

LEIA
Health

**WOMEN
INTECH**

UN
UNCONVENTIONAL
VENTURES

The LEIA Report 2025

1. Introduction

The LEIA Report 2025 explores how Swedish employers and employees manage parental leave in practice — from policy and planning to reboarding, wellbeing, and long-term career impact.

To better understand the current state, **we surveyed and interviewed 125 employees and HR leaders** from 22 of Sweden's largest companies across 18 industries.

The report combines organisational perspectives with **real employee experiences** to reveal how parental leave is managed — and lived — in today's workforce.

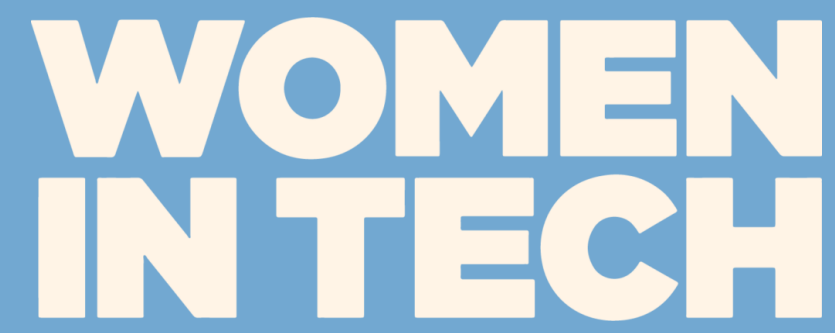


2. Behind this report



LEIA HEALTH

Building the digital infrastructure for parents in the workforce — **integrating health, policy, and HR** to help organisations manage leave sustainably and support every stage of parenthood.



WOMEN IN TECH

A leading platform **driving gender equality in tech.** By joining the LEIA Report, they spotlight how inclusive parental leave practices enable women's career growth and strengthen the industry's talent pipeline.



UNCONVENTIONAL VENTURES

An impact-focused investor backing underrepresented founders. Building on insights from its Nordic Funding Gap Report, UV highlights how **inclusive policies and parental support unlock untapped potential** in the Nordic ecosystem.

3. Key findings

Retention risk

1 in 4 employees has left a job due to poor parental support

Among them, 66% never shared this as their reason for leaving — suggesting a lingering stigma and a culture where employees don't feel safe being honest.

Reboarding failure

81% felt they did not receive sufficient reboarding; 56% rated support as fair or poor

The return to work is where most companies fall short — employees describe feeling unprepared, unseen, and left to manage the transition alone.

Equality inclusion

68% of HR leaders call their policies gender-neutral — only 50% of employees agree

This perception gap shows that formal equality in policy does not automatically translate into equal experiences at work.

No measurement

61% of HR leaders never measure parental-leave impact

83% say parental leave and health are key to employer branding — yet 79% have no KPIs linked to parental leave retention. Without metrics, progress remains unseen.

Flexibility gap

All HRs say they offer flexibility, but 1 in 3 employees were not offered this on their return

Despite being the most common benefit on paper, flexibility often fails to reach those who need it most — new parents transitioning back to work.

Health & career cost

42% of women took sick leave after their return, and 66% feared career setbacks

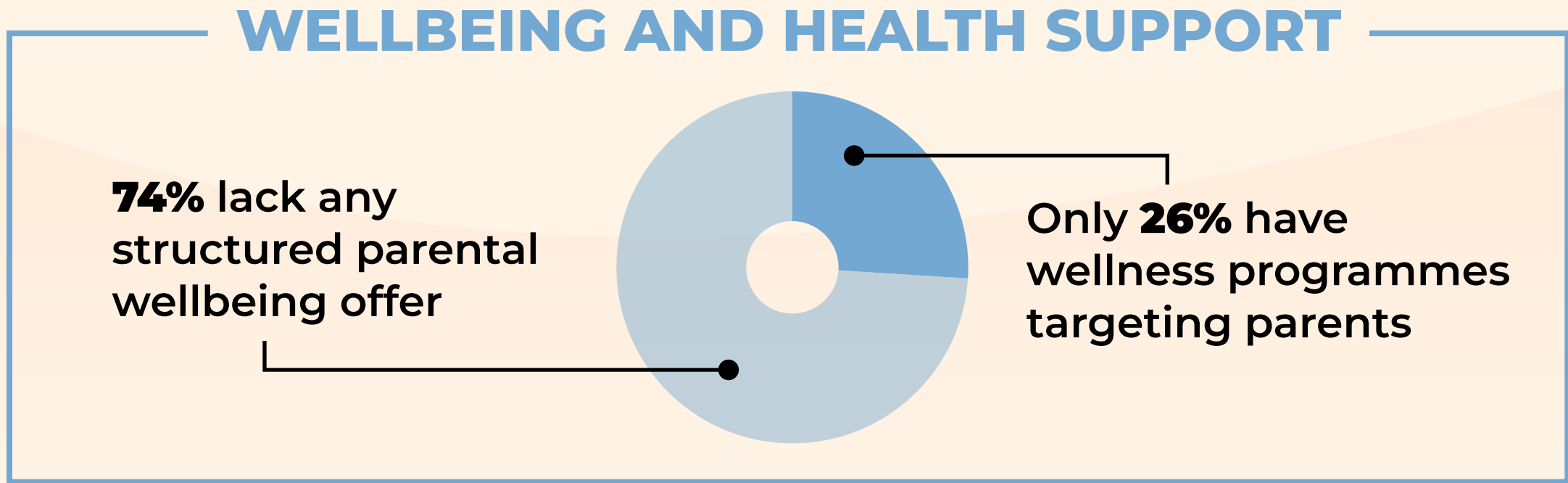
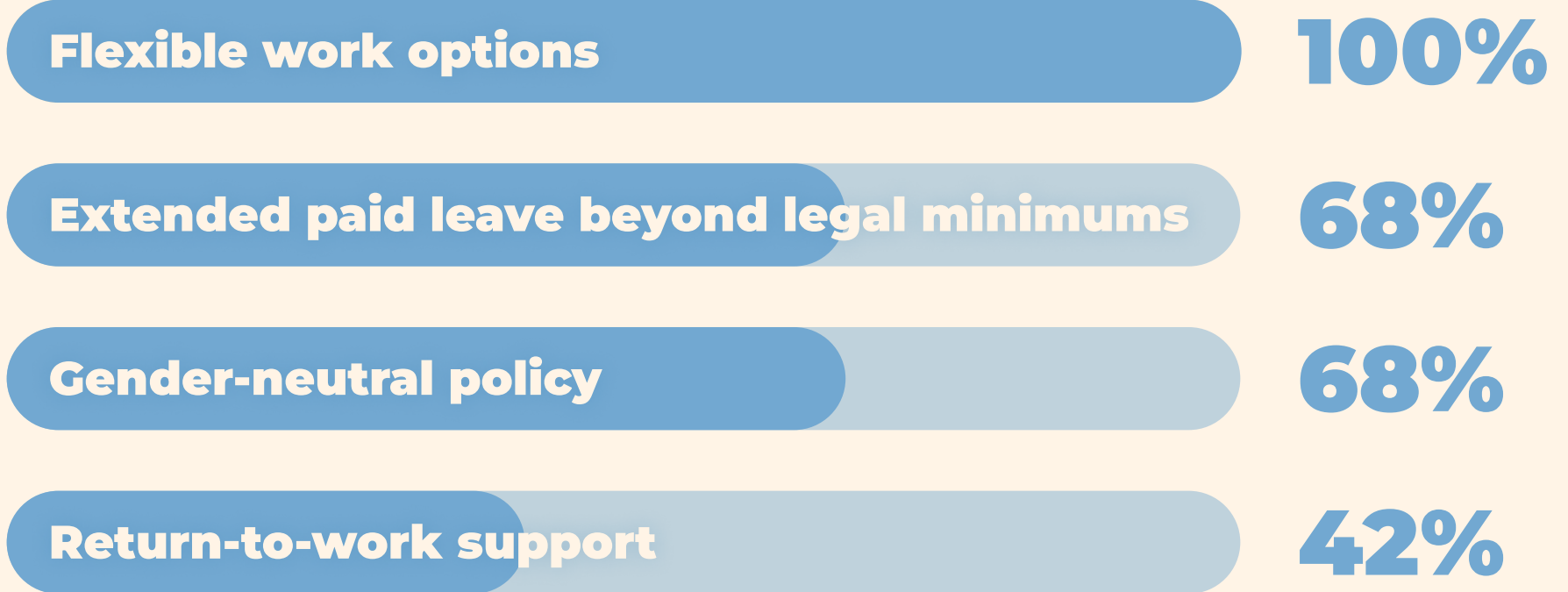
The data points to a clear, gendered impact, where returning mothers face both physical strain and perceived career risks after parental leave.

4. The HR experience

“We have the policies — but the challenge is consistency.”
— HR voice

POLICY STRENGTHS

83% say parental leave and health are important for employer branding. Here is what companies offer:



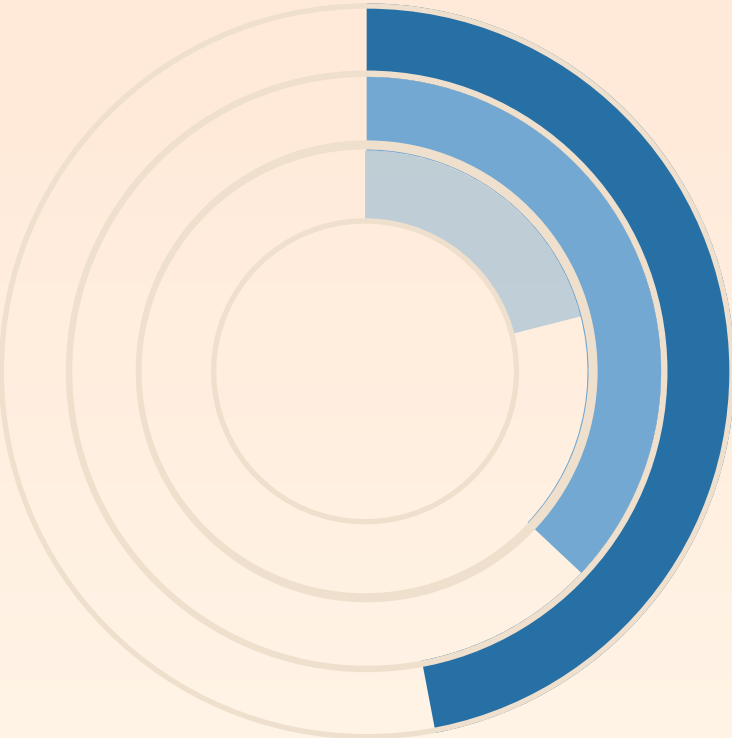
ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Companies use up to six different systems to manage parental leave — often including Excel. This is where policies fall short:



TOP REPORTED HR CHALLENGES

- 47% Work-family balance
- 37% Catching up post-leave
- 21% Reboarding quality



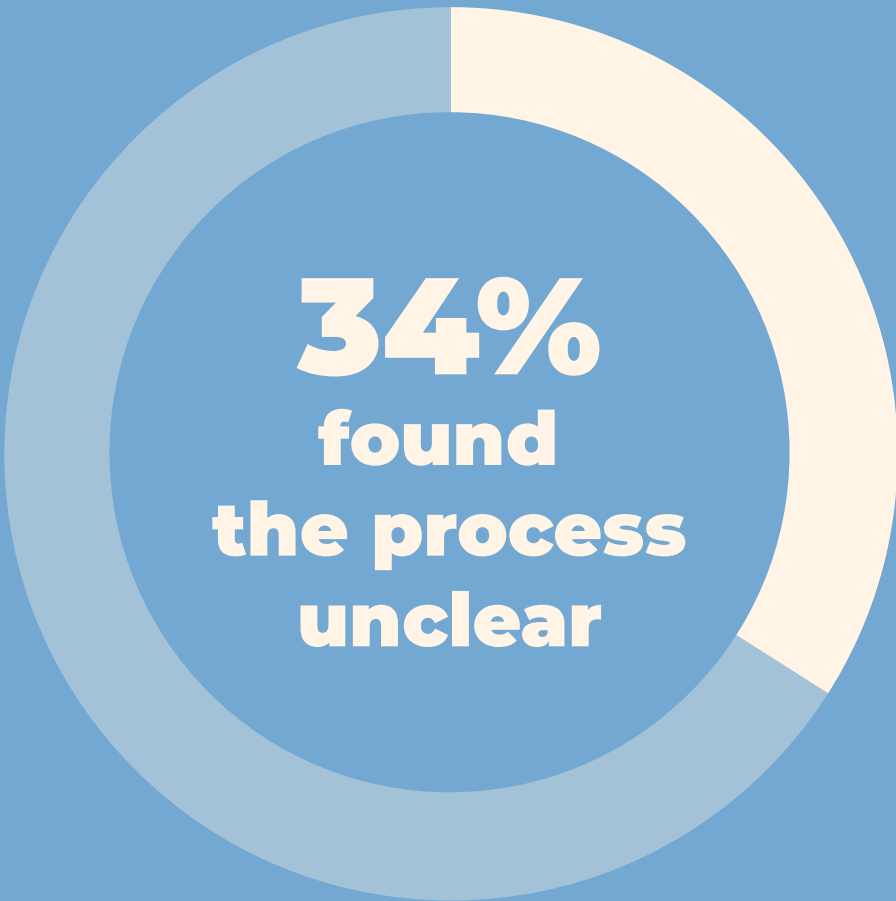
5. The employee experience



Preparation remains inconsistent and heavily dependent on individual managers.

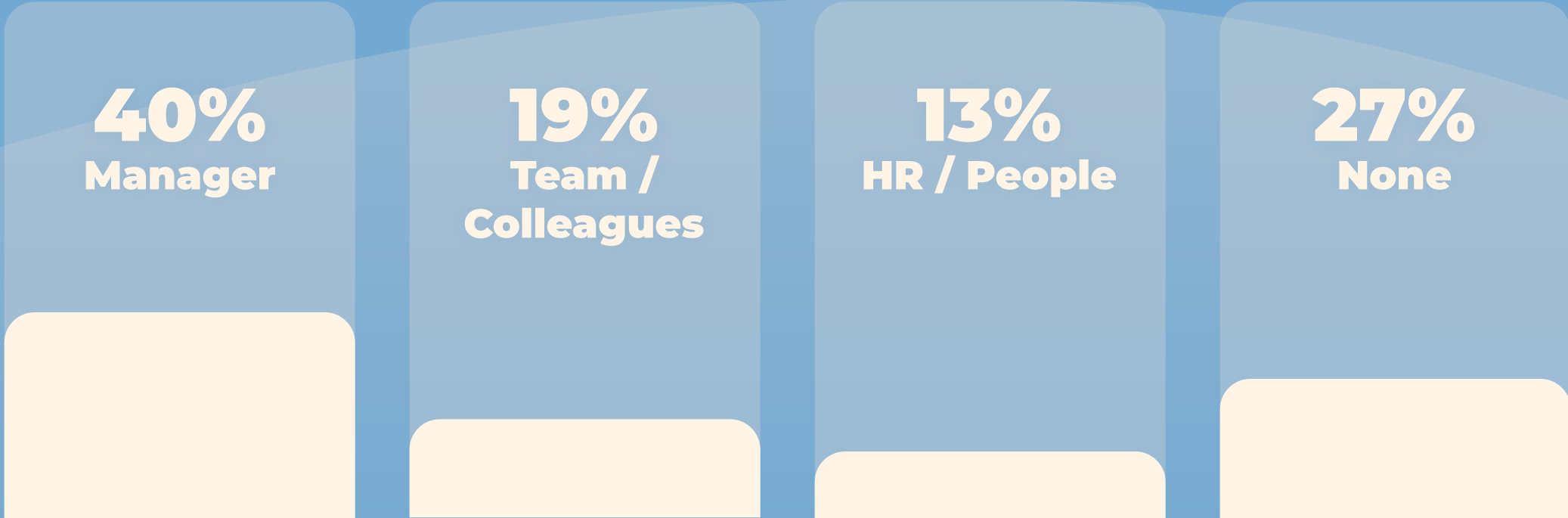
PROCESS CLARITY

28% found the process very clear while 38% found it only somewhat clear



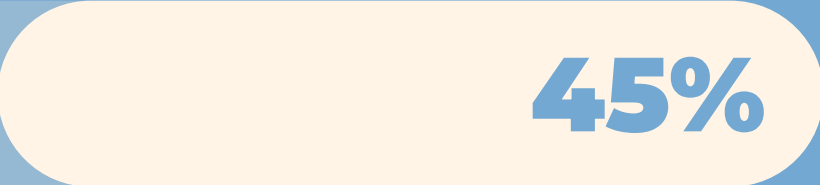
“It felt like everything was up to me to figure out.”
— Employee voice

WHO SUPPORTED EMPLOYEES IN PLANNING THEIR LEAVE?

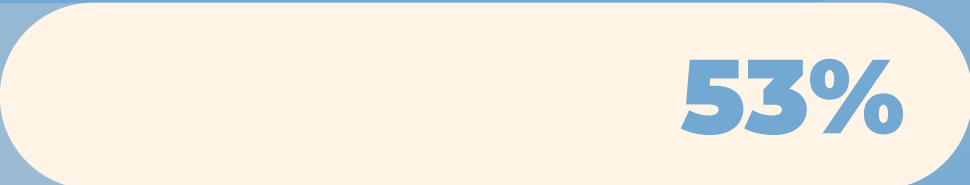


Support mainly came from managers — HR involvement was rare

Policy knowledge: 45% had poor understanding of policies



Handover plan: 53% had a handover plan



Pressure not to take full leave: 21% felt pressure not to take full leave



5. The employee experience

Many employees feel **disconnected** or unseen once parental leave begins.

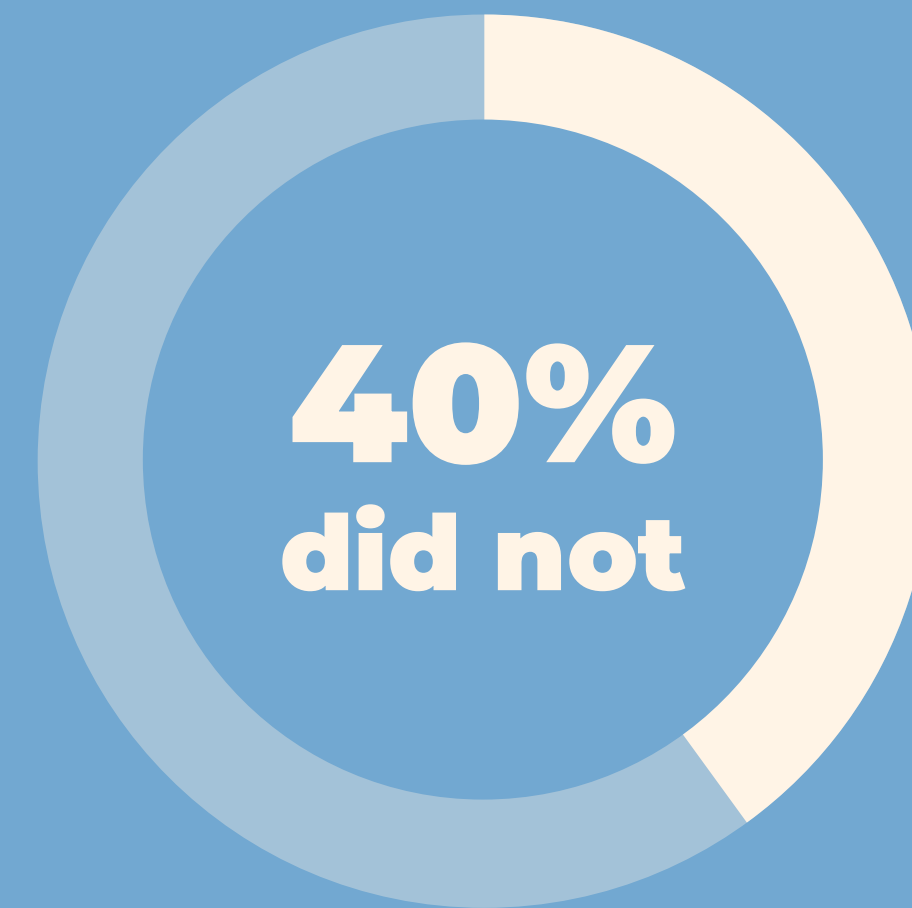
Before leave

During leave

After leave

**DID EMPLOYEES
FEEL SEEN AND
INCLUDED DURING
LEAVE?**

31% responded that they did, while 29% did so to some extent



31%

**said no
preparations
were made
for their
return**

**WERE THEY CONTACTED DURING
LEAVE ABOUT WORK?**

44% Yes (16% By choice)

"It felt like I disappeared from the radar — no one checked in." — Employee voice

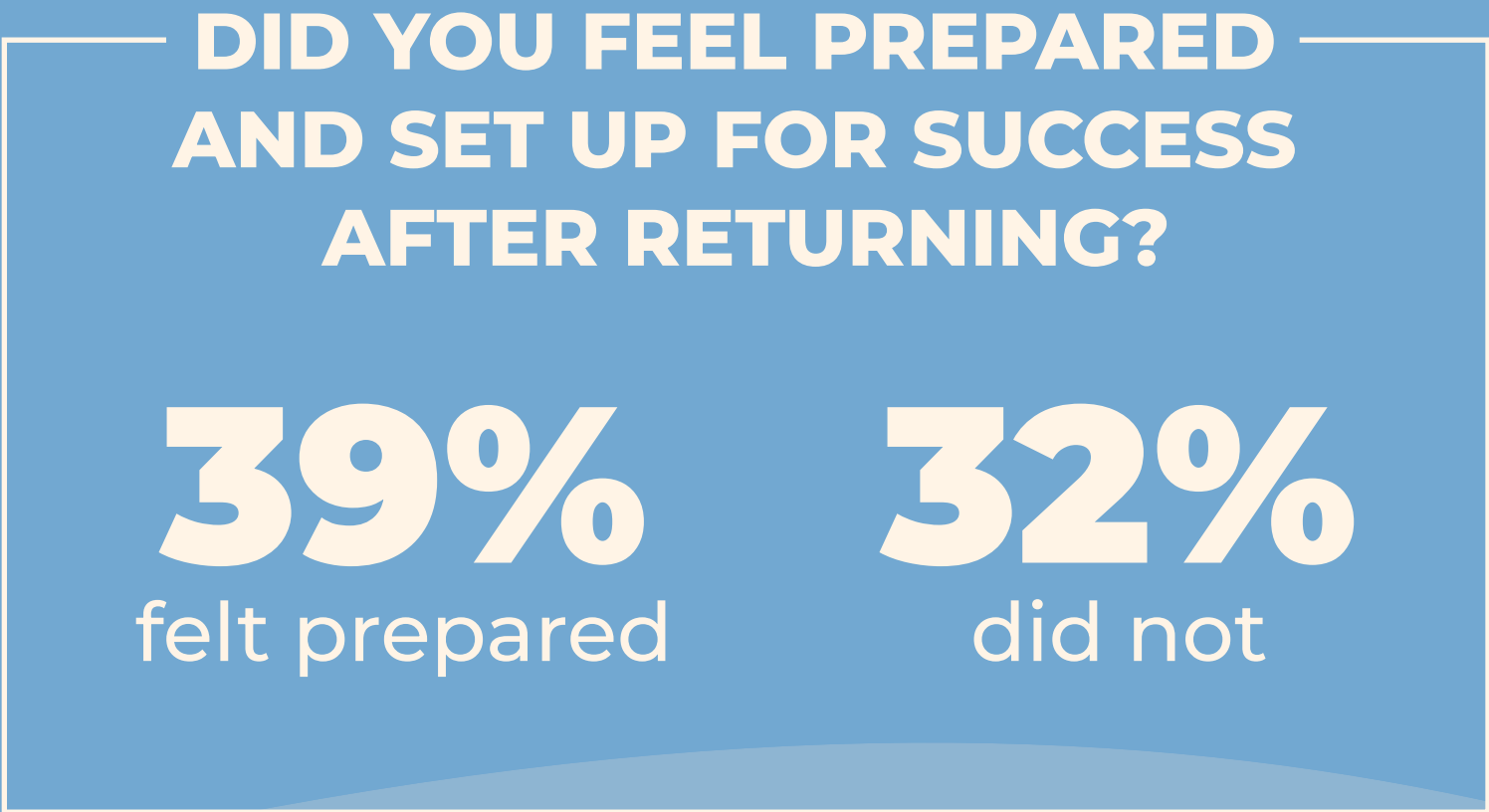
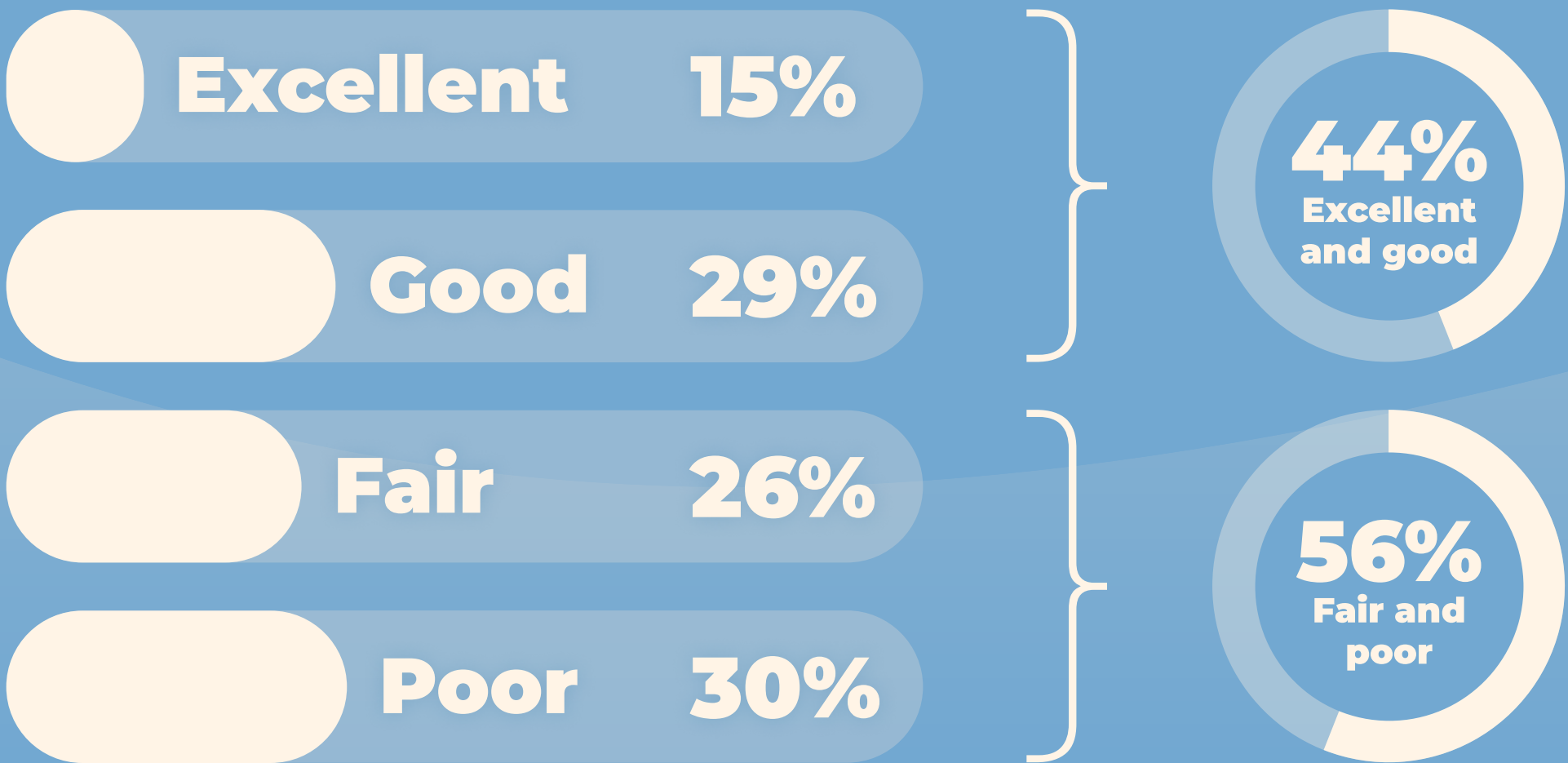
5. The employee experience



Reboarding is the weakest link in the parental leave journey.

“Returning to work was extremely difficult — I never fully reintegrated.” — Employee voice

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE SUPPORT AFTER RETURNING TO WORK?



Reboarding: 81% had less than one-month of reboarding or none at all
Feeling supported: Only 1 in 5 said their company balances parents’ needs and work demands well

6. Gender-neutral policies do not guarantee gender-equal outcomes

Women report more pressure, less inclusion, greater health impact, and higher attrition risk than men

“My career never recovered after parental leave.”
— Employee voice

EXPERIENCE AREA	MEN	WOMEN	GAP
Felt pressure not to take full leave	21%	33%	×1.6
Felt unseen during leave	21%	46%	×2.2
Felt prepared on return	53%	29%	×1.8
Took sick leave post-return	0%	42%	only women
Feared career impact	37%	67%	×1.8
Left job due to poor support	10%	38%	×3.8
Policy influenced decision to have children	5%	19%	×3.8

7. Gap between HR strategies and employee experiences

Where HR strategies fall short of employee experience

THEME	HR PERSPECTIVE	EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE
Flexible work	100% say it's offered	35% say no flexibility was available upon return
Return-to-work support	42% say they offer structured support	56% rate support fair or poor
Manager support	53% provide manager guides or checklists	40% say they received no or poor support
Reboarding structure	42% report having a reboarding process	81% had less than one month or none at all
Equality	68% describe their policies as gender-neutral	50% feel parental leave is equally supported

Despite **strong policies and stated ambitions**, HR leaders and employees describe two different realities.

What organisations offer on paper often **doesn't match what employees experience** in practice.

8. Best practice employers

How leading companies prioritise and invest in parental leave

— APOTEK HJÄRTAT — RETAIL

Focus: *Structured process through “Babyboarding”*

- Introduced Babyboarding: a framework for planning, contact, and return.
- HR owns the process; managers handle day-to-day implementation.
- Integrated into employer branding and positively received internally.

“For us, this initiative is about making parental leave a natural and integrated part of the employee journey at Hjärtat. Our people are our greatest asset, and many go through this life stage while with us.”

— **Sanna Smidvik, Talent Acquisition Team Manager**

— SÖDERBERG & PARTNERS — FINANCE AND ADVISORY

Focus: *Manager accountability and family wellbeing*

- Managers responsible for employee support and inclusion throughout leave.
- Access to counseling for family related challenges.
- Promotes openness about balancing work and family life.

“Our employees are part of us even when they’re not at work. We build relationships between employees, teams, and leaders even during parental leave — and take responsibility for their wellbeing.” — **Jenny Persson, HR Manager**

— EY — PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Focus: *Coaching, communication, and measurable support*

- Combines coaching, HR-manager collaboration, and added compensation.
- Maintains contact with employees on leave through sessions and activities.
- Tracks KPIs to connect parental support to retention and wellbeing.

“Through coaching, we help expectant parents make life more sustainable both at home and at work.” — **Henrik Gradin, HR Director, Sweden**

9. Recommendations

Practical actions to bridge the gap between policy and lived experience

1. STANDARDISE THE PARENTAL-LEAVE JOURNEY

- Replace ad hoc routines with a structured process covering planning, communication, and reboarding.
- Ensure every parent — and manager — follows the same clear path.

2. EQUIP MANAGERS TO LEAD THE PROCESS

- Empower managers with real-time guidance and digital checklists so support is proactive, not reactive.
- Provide tools so managers can guide employees confidently before, during, and after leave.

3. REBOARD WITH PURPOSE

- Replace one-time check-ins with a structured reboarding journey — helping employees rebuild confidence, balance workload, and reintegrate into team culture.

4. MEASURE WHAT MATTERS MOST

- Track outcomes like return-to-work satisfaction, retention, and wellbeing.
- Collect data and turn insights into measurable KPIs

5. SUPPORT PARENTAL WELLBEING CONTINUOUSLY

- Integrate access to wellbeing resources and proactive health screening to detect postpartum depression early, and connect parents to the right support before issues escalate.

6. NORMALISE PARENTAL LEAVE ACROSS ALL GENDERS

- Encourage all to take full leave to reduce stigma and foster equality.
- Promote flexible models that accommodate diverse families and personal circumstances.

10. Final words

Swedish employers demonstrate **strong intent and policy**. The next step is execution and accountability.

THE WAY FORWARD

SUPPORT MANAGERS

as key enablers in every stage

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS:

process outcomes, manager engagement, inclusion, reboarding success and retention

PRIORITISE WELLBEING

with tailored solutions for parents

TRACK DATA

to close the policy–practice gap



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Health



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