

Cyprus¹

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April 2019

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the Leave Network website). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members](#) page on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave

Length of leave (prior to and following childbirth)

- 18 weeks, of which 11 are compulsory and allocated as follows: two prior to the week of the expected birth and the rest following childbirth.

Payment and funding

- Private sector employees receive maternity benefit equal to 72 per cent of their salary. Some private companies cover the remaining 28 per cent: in such cases, an employer can request the maternity benefit from the state on behalf of the employee, then add the balance, so that the employee receives a full salary from the employer.
- For public sector employees, the first 12 weeks of leave are fully compensated, while the following six weeks are paid at 72 per cent of the employee's salary. If the mother is the main breadwinner of the

¹ Please cite as: Angeli, M. (2019) 'Cyprus country note,' in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Macht, A. and Moss, P. (eds.) International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2019. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/.

family, the percentage of salary paid during the six weeks increases according to the number of dependants (i.e. one dependant, 80 per cent of salary; two dependants, 90 per cent of salary; three dependants, 100 per cent of salary).

Flexibility in use

- Maternity leave can start two weeks before the expected week of birth or from the week of the actual birth.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- Full-time and part-time female employees, as well as self-employed women, are entitled to Maternity leave.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent) or delegation of leave to person other than the mother.

- In the case of the birth of multiple children, the period of 18 weeks is increased by four weeks for each additional child (e.g. 22 weeks for twins and 26 weeks for triplets).
- In the case of premature labour or in any other case where the infant is hospitalised right after birth for health reasons, the mother is entitled to additional Maternity leave as follows: for the first 21 days that the infant is in an incubator, the employee is entitled to one additional week of Maternity leave. If the infant remains hospitalised, the employee is entitled to an additional week of leave for every additional 50 per cent of a 21-day period (i.e. 10.5 days that the baby remains in hospital) up to a maximum of six weeks in total.
- In order to be granted leave over and above a period of 18 weeks, the employee must provide her employer with written certification from the hospital and from a doctor with the relevant speciality.

b. Paternity leave

Length of leave

- Two consecutive weeks.

Payment

- 72 per cent of the father's salary.

Flexibility in use

- Paternity leave may be used across any two consecutive weeks during the 16 weeks that the Maternity leave is in effect, following the birth or the adoption of the child.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- Paternity leave is granted to men whose wives have given birth; or have a co-habitation agreement and their female partner has given birth; or men in a couple who have had a child through a surrogate mother; or have adopted a child under the age of 12.

c. Parental leave

Length of leave

- 18 weeks per parent per child. Leave is an individual entitlement, but part-transferable in certain circumstances (see 'Flexibility in use' below).
- Only up to five weeks of leave can be taken in any one calendar year (or seven weeks if there are three or more children).

Payment

- None. However, social insurance contribution continues to be paid into the employee's social insurance fund during the leave period.

Flexibility in use

- Parental leave can be taken at any time between the birth of a child and the child turning eight years of age. Parents with disabled children can take Parental leave until their child reaches the age of eighteen years.
- Parental leave can be taken for between one week (minimum) and five weeks (maximum) per calendar year for one or two children, and seven weeks for three or more children.
- When one parent has taken Parental leave of at least two weeks, they can transfer the other parent two weeks from the rest of their leave.

Eligibility

- All employed parents with non-disabled children up to the age of eight years or disabled children up to the age of eighteen years, who have completed at least six months of continuous employment with the same

employer, and provided that at least 26 weeks of employment have elapsed.

- Same sex couples cannot legally parent a child together in Cyprus. They cannot adopt a child together or be recognised as the parent of a child who was conceived by a female partner through medically assisted reproduction. They are also not eligible to apply for surrogacy.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents.

- In the case of premature birth or the mother having health issues, Parental leave can be taken before birth.
- In the case of widowed parents, the leave can be increased to 23 weeks.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

None.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- 16 weeks in case of adoption, if the child is under the age of 12 years.
- 14 weeks for both surrogate mothers and mothers who have a child through a surrogate mother.

Time off for the care of dependents.

- Any employee is entitled to unpaid leave of up to seven days a year, on grounds of *force majeure* (i.e. for urgent cases such as a dependant being sick or in an accident). A dependent is defined as a child, husband, wife, parent, brother, sister, grandfather, or grandmother of the employee.
- Such leave may be granted as a single period of leave or split across separate periods of time.
- For married couples, each spouse is individually entitled to such leave.

Breastfeeding breaks

- Following Maternity leave, for the purposes of breastfeeding, a working mother has the right to arrive at work one hour later, leave work one hour earlier, or take a one-hour break during the workday for a period of six months.

Antenatal appointments and care

- Pregnant employees are permitted paid time off for antenatal examinations, provided that such examinations need be carried out during working hours. They should give advance notice to their employers and provide a relevant doctor's note.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

- The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Cyprus is six months. The full period of Parental leave can only be taken in five-week blocs per year: in total, only 3.7 months of the leave is paid.
- There is an entitlement to ECEC from the age of 4 years and 8 months (i.e. in the year before children start primary school). Attendance during this year is obligatory.
- There is a gap of over four years between the end of leave and an ECEC entitlement, and even longer between the end of well paid leave and an ECEC entitlement.
- Levels of attendance at formal services for children both under and over the age of three years are slightly below the average for the countries included in this review, as well as for OECD countries. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on the cross-country comparisons page.

3. Recent changes in policy

On 24 July 2017, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus passed the Protection of Maternity (Amending) Law 2017 (Law 116(I)/2017), which amended the Protection of Maternity Law 1997 (Law 100(I)/1997). The amendment provides Paternity leave for working fathers of a new child, including those who have adopted a child under the age of 12 years, and those who have had a child through a surrogate mother.

The new law also provides for any woman who has a child through a surrogate mother to have the right to 14 consecutive weeks of Maternity leave; to be protected against dismissal by her employer; and to be eligible for arriving/leaving one hour early or take a one-hour break.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

There is no information available so far as the leave was only introduced in 2017.

c. Parental leave

There is no information.