Dear [Parliamentary candidate]

I’m writing to ask you to commit to improving the statutory paternity offer for Britain’s fathers, so they can better care for their partners after the birth and share the caregiving during the baby’s first year.

I’m supporting the [Fatherhood Institute’s](https://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/six-weeks-for-dads) call for six weeks’ well-paid leave for all fathers – including those who are self-employed.

In a [recent poll](https://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/post/looking-ahead-to-the-general-election-what-do-parents-want) for the Families and Work Group:

* 92% of parents in marginal constituencies said it’s important for fathers to take time off work to look after their baby in its first year
* 88% said self-employed dads, currently ineligible, should get paternity leave
* 65% said the current statutory offer is not enough

Crucially, 68% of survey respondents said they’d be more likely to vote for a party promising to introduce better leave and entitlements for new parents.

This matters to me because (add your own paragraph)…

* *I wasn’t able to take paternity leave…*
* *I would have loved to take a month off work with my baby but couldn’t afford to…*
* *I had no choice but to go part-time after maternity leave, because my partner couldn’t take time off to look after our baby*
* *I strongly support gender equality and know that until fathers are able to take on more caregiving (as in Scandinavia) gender equality will never be achieved in the UK*
* *Children benefit from close care by both their parents*
* *When fathers do more caregiving, separation and divorce are less likely …*

As things stand, eligible fathers in the UK are currently entitled to just two weeks’ paternity leave, paid at less than half the minimum wage – and around a fifth aren’t eligible in the first place.

The UK’s statutory paternity leave and pay policy is the least generous in Europe, and the UK is 40th out of 43 countries in the OECD league table for paid leave earmarked for dads. Take-up of paternity leave in the UK is also well below the OECD average – unsurprisingly, given that an average-earning, full-time employed father whose employer offers only statutory paternity pay stands to lose more than £1,000 if he takes two weeks’ leave, compared to what he’d earn if he carried on working.

Estimates suggest 6 weeks for dads could bring a £23 billion increase in economic output, equating to 1% of the UK’s gross domestic product – for a cost of £1.6 to £2.2 billion.

The **6 weeks for dads** model would give mothers and fathers equal access to well-paid leave, helping reduce the gender pay gap, keeping families together and improving children’s outcomes – because ‘time with dad’ is key to better educational attainment.

You could show your support for the campaign by sharing a message on [social media](https://fatherhoodinstitute.org/six-weeks-for-dads#social-graphics), and/or by [emailing](mailto:J.Davies@fatherhoodinstitute.org?subject=Six%20weeks%20for%20dads:%20prospective%20parliamentary%20candidate%20contact) the campaign lead Dr Jeremy Davies.

Yours sincerely,

*Add your signature*