



What works to reduce your gender pay gap

Family friendly policies action note

What are Family Friendly Policies and why are they needed?

One of the biggest drivers of the gender pay gap is that women tend to spend more time out of the labour market and work part-time, often due to caring responsibilities. Family friendly policies – **flexible working, enhanced parental leave**, and additional **childcare provision** enable more equal sharing of work and childcare between men and women so that both can fulfil their potential at work. Family Friendly Policies are also good for business, helping to attract and retain talent and improve productivity.

Increasing productivity and supporting talent through flexible working

Flexible working enables women to stay in roles that reflect their skills and experience and men to share caring responsibilities.

There are many options for ways to work flexibly, examples include working from home, flexi-time, compressed hours, job-shares, and part-time working. Most employees already have the legal right to request flexible working and 97% of businesses offer some form of flexibility, but only 68% of employees for whom flexible working is available take up this option.

To improve your flexible working offer:

- Consider if there are other forms of flexible working you can offer to give employees choice in how and where they work.
- Build in flexibility when creating a new role or filling a vacancy. Could the job be done remotely or split into a job share?
- When advertising jobs, mention the flexible working options available. This can help attract a more skilled and diverse pool of candidates.
- During new staff induction, explain how you support flexible working and discuss available options.
- During annual reviews, explain and explore flexibility for existing employees.
- Train line managers on the benefits of flexible working and how to balance business and employee needs.
- Normalise flexible working by actively supporting male and female employees to achieve a good work life balance.
- Highlight senior leaders as role models for flexible working.
- Review take-up of flexible working regularly and take action if barriers are identified.



Supporting the equal sharing of childcare through parental leave

Most employees have the legal right to paid parental leave when having a child or adopting. Shared Parental Leave, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave and Adoption Leave are all available and provide some statutory support. However, to encourage more equal sharing of caring responsibilities, and reduce the gender pay gap, you can enhance the offer and provide extra support to your employees.

To improve your parental leave offer:

- Review and enhance your parental leave and pay offer, including Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, to give parents choice.
- Provide clear and easy to understand information on your parental leave and pay policy, and the support available, on your internal and external websites.
- Discuss parental leave and flexible working options with expectant parents as early as possible.
- Encourage fathers to take Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, and support them to take their full entitlement of leave.
- During parental leave use paid 'keeping in touch days' with your employees, including to highlight training and development opportunities.
- On return to work, explore the flexible working options that might suit new parents as well as your business needs.
- Highlight high performing employees who are parents to act as advocates for working flexibly and sharing caring responsibilities.

Supporting parents with childcare

Better access to childcare can help parents to share caring responsibilities more equally and enables them to work more hours if they wish to.

You can help by highlighting the childcare support you provide and that the Government offers, including:

- **Tax-Free Childcare:** Up to £2000 per child per year for working parents with children aged under 12 (or up to £4000 for disabled children under 17).
- **15 hours of free childcare a week:** For parents of all 3 and 4 year olds, and parents of 2 year olds who receive some forms of government support.^{††}
- **30 hours of free childcare a week:** For working parents for their 3 and 4 year olds.^{††}
- **Universal Credit:** If parents claim it, they can get up to 85% of their childcare costs covered for children under 16.
- **Tax credits:** If parents claim it, they can get up to 70% of their childcare costs covered for children under 16 (or under 17 if disabled).



For more information on childcare search 'childcare choices'.

[†] Some providers may charge for additional services, parents should speak to their provider about any additional charges that may apply

[‡] 38 weeks a year but hours can be stretched depending on providers