

## Advancing Parental Leave Equality for British Dads

*International Business Leaders Event and Exhibition*

**London – 17 May 2018 -** A new event for employers is being held on Wednesday 13 June at University College London (UCL), as part of a global advocacy initiative to increase men's parental leave participation. This not-for-profit event is designed to encourage businesses in the UK to address the imbalance in the support provided for parental leave, through policy and system changes - and by taking a positive approach to flexible working for Dads and partners.

While 90 percent of Dads take a short period of paternity leave, two weeks as standard, which they often top up by using their annual leave - Mums take up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, and frequently put their career aside to act as the main care provider for their family.

But there is an alternative that could better serve the dynamics of modern family life. By using Shared Parental Leave eligible parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave, and 37 weeks of pay; either separately or together. This approach allows Dads to be more hands-on and re-balance their work and family commitment; in turn making them happier more loyal employees. It could also help to close the gender pay gap too, by enabling Mums to return to work and keep their careers going, while their partner takes on the childcare role. Leading the way in this more enlightened approach are Swedish employers, offering 90 days leave. There are around 285,000 families in the UK who are eligible for shared parental leave, but currently the take up is low (Government estimates that take-up is around 2-8% of eligible parents) could be as low as two percent.

To kick start the conversation and help employers in the UK see the value of enabling Dads to play a more active role in their child's early life, the Swedish Dads photographic exhibition by Johan Bävman will take centre stage at the UCL event. Bävman's photographs illustrate the lives of 23

Swedish Dads who chose to stay home with their families for at least six months. The exhibition will also feature 10 'Aussie Dads', also shot and curated by Bävman. This is first time these images have been seen in public. Through the photographs and quotes from the Dads themselves, the exhibition highlights the experience that extended parental leave has given fathers and how their lives have changed for the better as a result.



**Swedish  
Dads**



**Aussie  
Dads**

The event will feature a round table presentation and discussion forum, with renowned experts and speakers on the topic, including:

- Torbjörn Sohlström - Ambassador of Sweden to the United Kingdom
- Emma Walsh - CEO and Founder, Parents At Work and Parental Leave Equality Advocate
- Sarah Jackson - CEO, Working Families UK
- Margaret O'Brien - Director, Thomas Coram Research Unit, University College London
- Johan Bävman - Photographer, Swedish Dads
- Dr Katherine Twamley - Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, UCL
- Laurie Benson, Human Resources Manager, Spotify
- Euan Graham, Head of Human Resources, Norton Rose Fulbright

Emma Walsh, CEO, [Parents At Work](#), is leading the event: "We hope the event and photographic exhibition will send a powerful message to help normalise men taking parental leave, secure in the knowledge they are supported by policy, their community and their employer."

The event and exhibition are being supported by University College London, the Swedish Institute, the Embassy of Sweden, Norton Rose Fulbright and supporting partners, UK Government Equalities Office, Working Families UK, [WorkingMums.co.uk](#), and Dads Info.

**For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:**

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