

Equal parental leave included in suite of new enhanced benefits announced by Sodexo

2 years ago



Sodexo UK & Ireland has announced it is equalising and enhancing its maternity, adoption and paternity paid leave benefits for its salaried and frontline employees to provide time, flexibility and financial support for important life moments.

These changes are part of a range of improvements [Sodexo](#) is introducing as part of its ambition to offer a flexible first culture to help all its employees, and not just those with caring responsibilities, to balance work and personal commitments in a way that suits them.

The new enhanced benefits, many of which become available on the first day of employment, will see maternity, adoption and paternity pay and leave equalised to offer all employees with the equivalent of 18 weeks full pay.

Also included in its plans are new or enhanced leave benefits for a variety of appointments including antenatal IVF, adoption or surrogacy. Neonatal leave and leave for family care givers and other carers such as grandparents, those with legal parental responsibility or special guardianship and foster carers are now also covered by the changes.

Life insurance is also being enhanced for salaried and frontline staff, the minimum level of life assurance will be a lump sum equal to the value of base salary as at date of death. Flexible working applications will be available from the first day they join Sodexo. Bereavement (including parental) leave is also being increased. Sodexo intends to implement the majority of these enhancements by September 2023.

The organisation is also working towards becoming an accredited menopause friendly employer and has joined the endometriosis friendly employer scheme.

Diana Gilmore, Relationship Manager, Working Families said: *"It has been a pleasure to help Sodexo develop their family friendly policies this year and a joy to see them build on our advice. They have succeeded in creating a progressive new portfolio of support for their staff with caring responsibilities and embedding a family friendly, flexible working culture that is central to their organisational values and strategies. I am delighted to be in the lucky position of tracking their progress, watching them grow as an inspirational employer, supported by their committed DEI team."*

Raj Jones, head of diversity, equity and inclusion, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "We are committed to an inclusive, equitable workplace for all. By introducing these enhanced benefits, many as a day one right, we are making progress in this commitment and in our ambition to create a culture of flexibility and recognition of what all colleagues need to juggle outside of work.

"We, as business leaders need to hold ourselves accountable for making change happen. This new suite of enhanced benefits, particularly those that equalise parental leave, is a part of our strategy to narrow our pay gaps by offering both parents the same flexibility and financial support to take time off for childcare. This could enable more women to come back to work sooner."

Sean Haley, CEO Sodexo UK & Ireland adds: "Our colleagues are at the heart of our business, and we remain committed to supporting them as much as we can. We are delighted to launch a wide range of enhanced benefits including for our frontline colleagues. It is our ambition that all our colleagues feel they belong to a company where they can act with purpose and thrive in their own way. We know there is a lot of work still to do and we are clear in our goal to create an inclusive and equitable workplace for all."

In February 2023 Sodexo Group announced Vita by Sodexo, a common foundation for employee benefits for eligible employees across the globe and with a minimum benefits package of parental and care leave, life insurance and an employee assistance phone line.

These new benefits will bring Sodexo UK & Ireland into line with the Vita programme requirements and beyond. Sodexo has recently written to every employee to ensure they know they can access its free confidential Employee Assistance Programme; 'Spectrum.Life' a suite of health and wellbeing solutions, and a range of employee discounts and financial management support tools.