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Are you doing all you could be to support working parents?

Parents have it tough these days, and not just when they're trying to wrestle screens away from their children!

More families than ever have both parents working – the cost of living means being a stay-at-home parent is unrealistic for most. Dealing with work commitments and home life can become a delicate balancing act. Not to mention the spiralling cost of childcare that many families have to fork out for.

Although the government has plans in place to give more parents access to free childcare, these won't come into force until September 2025. That doesn't help anyone right now.

Traditionally, some employers have shied away from hiring parents under the impression they're unreliable, unfocussed, or uncommitted. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Times are changing, and businesses are seeing that the positives of hiring parents far outweigh the negatives. If you have the right company culture that is.

So, what can you do to create a family-friendly business culture and attract and retain new talent in the shape of working parents?

First, you need to be aware of the leave, benefits and entitlements that apply to parents. These can be relevant to anyone from the moment they're expecting, to the time their youngest child turns 18. They also apply to cases of adoption, surrogacy, LGBTQIA+ families, and in cases of pregnancy or neonatal loss.



You should also look at other ways you can support parents, by considering flexible working arrangements (which can apply to everyone, not only parents), and other perks you may be able to offer to help strike a good work/life balance.

The more you do to support working parents, the more you'll see in return. It's likely you'll see more engaged, motivated, and productive employees who are happy in their roles and will stay with you for years to come.

Supporting parents can be simple if you understand the help that's available to both your business and its employees. I've written a new guide that details everything you need to know about parents and the help available, as well as the laws you need to be aware of.

We'd love to offer you a free copy. Get in touch!

LATEST NEWS

Drop in job vacancies puts productivity at risk

The number of job vacancies took a dramatic fall at the beginning of the year. And fewer opportunities for employees could lead to a drop in motivation – and productivity.

To combat this, employers need to place a focus on retaining their best people instead, with reward and recognition incentives.

While recognition can come in the form of a simple “well done”, according to new research, 86% of employees would feel valued at work if they received a surprise gift voucher worth £150. 57% said bonuses and regular rewards help them feel more valued.

When should a GP become involved in sick leave?

A recent tribunal found a business guilty of unfair dismissal and harassment when an employer contacted an employee’s GP regarding her mental health history, without consent.

To avoid a situation like this, it’s important you have an effective absence management policy in place. In cases of long-term sickness, conducting welfare meetings, showing care and concern for employees, and making reasonable adjustments to help them back to work is key.

Never be tempted to act before consulting an HR professional if you’re unsure of the best steps to take!

The number of employees signed off work has hit an all-time high post-Covid. The number of fit notes issued has risen by 11%. It’s possible this is due to an increase in mental health problems, Covid restrictions being lifted, and people moving back to offices.

It’s Pride Month! Are you getting involved?



If your business is doing things the right way, you’ll have a LOT of policies. Maternity policies, absence policies, we even have policies for internet use. And while you’ve hopefully got an inclusion and diversity policy, does it have a specific LGBTQIA+ inclusion section?

If not, it’s time you made a change.

While we’re fortunately seeing more acceptance of LGBTQIA+ communities, there are still occasions where LGBTQIA+ employees feel discriminated against, judged, or bullied simply for being themselves.

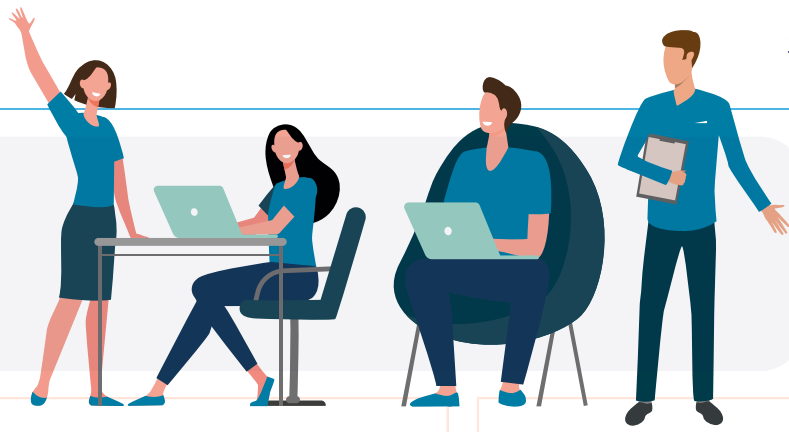
As an inclusive employer, it’s your job to make clear the repercussions of bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind, but that’s not the only thing you can do to make sure this behaviour doesn’t happen in your business.

Educate your employees with diversity training and awareness. Bring in LGBTQIA+ speakers or hold workshops that help everyone in the business understand the language to avoid in order to improve cohesion, but also to help them realise the difficulties that some LGBTQIA+ members face on a daily basis.

If you have LGBTQIA+ employees, don’t forget to speak to them to see what changes they think are needed in your business, if any. Take their feedback, their suggestions, and listen to their concerns. Likewise, let them know what to do if they feel they’re being harassed, bullied, or discriminated against at work, or by colleagues outside of work. Make sure they know who they should report any issues to, and the process for dealing with problems.

Inclusion and diversity is a big subject, but it’s important to ensure everyone is treated equally, fairly, and given the same opportunities. If you need any help or guidance on making the right changes in your business this Pride Month, give us a call.

Q&A



Can I decrease someone's pay?

This would be a variation of the employee's contract of employment. However, if you and your employee agree to a reduced wage, it's ok. Providing it still meets National Minimum Wage requirements.

Can I legally hire someone on a zero-hour contract?

Zero-hour contracts are legal, providing you abide by employee's statutory rights, including the right to National Minimum Wage, paid holiday, and rest breaks.

Can I make someone redundant while they're on maternity leave?

Yes. However, you can't make someone redundant because they're on maternity leave, and there's a strict process you must follow to avoid unfair dismissal or discrimination accusations.

Let's talk on the phone

Here are three questions for you:

- Do you currently have a HR consultant?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with them?
- If the answer isn't "I'm so delighted I could print 1,000 flyers to spread the word about them", let's jump on a video call

You know just how important it is to get proactive, responsive HR support. That's what we do. And we're taking on new clients.



Set up a 15 minute exploratory call at www.pshumanresources.co.uk



**YOUR HR EXPERT:
EMMA SHEPPARD**