

John Griffiths AM
Chairperson, ELGC Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA.

May 29, 2018

John.Griffiths@assembly.wales

Dear John,

Subject: Inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work in Wales

Thank you for the recent opportunity to provide oral evidence to your Inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work. At the session, we undertook to send you additional information on a number of matters. Please find below relevant evidence and examples.

Examples of good practice

Our Working Forward campaign has highlighted a number of good practice examples in relation to pregnancy, maternity and work. These include the below (short videos on the examples can be viewed at the links).

[BT: developing a maternity handbook](#)

Equality specialist, Sally Ward, and Openreach General Manager, Jo Koroma, discuss a new maternity handbook that BT has created to support line managers dealing with employees who are pregnant or returning from maternity leave.

The handbook was developed in collaboration with BT's women's network, using the experiences of women who have undergone pregnancy and maternity

at BT to help identify practical advice and top tips for line managers. It is complemented by an employee handbook.

Barclays: one-to-one coaching programme

Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Mark McLane, and Deputy Head of EMEA Power, Utilities and Infrastructure, Sally Rushton, discuss a one-to-one coaching programme which Sally set up to ensure Barclays employees are confident throughout pregnancy, maternity and their return to work – and that they can continue to develop their careers at Barclays after becoming parents.

Royal Mail: job sharing

Emma Wickham and Toni Jeffryes talk to Delivery Sector Manager, Marie Forrester, about how job sharing has enabled them to fast-track their career at Royal Mail while staying on top of their childcare commitments. It also allows Royal Mail Group to make full use of their talent pipeline by developing more of the women already working for the organisation

The job share was first conceived when Toni met Marie while she was speaking at one of Royal Mail's Springboard events. These events aim to inspire women and help them reach their full potential.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board are developing a pregnancy and maternity toolkit to support line managers in having regular and open conversations with team members during their pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.

South Wales Police have introduced 'pregnancy champions' to support pregnant staff and for the first few months of returning to work as a new parent. South Wales Police ensure all of this work is fed into their Internal Delivery Plan to increase the numbers of women at all ranks in their service.

Working Forward and Fathers

Following the Committee's discussion regarding paternity, we would like to highlight that last year we expanded our Working Forward initiative to include fathers in the workplace. Our members told us that there was a growing demand from working fathers to play a bigger role in childcare, if they have the support in place to allow it.

To open up dialogue between managers and new and expectant fathers, we have launched conversation guides that:

- Outline paternity rights
- Support dads in how to ask about flexible working arrangements
- Offer support with post-natal depression
- Help prepare for a discussion about returning to work after flexible work.

These conversation guides are attached. The Committee may want to explore how these guides can be promoted further.

Legal protections

Within our pregnancy and maternity recommendations we set out that to improve employer practice we need clarity in the law to provide a framework for employers to build a fair and diverse workplace. The legal framework protecting pregnant woman and new mothers in the workplace is extensive, but employers need greater clarity on their obligation not to discriminate in the recruitment process.

We recommend increasing the time limit for women to bring an Employment Tribunal claim in cases involving pregnancy and maternity discrimination from three to six months, in line with other employment claims such as redundancy and equal pay.

Our [Fair opportunities for all: A strategy to reduce pay gaps in Britain](#) report makes a number of recommendations to reduce gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, all of which are relevant to the Committee's Inquiry. With regard to changes to legislation and practice, the strategy recommends:

- The UK Government should legislate to extend the right to request flexible working to apply from day one in all jobs unless there is a genuine business reason that means this isn't possible
- Employers should offer all jobs, including the most senior, on a flexible and part-time basis unless there is a genuine business reason that means this isn't possible

Careers advice & addressing differences in subject and career choice

Our Fair opportunities for all: A strategy to reduce pay gaps in Britain report highlights that research finds that from an early age and throughout school, girls and boys are socialised to have conventionally stereotypical and limiting views about jobs for men and women (Ofsted, 2011), and that girls do not get the same range of choices over potential professions as boys (Girlguiding, 2016; Panel on Fair Access to Professions, 2009; Social Mobility Commission, 2016a). Educational opportunities and attainment are important determinants of careers and earnings. Removing the barriers to fulfilling educational potential; tackling traditional stereotypes and subject choices from primary school onwards that lead to occupational segregation; and increasing diversity in apprenticeships will contribute to reducing pay gaps and fairer workplaces. The report recommends:

- UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments and their agencies should ensure that careers guidance and work experience opportunities tackle stereotypes and encourage wider subject and career choices for women, ethnic minority and disabled students from primary school onwards

Welsh Government's economic action plan

'Prosperity for all: economic action plan' sets out a vision for the Welsh economy. The action plan commits to introducing economic contracts which will set the relationship between business and government to stimulate growth, increase productivity and make Wales fairer and more competitive. The contract requires businesses to demonstrate commitment to fair conditions before proposals will be considered in funding. One of these key themes is 'Fair Work'.

The Prosperity for all: economic action plan highlights work to support four foundation sectors – tourism, food, retail and care - in a joined up and consistent way across Government. It is important that equality is at the centre of the action plan. The Welsh Government current gender review is an opportunity for these issues to be explored further and for the Welsh Government to take forward action.

Our recommends in our submission included that:

- The Public Sector Equality Duty, the Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan and its new Employability Plan should be used as levers to tackle gender inequality in Welsh workplaces.
- The Welsh Government's Fair Work Board should considers our research and findings and that it provides support for businesses in agreeing a clear definition of fair work to ensure that female talent is valued and nurtured.

Childcare responsibilities

Our Fair opportunities for all: A strategy to reduce pay gaps in Britain report highlights that women still play the lead role in looking after children, so are more likely to work part time and take time out of the labour market – two factors contributing to the gender pay gap (Brynin, 2017). 'Sandwich caring', looking after young children at the same time as caring for elderly or disabled relatives, also has a disproportionate impact on women's employment and pay.

Women are four times more likely than men to give up work because of multiple caring responsibilities (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016).

Two factors seem to encourage men's involvement in childcare and reduce the impact on women's careers of being the sole carer: more generous paternity leave, and more affordable childcare. Government and employers need to introduce policies that encourage men to share childcare more equally and reduce workplace bias towards mothers as the primary carer. Improving paternity and shared parental leave entitlements and extending free childcare should have a positive impact on women's engagement in the labour market. To ensure this impact is fully understood, an evaluation of the effect of the changes to free childcare should be undertaken. Our report recommended that:

- The UK Government should introduce dedicated non-transferable, ring-fenced 'use it or lose it' parental leave for fathers with a pay rate that acts as a real incentive to take-up.
- The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments should continue to assess the impact of statutory childcare provision and different models of provision on women's labour market participation, and adjust accordingly.

I hope you find this information of use. Please let us know if we can help further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Coombs', written in a cursive style.

Ruth Coombs

Pennaeth Cymru / Head of Wales

Preparing for fatherhood

**A conversation guide
for fathers**

**WORKING
FORWARD**

SUPPORTING PREGNANT WOMEN
AND NEW PARENTS AT WORK

An introduction

First of all, congratulations! This is an exciting time as you prepare for all the transitions that come with being a parent.

You may have a partner who is pregnant, or on maternity leave, you may be adopting a child or having a baby through a surrogate, or you may be a single parent. Whatever your situation, if you're preparing for your paternity leave, thinking about taking Shared Parental Leave (SPL) or wanting to work flexibly to share childcare you'll need to discuss certain things with your line manager. This guide will support you in having these conversations with practical guidance and advice to ensure the most positive experience for you and your partner.

This guide is intended to complement your employer's policies, so it's always best to familiarise yourself with these first. Also, make yourself aware of any employee schemes, benefits and support networks that you can make use of.

You can find more advice on the law and your rights on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward



Telling your line manager about a pregnancy

Telling your line manager about a pregnancy will ensure that you get the support you need at this important time.

Before you talk with your line manager it's a good idea to do some research. Read your company's paternity policies and think about anything else you may need to consider at this point. The following is an overview of fathers' statutory entitlements and should inform your discussions with your line manager around leave, flexible working and time off for appointments.

Statutory Paternity Leave and pay

Employees can choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' Paternity Leave. The statutory weekly rate of Paternity Pay is £140.98, or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). Many employers choose to enhance Statutory Paternity Pay by offering full pay for the two weeks or an extended period of leave.

Shared Parental Leave and pay

As well as up to two weeks' paternity leave, eligible fathers can take SPL for up to 50 weeks. Parents taking SPL can choose to take this leave in turns, together or in a combination of the two. Parents can take blocks of leave continuously between them or in up to three separate chunks, but employers can agree to more.

Employees who qualify to receive Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) while on SPL will be paid £140.98 per week, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly



earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate, for up to a maximum of 39 weeks minus any weeks of maternity pay, maternity allowance or adoption pay.

For more information on paternity pay and leave please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>

For more information on shared parental leave and pay please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay>

Antenatal appointments

Your partner will attend a number of antenatal appointments during her pregnancy, and you may want to accompany her. Such appointments include routine check-ups by a doctor, midwife or consultant, ultrasound scans and other medical consultations, as well as complementary care, such as birthing, parenting or relaxation classes. Fathers are entitled to take unpaid leave to accompany the expectant (or surrogate) mother to two antenatal appointments of up to 6.5 hours each. Your employer may also enhance this by: offering paid leave to attend antenatal appointments, providing extra leave to attend more appointments, and/or allowing employees to 'make the time up' through flexible working. Discuss with your line manager about what your organisation offers.

1.1

Telling your line manager about a pregnancy

Top tips for a productive conversation

- 1 Talk to your line manager in whatever way is most natural to the both of you. It doesn't have to be a formal meeting – it could be over a coffee, if that's what works for you.
- 2 Be open and honest with your line manager and let them know they can be the same with you.
- 3 You don't have to have concrete plans for paternity leave now. But it will help your manager to know your baby's due date and any rough plans you might have – including any upcoming antenatal appointments.
- 4 Talk to your line manager about SPL. It can be helpful to discuss what might be possible and it doesn't commit you to anything if you later decide it is not for you.
- 5 It's a good idea to put any discussion points and agreements in writing to help avoid any confusion down the line. This could be as simple as a quick email.

2.0 Preparing for paternity leave

In the time leading up to your paternity leave you'll need to make decisions such as your potential leave date as well as making plans with your line manager and your team. You don't have to give a precise date when you want to take leave. Instead, you can give the general time, including the day of the birth or one week after the birth. You must give your employer 28 days' notice if you want to change the start date of your leave.

Remember, only 1 in 25 babies are born on their due date, so you may need to leave the workplace at very short notice to attend the birth, or be staying at work for longer than you planned. If you are involved in urgent or time-critical projects at this time, make sure that another member of staff is briefed so that they can take over without too much disruption. You may also want to ask that you do not travel extensively around the due date, particularly trips that could make it impossible for you to get back to support your partner during the birth.

You may want to do a handover with your line manager and colleagues and keep them updated with any changes or developments before you leave. Whether it's over email or in a meeting, you can choose to do this in whichever way is most suitable for you.

2.1 Preparing for paternity leave

Top tips for productive conversations

- 1 Let your line manager and colleagues know your plans, identifying any additional support your line manager may need and preparing a handover document if needed.
- 2 Think about whether you might want to extend your paternity leave by using annual leave to top up and discuss this with your line manager.
- 3 Talk to your line manager about your plans for returning to work and whether you want to work flexibly in the future.

3.0

Taking Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and keeping in touch

If you and your partner have decided to take SPL you will need to prepare for a longer period of time away from work. This will depend largely on how you have decided to take the time (up to 50 weeks). You may choose to take this leave in turns, together or in a combination of the two.

SPL is extremely flexible. Employees can also use up to 20 Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days to work. In practice these can be used to create a period of part-time working without a contract change. SPLIT days can also be used to keep up to date with developments, or be available for important events and meetings. Their use must be agreed so talk with your line manager about what might work best for both of you.

Good communication with your line manager is vital if you're taking an extended period of leave. Below are some of the things you might want to discuss:

- **Planning cover:** early planning for your absence helps to reduce any negative impact on your colleagues and your organisation.
- **Contact arrangements:** agree the level of contact you feel comfortable with while away. For example, talk about whether you want regular updates on company news, to hear about critical developments only, or those which affect you personally such as promotion or training opportunities. You can always change your mind on this during your leave.
- **Performance appraisals:** request that a performance appraisal is carried out shortly before you start your extended leave. This will ensure you are treated fairly, particularly if your appraisal system affects pay rises or bonuses.
- **Return to work:** have an informal chat about a return to work date. You may also want to talk about flexible working arrangements, such as part-time or agile working – or a phased return to ease the transition back. Make it clear that what you talk about is just an indication of preferences to help you plan, rather than something set in stone.



3.1

Taking Shared Parental Leave and keeping in touch

Top tips for productive conversations

1

Talk to your line manager about how you want to use your parental leave. SPL is very flexible and can fit in well to many working patterns. Talk to your line manager about what might be possible.

2

Planning your leave and thinking about cover and a handover will help both you and your line manager feel more confident about being away from work and the time ahead.

3

Ask your line manager to keep you updated on changes to the workplace or your team during your leave.

4

You can also discuss your plans for returning to work and whether you might want to work more flexibly in the future.

4.0

Preparing for a successful return to work after taking paternity and/or parental leave

When fathers have taken just a short period of one or two weeks' paternity leave, it can be easy for colleagues and managers to forget that their lives have just undergone a major change.

You may be lacking sleep, feel physically and emotionally exhausted and finding your way balancing new responsibilities at home with work. Have a candid conversation with your line manager to get the support and flexibility you need. It might be possible for adjustments to be made to help you manage work during this transition period. Options could include leaving earlier or coming in later than normal and/or avoiding holding late or early meetings.



4.0

If you have taken an extended period of leave, getting back up to speed in a way that works for you is likely to be a priority. Discuss with your line manager, ways in which they might help. These might include pre-return training or mentoring, with a colleague acting as a 'buddy' to facilitate your return. Whether you are planning to return to work on a full-time or part-time basis, it can be helpful to request some kind of phasing arrangement for the first few weeks or months following your return.

Familiarise yourself with your organisation's provision for working parents (for example, family or parent networks, employee assistance programmes, and childcare assistance) and its approach to flexible working (know what options for flexible working are possible and whether an informal arrangement is sufficient or a formal request to work flexibly is needed).

Postnatal depression is not an uncommon issue for new parents. One in five men experience depression after becoming fathers – much the same proportion as experienced by women during pregnancy or in the year after giving birth. Your employer may not be able to solve issues beyond the workplace, but they may be able to offer help and support. Identifying the problem will help you manage it and get the support you may need from work.

- **Recognise that becoming a parent is a major transition**

You may be taking on extra responsibilities around the house, feeling financial pressure more acutely, coping with a changing relationship with your partner, and suffering lack of sleep.



4.0

- **Be aware of the signs of depression**

Look out for uncommon changes – they may be warning signs of depression. These include: being uncharacteristically sad, anxious, restless, distracted, irritable, and low in energy or motivation. We all have off days, which don't necessarily indicate depression – but be alert to the possibility and be aware of the signs.

- **Look for information and advice**

GPs and health visitors will be able to provide treatment and support for depression. The following organisations may also be able to help:

- **PANDAS Dads** – part of the PANDAS Foundation, which offers advice and support for individuals experiencing pre- and postnatal depression. www.pandasfoundation.org.uk
- **The Birth Trauma Association** – provides information and support for mothers and partners who have had a traumatic birth experience. <http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk>
- **The Fatherhood Institute** – a charity that focuses on fatherhood policy, research and practice, offering services including ante- and postnatal intervention for new fathers and mothers. <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org>



4.1

Preparing for a successful return to work after taking parental leave

Top tips for productive conversations

- 1 You'll find it helpful to meet with your line manager on your first day back to discuss your return and any updates that either of you may have.
- 2 Whether you've had a couple of weeks off or an extended period of leave, speak to your line manager about any issues you might be experiencing and how they can help support you in the transition back to work.
- 3 Try to catch up with your own network too as they can provide further updates and help you settle back in.
- 4 Think about whether, on your return to work, you want to work flexibly and talk about your plans with your line manager.
- 5 Talk to other fathers about how they manage work and home-life. This can make it easier to know what options are working currently when you speak to your line manager.



Finally

We hope this guide has been useful and given you the information tips and advice needed to help you and your line manager support you as a new parent in the workplace.

For more information please visit:
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/
workingforward](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward)

#WorkingForward

www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward



SUPPORTING PREGNANT WOMEN
AND NEW PARENTS AT WORK



Managing fathers at work

A conversation guide for line managers

**WORKING
FORWARD**

SUPPORTING PREGNANT WOMEN
AND NEW PARENTS AT WORK

An introduction

As a line manager you have an important part to play in the smooth running of your organisation and a significant impact on the day-to-day experience of the people you manage. This includes working fathers and fathers-to-be. Increasingly, fathers want to play an active part in bringing up children. It may be their partner who is pregnant; they are adopting a child or having a child with a surrogate; or are a single parent. Whatever the situation, this guide has been created to ensure you feel comfortable about the conversations you will need to have.

This guide includes practical guidance and advice and is supported by corresponding guides for fathers and pregnant women/new mothers. We've kept it simple and straightforward, and while we cover some important points, it's best to check your company's policies and contact your HR team or senior management team for more information, especially if you have any queries or concerns.

Research shows that having a supportive manager is a key factor in raising awareness and take-up of family friendly policies by men. Working fathers who have access to flexible working options display higher degrees of commitment to their employer than those who are unable to work flexibly, and have an improved perception of their employer as committed and trusting. For most employers, recruiting and developing staff is a significant investment – and replacing someone is costly. Developing flexible working arrangements, supportive paternity leave and Shared Parental Leave (SPL) policies and other occupational benefits are often decisive elements in retaining new fathers in your employment.

You can find further guidance, advice and helpful tools on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward



1.0



Supporting new fathers at work

It's likely that you will already know which of your employees are currently fathers. But for new or soon-to-be fathers, one of the best things you can do when you hear the news that your employee is going to be a father is firstly to congratulate them. Then, do some fact finding and find out about your company's paternity policies and support for parents. The following is an overview of fathers' statutory entitlements and should inform your discussions with new fathers around leave, flexible working and time off for appointments.

Statutory Paternity Leave and pay

Employees can choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' Paternity Leave. The statutory weekly rate of Paternity Pay is £140.98, or 90% of their average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). Many employers choose to enhance Statutory Paternity Pay by offering full pay for the two weeks or an extended period of leave. Find out what is on offer in your organisation and let your employee know.



Shared Parental Leave and pay

As well as up to two weeks' paternity leave, eligible fathers can take SPL for up to 50 weeks. Parents taking SPL can choose to take this leave in turns, together or in a combination of the two. Parents can take blocks of leave continuously between them or in up to three separate chunks, but employers can agree to more. Find out what your organisation's policy is or what has been done previously so that you can properly inform your employee.

Employees who qualify to receive Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) while on SPL will be paid £140.98 per week or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate, for up to a maximum of 39 weeks minus any weeks of maternity pay, maternity allowance or adoption pay. Again, many employers choose to enhance ShPP. Find out what is on offer in your organisation and let your employee know.

For more information on paternity pay and leave please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>

For more information on shared parental leave and pay please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay>



Antenatal appointments

Fathers are entitled to take unpaid leave to accompany the expectant (or surrogate) mother to two antenatal appointments of up to 6.5 hours each. Such appointments include routine check-ups by a doctor, midwife or consultant, ultrasound scans and other medical consultations, as well as complementary care, such as birthing, parenting or relaxation classes. Some employers enhance this by: offering paid leave to attend antenatal appointments, providing extra leave to attend more appointments, and/or allowing employees to 'make the time up' through flexible working. Discuss with your employee what your organisation offers or what could be accommodated within your team.

Supporting new fathers at work

Top tips for a productive conversation

- 1 Have a conversation in whatever way is most natural to the both of you. It doesn't have to be a formal meeting – it could take place over a coffee, if that's what works for you.
- 2 When it comes to having a conversation, it's best to be open and honest. Encourage your employee to be open with any concerns he may have in order to get the support that he needs.
- 3 Share your company policies and highlight anything that you think might be useful (for example, the policy regarding time off for antenatal appointments or details of the parents' network).
- 4 To help the both of you keep on top of any antenatal appointments, you could suggest that he adds these to your diary or schedule.
- 5 Reassure your employee that you are supportive of his right to take an extended period of leave if he's thinking of doing so.
- 6 It's a good idea to put any discussion points and agreements in writing as this helps avoid any confusion down the line.

2.0

Preparing for your employee's paternity leave

Fathers taking paternity leave don't have to give a precise date (for example, 1 April 2018) when they want to take leave, but you can ask them to give you a general time, including the day of the birth or one week after the birth. If your employee wants to change the start date of his leave he must give you 28 days' notice. But remember, a little bit of flexibility on both sides can be helpful, particularly when only 1 in 25 babies are born on their due date.

If your employee is involved in urgent or time-critical projects at this time, make sure that another member of staff is briefed so that they can take over without too much disruption. You may also want to ensure that your employee does not travel extensively around the due date, particularly trips that could make it very difficult for him to get back to support his partner during the birth.

Working with your employee on a handover will ensure that you and colleagues are kept updated on work that will need to be covered.

2.1

Shared Parental Leave

Top tips for productive conversations

- 1 Organise a handover meeting and use a handover document as the basis for your conversations.
- 2 Discussing cover arrangements and working through a handover will help both you and your employee feel more confident about being away from work and the time ahead.
- 3 Take the lead from your employee as to how he wants to be kept in touch and what information he wants updated on during his leave.
- 4 Discuss your employee's plans for returning to work and whether he might want to work flexibly in the future.
- 5 Confirm the payment of statutory/enhanced Shared Parental Pay.

3.0

Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

Your employee may have decided to take SPL with his partner and if this is the case you will need to prepare for him taking a longer period of time away from work. Eligible parents can take SPL for up to 50 weeks and parents can choose to take this leave in turns, together, or in a combination of the two.

How your employee has decided to take the leave will affect how you need to plan for this and how you manage it at the time. Employees can also use up to 20 Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days to work whilst on leave. In practice these can be used to create a period of part-time working without a contract change. SPLIT days can also be used to keep up to date with developments, or be available for important events and meetings. Their use is subject to agreement so talk with your employee about what might work best for both of you.



3.0

Good communication with your employee is vital if he's taking an extended period of leave. Below are some of the things you might want to discuss:

- **Planning cover:** early planning for his absence helps to reduce any negative impact on your colleagues and your organisation. Include your employee in discussions and resist making assumptions about what he can and can't do. You may want to think about rescheduling projects that he's essential for but be careful not to exclude him from projects that might enhance his career prospects, which could be regarded as inadvertent discrimination.
- **Contact arrangements:** speak to your employee about the level of contact he feels comfortable with while away. For example, talk about whether he wants regular updates on company news, to hear about critical developments only, or just those which affect him personally such as promotion or training opportunities.
- **Performance appraisals:** ensure that you carry out a performance appraisal before your employee starts his extended leave, while the information is current. This will ensure he is treated fairly, particularly if your appraisal system affects pay rises or bonuses.
- **Return to work:** have an informal chat about a return to work date. You may also want to talk about flexible working arrangements, such as part-time working, compressed hours, working remotely, or a phased return to ease the transition back. It's a good idea to have examples of other fathers working flexibly so your employee can see what might be possible. Remember, fathers may be less comfortable asking for formal flexible working arrangements than mothers and you can help by talking to them about what is possible.



3.1

Shared Parental Leave

Top tips for productive conversations

1

Talk to your employee about how he wants to use his parental leave. SPL is very flexible and can fit in well to many working patterns.

2

Discussing cover arrangements and working through a handover will help both you and your employee feel more confident about being away from work and the time ahead.

3

Take the lead from your employee as to how he wants to be kept in touch and what information he wants updated on during his leave.

4

Discuss your employee's plans for returning to work and whether he might want to work flexibly in the future.

5

Confirm the payment of statutory/enhanced Shared Parental Pay.

4.0

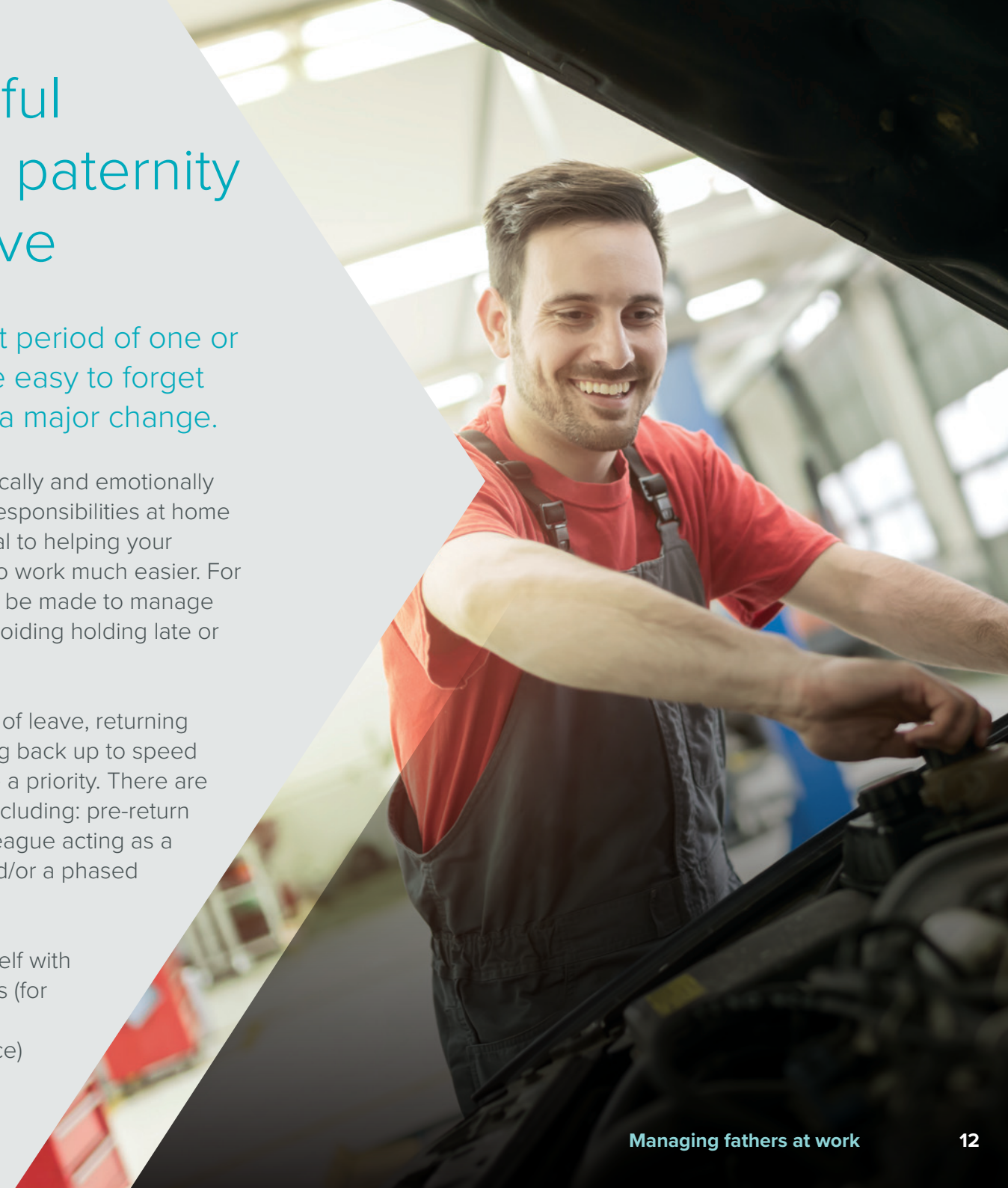
Ensuring a successful return to work after paternity and/or parental leave

When fathers have taken just a short period of one or two weeks' paternity leave, it can be easy to forget that their lives have just undergone a major change.

Your employee may be lacking sleep, feel physically and emotionally exhausted, and finding his way balancing new responsibilities at home with work. Your support at this time will be crucial to helping your employee adjust and make the transition back to work much easier. For example, it might be possible for adjustments to be made to manage his work during this transition period, such as avoiding holding late or early team meetings.

If your employee has taken an extended period of leave, returning to work may again be a challenging time. Getting back up to speed in a way that works for both of you is likely to be a priority. There are several ways you can help ease the transition including: pre-return training using SPLIT days, mentoring with a colleague acting as a 'buddy' to help your employee on his return, and/or a phased return for the first few weeks or months.

Before your employee's return, familiarise yourself with your organisation's provision for working parents (for example, family or parent networks, employee assistance programmes, and childcare assistance) and provide him with this information.



4.0

You should also be clear on your organisation's flexible working policies, what options for flexible working are possible and whether an informal arrangement is sufficient or a formal request to work flexibly is needed. Research shows that working fathers who have access to flexible working options display higher degrees of commitment to their employer than those who are unable to work flexibly.

Postnatal depression is not an uncommon issue for new parents. One in five men experience depression after becoming fathers – much the same proportion as experienced by women during pregnancy or in the year after giving birth. You may not be able to solve issues beyond the workplace, but you can offer help and support to your employee. The following organisations may also be able to help:

- **PANDAS Dads** – part of the PANDAS Foundation, which offers advice and support for individuals experiencing pre- and postnatal depression. www.pandasfoundation.org.uk
- **The Birth Trauma Association** – provides information and support for mothers and partners who have had a traumatic birth experience. <http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk>
- **The Fatherhood Institute** – a charity that focuses on fatherhood policy, research and practice, offering services including ante- and postnatal intervention for new fathers and mothers. <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org>



4.1

Ensuring a successful return to work after paternity and/or parental leave

Top tips for productive conversations

1

Book in a meeting with your employee on his first day back to discuss his return and any updates that either of you may have.

2

Listen to your employee and give him the opportunity to talk about any difficulties he may be having so that you can better support him in his transition back to work.

3

Discuss flexible working options with your employee, think carefully about what might be possible, informal trial arrangements are a good way of testing an approach out.

4

Speak to other colleagues who are also managing parents, find out some of the arrangements that might already be in place elsewhere in the organisation.



Finally

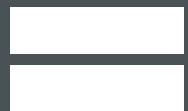
We hope this guide has been useful and given you the information, tips and advice needed to help you support your employee as a new parent in the workplace. Visible support for working fathers helps to create a supportive and inclusive culture that has a positive impact across the organisation.

For more information, resources and training, please visit:

[www.equalityhumanrights.com/
workingforward](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward)

#WorkingForward

www.equalityhumanrights.com/workingforward



**Equality and
Human Rights
Commission**



SUPPORTING PREGNANT WOMEN
AND NEW PARENTS AT WORK