



Case study: developing talent

Empowering maternity leave

As part of a commitment to tackling gender imbalance in the industry, ScottishPower has partnered with expert parental leave consultants, Talent on Leave.

Maternity leave has long served as a significant barrier to career progression for females and, by association, to achieving gender balance amongst senior leadership. Research from HR Review (2020) shows that **80% of professional women in the UK who go on maternity leave return experiencing a lack of confidence, a feeling that they must 'make up' for time away from the business and doubts about their ability to achieve career progression.** Further, 60% of UK professional women who do progress in their careers choose to switch employers to do so.

In recognition of the challenges those on parental leave face, ScottishPower has partnered with Talent on Leave to conduct a thorough review of the parental leave process, identifying opportunities to improve the 'return to work' process at both a business-wide and an individual-specific level.

At the individual level, Lynn White, Founder of Talent on Leave has provided individual coaching to women in senior and middle management leadership roles at ScottishPower before, during and after a period of parental leave. Coaching is tailored to the needs of each individual but often focuses on the perception of what is achievable upon a return to work, the creation of the ideal conditions to thrive at home, restoring confidence and empowering returners to pursue their work and home life goals.

As a result, ScottishPower has seen year on year progression in female representation at middle and senior management levels with women now making up 26% of its senior and 33% of its middle management populations respectively. Moreover, with the support of Talent on Leave, 80% of women who have received individual coaching in 2020/21 have applied for and achieved promoted positions.

The beneficiaries of the programme largely attribute success to the content of their individual coaching, which aims to help them redefine what might be possible.

Here are just two of ScottishPower's female leaders who have benefited from bespoke coaching during their maternity leave.



"The whole coaching experience with Talent on Leave has been

great for me. Since returning to the business I have secured a promotion into a new role and within my network, two of my close colleagues are also now receiving coaching and thriving in their return to work too. It's fantastic that ScottishPower has invested in such a programme."

Natasha Paine
Head of Smart Solutions Sales

"For me the programme has been invaluable. Following my maternity leave I have secured a promoted post after previously thinking that I had to choose between being a good parent and succeeding in my career. To have that perception barrier broken down has been so powerful."

Cristina Fundulea
Engineering Section Head



26% of senior and **33%** of middle management are now female