

Talk to Take

The science of how to successfully communicate parental leave

We partnered with behavioural scientists to conduct a literature review into how we can encourage uptake of parental leave. We developed the findings from this research into a checklist for us to follow to make our communications about parental leave more effective.

- 01** Present 24 weeks parental leave as the default – with the ability to opt out.
We are highly likely to stick with pre-selected options.
- 02** Provide certainty: remove approximating and hedging language like ‘up to’ or ‘may’.
There is a considerable emotional difference between an outcome that is certain and one that is probable.
- 03** Provide urgency and personal relevance: their parental leave is due to be taken.
Parental leave rarely feels personalised for fathers and we overvalue things we feel we have ownership of.
- 04** Connect people and showcase examples of others who have taken parental leave.
We are much more likely to take parental leave if we see people close to us doing the same.
- 05** Consider different messengers.
While supervisors’ and organisations’ opinions are important, we are also influenced by peers and colleagues.
- 06** Develop early, concrete plans with ‘whens’, ‘wheres’ and ‘hows’.
The more concrete and specific our intentions are, the more likely we are to follow through with them.
- 07** Celebrate the opportunity to learn new skills and values.
Time away can threaten work-related identities – parental leave should feel like something that a ‘good worker’ can do.