



WORKING DADS EMPLOYER AWARDS

Parenting Policies Case Study

Why is it important for PepsiCo UK and Ireland to support working dads?

At PepsiCo UK and Ireland, supporting fathers is key to fostering our inclusive culture. We recognise that all parents should have the opportunity to thrive both at work and at home, and the organisation offers a wide range of inclusive benefits designed to support this balance. Enhanced (paying significantly above the statutory rate and offering longer periods of leave) family leave policies reflect our commitment to helping employees manage both professional and personal responsibilities, ensuring fathers have the time and flexibility to connect with and support their families. By championing parental wellbeing and encouraging active fatherhood, we promote a workplace where all employees feel valued and supported. This approach benefits employee morale and retention while helping to build a fair, high-performing organisation where individuals and the business can thrive together.

What does PepsiCo UK and Ireland offer in terms of parenting policies?

We have introduced enhanced parenting policies to support employees through various stages of family life. These include our Extended Parental Leave policies, which provides 26 weeks at full pay (maternity) and Short-Term Parental/Paternity Leave of 10 weeks at full pay for employees with at least one year of service. These policies are also applicable for colleagues' taking adoption and surrogacy leave. We recognise there are many ways that a family is built and, as such, this is also reflected in the wording of our policies.

To further support returning parents, including fathers, the Parent & Carer Employee Resource Group runs a

buddy scheme that connects new or returning parents with colleagues who have recently returned from leave. This peer support initiative helps ease the transition back to work and has received consistently positive feedback. It exemplifies our dedication to creating a workplace where all colleagues can thrive, regardless of their caregiving responsibilities.

What were the biggest challenges to overcome and how did you overcome them?

One of the main challenges in implementing the parenting initiatives was the lack of data on the number of fathers taking paternity leave. Additionally, aligning best practices for managing workload and coverage during the 10-week leave period presented difficulties, as practices varied across different departments and locations. To address these issues, we estimated the cost of backfilling roles by analysing maternity leave utilisation rates and workforce size, differentiating between factory and office-based roles.

With both fathers' and business needs in mind, we also introduced greater flexibility by offering options for how the 10 weeks can be taken, either as 1 entire block, or separated into 2 blocks.

What information did you gather to persuade SMT or the organisation more broadly that this was the right thing to do?

The UK Total Rewards Team conducted a nationwide employee survey to identify the benefits that mattered most, using sliding scales to assess priorities across multiple offerings. This approach provided detailed insight into employee preferences and needs. Additionally, the team performed annual benchmarking against market standards to evaluate current benefit offerings. These



PepsiCo UK and Ireland is a leading food and beverage company with over 40 years of heritage in the UK. It employs a diverse workforce and places a strong emphasis on innovation, operational care, and long-term sustainability. Environmental and social responsibility are integrated into its operations through agricultural partnerships and community initiatives. PepsiCo UK and Ireland also maintains a firm commitment to inclusion, aiming to ensure that both its internal culture and its products reflect the diversity of the communities it serves.

data-driven activities supported the organisation's strategic focus on becoming an employer of choice by attracting and retaining top talent, which is one of our ongoing priorities.

How did your leadership team help create this change?

Insights from the benefits survey and market data informed a proposal



that was presented to the leadership team for approval. The UK Total Rewards Team collaborated closely with Employee Resource Groups, particularly the Parents & Carers Network, to develop policies and guidance. Leadership actively promoted the initiatives, with several Executive Sponsors, many of whom are parents or carers, taking extended leave to role model the desired behaviours. To maintain momentum, monthly leadership communications were introduced to raise awareness and encourage uptake. The policies are also reinforced through company-wide events and executive communications to embed lasting change.

How did you communicate the change to the organisation and more broadly?

Our enhanced parental leave policies were launched by the UK General Manager and HR Vice President during a company-wide Town Hall, followed by targeted emails and continued support from the Parents & Carers Employee Resource Group. Senior sponsors, including a member of the UK Executive Team, actively promote policy uptake. Real-life stories from fathers have been shared internally and externally to demonstrate the policy's impact. Communication channels for factory teams include print magazines, plasma screens, and local engagement forums. These efforts align with the wider inclusion strategy and are highlighted during key events such as International Women's Day and Father's Day.

What has been the impact of the new policy?

Positive engagement with the policy has been observed across all levels of the organisation, from leadership to colleagues, encouraging meaningful conversations between line managers and teams. The policy was featured in Father's Day and Pride Month communications, emphasising its inclusivity and recognition of diverse family structures. The Buddy Scheme matched 30 pairs in 2023 and 28 in 2024, offering valuable peer support. A Father's Day social post from a colleague stated, "Ten weeks of leave



has been a game-changer, for me as a dad, my family, and understanding parental leave experiences."

The impact of these initiatives on the organisation and staff has been significant. A 2024 Organisational Health survey indicates a 5% increase in men feeling comfortable to leverage flexible policies to manage work and life, a rise also reflected across our overall professional population. Engagement scores rose by +3 UK-wide and +7 among frontline staff. One colleague stated, "PepsiCo updated their parental leave, showing the company listens and puts employees first."

What have you learnt through this process?

Close collaboration between the Parents & Carers Employee Resource Group and the UK Total Rewards Team has been essential in shaping effective parenting policies. Maintaining ongoing engagement with stakeholders through inform-and-consult channels ensured policies remained relevant and supportive. This process highlighted the importance of continuous review and adaptation, leading to the development of new policies such as neonatal leave and pregnancy/baby loss leave, alongside supportive guidance for managers.

What about next steps?

We plan to continue collaboration with the Parents & Carers Employee Resource Group and other stakeholders to keep parenting policies and guidance up to date. Recent initiatives that have launched, include a neonatal leave

What advice would you give other organisations wanting to support working dads?

Our advice to other organisations considering similar changes is to start by understanding your community and truly understanding your workforce's needs through surveys or informal conversations, even in small teams. Identify who you are serving, what they need, and how you can best support them. Insight-driven plans are the most impactful. Collaborate closely between HR and any employee networks or champions to co-create parenting support initiatives, as this partnership drives real change. Prioritise quality over quantity by implementing a few targeted policies exceptionally well and openly share stories to build a culture that values and normalises paternal involvement. Engage with industry leaders and networks to stay informed about effective strategies. Sharing success stories and challenges can inspire change. Continuous learning and adaptation are key to fostering a supportive environment for working fathers.

policy aligned with government announcements and a pregnancy and baby loss leave policy with a supporting manager's guide. These steps reflect an ongoing commitment to expanding family-friendly policies and ensuring support structures evolve to meet employee needs and we continue to review our policies and benefits to enhance our employee experience.

Information accurate as of 2025.

Contact us:

sarah.forbes@york.ac.uk
h.birkett@bham.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM