

# Who is eligible for parental leave in the United Kingdom?

Parental leave is granted to parents, usually after maternity and paternity leave, allowing mothers and fathers to take care of their young children without losing their jobs. Such a policy exists in all EU Member States and in the UK it is called **Parental leave**. The policy design and eligibility rules vary across the EU and not all women and men in the EU are eligible for parental leave.

## Parental leave in the UK is:



Unpaid



8.3 months



Leave is an individual right and cannot be transferred between parents

## 28 % of women and 32 % of men in employment are not eligible for parental leave

This factsheet is based on an eligibility study of how many women and men (aged 20-49) would be eligible for parental leave if they had a child in 2017 and the reasons behind their non-eligibility <sup>(1)</sup>.

## Who is eligible for parental leave in the UK?

✓ **Employees**  
(with conditions)

× **Self-employed**

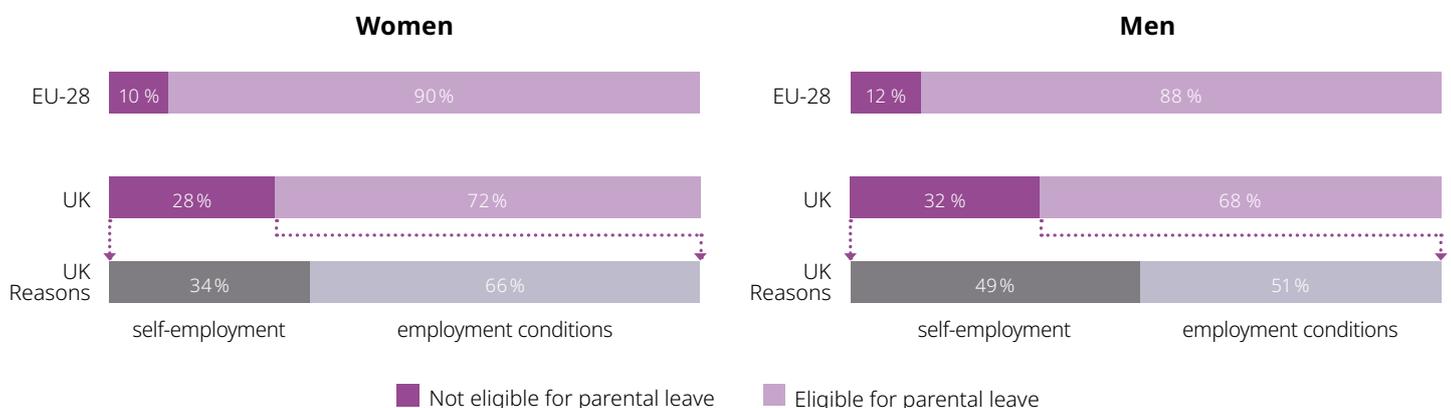
✓ **Same-sex parents**

✓ **Non-citizens <sup>(2)</sup>**  
(except asylum seekers)

In the EU-28 <sup>(3)</sup>:

- 15 countries restrict access to employees with short working duration before birth (including the United Kingdom)
- The self-employed are not eligible in 10 countries (including the United Kingdom)
- 11 countries do not allow access for same-sex parents (not the United Kingdom)
- 19 limit access to refugees or asylum seekers (including no access for asylum seekers in the United Kingdom)

**In the UK, self-employment and duration conditions for the employees restrict the access to parental leave.**

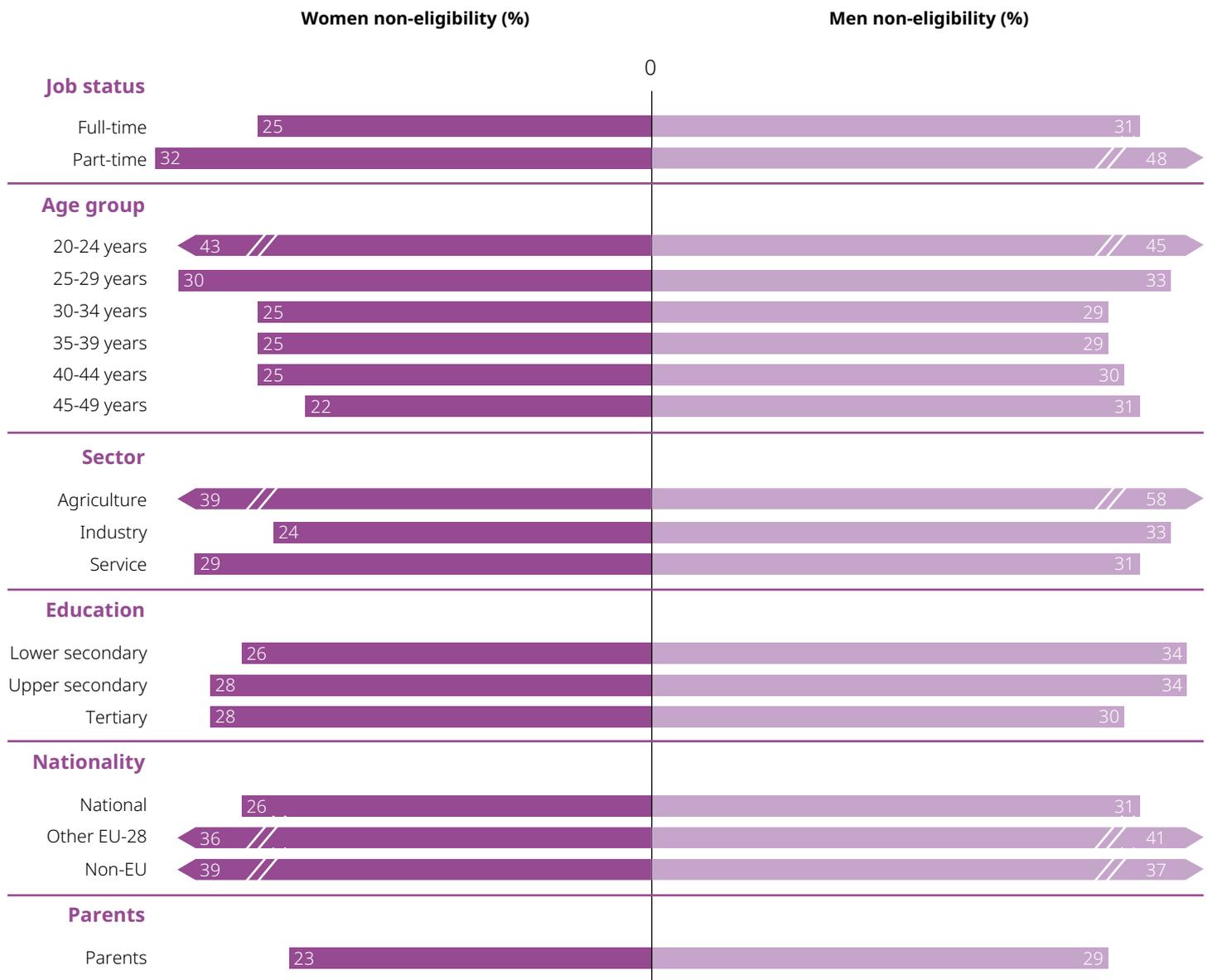


<sup>(1)</sup> Restrictions for same-sex couples, refugees and asylum seekers where they apply are not included in the simulations, so underestimates non-eligibility.

<sup>(2)</sup> The non-citizens category is multidimensional and cover other EU-28 citizens, 3rd country nationals, refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>(3)</sup> The data was collected before the UK left the European Union.

## Who is not eligible for parental leave in the UK?



In the UK, **23 %** of mothers and **29 %** of fathers with a co-resident child aged less than 3 years are not eligible for leave, there is a 6 percentage point gender gap in access to leave. The gender gap for parents with young children is slightly larger than the national average (4 percentage points).

Source: Eurostat – EU LFS, EU-SILC, 2017. EIGE's calculations based on annual reviews on leave policies by the International Network on Leave Policies and Research.  
Note: EU-28, weighted average (population age 20-49, EU LFS 2017, (lfsa\_pganws)).

### European Institute for Gender Equality

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This factsheet is based on the work of Matthew Aldrich, Sara Connolly, Margaret O'Brien, and Merve Uzunalioglu; in collaboration with Alison Koslowski and Jamie Atkinson and [www.leavenetwork.org](http://www.leavenetwork.org).  
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### Contact details

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[eige.sec@eige.europa.eu](mailto:eige.sec@eige.europa.eu)   
 +370 52157444   
<https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/> 



European Institute for Gender Equality  
Gedimino pr. 16  
LT-01103 Vilnius  
LITHUANIA



Publications Office  
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