



equality for single parents

## Single Parent Inclusive HR Policies

There are 2.9 million single parents in the UK with 70% employed outside the home. Single parents are a valuable asset, and the motherhood advantage<sup>1</sup> can be seen time and again in single parents work ethic, from determination and multitasking to motivation and efficiency.

Single Parent Rights works with single parents and employers to try and find ways to ensure single parents have equality and equity within the workplace through effective policies and supportive workplace environments. You can find out more on our website at: [www.singleparentrights.org](http://www.singleparentrights.org)

The policies outlined below are designed to help your employees be the best they can be, while enabling your organisation to succeed.

If you would like us to come and talk to your organisation about single parent inclusion in the workplace, please contact us on [singleparentrights@gmail.com](mailto:singleparentrights@gmail.com)

### Key policies

- Ensure your organisations carer policy specifically considers the needs of single parents
- Implement and encourage the use of carers passports<sup>2</sup> and ensure single parenting responsibilities and the support and services available are covered

### Flexible work

- Make all roles flexible by default and advertise them with flexible working opportunities
- Allow employees to request flexible working at any point in their career and work together constructively to find staffing solutions that fit employees' individual circumstances
- Prioritise flexible working requests from single parents

### Parental leave

- Provide paid parental leave with an additional entitlement for single parents
- Have a flexible approach to the criteria for parental leave days e.g., allow reasons beyond illness/ medical appointments such as education, court cases and social services
- Provide flexible parental leave which can be taken in hour blocks for appointments as needed

### Professional development

- Where possible ensure professional development opportunities are within core working hours
- Establish a single parent mentoring scheme/prioritise single parents alongside other marginalised groups in existing mentoring schemes and hold sessions within core working hours
- Map and promote potential 'progression pathways' for staff, including those on lower-level roles/ part-time hours

### Wellbeing and supportive workplace environment

- Establish a single parent staff support group, this could be a sub-group as part of a parents/ carers network
- Create a workplace environment where staff feel comfortable sharing their single parenting details to line managers/ via the carers passport
- Promote positive attitudes towards single parents throughout the organisation
- Prioritise single parents in wellbeing services

<sup>1</sup> <https://slate.com/human-interest/2018/06/the-motherhood-advantage-the-evidence-suggests-that-becoming-a-mother-makes-women-better-not-worse-at-work.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/carer-passport-scheme>

## Childcare

- Reimburse childcare costs single parents might incur for activities outside core hours
- Have a clear policy on a reasonable notification period for employees to participate in work related activities outside of core hours e.g., overtime, professional development opportunities

## Diversity and inclusion

- Include single parents as a core group alongside protected characteristics within the diversity and inclusion strategy and staff training and line management training to address the unconscious bias, stigma and discrimination single parents often face
- Add single parent as a category on staff monitoring data and staff surveys so the impact of policies, practices and culture on single parents can be monitored and addressed as necessary
- Provide mandatory training for all line managers covering policies, processes and their role in supporting single parent employees and creating a positive environment for single parents

## Pensions

- Where single parents are not eligible for auto-enrolment, encourage single parents to opt in
- Provide a minimum contribution of 3% for single parents from the first £1 of earning

## Maternity/paternity/ adoption leave and fertility treatment

- Provide longer paid maternity/ adoption leave to compensate for the absence of any paid paternity/second parent leave
- Support single parents/ single adults undergoing fertility treatment/ adoption process by allowing time off for appointments

## Divorce, separation, and loss of a partner

- Ensure compassionate leave policies account for the additional pressures on employees who have lost a partner and have a child(ren)
- Ensure your organisation has a policy in place to support staff through divorce and separation, accounting for the additional pressures on those who have a child(ren)