

**Working
Families**

**National
Work
Life Week**
2-6 October 2023



#WorkLifeWeek

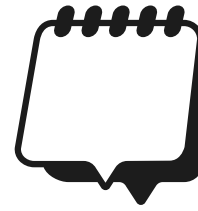
Employers' Toolkit



Official Partner:

Bright Horizons.
Work + Family Solutions

What is National Work Life Week?



National Work Life Week is the annual campaign designed to highlight the value of flexible and family-friendly practices in the workplace. It's run by Working Families, the UK's national charity for working parents and carers.

As an employer, you can use the week to showcase how your workplace is enabling everyone to thrive both at work and at home. This short guide is your starting point, full of tips on how to involve your staff team and let the wider world know that you are an employer that makes the wellbeing of your people a high priority.

But you don't have to stop there! Let your imagination run wild and ask your staff, family network groups (if you have them), and the senior team for ideas that will suit your own unique culture.

Make sure you spread the word by sharing what you're doing using the tag:
#WorkLifeWeek



All kinds of flex for all kinds of families

Flexible working and family-friendly practices open up opportunities for a diverse range of people and foster a sense of belonging, both of which strengthen your business. This year's theme - **All kinds of flex for all kinds of families** - is about showing that flexible working is for everybody. No matter what your job, sector, caring responsibility, age or disability status is, there are flexible options to fit every need and lifestyle.



The Official Partner for National Work Life Week 2023



Bright Horizons is delighted to be partnering once again with Working Families to support National Work Life Week. Our two organisations have a long history of collaboration, reflecting our shared commitment to transforming workplace cultures and ensuring that the combination of work and family is a positive experience for everyone.

For over 35 years, Bright Horizons has partnered with employers to devise and implement work-life strategies that reflect the evolving needs of businesses and families. In this role we've been privileged to be a part of the conversations around what makes a truly family-friendly workplace where people can thrive in their professional and personal lives. We currently work with over 400 UK employers, representing sectors as diverse as retail, health, higher education, law, media, finance, and government. Our wide range of services are all designed to support those who have caring responsibilities for loved ones of all ages - including pets!

The feedback we receive from our clients, and the wider research we undertake on a regular basis, demonstrates the significant impact that employers can expect to see on engagement, retention, and productivity. It's a real win-win situation where the *right* thing to do is also the *smart* thing to do.

Flexibility is therefore key to a successful and inclusive employee experience.

The emphasis which National Work Life Week puts on flexibility is one which we fully support. Today's fast pace of demographic and social change, plus developments in technology, all impact the ways in which we work - and also how we integrate careers with family life. We're all aware that the term 'family' encompasses a multitude of different situations and within this people will experience a wide range of challenges and opportunities. Flexibility is therefore key to a successful and inclusive employee experience. Like 'family', flexibility is a word that contains infinite interpretations and possibilities - not just about start and finish times or working from different locations, but also a mindset, an openness to listen, empathise and innovate.

With this toolkit, Working Families is providing a starting point for exploration, in considering what could be done today and planned for tomorrow. We look forward to hearing where your organisational journey leads.

Bright Horizons

The Bright Horizons Team



**More than
ever, we need
to prioritise
flexible and
family-friendly
working for all.**

Why does flexible working matter?

Flexible working is no longer just a perk or a nice-to-have. For many, it's a must-have, and is the difference between having a job and not.

And yet, not everyone who needs flexible working has access to it. Our 2023 *Working Families Index* Spotlight Report found that those on lower incomes face barriers accessing flexible working and are twice as likely to have an informal flexible working request rejected than those on higher incomes. We know that flexible working is a way for more people to participate and progress in work, as well as having a positive effect on their lives. But it can't just be reserved for those on higher incomes working behind a desk. No matter what your job, everyone should be able to unlock the benefits of flexibility.

Flex is for everyone

Flexible working comes in many forms, not just home and hybrid working. Thinking creatively about flexible solutions can help to meet the needs of the 46% of UK working parents who work in 'place-based roles' (roles that must take place at a specific location).

Flex can be good for you

Our research shows that parents and carers on a lower income who are able to access flexible working are a third less likely to have to quit their job to manage childcare, 25% less likely to fall into debt, and half as likely to feel their mental health was negatively affected by the struggle to find childcare.

Flex opens doors

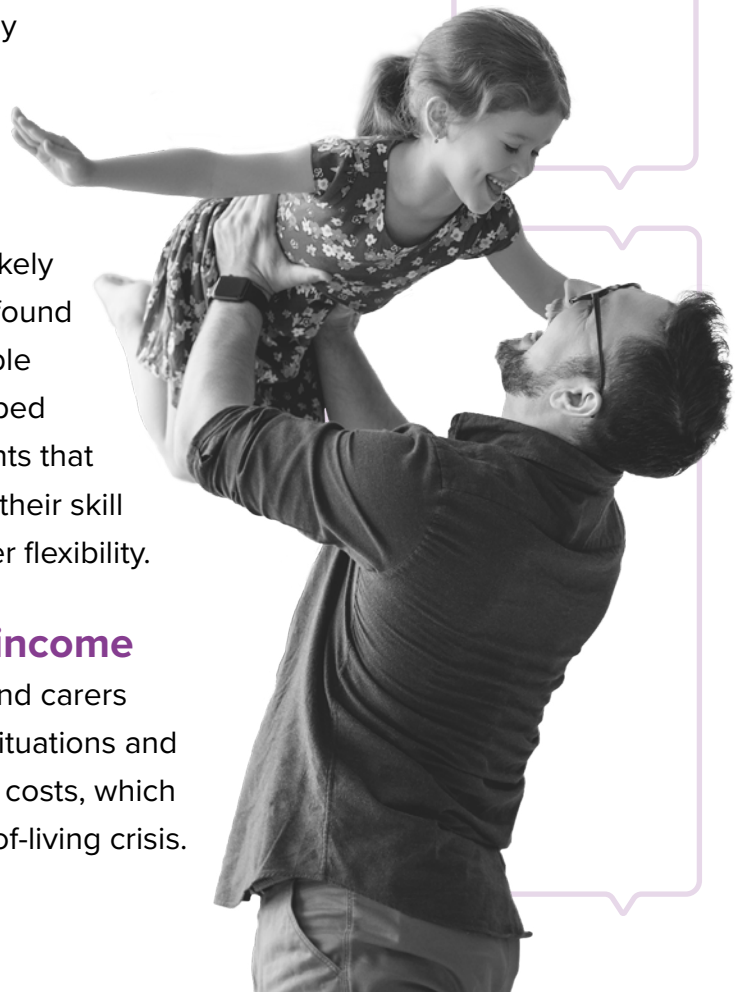
Advertising flexible jobs helps more people into work. Our research showed that 82% of UK parents would apply for a job that advertised flexible working options, compared to only 31% that would apply for a job that didn't. For employers, this means that flexible working can dramatically increase your talent pool.

Flex is a priority for many

For many, flex is a deal maker. Over half of UK parents (55%) would be likely to consider leaving their job if they found another one that offered more flexible options. Flex can also unlock untapped talent, reaching the 3 in 10 UK parents that are currently working in jobs below their skill level because their jobs offer greater flexibility.

Flex can free up valuable income

Flexible working can help parents and carers respond to ever-evolving financial situations and save money on childcare and travel costs, which can be a lifeline in the current cost-of-living crisis.





Happy to Talk Flexible Working

Working Families, with the support of the Government's Flexible Working Taskforce, have developed the Happy To Talk Flexible Working strapline and logo to support employers on their journey to designing more flexible roles.

With new flexible working legislation coming into effect next year, giving all employees the right to request flexible working from day one on the job, Happy to Talk Flexible Working will give you a head start in thinking about how all your roles can be done flexibly.

Visit our website for step-by-step instructions for designing and advertising flexible roles that work for your organisation.

How can employers attract the best talent? By designing jobs as flexible by default and telling potential hires you're...



Top tips on taking part in National Work Life Week

Lead from the front

One thing we know is that for culture change to work, it needs to be led by action and role modelling from the top. Involve senior leaders and your CEO in National Work Life Week from the start (get it in their diaries now!) and make sure they are a visible part of your activities.

- **Do any of your senior team work flexibly?**

Part-time or flexed hours? Job share? Different locations? Ask them to write a blog to mark the week and share their experiences of flexible working.

- **Would your CEO be willing to lead a webinar?**

This could be alongside team members with different experiences (parents, carers, people with other commitments outside work) to highlight the benefits diversity, flexibility, and family-friendly working brings to the organisation.





Get the conversation going

Use this week as a chance to put flexible working and work-life fit at the top of the agenda by starting a conversation about different ways of working with a staff webinar, a roundtable, or a **Working Families lunch and learn**. Topics could include top tips for flexible working, returning to work after family leave, and best-practice policies for parents and carers. You may want to invite some inspiring speakers who can talk about balancing work and family life, building confidence, and prioritising self-care.

Why not keep the conversation going? Invite colleagues to share what flexible working helps them to do - whether it's getting into sports, being able to pick the kids up from school, taking a loved one to an appointment, or getting the shopping done when it's quiet. Set up a space on your intranet or internal social channels to share pictures and stories.

One size doesn't fit all

Although there has been a lot of emphasis on home-working and hybrid working recently, there are so many other ways in which people work flexibly; for example, job sharing, annualised hours, term-time working, shift swapping, and compressed hours. Take the opportunity to broaden the understanding of flexible working in your organisation by showcasing different working patterns. Testing a new way of working using a trial period is a really good way to understand if it is going to work for the individual and the team. If it works, then share it within the organisation - it may benefit another team or give a colleague the confidence to make their own request. Consult with employees who can't work from home. Do they have an alternative vision for flexibility? You may discover they have their own solutions that will work well for the team and the organisation, such as self-rostering.



Support your managers

Good line manager support is vital to the success of flexible working. Set your managers up for success by giving them the skills and **resources** they need to manage flexible or hybrid workers. Working Families' expert consultants can provide tailored **coaching** for line managers in supporting high-performing, flexible teams. Encourage managers to speak to and support each other - discussing what works and doesn't work in one team might help someone in another area.



Communication is key

Use this week as a chance to put the spotlight on your own family-friendly policies and employee benefits. Run seminars, use your intranet to highlight a different policy each day, or do an all-staff Q&A to help promote what you are already doing and to ensure you reach the widest audience possible. If you have a parent and carer or family network, you could also emphasise the vital role they play in supporting parents and carers within the organisation.



Shout about switching off

Use this week to ensure that your staff team is finding time to disconnect, and check that line managers feel they have the skills and messages to encourage their teams to switch off on time. Encourage senior leaders to 'leave loudly' and message their teams when they stop working, sharing what they are going to do in their free time. Use it as an opportunity to show that productivity doesn't decrease when people finish on time; it often increases!

Remember to share what you're doing using the hashtag **#WorkLifeWeek**. Letting your communications team know about it well in advance will help make sure your organisation is primed and ready to make a big noise about all the great work you're doing.

Tips for SMEs

Running a smaller organisation? There are lots of ways you can encourage your team to think about and improve their wellbeing at work for National Work Life Week.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Switch up the communication

Instead of virtual chats, why not make them phone calls or walk together outside? Enjoy some time in nature and get your steps in!

Share your stories

Ask your team to share what they are doing to aid their wellbeing during the week. It could be going for a run, spending time with loved ones, or taking up a new hobby.

Offer staff a different experience

Even if you don't have a big budget, there may be options, such as asking a local organisation if they can offer a virtual yoga class or meditation taster session.

Highlight what you've already got

Whether that's coffee catch-ups with the CEO, access to support via a virtual app, or group fitness sessions, make sure you shout about it. And always share your own flexible working to inspire others.

Working Families has a support package specifically tailored to the needs of smaller businesses - for more information head to [our website](#).

We also have **FREE** resources for **SMEs** about managing maternity leave, flexible working, and flexible recruitment, which you can [download here](#).



Resources and training

Running a training session for staff during National Work Life Week is a great way to show that you are actively encouraging a better balance at work.

Book early to avoid disappointment!

Lunch and Learn sessions

Are you looking to support your employees and managers to work flexibly, optimise team engagement, and ensure high productivity? Why not take a look at our updated **[lunch and learn programme?](#)** Each interactive 45-minute session, delivered by our experts, provides insight, guidance, and practical tips on a range of topics.

Flexible working group coaching

Our group coaching workshops will give you and your staff the strategies, skills, and tools they need to implement effective flexible working across your organisation. We can tailor the coaching for line managers, for employees, or for the senior leadership team and board. **[Watch our taster films.](#)**

Policy reviews and virtual consultancy

Our experts will help you **[review your policies](#)** and share with you what best practice looks like for flexible working and family-friendly policies. If you don't have policies, we can help you create them. We'll also provide you with comprehensive toolkits comprising tools, templates, factsheets, and guides for senior leaders and line managers.

 **Contact employers@workingfamilies.org.uk to find out more about what we offer.**

Life after National Work Life Week...

After a week of focusing on flexibility and creating a culture of wellbeing at work, it's easy to slip back into our old ways.

If you want to build a family-friendly, flexible organisation that works for your employees and delivers significant business benefits, then we can help.

Become a Working Families member

Keep your business at the forefront of best practice with a Working Families membership. Our membership scheme works for all types of organisations, regardless of size, maturity, and working dynamic.

The way to attract and retain the best talent, whatever sector you're in, is to make sure your ways of working are outstanding.

Members have access to a wealth of information, support from experts, and easily accessible toolkits designed to help you to create a new culture, mindset and behaviours to embed flexible, high performing ways of working within your business.

You can expect access to our Top Employers for Working Families Benchmark and in-depth analysis, regular round tables, network chair discussions and webinars, as well as newsletters and updates on changes to legislation, case studies, and opportunities to share ideas and best practices with the UK's leading employers.

Join today!
Email us
to find out more!





Get in touch

We would love to hear from you!

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Discover a flexible benefit that
works for everyone

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For more information on our work and mission, please visit

[workingfamilies.org.uk](https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)

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