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Question & Answer

Family friendly policies

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by Gill Brown, director specialising in employment law

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Q: What are the new family friendly policies for working families that came into effect this April?

A: Gill Brown replies

The new April 2010 rules provide for the mother of a new baby, who returns to work during or at the end of her initial period of ordinary maternity leave, to be able to transfer the remainder of her statutory maternity leave and pay to her partner. This gives more flexibility in a relationship to share the statutory entitlement to time off and to transfer the balance of maternity pay to the mother's partner, if the mother returns to work without taking her full entitlement. But please note that although this rule has now come into force, in practice it will only apply to babies born on or after 3rd April 2011.

Other changes taking place this April are increases in the amounts of both statutory maternity and paternity pay to £124.88 per week.

Another notable point is that there has been a vote by one of the committees of the European Parliament to increase maternity pay to 20 weeks' full pay, although at this stage it is only a proposal. It is very good news in the pipeline for employees, even if employers are not so keen to hear this.

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ENDS

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