

TOP UP ON PARENTAL LEAVE

Company name : A&O Shearman

Activity sector : Autres activités de services

Company category : Grande Entreprise

Description of the action

When a parent, whether a lawyer or an employee, takes parental leave, the CAE steps in to provide a replacement income during this period. This replacement income is capped, which was a significant obstacle mainly for lawyers since the financial limit was lower than our fees. Through this measure, the partners and the management team aimed to democratize the taking of parental leave by offering, under certain conditions, financial compensation to parents of children under 6 years old who wish to take a break from their professional career or reduce their working hours to dedicate more time to childcare. This compensation is offered for a maximum period of 4 months or for a maximum absence of 8 months on a part-time basis and covers 75% of the gross monthly salary received by the applicant, subject to a maximum compensation limit. For salaries below €6,000, the compensation can go up to 85% of the gross monthly salary. [Edit Description](#)

Context

At our firm, the reduction in salary during parental leave has historically been a significant barrier for our team members for them to take parental leave. Recognizing this challenge, we have implemented an inclusive policy that supports both fathers and mothers equally and applies to both lawyers and employees.

Objectives

- **Enhancing Work-Life Balance:** By providing financial support during parental leave, our firm enables parents to take necessary time off without the stress of a significant income reduction. This promotes a healthier work-life balance, allowing parents to dedicate more time to their children during crucial early years.
- **Increasing Inclusivity:** The measure is designed to support both fathers and mothers equally. This helps break down traditional gender roles and encourages both parents to participate actively in childcare, promoting gender equality within the firm.
- **Improving team member retention:** this scheme tends to enhance team member satisfaction and loyalty. They are more likely to stay reducing turnover rates and retaining valuable talent. While there is an upfront cost associated, the long-term benefits of reduced turnover, higher team member satisfaction, can outweigh these initial expenses.
- **Attracting Top Talent:** A clear and progressive parental leave policy is a strong selling point when recruiting new talent.

Approach

The process was implemented three years ago. When applying for parental leave, the team member only needs to indicate that they wish to benefit from this measure. Communication around this internal policy is done through our internal newsletter and during individual meetings with the HRBPs following the announcement of an upcoming birth. During this time, the HRBP presents all the options for parental leave as well as the internal measure.

Impact

Before the introduction of this measure, no male lawyers took parental leave and few women did. On top of the pay cut they would have to endure during this period, many felt that taking time off to care for a newborn would damage

their career opportunities. As a result, they missed out on the benefits of bonding with their child and sharing the responsibilities of parenthood. After the measure was implemented, almost all future parents (men or women) took parental leave. The measure also guaranteed them a flexible return to work policy. It also created a culture of support and respect for lawyers who chose to balance their professional and personal lives.

« **To do** »

« **Not to do** »