



Paternity leave scheme shelved

The Work and Families Act 2006 includes provisions to give working fathers and partners of new mothers the right to share paid leave when they have a baby or adopt a child, by extending payment of SMP, adoption pay, and maternity allowance up to twelve months. The aim is for mothers and fathers to share the twelve months of paid leave, with mothers having the option of returning to work after six months' maternity leave and for fathers to take the remaining six months of paid leave as paternity leave. Those fathers whose partners do not work, or who do not return to work after having a baby, will not be eligible to take the additional paternity leave. It was originally envisaged that these changes would apply to the parents of babies due on or after 6 April 2010. The government has decided to shelve the introduction of these changes and there is no indication of when they may come into force. Therefore, fathers remain entitled to only two weeks' paid paternity leave, and SMP remains payable for nine months.