

Hours to Suit

Part II

Working Flexibly at Senior
and Managerial Levels in the
Public and Voluntary Sector



Foreword

Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of flexible working at all levels of their organisations. It is seen as the right thing to do as it brings other social and economic benefits of their enterprises.

Among these are improvements in staff morale and retention; access to a larger pool of potential employees and experience enhanced productivity. Flexible working has social benefits too; staff have a better work-life balance; are less stressed and have more time for community based activities.

Flexible working also allows parents and careers, whose responsibilities would not allow them to do a traditional nine to five job, to fulfil their potential and increase their earning power. The latter can play a very positive part in the elimination of child poverty.

But though the benefits of flexible working are plain putting it into practice can be a real barrier. That is why the Government launched the Quality Part-Time Work Fund and why it, in turn has helped Working Families to produce their 'Hours to Suit' reports. These provide employers with practical, real life case studies of how flexible working at senior levels can be delivered in any size of organisation and any sector.

Barbara Follett, MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State



Government Equalities Office
Foreword

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Introduction



This edition of the Hours to Suit series contains 19 case studies of senior public and voluntary managers who work reduced hours or flexibly. The case studies were collected as part of a project inspired by the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission's report of February 2006. One of the calls for action resulting from this report, Shaping a Fairer Future, was the need to demonstrate clearly that senior roles and flexible working were not incompatible. Funding was made available by the Government Equality Office's Quality Part time Work Initiative. A first collection of case studies, looking at senior workers in the private sector, was published by Working Families in March 2007.

The case studies presented in each book have been chosen to reflect the diversity of ways in which senior roles can be redesigned on a flexible basis, and the wide range of organisations in which such arrangements are successfully working. The case studies in this book include central and local government, voluntary sector, the academic sector and healthcare.

Context

Previous work by New Ways to Work (now Working Families) in the 2001 study Flexi Exec, had identified four key areas:

- **The importance of having the right workload for reduced hours;**
- **The role modelling aspect of senior staff working flexibly;**
- **There is no single working arrangement which will always be appropriate;**
- **Career progression for reduced hours workers needs particular attention.**

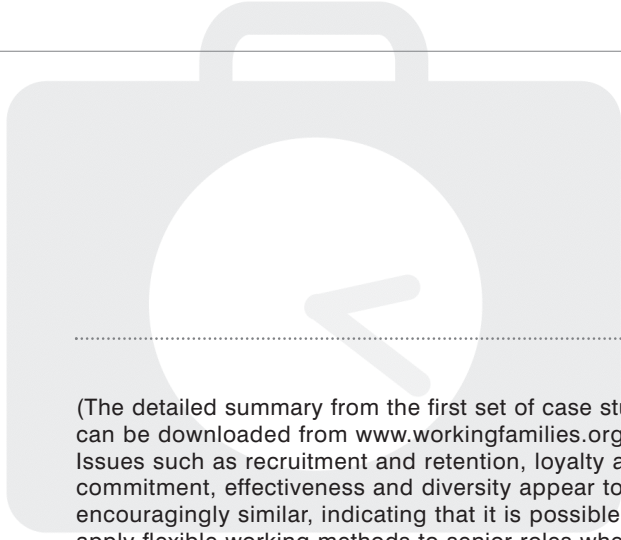
In addition the Equal Opportunities Commission identified in their 2005 report, The Hidden Brain Drain, that the lack of senior roles available on a flexible basis was deterring women from taking higher-level jobs.

Demographic change and changing family roles mean that groups of employees who are outside the 'traditional' cohort of workers (parents, and particularly mothers of young children) who want flexible working, will increasingly demand flexible work patterns. These new groups will include carers of adults, parents of older children and older workers.

Findings

The lessons and conclusions drawn from the first set of case studies in the private sector apply to a great extent in the public sector, and vice versa. Because of this similarity, detailed findings have not been reproduced here, but in brief they were:

- **there is a strong business case for facilitating senior managers to work on a reduced hours and flexible basis.**
- **there are indications that organisational cultures have changed over the last three to four years**
- **being a visible role model sends a powerful message to others**
- **managing others is possible whilst working part time, compressed hours, from home or job sharing**
- **developments in technology are key to making the arrangements work.**
- **job sharing can be highly successful at enabling senior roles to be carried out on a full time basis, where full time role cover is necessary.**



(The detailed summary from the first set of case studies can be downloaded from www.workingfamilies.org.uk). Issues such as recruitment and retention, loyalty and commitment, effectiveness and diversity appear to be encouragingly similar, indicating that it is possible to apply flexible working methods to senior roles wherever they are situated.

Certain findings have been reinforced in this collection of case studies. There was a range of individuals who were successfully working a four day week, but they all felt that it would not be possible to carry out their roles if they were working three days or less. It was recognised by them and by those working on a job share basis that job sharing was a particularly suitable model for roles which need full week cover and cannot be carried out on a reduced hours basis. These case studies also demonstrate how particularly successful a jobshare arrangement can be in a senior management position where the role is such that it can be unhealthy for one person to do – the element of support provided by a job share was also very evident.

Compressing working time is also popular at this level, allowing people to make the hours commitment their role needs whilst taking time for themselves. It may be that the more widespread use of flexible working arrangements within organisations is making compressed weeks easier to arrange and negotiate for some senior workers. A number of interviewees mentioned that many people worked flexibly on Fridays, meaning that taking a day off then had less impact on the organisation as it was a 'quiet' day.

The lessons of recruitment and retention are also reinforced. Many case studies indicated that without being able to work in a different way they would have looked for other jobs. One set of jobsharers was able to point to their flexible working arrangement as the key to being able to continue to work and develop as professionals in their chosen field. It is important to recognise the role that worklife integration has played in retaining this senior talent, particularly in organisations where building a business case is done without a wealth of colleagues already working flexibly at these levels.

Conclusions

It is encouraging that there are not radical differences between public and private sector organisations when it comes to flexible working at senior levels. Many of the techniques and challenges remain the same, as do the benefits. However the initial research stages of this project found some indications that flexible and reduced hours working at senior levels is more widespread in the public than the private sector. Although there are no statistics to back this up, this may be the case for a number of reasons including: a more widespread culture of flexible working in the public and voluntary sectors; use of worklife balance opportunities to compensate for generally lower pay levels than the private sector offers to managers; a longer history of

flexible working options within the public sector; a deep embedding of an equality and diversity ethos within public and voluntary organisations, often tied to their mission and organisational goals.

It is hoped that both this and the preceding collection of case studies will be of use to organisations and individuals. They demonstrate that a wide range of jobs can be done in an equally varied way – there is no size which fits all. It is important to recognise that many of the usual objections to senior people working flexibly – such as management responsibility, or client perceptions – have been successfully addressed in public, private and voluntary sectors. It is equally important that when a senior role is being considered for flexible working, the search for examples and comparators is not too narrow but takes a wider view across the employment landscape to look for ideas and solutions.

Case Study

Samia al Qadhi and Christine Fogg

Joint Chief Executive, Breast Cancer Care



Samia al Qadhi and Christine Fogg share the job of joint Chief Executives for Breast Cancer Care, a charity providing information, practical assistance and emotional support for anyone affected by breast cancer. 270 staff are employed in the central office in London and across five other offices.

Samia explains: “I worked here as Chief Executive between 1994 and 2000, when I left to have my daughter. I didn’t intend to come back, but Christine took over the job and we kept in touch. She became pregnant when my daughter was nearly two. I was, by then, thinking about going back to work, and we thought we could put a proposal to the board that I cover her maternity leave, and that we job share after that. Because the board had known us both and we had both done the job independently for a substantive amount of time, they were open to this idea. Christine and I built a proposal together, setting out how we thought it would work. We recognised that the onus was on us to work out how to solve any problems; we have always thought that.

“We began by each working two and a half days a week and then extended this to three full days each, in order to have a decent hand over, which is critical. We set up very clear administrative processes from the start and have one computer and one email; so people don’t make a choice about who they contact – they contact ‘the Chief Exec’.

“We have a handover book and write notes for each other as we go along. We keep a one sentence record of decisions we’ve made or problems that have come up. We meet early on a Wednesday morning for a handover, so by the end of the morning we should both be up-to-date. We work very closely with our PA to make the communication systems work effectively. We have five senior managers and our PA, and share out the line management so that we each manage three people. We swap those over every year or so, so we don’t end up entrenched with managing the same small group all the time. We each do the line management and appraisal of the people we manage, but we discuss together the person in question.

“Wednesday is meeting day, which is quite tough on the organisation and a lot happens on a Wednesday. We share all responsibilities, and even if we are not party to another person’s decision we will back that person up. For us that is the crux of the deal. I think we have practically never, in about five years of job sharing said: ‘I wouldn’t have done that’. That’s what we made quite clear to the board: that we are jointly responsible and jointly accountable. We don’t share out responsibility, but we do share out roles. We might share out projects – one of us might be the lead and then the other person can dip in and out – but the responsibility is always joint.

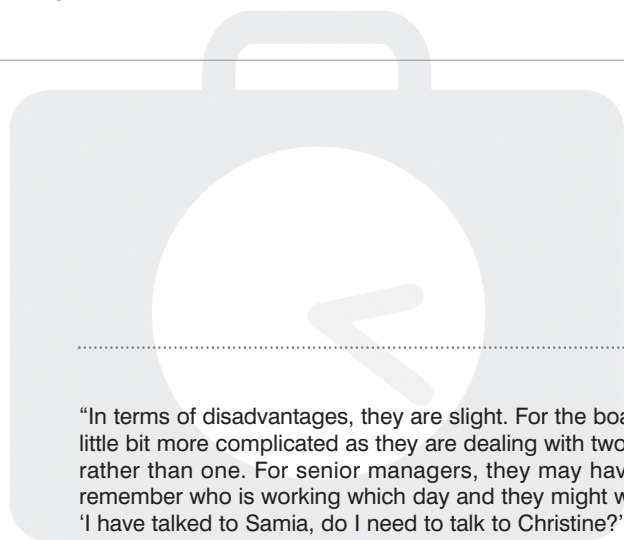
“When we’ve dealt with an email, if the other person hasn’t seen it, we have a category called ‘for filing – Christine’ or ‘for filing – Samia’. I read it, I act on it, and Christine doesn’t have to do anything. But in order for her to know

what’s happened, I put it into her email ‘for filing’ and she knows that after she’s read it she can either delete it or file it. There is also a subgroup which is for action. If Christine is thinking ‘Samia doesn’t only have to read this, she has to act on it’, she’ll put it into my action file. It is a simple way of making sure that we are both kept in the loop. In general, I would say that because you have to be explicit about decisions there are less grey areas and more clarity.

“The biggest benefit to our employer is that they end up with two Chief Executives. Christine and I aren’t doing other paid jobs. So all our potential work energy is put into this job. I believe they get the best of us, and pay us for the best of our time. They don’t pay us for any down time and I think we work very, very hard. The biggest benefit is our intellectual input, because you get that high level intellectual commitment from two people. There is practically nearly always a Chief Exec around, as we would hardly ever have holidays at the same time; our accessibility is higher. They also end up with double the evening commitment – two people can do more evenings. You also get two people who have equal commitment to a solution, thrashing out a problem. We don’t make knee-jerk decisions, because two heads are better than one. You end up with a quality of leadership which I think is better. Some people would think decision making is slower, but I think the opposite applies. Some decisions need more thought and it means that rather than making a reactive decision on your own, you think about it and talk to somebody else. That is a massive advantage for the organisation, particularly with scary decisions. The advantages to us include reduced isolation and sharing the load. Leadership jobs on your own are very stressful and lonely at times and it is heaven to have someone to share it with. I did it on my own for six years, but I would rather not now, because I know the advantages of having a close friend to share it with – someone who has the same commitment to a positive outcome. Another advantage to the organisation is that the work continues even if one of us is off.

“Working in this way is a really positive role model for the organisation and for the sector. It means that people who work here can feel confident that they can ask for flexibility – without it being a culture where it is not acceptable. It sets the tone for a people-friendly approach to work. I think it is a fallacy that CEOs need to be one person carrying the flag for the organisation.

“The biggest advantage to me is that it allows me to have some time with my daughter. If I was working full time in this job, particularly now it is on the scale it is, it would be an all consuming thing. It’s also a massive advantage for my emotional wellbeing, because on the two days when I don’t work, I not only get some family chores done, I also quite often do some work, but it’s work in peace with no immediate pressure. In terms of the quality of my life, enormously improved. I’m not quite sure that I could bear to work full time again – I did it for nearly 20 years.



“In terms of disadvantages, they are slight. For the board it’s a little bit more complicated as they are dealing with two people rather than one. For senior managers, they may have to remember who is working which day and they might wonder: ‘I have talked to Samia, do I need to talk to Christine?’ about some issues. There is a slight disadvantage in terms of the very conventional public face of the organisation. I think it is easier for the external communications team to build up one person as a figurehead, but it’s meant that they have used more people, which I think has its advantages.

“So much has to be loaded into Wednesdays and this can be a strain for everybody, but on the other hand it is a day when everybody assumes they need to be at work, so if you are trying to plan things you might always assume you need to be in the office on a Wednesday.

“We sometimes have tensions, but the key to an effective job share is trust, communication and shared values. That doesn’t mean that you have to be the same sort of person or have the same approach. You can have massive differences as personalities, and Christine and I do – we are very different sorts of people. But if your values are different you are going to be in trouble. To be able to do a challenging job with one of your best friends whom you trust and work effectively with is practically all advantage. The only literal disadvantage is you are paid less. In this sort of job you would never count the hours anyway; it would become meaningless. All you can try and do is make it tolerable. These sorts of jobs just extend into a bottomless pit of challenges and the more your door is open to them the more they come in.

“The organisation not only has double our energy, it also has double our experience. Rather than having twenty years of management experience they have forty, because we both bring our experiences to the table, and we still learn from each other. That’s a massive advantage for the organisation and ourselves. I think we try and play to our strengths. We know each other very well now and we know what the other is good at. Sometimes that can be good, because it can be about not forcing a square peg into a round hole. There are certain things that I don’t like doing and Christine might be more relaxed about them and it’s lovely to be able to play to those strengths; as long as you don’t use it as a way of not developing aspects of yourself. I think you couldn’t work with someone in a job share partnership who had a different level of energy to you. We’ve never had problems where we’ve tried to pass the buck. We know that the day we start trying to pass the buck is the day that it is destroyed. We do everything we can on the days we are in and we try and leave the decks clean for the other person. In our handover book there are usually two outstanding actions and the reason we couldn’t resolve them is an external reason.

“I feel that a good job share is a bit like a good marriage – you make a commitment to each other to work together as a team and you go through ups and downs as a team – there is almost a contract between you. Of course you will have quarrels and of course you will have upsets, but you wouldn’t make those quarrels public. You need to be loyal to each other.”

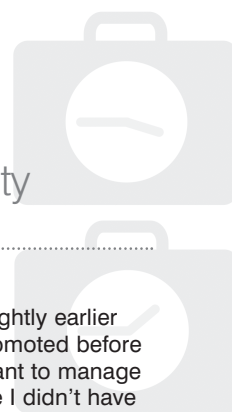
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Case Study

Helen Atkinson

Professor of Engineering
and Head of the Mechanics of Materials Group, Leicester University



Helen Atkinson is Professor of Engineering and Head of the Mechanics of Materials Group at Leicester University. Since 2005 she has been working full time, but between 1991 and 2004 she worked part time with proportions varying from 50 - 80 per cent of a full time equivalent whilst developing her career from lecturer to professor.

Helen explains: "Shortly after taking up a lectureship at Sheffield University I wanted to work part time after my first child was born in 1991. I suggested that I concentrate on teaching, but my head of department advised that from a career point of view I needed to build up my international research profile. The way he set this up was that I was given half the normal teaching load, a full research load and no administration.

"I continued on a half time contract whilst taking two further maternity leaves in 1992 and 1993. By 1996 I was, in effect, working the equivalent of 60 per cent and therefore my contract was increased. By making sure that my research was maintained whilst I worked part time, several years later I was eligible to apply for a senior lectureship and was successful in this promotion in 2000. The University had very carefully reviewed the promotion criteria to deal with the situation of people working less than full time, whilst maintaining the quality threshold. Scoring was under the headings of research, teaching, administration and professional standing. If someone didn't have a score under one heading (as was the case with my situation with no conventional academic administrative roles, such as being Examinations Officer or Admissions Tutor) the University would look at the candidate's standing under the other three headings. My scoring was high under the three headings, not including administration. I was strong on research project leadership, I had published a significant number of papers of high quality and my professional standing was also high.

"In 2002 I became a Reader, a role which recognises excellence in research, research project leadership and national and international standing, all of which I had by then developed. At this stage I had built a strong team around me and had been managing a group of two or three post docs and four or five PhD students.

"In 2002 my family moved to Leicester and the foresight of my original head of department, and the support of his successors and colleagues, meant that when I applied to Leicester University, the CV I submitted was virtually indistinguishable from a 'normal' full time CV for a chair, in terms of all the key experiences. I was appointed to a professorship, again working part time, on an 80 per cent basis. In 2004 I became head of a research group with three professors, two senior lecturers and two lecturers. As head of group I was by then responsible overall for about 25 people. At that stage I felt ready to work full time again and after a family discussion started working full time in 2005.

"Despite working part time for 14 years I have stayed within the system and I have been able to spend time with my children when they were young. I might have been

promoted to a chair (i.e. made a professor) slightly earlier had I remained full time, but it is rare to be promoted before 40 and I was promoted at 42. It is very important to manage your time carefully and make a mark. Because I didn't have the experience of administration in the earlier part of my career it has meant that I have had to learn in depth how university structures work over the last few years.

"I would stress that people who want to work part time during part of an academic career must understand their university's promotion criteria and must work with their department to ensure that they meet their department's needs. An academic's job is quite a flexible one by its nature and there is quite a lot of potential to reorganise things if necessary (but obviously not lectures and other teaching commitments). It is however necessary to travel in connection with research because you must build international profile.

"I have recently been made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering – the highest honour for an engineer in the UK. As a consequence of the positive approach of the Universities both in Sheffield and in Leicester, the higher education system has held on to someone who is now able to make a very full contribution to the department and the university as a senior academic. With my background and range of experience I now mentor and help develop members of staff who are at earlier stages in their careers; something I gain great satisfaction from."

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Case Study

Mike Attwood and Stephen Jones

Chief Executive of Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Mike Attwood and Stephen Jones share the job of Chief Executive of Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT), which directly employs around 1,500 staff in the delivery of front line community health services and has a corporate commissioning arm. They work three days a week each, covering the equivalent of a 1.2 full time post.

Mike explains: "I have worked for the NHS for just over 22 years, and Stephen and I have job shared for Coventry Teaching PCT since June 2005. I had always worked full time until early 2004 – I am a bit of a rehabilitated workaholic. At this time I was Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust in Slough. I have always been very driven, and I had a conversation with our Head of HR who said 'You may have the right to kill yourself, but you haven't got the right to kill everybody else'. This was a bit of a wake up call in terms of what model of leadership I was promoting to the organisation.

"I had been thinking through my work life balance and had some good executive coaching, and I began to make some personal changes around working patterns. At that point I shifted to an annualised hours contract. NHS senior manager contracts don't specify working hours, so I caused a bit of consternation with the Strategic Health Authority because I went onto a 48 hours a week annualised hours contract. At the same time, we decided that there should be a Deputy Chief Executive, and this worked very well. I was able to put in the extra hours at peak times or times of particularly high risk for the organisation, and take time back when the organisation was more in maintenance mode. In essence this meant I went from having about six weeks holiday to about twelve across the year. That was my dry run at doing a job share.

"Stephen and I had worked together before in London, when essentially I was providing the services that he was commissioning. We did a lot of team development work and realised that we had a similar view of the world and worked well together. We had also both done the Top Managers programme at the King's Fund so we kept bumping into each other. Stephen was working a four day a week contract as Deputy Chief Executive of Brent Primary Care Trust. I said to him that I might like to take the next step and do a job share. I saw this job advertised and as we had both always worked in urban, deprived and diverse communities I thought Coventry might fit the bill, so we put in a joint application. This comprised a joint submission setting out what we could offer, plus our separate CVs.

"It was quite a learning curve for the NHS. The Headhunters had to work out if they were going to interview us together or separately in the 'long list' interviews. In the end we agreed that we would be interviewed separately, but both be in the room. They were worried about confidentiality, but our view was that if we were applying for the job together, it was important to know if we were both up to it! We did the psychometric and ability testing separately but asked to hear our results jointly. We had to be quite clear about how we thought things should be designed. The interview was a joint

interview. The short list was three including us as one, from a long list of 12. We did more work on our strengths and weakness and checking out common ideals, common principals and ethics. We also did some common interview coaching. Key questions included 'What would you dismiss somebody for?'

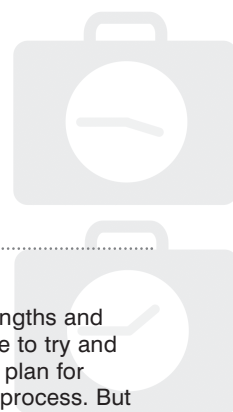
"Our aptitude and psychometric tests showed that our skills were complementary. One of us was coming up stronger on the intuitive tactical relationship building, and the other on core strategic analysis and strong project management. We also stressed the fact that we had chosen each other and had worked together before. We were very clear that we were one candidate! We also worked on managing equal airtime during the selection process. We had some very good advice, from another job share, that at the interview we should take the questions in turn and we practised this. The other point we made was that our combined experience as both provider and commissioner of services would give the organisation a very well rounded Chief Executive.

"We got the job and started in June 2005. In terms of the logistics, we said that for the first six weeks we would both work four days a week, rather than three, as part of the salary deal for the first year. That meant that we could do a common induction programme, meet our own team together, do joint staff roadshows and meet the board together. We talked with the Headhunters about the logistics and what the job share contract would look like, but made it clear that we would not talk about that in the interview.

"We are both on a 22 hour week contract and we both work three days a week with a joint day on Tuesdays. We don't have set days apart from Tuesday, which is the corporate day in terms of board meetings. One week you do Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and the second week you do Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday. We have a daily handover email note, a conversation and a common 'to do' list. The person in writes the handover email, and the person out reads it and rings in to do a debrief. On a weekly basis we update the tactical short term 'to do' list, and strategic 'things we need to move forward'. The first thing we do on a Tuesday is our own weekly catch up. We made a conscious decision that apart from that hour, our aim on Tuesday is for the Joint Chief Executive to be visible and outward looking.

"We split the line management of the six Directors, but we do joint objective setting and appraisal. We both do the whole job, although there are projects that one or other of us will take the lead on. We have also shared out the chairing of some clinical networks.

"The core meetings we both attend are the weekly executive meeting with the Director team, the board meetings (monthly) and the Professional Executive Committee. "If needs be, we will come in for other important joint meetings and days are added onto the annual leave allowance. Sometimes people will call you into an urgent meeting and want both of you, but we have made it clear that we are both capable of handling the whole business. We inherited a complicated financial



situation, with a deficit over the last two years and we both attended meetings at the Health Authority.

“The main advantages for the Trust are that two heads give a broader range of experience, we have complementary skills, they get two people for the price of 1.2, better decision making and more focus because of less stress. On the two days that you are off you don’t stop thinking creatively, so they get much more strategic capacity. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

“For me the main advantage is a more sustainable work life balance. I wanted to spend more time with my godson and I am able to pursue some other academic interests. Stephen also wanted to spend more time at home working on music and languages. The NHS has been through a very stressful period and a benefit for us has been more headroom and an ability to reflect, which also benefits the organisation. British culture is still hung up on the heroic individual Chief Executive.

“We have had to watch some of our differences. I can normally judge where we just need to decide, and Stephen will call me up short if I’m not doing enough analysis of the issue first. Most of the time it is a real strength, but occasionally we have to check that I haven’t knee-jerked and Stephen hasn’t over-analysed.

“If you are dealing with a crisis, like the financial deficit, it is sometimes positively better to field one person to handle a very high profile meeting. This demonstrates that the job share is strong enough and we have a great team.

“You have to watch out if you bound in very enthusiastically on a Thursday when everybody else is feeling a bit ‘end of weekish’. When we were turning around the deficit, we were very aware that we were getting a respite during the week and the full time Directors weren’t. A lot of it is dealing with other people’s perceptions, but generally speaking the job share is viewed very positively, although two men doing a job share is seen as unusual. There is no way I would go back to full time work. I love the job share and it brings lots of organisational and personal benefits.

“I don’t think there are any disadvantages. There are areas we need to watch to make sure we maximise the complementary skills and identify our development needs. The chair is our boss and we have a joint appraisal with her. We have to be careful if we have worked an issue through together, that we do include other people in scoping possible solutions. One of our Director team will occasionally say ‘It seems like you have talked to each other so much, that you are not using me as a Director. You need to make sure that I have the ability to shape rather than just execute the decision’. But we have established a very open culture of feedback so they can say this sort of thing.

“The key is really understanding each other’s vision and values. Although you have different strengths and weaknesses, you have to be sure that you are heading in the same direction and have broadly the same aspirations for what success will look

like in the job. Be very honest about your strengths and weaknesses and work on them. Expect people to try and play you off one against the other and have a plan for managing it, and have a very good handover process. But I think these things are intensely personal, so for us it is the daily email note, for someone else it might not be. I feel very strongly that everyone has weaknesses and everyone has fantastic strengths. We have joint supervision with one person and we have also had other coaching from a retired Chief Executive. Once they appointed us they were sold on the job share, and said we need to invest in what will unleash the power of the job share. The joint supervision followed from this. It is fun, it is challenging and it is much more sustainable for us, and the organisation.”

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Case Study

Tamsyn Barton

Head of the European Union Department,
Department for International Development

Tamsyn Barton is Head of the European Union Department in the Department for International Development (DfID), which employs 2,521 (of whom 875 are recruited overseas) people (as of September 2007). She is a grade 5 senior civil servant, and has worked for the Department in a permanent role since 2001. She worked on contract as a Technical Cooperation officer for the Department's predecessor between 1994 and 1997. She has worked a compressed four-day week most of the time since March 2006, having worked on a job share basis in a previous role. Wednesday is the day she generally does not work.

Tamsyn comments: "When I first joined the Department I had the opportunity of working from home one day a week. It didn't have to be a particular day but it helped people to know which one it would be. With my previous employer in the voluntary sector you just had to be there from 9 - 5 whatever happened, barring a crisis. So working for the Department was much more flexible in that way from the start, even though it was a full time job.

"When I first arrived, I was a grade 7, which is equal to the grade I had been on as a Technical Cooperation officer, and I got promoted to grade 6 after a couple of years. I couldn't afford to go part time as I am the breadwinner of the family. In September 2005 I saw an advert for a job sharer in the Senior Civil Service. I had been thinking about finding a way to go part time for some time, so I applied and got the job as a job sharer. It was a rather complicated job, in that it was actually two jobs, but we received a lot of help and encouragement. It needed good IT systems to support it, patient team members and an executive assistant to provide continuity.

"It was a very heavy and fast moving policy agenda and it was quite a challenge to keep each other abreast all the time. In the initial stages it was complicated by my having an additional corporate role. It can be quite difficult to share a job with somebody who is already in post. Ideally, you should start together. We did it for a year and made it work. Both of us benefited hugely and it was the first time either of us had been able to reduce our hours.

"Following a restructuring, my job share partner was moved into another role, where she decided not to job share but to have a deputy. My son is mildly autistic and was just about to go to secondary school and I was very motivated to spend time supporting him in that move. I decided to continue working part time and agreed this with my new head of department, where I was in a temporary role covering a maternity leave. It was a very demanding job, and I struggled to fit it into four days. I would have liked to work compressed hours, but in that particular department it wasn't available. I then got promotion to grade 5 and had the opportunity to ask to work compressed hours - which is what I do in my current role.

"Everyone knew that I had done the job share arrangement, but the Department preferred me to be on compressed hours rather than part time in this role. Although I had worked fewer hours when I was officially part time, I felt I was working a full

time load. So for me, compressed hours is a good bargain. The broad understanding is that you can work longer hours on four days and you do not work on the fifth day. Wednesday is the day when I don't work. In practice you have to be flexible and I don't mind that at all. I have to come in for some things, so in those weeks I will try not to do such long hours on the other days. What I like is the fact that I can try and make myself as available as possible to people in case of emergency, but I am allowed to be off the email at home and off the end of the phone on a Wednesday. Someone in my department works a nine-day fortnight, and there are various other flexible arrangements, but no one has quite the same one as me. I think broadly it's a success, although I am sure I work more than my conditioned hours.

"I have 19 people in my department at present, two of them are in Brussels and the rest in London. I am directly responsible for three team leaders, and have someone who reports to me as a corporate manager, separately from the teams. I am also responsible for about 19 seconded national experts from Europe and I directly manage four of them at the moment.

"I wouldn't say I organise the management any differently because I am working compressed hours. My current role, dealing with Europe, is very much a policy and influencing role, and the associated spending. Technology has helped to reduce the administrative side of things. My role is mainly as a sounding board, giving guidance and coaching to people so that they can advise ministers better and also to help people improve their performance. For the most part the work is done by my team. I might edit something and I will talk through things, but they will produce most of the documents and I will tweak them. Some of it is face to face communication, but a lot of it is paper based and electronic communication.

"On a Wednesday I have a team leader deputising for me, but they contact me if they need to and I would rather they did. If it is an awkward moment I will ring them back. If there is something they really want me to look at I will. If it is Ministerial business, it would fall to the team leader whose area it covers. We haven't had any problems over deputising.

"It would be easier for everybody if I were in every day, no question. On the whole, people are getting used to me after six months. They know I will come in if necessary for a particularly important meeting. Or it might be the only date I can travel to Brussels or somewhere, as part of a big ministerial meeting - I can't not go. I will then see if I can get another day back, during the week. Some weeks you just can't get another day and then I just try and not work such long hours. Probably most people won't even be aware of my working arrangement.

"I think you generally find in DfID that most people are very pro flexible working from home. We have a very good system of remote working, compared to many departments. It is part of the culture and I think that's down to the leadership. The culture and the rules have changed a lot. When I was a



Technical Cooperation Officer working in India on a temporary contract, whilst my son was small and I was feeding him, I took him all over India and it was quite a challenging business, as nothing was set up for that. It cost me a fortune for my partner to travel with me and look after him while I was on long car journeys in the field. Now it's completely changed for people doing similar jobs. They are permanent and pensionable, and officers are given support with child care and the costs of bringing someone to travel with them.

"In 2001, we had a new Permanent Secretary, Suma Chakrabarti, and his appointment caused media interest because it was agreed that he would be the first Permanent Secretary to be allowed to stay at home on Fridays. He was very interested in the way IT systems could support these more flexible arrangements, not least because he wanted to use them himself. You can do your emails late at night when you have done the chores, if that's what suits. That was the model he adopted. It's harder, but you can still rise up the ladder working part time.

"I think in our Country Offices (outside the UK) there is much more restriction on part time working, but I have a cousin who works for DfID who was able to reduce her hours after working full time for a while in a Country Office. She is an AIDS specialist and they wanted to retain her. Generally it is less flexible in Country Offices, because of the cost of having people there. There wasn't much gender diversity in the Senior Civil Service and I suspect that this was because of the need for mobility, although the evidence wasn't clear. It is quite difficult to rise without having Country Office experience, and women tend to be more hindered in getting that.

"I think I'm ten times more motivated because I know I can get some time focussing on my kids in particular, and domestic stuff. I can pick them up from school at least once a week and I can also drop them off every day, as here you can arrive at 10 o'clock and it's fine. I find with people in my teams that, given the chance to work the way that suits them and the hours that suit them, they are so much more motivated and committed. They don't get so stressed by competing responsibilities.

"It can get complicated to manage with all the different obligations on different days of the week. I know we are way ahead of most other Whitehall departments. The problem is that compared to working outside government, there is the security on your lap top, which means that just opening the thing up will take 20 minutes. But at least everyone can have a lap top. Once it became so common for people to work from home or remotely (which helps with the travelling) it was decided to have a one machine policy so people either have a desk top or a lap top.

"The main downside with working compressed hours is maintaining as much contact time as I can with my team. It's just that bit harder to get the contact time you need to do the best possible job as a manager. The advantage to the department is that they can retain a greater variety and

diversity of talent. The civil service looks totally different now and the leadership of this organisation is quite different, because of the deliberate attempt to encourage diversity. This brings in a better range of ideas. I doubt that would have been possible without all these measures to support flexible working."

I think I'm ten times more motivated because I know I can get some time focussing on my kids in particular, and domestic stuff. I can pick them up from school at least once a week.

Case Study

Toby Blume

Chief Executive, Urban Forum

Toby Blume is Chief Executive for Urban Forum, an umbrella body for community and voluntary groups with interests in urban and regional policy, especially regeneration. Urban Forum has seven staff members and four work part time. Toby works a compressed work week between Monday and Thursday.

Toby explains: "I joined Urban Forum in 2004. I left my previous job, primarily motivated by the birth of my first child. I had been a founding director and worked there for seven years. Although I wanted the professional challenge and career development offered by a new job, there was definitely a personal motivation to work less and be closer to home. I had been working about 60 hours a week because I loved it, but my priorities changed. Before accepting this job I talked with them about the potential to explore flexible working. There had been part time staff before and a degree of flexibility, so they were prepared to consider a request and that was sufficient for me to accept the job. After a few months, when I had settled into the job, I made a formal request to move to working a compressed week and this was agreed by the chair.

"I work full time over four days between Monday and Thursday, and have Fridays off, when I have child care responsibilities for my two children. There are occasions when I am required to work on Fridays but in general I can either schedule things Monday to Thursday or find someone else to stand in. I work long days, but I tend to leave quite early, so my usual working day is something like 7am to 5.30pm, which suits me.

"Some days I come in even earlier (if my son wakes me up!). The case I made to my chair was that this was a way of managing my hours more effectively, because otherwise I would find myself working long days, five days a week. I think that enhanced my case.

"There is an appreciation here of the value of balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of the individual, and an acknowledgement that a happy workforce is a productive workforce. I think as a new chief executive they were keen to accommodate me in so far as the organisation's needs were met. There wasn't a particular reason why it couldn't be managed provided there was flexibility on both sides. I wasn't asking to reduce my hours, so I think that helped, and there was an appreciation of equal opportunities.

"On occasion I need to be in contact with the office on a Friday and I don't find that a problem. The things that tend to not be able to wait are press and media work, and our communications manager knows that I am happy for him to call me. Most things can wait – the difference between Friday and early on a Monday is not that great. I am not a workaholic, because I am too busy at home, but I do tend to keep on top of things. If there are urgent things I am prepared to be flexible. I appreciate it goes both ways. There is also a very capable deputy Chief Executive who I trust to take decisions if necessary. She works three days a week, one of which is usually a Friday. She is on maternity leave at the moment and another member of staff is covering her

role. On occasions there are meetings which I don't go to, and working in this way does put pressure on; just in terms

of scheduling meetings. The main disadvantage is pressure on time. Occasionally there are things that it would be convenient to be able to respond to on a Friday.

"I am much happier in my job than I would otherwise be. I think I am productive in the time that I have – it means that I am not working ridiculously long hours. It also signals the organisation's commitment to accommodate flexible working. If the chief executive can do it then it shouldn't be a barrier to anyone else. The greatest advantage is that I made a conscious decision to be as present as possible for the first two years of my daughter's, and now my son's, lives. It was a very deliberate choice, to put career development to one side for a period of time to invest in my children. I look after both of my children on a Friday when my partner works. It allows her to work without additional child care costs, which is a big issue. That has resulted in my having a relationship with my children that is on a par with their mother. It's a better balance, three days not working, and four days working is about right. So my health, my general well being and my mental health benefit as well. If I just have a normal two day weekend, by Sunday I am thinking about work. At least this way I have Saturday in the middle where I have genuinely forgotten all about work pressures.

"It's sometimes hard getting up so early – it's a long day. I will make sure that I do the things that really need doing at the beginning of the day and then at the end I can pick up things which are easier to deal with, or smaller tasks.

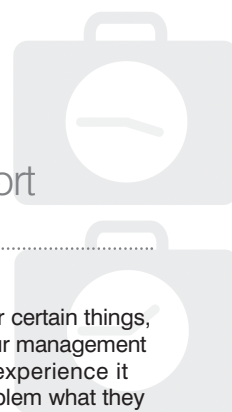
"I think that people appreciate the value of a flexible working policy, and that in general they know that I do a good job and it doesn't affect my performance. The trustees commitment to equalities and to ensuring that people are not excluded by working practices is reflected in their accommodation of my desire for flexible working. The chair is a similar age with kids of his own and I think he appreciates the importance of family time, so the board have been incredibly supportive as well. I get positive feedback about performance, so I don't think my flexible working is felt to have a negative impact on my work.

"I currently have three direct reports. We have a number of part time staff who work part of the day every day, and we have someone else working a compressed week. Part time working can pose some problems, although the issue is probably more to do with our capacity to do the things we want to do, which I think is very common within the voluntary sector. Some people are based in offices in other places, one in Exeter and one working from home in Bath - that creates some challenges as well. You can pick up the phone and email but it's not quite the same as having someone at a desk opposite. Our team meetings are a nightmare to arrange. Sometimes you think 'wouldn't it just be easier to have six staff all working full time all in the office', but we would lose some good people, so we are where we are and we are performing well."

Case Study

Anita Charlesworth

Director, Active Generation, Department of Culture, Media and Sport



Anita Charlesworth is Director, Active Generation, at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which employs around 500 people. She is a senior civil servant, grade 3. She works three days a week and moved into this role in January 2007.

Anita explains: "I started working at the Treasury in 1998. I have worked part time now for seven years and in that period I have had three spells of maternity leave, and have been promoted.

"My first child was born in 2000 and I took the minimum amount of maternity leave. I returned after four months and worked five days a week compressed into four. I was the main bread winner, and because my husband was teaching he was very local and collected our daughter from nursery on four days. In the Treasury, with ministers, it tends to be a late 'til late culture, so it was easier not to be there for a day than it was to leave at 5pm. Most ministers go back to their constituencies on Fridays and many people didn't realise I didn't work on Fridays. In a work sense it was very straightforward, but from a personal viewpoint it was horrible - I never got home until my daughter was in bed.

"I had just been promoted to the senior civil service when I came back from maternity leave and I was working in a different role. I became pregnant again when my eldest was six months old and I took 18 weeks maternity leave. When I returned I spaced out my maternity leave. The Treasury was very flexible, so for the first four months I worked three days a week, but was paid for four - again into a new job to work on a review, a discreet project. And I brought the baby in a day a week.

"I then got a job heading the team that monitors spending on home affairs, working 90 per cent, which I did in four days. It was highly pressurised but I had a strong team. I recruited a couple of very experienced people who I knew I could delegate to, and I did learn to delegate a lot more. I did that for a year and then I got promoted into my boss's job. I had a boss who treasured his work life balance, and was incredibly supportive. I was then a Director, grade 3. I had said when they promoted me that it was my intention to have another child and that I might need another period of maternity leave.

"The good thing about working four days a week is that it pushes you to be more strategic. You have to become more disciplined and more organised. The down side is that I was then responsible for about 60 people and the spending of four government departments, some of which were very big. So trying to fit in the external representational role, the corporate management role within the Treasury with my line management was really difficult, and feedback from my staff was that I wasn't visible enough. I did that job for two years, and then went on maternity leave for my third child who was born in the summer of 2004. I took six months off and then came back to the same job three days a week in the summer of 2004. I found that very hard.

"The thing that I found very difficult to do part time, is managing people. In terms of delivery and intellectual output you can be more disciplined and focussed. What you can't do is organise

for people to need you less or need you only for certain things, at certain times of the day. If you try to make your management support more efficient and truncated, in my experience it backfires. People need time - if they have a problem what they want is an opportunity to share it. As their manager, especially if you are helping them to develop, you need to give them time to talk through things so they become more confident to take risks. I have come to the conclusion that if I don't want to work more than three days a week then I probably need to do a job share. That's where job sharing comes into its own. The other way to cope with three days a week is to do a job that doesn't have significant management, so that is what I have done since early 2005.

"The thing that makes or breaks part time work is the attitude of your boss. My boss moved to become Permanent Secretary at DCMS in 2006, and I moved here to work on a project around the Olympic's legacy. They didn't have anyone available and they needed someone urgently. For me, project work seems to work best on three days a week. I am only directly managing a team of six. I have project teams that I lead, but I don't line manage the people in them.

"By offering flexible working, the civil service gets rewarded with loyalty. The civil service has a high turnover between posts and this can be quite a big problem. I have stayed in the same area, so I have a network of contacts, relationships and organisational memory. The Treasury were incredibly flexible with me, and so when they genuinely needed it I was flexible back. At the end of the spending review, even when I was eight months pregnant, I worked 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The other thing that was important to the Treasury was to have people in senior posts working flexibly, to show junior staff that the department was seriously committed to diversity. When I was working four days a week I delegated more, and I was able to allow some very able staff who worked for me to shine and grow. I think for some of them that worked very well. But I wasn't visible enough and that matters to people.

"I have had a policy over the last few years that outside my work days, the only phone calls that I would always be prepared to take are about management issues. My PA knows this, and will filter things. I don't work on the other days at home - it is physically impossible with toddlers. I work two long days on Mondays and Wednesdays and one short day on Tuesday, so I can pick them up from school. My husband works three standard days and two short days. My PA manages the email on Thursdays and Fridays.

"I think there are groups of people who treasure their own work life balance and like to see that someone senior is taking it seriously. For them, it's a validation of what they want. I have suggested here that we have a day of the week when all the management meetings happen. Everyone who is part time then knows that they should try and work that day as that's when we will do our corporate events. I have noted the number of male colleagues who work full time and share the drop off to school, and are keen for meetings to start at 9.30 am rather than 9am. They would never have said it beforehand."

Case Study

Karen Childs-Smith and Catherine Tite

Head of the Library and Information Service, NSPCC

Karen Childs-Smith and Catherine Tite job share as Head of the Library and Information Service for NSPCC, the charity working towards ending cruelty to children. NSPCC employs about 2,500 and has several hundred volunteers. Catherine joined in 1991 as the full time Librarian and Karen was appointed to job share with her in early 1995. Under normal circumstances each works 17.5 hours a week.

Catherine explains: "When I joined NSPCC in 1991 we were a team of five running the library and keeping an eye on the archive, but the job has developed over the years. I went on maternity leave in May 1994 and after my son was born I asked my boss if I could job share. At the time the NSPCC didn't have a policy on flexibility but there was a lot of willingness on the part of managers and HR. My boss was quite forward thinking, but her main concern was about line management. Having read a book on job sharing, I was able to quote to her how other people had done it. I suggested that we would provide a seamless service, but take a lead on different areas of work and split the line management. As managers there was no way we could have worked without a handover and I persuaded her that although a couple of hours of talking to each other might be seen as a waste of time, it would mean that I wouldn't have to do that with my deputy as I did at the time. Also that we would have two people with ideas rather than one, and that we would have more energy.

"I was due to come back in January 1995 and initially returned on a 21 hours a week temporary basis. At that stage the job share was agreed and the recruitment process was put in motion. It was not thought appropriate for me to be on the panel, but she wanted me to meet all the candidates, show them around, answer their questions and ascertain whether we would be able to work together. I think there were four or five interviewed and I did know Karen very slightly, as we had both worked for the ILEA.

"I was told that Karen was by far the best candidate and it was thought we would suit each other. I think one of the keys to why we job share well together is linked to our similar views and philosophies about what libraries are for. We are very different people and we have different styles, but we almost never argue about core principles and what we are there for.

"We started off overlapping for two hours on a Wednesday in the middle of the day. But it soon became apparent that that didn't work, because that was the best day to have full staff meetings and our manager wanted to meet us together. So we changed it to overlap for the whole of Wednesday morning until 2pm. Although some weeks we would just meet for an hour, other weeks we could meet with our boss and others. At that point we acquired an archivist and we were managing six or seven people. We have identified various opportunities over the last ten years. We made a strong case in the mid nineties for running the intranet in our department using our information management and customer service skills. Over the years we have expanded and we are now responsible for 21 people working in 20 full time equivalent posts. During the

development years we split up lead responsibilities according to our experience. Where there were big projects we would take it in turns to lead.

"We split the line management equally between us. In the early days we line managed everyone between us but then the department got too big. A couple of times we swapped line management to become more familiar with other staff. We looked at what wasn't working too well and made changes."

"We do check with our staff how the job share is going. People generally say that we are very different and have different styles, but they recognise that they will get a similar answer, even if it is done in a different way. In the past some people have tried to play us off against each other, and we are very wise to that. We do tease each other but we won't openly disagree. Appraisals are done 'one to one' and one person leads. If I am doing someone's appraisal I will ask Karen the week before if she has any feedback. We have a shared document drive and access to each other's emails and can reply 'on behalf of'. We have never had a secretary, but we have now recruited a part time team administrator. We have settled into certain roles but we are prepared to challenge them.

"Wednesday is meeting day. Our monthly meetings with the heads of service focus on management issues and troubleshoot any problems. The full staff meeting, held each month, is usually about communicating, briefing and training opportunities.

"We are currently managed by the Director of Public Policy, who hadn't managed job sharers before. We meet with him once a month and take it in turns to deal with agenda items and try not to interrupt each other or finish sentences! We prepare for our appraisal together, planning and evaluating how we did last year, and end up writing it together. He sees us together initially to look at that and then he sees us separately for personal achievements and to give us some feedback, which we then share. The NSPCC encourages staff to get written feedback from colleagues. Normally we give each other feedback verbally – systematically, but informally. I'm a monitor-evaluator and Karen is a completer-finisher. I love the way she has very clear views – we complement each other. I might slow her down if she hasn't explained the thinking behind it.

"Some people have more difficulty with it than others – they want everything written in stone. We just keep repeating the message that we are in charge on the days we are in charge and they can talk to either of us about the issues. Most staff are very used to it and there are other job shares in the organisation.

"We write things in the handover book or copy emails. We made it very clear to staff that they don't have to copy us in all the time. The managers are good at saying: 'I discussed this with Karen on Tuesday and she suggested this'. I say, 'fine, is it working...?' We present a united front about what we want to do, and that is more powerful than one person. We do talk



to each other on the phone. I might calm down upset staff, and then speak with Karen, and she might ring me to say someone has just resigned. There are potential pitfalls to job sharing, particularly around communication, if you haven't informed each other.

"When we are at work we are concentrating on work and working hard. We are able to come up with decisions and actions which benefit from two different approaches, sets of experience, two different attitudes and more energy. I think it is better if you can complement each other's styles. We are flexible about hours, so sometimes if a meeting has been called on a day when both people are needed or a different person is needed, we have managed to swap days.

"Recently our boss has needed to run some specific projects. He doesn't have a deputy and Heads of Department are all busy, so Karen has worked on two short term projects which matched her skills. This year he has asked me to head up a project and Karen encouraged me to do this. I am now working three days on that project and one day in the library. Meanwhile Karen is working four days in the library. We are currently covering 1.5 full time equivalents and this will be until September 2008. This is a huge advantage to NSPCC, to be able to draw on staff who have worked here for a long time, but have some time available. Also it keeps you fresh.

"There could be a perceived waste of time when you are overlapping. What would our staff think if we were both doing the equivalent of eight hours rather than four hours. Is it a good use of our time? But when our boss thinks it is valuable, we both do go. Sometimes we have to say: 'sorry we are not both coming to this event'. You need to be loyal to each other. Any disagreement has to be done behind closed doors, not in front of your staff. You have to learn an assertive feedback technique and not to be upset. You need someone else who knows what you are both doing – like a team administrator, or a Deputy – a communicator role.

"The main advantage to me initially was to enable me to work part time in a job I was experienced at – I didn't want to go into a part time assistant's job. It has saved my career. On a personal level, we have similar life experiences and we are sympathetic to each other. I have found a friendship. We have developed each other, and been able to be honest in a pleasant way - like old friends who rag each other. We share a desk and computer and knowing that, we are careful not to leave things around and to tidy the desk. We also have to be flexible about hotdesking when we are both in. I really think it is to the benefit of the NSPCC that I am job sharing. I am not sure that I could have done all that work on my own. Yes I do take work home – but only half the amount.

"At the beginning, it was difficult for both of us. I had to let go, because I had been working full time, even though I had been off for six months. Karen had to learn a lot and take charge of things that people were used to me running. People choose to ring and email and ask to see the person they are familiar with. I think it took a year for people outside the department to get to know her and to know what she was leading on. We

think job sharing is great but we are quite sensitive to the fact that other people might not. I think we try and minimise the consequences for other people"

When we are at work we are concentrating on work and working hard. We are able to come up with decisions and actions which benefit from two different approaches, sets of experience, two different attitudes and more energy. I think it is better if you can complement each other's styles.

Case Study

Alison Comley and Rick Palmer

Head of Community Safety & Drug Strategy for Safer Bristol

Alison Comley and Rick Palmer share the job of Head of Community Safety & Drug Strategy for Safer Bristol, the Crime and Drug strategy partnership tackling the city's crime and drugs problems. They are employed by Bristol City Council as second tier officers reporting directly to the Council's Chief Executive and are responsible for a team of about 180 people and a budget of £14 million. Rick works Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and Alison does Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. They each have a contract for 22 hours to allow for the handover – full time is 37 hours. They have been sharing this role for three years.

Alison explains: "I applied for the job, which was a new post, on a job share basis, and thought I wouldn't get it for that very reason. But I did, and I came to an agreement with the Chief Executive that I would work in the post full time for six months on the understanding that they would then advertise the other half of the job, although they were very sceptical about whether they would find anyone to fill it. I was not involved in the selection process at all, although I was part of one of the discussion groups.

Rick continues: "I had previously worked as a police officer and when the job share came up I was working as a civil servant in Government Office. I applied and four people were short listed. No one mentioned job share or how I would share responsibility in the selection process. Alison is an expert around drugs and I am more of an expert around crime. We decided that we didn't want to end up mainly working around our own specialism, but I worked the beginning half of the week, and when we looked at the diaries, most of the drugs meetings were in the last part of the week and most of the crime meetings at the beginning. So we defaulted into a position that wasn't where we wanted to be, but it works very well. I am still predominantly crime, and Alison is predominantly drugs, but over the three years we have made inroads into each others fields. For example if someone phones up on a Thursday and says: 'Can I speak to Rick', then our PA, Dan, will say: 'He's not here – he doesn't work this end of the week, but do you want to be put through to Alison?' and vice versa. We do work more hours than we are paid for. We both work all day on Wednesday and they are full days. Our diaries are generally back to back meetings for the three days that we are in.

"We try to set aside two hours first thing on Wednesday to hand over. We have a handover book, although sometimes it is via email from home. We go through the key things we believe that each needs to know about, even if it's just knowledge about the outcomes of meetings. We do it really quickly – it may be just a note in the diary and a verbal report to each other, and includes what our thinking is. I will ensure that Alison's emails are checked and Alison does the same for me. Our system doesn't allow us to have a joint email"

Alison: "On a Thursday and Friday and a Monday and Tuesday our PA will either print out all of Ricks emails or all

of mine and then we go through them. We are directly responsible for four people and we directly supervise two each, but we share notes and issues that come up in 'one to ones', so the other one is briefed about what's going on. We hold joint meetings with our management team on a Wednesday, which we take it in turns to chair.

"Job sharing is a real advantage when you have problems to sort out, as you have someone else to chew it over with, so we don't bother our boss, the Chief Executive much. We get ideas on how we might develop the service from each other and we bounce ideas off each other."

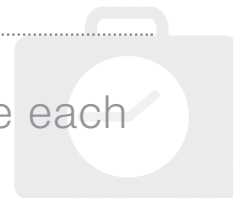
Rick: "One of us will take the lead on specific projects and sometimes where you think that Alison might do it because of her expertise I'm doing it to raise my game. We both go to the bimonthly Safer Bristol Executive, even though that falls on a Thursday."

Alison: "We are quite flexible about changing days or working extra days and we have tried to take the time back, but it is very difficult. I reckon they get either Rick or I in the office for at least 60 hours a week. We each work three ten hour days. Written reports tend to be done at home and part of that is a choice; in that it's much less stressful trying to think at home. Another advantage is that we don't tend to take holidays at the same time, so it is very rare for neither Rick or I to be around."

Rick: "The feedback we have from Partnership Members is that they get a real sense that we know what we are talking about, particularly because of our different backgrounds, which they wouldn't get in one person. Alison's background is as a social worker and mine is as a police officer, and you wouldn't ever think those two could work together! But because we have different backgrounds, it works brilliantly because we can bring quite a different perspective. We also bring two different ways of working, as we also have different styles. Another advantage is that for the three days I can give 100 per cent and know that I can then re-charge my batteries – you don't feel as if you are going to burn yourself out. Also, I don't think we have had any sickness, but if there was sickness, there is still going to be someone around."

Alison: "I worked for a local authority for over 20 years coming up through social work. I have done four job shares, and have received promotion as a job sharer, eventually to a service manager role. I run a theatre company, and my reason for wanting to job share was so I would have time to enjoy both parts of my life. Rick took six weeks leave earlier this year, and because I was here there was no need for someone to act up, so there is no additional cost to the organisation. Also, in a job share I think you are much more efficient because you tend not to leave things for your partner. This is a really interesting job, but I would find it very difficult to work day in day out at this pace. We are very energetic and I certainly feel I bring more energy to work, and take away things into other parts of my life as well."

Rick: "I have been able to look outside of work for other



activities. I did feel initially: 'What am I going to do with four days a week?' I do quite a lot of voluntary work and have taken on a school governor role. For me there is a fantastic quality of life that I didn't ever think that I would be able to achieve while I was working."

Alison: "People say: 'How can you job share at this level?' but I think it's probably a bit easier to job share at this level in a strategic role. I think it was harder when I managed a social work team. I think it's a real myth that the higher you get up the ladder that it's more difficult to job share, I think it depends on the attitude of the organisation. The Chief Executive thinks he has made a fantastic decision. Hopefully we model that it is OK and that the organisation gets a good deal for its money. It gets two energised people in a week rather than one who is flagging by Thursday."

We have a single score in terms of our appraisal (a single Performance Management and Development Scheme). The only part that is different is the developmental discussion; we have that separately if we require it. We were very clear that we wanted a single PMDS, because it is one job description and one set of objectives. At the end of the day, if it's a Monday and there is something about drugs Rick will deal with it. Similarly if it's Friday and it's crime, I will deal with it."

"The feedback we have had has been very positive. People have never articulated a disadvantage to our faces - no one has ever said that we think it doesn't work. The only comment that has come back is: 'We can rely on Rick and Alison to produce the goods, at the deadline and up to standard'."

"When we are appraising our staff we ask the other one if they have any comments. We have the occasional discussion if there is an issue, so it doesn't come up just at the six monthly review, it will come up at the supervision time. At the end of the year we will talk about performance and will agree a score between us."

"We know we can phone each other up. If there is a knowledge gap we would manage that, rather than saying to the organisation you will have to wait until Monday. But we very rarely need to phone each other and we don't have blackberries. We share an office and desk. I think job share is very different to working reduced hours because you are covering the whole week. People like it because they can always get somebody."

Rick: "For me the key things to make it work are being organised, communication, flexibility and the will to want to make it work. I thought I would find it difficult and I think probably because of Alison's experience around job share this helped us to get it off the ground quickly."

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Case Study

Jessica Craik and Tessa Philpott

Detective Inspector for the Metropolitan Police

Jessica Craik and Tessa Philpott share the job of Detective Inspector for the Metropolitan Police. They run the Croydon and Sutton Child Abuse Investigation Team and are responsible for five detective sergeants, 14 detective constables and five members of police staff. They each work 75 per cent of full time and jointly make up 1.5 of a Detective Inspector post

Jess and Tessa have been in the police force since the early 1980s. Tessa explains: "After the birth of my first child in 1998, I was promoted to Detective Sergeant. Both my husband (also in the police) and I were working all hours and something had to give. I did a year as a full time Detective Sergeant, because it was a new rank and I felt I needed to get a full year under my belt. At the end of that year I asked if I could go part time. My request was very well received, and I went back to dealing with registered sex offenders as a supervisor on three days a week. My daughter was born in December 2000, and I returned to work in April 2001."

Jess comments: "I became a Detective Sergeant in 1998, and shortly after this became pregnant with my son. I came back to work after three months and remained full time because I was running a crime management unit as a Detective Sergeant (DS). After my daughter was born I returned to work in April 2001. A colleague mentioned that she wanted to go back to doing active police work. She was trying to find a job share partner and asked if I was interested. She approached the Detective Chief Inspector in Wandsworth who was forward thinking and he took us on as a job share, working within community safety. We divided the week between us, with a handover on Wednesday and both worked one weekend a month. I also worked with one other partner in that job when Rachel moved on. Both worked very successfully."

Tessa continues: "In mid 2003 my then boss decided it was time to move on. Jess and I were both studying to become Detective Inspectors and saw an opportunity that we could job share. We were both working part time and had known each other from very early on in our careers. We had joked about doing a job share, but we were both in different places and doing different things. I approached the Commander who was in charge of child protection saying I was interested in that job, but he said: 'You can't do it part time.' So we applied for it together. We wrote a business plan to set out how the role could be done on a job sharing basis. They interviewed us individually and we became the first ever job share Detective Inspector (DI) in the Met."

Jess comments: "Job sharing the role of DI was quite different from the DS. Because there had been no precedent, we had to develop our role together and that has been very challenging – rather like a marriage. It has been personally challenging as well, because the impact on our families and our friendship has been quite vast. It was a new rank for us too, so we were still getting used to that. It has been really hard and we are both very glad that we have done three years together now."

Tessa comments: "In the business plan we set out how we would cover Monday to Friday between us, with Jess working the beginning of the week, a handover on Wednesday and I would cover the end of the week. Generally we have to be ready to deal with anything that comes our way and we have to do 'on call' every 5 weeks. We chose to do a full week of this each to save confusion."

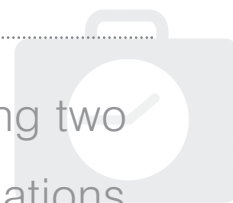
Jess adds: "Because we cover two boroughs and Tessa had worked a lot with Croydon, it seemed natural for her to take it on and I took on Sutton. At the beginning, Tessa changed a lot of her days to work with me and we went to see various groups together. We both still do swap days and we each know Croydon and Sutton if an issue comes up that can't wait. Tessa is very organised and likes a system; I like a system too but we are different personalities."

"We haven't always used the handover book, but we always come back to it. It has been extremely useful but we spend hours on the phone – which is our choice. We did use to write a lot in it but now we almost make a meeting agenda, with subject headings. This is good because it focuses you. Our bottom line is that we speak to each other, we know how each other thinks. We decide who is taking the lead on something and then we come back together to discuss it at a later stage – this gives us a lot of strength. What works for us wouldn't necessarily work for somebody else. We are both willing to give up our time to do things outside of work time. Tessa and I love the job – we always have done and we want this to work."

Tessa comments: "Wednesday is handover day, and generally people would like both of us at a meeting, but we have to be careful about how much we book in on a Wednesday. What we want to do is get on and handover. It's Jess's last day and she needs to top and tail things. It's my first day and I have umpteen emails. Generally we like to put aside an hour for a handover because we also want to have a Detective Sergeant's meeting, which ideally we would both attend. We agree on a lot, but there are some things that we will do totally differently and it's important that we both have an input. Jess might have a different angle on something and I am grateful for that input. This works fantastically well and there are benefits to everybody in this."

"We now have more staff and some of them are in the promotion process at the moment, which means they have regular assessments with us, so we divide responsibility for them between us. But when we are doing their appraisals we will discuss them together and we get another point of view. We are perfectionists and we do expect things to be done in the right way and we can be very honest with each other. If it was somebody else that I didn't know as well, I don't know if I would be that honest."

"Our boss is a Detective Chief Inspector. He will phone up during the week and see how we are and we keep him informed. He's very used to dealing with both of us. People get our names confused all the time! We had a survey of flexible working across the whole Metropolitan Police's



Child Abuse Investigation Command and one of the main things that came out was that job share is the best flexible working solution for this 24/7 service. We also have two job share Detective Sergeants in our team. We were able to say come and job share and we know how it can work!

Jess comments: "My daughter was very poorly for a long while and I was off work for ten weeks but they still had cover between Wednesday and Friday which was a big advantage. Also, we do try not to take our holidays at the same time.

"It is an advantage having two people who look at situations from two angles. Although we have a lot of similarities, we also have a lot differences in ways that we do things.

If you are not job sharing, it can be very lonely as a manager. The advantages are enormous – you can become quite emotionally involved and having someone else there helps.

"They do get a lot more out of us as well. Tessa is very passionate about the Croydon side of things while I am very passionate about Sutton, and you could not have that from one person. We have never independently felt so strongly and differently about something that it would become an issue."

Tessa comments: "The advantage for me is that I am able to be a senior police officer doing the job I love and I am still able to have time with my family. We have the best of both worlds in lots of ways. We have both achieved more than we thought we could achieve – we have been given real responsibility in the rank we are now in. The disadvantage is that it doesn't end on our days off, because we intrude into each other's days off, but it's a disadvantage of our own choice.

"The longer it goes on, you get to know each other more. We can have an honest conversation, not to say what the other is doing is wrong, just that there may be another way or there may be something that hasn't been thought of. Again, we can laugh about things which helps."

Jess concludes: "I was very lucky with my first job share because it worked really well. I do feel that you have to be very careful who you job share with. If you have been friends with someone and you do it, it could break a friendship."

It is an advantage having two people who look at situations from two angles. Although we have a lot of similarities, we also have a lot differences in ways that we do things.

If you are not job sharing, it can be very lonely as a manager.

The advantages are enormous – you can become quite emotionally involved and having someone else there helps.

Case Study

Jane Ellis

Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), Hyndburn Council

Jane Ellis is Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) for Hyndburn Council, Lancashire, a small local authority employing about 300 people. She works a four day week, Monday to Thursday. She is currently on maternity leave.

Jane explains: “I started working for Hyndburn in September 1999. I was then Head of the Legal Section, managing about six staff. In February 2004 I went off to have my daughter and took a year’s maternity leave. By 2004, a range of other responsibilities had been added to my role, and I was responsible for a department of about 30 people. I had mentioned to my boss before I went that I wanted to reduce my hours, but we formalised it while I was off. I report directly to the Chief Executive and we talked it through – he is quite flexible. He has usually left by 5.30pm himself, as he has a young family. The culture at Hyndburn is about whether you get your job done, not how long you are at your desk. I came back on four days a week in April 2005.

“I think I probably do five days work in four. I don’t think there has been any reduction in my work load. It is about being very organised and very clued up about what the important things I have to get done are, and making sure I do them. I do occasionally bring work home, but not very often. There isn’t much time to wander round the office being sociable. I have to be very focused and ruthless about saying what I can’t do.

“I am directly responsible for seven people. They are pretty senior and I operate an open door policy where they can come and see me if they need to and I see them all individually, formally, once a fortnight. On the last Thursday every month we all have a meeting, this is what they wanted. I do say to them that they can ring me on a Friday if they need to, and from time to time they will, but it is quite rare.

“There is never any slack, it is constantly very busy and pressured. I still do quite a lot of legal work myself. What does sometimes suffer is some of the people management. Most of Lancashire County senior manager’s meetings happen on a Friday, so other senior management team members go and I don’t. I do feel guilty that I don’t take my fair share. Friday is quite a good day to take off though, as most of the important things tend to happen earlier in the week.

“I would have left if I couldn’t reduce my days, so the Council have retained me. The main benefit for me is time spent with my daughter. I went back to work when my daughter was one. My husband is a lawyer and when I returned to work he reduced to four days a week for two years, and he took Mondays off. He went back to work full time when my daughter was three. I went off on maternity leave again in May 2007, and my son was born in June 2007. When I return to work this time, it has been agreed that my husband can reduce to four days a week again. I have agreed that I will return on the same basis as before, and will probably come back after a year.

“I have had positive feedback and my boss says I am doing fine. I set high standards for myself and I feel I don’t have time to do the extras, the frills. You have to be ruthless in terms of how you organise your time. Both in terms of not working at home too much, and making sure you do the important things. You have to be more conscious about making time for the softer things.

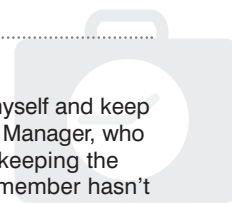
“The downside for me is that I lose a fifth of my wage and the associated pension. I also do miss out on some of the networking opportunities. A group of local authority Heads of Legal Services meet on a Friday and I will occasionally go. I don’t get around to meetings in the way I did. Most of my counterparts in other authorities won’t know me, so it does affect your profile. But where I am suits me at the moment. I have a good balance and a relatively senior job. I would like to do three days a week, but I don’t think it is possible to do this job in three days a week. The only option would be to job share.”

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Case Study

Nicola Fegan

Senior Clinical Nurse for Gynaecology at Addenbrooke's Hospital



Nicola Fegan is Senior Clinical Nurse for Gynaecology at Addenbrooke's Hospital (Cambridge University Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust). She works 30 hours a week Monday to Thursday and is responsible for about 40 people.

Nicola explains: "The family was moving to the Cambridge area and I looked at the Addenbrooke's website and saw this job. When I read the job description it seemed to combine a lot of my experience. We moved in August and I applied and was interviewed in early September. At the interview I said that I felt that working full time with growing children and in a new area would be too much. I didn't know at that point that Addenbrooke's offered a nine-day fortnight. So I could probably have done full time hours and had one day off a fortnight. As it stands, it feels better for my work life balance to have that day off. It was negotiated that it would be the same day every week, usually a Friday, but I am flexible if there are things I need to come in for. That works for the staff too, so they know when I am in.

"I wasn't aware of the flexible working policies until I got to the hospital. Many of my friends said 'You will be much better to get in there first, and then negotiate', but I thought 'I want to be honest with them and say this is how it could work for me'. It was a new position and they were very open to the suggestion. We are Modern Matrons but we are called Senior Clinical Nurse.

"I had previously been working on a ward where flexible working was crippling, with so many different start times and handovers, which didn't help with communication. So I am aware of the importance of managing flexible working properly. I have five people I directly line manage, and two newly created posts to add to this. In their areas, we have an emergency gynae and early pregnancy day area, an infertility unit and an outpatients shared with maternity.

"During my four days, I try to have a monthly one to one with the people I directly line manage, and for outpatients we have a monthly meeting for the general staff. Sometimes I have worked in clinic on a Friday, so I have swapped my days – it is flexible both ways. I give back to them and they offer me the flexibility. Last year I had two sons with broken arms and my manager said you take the time to sort them out. Occasionally things will fall on a day off. I tend to work 9am to 5pm four days a week, but sometimes we have earlier meetings.

"A benefit for my employer is that I can arrange dental appointments and children's appointments on my days off. For me, it's good to know I have that day off and I can sort my home life out. It was nice for the children that I was there one day a week when they were younger – they are now 15 and 12.

"Friday is quite a common day for people to take off. Four days goes very quickly sometimes and you feel you are playing 'catch up' and I wish I had another day. But it might be the same if I worked five days. They very rarely contact

me on the Friday. If there is an issue, I ring in myself and keep in contact. There is always the Service Delivery Manager, who although not clinical has the responsibility for keeping the service going, and will find someone if a staff member hasn't turned up for a clinic. In the whole of the four years, there hasn't been a great problem. One of my direct reports don't work on a Monday or a Friday and there is one other who works 30 hours. She doesn't have a specific day off and tends to work on a Friday.

"You might get the odd comment 'Oh, you are not here on Friday'. There have been some other throwaway comments. All in all it is accepted. People know where they are - it's not like I am off on different days. I have had four different line managers over the four years and no one has said anything.

"Before moving to this area, I was a Clinical Nurse Specialist for Gynae Oncology, which was a brand new role. It was quite demanding and I worked full time, but towards the end I reduced to three days a week, before we decided to move.

"A lot of people here do work reduced hours in four days. That can be difficult too. A lot of the other clinical nurses are working fewer hours than me, but in bigger teams which makes cover easier. You will never please everybody. When you are in a senior role, you are expected to be there 24/7. I think it is important for people to see that you are willing to come in and do your bit."

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Case Study

Sarah and Patrick Fielding

Head teacher, Haydn Primary School

Sarah and Patrick Fielding share the job of Head teacher at Haydn Primary School, Nottingham. Haydn has 480 children at full capacity, growing over the year from 420 rising fives. There will be 15 class teachers by the end of the academic year and 11 teaching assistants and support staff.

Sarah explains: "This is our second job share headship. We took over the headship of Mayflower Primary School in Leicester in 2001. After appointing us, one of the governors said 'We were looking for a good dynamic head and we actually found two. We would have taken either of them on their own, but they wanted to work together'. Parents seemed to enjoy the fact that there was a job share, and it was a man and a woman so there was an element of choice in who they went to. Pat and I are very different, not in content, but in delivery. The staff were quite wary to begin with, because they didn't know how it would work. We were extremely flexible and remained so. We always felt that having been allowed to job share, we had to work very hard to make sure all angles were covered.

"To begin with I worked Monday, Tuesday and alternate Wednesdays and Pat worked Thursday, Friday and alternate Wednesdays, but gradually we have moved to a week on/week off system. When one of us was doing one end of the week and the other the other end, Pat got all of the school assemblies and I got all of one type of meeting. We felt that we both needed an overview of the whole – that we both needed to do senior team meetings, and both needed to do staff meetings. So we started a week on/week of system working from Wednesday to Wednesday about four years ago. It feels like you are in the school more. I think from the governors' point of view it feels like good value for money. We've always both been there when we've needed to be, for children's presentation evenings and other important events such as school inspections and summer fairs.

"From the staff's point of view, there is a period of flux. Everyone waits and watches. And then there are challenges – if I go to this person, will I get a different response? We worked hard to make sure that people get a consistent message. You have to cope with your own ego when you are in a job share. To begin with, I went through a phase of trying to be Pat and to manage like Pat and then you realise that your personality doesn't allow that, so you then become yourself. Some people will come to Pat because they like the way he deals with things, he is very gentle. We've always had a very strong strategic view of what it is we are trying to achieve and that's been shared.

"Sharing the headship at Mayflower was a successful partnership. The school had 480 pupils at full capacity, two form entry throughout, a 30 place nursery, and 14 class teachers plus teaching assistants and support staff. We were very aware that we wanted to make sure it did work, because of all the barriers there were to getting the headship. The authority was incredibly supportive and encouraging from day one. They really found ways through issues where other places had not bothered.

"Four years ago, once both our children were at school (they are nine and eleven now), we both started to pick up other work. We started working as external advisers for Cambridgeshire Education Authority and for Leicester City. I also do work for the National College for School Leadership. I was working as an Educational Adviser for the Head at Haydn School in Nottingham, so when the headship came up nine months later I did have some insight into what the issues were. Mayflower was a very good school with a very good team, so we were selective about applying to another school. We live in Nottingham.

"We each filled in an application form and wrote a joint letter of application with a note saying 'We are applying for this as a job share and we are only interested in it as a job share'. There were four others interviewed. We had to stand up as individuals and we were interviewed separately. When you are given the same title and you are a married couple your work has to be complementary, but each has to present in our own particular way.

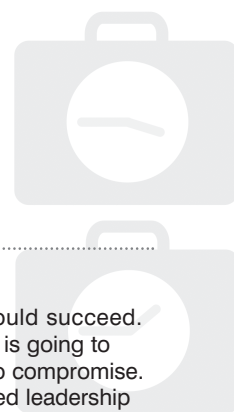
"We were offered the job and we started in January 2007. The school was in 'special measures' and we both worked full time until September. There was such a lot to do and you are inspected every term. When we started there were 15 class teachers and 20 teaching assistants. There was an issue with standards, there was no IT equipment in the school to speak of, and staff hadn't been trained. The school was running in deficit with inappropriate staff structures. The school has been neglected, but the staff and children are fabulous. We had to restructure the staff and make some redundancies to balance the budget. I don't think I could have risen to this challenge on my own, particularly the staffing issues. We have now come out of 'special measures' and we are on the way up.

"As from September we have been very strict about when we come in. The danger is because we only live five minutes away, we got into the habit of thinking 'I'll just nip down for an hour'. We phone each other sometimes during the day.

"We have moved to using electronic diaries that synchronise with the computer at home and at school. We go through things daily at the moment, but we do a big hand over briefing on Tuesday night. Pat tends to use a pen and paper and I use my electronic diary for notes.

"At Mayflower we had started to evolve some things that one person did and the other didn't. We don't split the role in half, but we do try to work to our strengths. For example, I like looking at school data and although Pat is very accomplished at this, he would rather concentrate on other things. So I will take that on. I do the data analysis and then we look at it together. Another reason why we tend not to split roles, is that if someone asks me something on a Tuesday then I need to be able to respond if Pat isn't in until Thursday.

"The benefits for the school are that you have strength and flexibility, and you have two sets of skills and two sets of abilities. I am a visual artist and Pat is a musician. I think it is



very good value for money. Being able to work collaboratively with someone strengthens your decision making. You really have to think things through at a deeper level than if you work by yourself. As a full time Head you don't work alone, you develop a particular relationship with the Deputy Head. That is an important issue you need to be aware of. Working in a job share headship role changes your relationship with your Deputy, and you need to be careful about not cutting people out of your decision making.

"We have always thought that job share is not suitable for everybody, you have to find someone you are compatible with, and Pat has been my person. We haven't had a day off sick, which is a testament to job share. We are gaining experience of a range of educational things outside school, so we both bring back new contacts and ideas, as well as different ways of doing things, which helps inform your practice. The fact that we are not only the Head of Haydn, we are other things at other times, helps you to know what the national picture is.

"The key advantage to us has been that we have been able to bring up our children ourselves. We can go to their school plays without having to think about it – you are at every event with your children that you need to be at. We also get to do other things and it is a very interesting, if sometimes chaotic, way to run your life. We feel that we have been very privileged to do this. It is about the quality of your life. The reason we don't want to take on a headship each is that we would be totally sucked in – neither of us is interested in doing that ever.

"You have to make sure that you maintain your relationships with your staff and you don't work in a void. You have to work hard to make sure that you communicate effectively, that you don't forget things. It is easier because we live together. It would be harder if we didn't. You would have to spend a lot of time on phone calls. It works well for us.

"We do work to our strengths. Pat is better at the performance aspects of headship and I shy away from that, which is a disadvantage as well. You can shy away from all the things you are challenged by in a job share, because the other person will do it. I am making myself do things that I avoided at Mayflower for a long time. You have to be aware of yourself – it is an easy way to hide. You are looking at somebody else all the time and you are constantly appraising what you do in that light. This is particularly the case when you are establishing things. You have to reflect on your practise constantly - it is built in development – you don't have to go on a course.

"A downside is that the development of relationships with children, adults, and staff takes longer because you are not there all the time. Parents have been very positive about it, which was a surprise. We have always run an open door system and there hasn't been an issue.

"Your vision, values and attitudes have to be similar so that you are aiming towards the same thing. This is

absolutely key, otherwise I don't think you could succeed. You have to have an awareness of what extra it is going to take in terms of time, and if you are prepared to compromise. At another school I think they use their dedicated leadership time so they are paid an extra half day a fortnight in school, but we don't do that.

"Every challenge will be made if there is inconsistency. You need to agree how you are going to communicate and how it is going to happen. What happens about flexible time? You have to set protocols before you start. I think it is the most fabulous way to work, I think it keeps you energised. You go in on a Wednesday full of the joys of spring and then you work until Friday, then you have a weekend and then you work until Wednesday. We never get to the end of the term and feel absolutely crushed by it. The energy you bring from doing other things means you come in full of ideas. We have been working this way for eleven years from 1996 when we first job shared successfully as Deputy Heads. We are not intending to do it any other way, ever."

The benefits for the school are that you have strength and flexibility, and you have two sets of skills and two sets of abilities. I am a visual artist and Pat is a musician. I think it is very good value for money. Being able to work collaboratively with someone strengthens your decision making.

Case Study

Debbie Grant

Modern Matron in the New Born Intensive Care Unit, Royal United Hospital NHS Trust, Bath

Debbie Grant is a Modern Matron in the New Born Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Royal United Hospital NHS Trust, Bath. The Unit has 21 cots (four intensive, three high dependency and 14 special care). Debbie is responsible for about 50 staff, and for the nursing leadership and standards of patient care. She now works 33 hours a week but she has worked a variety of reduced hours arrangements over the last 17 years.

Debbie explains: "I started working a 30 hour week as a sister in March 1984. I took maternity leave from October 1990 and came back in June 1991. I wasn't sure originally if I wanted to come back, and when I asked if I could reduce my hours I was told I would have to come back as a staff nurse. I wasn't happy about returning at a lower grade, so when a job share was offered, I said yes. This was the first job share on the unit, and one of the first in the hospital. My job share partner was working as a senior staff nurse and successfully applied for the other half of the job share post. As the full job was 30 hours, we each worked two days, with off duty as normal. We worked round each other and there were never any problems about shifts. We contacted each other by phone and left notes. If you make sure you communicate well and leave notes it makes for a better handover.

"I took maternity leave again in 1993 and returned mid 1994. When my job share partner went on a course in 1995, I was left doing the two days a week. I was beginning to want to do something new as I had been working as a sister for 11 years. There was a lot of maternity leave on the unit at that time, including the manager of the unit and I said I would increase my hours. I applied and got the temporary post to cover for the period of her maternity leave in 1996; she didn't return and I got the permanent position. There was a re-organisation of management in the hospital in 1997 and for each new Directorate they wanted a clinical manager. I was encouraged to apply, and in 1998 I moved into sharing the role of Clinical Manager, Paediatrics with Bev Boyd. We shared the responsibility for the whole Directorate of 100 full time equivalent staff. In practice I covered the New Born Intensive Care Unit (44 people), but we worked closely together and covered for each other when the other was on holiday or off sick. Staff knew that they could go to the other manager if one of us wasn't available. I still worked a total of 26.5 hours. One week I did four days – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and the next week three days – Monday, Tuesday and Friday. On the managerial side I attended management team meetings and changed my days to cover that on Thursdays.

"I was always working extra, so to compensate for this, about four years ago I increased my hours to 33. I now work five days a week – three six hour and two seven and a half hour days. I do two days a week clinical (15 hours) and three days a week managerial (18 hours). I tend to do my clinical days at the end of the week. There are regular meetings on Monday and Tuesday, and I avoid clinical work on these days, but I am flexible around this. When I am doing clinical work the other role sometimes eats into that. I have tried to be stricter with

people and I will ask people to phone back, but is not always possible. My role is now wider and it is called Modern Matron. Basically the job is similar and involves improving infection rates, looking at the fundamental aspects of care e.g. hygiene, nutrition, communication, privacy and dignity and many more, as well as striving to improve care using evidence based practice. Some of the managerial aspects have disappeared and some of the sisters have taken on slightly more responsibility. We are having a new building (due to open in 2010) and another part of my role is being involved in this. This will help our clinical care and we will have a lot more space. I am personally very happy in this job. There is quite a lot of variety. I am involved in an Essence of Care group and I am the lead nurse for Privacy and Dignity across the Trust. I also sit on the Trust's Clinical Ethics committee. We are now part of a network around standardising care in the region as well as a neonatal network which involves cross-Trust working. I am also involved with a transport group for the region.

"The big advantage for me is having the flexibility around my children – they are now 14 and 17. I have also retained my career pathway. The downside is that I often work more than my hours and there have been times when I haven't been able to get away on time to pick up the children when they were younger, but all things considered it has been very good.

"By allowing me to reduce my hours and to job share, the hospital have kept a very experienced person who otherwise they would have lost. We have job shares as junior and senior sisters. We have a huge mixture of hours, with a lot of people working part time. This has advantages and disadvantages. Generally, staff are happier and fresher when they work the hours that suit them. Experienced neonatal nurses are very hard to come by. Sometimes it is not easy having a lot of people working part time, because of continuity, but it does give you a more flexible workforce. If you're short staffed you can more easily ask someone working 18.5 hours to work extra occasionally.

"In 2002 I started doing an MSc in Health Care Management and completed my dissertation around neonatal transport – hence my interest in the transport group. The Trust gave me half a day a week for this. They also supported me with extra time for study."

Case Study

David Lewis

Head of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Adult and Community Services, Lancashire County Council



David Lewis is Head of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Adult and Community Services, Lancashire County Council. Since April 2006 he has worked a V-time (voluntary reduced hours) arrangement, which involves 20 days extra unpaid holiday a year. This enables him to take extended time off during the school holidays.

David explains: "I joined the County Council in 1990 as a trainee analyst/programmer, after just under three years as a secondary school teacher. In 2003 I became Head of ICT for social services. I have three children aged 9, 11 and 13, and one year ago my wife returned to full time work. In order for us to cover child care arrangements, I started to consider how flexible working could help. The council actively promoted its flexible working opportunities, and at the same time a council efficiency initiative was introduced, also strongly promoted in our directorate. This is ultimately a move to save money, by making better use of technology to enable staff to work more flexibly, to work from home and to support their work life balance. The culture in the organisation changed, making it more acceptable for my application to be considered.

"My voluntary reduced working hours (V-time) arrangement is similar to term time working, and I also work one afternoon a week from home. My 20 days additional unpaid leave doesn't affect my pension. I did consider job sharing, but decided that term time working would alleviate the school holiday issue. My wife also works for the county council. We decided we could cover term times by using the flexitime system between us, alternating the dropping off and picking up of our children.

"When I was considering the V-time scheme, I didn't know of any other senior managers working in this way, although there were some job shares. I did some web searches and came across the Working Families website, where there is guidance on putting together a business case. The council's flexible working scheme has an application form, which I completed and included my business case, setting out how the authority would benefit. I submitted it to my line manager, who was already aware of what I would be asking for. By that time, there had been a restructure and I had a second line manager, so I copied my application to him as well. In March 2006, we had a meeting where my arrangement was agreed.

"I am responsible for a team of 18 people and directly manage four team leaders. In my application, I requested 20 days additional leave and said I wanted to take that leave during the school holidays. I worked out how to do it in conjunction with my management team. I had to demonstrate that we would be able to maintain continuity of service, that there would always be someone available for customers and staff in the group, and that they would know who that was. I also needed to ensure that I had effective cover within my management team. Fortunately they were happy to support this.

"The additional leave doesn't enable me to cover all the school holidays. There are still about nine days that I have to work. I spread these over the year and in the summer I worked three days of the school holiday. I had the first week off completely

and in the following three weeks I came in one day a week. This was very beneficial because it meant I was able to keep in touch with everything in the team, and keep on top of my emails. If I had had a six week break that would have been more difficult. Also, for four of the six weeks I had agreed with my line-managers and my management team that I would be available on the phone between 9am and 10am every morning.

"Knowing that the holidays are covered for the children is a huge benefit. They are very relaxed in holiday time. It works well for the family, it provides some respite for my partner because in the holidays I do all the domestic side of things.

"At work I ensure we have a business service plan in place for the Directorate ICT function, and I agree team plans with each of the four managers and their teams, so they all have their targets and objectives clearly defined. One of my areas is IT training and the training programme runs down over summer, because lots of people are on holiday. I have asked my managers about the impact of my being away in the summer. They said that knowing they can phone me is useful, but they have not needed to do that.

"I have more energy for work, so I feel better. I think that is a benefit for the authority, but also for me. I have been more focused and in some ways more productive in what I am doing. I feel confident that the service isn't compromised – it's potentially better. There is a budget saving from the 20 days which gives us opportunities. It retains me in the authority. If I hadn't made an arrangement that worked, I would have been looking for other employment. I think in terms of my energy for the job, that's increased, so my effectiveness may well have increased. I had become conscious of feeling stale. I have been in the role for a long time, and if you only get the five or six weeks off over the year it's just very ongoing. By having these breaks I do come back feeling rejuvenated, energised and more focussed. Because I know that between each of my sets of leave I have eight weeks, I think 'What am I going to achieve in those eight weeks?' I am very grateful to the organisation that this is available. My arrangement is reviewed annually so I will have to negotiate it again.

"Questions have been asked about the need to have a manager to keep the work moving along – what is the impact of leaving teams and managers to get on and do the work themselves? I manage this by agreeing target dates in the team plans. From a leadership point of view, one of the attributes of a leader is to be visible and present. Does it create a vacuum if the leader of the services isn't there? I didn't come back to any issues. One of my managers is on a similar V-time arrangement but he does not tie his additional leave to the school holidays – his reasons are about managing a long term health condition.

"One of our four teams is in the process of transferring to home working arrangements and we will be able to free up an office. For the business case, we had to demonstrate that we could make a real saving. The office we are retaining will operate a hot desk arrangement. I do miss the face to face contact with people who are working from home. Also the ability sometimes to get together with my managers at short notice. I think that's the main concern – keeping in contact with the team members so they do not feel isolated."

Case Study

Erika Lewis

Head of Strategy, London Development Agency

Erika Lewis is Head of Strategy for the London Development Agency (LDA), one of nine regional development agencies set up by the government to transform England's regions through economic development. LDA employs about 500 people. Erika works four days a week, one of these from home.

Erika explains: "In April 2000 I started working full time for the LDA as a Regeneration Manager, managing about 14 Single Regeneration Budget schemes. Two years later I moved into a policy job where I was responsible for third sector issues. I had my first child in February 2002 and returned to work a year later. My manager at the time had a young family himself, and he was very open to flexible working. About five months before I came back we had a meeting and negotiated that I would go to three days a week. They were very helpful, and gave me a special project to do, managing the Economic Development Strategy. It was a high profile and discrete project, and I worked Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I organised it so that all the early week meetings happened on a Tuesday afternoon. Then on Thursday in the afternoon, I would have a regular briefing to my manager of what had happened. It worked very well and was very successful.

"We set it up so it was very clear when I was working, so every email response told people when I worked, as did my phone message. People got very used to it. The key thing was that it was very well communicated that I did three days a week. It was a clear role that I had one very large project to run. I had a lot of managerial support in working three days a week; they didn't call on me on a Friday or Monday.

"I applied for promotion as a Team Head at Christmas 2004, and I then moved into a managerial role. Part of the agreement about moving into that was that I would increase my hours – so I started working four days a week and that is how I work now. It was the next job up in the role I was doing, and it was for the same manager. From his perspective he thought I was managing very well. He was quite happy that he would get enough out of me in four days.

"Four days is more difficult to manage than three. It is impossible to do a full time job in three days, so you don't even try. With four days, people don't really know that I am only working four days a week – they just know I work. I was managing about five people. I tried to be very open. I said these are the days I work, but I am always available to my team on a Friday. It's clear on my email and phone that I am not here. It doesn't happen a lot, but from my perspective I feel more comfortable to be available. There are not a lot of meetings, not much happens in our business on a Friday, so I don't miss things.

"I had another child in May 2005, and when I came back after a year it was to a boss who I had never met before. At that point I did a nominal job share for about six months, because I came back three days a week into a different role – Joint Head of Economic Analysis. In February 2007, I went back to working four days a week, returning to the job I had previously done before maternity leave.

"I am now Head of Strategy and am responsible for three direct reports. Technology has moved on, so I can access my emails at home. I spend half an hour at home making sure that I know what is happening on Monday. I have a mobile phone, but it is very rarely that someone calls me. I organise my week so I know I will be finishing on a Thursday. I am thinking of what people can do on a Friday that doesn't include me. I also work at home on Tuesday, as my job involves a lot of meetings so I have a whole day of admin. Tuesday is very important. In the summer I came in on a Tuesday and I feel I was less efficient. I work a split day on a Tuesday. I work from 9.15 am until 3.30 pm and then I pick my son up and go swimming and then I pick up work again in the evening.

"It is non-negotiable that I spend a day a week with my younger son. If they were not to agree to that, I would look for another job. Working four days a week can make you quite efficient. I don't do as much socialising, but I have worked here for seven years so I have well developed networks. You don't do as much chatting at the coffee station; you just get on with it.

"The benefits for the LDA are that they get somebody who is very motivated and very energetic. I get to do a 'full time' job without having to work five days a week. My manager and I have had some discussions about whether I am actually working a five day week. I am very clear that I don't want to risk Fridays, so whilst I do close to a full time job, I don't want to be paid for Friday because it would change the balance for me. I would then feel like I ought to work on a Friday. I am generally very happy with work. I work quite fixed hours. I come with a lot of energy and I enjoy it.

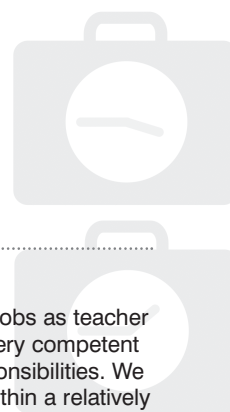
"I have been incredibly lucky with the people I work for. I am assertive and I don't apologise for it. I just say: 'I am not here on Friday'. But I am supported in this. I made a business case for working in this way and it has been accepted and formally agreed."

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Case Study

Alison McKinney

Clinical Pharmacy Services Manager,
Airedale General Hospital in West Yorkshire



Alison McKinney is Clinical Pharmacy Services Manager at Airedale General Hospital in West Yorkshire (Airedale NHS Trust). She has worked a variety of flexible working arrangements since April 1997. She currently works three days a week (19.5 hours) on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Alison explains: “I started working at Airedale in September 1986. I took my first maternity leave in 1993 and after seven months returned full time. After my second maternity leave in 1996, I returned full time until April 1997. The second time around it was harder working full time with two children and my parents were elderly and needed support.

“I went to see my boss, who is very forward thinking about flexible and reduced hours working arrangements. I was in one of two full time grade E pharmacists posts and both had a managerial role. The other grade E had already been a job share, so a precedent had been set for a flexible approach, and the job share had worked well. It was seen as a good way of managing things and together the sharers had a diversity of knowledge. About the same time that I was wanting to reduce my hours, one of the job sharers left, which meant that half a grade E post was vacant. As well as my clinical work, I did a certain percentage of my work outside pharmacy, for example, I co-ordinated training for 3rd year medical students from Leeds University.

“It was decided to use the opportunity created by one of the job sharers leaving to organise our work in a different way. We decided that Kay (the remaining job sharer) and I would ‘job share’ the clinical work, and in addition we would both carry out our separate extra duties. We were then able to appoint an extra full time person. At that time I had line management responsibility for five resident pharmacists and a pre-registration pharmacist. Kay and I shared management responsibility for the Grade D clinical pharmacist.

“Working four days meant that I could still maintain other work involvement, such as the consultant ward rounds and clinical teaching commitments. In fact, a lot of people didn’t realise that I was not in on Mondays. The money released from the reduction of my hours went into the pool and was used for other posts. I worked three days on the wards and Kay did two days. There could potentially be a problem with lack of continuity on the wards, so we were careful about communicating what had happened and catching up with each other. Every ward had a file with a page on each patient and we made notes on this. For us that was the best way of communicating information. We tried having a communication book, but we didn’t have time to fill it in. There was a big advantage in us sharing that role because of the interchange of skills and knowledge.

“In July 1999, I had my third child and when I returned in May 2000 I cut my hours down to 19.5, which was half time. I do the management on the days that I work and Kay now works four days a week. I now have responsibility for seven clinical pharmacists. The management mainly involves regular update meetings, annual appraisal and development. Some work part

time for family commitments and two do other jobs as teacher practitioners for the university. We have other very competent pharmacists on my grade who have other responsibilities. We work as a team and pass things by all of us. Within a relatively small department (in a District General Hospital) we can all communicate fairly easily. We have monthly clinical meetings and short department meetings weekly.

“The biggest advantage for me of working this arrangement has been the fact that I can keep my life together, and maintain my salary level and responsibility. I have also negotiated to come into work slightly later to drop my son off at school, so I get in at 9.15am on the three days, and on one of those days I work a school hour day. I collect my youngest after school, so I only need after school care two days a week.

“Most people starting in the profession these days have postgraduate diplomas or Masters degrees. I didn’t, so I took the opportunity to do the Advanced Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy Teaching course, starting in 1991 and finishing whilst I was on my first maternity leave. After that I completed a research dissertation for my M Ed in Clinical Pharmacy Teaching whilst on maternity leave for my youngest child. If I had been working full time I would not have had enough time to do this. This has benefited me and the hospital. I do sometimes tend to work longer hours than I am paid for. The way I work is just accepted and not seen as a problem. We all have interchangeable skills and work as a team.

“If I didn’t have flexibility I think I would have to look at doing retail locums, because I couldn’t work full time now. A lot of us have been here a long time and a considerable number of us work some form of reduced hours. I do quite a lot of teaching medical students and doctors about prescribing, and sometimes I can work other days, so this can benefit the Trust. It works both ways. I now need the time to support my mother who has recently gone into a residential home and my children are 14, 11, and 8. My husband travels abroad quite a lot so I have to do most of the looking after the children. My boss sees that taking a flexible approach is a way of making sure that people with skills and expertise are able to stay, and this maintains the skills within the department.”

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Case Study

Lorraine Purcell

Head of Procurement,
Partnering and Programme Management, Sheffield City Council

Lorraine Purcell is Head of Procurement, Partnering and Programme Management for Sheffield City Council, a local authority employing 18,000 people. She works at home regularly and compresses her full time role into a nine-day fortnight.

"I started working for Sheffield City Council in this role in 2001, having previously worked for central government. At my grade we don't work or record flexitime, but the hours are still flexible. I tend to get in about 7.30am and I don't leave later than 4.30 or five o'clock. That can mean that I do a couple of hours reading at home, but I prefer that anyway as there are less distractions. The idea is that every other Friday, or another day, I have a day when I don't work. I am flexible though, and if there is a meeting I will come in.

"I was working a lot of hours and feeling that I didn't have the right balance, then for the first time in my career I wasn't very well. I had a nasty virus and realised that the world hadn't ground to a halt while I was away - in fact they did very well. I took it as an opportunity to take stock and re-evaluate.

"It was about a year ago when I asked my line manager, the Director of Finance, if I could change to a nine day fortnight, and she said 'yes'. The only condition we agreed is that I would be flexible. For example, last Friday I went to the Director's group away day when technically it should have been my day off. That kind of flexibility I don't mind.

"If I have to draft something, then working at home works better for me as I can focus and I get it done so much quicker, but I used to carry this huge guilt with me that made me feel I should be in the office rather than working at home. But I decided to stop feeling guilty, and looked at the actual work I produced. I was determined to put it on a proper footing, and commit it in my diary that I was going to do a nine-day fortnight.

"It is a 37 hour week here - but with the hours worked at home I was doing between 40 and 45 hours. The thing for me was to stop thinking I am supposed to do seven days a week and to start counting the work I did at home towards my nine-day fortnight. That was the shift - count it for what it is and don't feel guilty.

"I have a team of 20, and three people directly report to me - they are my management team. I advocate a similar flexible approach for my staff which is: if you need to work from home you can, and if you need to be flexible we'll be flexible. Because they see that I am flexible, hopefully they are more comfortable asking me if it OK if they work from home. Generally there is a willingness to make this flexible approach work, and I think you get more work out of people that way. If there is something in it for you, you will make it work. I am probably getting through more work and doing more things, but not having to put as much time in as I was previously. I am more contactable, because I am at home, than if I was stuck on a train travelling somewhere. I have probably been more accessible this Monday because I was working from home and I was on my mobile; I was ringing them and they were ringing me. Because I was working at home, I was able to have a

more structured phone conversation with somebody than if I had been doing a bit here and there, and then snatching a phone call with someone.

"There have been a couple of occasions when I have been working at home and we've had meetings there. Someone else who was also working from home that day has also ended up in my dining room with me. I doubt we could have got a meeting room here! I think generally it sends out positive messages - it's not that there is one rule for me and one rule for you.

"I am not so sure there are any disadvantages if you are flexible in your approach. I can't think of any - if I need to be here I'm here. Peers have encouraged me to stick to my work pattern, and are sometimes surprised to see me in the office on a Friday. People are very supportive - it's a recognition that we all do incredibly long hours - but I'm doing less hours than when I first joined the council. It's a lot to do with the fact that I have a very good, supportive management team. I trust them enormously and I couldn't do this without them. They know that flexibility works both ways. When I worked in the civil service there was a culture that if you weren't there at six or seven o'clock at night, you were not doing your job - it's not as bad as that here. If you've got the right management team and you are prepared to delegate and trust people, you don't have to do very long days. There comes a point where you just have to say, 'I don't need to know that amount of detail'. I trust other people to have the information.

"There are probably a lot of people at my level who will work from home, but I wanted the formal recognition of working a nine-day fortnight - I think it's good to know the day is there and the recognition, even if I don't always take it. I tend to cram things such as going to the dentist into my nine-day fortnight day.

"Sometimes I still feel guilty. I love working here, they pay me well, I work with some fantastic people and then have the icing on the cake of working a nine-day fortnight.

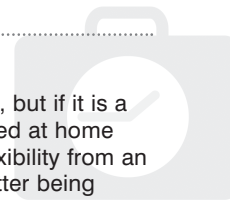
"My team are very protective and my office manager will say: 'What have you got in your bag? What are you taking home - are you having a proper 'nine-day'?' It will be in the diary and she is absolutely dogged with people. They won't ring me, but if I ring them they will talk to me, but first they will say 'why are you ringing?' But it works both ways - if they want to take some time out they know they won't be bothered.

"I find a lot of the people I come into contact with at a senior level have an inability to let things go. My deputy is moving into a key piece of work - it's a really sticky area, but I know he will do a fantastic job. I only need to know the headlines, I don't need to go to any meetings - that's how we work well together. Sometimes I see people and I think 'why are you going to that meeting. Why don't you let go?' Recognise that you have interviewed and selected the people working for you for very good reasons - so just trust them. If more people operated like that at senior level they could free up some time naturally and they could be doing a nine-day fortnight. Don't be afraid to ask and don't be afraid to do it."

Case Study

Karen Reay

Finance Sector National Officer, Unite



Karen Reay works for the trade union Unite, which was formed in May 2007 by a merger of Amicus and the Transport and General Workers unions. Unite has two million members. Employees are based in the London and Regional Offices. Karen is Finance Sector National Officer co-ordinating the union's work within the finance sector. She mainly works based from her home in Sunderland.

Karen explains: "I started working for the union MSF (Manufacturing, Science, Finance, which merged with AEEU to form Amicus) as a Regional Officer in Newcastle in September 1997. I had three very young children at the time. My partner and I worked very long hours but there was flexibility within them, so you could make doctors and school appointments, as long as people were aware where you were. It wasn't nine to five - you worked however many hours the job required.

"Two years ago I took up a new post in the Health Sector to carry out a particular piece of work, based in London. I needed to be in London some of the time, so there was agreement that I would stay in London two or three nights a week and then work from home the rest of the time. In April of this year I moved across to the Finance Sector (the job was the same grade).

"The Finance Sector membership of Unite is spread across the whole of the UK, so it is as easy to work from home as to work based in London. I have administrative support based in the London office, and I am able to work there when in London. I have been provided with a computer system at home and I use a room there as an office-I also have a mobile and a blackberry. I travel from home - this is my base. For example, I am about to go to Glasgow. For me this works well as it is very easy from the North East. There are two National Officers within the finance sector and we coordinate the work geographically, and have split the big companies up between us. People know who their National Officer is, and it works very well. I don't clock in or out. I have a diary system and admin support in London, who keeps me on track and I work to my diary. I am very pro-active, so rather than wait for things to come in I do tend to discuss with officers what's going on and I go out and meet the membership. If I have to be there at 7am, I am there, but equally if there is something important at home with my children I can organise my diary to ensure I am there if needed. My mother died recently and the attitude of Unite is very understanding and flexible. I was able to be there with my family when needed, and because my base is home I was able to keep up to date with work. I can't just turn off work - I am much better with this flexibility.

"I think the union do get a lot more out of me, because it works both ways. Because of the flexibility and the working from home I don't spend as much time travelling and I tend to work much harder. It is probably more cost effective for Unite, and I think it sends out the right message to men and women. I had to go to London yesterday, and I was six hours on the train for one meeting. As an organisation we are introducing more effective ways to communicate such as video and tele-conferencing - which is much more cost effective, much easier to organise and much less stressful for everybody.

"I don't think you can replace the face to face, but if it is a very factual discussion, the fact that I am based at home doesn't matter. Women can have it all with flexibility from an employer. It helps me to organise my time better being based at home. I am saving so much time by not travelling that I can do more work. Working based at home has enabled me to do the job better.

"When I am at home I sometimes try to do too much. I am working, but I also know the washing machine needs emptying or the children (now 16 and 13 year-old twins) come home from school and you are in the middle of something - it is about trying to get the barriers right. You do miss people, but it depends on where you have worked before. Because I have admin support in London, she ensures I am included in internal information and so on - but it is the comradeship you miss. Overall the positives far outweigh the downsides. Because we have regional offices, even if you work from home you are fairly near to a regional office.

"For my children it is a very positive role model. It shows that it can work and it gives them the opportunity to see that there is nothing wrong in a women being motivated by her career and enjoying the job she does, and she can also be there for her children. The children see the flexibility but they have also grown up to be very capable of looking after themselves. My mum was living with us and she was disabled, so I was her main carer as well. It tends to be women who are carers and if you are working full time in a job that is a very rigid nine to five it is hard to be that carer.

"If I am down in London I will make a point of putting time in my diary and go to my admin support office and we go through things we are organising. She is extremely efficient and enables me to do the job I am doing. We communicate a lot via email and will probably speak at least once a day. To have good admin support is key. I also manage work priorities with about 15 other officers.

"Years ago the union did have a culture where if you were a senior officer you had to be based in London. Four/five years ago things started to change, particularly when IT was being used more. We are, as a union, trying to negotiate more flexibility for our members and the flexibility I have is totally accepted. It's about how you control and manage your time. From a managerial perspective as long as the job is done and is done well, that is OK. It has to be fully agreed with your employer and not be half hearted on either side. Also you need the right equipment. You are quite isolated and you need that connection with the organisation. I work 'based at home' which is different from working at home all the time. I could be out 12 hours a day, but home is where my systems are. You are saving so much time on travelling. It is win-win."

Case Study

Dawn Whelan-Smith

Strategic Human Resources Manager, British Library

Dawn Whelan-Smith works for the British Library, the national library of the UK and one of the world's greatest libraries. The British Library serves business and industry, researchers, academics and students in the UK and world wide and employs 2,030 staff located in London and Boston Spa, West Yorkshire. Dawn is the Strategic Human Resources (HR) Manager, and is part of the senior leadership team. Dawn is based in London and is responsible for a team of 19 people on both sites, with five people directly reporting to her. She is on a 36 hours a week contract, and compresses this into four days between Monday to Thursday.

Dawn explains: "I started in this role at the British Library in November 2004. Before I applied for the job I spoke to the Director of Human Resources (HR) in order to fully understand the role and it was at this stage that I also indicated that I would be looking to work compressed hours because of the distance I would be travelling to work, and my childcare commitments. I had worked with the Director of HR in a former employment and had worked compressed hours with her. I was aware that she would be supportive, and would give serious consideration as to whether this was a practical working pattern for this new role. I was clear about my personal circumstances, and that I would need to pursue opportunities which would enable me to do this pattern of work. The Director of HR said that this would be possible if I was successful. The role did sound interesting and challenging so I applied for the post in the normal way, stating a wish to work compressed hours formally on my application.

"The working arrangement works very well. I have a mobile link into my laptop and a blackberry, and this makes life much easier. I have two hours travel each way, so I can do my emails on the way home. Because of the split location we use video conferencing quite a lot as this reduces the travel generally for everyone. I have been able to phone into a video conference centre and be part of a conversation with Boston Spa while still being at home. I have also been able to chair meetings by telephone, even if I haven't been there. Technology has helped incredibly – once you get used to using it! I always make it very clear to the Director of HR if I am not contactable on my non-working day due to personal commitments. From her perspective, I am sure that on a Friday she becomes more aware of day to day issues that would normally be brought to me; however she has never raised this as being a problem. But even if I were here five days a week my diary would be full anyway.

"From an operational point of view there is an expectation that you are always available. I have an exceptionally strong and good team and have never had any negative feedback from them. I would normally have my mobile on so that anyone could ring me if they needed to, but it is very rare that any of my team do that. I know that if they ring they really need to talk to me. If I am in the middle of something, I say I will call them back and this works well. If there is a particular work activity and I am the only person who can to do it I will come in on a Friday.

"I normally get into the office for about 8.15am and I try to leave by about 6.15pm to get the last straight through train home, but nine times out of ten I leave about 7pm. If I need to, I work on the train. If I haven't looked at emails then I would go through those on the way home on Thursdays. My 'out of office' is on my email on a Friday. The management of staff is a challenge due to fitting in site visits within the four day working week but the team and I work hard to schedule these in advance. From a work perspective, when we had some challenging restructuring consultations I went up to Boston Spa on a Friday in order to support the change programme. There is flexibility, but it is no different from if you worked five days a week and you had to come in on a Saturday. I think I am exceptionally lucky to be able to work in this way in this role and position. I understand that it is a lot quieter in the office on a Friday which makes this the best day not to be in the office. There is a flexible working hours scheme in the organisation, and typically Friday is a day that people take off. I worked in another organisation on compressed hours, and I was off on a Monday, because I knew all of our reports to the executive team had to be finished by Friday.

"I am out of the family equation for four days and I pick it up for the other three days. I am still part of school life and I can drop the children off and pick them up at least one day a week. I have two children and there have been times when one has been ill and I have been able to carry on working at home. It does mean working very long days four days a week, as you have to get the hours in. It is very antisocial and my husband and children have been very tolerant. You do need to have a very tolerant partner, as he picks up all the morning and evening activities for those four days.

"I know that if I went part time I would still work full time. I have been approached to job share over the years, but I like to be in control of a role and I think you have to be certain sort of person to job share. I like working full time. This way of working suits my working style – I prefer working long days.

"I have on occasions worked from home, but I don't do that much now. I do social and community activities on a Friday, but I could just as easily bring something home and work on it – it is swings and roundabouts. I think in the past there were people who were quite judgemental and felt it necessary to make comments, but I don't have that anymore. We have a number of people at my level who work from home, and we have some who work 80 per cent contracts over four days. It does take a while to change and shift cultures, and we are making progress to achieve this."



Working Families is the UK's leading worklife balance charity. It supports and gives a voice to working parents and carers, whilst also helping employers create workplaces which encourage worklife balance for everyone.

Working Families helps parents and carers understand their rights and to negotiate for change at work, and also encourages employers to grasp the real business benefits that worklife balance practice can bring. Informed by all it hears from and knows of its individual and employer members, its research and its legal advice work, it is able to argue authoritatively for social policy and workplace change that will benefit all families.

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