Policies to increase fathers’ use of leave

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Evolution of leave for fathers

• Maternity leave

• ‘Gender neutral’ Parental leave (family entitlement)

• Entitlements for fathers only
  – Paternity Leave (at time of birth)
  – Non-transferable Parental Leave (individual entitlement, e.g. EU Directive, fathers quota)

...all or part of leave; unpaid or paid
Policies to increase use

- **Penalty** for **not** using (use it or family lose it)
- **Incentives** to use: bonus payment, time e.g.
  - Italy: additional month if take 3 months ParL (for father)
  - Finland: 12 ‘bonus’ days if take 2 weeks (for father)
  - Germany: 2 months extra paid ParL if father takes 2 months of ParL (for family)
  - Portugal: 15 days ParL at full earnings if taken immediately after MatL (otherwise unpaid) (for father)
  - Basque: regional government payment for parents taking ParL, higher benefit for fathers
Policies to increase use

Compulsion

– Portugal: 5 days PatL are obligatory
Transfer of maternity leave to fathers

- In exceptional circumstances
- As a general option
  - Spain: 10 of 16 weeks to fathers (Castilla-La Mancha gives extra payment to men taking 3+ weeks)
  - Portugal: 11 of 17 weeks to fathers
  - UK (proposed): up to 6 of 12 months as ‘additional paternity leave’
Beyond separate types of leave

Maternity leave + Paternity leave + Parental leave

‘Postnatal leave’ equally divided, e.g. Iceland

– 9 months of well-paid ‘birth leave’

(\textit{faedingarorlof}) = 3 months for mother + 3 months for father + 3 months for ‘family’

“Law makes no distinction between different types of leave taken by mothers and fathers [but] a distinction is made in everyday usage”
Take-up

• Fathers use well-paid ‘fathers only’ leave

• Fathers do not use poorly paid Parental leave

• If there is a well-paid ‘family entitlement’, fathers:
  – Do not use it if there is also a fathers entitlement
  – Make limited use if there is no fathers entitlement, i.e. mothers use most of leave
Take-up

Iceland

Fathers take 96 days leave, mothers 182 days
17% fathers use some of ‘joint rights’ compared to 91% of mothers

i.e. Fathers use 3 months fathers leave; mothers use 3 months mothers leave + 3 months ‘family entitlement’
Take up

Slovenia

15 weeks MatL+15 days PatL+37 weeks ParL
@100% + 75 days PatL at very low pay

\[\frac{2}{3}\] fathers take PatL – but 91% only take 15 days
All mothers take ParL - but only 2% of fathers

Nada suggests low take up because of: social attitudes, employers’ expectations, absence of positive image of fathers who take more family responsibilities
Take up

Denmark

18 weeks MatL + 2 weeks PatL + 32 weeks of ParL @ 100%

On average, mothers take 351 days, fathers 25 days
Well-paid leave for fathers only

None: Australia; Austria; CzechR, Germany; Ireland; Italy; Poland; UK: US

2 weeks or less: Belgium; Canada; Denmark; France; Greece; Hungary; Netherlands;

1 month: Finland; Portugal; Quebec (3-5 weeks); Slovenia & Spain (3 weeks)

2 months: Norway; Sweden (2.5 months)

3 months: Iceland
Some observations

• How do fathers use leave–do they go hunting?
• Do ceilings on benefit payments act as a greater disincentive for fathers than mothers?
• How far can ‘well paid fathers only’ leave policy work, e.g. 3 → 6…9…12 months?
• Fathers who are not co-resident. Eligibility? Use? Mothers? Statistics?
• Other influences on use of leave: mothers, workplace, cultural norms etc
Some observations

Need for wider, coherent and monitored policies to “promote and encourage...increased participation by *men*” (Article 6, 1992 Council Recommendation on Child Care) in care and upbringing of children.
Some observations

Other measures to promote and encourage
-fathers after early childhood (e.g. leave for sick children, shorter hours, preschool & school)
-men’s employment in services – only Norway has national target for men in ECEC

More participant fathers+increased ECEC care and upbringing of children remains gendered

Choice or presumption?