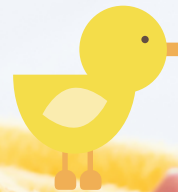
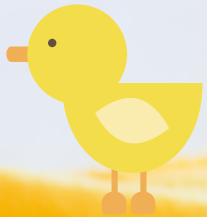


A baby is sitting on a white bed, wearing a yellow duck-shaped hood and a matching yellow blanket. The baby is smiling and looking to the right. The background is a blurred room with blue and white pillows.

Managing parents-to-be

The EMIS guide to handling growing families



Contents

Manager checklist for someone going on leave..... 3

Having the conversation..... 4

I’m not an expert with parental policies – who do I ask? 5

My team member is concerned about the security of their role..... 6

I’ve been asked to offer flexible working. What now? 7

KIT days with purpose 9

What happens when someone comes back into the business? 11

How do I coordinate a returner’s induction and handover? 12

Is there a ‘settling back in’ period? 14



Clicking any of the links above will take you to the chosen page

Managing parents-to-be

Manager checklist for someone going on leave

- Maintain an open dialogue with the team member all the way through to their return
- Communicate with the team about what is happening
- Complete the Health & Safety Workplace Assessment
- Set up a meeting with HR and our **Family Friendly Expert** to organise a plan
- Think about the backfill as early as possible – do you need to recruit or will work be distributed among team?
- Prepare and support the handover process so you are clear what’s happening and ensure nothing is missed
- Agree the desired level and frequency of communication during leave – this is different for everyone
- Ensure up-to-date contact details are loaded in Heart
- Conduct a review and agree the performance rating before Leave commences
- Make sure an out-of-office is switched on once the team member goes on leave



Managing parents-to-be

Having the conversation

So your employee has told you they are expecting a baby or adopting. What great news! But as a line manager if you have never dealt with growing families before, this may feel daunting. And that's why we want to help you to feel as prepared as you possibly can.

There are policies and procedures in place to ensure you're able to cope with the increased pressure on the business that having someone on leave may bring.

You can also reach out to the [Manager network](#) on Workplace for advice and support for preparing for one of your team to go on Leave.

► [Click to access the EMIS Manager Network](#)

What you need to focus on right now is supporting the parent-to-be.

Your team member will ideally have requested a meeting to share their news, but they may just spring it on you. However they go about telling you, make sure you receive their news positively and appropriately. It's important that they feel they have your support and that you're putting them at the centre of the dialogue, rather than the impact on the business.



Managing parents-to-be

I'm not an expert with parental policies – who do I ask?

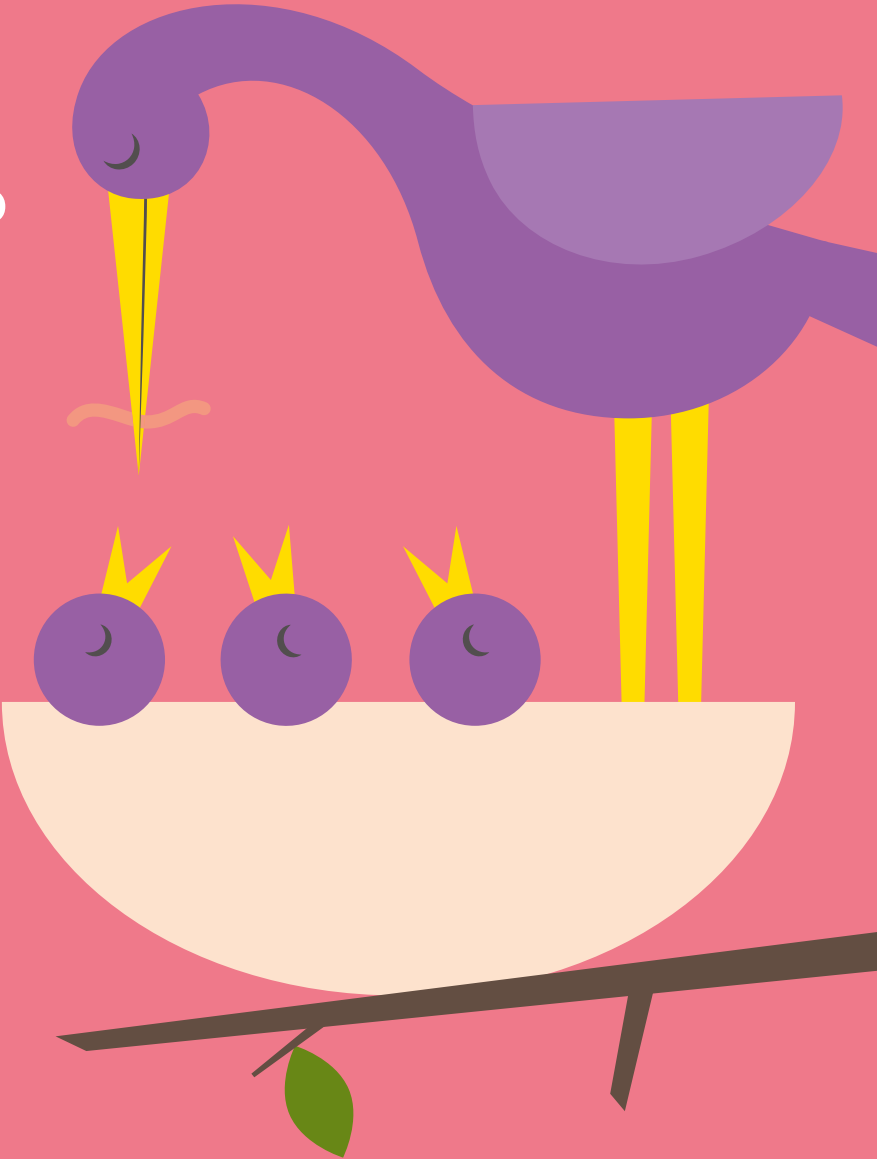
We have a dedicated [Family Friendly Expert](#) within our HR Division who will be able to give you official, accurate and reliable advice on anything related to parental policies.

Then there's also your HR Business Partner, who'll also be there to support you with any concerns or questions you might have. They can also help you in planning for the period where your team member will be out of the business.

Of course, there's plenty within this document and all the other documentation we've pointed you towards to help answer any questions.

But if there's anything that's not clear, anything that's not covered or anything you just feel like you need a bit more support with, come to us and we'll work through it together.

► [Click to learn more about our Family Friendly Expert](#)



Managing parents-to-be

My team member is concerned about the security of their role

It's not so much whether they'll have a role or not when they come back (they know they will). More that they're worried about how the role might change while they're away.

It's a valid question. There are a number of reasons that it might:

1. Departmental goals might change while they're on leave
2. The role might take on new, extra responsibilities as a result of other factors (e.g. someone leaving the business)
3. The role might handover certain responsibilities to someone and these might take time to transition back
4. The business might adopt new technology while they're on leave

These are just examples, but these are the kinds of things people will be thinking about, so it's important to be realistic but reassuring.

Make sure the returning parent knows that there'll be a full and proper induction upon their return.

► [Click here to view our various family policies](#)

Remind them that they can keep up to date while they're out of the business with KIT days.

If they need new skills to come back to the role, tell them you'll make sure they're trained and supported.

If someone else picks up their responsibilities, reassure them that a full and proper handover will be given, including any new findings that contribute to the improved carrying out of the role.

We can't guarantee that they will return to the exact same role as before, but you can assure them that, as a business, we're committed to ensuring that people with growing families enjoy all the same opportunities to develop and shape their roles in line with the rest of the business.

To gain a thorough understanding of our legal obligations as an employer, please read through our various family policies [here](#).

Managing parents-to-be

I've been asked to offer flexible working. What now?

Some returning parents slip naturally back into work. With others, the transition can be a little more challenging.

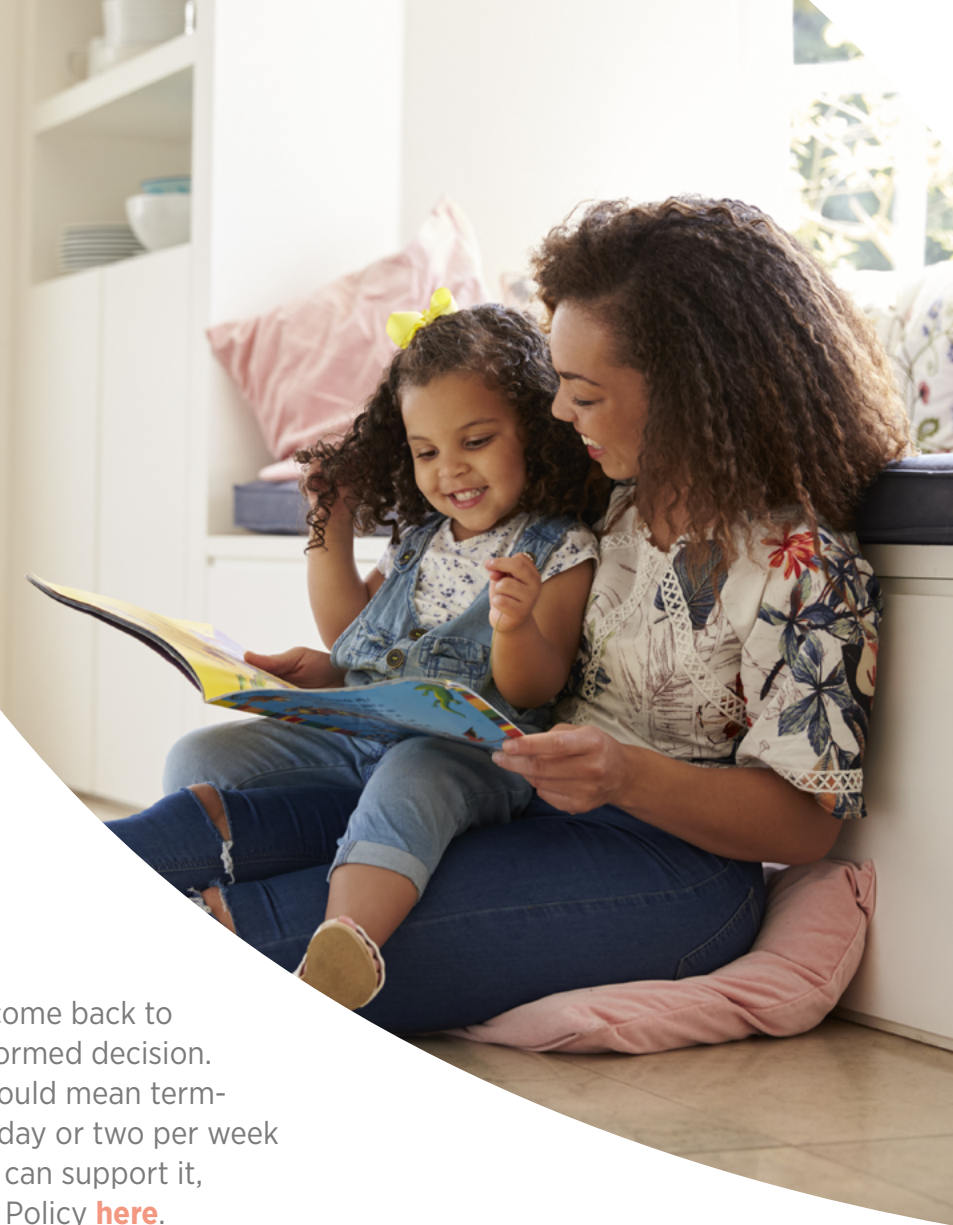
So, don't be surprised if you receive a request for flexible working.

It's one of the toughest challenges to deal with because:

1. You always have to consider the needs of the business
2. You have a duty of care for the needs of your team member
3. You may feel emotionally drawn in one direction or another

The first thing to do, if you do receive such a request, is to ask your team member to come back to you with a fully formed idea of how they would see it working so you can make an informed decision. Flexible working can cover a whole range of scenarios. It may be reduced hours, but could mean term-time only or condensed hours, or being able to drop their child at nursery or school a day or two per week before work. Whatever their request, in order for you and the business to decide if we can support it, we need to understand the reasons behind it. You can read the EMIS Flexible Working Policy [here](#).

► [Click to read the EMIS Flexible Working Policy here](#)



Managing parents-to-be

I've been asked to offer flexible working. What now? (continued)

On receiving a flexible working request, make sure to tell them that you understand their position and can't promise anything but will consider it. You don't want to give false hope, but you do think it's important to hear what they have in mind and how it might work.

This gives you the chance to analyse the feasibility and potential benefits/cost to the business.

If the answer is 'yes':

- Engage with HR to ensure contractual changes are made accordingly
- Plan the on-going workload thoroughly – resources, time and cost
- Make sure the team member knows that, should the workload demand it, it is at your discretion as to whether or not you recruit additional people to meet that demand
- Be clear that, once the new flexible working arrangement is in place, it cannot simply be overturned and is only subject to review after an initial 12-month period

- Reassure the team member of their value to the business and remind them that their standard of work is not expected to change as a result of the new arrangement

If the answer is 'no':

- Engage first with your HRBP to discuss your rationale for not approving the request
- Be thorough in your response – explain your decision-making process so that you do not risk the loyalty, motivation or trust of your team member
- Ensure that your reasoning is consistent with responses you have given to any similar requests for flexibility – it's vital that you are fair
- Be authoritative – your decision is at your discretion
- Only offer to review the circumstances at a later point if you foresee the potential for change
- Again, reassure the team member of their value to the business



Managing parents-to-be

KIT days with purpose

Keep In Touch (or KIT) days are a great way to reassure people on leave of the security of their position and keep them updated on the business. They help our people feel comfortable that they know what's going on while they're away and what to expect when they come back. In short, they help people to realise that becoming a new parent doesn't mean being shut-off from your professional life.

They're also great from a business perspective. Organised effectively, a KIT day should enable you to keep your team member on leave informed of any and all essential information that will affect them upon their return. After all, things change fast in a business like ours – not least the tech – and it's important that we don't bombard anyone coming back into the business with too much information.

We're able to offer up to 10 KIT days without it impacting upon Statutory Maternity or Shared Parental Payment. But it's important that you plan them, if they're going to have a positive impact for both parties. Make sure you talk to your team member and ask what they want to achieve from it.



Managing parents-to-be

KIT days with purpose (continued)

Then talk to whoever is providing cover so that they can give a one-to-one update. Also, include a session to help them get back up to speed with other members of the team so they're able to do a semi-formal update. And make sure everyone is ready to contribute.

It's important that you arrange for them to come in at a time that is going to really benefit them. For example, when there's going to be a team meeting, away day or business update session. Or potentially more socially rewarding times when everyone's in the office.

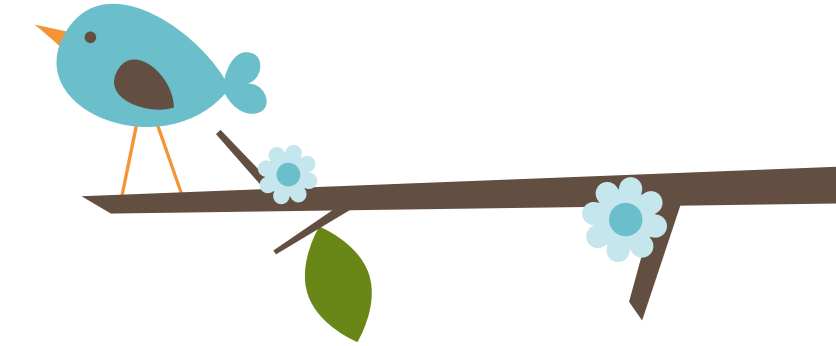
If someone uses a KIT day, you must make sure they get paid for it. On completion you need to **raise a ticket** with HR Shared Services to let them know a KIT day has been used and they will do the rest.

► [Click to raise an HR ticket](#)



Managing parents-to-be

What happens when someone comes back into the business?



First thing's first – the focus must be on the returning parent.

Put yourself in their shoes. Even with KIT days, there may be some anxiety as they leave their child for the first time. Also be mindful that when most infants start childcare they pick up a huge range of bugs that most parents catch too. So, be conscious that in the early weeks and months of their return to work, your team member will likely feel ill, be lacking in sleep and feel guilty for not being with their ill child. All at the same time as feeling guilty that they're not as focused on work as they should be. It's a lot of pressure! All that, plus coming back into a role they haven't carried out for a good while. So be sympathetic and empathic.

It's vitally important that they have a soft landing back into the world of EMIS. So be prepared they may be a bit late in as they get used to the new balance of working and parenting. Encourage them to leave work on time. Be flexible and supportive, as that will not only put your team member in a better frame of mind to do their work, but will encourage their loyalty to you as a line manager and EMIS as a business.

If your team member is field based, consider the amount of travel they do in their role and help them keep the distances short in the initial weeks as they get used to juggling work and childcare.

You might want to see if they'd prefer a phased return and use up their accrued holiday to soften the process of them coming back. This will allow a more thorough, less daunting handover. Whichever way they decide to return, though, there are two things you must do:

1. A full and proper handover from the person providing cover
2. An induction back into the department and business that covers all notable changes within both (so be sure to keep a note of anything relevant that happens when they're off to help with this)

You might think that KIT days have given the team member everything they need to just slot back in, but the more you can do to enable that, the better. So be thorough.

Managing parents-to-be

How do I coordinate a returner's induction and handover?

Coordinating a return is much like coordinating a new starter. The major difference is that you're working with someone who already knows a lot about the business, so in some cases it can require a bit more sensitivity.

First of all, let's take a look at the induction.

- Do:** Speak to IT to make sure they're set up with all the systems they need (old and new). They may also have forgotten their passwords so make sure you know how to contact Group IT to get them reset
Don't: Presume that nothing will have lapsed and that all the equipment or systems they use won't need checking
- Do:** Make sure to cover any and all changes to the business, department and role that are going to impact on the returner
Don't: Patronise the returner by telling them what they already know
- Do:** Be sure to introduce the returner to new people in the team and give them a 360° view of the business as it now appears
Don't: Make them shadow in change-affected areas that won't affect their role in any capacity
- Do:** Expect returners to be both eager to learn new information but also wary of treating them like a new starter
Don't: Lose patience if you run into a few bumps along the way – they may be a bit slow to get into the swing of things and quite possibly sleep deprived, so be sensitive and keep two-way communication high
- Do:** Have a wrap-up meeting to discuss their view on things having had some time out of the business, now they've been reintroduced to it
Don't: Just make it about ensuring they know what they're doing. Also give them the opportunity to input into the new developments and to add value from the moment they return

Now, let's take a look at the handover.

- Do:** Use the returner's initial handover to follow-up on projects that were live at the point of their going on leave
Don't: Feel as though you have to send them a copy of every email that was sent from the day they went on leave – it's about covering all the major action points that have taken place
- Do:** Ensure that all projects that got underway after the returner went on leave are treated as new projects – so give a full brief; show what has been done so far with rationales as to why; compile a to-do list and a list of key stakeholders, their roles and their contacts
Don't: Assume a level of knowledge greater than the information you handover
- Do:** Remember to acknowledge and show appreciation for the work carried out by the person who provided cover and make them feel good about it. At the same time, welcome the returner and let them know you're glad they're back
Don't: Show favour to either the returner or the person providing cover. The reputation of EMIS as an employer hangs on how we treat people both coming into and exiting the business
- Do:** Keep it easy to understand and methodical. If there's too much to take in, it will become overwhelming
Don't: Miss information out because you're worried about overloading the returner with detail. Just break that information down into smaller chunks instead
- Do:** Consult with everyone involved in projects to make sure the person providing cover has detailed everything that needed to be in the handover
Don't: Delegate responsibility for actually doing the handover to multiple people – it should be put together, and delivered, by the person providing cover and you as their line manager



Managing parents-to-be

Is there a 'settling back in' period?

It's different for everyone who's been on leave. Some people slot right back in. Others take a bit more time. You will be absolutely key to helping them feel comfortable in their role again, so be sure to stay in touch regularly.

The best way to continually gauge this is to set up regular one-to-ones and actively follow the progress of the returner back into the business.

Focus on performance, of course, but also on the emotional side of being back in work – what does it *feel* like after taking time out of the business.

Make sure you set reasonable goals with more challenging KPIs as time goes by. No one wants to be thrown in at the deep end, but nor do they want to stagnate – you don't need to be so protective of returning parents that you stop them from achieving their professional goals.

Keep tabs on the returner's need for flexibility. If the 'settling back in' period feels like it's taking longer than it should, explore with the new parent what extra support they may need, for example how greater work-life balance might contribute to improved performance. If things still don't feel like they are getting back on track, speak to HR about how to set some goals their performance can be measured against.

