

Delay to paternity changes

In response to the article entitled 'Paternity Leave' (June 2009), the proposed changes to paternity leave will bring legislation in line with current working practices, but by delaying them even more the government sends a strong signal to working parents about who the main carer should be.

Currently, the mother is forced to stay home as fathers are not given extended paid leave, but the ideal would be to allow the choice of allocating flexible leave to either parent. I can appreciate businesses may be concerned with the costs involved, but it is a necessary step towards equality and fairness. The Equality & Human Rights Commission's proposition seems fair and balanced without putting pressure on businesses.

Parenthood is often shared between two people, so it is only right that parental leave reflects this. Eventually, this could lead to an improvement in women's prospects by shifting the biases around hiring women of child-bearing age within some businesses. Unfortunately, this won't change unless there is a similar standing in the opportunities for both mother and father to be equally and actively involved in caring for the child.

Chris Parke, managing director, Talking Talent