

FLEXIBLE  
WORKING**HOW SSE REDUCED THE  
NUMBER OF NON-RETURNERS  
FROM MATERNITY LEAVE FROM  
16% TO 4%**

In 2015, SSE carried out an in-depth review of its family friendly policies and benefits. The findings from the review, together with awareness of an overall gender imbalance within SSE, led the business to make significant improvements to its family friendly offerings.

In April 2017, SSE increased maternity, adoption and paternity pay. The increase in pay for maternity and adoption leave increased from 6 weeks' full pay, 12 weeks' half pay and 21 weeks' statutory pay to 21 weeks' full pay and 18 weeks' statutory pay. Paternity pay increased from 1 to 2 weeks' full pay.

Uniquely, the company also introduced a gradual return from maternity and adoption leave on full pay and benefits for up to 6 months. This means that returners receive full pay and benefits whilst enjoying working 80% of their contracted hours for their first 6 months, allowing them to better adapt to the life changes that having a child brings.

The changes have had a significant and tangible impact. Prior to the introduction of enhanced maternity provisions in April 2017, 16% of women who took maternity leave at SSE did not return or left shortly after returning. By the end of 2018, this had fallen to 2%. At the end of the financial year 2019, the non-return rate was still low at only 4%.

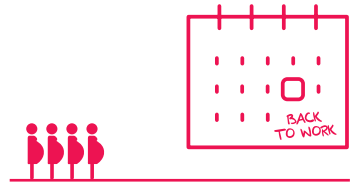
SSE employees who have benefited from the enhanced offerings have shared their thoughts in the surveys the company regularly runs. Here are some examples of what they have to say:

*"I felt like SSE was really going above and beyond to support returning parents during what can be one of the most difficult times of your working life - it just made the whole experience more positive."*

*"Excellent benefit makes you want to stay if you are considering having another child."*

*"When you have a year off, it is a challenging time to get the balance of career and raising your child. Having the extra time as an option was very beneficial to my mental health."*

*"Speaking to a number of friends and family who work in similar companies (FTSE top 20), having flexibility around maternity and working pattern is a key decision factor when looking at where to work and what jobs to apply for."*



**4%**

non-return rate  
from maternity  
leave (16% in 2017)

