

October 2023

National Work Life Week



Key takeaways for
employers who want
to go beyond flexibility

**Working
Families**

 Official Partner:
Bright Horizons.
Work + Family Solutions



Going beyond flexibility

This National Work Life Week, together with Bright Horizons, we surveyed parents to find out what matters to them. More than ever, parents are looking beyond flexible working to other family-friendly practices that will enable them to thrive. Employers who have the right approach to flexible working and who put supportive measures into action are the employers that others will need to catch up with. **Here's what we found:**

Culture is crucial

Having a culture that enables people to successfully balance their work with family life is a top priority for parents, in fact, seven in 10 parents agree it's incredibly important. Let employees know that you understand family life can be tough. Be open about family challenges, tackle taboo subjects head on, and encourage the sharing of experiences through coffee mornings, awareness days, and buddy schemes, so you can cultivate an environment where people can be themselves.

70%

of working parents said that a **"culture that encourages work/life balance"** was an important workplace benefit

Mental health matters

Many parents are under enormous stress due to the cost-of-living crisis or are facing fatigue and burnout following the pandemic, so it's understandable that two fifths (39%) of working parents want mental health support at work. As well as ensuring workloads are manageable, employers can help by normalising conversations around mental health and taking measures that prioritise wellbeing. Consider providing counselling, initiate or promote a peer support network, and train mental health first aiders to be a recognised point of contact for anyone who is in need of support.

2 in 5

working parents would like to see mental health support implemented at their workplace



Find the flex that fits

Flexible working goes way beyond hybrid or remote working – there are countless ways to work flexibly. As the research found, sometimes other forms, such as variable hours or term-time working, are preferable for parents. The most successful flexible working arrangements are those which have been worked out between the individual and the organisation, finding a solution which takes into consideration the needs of both.

Think about personal priorities

Employees are individuals, and as such they have differing priorities. Childcare support came only slightly behind mental health support when asked what workplace benefits mattered to them. Employers can support with childcare subsidies or loans to cover nursery deposits, and back-up care which can cover its own costs in absence management. Such measures can help parents, particularly women, to stay in work. Initiatives such as menopause advice, coaching, and mentoring can help employees feel valued as well as supporting their personal development. If it's not possible to provide these in-house, signposting to relevant support sends a similar message.

Access the benefits of flex

Being able to work flexibly isn't just good for your employees' wellbeing and ability to balance their caring responsibilities, the research showed it can also boost productivity and loyalty - a win for any employer wishing to reduce staff turnover. Plus, it can make the difference between some people, in particular women, being able to work or not, so it's good for closing the gender gap too.

Benefits of flexible work

89%
Agree

"I would feel **more loyal** to an employer who offered me flexible work opportunities, compared to one who didn't"

89%
Agree

"Access to flexible working arrangements has, or would have, a **positive effect** on my wellbeing"

86%
Agree

"Having access to my preferred flexible working pattern makes me/ would make me **more productive** at my job"

Information about the survey and figures included in this briefing

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 809 GB parents of children under 18. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th-12th September 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

For more information on our work, please visit:

workingfamilies.org.uk
solutions.brighthorizons.co.uk

Official Partner:

