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**How to support an employee returning from family leave**

Returning from work after a long period of family leave can be a daunting experience. Simple actions by a manager can be key to a successful and sustained return.

It is good practice to keep in contact with staff when they are on family leave. Use of ‘Keeping in Touch’s days can be useful to support this.

Managers should consider:

* Updating the returner on practical changes to the workplace.
* Ensuring IT systems / access are still working effectively and that their workstation is ready for them.
* Organising a handover with anyone that has been providing cover / undertaking duties in their absence. It may be appropriate to hand work back on a gradual basis initially while the member of staff gets up to speed.
* Arranging a meeting as early as possible (ideally on the first day) and meeting regularly in the first few months of the return.
* Discussing with the member of staff what support or development they feel they need to help them make an effective return to work.
* Arrange meetings with any new starters to the team.
* Setting new objectives for the future.
* Signposting areas of support if required, eg the University counseling service or the internal coaching network for any member of staff that feels they need some additional help with their return.

Some members of staff may make a request for flexible working prior to a return from family leave. If this is the case it should be addressed before the agreed return date. If accepted, workloads should be assessed and reduced if applicable.

In the event that an employee returns from family leave and is breastfeeding, see our separate guidance for more information.