



## **More Choice for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Family**

New mothers could soon have the choice to transfer their maternity leave to the father and be able to go back to work whilst the father stays at home and cares for the child. The government is proposing to allow employed mothers to transfer all or part of the last 26 weeks of their maternity leave to the father of the child allowing more flexibility for new families to make financial decisions. New mums will be given the opportunity to return to work, while the fathers spend some of those first few months with their newborn and care for their child without losing their job or suffering financially.

If this 'additional paternity leave' is taken by the father when the mother would otherwise have received statutory maternity pay (SMP) during her 39 week maternity period, then up to three months of it will be paid at the same rate as SMP. This means that the total amount of pay (SMP plus paternity pay) will be the same but it can be split between the mother and the father.

The government intends the change to maternity and paternity leave to be in force by April 2010, and to have effect for parents whose baby is due on or after 3 April 2011.

Existing paternity rights will also not be affected:

- two weeks' paid ordinary paternity leave
- 13 weeks' unpaid parental leave until the child's fifth birthday.
- Parents of children aged 16 and under also have the right to request flexible working.

Information provided by Sevenoaks & Swanley Citizens Advice Bureau. Tel: 01732 454443, email: [info@sevenoakscab.org.uk](mailto:info@sevenoakscab.org.uk). There is also a Citizens Advice Bureau at Edenbridge.