

## **NEWS LETTER**

### **New Shared Parental Leave regulations come into effect today.**

Three new regulations around Shared Parental Leave (SPL) come into force today (1 December 2014).

The new Shared Parental Leave is designed to give parents more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. Parents will be able to share a pot of leave, and can decide to be off work at the same time and/or take it in turns to have periods of leave to look after the child.

The new rules apply to couples with babies due or children matched or placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015.

The following key points on SPL come from the ACAS web page which provides a good source of information, a guide and a summary of the process.

#### **Key Points**

- Employed mothers will continue to be entitled to 52 weeks of Maternity Leave and 39 weeks of statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance.
- If they choose to do so, an eligible mother can end her maternity leave early and, with her partner or the child's father, opt for Shared Parental Leave instead of Maternity Leave. If they both meet the qualifying requirements, they will need to decide how they want to divide their Shared Parental Leave and Pay entitlement.
- Paid Paternity Leave of two weeks will continue to be available to fathers and a mother's or adopter's partner, however Additional Paternity Leave will be removed (Shared Parental Leave will replace it).
- Adopters will have the same rights as other parents to Shared Parental leave and pay.

### **Forward notice of Statutory Pay Rates from April 2015.**

The Government has published the proposed rates of statutory pay to be effective from April 2015. Although these are still subject to parliamentary approval we are sharing these now to help you prepare budgets for next year, it would be very unusual for them to be changed (although strictly speaking possible).

Statutory maternity pay, statutory shared parental pay, statutory paternity pay and statutory adoption pay will increase from £138.18 per week to £139.58 from 5 April 2015. The rate of statutory sick pay will increase from £87.55 to £88.45 from 6<sup>th</sup> April.

A technical guide to maternity benefits updated yesterday (15/12/2014) can be found on the Department of Work and Pensions web site here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-benefits-technical-guidance>

Past time