



# Parental Leave Toolkit & Coaching Impact Survey 2021

Insights from client employees who have experienced Bright Horizons Parental Leave Toolkit and / or Parent Transition Coaching





# Executive Summary and Context

This research shows that the existence of a programme to empower an individual team member and their line manager through the parent transition has a huge impact on engagement and retention.

Line managers in our survey provided 100% positive approval ratings. Among individual users, well over 9 in 10 survey respondents felt it encouraged a positive view of their employer and nearly 9 in 10 found it boosted confidence, showed support for wellbeing, and helped to keep their career on track.

These latter two points

are vital to the employer who genuinely seeks to support this transition from a personal and professional perspective.

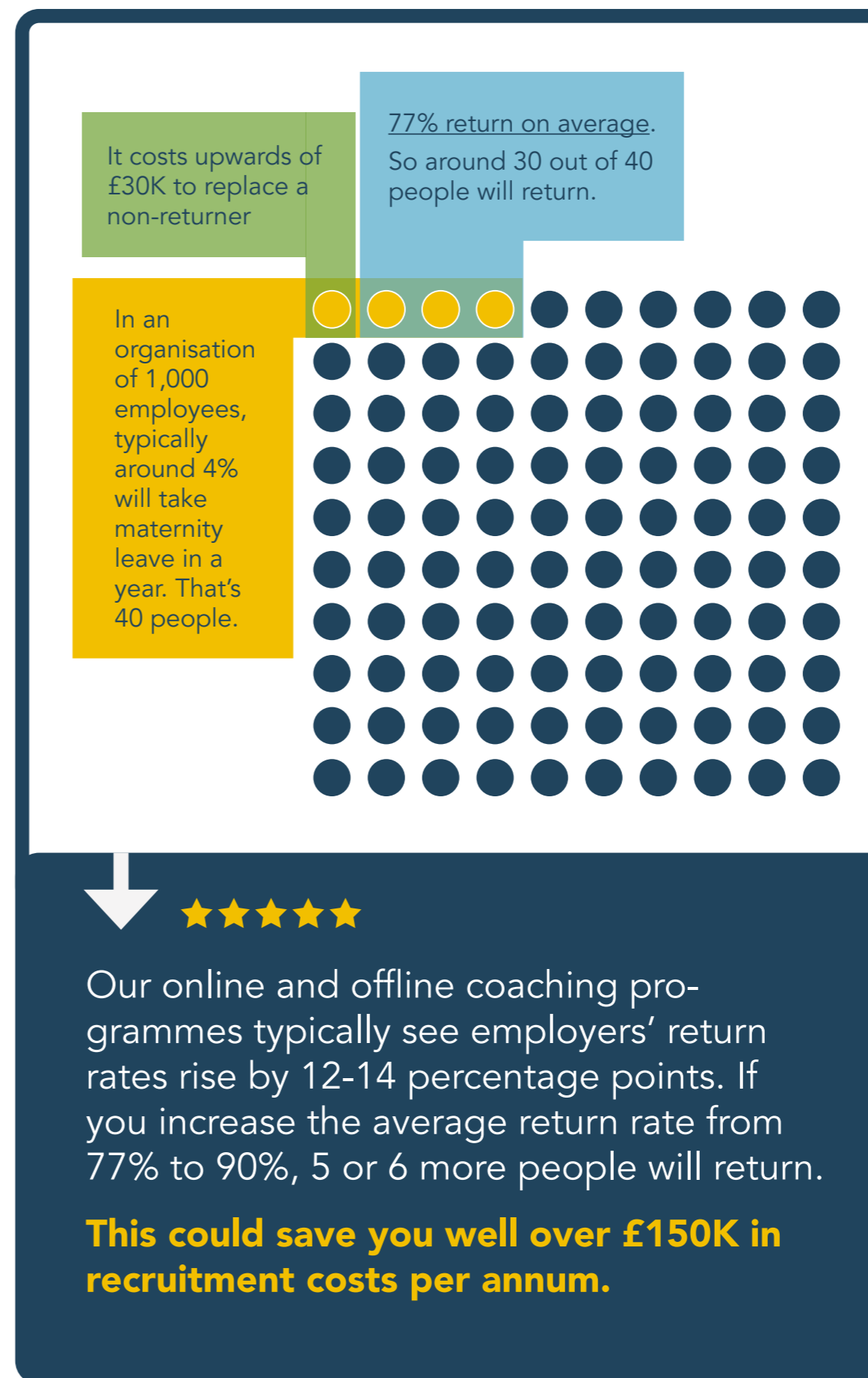
On a personal level, wellbeing is paramount at this stage for the individual and their family. On a professional level, one of the drivers for employers in putting a parental leave programme in place is the knowledge that careers can derail at this critical moment, and gender pay gaps widen, unless the process is managed intentionally.

The results here demonstrate that a parental leave offering combining an online / app-based programme with expert coaching and advice provided in-person (virtually) achieves key personal and professional objectives for the individual and the employer.

As this report shows, the online / app-based programme received appreciation both for the way the date-driven reminders and tools keep individuals and managers on track throughout the transition, and for the sense of being more in control given the insider tips shared for success.

We also know from our client feedback that a good parental leave programme enhances talent retention. Our clients typically see a 12 to 14 percentage point uplift in the number of leave takers returning to their business.

This represents considerable cost-savings as well as an enhanced employee experience. Here's what it means in practice [right].



At this time in particular, individuals returning from parental leave to a new hybrid working world are looking to their employers for support in navigating the transition, the combination of work and family and their ongoing career success. This research demonstrates that putting in place an effective Parental Leave Programme combining tech and coaching makes a marked and significant difference.



## Survey Background

Bright Horizons has led the way in award-winning online and offline support for the parent transition for over 15 years.

During June 2021, 40 respondents took part in a stand-alone survey looking at the overall impact of having a parental leave programme, including the Parental Leave Toolkit online and app-based support: 30% of respondents also had access to our one-to-one coaching.

Also on an ongoing basis we collect detailed feedback from individuals who use the Parental Leave Toolkit, and also from those who experience our Leadership and Parent Transition Coaching services: both of these sets of feedback are included in this study.

## In this report we examine the combined results of these inputs:

- The 40 respondents to the one-off impact survey, (37 using the programme primarily to support their own parental leave and 3 using it as a manager to support a team member going through parental leave).
- Impact data from our regular Coaching feedback gathered during the first half of 2021 from 170 users of our Parent Transition Coaching services who responded to feedback requests.
- Further comments from 57 individuals and 13 managers who responded to our regular requests for feedback from users of the Parental Leave Toolkit.





# The high value of providing a Parental Leave programme

Employee perceptions of their employer are fundamentally and significantly impacted in four key ways as a result of being provided with access to the Bright Horizons Parental Leave Toolkit.



**94%**

Agreed that: 'Simply knowing my employer recognises this transition and provides a Parental Leave Programme encourages a positive view of my employer.'



**88%**

Agreed that: 'Having a Parental Leave Programme shows support for wellbeing.'



**88%**

Agreed that: 'Having a Parental Leave Programme helps working parents focus on keeping their careers on track.'



**Nearly 8 in 10 (79%)**

Agreed that: 'Having a Parental Leave Programme gave me confidence in taking parental leave'

## Managers are unanimous on the positive impact of having the Parental Leave Toolkit

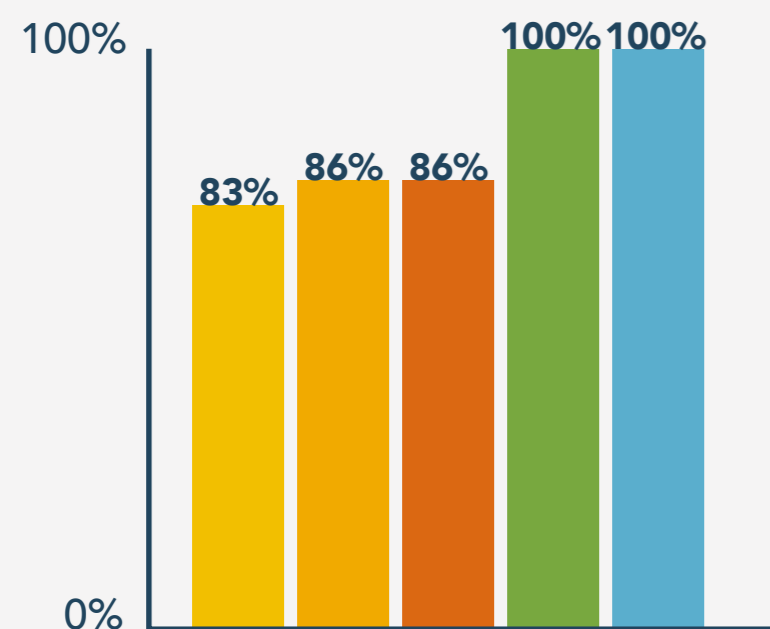
- **100%** 'Strongly Agreed' that 'Knowing my employer recognises this transition and provides a Parental Leave Programme encourages a positive view of my employer.'
- **100%** 'Strongly Agreed' that 'Having a Parental Leave Programme shows that employers support wellbeing.'
- **100%** 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that 'Having a Parental Leave Programme helps working parents focus on keeping their careers on track.'





# The Parental Leave Toolkit has high usability

Ease of use and date-driven plan inspires confidence in the parent transition.



- Agreed that 'overall, it's useful to have a mobile/app enabled parental leave solution'
- Found the 'email / app notifications helpful in keeping me on track'
- Found the 'date-driven plan helped me know what to do and when'
- Agreed that the programme 'supported my confidence in managing this transition'
- Of those who entered their dates to make a plan within PLT found it was 'easy to use'



Among those who did not enter their dates in their PLT in order to generate a plan, **82%** nonetheless agreed it was easy to use and **64%** agreed 'The programme supported my confidence in managing this transition'.



Of those who did not make much use of the PLT, **54%** selected 'Simply knowing the Parental Leave Toolkit was there if I needed it, was helpful' and 46% selected 'Actually I'd have liked to use this more but I wasn't really aware of it'.

The managers who had created or accepted a date-driven plan for a team member 100% agreed:

- I found the date-driven plan helped me know what to do and when
- I found the email / app notifications helpful in keeping me on track
- All managers agreed with the general statement: "The Parental Leave Toolkit is easy to use"





# What do users appreciate about the Parental Leave Toolkit?

23% of those who responded to our June impact survey had made a plan within the Toolkit driven by their dates and used the reminders to stay on track. 35% did not make a plan but 'dipped in and out along the way' while 42% 'didn't really get round to using it'.

We asked PLT users to describe in their own words what they found most useful or impactful about the Parental Leave Toolkit, or what they liked about it.

Here's what they said:

The date-driven plan received lots of praise:

"The weekly updates and suggestions have been helpful, particularly when walking me through the process of applying for leave and creating a handover and return from work plans".

"Week by week steps are helpful in planning"

"I do like the weekly emails and assistance provided for returning to work"

"I enjoy receiving the nudges into my inbox (especially work inbox) giving me a chance to smile and have 5 minutes break while reading those"

There was a feeling of empowerment from the insider tips shared in the toolkit:

"I like the tips and encouragement of being in control of your leave planning, handover planning and come back planning"

"It helps to understand that, as we have access to the wellbeing side of the plan for ourselves, as well as the professional side, this is the message our employer wants us to hear: that professional and personal should be balanced and neither one should be undermined"

"Checklist to ensure I'm not forgetting anything".

"Return to work element has been really helpful in helping me transition back to work and consider things that I wouldn't otherwise have thought about".

"The main thing is it makes me feel like my employer actually recognises the issues I face and will support me"

Some had general enthusiasm for the range of resources:

- The coaching
- Wide variety of topics
- Video clips and printouts
- Articles
- The resources provided

There was appreciation for the Toolkit supporting managers' good practice:

**"I like the fact that whatever I find there is mirrored content for my manager and it is easier for me to bring up the topics for our catch ups"**

**"The weekly updates, and prompts to link with my line manager"**

Some users particularly valued the expert tips on finding and selecting childcare:

- Childcare assistance
- Childcare email was particularly useful

**"The best thing I've ever experienced in a working environment! Having this time to spend with my son and watching him develop has been amazing. Further, I'm grateful to be able to help my wife, who doesn't have to manage a potentially difficult time on her own, which would have happened if I had to go back to work reasonably soon. I will forever be grateful to [my employer] for this opportunity."**

# Our overall Coaching and Parental Leave Toolkit feedback

The feedback from Coaching with our Parental Leave Toolkit is measured by Success Factors. We ask for scores out of 10 before and after coaching, and then calculate the uplift, expressing the change as a % of the original score. This is what Coaching and Parental Leave Toolkit added during the first half of 2021.

	Before Session	After session	% move measure before/after
Clarity of plans for your way forward	5.9	8.5	↑ 44%
Being equipped for the influential conversations you need to have with various stakeholders	5.8	8.4	↑ 45%
Having confidence in how you approach this area	5.6	8.4	↑ 50%
Practical know-how and skills relevant to this area	5.7	8.3	↑ 46%
Sense of being valued and supported by your employer	6.7	7.9	↑ 18%
Being equipped to manage your ongoing career at employer as you balance work+family	5.8	7.9	↑ 36%



**Two-thirds** of users create or accept a date-driven plan for their team member and use the dates and prompts to stay on track, while one-third is more likely to dip in and out as needed along the way.



**77%** of managers 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' when asked the following: 'This resource has been put in place to help you plan effectively with team members going through family life transitions, returning to work and integrating family life with ongoing career progression. To what extent do you feel that the Toolkit, as you have experienced and engaged with it so far, supports these aims?'

**77%** of managers, also 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' when asked: Would you say the Toolkit has been helpful for you overall?

**We asked:** Please comment on any aspects that you found particularly helpful (or aspects you would like to see improved).

"This new program - keeps timings and conversation topics front of mind".

"The fact that we have this toolkit is, in itself a revelation. It has been very useful for this paternity leave planning and for previous maternity leave planning. Great tool for the team and managers".

"Handover planning is particularly helpful".

"The scheduling aspect that gives appropriate coaching at the right moment allows focus on relevant areas".

"I understood the steps I needed to take to support my team member but enjoyed having the prompts".



**We asked:** We're continuously developing and improving the toolkit for both individual users and line managers. Please do tell us any improvements you would suggest.

"I'm not actually sure! Everyone in my team bought into the opportunity and associated tools and I can't think of any improvements".

"I think the toolkit itself is great, however more encouragement to use this from managers early on would be good, so both manager and person on maternity can work together, and even use it as a way to keep in touch during maternity leave".

"Overall great".

"Having the choice to alter the frequency of the emails would be beneficial".

We have recently made additional improvements to the Parental Leave Toolkit enabling users to further personalise their journey and this will optimise the relevancy of the date-driven plan. As part of our 2021 refresh, we have streamlined the tools, suggestions and resources that are served up throughout the journey to focus on the areas where help is requested by the user, through an initial category selection process.

**We asked:** 'Please let us know any ways you would like to see the Parental Leave Toolkit developed or delivered differently and make it a go-to resource for you to use.'

"I wasn't aware of this resource so it would be good if this were flagged to employees properly".

"I think it can be a part of the conversation, so when you first learn of the upcoming leave, flag it as a resource then to individuals".

"More coaching how to use and insight from the firm".

"I would like to have been made aware of it and what are the benefits of using a parental toolkit app".





# High Impact and Value of Parent Transition Coaching

For those who had received one-to-one coaching in addition to the Parental Leave Toolkit, we asked them to comment on what they had found most useful or impactful about the coaching.

“It helped to reframe my thoughts and turn any doubts into areas where I could make positive changes, and real action”.

“The coach was an individual who had previously worked in the same profession and therefore could understand what I was going through. They therefore provided helpful insight and advice”.

“Re-gaining my confidence after maternity leave”.

“Extremely helpful tips and guidance around managing the transition to and back from leave, which made the process much more successful. In particular my coach challenged my assumption that I should leave return planning until I was back in the office and she was completely right”.

“The one to one coaching was excellent. Linda was really in tune with the internal workings of our firm and the way it operates, which made speaking with her very helpful”.

Some also had access to ‘Childcare Choices’ advisory calls with our childcare experts.

“The session was about choosing nurseries... I had been told by a friend that waiting lists were a year long, which turned out not to be true, but the session was useful in talking through what to look for, and I was very impressed by the lady’s credentials and experience”.

Managers’ feedback on Coaching was also extremely positive.

“Well-planned, stuck to time and was value for money”.

“Very useful session. Before it, I wasn’t aware that such a great portal with so much information and tools existed! This should be more promoted within the organisation”.

“Very insightful session, these should be made mandatory rather than optional for managers”.

“Extremely useful, everyone in the organisation should use it!”



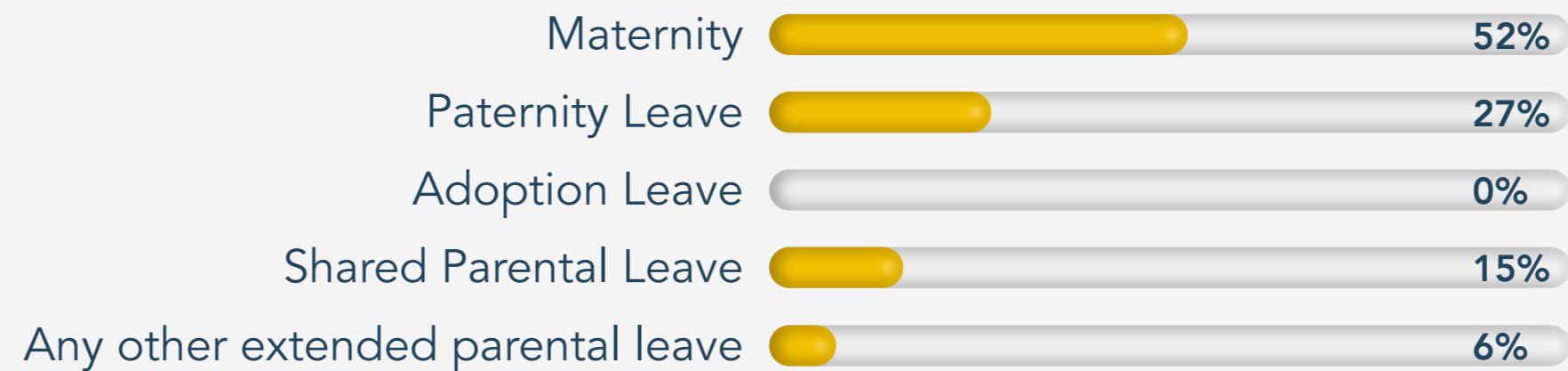
# The Parental Leave Toolkit supports Managers' Best Practice

Following the same method as for individual team members, we tracked the impact for managers who had received coaching alongside PLT in the first half of 2021.

	Before Session	After session	% move measure before/after
Clarity of your ongoing plans with relevant team members.	7.0	9.5	↑ 36%
Being equipped for the influential conversations you need to have with your team members	7.0	9.5	↑ 36%
Having confidence in how you approach this area	7.5	9.5	↑ 27%
Practical know-how and skills for supporting your team in this area	7.5	10.0	↑ 33%
Understanding of the business case and best practice for managing this transition effectively	7.0	10.0	↑ 43%
Being equipped to retain new & expectant parents' talents and support career progression	6.5	9.5	↑ 46%

## Who Took Part?

Type of leave: what was the main type of parental leave you were taking?



In gender terms, 61% of respondents were female, 39% male and no-one selected either 'Prefer not to say' or 'Prefer to self-describe as' any other gender.

Which of the following best describes your working role?



The majority of respondents who used PLT/Coaching for themselves were middle managers or professionals.



## About Bright Horizons

Bright Horizons provides the best in class work and family solutions. We act as a trusted partner, provider and advisor to employers on strategies for combining work and family. This plays a key part in attracting, engaging and retaining clients' talented employees. Alongside the provision of a wide range of childcare solutions, we support employers to enable the holistic combination of work and family; ensuring working parents and carers are amongst the most engaged and productive members of any team. The business now globally encompasses approximately 1,000 nurseries, and over 10,000 emergency childcare and back-up care providers.

With operations in the US, UK, India and the Netherlands, we specialise in supporting multi-national clients. We work with around 400 clients in the UK, and more than 1,300 of the world's leading employers globally, providing a full range of work and family supports. Our bespoke services address the practical, wellbeing and cultural needs of organisations and individuals. We have a strong commitment to corporate sustainability, which is reflected in a number of ways including our registered charity, the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children.

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