



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2019

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about Parental Leave for parents with premature babies.

I sympathise greatly with the experiences of parents of premature babies, especially those whose children spend extended periods in neonatal intensive care. I am assured that the Government is fully committed to supporting working parents in this position.

The UK's system of maternity leave is one of the most generous in the world, while employed, eligible fathers have a number of workplace employment rights which include Paternity Leave and Pay, Shared Parental Leave and Pay, Unpaid Parental Leave and time off for dependants. In the case of premature births, eligible fathers and partners also have the flexibility to take up to two weeks of paternity leave and pay within eight weeks of the expected date of birth, rather than within eight weeks of the actual date of birth, if they wish.

That said, I welcome that the Government is undertaking a review of the provisions for parents of premature babies and also for those who experience multiple births. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working with charities and parents to better understand the pressures and the issues that those parents have to face when their child is born prematurely or sick. As I understand, Ministers expect to be in a position to share the key findings of this review in the near future. I can assure you that I will be following the outcome of this with great interest.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**