



Neonatal Leave and Pay - Government Consultation

The Smallest Things 'Top Ten Tips' for Responding

This Summer the Smallest Things welcomed the Governments proposals to introduce Neonatal Leave and Pay for families in neonatal care.

Born too soon or poorly, babies can spend weeks and months in hospital before their parents can bring them home. Fathers juggle work and family commitments as paternity leave fails to cover the time they need whilst their baby remains in neonatal intensive care; and mothers recovering from the trauma of premature birth wait beside incubators hoping for the precious moment they can hold their child. Time spent watching a tiny baby in neonatal intensive care simply isn't maternity or paternity leave.

The Government is consulting on their plans to introduce **Neonatal Leave and Pay**, which will allow every employed parent living in Britain to receive one week of paid leave for every week their baby receives neonatal care, up to a maximum number of weeks.

The Smallest Things have gathered parents' views and have produced a Top Ten guide to completing the government consultation – now is your time to **HAVE YOUR SAY!**

The DEADLINE to respond is - 11th October 2019

How to Respond:

You can respond by either completing the [online survey consultation form](#) or by downloading a form and returning it by post or email to:

- Family-related Leave and Pay Team
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1st Floor Spur, 1 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, SE24 0DN
- Email: supportingfamiliesconsultation@beis.gov.uk

SHARE!

It is important that Government hear from families and the more parents who respond to the consultation, the stronger our voice is.

Share the consultation and The Smallest Things 'Top Ten Tips' with family and friends. Why not share with your local neonatal unit too!

Neonatal Leave and Pay - Government Consultation

The Smallest Things 'Top Ten Tips' for Responding

One:

Read - Neonatal Leave and Pay: Proposals to support parents of children who require neonatal care following birth.

Take a little bit of time to read and to get to know the proposals and background to the consultation. Don't worry about the questions, we'll go through this is the rest of our 'Smallest Things Top Tips', focusing specifically on the ones we think are most important to families in neonatal care.

Two:

Parents: When answering the consultation questions don't forget to share details of your own experiences of neonatal care, highlight the benefits extended leave and pay would have made to your family.

For example: being able to spend more time in NICU bonding with your baby, more financial security, more time to support your partner, time at home to recover before returning to work, time for baby to grow and develop before beginning child care, time to allow you to return to work successfully.

Employers: Organisations across the UK are already extending paid leave for staff whose babies are born premature or poorly, many of who have signed up to the Smallest Things 'Employer with Heart' Charter. Don't forget to share examples of how neonatal leave and pay policies have supported your employees and why the government should ensure all parents have access to Neonatal Leave and Pay as a day one right.

The Smallest Things have picked out 6 questions that parents have told us are most important and the next steps will help you to respond.

Three:

Question 2. *Do you agree that parents of babies who need to spend time in neonatal care should have access to additional pay and leave?* • **Strongly agree**

Possible answers - Strongly agree • Agree • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree • Don't know

The Smallest Things **STRONGLY AGREE** that parents of babies who need to spend time in neonatal care should have access to additional pay and leave. We have campaigned for additional leave and pay for parents in neonatal care since 2015.

Four:

Question 3. Do you agree that access to Neonatal Leave and Pay should be restricted to parents whose children have spent a minimum of 2 weeks in neonatal care, i.e. are seriously ill or likely to be in hospital for an extended period of time? • **Disagree**

Possible answers - Strongly • Agree • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree • Don't know

The Smallest Things believe that a minimum limit of 2 weeks in neonatal care is too long and does not reflect the short amount of paternity leave afforded to fathers and partners.

In addition, The Smallest Things believe that that Neonatal Leave and Pay should not be restricted to neonatal care and should include babies born poorly and admitted to specialist paediatric wards.

Five:

Question 4. If you agree that access to Neonatal Leave and Pay should be restricted to parents whose babies are most seriously ill, after what length of time in neonatal care should the parents' entitlement to Neonatal Leave and Pay crystallise? • **Other**

Possible answers - After 2 weeks • 4 weeks • Other

The Smallest Things believe that parents whose baby(s) spend more than one week in neonatal or specialist care should be entitled to neonatal leave and pay. This is to reflect extremely short parental leave entitlements and to ensure that fathers and partners can spend the time they need with their baby(s) and partners in the neonatal unit and be there when they come home.

Six:

Question 5. Are there other circumstances that you think should be considered for inclusion within the scope of Neonatal Leave and Pay? What are they?

Self Employed Parents

The Government proposals do not include self-employed parents and as such additional neonatal leave and pay would not be offered to this group.

The Smallest Things believe strongly that all families spending more than one week in neonatal care should have access to additional leave and pay and urge the government to consider additional plans for self-employed parents to ensure that self-employed mothers and fathers can also visit and be with their baby(s) throughout the duration of their neonatal stay.

Seven:

Question 7. Do you agree that the qualifying period of service for Statutory Neonatal Pay should mirror the qualifying period of Statutory Paternity and Shared Parental Pay? • **Strongly Disagree**

Possible answers - *Strongly* • *Agree* • *Neither agree nor disagree* • *Disagree* • *Strongly disagree* • *Don't know*

The Smallest Things believe, in line with Government views, that Neonatal Leave should be a 'day one right' (question 6). However, **STONGLY DISAGREE** that there should be a qualifying period of service before a parent may receive Neonatal Pay and that both pay and leave should be a day one right.

Eight:

Question 8. *Do you agree that the entitlement to Neonatal Leave should be capped?* • **Strongly Disagree**

Possible answers - *Strongly* • *Agree* • *Neither agree nor disagree* • *Disagree* • *Strongly disagree* • *Don't know*

The Smallest Things **STRONGLY DISAGREE** that the entitlement to and length of Neonatal Leave should be capped.

Parents tell us that if Neonatal Leave was capped they wouldn't get the time at home they needed following the trauma of neonatal intensive care, they might not be able to return to work successfully and for the small number of parents of babies born extremely premature or poorly parents would still be visiting their baby in hospital when neonatal leave stopped.

Nine:

Question 9. *Do you agree that the maximum number of weeks of Neonatal Leave should be the same as the maximum number of Neonatal Pay in order to ensure eligible parents can receive pay throughout their leave period?* • **Strongly Agree**

Possible answers - *Strongly agree* • *Agree* • *Neither agree nor disagree* • *Disagree* • *Strongly disagree* • *Don't know*

The Smallest Things **STRONGLY AGREE** that the parents should receive pay throughout their period of Neonatal Leave, recognising the financial impact of having a baby(s) in neonatal care.

Ten:

Stronger together!

- A staggering 345,900+ people have signed our [petition](#) to extend parental leave.
- Thanks to employers leading the way more than 100,000 employees now benefit from access to extended parental leave as part of [The Smallest Things Employer with Heart charter](#).
- Parents and Smallest Things supporters have helped shape the Governments consultation and proposals, attending focus groups as part of the government review.

Now it's time to **SHARE YOUR VIEWS** and ask others to do the same.
[Complete the Consultation online now.](#)