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Aviva's equal parental leave remains popular during Covid-19 pandemic

26 APR 2021



- *Over 1,900 Aviva people in the UK have now taken equal parental leave at Aviva since the policy was launched in November 2017*
- *In 2020 99% of new Aviva dads took parental leave, with 84% taking at least six months*
- *In 2020 Aviva dads took on average 24 weeks' paternity leave, three weeks more compared to 2018 (24 weeks v 21 weeks).*
- *Aviva parents said being able to take extended*

parental leave during the pandemic was vital to support their partner and new child when unable to access the usual help from family, friends and parenting groups.

- *New research undertaken for Aviva by YouGov shows two in five parents with children under the age of 18 with childcare responsibilities would have welcomed extra support from their employer in the last 12 months.*

Latest Aviva data reveals that take-up during lockdown compares well to pre-pandemic levels and new fathers are now taking more time off to spend it with their young families

Aviva's equal parental leave continued to be popular during the Covid-19 pandemic, with strong take-up from Aviva colleagues. 643 employees took the leave last year, despite more families being based at home during 2020.

Over three years ago, Aviva became one of the first UK employers to launch an equal parental leave policy, offering new parents in its UK business 12 months' parental leave, with six months at full basic pay. Since then, new figures from Aviva shows the number of men and women now taking leave is almost equal, although mothers continue to take more time with an average of almost 44 weeks off, compared to almost 24 weeks for fathers.

Aviva dads are now taking three more weeks' paternity leave compared to when the policy launched. This suggests men are becoming more comfortable taking time out of work when a new child arrives and equal parental leave policies are becoming more established.

The need for more organisations to provide carers support, such as equal parental leave, is reflected in research undertaken by Aviva with YouGov, carried out online. This shows that over a fifth (22%) did not receive more flexible working arrangements and almost a fifth (19%) did not receive extra paid leave for caring responsibilities, but in both cases said these would have made childcare easier. And over two in three (67%) surveyed parents think the pandemic has increased employers' responsibilities to do more for working parents.

Danny Harmer, Aviva's Chief People Officer, said:

“Take-up of parental leave in 2020 shows it's a benefit people really value and was a welcome reassurance to families facing into the stresses of a pandemic. Indeed, it proved to be essential for many colleagues while support networks, such as grandparents and parenting groups, were unavailable over the last 12 months.

“A key challenge with hybrid or remote working is that those with caring responsibilities – who are more likely to be women – become less visible unless organisations act consciously. Our hope is that policies like equal parental leave help to balance caring responsibilities between genders and remove any gender based or carer based barriers to career progression.”

"It proved to be essential for many colleagues while support networks were unavailable over the last 12 months."

Although the number of men and women taking parental leave is equal, it's predominantly women who make contractual changes to working patterns on their return. One in five Aviva employees who took equal parental leave in 2020 requested changes to their working hours. Of these, nine in ten were female.

Danny Harmer continues:

“As we enter a new era for the workplace, with people working more flexibly than ever, it will be interesting to see how initiatives, such as equal parental leave, positively impact the working patterns of parents in the future.”

Daniel Clark-Bland who works for Aviva and is based in York, took parental leave to adopt his son:

"Becoming a parent made me feel immensely proud to work for Aviva."



"Becoming a parent made me feel immensely proud to work for Aviva. When I came back to work in April 2020, lockdown meant we couldn't get childcare, so my husband and I had to adjust to working with our son at home. Aviva and my leader were exceptionally supportive. We arranged a working pattern that meant I could be a decent employee and dad."

Ben Beazley is based in Norwich and took parental leave from May-November 2020 for his first child:

"If I hadn't been able to spend these six months with my family, it could have had a huge impact on our

wellbeing."

"We were only a few weeks into the first lockdown when my son was born. If I hadn't been able to spend these six months with my family, it could have had a huge impact on our wellbeing. For the birth, we were surrounded by compassionate people whose faces we couldn't see because they were in full PPE. Not being face to face with my colleagues after six months on paternity leave has been a challenge, but I've had a lot of support from my manager and people around me."

About our equal parental leave policy:

- In the UK, Aviva offers up to one year of leave, of which 26 weeks' is at full basic pay for parents employed by the company within the first 12 months of a child's arrival. This applies to employees in all UK offices and locations. Aviva's parental leave policy entitlement includes:
- Equal amount of paid and unpaid parental leave when a new child arrives, including adoption and surrogacy.
- Is available to full-time and part-time employees across all levels of the company.
- No requirement to share the parental leave between parents.
- If both parents are employees of Aviva, each has their own entitlement to leave and pay, which they can take at the same time.

Aviva wellbeing policies:

- **First day of school:** All parents in the UK are entitled to half a day of additional leave to support their child's first day at a new school.
- **Caring commitments:** UK employees are able to take up to 35 hours of pro-rated, paid leave per year. They can also take up to three months of unpaid leave.
- **Wellbeing day:** in 2021, UK employees can take one day of leave specifically to help their wellbeing, to help support during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Domestic abuse awareness and support policy** for our people and customers, in partnership with SafeLives.
- **Mental health support:** free access to our wellbeing app, as well as external apps Headspace and Thrive. 65% of UK people leaders have attended mental health training to help them support their reports with their mental health.
- **Specialist menopause support** through Peppy app, which offers a one-to-one consultation, resources and live chat services.

-ENDS-

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from 14/04/21 to 15/04/21. Total sample size was 2000 adults, of which 424 had a child under the age of 18. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th - 15th April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

We can offer case studies from York, Norwich, Sheffield and Glasgow.

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Notes to editors:

- For information on how Aviva is helping our people, customers and communities impacted by COVID-19 visit: www.aviva.com/covid-19-our-response/
- We exist to be with people when it really matters, throughout their lives. We have been taking care of people for 325 years, in line with our purpose of being ‘with you today, for a better tomorrow’. In 2020, we paid £30.6 billion in claims and benefits to our customers.
- Aviva is invested in our people, our customers, our communities and our planet. In 2021, we announced our plan to become a Net Zero carbon emissions company by 2040, the first major insurance company in the world to do so. This plan means Net Zero carbon emissions from our investments by 2040; setting out a clear pathway to get there with a cut of 25% in the carbon intensity of our investments by 2025 and of 60% by 2030; and Net Zero carbon emissions from our own operations and supply chain by 2030. Aviva has been leading this agenda for decades: Aviva was the first international insurer to go operationally carbon neutral in 2006 and we are champions of renewable energy and energy storage at our offices, allowing us to achieve our 2030 carbon reduction target (70% reduction on 2010 levels) 10 years early. Find out more about our climate goals at www.aviva.com/climate-goals and our sustainability ambition at www.aviva.com/sustainability.

- Aviva is a Living Wage and Living Hours employer and provides market-leading benefits for our people, including flexible working, paid carers leave and equal parental leave. Find out more at <https://www.aviva.com/about-us/our-people/>
- We are focused on the UK, Ireland and Canada where we have leading market positions and significant potential. We will invest for growth in these markets. We will also transform our performance and improve our efficiency. Our transformation will be underpinned by managing our balance sheet prudently, reducing debt and increasing our financial resilience. We also have strategic investments in Singapore, China and India.
- At 30 June 2021, total Group assets under management at Aviva Group are £522 billion and our Solvency II shareholder capital surplus is £12 billion. Our shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange and we are a member of the FTSE 100 index.
- For more details on what we do, our business and how we help our customers, visit www.aviva.com/about-us
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Directorate changes

21 FEB 2022

Aviva announces changes to the composition of its Board and Committees.

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Secure properties and plan journeys ahead of storms

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Aviva is advising residents and business owners to carry out checks to their properties.

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9 FEB 2022

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New Aviva campaign celebrates the brighter, unexpected side of driving.

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Aviva completes two buy-in transactions for the Northern Bank Pension Scheme totalling £257m

31 JAN 2022

The first transaction of c£227m was completed in September 2021 and the second transaction insured a further £30m

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OUR CUSTOMERS

Millions struggle to understand their most important source of income in retirement

27 JAN 2022

More people are saving into a pension than ever before, but new research reveals a widespread lack of understanding

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Peculiar claims, famous firsts and celebrated customers

24 JAN 2022

Business as usual as Aviva celebrates 325 years of commercial insurance.

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Aviva Financial Advice launches Whole of Market panel for Annuities

24 JAN 2022

Aviva Financial Advice (AFA) has announced the launch of a new Whole of Market advice model for annuities.

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OUR BUSINESS

Resignation of Group CFO Jason Windsor

13 JAN 2022

Aviva plc announces that Jason Windsor has resigned as CFO and as a Director of the Company with effect from July

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Remove auto-enrolment thresholds, says Aviva

5 JAN 2022

Aviva supports recommendations to lower the automatic-enrolment age threshold and remove the lower qualifying

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Sixty the most popular age to retire early

30 DEC 2021

But those who do find happiness comes at a cost.

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Aviva completes sale of Aviva Vietnam

29 DEC 2021

Aviva plc (“Aviva”) today announces that it has completed the sale of its entire shareholding in Aviva Vietnam to Man

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ENVIRONMENT

Aviva invests £50m into sustainability focused venture capital funds

20 DEC 2021

Aviva today announces a commitment to invest £50m into venture capital funds focused on emerging technology with

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Directorate Change

20 DEC 2021

Appointment of Shonaid Jemmett-Page as Non-Executive Director of Aviva plc.

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Aviva plc to increase and extend ordinary share buyback programme

16 DEC 2021

...taking the maximum aggregate consideration to £1.0 billion*

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Aviva issues warning as battery chargers lead to fires

7 DEC 2021

Aviva is warning customers to take care when charging electrical items, after receiving dozens of home fire claims ca

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Sustainability at Aviva

Sustainability is fundamental to our strategy and culture.

Sustainability is fundamental to our strategy and culture.

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Our actions

Our sustainability ambition is focussed on three core areas.

[Acting on climate change](#)

[Building stronger communities](#)

[Embedding sustainability throughout our business](#)

Our reports and policies

Discover what guides our business and behaviours.

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