

APPG for Flexible & Family Friendly Working

Working Families

Linking policy to employer best practice and experience

Shortly before the general election was called in 2024, Working Families established an All-Party Parliamentary Group on flexible working. This followed our close work with Parliamentarians to develop policy on flexible working, including the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Bill which we initiated and developed with Yasmin Qureshi MP. The group had to be disbanded due to parliamentary regulations when the election was called, but now having secured two highly engaged co-chairs we are ready to re-establish the group and move forwards with our ambitious plans to shape the future of work.

Working Families is now seeking a select group of corporate partners to join our founding members Wates, Zurich and TLT LLP and perform a vital role shaping the direction of the APPG and representing cross-sector employer best practice.

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are informal cross-party groups within Parliament. They are run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. APPGs may hold events in Parliament, run campaigns and issue reports, however, unlike a Select Committee they do not have official powers.



As the secretariat of this group Working Families would be recorded on the [APPG register](#) along with any 'benefits in kind' received for the running of the group from sponsoring parties i.e. the total collective value received from the group's sponsors would be listed along with their names.

Parliamentary Officers

Sarah Russell, Labour MP for Congleton

Sarah Russell was elected as MP for Congleton Constituency in July 2024. A former employment solicitor and school governor, she previously held a position on Manchester City Council.

Her interventions in Parliament have focused on employment rights and gender equality, recently making the case for better paternity leave to Keir Starmer during PMQs and securing a meeting to discuss this with the Employment Rights and Protections Minister and Working Families.



Joanna Penn, Baroness Penn



Baroness Penn was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 14 November 2023. She was appointed a Minister on leave (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State) on 1 March 2024, whilst she was on maternity leave.

She was previously Treasury Lords Minister in the UK Government from 30 October 2022 to 14 November 2023, and Baroness in Waiting (Government whip) from 19 March 2020 to 20 September 2022. She previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Theresa May from 2016 to 2019 and became the youngest member of the House of Lords when she joined the House on 21 October 2019. From 29 October 2019 to 21 April 2020, she was a member of the Lord's Science and Technology Committee.

Policy Influence Opportunities

Working Families will devise a programme of activities through the APPG including events, research and campaigns.

The group will hold meetings in Parliament with MPs and employer leaders on a quarterly basis, with additional task and finish meetings to advance the programme or to capitalise on relevant media or policy opportunities such as parliamentary inquiries and government consultations.

While Working Families continues to engage with departmental officials and other parties to influence the development of the Employment Rights Bill the following influencing priorities have been identified as areas where we believe we can make the most impact.

“Thanks to Working Families’ guidance and support, I secured amendments to my Private Member’s Bill introducing neo-natal care leave and pay ensuring low-income women and those needing to take early maternity leave will benefit from the new leave and pay entitlements.”

Stuart McDonald MP

Influence policy change on parental leave

Be part of the national conversation influencing the Government’s review of parental leave and pay. Help create a more balanced system for fathers and mothers, strengthen statutory pay provisions, and improve eligibility so that all families benefit.

Champion childcare reform to support working parents

Contribute to lobbying efforts that call for better support with upfront childcare costs. This change would enable more mothers to return to work sooner and reduce the “motherhood penalty,” helping employers retain experienced talent.

Promote the business case for flexible and family friendly working

Shape discussions in Parliament and beyond on the proven performance and productivity benefits of flexible working. Position your organisation as a leader in this space, particularly if you operate in sectors not traditionally seen as family friendly.

Sponsors will also have opportunities to showcase their own good practice, including through the Family Friendly Workplaces certification.

Shape the development of Gender Pay Gap Action Plans

Play a role in how these plans are designed and implemented to ensure they work for employers. By supporting measures such as flexible job design, transparent job adverts, and active promotion of carer and parental leave benefits, you will help widen and diversify talent pools, bringing real business benefits through access to a broader workforce.

Position your brand as a thought leader

Sponsorship provides high-profile opportunities to speak at Parliamentary events, contribute case studies, and be recognised as a founding member of an APPG committed to driving positive change in the world of work.

Network with Parliamentarians and employer peers

Join a select group of leading employers in dialogue with MPs, Peers, and senior policymakers, expanding your influence and strengthening your reputation as an employer of choice.

As a corporate partner, your organisation will be at the heart of this activity, informing areas of discussion and contributing best practice case studies.

Indicative Programme

	Spring	Summer	Autum	Winter
APPG roundtable themes	Inaugural meeting: Gender Pay Gap Action Plans	Reforming the UK's parental leave system	Barriers to Equal Parenting research findings	TBC
Policy and comms	Ad hoc policy development opportunities (input to consultations, meetings, case studies etc.) Comms opportunities promoting APPG projects or sponsor case studies			
Sponsor meetings	Quarterly check-ins and planning meetings			

Core Sponsor Benefits

📌 Direct access to policymakers and peers

Build relationships with Parliamentarians and senior employer leaders to shape the national agenda on flexible and family friendly working.

📌 A seat at the table on policy development

Contribute to APPG meetings, publications, and consultation responses that influence the future of work and caring in the UK.

📌 Profile and credibility as a sector leader

Showcase your organisation's commitment to family friendly working through speaking opportunities, Parliamentary panels, and case studies featured in APPG activity.

📌 Opportunities to showcase best practice

Highlight your HR policies, flexible working initiatives, or family support programmes as examples of leading practice in Parliament, APPG reports, and wider communications.

📌 Exclusive thought-leadership opportunities

Benefit from priority consideration for speaking roles across Working Families' wider events programme and campaigns.

📌 Brand visibility as a founding APPG sponsor

Be publicly recognised across APPG and Working Families channels as part of a select group of pioneering employers shaping the future of UK workplaces.

"Being one of the founding members of the APPG was a fantastic experience for us. As a business that has built its entire model around being family friendly and wants to do this while achieving ambitious commercial goals, we found the APPG an invaluable forum for sharing our views on how things could work. Being able to go to Westminster once a quarter and play a role in shaping policy is quite special and was a unique learning experience for our people who were involved in the group."

Saira Demmer, CEO SF Recruitment

About Working Families

Working Families has an established record of working with employers and Parliamentarians to influence policy and develop voluntary initiatives. This includes historic policy wins on Paternity and Shared Parental Leave, lobbying for greater flexibility on the Furlough Scheme and more recent campaigns with members of our Families and Work Group (a coalition of charities and civil society groups) around childcare and Universal Credit.

Following our Private Members Bill policy briefing sent to all MPs in May 2022, we have worked with several backbench MPs and officials at the Department of Business and Trade to bring forward a suite of Private Members Bills on flexible working, neo-natal care leave and pay, a right to request predictable contract hours, carers leave, and redundancy protections for pregnant women and new parents. In addition to initiating the flexible working and neonatal care bills with Yasmin Qureshi MP and Stuart McDonald MP we are extremely proud to have secured a technical amendment at the committee stage of the neo-natal care bill which changed the qualifying criteria meaning that lower-income mothers and those required to take early maternity leave would not miss out on their leave or pay entitlements.

We are Members of the Department for Business and Trade's Flexible Working Taskforce and the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Board. The taskforce will be promoting the new flexible working legislation with our 'Happy to Talk Flexible Working' trademark which we developed as a free resource for employers to use when advertising jobs.