

Press release

Minister O’Gorman confirms introduction of new employment rights for parents

From [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth](#)
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Minister Roderic O’Gorman has today (26 June) announced the commencement date for new employment entitlements brought in as part of the recently passed Work Life Balance Act 2023.

As part of the legislation, the entitlement to breastfeeding breaks will be extended from the current period of six months – a time which coincides with maternity leave – up to two years.

In addition to this, parents and carers will be entitled to a new right to unpaid leave for medical purposes.

The Minister confirmed today these provisions will come into effect from 3 July 2023.

Speaking about the commencement, Minister O’Gorman said:

“The Work Life Balance Act is about helping make sure that our work lives reflect the reality of our personal lives, particularly for parents and carers.

“By extending breastfeeding breaks to two years after the birth of the child, we can support women returning to work after maternity leave to continue to breastfeed, in line with best practices from a public health perspective. Normalising breastfeeding in the workplace is of benefit to mothers, babies and wider society.

The Minister went on to say:

“The new right to leave for medical care purposes will give parents and carers access to a flexible short-term form of unpaid leave, providing certainty at difficult moments, should they need it.”

Notes

Part 1, Part 2, other than sections 7, 8, 12 (a), 13 and 14; and Sections 32 to 39 of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 will be commenced on 3 July 2023.

This includes the introduction of leave for medical care purposes and amendments to the Maternity Protection Acts to provide for the extension of breastfeeding breaks. An order amending regulations relating to breastfeeding breaks made under the Maternity Protection Acts will also be made.

It is planned to commence the legislative provisions introducing domestic violence leave in the autumn.

The right to request flexible working for parents and carers will be commenced following the preparation of a Code of Practice by the WRC under Part 4.

Commencement of Part 3 and Part 4 are for the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

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