

Nomura International

Parental Transitions Programme

As an international investment bank, Nomura, like fellow competitors in the industry, faces the issue of ensuring staff return to work after maternity leave. Given the challenging working environment in the finance industry it is crucial that institutions have programmes which assist in a smooth transition for employees returning from maternity leave back into the workplace.

The Nomura Parental Transitions Programme was established to resolve this issue by ensuring that benefits and offerings to staff are competitive and simple to access, enabling Nomura to attract and retain the best available talent.

Issue to be resolved

Through analysing Nomura data on employees returning to work after maternity leave, it was identified that this number could be increased. Further it was recognised that whilst Nomura offers several employee benefits programmes not all of them were known to staff embarking on a period of extended leave.

Identifying this gap led to Nomura developing the Parental Transitions Programme. The programme takes a holistic approach, bringing together several elements of Nomura's employee benefits into one place, offering a solution to parents which is easy to use, accessible and can be tailored to individual requirements.

Action taken

Focus groups and interviews were conducted which confirmed that parental support is a key issue for Nomura. Constructive feedback from the initial consultations revealed that there was room for development in Nomura's maternity and paternity programme. To tackle this issue Nomura created and implemented the Parental Transitions Programme. The programme aims to enhance the 'experience' of Nomura's existing employees, leading to higher rates of staff retention and positioning Nomura as an 'employer of choice'.

Parental Transition supports employees both professionally and personally through the life changes and transitions of becoming a parent.

The programme is flexible, giving employees a choice over what aspects of the offering they want to utilize. It is inclusive and supports all staff, male or female who are looking to increase their families.

The holistic approach of the Parental Transition Programme means it brings together several existing programmes to successfully address support issues, both in the lead up to expecting a child and when returning to the workplace.

Parental Transitions includes:

- Opportunity to participate in training and coaching, including career coaching and new parent workshops.
- Line managers are coached on how to support employees and the wider team in the build up to the leave period and when the individual returns.
- Maternity yoga classes are offered in Nomura's London gym, as is two months of free gym membership for women returning to work after pregnancy.

- Nomura encourages “keeping in touch days” for employees on extended leave so that throughout their absence from the office they are kept up to date with team and business developments, making the transition back into the workplace much easier.
- The “Buddy System”, where new and expectant parents can team up with a colleague who has been a parent for some time and navigated the return to work has proved popular for both men and women.
- Our Employee Life and Family network and the sub-network, Parents at Nomura, ensures that parents can get together and share their experiences and provide support. The network also runs a number of events such as baby first aid and how to be an effective father figure.
- A support service for emergency child care, elder care and convalescence support is available 24 hours every day and includes assistance to find permanent care. This component of the programme places Nomura as an industry leader for holistic back-up care.

Result

Parental Transitions has been running for over six months and is receiving excellent feedback from all participants. The programme has proved to be an effective tool for women who are thinking of having children in the future and the support

Nomura can give them.

In a matter of months, a significant number of employees have already benefited from the coaching support, either as an employee taking a leave of absence or a manager responsible for someone going on leave. Recurrent feedback has demonstrated that participants feel the support they have received has allayed their concerns about going on leave and given them access to plenty of useful advice.

The Nomura Employee Life and Family network continues to have a positive influence on the organisation. Creating a sense of community in a large company can sometimes be difficult, but with over 500 members and 82% of respondents on a recent survey saying they felt the network directly encouraged an inclusive environment at work, Nomura knows it is bringing the organisation together. This is across divisions and departments, building a strong sense of support and value for parents in the workplace.

Next Steps

Nomura will maintain the momentum of Parental Transitions through internal communication channels. Through making the programme and its benefits known to staff throughout the firm, more employees will access the programme when they are embarking on an extended leave of absence, be that maternity, additional paternity leave, adoption leave etc. This will have a roll-on effect in implementing appropriate programmes in Nomura’s offices throughout other regions, with the aim to have the programme operating throughout the firm internationally.

To monitor the success Nomura will look at employee engagement figures on a quarterly basis and continue to conduct focus groups to see where the programme can be developed and improved. The overall aim is that more women in particular, utilise the programme and experience the benefits of it. This in turn will allow for more women to return to Nomura from maternity leave and further their career advancement. The continuous assessment of the impact of the offering is essential to ensure its success. Nomura have already undertaken a full review of the offering six months in to identify where aspects can be improved, developed or more effectively communicated.