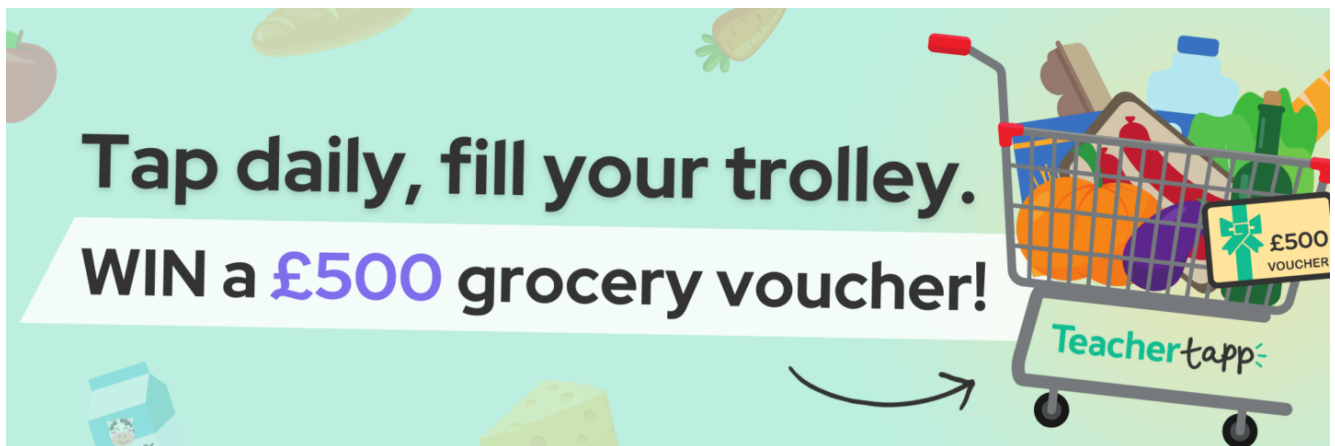


Parental leave special – part one

Hey there, Tappsters!

Today was the last day you could 'tapp' in the prize draw! Keep an eye out for the announcement for the winner...and the new prize draw coming soon! It's one that will hopefully put one Teacher Tapper in a VERY relaxed and chilled mood...



Now, onto our special blog with our findings on parental leave – digging into the data behind the questions suggested by our Teacher Tappers...

Parental leave

First off – just how many teachers have used parental leave? Just over a quarter (27%) of Teacher Tappers have used some kind of parental leave in the last ten years (or are imminently about to take it!).

Among those taking leave, as well as those taking maternity leave (62%) and paternity leave (34%), 12% took shared parental leave and 2% took adoption leave.

Cutting it short

The amount of money paid to teachers while on the different types of parental leave is broadly the same from school to school (you can read more about parental leave rules [here](#)) – but sometimes schools or trusts 'enhance' their offer for teachers.

Is this pay sufficient for teachers to take the amount of leave they want to?

- 45% returned to work earlier than they had wanted due to financial concerns (though this increases among women to 48% and drops for men to 38%).
- Just 3% were able to take longer.
- 52% were able to take what they wanted and were not influenced by the school policy.

Just under half (45%) of teachers return to work before they're ready due to financial concerns, and this is worryingly high. In the next blog on parental leave, we will dig into this in more detail, but for now, we will look at one way the end of parental leave can be staggered...KIT days...

KIT and SPLIT days

KIT and SPLIT days are one instrument in the parental leave toolbox. They exist to make their return to work easier for both the teacher and the school. They stand for: Keeping In Touch or Shared Parental Leave In Touch.

If you weren't sure what these days were you are not alone: 10% of teachers who took maternity leave, and 13% of men who took shared parental leave were not aware of KIT or SPLIT days.

Who DID use their KIT days?

For female teachers taking maternity leave, using KIT days was pretty typical with 66% making use of them, of those 12% using all ten days.

Teachers using shared parental leave were also taking advantage of their SPLIT days but it was more common among women than it was men: 71% of women and 37% of men used SPLIT days.

And when it came to using the full entitlement, women on shared parental leave were almost TWICE as likely as men on parental leave to use all 10 of their entitled days (20% vs 11%).

Why weren't they being used?

The reasons why teachers weren't taking them were mixed. 13% of teachers on maternity leave didn't have it offered to them, and this was also true for 14% of women on shared parental leave and 18% of men on shared parental leave.

Another group didn't feel they needed them, and this was true for 8% of teachers on maternity leave, 12% of female teachers on shared parental leave, and 23% of male teachers on shared parental leave.

How can we support teachers taking KIT days?

Taking the KIT days of course, is just part of the story. When teachers take this leave – how supported did teachers feel when taking it?

59% reported feeling supported - but 17% felt the school were unclear about how the days work, and 24% reported they felt the school didn't fully support or engage with them.

What could be the reason 41% of teachers didn't feel supported? The answer might be found in the answers to our next question: who organised the KIT days?

Teachers who had to organise their own days were almost TWICE as likely to say the school were unclear on how they worked, compared to teachers whose headteachers organised them (20% vs 11%).

Similarly, teachers whose schools organised their days were MORE likely to say they felt supported compared to teachers left to organise themselves (71% vs 53%).

What does this tell us about KIT days?

Despite the fact that KIT and SPLIT days have been around for a few decades now, there are still a number of teachers who have taken parental leave in the last ten years and were not aware of KIT days (10% women, 35% men).

Lack of awareness is one issue, but also supporting teachers in taking the KIT days could improve teachers' experience of parental leave. A number were not offered the chance to take KIT days (14% women and 27% men). Building KIT days into the automatic entitlement for teachers on parental leave could be another way schools might improve their offer for teachers.

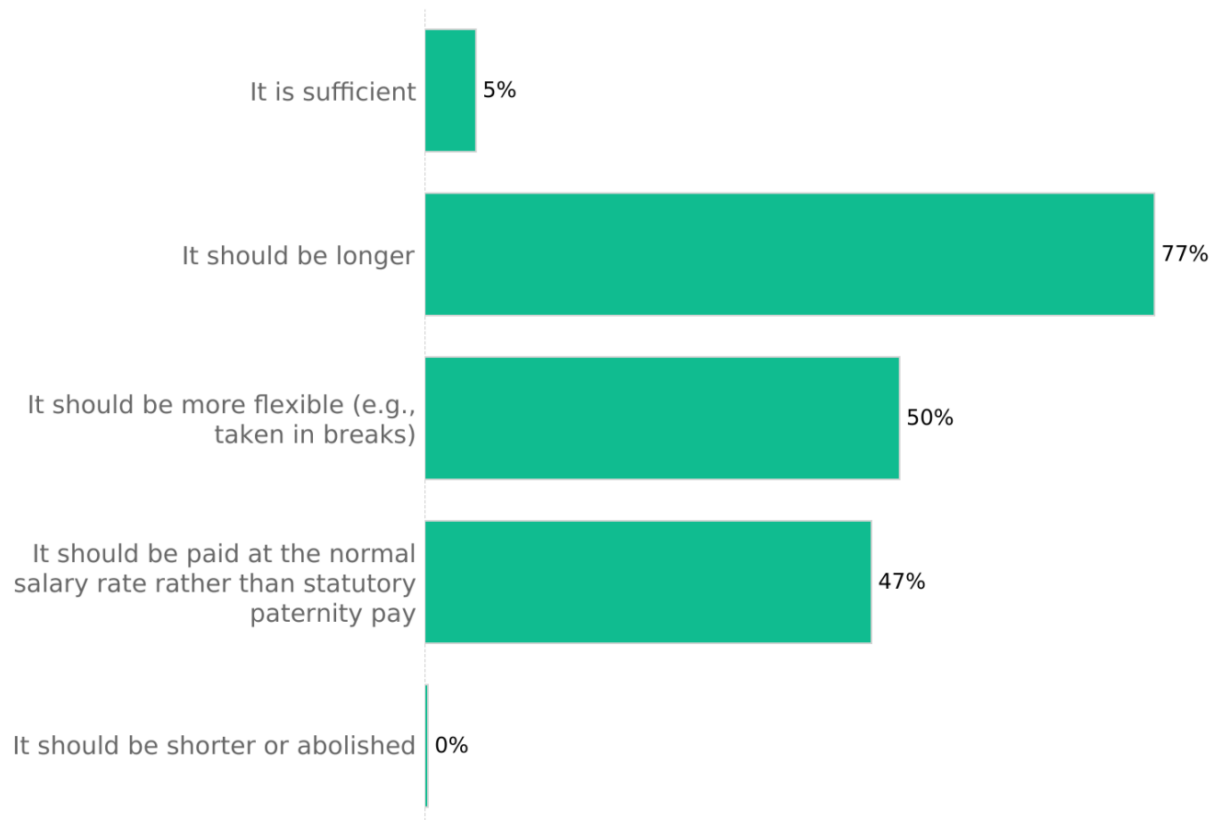
Paternity leave

The standard two-week paternity leave has been around now since 2003, but does it need an update?

It's a big YES from teachers with 95% feeling it should be either longer, more flexible or paid at the normal salary rate.

- 77% wanted to extend it beyond the standard two-weeks (with this strength of feeling rising to 87% among those who have taken paternity leave).
- 50% wanted more flexibility in how it is taken.
- 47% wanted the pay to be at the normal salary rate.

What are your thoughts on the standard two-week paternity leave?



Question answered by 9,305 teachers on 21/03/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Tell us more...

More than 300 teachers wrote in to tell us more about their parental leave (371 to be exact!) and it was great to get to hear more detail about experiences of leave.

We asked teachers to tell us about their experiences with maternity, paternity and shared parental leave – and wow, did they have a lot to say. Here are the five big things that came through loud and clear:

1. The pay feels shockingly low

Loads of people said they simply couldn't afford to take the time off they wanted. Maternity pay in teaching doesn't stack up well compared to other sectors, and paternity leave? Two weeks – often with only one at full pay – just isn't cutting it. Several dads said they had to fake sick days or take unpaid leave to get the time they needed.

2. Flexible working feels more like a myth

Plenty of teachers tried to go part-time after leave – especially parents in leadership – and hit brick walls. Either they were told it "wasn't possible," or they were allowed to drop their hours but forced to give up TLRs, responsibilities, or any chance at progression. Some said they had

to leave teaching altogether just to get a better work-life balance.

3. No one tells you your rights

A surprising number of teachers didn't even know shared parental leave was a thing – or only found out too late to use it properly. Others struggled to navigate KIT days, tax, or how pay would change month to month. Quite a few said they only figured things out because a colleague or union rep helped them.

4. Returning to work can feel 'messy'

There's a big gap in support for teachers coming back from leave. Many said they felt forgotten, out of the loop, or like a spare part when they returned. Some were given new roles or timetables without warning. Others had to play catch-up without any phased return or even a proper chat about how they were doing.

5. Having a baby can seriously stall your career

Too many people said they'd been passed over for promotions or stripped of roles when they asked to go part-time. A few were openly told they couldn't stay in leadership if they weren't full-time. The result? Experienced teachers – especially mums – leaving the profession or being forced into roles that didn't match their skills.

Next time...

In a few weeks we will look at some more of your responses to parental leave – including flexible working, the processes around returning to the classroom and whether or not your 'entitlement' should transfer when you change schools...