

<b>TITLE</b>
<b>Statutory Changes April 2026</b>
<b>DATE</b>
30/03/2026
<b>LEAD OFFICER.</b>
Harry Steer, Employee Relations Consultant & Policy Lead
<b>1 Summary description of the proposed change</b>
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
<p>The Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026 enforce the following statutory changes from 6 April 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day-one right to Paternity Leave (but not Paternity Pay).</li> <li>• Day-one right to Unpaid Parental Leave.</li> <li>• Removal of restrictions on order of Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave.</li> <li>• Right to up to 52 weeks of unpaid Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave when the mother/primary adopter/parental order parent dies within the first year of the child's birth/placement.</li> </ul> <p>These represent key changes in family-related leave to empower parents to make arrangements to look after their new children in a way that suits them. It reduced the burden of requiring service in order to make use of rights, and gives a substantial uplift to fathers or partners who experience a bereavement of the primary carer.</p>
<b>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment</b>
E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
Because these changes arise directly from statutory requirements, formal consultation was not undertaken. However, given the limited scope of the amendments and their targeted focus on enhancing rights for parents, the potential impacts on protected groups can still be assessed with confidence.
<b>3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?</b>
Is it likely to: Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't <b>(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)</b>

# Diversity impact assessment

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
<b>Age</b>	No	No	No
<b>Disability</b>	No	No	No
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No	No	No
<b>Marriage/civil partnership</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Pregnancy/maternity</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Race</b>	No	No	No
<b>Religion/belief</b>	No	No	No
<b>Sex</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>Care experience</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>Other (e.g. low income groups)</b>	No	No	No

#### 4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

The likely impacts of these changes primarily sit with:

- Marriage/Civil Partnership due to empowerment for family planning
- Pregnancy/Maternity due to better family leave rights to care for children
- Sex due to empowerment for men/partners to take leave to care for children, reducing parental burden on both sexes

There may also be a fostering of good relations with regard to Sexual Orientation and Care experience due to the increased inclusivity these changes provide, allowing greater flexibility for those with caring responsibilities and taking note that Paternity Leave in all changes also applies to those in same-sex partnerships.

There are no negative or adverse impacts arising from these changes.

# Diversity impact assessment

## 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

While there are no likely adverse impacts, the changes must be made in line with statutory requirements, and good communication via staff newsletters will be key in informing staff of the changes to ensure they understand their new rights.

## 6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Implement the changes in policy.	Harry Steer	6 April 2026
Provide communications to all staff explaining the changes to their rights throughout the month of April.	Harry Steer	1 May 2026

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

It is recommended to proceed with the changes as there are no adverse impacts and several positive impacts. These changes also represent a statutory requirement.

## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

### Assistant Director

Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

### Date of authorisation

30/03/2026