

## PF2.2: Parents' use of childbirth-related leave

### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator presents information on parent's use of childbirth-related leave through three main measures:

- *Recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid paternity leave per 100 live births*, that is, the number of fathers or other partners using publicly administered paternity leave or claiming publicly administered paternity leave benefits in a given year per 100 live births in the same year.
- *Recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave per 100 live birth, by gender*, that is, the number of men and women using publicly administered parental leave or claiming publicly administered parental leave benefits in a given year per 100 live births in the same year.
- *Gender distribution of recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave*, that is, the male and female share of those using publicly administered parental leave or claiming publicly administered parental leave benefits in a given year.

All three measures are based on administrative data, that is, national administrative records on the numbers of individuals using paid leave or claiming paid leave benefits. These records are generally available only where there is some publicly administered paid leave scheme, so information is not available for countries without statutory paid leave or in countries with statutory schemes that are processed directly by the employer (e.g. paternity leave in Korea and the United Kingdom). Moreover, these data generally do not cover individuals using employer-provided schemes, so are likely to underestimate take-up even in countries with statutory schemes. Nonetheless, where available, these records can provide insight into how many men and women are making use of statutory leave.

Administrative data generally come in the form of the *number* of users of the given publicly administered leave or the *number* of recipients of publicly administered benefits attached to a given leave, so need to be standardised before they can be compared across countries. Because information on eligible populations is not available, measures are presented here either as the number of leave users/recipients per 100 live births in the given year or, for parental leave only, through the gender distribution of leave users/recipients.

Other relevant indicators: Key characteristics of parental leave systems (PF2.1); Additional leave entitlements of working parents (PF2.3); and, Family-friendly workplace practices (LMF2.4).

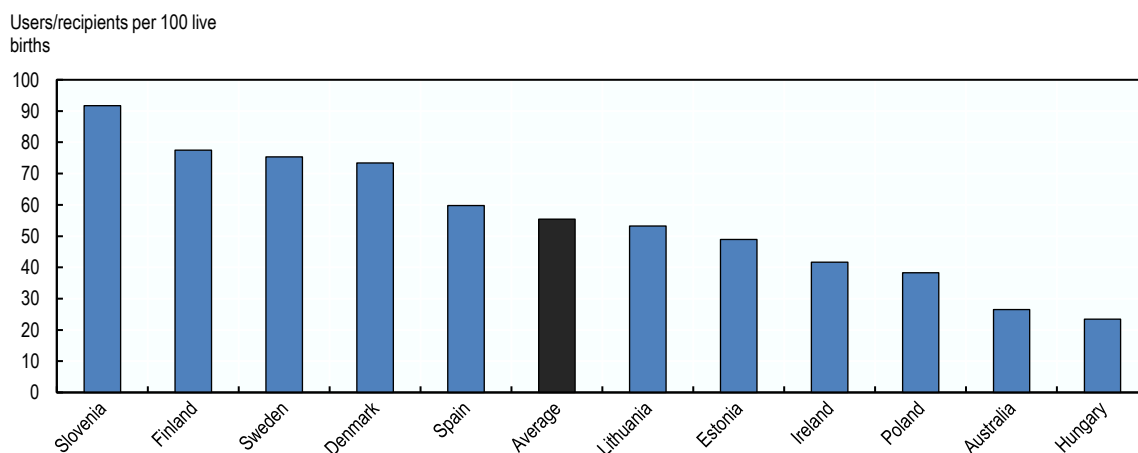
### Key findings

Data on the use of paid paternity leave is available for only a minority of OECD countries, but those that are available suggest paternity leave is generally well used in many countries (Chart PF2.2.A). On average across the 11 OECD countries with available data, there are 55 users of paid paternity leave per 100 live births – in other words, about one person claiming publicly administered paternity benefits or using publicly administered paternity leave for every two children born. In Finland and Sweden, this rises to about 75 users/recipients per 100 live births, while in Slovenia the rate is 92 per 100 live births. Given a number of new fathers will not be eligible for statutory paid paternity leave – and that in some countries (e.g. Australia) fathers may also be using employer-provided leave rather than low-paid statutory leave – these rates point to fairly healthy usage and widespread take-up across countries.

Paid parental leave recipient rates vary more, and differ considerably between men and women (Chart PF2.2.B, Panel A). Women’s parental leave recipient rates are generally fairly high. In just over half of all countries with available data, female recipient rates are around or above 100 per 100 live births – that is, at least one woman user/recipient for every child born – and only two countries (Chile and Korea) have a female recipient rate below 50 per 100 live births. In some countries, the female recipient rate well exceeds 100 per 100 live births. In Estonia and the Czech Republic, for example, there are more than 200 women claiming publicly administered parental benefits or using publicly administered parental leave for every 100 live births. In Sweden the rate is as high as 380 recipients per 100 live births. These exceptionally high rates reflect both high take-up and the ability of parents to take leave over several years and/or in multiple blocks<sup>1</sup>.

**Chart PF2.2.A. Users of paid paternity leave**

Recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid paternity leave per 100 live births, 2016



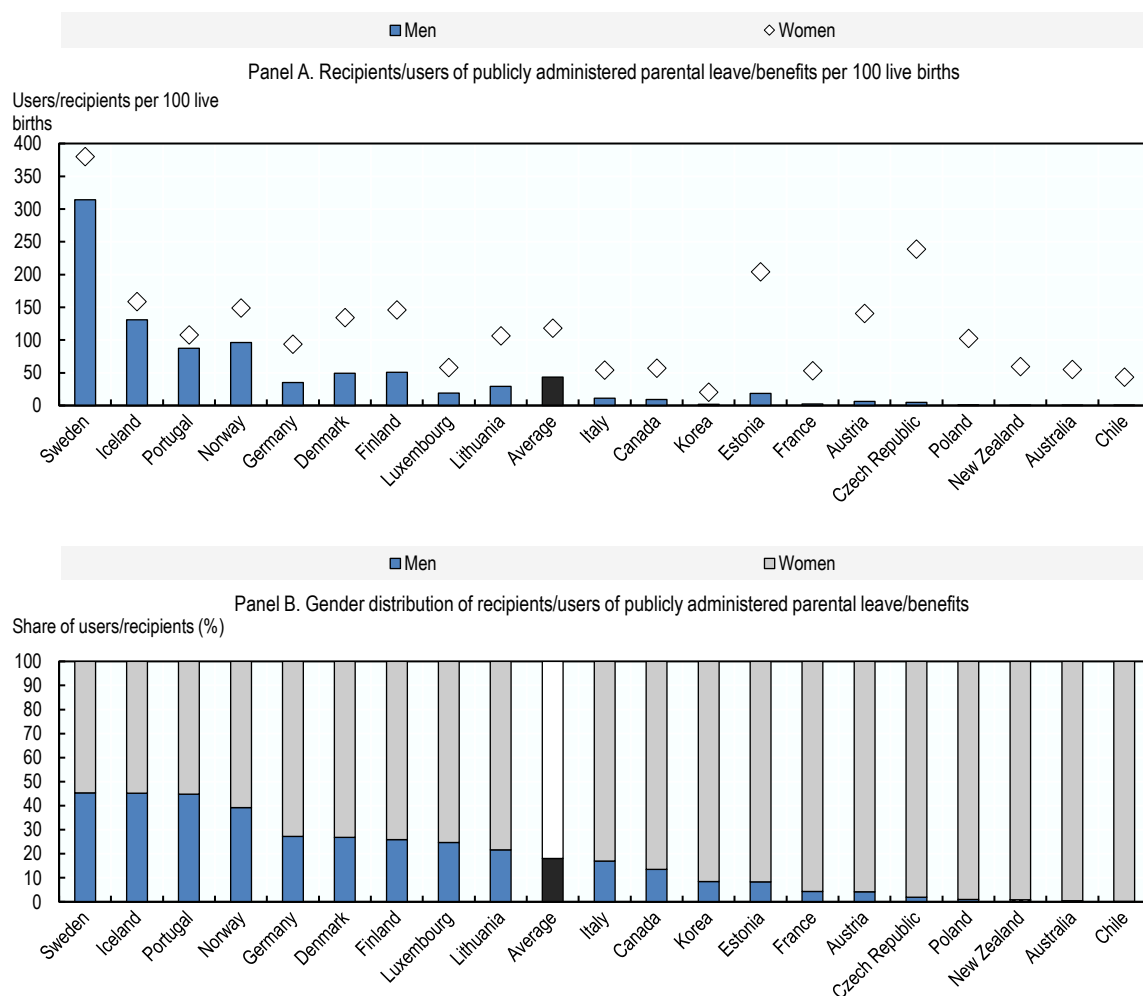
*Notes:* Data refer to recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or paid paternity leave only, and do not include individuals using only employer-provided leave or unpaid leave. For those countries where women are able to take paternity leave and/or it is possible to separately identify women recipients/users in the data, data include both men and women recipients/users. For Australia, data refer to recipients of 'Dad and Partner Pay'. For Finland, data refer to the number receiving the part of the paternity allowance that is available while the mother is on maternity or parental leave, only. For Slovenia, data refers to the combined number receiving paternity leave benefit for less than or for more than 15 days. For Sweden, data refer to the number using the 10-day 'temporary parental benefit in connection with the birth of a child or adoption', only. Data for Hungary refer to 2014.

*Sources:* OECD calculations based on information from national ministries and statistical offices and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

<sup>1</sup> In Sweden, for example, parents can take leave in multiple separate blocks—limited at a maximum of three blocks per year—until the child turns 12 years old. The very high recipient rate likely reflects mothers (and fathers) taking leave multiple times over multiple years.

### Chart PF2.2.B. Users of paid parental leave

Recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave, by gender, 2016



*Notes:* Data refer to recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave, and do not include users of maternity or paternity leave unless the country in question does not make a distinction between the different leaves (e.g. Iceland, Portugal). For Australia, data refer to recipients of 'Parental Leave Pay' only. For Austria, data refer to recipients of 'Kinderbetreuungsgeld' (childcare allowance). For Canada, data refer to new employment insurance parental benefit claims established in the given year. Data do not cover parents in Québec, which since 2006 has administered its own parental benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan. For comparability, live births to mothers resident in Québec are excluded from the birth data. For Denmark, data refer to recipients of benefits for the 32-week 'common leave' period only. For Finland, data refer to recipients of the sharable parental allowance plus the paternity allowance after the parental allowance period. For France, data refer to recipients of CLCA (*Complément de libre choix d'activité*) or PreParE (*Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant*). For Germany, data refer to recipients of 'Elterngeld' (parental allowance) with children born in the given year. For Iceland, data refer to recipients of any benefits in relation to maternity/paternity (i.e. benefits paid during either the mother- or father-quota or during the sharable period of parental leave). For Lithuania, data refer to recipients of both the parental benefit for children under one year of age and the parental allowance for children aged between one and two. For Korea, data refer to recipients of employment insurance parental leave benefits and cover private sector employees only. For New Zealand, data refer to recipients of 'Primary Carer Leave' benefits. For Portugal, data refer to recipients of benefits for 'Initial Parental Leave' only. In all cases, data refer only to those using statutory schemes and do not include individual's using only employer-provided parental leave or parental leave pay. Data for Germany refer to 2015.

*Source:* OECD calculations based on information from national ministries and statistical offices and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

Paid parental leave recipient rates are generally much lower for men (Chart PF2.2.B, Panel A). In some of the Nordic countries male recipient rates continue to exceed 100. In Sweden, for example, there are just over 300 male recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits for every 100 children born. But in most OECD countries fewer than 50 men claim publicly administered parental leave benefits or use publicly administered parental leave for every 100 live births. In nine OECD countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, France, Korea, New Zealand and Poland) the rate is below 10 users/recipients per 100 live births.

Regardless of how many men take paid parental leave, they are always less likely to use it than women (Chart PF2.2.C, panel B). In some countries, the disparity is only small. In Iceland, Portugal and Sweden, around 45% of users/recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits are men. However, on average across countries with available data, men make up only about one in every five users/recipients, with the share in several countries lower than one in ten. In Australia, Chile and New Zealand, less than one in every hundred users/recipients of paid parental leave is a man.

Moreover, even when the incidence of leave-taking is relatively evenly shared between women and men, the *intensity* of use is still much higher for women (Chart PF2.2.C). Comparable information on the duration of paid parental leave taken by men and women is available for only a few OECD countries but, where it exists, the data suggest men account for less than one-third of all days used. Of those countries for which data is available, the highest male share of days used is in Iceland, where men account for 29% of the days for which maternity, paternity, and parental benefits are drawn, and Sweden, where men take 28% of all days used. In Denmark and Finland, men claim only about 10% of maternity, paternity and parental leave benefit days.

#### *Comparability and data issues*

The administrative data used in this indicator does have its limitations. As noted in *definitions and methodology*, administrative data are available in the first instance only where there exists some publicly administered paid leave scheme, but they are also limited by what countries actually record and publish. Relatively few countries issue statistics on the number of individuals taking maternity leave or claiming maternity leave benefits, perhaps because in many countries (e.g. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Slovenia) it is obligatory for the mother to take at least some of her maternity leave entitlement (Blum et al., 2018). Several more countries (although still not all) publish statistics on the number of people using paternity leave and particularly the numbers using paid parental leave or receiving parental leave benefits. However, in some countries (e.g. Hungary) numbers on parental leave are available only for the total number of recipients with no disaggregation between men and women. In others (e.g. Japan), the use of leave is monitored through specific government-run surveys with their own individual samples and definitions. This places limits on the number of countries that can be included in this indicator.

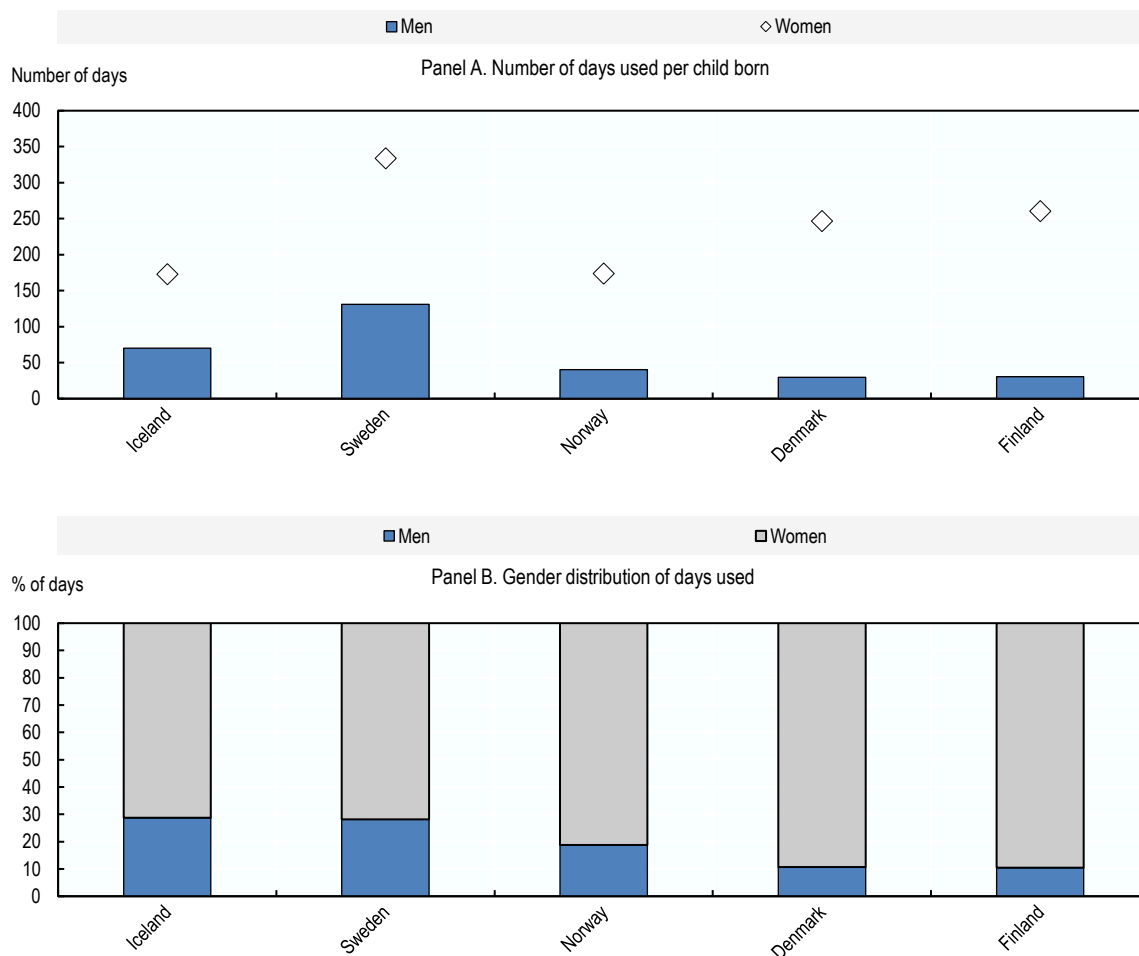
Moreover, even where data are available differences between countries in the structure and design of leave programmes can hamper comparability. In some countries paid maternity leave (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and Sweden) and, on occasion, paid paternity leave (e.g. Iceland) do not exist as separate entitlements but rather are integrated into an overall parental leave system (see *OECD Family Database* Indicator PF2.1 for more detail). In others (e.g. Austria and France) parental leave is theoretically unpaid, with benefits instead available through ‘child-raising allowances’ that are paid to parents who meet eligibility conditions whether or not they are technically on leave<sup>2</sup>. These differences may influence the composition of those individuals taking paid leave or claiming the associated paid leave benefits. The notes to the various charts provide descriptions of the exact leave or benefits schemes covered by the data, with more information on cross-national differences in the design of leave programmes available in *OECD Family Database* Indicator PF2.1.

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<sup>2</sup> Although typically one parent has to stop working in order to care for the child, or at least work under a certain number of hours, to become eligible (Blum et al., 2018; see *OECD Family Database* Indicator PF2.1 for more detail)

### Chart PF2.2.C. Duration of paid leave for men and women

Number of days of maternity, paternity and parental leave benefits used by gender, 2016



Source: Nordic Social Statistical Committee (NOSOSCO) (2017), *Social Protection in the Nordic Countries Scope, Expenditure and Financing 2015/2016*, <http://nowbase.org/publications/social-protection-nordic-countries>

**Sources and further reading:**

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