

Maternity in the Workplace Conference 2023

Developing Best Practice Maternity Policies and Processes: Guidance for Employers

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About Working Families

Our vision

We want to achieve a society in which everyone can fully meet their work and caring responsibilities, where all parents and carers have an equal opportunity to find and progress in secure, paid work.

Our mission

Our mission is to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace. We drive positive change by supporting and advocating for working parents and carers, collaborating with employers to build flexible and family-friendly cultures, and influencing government policy.



Our strategic approach



Empowering Parents and Carers

- Working Families gives free legal advice to parents and carers on their rights at work and in-work benefits through our award-winning Legal Advice Service. We run a telephone and e-mail helpline, and provide hundreds of pages of advice on our website.



By the Numbers: 2021-22



1.1 million

Over the year, over 1.1 million working parents and carers accessed legal advice through our website.



94%

94% of parents and carers who used our e-mail advice service intended to act on the advice they were given.



2,300

Our legal advice service gave personalised advice to over 2,300 people.

Supporting Employers

- Through our employer membership scheme, training, and consultancy, Working Families helps organisations of all sizes and from all sectors harness the benefits of flexible and family-friendly policy and practice.



By the Numbers: 2021-22



162

We supported 162 employer members to create flexible, family-friendly workplaces.



1 million

The work we did with employers in 2021-22 reached over 1 million employees across the UK.



1,875

1,875 professionals registered for our events online in 2021-22.

Driving Change

- Working Families advocates on behalf of working parents across the UK, influencing policy using insights from our helpline, the employers we support, and our research.
- We developed the *Working Families Index*, the most comprehensive survey of how parents and carers are managing the balance between work and family life in the UK.
- Most recently, we worked with Yasmin Qureshi MP on her Flexible Working Bill, which will remove barriers for millions of employees so they can access the flexible working arrangements they need to thrive.



Best practice maternity support

- Business case
- Culture that supports family-friendly and flexible working
- Support from senior leadership
- Family champions
- Accessible and transparent policies with enhanced pay
- Communicate and proactively encourage take up of policies and support, using different channels
- Other support – coaching, mentoring, buddying, family networks
- Childcare support and back-up care



Best practice support for line managers

- Consistency is key
- Training/coaching for line managers – understanding the policies
- Guidance and checklists for each stage
- Covering the work – recruitment/secondment
- Handover/back-to-work plan
- Keeping in touch during leave
- Discuss flexible working options
- Conduct appraisal/discuss career aspirations – don't make assumptions and check they remain the same post-return
- Facilitating a smooth transition back to work - phased return
- Continuous check-ins



Facilitating flexible working

- Open, early conversation between employee and line manager
- Guidance on making and dealing with requests for flexible working
- Promote a range of flexible working options
- Job analysis/finding the flex in every role
- Managing flexible workers – training and peer support
- Trial period for new arrangement
- Forum/network for flexible workers
- Career progression and development opportunities for flexible workers – case studies and role models, celebrating different working patterns
- Ensure personal development opportunities are available and accessible to flexible workers



Monitoring and measurement

- Monitor changes and use data to help identify and address barriers to mothers progressing in the workplace
- Monitor take up of policies across the organisation:
 - Maternity leave and other leave policies
 - Retention following maternity leave and two years post-return/after subsequent children
 - Flexible working requests and approvals – by team/manager
- Provide extra support for managers where challenges are identified
- Performance and promotion data – full-time/part-time/flexible workers
- Seek feedback from staff – surveys, focus groups, staff networks



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