

Shared Parental Leave – what could it mean for the City of London?

The advent of shared [parental leave](#) will bring about a major cultural change. HR practitioners will no doubt be keen to learn from countries that have already successfully implemented shared parental leave schemes such as [Canada](#), and [Denmark](#); and this may lead to an exchange of ideas between financial institutions in the City. The proposed merger between [TMX Group](#) (which operates the [Toronto Stock Exchange](#)) and the [London Stock Exchange](#) may become a further catalyst for dialogue between HR professionals across the [Atlantic](#) on this very issue.

HR practitioners in the City will follow the forthcoming consultations closely to see how [the Government](#) intends to introduce a system to request shared parental leave, and the grounds upon which such a request may be refused. The central issues in the City will be trying to balance a system that is flexible and fair for staff, but also sufficiently certain for business purposes.

Challenges could include how to deal with an employee who requests to take chunks of leave (if indeed this is permitted) over a period of weeks or months, and how to cover for staff in this way. All organisations will need to update their existing employment policies and procedures and train staff in due course.

The Government's research (contained in the [Final Impact Assessment](#) for additional paternity leave) provides a snap shot of some of the factors affecting take up of shared leave in other countries. In Finland, for example, it was found that overall parental leave is shared more often in families where both spouses have a high level of education and middle sized or good income – which may initially indicate that the take-up in the City will be high. However, it is likely that the level of take up will be guided by several factors, including the level of parental leave pay, and of course whether it suits the needs of employees. Shared parental schemes are already in operation in the [UK](#); last year Santander published plans to offer shared parental leave to staff, and details of their internal consultations may be of interest to the City HR community

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