

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY  
ON TUESDAY 19th MAY 2020**

**Implementation of Family Friendly Rights**

The development of family friendly employment legislation in Jersey stretches back more than 10 years. Initial proposals were subject to delays caused by the global financial crash of 2008 and until September 2015, Jersey provided no employment rights for parents, far behind the international standards at that time.

Since 2015, more progress has been made and last October I was delighted when Members approved a comprehensive set of family friendly employment rights. At the time I also committed to bringing forward parental benefit regulations so that the cost of paid parental leave would be shared between the government and the employer.

The timetable to achieve this was suggested as summer 2020 and initially, good progress was made on the law drafting and operational changes required.

Over the last 8 weeks this work has been completely disrupted by Covid-19 and the original timetable of implementing the two laws together in July 2020 can no longer be achieved.

Jersey has lagged behind other countries in its family friendly rights for many years and I am not prepared to allow another delay on my watch.

Along with my fellow ministers and states members, in 2018 I signed up to the strategic priority of “putting children first”. But, to put children first, we must look after the parents.

- To put children first, we must give every mother the opportunity to breastfeed a new baby for as long they wish to
- To put children first we must give dads as well as mums the right to a decent amount of paid leave.
- To put children first, we must give all parents the right to choose to stay at home for that first crucial year of life.

BUT, at this time of great economic turmoil, we must also make sure that employers are able to support parents and appreciate them as valuable members of the workforce.

Today, I am announcing that I will bring forward the appointed day act for the family friendly employment law changes agreed last year. Subject to your approval, the law will come into force on 28 June 2020.

At the same time, I am working with the Treasury and Resources Minister to identify funding so that I can introduce an interim subsidy scheme to support employers with some of their additional costs as the legal right to take paid leave is extended to all parents. This will be introduced at the same time as the new law.

This interim subsidy scheme will continue until the work on the parental benefit regulations has been completed, scrutinised and approved by the Assembly. I will aim to bring those regulations forward in late 2020 for implementation in early 2021.

By the end of June, I very much hope that governments around the globe will be working hard to

- get their citizens back into jobs,
- get their children back to school,

- return their health services to normal business

but at the same time, I am also realistic that the threat of a second wave of pandemic will still be with us for the rest of the year.

Over 400 babes will be born in Jersey between the end of June and December into that strange, uncertain world. My plan will provide those babies and their parents with just a little more support to help them through this difficult time. I hope Members will support me to achieve this.