

Firm launches equal parenting policy across UK and Australia

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Laing O'Rourke is launching an equal parenting approach for all staff across the UK and Australia, regardless of how they become a parent.

From October, every employee will have access to six months' parental leave on full pay. This leave is also available for parents who adopt or welcome a baby via surrogacy.

The policy – **any gender, any birth, any child** – will be matched by additional industry-leading benefits in both operating markets, in line with local regulations and requirements.

Effective immediately is a new pregnancy loss policy that provides paid leave for any employee who has suffered, or whose partner or surrogate has suffered, a loss of pregnancy.

Welcoming the new approach, Rae Avatar Barnett, leader of the People function in Europe said: "We believe that families, whatever their structure, should be entitled to spend valuable time together with a new child.

“And in the case of pregnancy loss, take the time they need away from work.

“This industry-leading approach to equal parenting will allow us to create better gender balance and shape an organisation that attracts, supports and retains the most talented people.”

Helen Fraser, leader of the People function in Australia, said:

“These changes recognise our values around caring for our people, especially at significant stages of their lives.

“In 2011 we led the industry here in Australia when we launched a policy that provided our people with 18 weeks full pay and 8 weeks half pay and I am delighted to see us once again raise the bar in introducing 26 weeks paid leave for new parents.”

“Flexible workplaces are workplaces where all people thrive,” Helen added.

“Laing O’Rourke is committed to a 50-50 balance between men and women by 2033, and this approach demonstrates our commitment to gender equality and eliminating unconscious biases that may exist in our business.”

CEO, Ray O’Rourke said: “When I joined the industry more than 50 years ago, I saw my own role as the traditional family breadwinner.

“The world is now a very different place, and we value modern and diverse family structures and new opportunities that balance careers and childcare.

“I’ve always been an advocate for innovation and modern methods of construction, and those approaches should not just be in the technical ways we work – but in the ways we recruit, deploy, reward, and support our people.

“One thing remains the same as when I became a parent, it’s the most common, most disruptive life event for most of our people – in a good way! So why wouldn’t the business do everything it can to support people fairly during this change.

“No matter who you are or how your family comes about, at Laing O’Rourke we’ll take care of your career while you do what needs to be done at home.”