ACHR INSIGHT | OCTOBER 2026 | RESEARCH BRIEF

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HR RESEARCH & MEMBER PERSPECTIVES

FEATURED RESEARCH

Paternity Leave in Ghana

What HR practitioners want from the new Labour Law, and what the Labour Bill, 2024 proposes



94% OF MEMBER VOTES SAID YES

116 VOTES IN THE ACHR POLL

5 days PROPOSED IN THE LABOUR BILL

4–6 wks WHAT MEMBERS PROPOSE

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Executive summary

Ghana's Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) gives fathers no paternity leave. The Revised Labour Bill, 2024 would introduce it for the first time, at not less than five days. ACHR asked its members whether men should be granted paternity leave, and 94% of the votes said yes.

Members' comments went further than the Bill. Many argued for four to six weeks, and they raised issues the Bill does not address. International research supports them: leave of two weeks or more is linked to fathers staying involved in childcare long after the leave ends.

94%	116	5 days	4–6 wks
OF MEMBER VOTES SAID YES	VOTES IN THE ACHR POLL	PROPOSED IN THE LABOUR BILL	WHAT MEMBERS PROPOSE

Key findings

- **Strong support.** 109 of 116 votes backed paternity leave.
- **Members want more than the Bill.** 4 to 6 weeks, against the Bill's 5 days.
- **The evidence agrees.** Two weeks or more is linked to lasting father involvement.
- **Three gaps in the Bill.** Tied to "the wife", pay not stated, bereaved fathers not covered.
- **HR need not wait.** Employers can adopt paid policies now.

Key recommendations

- Extend paternity leave to at least two weeks, with a path to four, on full pay.
- Make it a right rather than a matter of employer discretion.
- Base eligibility on the child's birth certificate, not proof of marriage.
- Give a bereaved father the unused maternity period.

01 Introduction

When a child is born in Ghana, the law gives the mother 12 weeks of paid maternity leave. It gives the father nothing. Whether he spends time at home depends on his employer's goodwill, a collective agreement, or his own annual leave.

That may soon change. The Revised Labour Bill, 2024 proposes the country's first statutory paternity leave. As at February 2026 the Bill had not been passed, and in 2025 a new committee was reviewing the labour law amendments.

With the law still open to review, ACHR asked its members a simple question: *Should men be granted paternity leave?* This Insight sets out what they said, what the Bill proposes and what the research says, and closes with recommendations for policymakers and employers.

02 What ACHR members said

"SHOULD MEN BE GRANTED PATERNITY LEAVE?" · 116 VOTES



109 Yes: Dad is a parent too (94%) **5** No: Maternity leave is enough (4%) **2** Rather not say (2%)

For certified HR practitioners, the question is no longer *whether* fathers should get leave. It is how much, on what terms, and how to make sure it is used well. The discussion that followed raised seven serious themes.

> ***The first few weeks with a new born are very hectic for the mother... She also needs that emotional support and feeling that she's not alone in this journey.***
>
> ACHR MEMBER

2.1
Mothers need support, and children need fathers

A grandmother's help is valuable, "but sometimes they need the presence of the man." Leave also lets the father bond with the baby. Members proposed four to six weeks.

2.2
A father left alone with a newborn

If the mother dies and only the baby survives, the father should receive the full maternity period. The Bill does not address this. It was the most important gap the discussion surfaced.

2.3
Who qualifies, and how HR verifies it

Members asked whether HR would need to confirm the "legal wife", and whether some men might claim repeatedly for children with different partners. Others replied that the child's birth certificate is enough.

2.4
Will the leave be used for its purpose?

Sceptics noted that many fathers "neither know how to put the diaper on the child nor the child's teachers name." Others answered that fathers will "start learning" once they have time at home.

2.5
Work culture keeps fathers away

Weekday work, weekend overtime and relocations limit many fathers to "paying bills". Executives and business owners already have flexibility that ordinary workers lack.

2.6
Fathering does not end at birth

A call for "PTA leave" for fathers drew support and pushback. Critics said school meetings come with notice and can be covered by planning or annual leave.

2.7
Paternity leave or parental leave?

Some Ghanaian companies already give fathers about a week. Members also cited shared parental leave abroad, such as New Zealand's Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.

> ***"It is time our laws are amended to enable daddies be part of their children's day to day affairs."***
>
> ACHR MEMBER

03 What the Labour Bill, 2024 proposes

The Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) provides 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and no paternity leave. The Revised Labour Bill, 2024 (draft of 28 March 2024) would change this.

Provision	Labour Act, 2003	Labour Bill, 2024
Paternity leave	None	**Not less than 5 days** (clause 52)
Who qualifies	—	A male worker whose wife, or a surrogate of the wife, gives birth; or who adopts a child under one year with his wife
When to apply	—	Within 3 months of the birth or adoption
Proof required	—	Proof of birth or of adoption
How often	—	Not more than once in 24 months
Maternity leave	12 weeks, fully paid	At least 14 weeks, fully paid, plus 2 weeks for abnormal or multiple births (clause 78)

The Bill is a welcome first step, and its 24-month cap partly answers members' concern about repeated claims. Three features of clause 52 deserve attention:

Tied to "the wife"

Fathers who are not married to the mother are not clearly covered.

At the employer's discretion

Granted "where the employer is satisfied". Maternity leave is an entitlement.

Pay is not stated

Clause 78 says maternity leave is on full pay; clause 52 is silent.

04 What the research says

International evidence broadly supports ACHR members. Leave of about two weeks or more, ideally paid and reserved for fathers, changes how involved fathers are, and the effect lasts well beyond the leave itself.

115 of 185

Ghana is in the minority

Countries that offer paternity leave, averaging about 9 days. The maternity–paternity gap averages 16.7 weeks.

ILO, *Care at Work* (2022)

2 weeks+

The threshold that matters

Fathers who took two weeks or more were more likely to do childcare when children were young.

Huerta et al., OECD (2013)

Hands-on

Leave is how fathers learn

Fathers who took leave did more feeding, nappy changing and night care.

Tanaka & Waldfogel (2007)

+250%

Reserved, paid leave works

Quebec's five "daddy-only" weeks raised fathers' leave-taking by about 250%.

Patnaik (2019)

2.4% → 89%

Norway's father quota

Uptake among eligible fathers, 1992 to 2004, after a reserved quota.

ILO

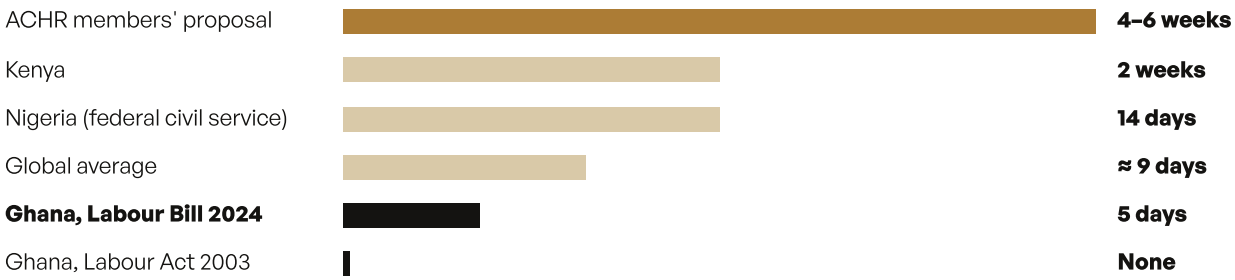
6 months

The global benchmark

UNICEF recommends at least six months of paid leave per family, shared between parents.

UNICEF (2019)

Ghana's proposed 5 days sits below the global average and its neighbours



Bars scaled to 28 days, as stated by each source: ILO (2022); ICIR (2021); Labour Bill, 2024. South Africa now allows 4 months and 10 days of parental leave shared between parents (Constitutional Court, 3 October 2025).

05 ACHR analysis: where the Bill falls short

Issue	ACHR members	Labour Bill, 2024	Evidence
Length	At least 4 weeks; some said 6	At least 5 days	Two weeks or more linked to lasting involvement
Pay	Expected to be paid	Not stated	Paid, reserved leave drives uptake

Issue	ACHR members	Labour Bill, 2024	Evidence
Mother dies at birth	Father should get the full maternity period	Not covered	The Bill protects a bereaved mother (clause 78(6)); a matching rule for fathers would be consistent
Eligibility	Birth certificate should suffice	Tied to "the wife"	Child-centred eligibility protects every child
Proper use	Some doubt fathers will give care	No provision	Leave itself builds caregiving skills

Five days is a token, not a policy. It covers the hospital stay and the naming ceremony, but not the two-week threshold at which fathers begin to take on daily care. Members' instinct for four weeks is much closer to the evidence.

Tying leave to "the wife" is the Bill's weakest point. A benefit meant for the child depends on the parents' marital status. Many Ghanaian children are born outside formal marriage, and HR officers would be left to judge customary, religious and civil unions. A birth certificate naming the worker as father, with the 24-month cap, would answer members' concerns more simply.

The bereaved father is left out. The Bill protects a mother who loses her baby. It offers nothing to a father whose partner dies in childbirth and who is left alone with a newborn.

> *A law alone does not make fathers present. Uptake depends on pay, on managers who respect the leave, and on workplaces that treat it as normal.*

06 ACHR recommendations

For policymakers

1. **Extend the leave.** Raise paternity leave from 5 days to at least 2 weeks, with a path to 4 weeks.
2. **Make it paid.** State that paternity leave is on full pay, as clause 78(2) does for maternity leave.
3. **Make it a right.** Replace "where the employer is satisfied" with "shall grant" once proof is provided.
4. **Focus on the child.** Base eligibility on a birth certificate or adoption order naming the worker as father. Keep the 24-month cap.

For employers and HR practitioners

1. **Act before the law does.** Adopt a written policy of at least two weeks' paid paternity leave.
2. **Keep verification simple.** Accept a birth certificate or hospital record, with a clear application window.
3. **Prepare new fathers.** Pair the leave with a short orientation on infant care.
4. **Lead from the top.** Encourage senior men to take the leave visibly, so it becomes normal.

5. **Protect bereaved fathers.** If the mother dies or is incapacitated at birth, give the father the unused maternity period.

5. **Look beyond birth.** Review overtime, weekend work and relocation policies for workers with young children.

07 Conclusion

Dad is a parent too.

ACHR members have spoken clearly: fathers are parents too, and the workplace should make room for them. The Labour Bill, 2024 opens the door, but five days, uncertain pay and a marriage-based test leave it only half open. As the Bill is reviewed, ACHR urges policymakers to align it with the evidence, and encourages HR leaders to set the standard in their own organisations now.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This Insight is based on a poll of ACHR members on the ACHR HR Mentorship platform. Respondents could select more than one option, so vote totals may not exactly equal the number of respondents. Comments were reviewed for substantive themes, and quotations are lightly edited for clarity. The analysis also draws on the Revised Labour Bill, 2024 (draft of 28 March 2024) and published research.

ABOUT ACHR

The Association of Certified HRs (ACHR) is a professional community of HR practitioners in Ghana, bringing together graduates of the HR Certification Centre's programmes and other HR professionals. ACHR Insights share members' views and research on issues shaping the world of work.

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