



For family or friends who
step up to raise a child.



Designing a new right to paid leave for kinship carers

We set out a proposed model for a new right to statutory leave and pay for kinship carers, designed alongside kinship carers and workplace leaders, to inform the government's review of the parental leave and pay system.

5 key principles

1. The complexity of kinship care and its unique qualities demand a different approach.
2. There is a key role for the parental leave system in providing employment support.
3. Others – including employers and local authorities – still need to play their part.
4. Policy design challenges are not insurmountable; we can learn from existing family leave rights.
5. The foundation must be improved awareness and recognition of kinship care.

A model for kinship care leave

Phase 1 kinship care leave and pay

Modelled on Neonatal Care Pay and Leave, this is designed to provide new kinship carers with the 'breathing space' they need when a baby or child is about to or has just come into their care, often unexpectedly. This would deliver some shorter term relief from the demands of work to enable kinship carers to access independent advice and information and navigate a period of immense uncertainty and upheaval.

It would:

- provide kinship carers with **up to 12 weeks of leave and pay**, available to be taken flexibly.
- be **available to all kinship carers**, regardless of the type of kinship arrangement.
- **extend to the partner** or spouse of a kinship carer where they are also providing care.
- require **no specific documentary evidence**, although a written declaration would be required to access statutory pay.

Phase 2 kinship care leave and pay

Modelled on existing maternity, paternity, Shared Parental and adoption leave and pay, this is designed to deliver the longer period of protected time parents or carers typically need to bond with a child and help them settle, whilst maintaining their household's financial security and preventing unnecessary permanent labour market withdrawal.

It would:

- provide a kinship carer with **up to 52 weeks of leave** (and up to 39 weeks of pay).
- be **available to all kinship carers** who expect to be the primary caregiver on a long term or permanent basis.
- be accompanied by an **equivalent paternity leave** and pay right for 'secondary' kinship carers.
- require **no specific documentary evidence**, although our paper outlines potential options and a recommendation for the use of a similar statutory declaration to access statutory pay.

See the full paper for more on **our policy approach** (e.g. why we propose 2 entitlements which mirror existing family leave and pay rights, and how this might influence the cost to employers and government) and **considerations in our policy design** (e.g. how notice and evidence requirements could operate, and how this model might work where there is ongoing children's services involvement).

Visit kinship.org.uk/designing-a-new-right or scan the QR code to download the full paper.