



WORKING DADS EMPLOYER AWARDS

Support for Returning Fathers Case Study

Why is it important for PwC to support working dads?

Supporting returning fathers is incredibly important to PwC. We want our people to feel they can bring their whole selves to work and feel comfortable sharing their successes and challenges – including those around parenting. We want to ensure that our dads know they have the support from us in returning to work and feel comfortable managing their work life and their personal life. Supporting returning fathers also reinforces our gender equality actions – it enables our dads to be part of their families and feel they can have a positive work life balance.

What does your organisation do in the area of support for returning fathers?

At PwC we have put in place a lot of initiatives to support working parents and specifically returning dads. Firstly, we have a Parents and Carers Network, who raise awareness with the wider business on challenges and how we can best support each other. In terms of policy, we provide pre-leave and return-to-work coaching as well as backup care of 20 free sessions annually. We also offer up to 8 weeks of discretionary, paid premature births and neonatal care leave. We have increased our Paternity Leave offering to four weeks full pay, and Shared Parental Leave to 22 weeks at full pay. Dads can also access our comprehensive wellbeing support for parents and carers, e.g., resources to support physical, mental and financial wellbeing. All parents can also access our empowered flexibility policy that enables our people to decide the most effective working pattern on any given day.

What challenges did you face in making these changes?

One challenge we have had has been around how we respond to feedback

and requests from our employees once we created safe encouraging spaces for parents to raise concerns and suggest improvements. We have worked hard to use these personal insights and experiences to inform actions we have taken to support returning fathers and the sources of support we offer.

Another challenge is that it can be quite difficult sometimes to hone in areas where the firm can provide additional support. One of the things that we do to help determine this is use our Parents and Carers Network (SPACE network) which has chat room spaces that are dedicated to different topics and we seek feedback on the specific areas we can improve upon.

How did your leadership team help create this change?

Our People Networks (including our Parents and Carers Network) have a Senior Partner who sponsors the network. Working with the network we develop proposals using their insights and feedback that informs the actions we need to take and support the business case when proposals are taken to People Leadership for approval. Our Chief Head of People himself is a member of our Parents and Carers Network.

How do you communicate your support for working dads?

We share firmwide stories across our internal news channels of the experiences of our working dads. Our Parents and Carers Network, SPACE, has 2200+ members sharing information, providing support through their buddy network and networking. SPACE has a dedicated sub-group for Dads which hosts regular events and coffee sessions, inviting dads at PwC to get together and share their experiences and provide support and advice. Topics that have been highlighted and discussed: men's mental health, Shared Parental Leave,



PwC UK LLP is a global professional services organisation. We have over 26,000 members of staff across the UK and our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems – this informs the services we provide to our clients and the decisions we make. Our vision is to be a leading organisation for inclusion and belonging with our people, clients, and external stakeholders, a leading destination for diverse talent, recognised for diverse and inclusive solvers who build trust and deliver sustained outcomes.

becoming a new father, divorce & separation, equal parenting and solo parenting. We consult with our people to get their insights on the issues that matter and their feedback on our proposals for support. To support our returning dads, we shared stories and experiences of our working dads across our firmwide channels – encouraging others to do the same – letting our staff know they weren't alone.

One area that we have found that we've had to really work on and focus is actually how you get information to somebody before they actually need it. An area that we do specifically focus on is recruitment and also careers advice. And what we mean by that is effectively how we let people know what support we have within PwC before applying for a role. We think it is important that somebody understands the types of policies, support and networks that we do have in the firm that will be ready for supporting them as they come into the firm.



What has been the impact of this work?

We have seen many positive outcomes from our work to support dads across PwC that has helped families and supported us to be a more inclusive employer. 'Dads Do Chat' was created to help promote discussion amongst fathers, to date 350 individual 1-2-1 sessions have been run totalling 1000 hours worth of discussion. The Dads in SPACE community now has nearly 500 members from all areas of the business including representation from all grades, office locations and backgrounds. Many of our staff have shared their positive stories externally as well on our career sites. We know support for working parents is an area people want to check when considering who to work for, which is why we provide details of the support we provide parents on our careers site.

"As a first-time dad, the leave gave me the opportunity to spend time with my child, establish myself as a parent and support my wife. The level of support offered to dads is above and beyond the Government legislation from a financial perspective, making it much more feasible for expecting dads to take extended leave".

Tom Kirkham, Director

Furthermore, you need to make sure that people have the right information up front which is important from an inclusion perspective, but also staff retention as well.

What have you learnt through this process?

What works really well is storytelling – people sharing their experiences. Not only does it create a community for support but it also raises awareness of the sources of support out there. The other thing that has worked well is working closely with the network, gaining insights and feedback from members on what is /is not working and using that to inform actions.

Next Steps

We will continue to monitor our membership and activity in our Parents and Carers Network and continue to work with the Co-Chairs of the Network so ensure that we are supporting our returning dads. We also have a Staff Diversity Council and People Council. Our Staff Diversity Council provides feedback, ideas and insights on our Inclusion strategy and action plans and include representatives from our different communities at PwC. Our People Council is made up of representatives from across the firm who share their thoughts and feedback on our People strategy and practices. Both these councils include a number of working dads whom we meet with regularly to hear their feedback on our policies and practices.

What is your advice to other organisations interested in doing more to support working dads?

There are four pieces of advice we would pass on. First, it is important that you are talking to your staff and you understand potentially some of the barriers that they're facing within the firm, but also really listening and bringing them into some of the discussions so that you have a different perspective and are avoiding assumptions. Through these discussions and feedback you can implement initiatives that reflect the needs of your staff. Secondly, it's about trust. Trusting your staff to do the best that they can do within their working day. Thirdly, look at some of the policies that you have in the firm and look at different ways of utilising them. For example, we have a flexible working policy and we also have opportunities where somebody could work part time, but also as a shared role with somebody else in the firm (jobshare). Really look at some of the ways that you can evolve some of your policies to matter. Our fourth piece of advice would be consistent communications. It is important to consistently communicate to your people, for example, if you are updating policies or sharing new success stories or perhaps about something that isn't working. Make sure that your organisation consistently sends messages out to your network and make sure to do it in line with your wider inclusion goals and campaigns as well.

Information accurate as of 2023.

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