



Justin Madders MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Business and Trade
Admiralty Place
London
SW1A 2DY

16th May 2025

Dear Minister,

Parental leave and pay for the self-employed

I am writing to you from [IPSE, the self-employment association](#), on behalf of the UK's 4.3 million self-employed workers regarding the government's planned review of parental leave policies.

We believe the review presents an ideal opportunity for government to address the unfair shortfall in support for new parents in self-employment. We would like to offer our help in finding ways to do this that are practical and affordable for parents and taxpayers.

The Maternity Allowance

Mothers are one of the most significant groups in self-employment. There are approximately 554,000 of them, up 46% since 2008.¹ Following a new birth, they're eligible for the Maternity Allowance – but this benefit unfairly results in them receiving less statutory benefit than an identical mother who happens to have an employer.

Currently, employed mothers receive 90% of their average weekly earnings for the first six weeks. Self-employed mothers do not receive this initial payment. Our question for the upcoming review would be: **why should self-employed mothers get less?**

Paternity pay

Every father should have the opportunity to spend valuable time with their newborns, regardless of whether they work for themselves or for someone else. But self-employed dads are not eligible for even a basic level of paternity pay as a state benefit. Research shows that just 31% of self-employed dads took time off when their partner had a baby.²

¹ [IPSE, The self-employed landscape in 2024](#)

² [Opinium/TUC, 1 in 2 families struggle financially when dads take paternity leave, 2023](#)

In these situations, policy is forcing the burden of settling a new child into the world entirely onto mothers. This burden is especially pronounced in households where both parents are self-employed.

We would urge you to ensure that extending some form of paternity pay to self-employed fathers is also considered in a review.

A comprehensive review of parental pay

We recognise that implementing these changes may not be simple, however, we believe it is possible and that it is essential that everyone, including the self-employed, should have the opportunity to take time away from work at the birth of a newborn.

Before the review commences, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points with you and your colleagues at the Department for Business and Trade, and offer our perspective on how to ensure the self-employed are fairly heard in the process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Chamberlain", with a stylized, flowing script.

**Andy Chamberlain,
Director of Policy, IPSE**