

Wates recognised at Working Family Awards 2022

3 years ago



Wates Group has been recognised with two awards at the [Working Families Best Practice Awards](#) for its [flexible working practices](#) and support for parents and carers. The Group was named Best for Fathers and Best for All Families.

The recognition comes almost exactly a year after the introduction of Wates' Flexible Working Principles, and two years after the launch of industry-leading Family Leave policies.

John Dunne, Executive Committee Director and sponsor for Wates' Parents and Carers Employee Network said: "These awards are fantastic recognition of the work we're doing across the Wates Group to support parents and carers. I am really proud of the impact our Family Leave Policies and Flexible Working Principles are having in enabling parents and carers and indeed, all colleagues at Wates - to manage their commitments outside of work and I look forward to continuing to focus on this, in partnership with our Parents and Carers Network going forward".

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WATES GROUP'S FLEXIBLE WORKING PRINCIPLES](#)

Now in their 13th year, The Working Families Awards recognise UK employers whose stand-out cultures and practices demonstrate that they understand that all employees perform better when they have some degree of flexibility over when, where and how they work and that employees will be more productive if the organisation supports their work-life balance.

The awards showcase and celebrate employers who are offering flexibility for all their people and going above and beyond in their support for parents and carers.

Best for Fathers

The 'Best for Fathers' award was made in recognition of the changes made to drive cultural change in a predominantly male workforce, with its Family Leave policies supporting the 44% of the workforce who are fathers and helping to shift perspectives on flexible working.

Wates wanted to bust the myth that flexible working was only for mothers returning from maternity leave, and so overhauled their suite of policies to strengthen their offering to fathers. Paternity Leave was increased to eight weeks fully paid which can be taken in two blocks within the first year and renamed paternity/partner leave (PPL) to recognise the diversity of 21st-century family. Shared Parental Leave (SPL) was enhanced to 26 weeks fully paid leave to be taken at any time in the first year and is in addition to Maternity and Adoption leave.

Other family leave policies, such as having four weeks unpaid carers leave available that can be taken one day at a time and two weeks paid Parental Bereavement leave that can be used in two blocks within a year, offers flexible support when a father needs it most.

The 'One Simple Thing' initiative, whereby employees on site are encouraged to identify as a team how they can improve their wellbeing and work-life balance, has been introduced to boost take up of flexible working, especially amongst men.

As a result, 72% of men with parenting responsibilities now say that they feel genuinely supported if they choose to make use of flexible working arrangements, and 62% of fathers who have flexible working arrangements say they feel more productive.

Best For All Families

The 'Best for All Families' award recognises the Group's family-first culture, and the measures put in place to help employees, along with their families, thrive.

All roles are advertised with at least one flexible working option. Family leave policies are clearly visible on the website for candidates to view and virtual interviews are used to fit around caring responsibilities. Efforts to achieve inclusivity start at the top, with leaders attending Inclusive Leadership training, and managers invited to participate in inclusion webinars. Inclusive performance management training is offered to remove bias in assessing employee performance.

Our approach to flexible working allows managers and employee to find individualised flexible solution that work for both business and employee's wellbeing. Leave entitlements are generous, with Shared Parental Leave of 26 weeks, in addition to 26 weeks Maternity/Adoption Leave, to be taken at any time during the first year. Paternity/Parent Leave has increased to eight weeks fully paid, which can be split into two blocks. Unpaid carers leave of four weeks has been made available, which is able to be taken a day at a time to respond to caring responsibilities.

A survey of employees showed that 85% mothers and 77% fathers would recommend Wates as a great place to work. The introduction of the flexible working principles and One Simple Thing has encouraged the use of flexible patterns especially among men, with 72% of men with parenting and caring responsibilities say that they feel 'genuinely supported if I choose to make use of our flexible working arrangements.