Supplementary written evidence from the Fatherhood Institute (GPG0061)

Shared parental leave and paternity leave summary

- The **period of parenting leave** per child should remain, as now, 54 weeks – as follows.
  - 2/4 weeks’ Maternity Leave (depending on the nature of the mother’s employment – if it’s manual, then she gets 4 weeks), 2 weeks’ Paternity Leave. Both of those are individual rights, based on each partner’s own employment HISTORY. and the leaves can be taken concurrently. These are ‘use it or lose it’ benefits and cannot be transferred to the other parent
  - 48 weeks of other leave probably called Flexible Shared Parental Leave
  - All to be taken within the first year after the birth (with mothers able to take some of their leave, as now, beforehand)
  - We change the STATUTORY levels of both Paternity and Maternity PAY: we upgrade the Paternity Pay to 90% of earnings (with a cap); we put a cap on the mother’s pay so it too is paid at 90% of earnings (as now) but with a cap for higher earners. This is a ‘handout’ to fathers and a penalty on a few mothers which I am sure everyone would see as fair (currently there is no cap on Maternity Pay)
  - We also change the pay levels for PART of the Parental Leave – see below (“how we incentivise fathers’ leave-taking”) . . .

- **The conditions under which fathers can use the Parental Leave** become as follows
  - He only becomes eligible once the mother starts working for money (employed, self-employed, whatever)
  - SHE GETS TO DECIDE WHEN SHE IS GOING TO START WORKING.
  - Although a father can only take the leave once the mother is working for money, his ELIGIBILITY does not depend on her transferring leave – because the leave is not transferred. All employed fathers who are eligible for Paternity Leave & Pay are eligible for Parental Leave & Pay, once the mother is working for money (employed, self-employed, on zero hours contracts, whatever). That is, his eligibility depends (1) on his own work HISTORY not on their combined work histories; and (2) on her entering the paid workforce (not, as now, RETURNING to it)

- **How we incentivise fathers’ leave-taking without taking anything away from mothers**
  - We incentivise fathers’ leave taking through the Statutory PAY LEVEL. Currently, the mother’s first six weeks are payable at 90% and another 33 weeks are paid at income support level, after which the leave is unpaid. We change this to the following:
    - **Mother:** eight weeks Parental Pay at 90% (with a cap) in addition to her 2/4 weeks Maternity Pay (so she gains an additional 4 weeks of high-level pay)
    - **Father:** eight weeks Parental Pay at 90% (with a cap) on top of his 2 weeks Paternity Pay
• This PAY is not transferable: if the father doesn’t use his entitlement, the mother can still use the LEAVE, but (as now) only receive income-support-level-payment to 39 weeks, with the rest of the leave unpaid

• **A few other points:**
  o This is a handout by the State to both mothers and fathers – but still an incredibly cheap policy
  o We make Paternity Leave a Day One right
  o We try VERY HARD to make the leave flexible, so parents can each work part-time and be on leave part-time
  o At a later date, there is nothing to stop an extension of the period of high-level pay to fathers AND mothers – which would incentivise longer leave-taking by fathers