**Statutory right to request Parental Leave and time off to deal with a Family Emergency**

**From 5 April 2015 the age limit on unpaid parental leave will increase** from the current five years to 18 years. This will provide each parent, who meets the qualifying period of one year’s employment, with the right to up to 18 week’s unpaid parental leave for each child up to the age of 18. A maximum of four weeks unpaid parental leave per year can be taken

**The right to apply for Parental Leave, 18 weeks unpaid**

The right to parental leave entitles all parents, both men and women, who have one year’s service with their employer to take a period of:

* up to 18 weeks unpaid leave (in total, not per year) to care for each of their children, up to the child’s fifth birthday, or up to five years after the placement date of an adopted child; or
* up to 18 weeks for each disabled child, (in total, not per year) up to the child’s 18th birthday .
* There is a maximum of four weeks unpaid parental leave that can be taken each year

The right applies to mothers and fathers and to a person who has obtained formal parental responsibility for a child under the Children Act. Parents are able to start taking parental leave as soon as the child is born or placed for adoption, or as soon as they have completed the required one year’s qualifying service with their employer, whichever is later.

**The right to unpaid time off for Family Emergency – this right applies to all employees**

In many cases an employee now has the right to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on them. A husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with them as part of their family can all be considered as depending on them. Others who rely solely on them for help in an emergency may also qualify. An employee can also take time off if a dependant dies and they need to make funeral arrangements or attend the funeral.

The amount of time an employee can take off is as long as it takes to deal with the immediate emergency. For example, if their child falls ill they can take enough time off to deal with its' initial needs, such as taking them to the doctor and arranging for their care. But an employee will need to make other arrangements if they want to stay off work longer to care for them themselves. In most cases, time off work will amount to one or two days but of course may be longer depending on the specific situation.

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