

# Top Employers for Working Families

## **Special Awards**

# 2014

# Top Employers for Working Families **Special Awards 2014**

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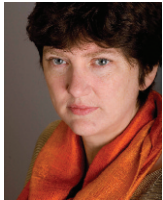
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# Introduction



**Sarah Jackson**  
CEO  
Working Families



**Mary Mercer**  
Principal Associate Consultant  
Institute for Employment Studies

**Welcome to the case studies for the 2014 Top Employers for Working Families Awards. The case studies here include all the shortlisted finalists across the different Awards categories. Judging this years' entries we have been struck by two things: that organisations with a long track record in family friendly and flexible working continue to adjust and refine policies in response to employee and business needs; and that innovation keeps coming, across sectors and within organisations of all sizes.**

Of course, the two issues are related, and adjusting a policy can lead to innovative new ways of doing things differently. We have been encouraged to see that employers are not content to create a policy and leave it at that, but instead understand that to make it a realistic option that employees actually want to use, they have to support it and demonstrate to their people that it is safe to do so. This year's awards show employers really getting to grips with the culture change work that is necessary to support family friendly and flexible working. This, we think, represents the current key issue around flexibility. It is essential that employers are keenly attuned to how flexibility is playing out in their workplace, and are vigilant in their understanding of the detail of employee experience.

When entering the awards, we asked employers three key questions: What do you do? Why do you do it? And how will you ensure that it survives within your organisation? The response to all three of these questions was illuminating, but the last two were strongly linked. Organisations are motivated to move in a family-friendly and flexible direction, not because it is the right thing to do or a 'nice' employee benefit, but because they have understood that the way that the organisation operates and the way that employees want to live needs to be closely aligned. The goal is mutual success, in terms of performance and wellbeing and work-life fit. And organisations have also grasped that by building up a way of measuring and capturing these benefits, they can embed them so that they become an everyday way of working.

We hope that you enjoy reading about these different companies, and that perhaps these case studies will provoke new ideas about the way that family friendly and flexible working can be shaped in your own organisation. These are best practice example; we hope that you can take something from them.

# The Judging Panel



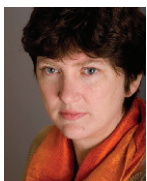
**Professor Cary L. Cooper CBE** Pro Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University

Professor Cary L. Cooper is a Pro Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University and Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health. Cary's previous roles have included adviser to the UN and to the Defence Committee of the House of Commons. Cary is the author of over 100 books (on occupational stress, women at work and industrial and organisational psychology), has written over 400 scholarly articles for academic journals, and is a frequent contributor to national newspapers, TV and radio. In 2001, Cary was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his contribution to organisational health.



**Arvind Hickman** Editor, HR Magazine

Arvind Hickman is the Editor of HR magazine – the UK's leading source of strategic, people-centric business news and analysis for HR directors and senior executives. Born and raised in Australia, Arvind has had an extensive media career in print, radio and TV, and has won awards for his journalism. He has been editor of several business titles in finance and accounting, and in the early part of his career covered news, politics and sport. Arvind has a journalism degree from the University of Technology, Sydney. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his son and is a passionate supporter of Liverpool Football Club.



**Sarah Jackson OBE** Chief Executive of Working Families

Involved in work-life balance campaigning and culture change since joining Parents At Work in 1994, Sarah is an acknowledged expert in the field. In 2007 she was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to Quality of Life Issues. Leading Working Families' policy and parliamentary work, she is the charity's key media and public spokesperson on all aspects of work-life balance. Sarah has chaired the judging panel for the Working Families Employer of the Year best practice awards since 1996; and developed the Top Employers for Working Families Benchmark, for which she chairs the awards judging panel.

Sarah ranked regularly in Human Resources Magazine's "HR top 100 Most Influential" from the inaugural list in 2006. In 2010 she was a member of the then government's Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, and currently chairs the Promoting Flexible Working: Private Sector Employers Group for the DWP. She is a member of the Policy Advisory Board of the Social Market Foundation and a Fellow of the RSA.



**Mary Mercer** Principal Associate Consultant, Institute for Employment Studies

Mary is the Principal Consultant at the IES and is experienced in operational delivery, project management and project direction. Key skill areas include human resource and organisation development consulting, including flexible working, performance improvement, business process redesign and operational research. Mary leads the IES consultancy work on both flexible working and performance

management and has delivered consultancy support within Local Government, Central Government, the Health Service and the Private Sector.

Mary's philosophy is to deliver support that has a pragmatic and lasting impact, and she has a range of examples of how HR improvements can have a measurable business impact. As an experienced designer and facilitator of training and development, she runs development programmes and events for members of the IES HR Network.



**Jonathan Swan** Head of Research and Information, Working Families

Jonathan Swan is Policy and Research Officer for Working Families, leading the development of innovative projects that explore the links between working practices and performance. The research which he leads for Working Families is pragmatic and focussed on real-world issues, and is designed to offer insight and practical actions for organisations.

He has researched and written on a wide range of work-life integration issues, including: fathers and work, flexible working in senior roles, productivity and performance, organisational culture, absenteeism and active ageing. He is responsible for the annual Top Employers for Working Families benchmark for organisations and the Time Health and the Family series of reports.

An experienced project manager, Jonathan has led innovative research partnerships with a number of academic institutions. Before joining Working Families he was the Policy and Research Manager at New Ways to Work.



**Caroline Waters OBE** FRSA FCiPD (Hons)

Caroline is Deputy Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, Vice President of Carers UK, a member of the Whole Education, Roffey Park and IncredIBull Boards and Founder of CW's Consulting Box. Caroline has held a number of positions for the BT Group, where she was formerly Director, People & Policy. Her previous role focused on realising BT's business ambitions through leading-edge people strategies, underpinned by robust policies and processes, promoting inclusivity and the empowerment of individuals whilst allowing them to contribute to the community and volunteering.

Caroline regularly contributes advice and guidance to Government and industry. She is a Board member or Chair of a variety of employer forums and Governmental working parties and has judged a number of prestigious diversity awards.

Caroline's work was widely recognised across the industry with her appointment as HR Director of the Year at HR Magazine's HR Excellence Awards in 2009. She is consistently placed within the top 3 positions in their annual 'HR's Most Influential People' listings. This leadership was further recognised by the award of an OBE in the New Year Honours List 2010 for services to diversity and equal opportunities.

Caroline also mentors a number of people, from apprentices to senior business leaders. She has now formed her own consultancy, CW Consulting Box.

# Finalists' case studies

For more detailed case studies, please go to the 'winners' section of the Top Employers website [www.topemployersforworkingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.topemployersforworkingfamilies.org.uk)

## The Cityfathers Best for All Stages of Fatherhood Award



**The London School of Economics & Political Science**  
Sector: Higher Education



**Gail Keeley**  
HR Manager, Policy & ER  
LSE



The judges were impressed by The London School of Economics (LSE)'s continuing development of its provision for fathers. A very strong suite of policies and support is available, and a major initiative is the commitment to pay fathers up to 16 weeks APL at full pay, providing a real incentive for couples to share time off. This commitment to full pay is key as it recognises that one of the main barriers to fathers taking extended periods of paternity leave is a financial one. This is part of a wider strategy for the LSE that aims to ensure that it treats fathers and mothers equally, deliberately building a reputation as a diverse, fair and flexible employer that attracts and retains the best people.

There is a wide range of support for fathers, in addition to policy provisions. Fathers are able to take part in workshops for parents, including: 1. 'Balancing Work and Being Mum' (places are given to mothers, even if they are not LSE employees, because it helps to support the fathers who are LSE employees); 2. 'Balancing Work and Being the Carer of a Disabled Child'; 3. 'Balancing Work and Being Dad'; 4. 'Positive Parenting'; 5. 'Balancing Work and Being the Carer of an Adult'. There is also a mentoring scheme for fathers and networks for working parents and carers. Account is taken of the impact of APL in terms of career development and work output, (e.g. in terms of research output which is taken into consideration as part of probationary periods and promotion) and any father taking 26 weeks of APL will return to a term's fully paid, teaching-free research leave.

Benefits are comprehensive. Fathers are given paid time off to accompany the birth mother (partner or surrogate mother) to attend antenatal appointments. There is two weeks' fully paid paternity leave, and up to 16 weeks' APL on full pay. Fathers can take pre-adoptive leave on full pay, contractual adoptive leave and pay, and they have a right to a phased return to work. In addition, the LSE provides an on-site subsidised nursery, emergency childcare, and emergency leave on full pay.

Fathers also get one-to-one support. They can arrange meetings with HR staff to provide tailored advice on paternity or adoptive leave, APL, keeping in touch and flexible working (including which options are available and how to make a request for flexible working or phased return to work). They also have the opportunity to seek support from a trained mentor on managing the transition to becoming a (working) parent.



## Citi

Sector: Banking  
& Financial Services

**Xanic Jones**  
EMEA Diversity & Inclusion Specialist  
Citi



Citi has a well-established strategy to support new fathers, part of the bank's policy of support for parents throughout their careers. They have an excellent track record of working with fathers, and have targeted initiatives to close the cultural gap that can make it harder for fathers than mothers in the workplace.

In 2009 Citi launched 'New Dads' workshops. These are highly interactive and participative classroom-based sessions, led by an external partner, to help new or expecting fathers navigate the challenges and opportunities of new fatherhood while working in a demanding organisation. The group explores their own goals and aspirations for fatherhood and how their map for fatherhood might differ from the one they inherited from their own fathers. It also looks at managing boundaries with others (specifically managers and family members).

The workshops cover essential information on what is available to working parents at Citi, such as paternity leave and pay, additional paternity leave (APL), a Dad specific web portal, flexible schedules, back-up childcare, childcare vouchers, the employee assistance programme and family cover for private health. While all this information is readily available on intranet sites, Citi's experience is that compared with new mothers, fathers seem less connected to sources of information that would help. The New Dads workshops are offered on a quarterly basis at no charge to the business unit. They are advertised using internal news bulletins, soft screens in public areas and by personal invitation when people have registered for paternity leave.

When the government introduced APL, Citi reviewed the policy on enhanced discretionary pay. It has always offered enhanced pay for ordinary paternity leave, while the ordinary maternity leave (OML) period is paid at full pay for the first 26 weeks. When Citi introduced its own internal APL policy, it offered the same terms as for OML. As APL can start when the baby is 20 weeks old, Citi enhances to full pay for the remaining 6 weeks of the OML period. In 2013 seven fathers took APL, up from three fathers in 2012. Their experiences have been tracked carefully, through consultations with both employees and managers. Citi is keen to learn from fathers' experiences: of registering for APL, of their leave in terms of connectivity with work and at home, and of their return to work.

Citi has taken a proactive approach to learning from the experiences of its fathers, including those who have adopted children. While the number of adoptive parents at Citi is low (the journey to adoption is hard, and can last between two and four years), the bank took the view that adoption is just another route to becoming a parent and so should be supported in the same way. It therefore enhanced its adoption policy to allow for time off to attend adoption appointments, in the same way that its maternity policy allows time off for antenatal appointments. Prior to this, adoptive parents had had to use their annual leave.

Citi understands the critical role that managers play in fathers' experiences of their transition. Since 2007, it has offered management workshops, initially focused on managing maternity. When APL was introduced, these workshops were modified to include paternity leave as well as adoption and same-sex couples, and renamed 'Managing Parent Leave'. In 2013, workshops became mandatory for line managers.

Citi tracks detailed metrics to help it understand how policy and support are actually working in the wider business, and whether or not they are effective. It tracks paternity leave take-up and notes that in the last four years it has become more successful at getting fathers to formally register their leave. It monitors the number of attendees at both the 'New Dads' and 'Managing Parent Leave' workshops, the number of fathers taking APL, and the number

taking adoption leave. Performance ranking and annual pay decisions for those taking, and those who have taken, APL are monitored too.

 Finalist

**National Grid**  
Sector: Energy

**Karen Clayton**  
UK General Counsel & Company Secretary  
and Executive Sponsor of Work & Life Matters  
National Grid



Around three-quarters of National Grid's workforce are male, and in each of the last three years, there have been 180 new fathers. With the role of fatherhood continuing to change and evolve, National Grid feels it's important that, as a business, it is able to evolve too. Just as fathers have the desire to take a greater and more active role in the parenting of their children, so National Grid believes that supporting, encouraging and helping its fathers to make this possible will bring much higher levels of engagement from them. Aware of the difficulties, stress, tiredness and challenges that becoming a new father can bring, their aim is to change the attitude within the business from 'man up' to one of more support, awareness and understanding.

National Grid has put in place a programme to do three things for fathers: educate them on legislation and HR policies; provide them and their managers with support and tools; and create a culture on ongoing support throughout the journey of fatherhood. To deliver these goals, National Grid has been running workshops, webinars and mentor development workshops, initially for its Midlands-based fathers. The programme is designed to be scalable and to be rolled out more widely in the UK and also globally. Crucial to the success of the programme has been the recruitment of senior managers to help with engagement and embedding across all divisions of the business. With a geographically spread workforce, it has been important to secure local managerial support too.

A fathers-only web portal has been created on the company intranet, and here fathers can find information on webinars and workshops, as well as other relevant information. As a result of these activities, National Grid expects to see data in their annual survey showing an increase in flexible working requests and acceptances for men, and a decrease in absenteeism in new fathers over the last five years.

Fathers are also well supported by policy. This includes paid time off for antenatal care, enhanced paternity leave and pay, provisions for parental leave, a right to request flexible working arrangements for all employees, enhanced parental breaks (up to 12 months, unpaid) and childcare breaks (7 weeks fixed duration, unpaid).



# The Citymothers Best for All Stages of Motherhood Award



## Barclays plc

Sector: Banking & Financial Services



**Steve Weston**  
CEO Mortgages  
Barclays



Barclays' positive approach to motherhood is part of its wider aim to be an employer of choice and are "proud of the support that we provide to our colleagues, whilst ensuring that they are able to achieve their career ambitions." Steve Weston, Barclays. The bank's emphasis is on confidence – that employees should not have to make career compromises because they want a good work–life fit.

Central to this are the organisation's values of respect, integrity, service, excellence and stewardship. All employees, including those on maternity leave, were asked to attend half-day workshops to learn about the new values. Sessions were run all over the country. To ensure that maternity leavers could come, bespoke workshops were set up for them as a Keep In Touch day replacement, and on-site crèches were arranged for those who wanted to bring their babies. As one attendee remarked:

*"It was incredibly valuable and perfectly pitched – I now feel very much energised about returning to work next month. Thank you also for arranging the childcare –when childcare isn't available I generally am unable to attend this type of event. It made all the difference to me – it was a really thoughtful and unexpected touch which was very much appreciated."*

Barclays has over 4000 new parents each year. It supports them via maternity, paternity or adoption leave policies. If both parents work for Barclays, they are already allowed to combine and share their leave allowance, ahead of the new shared-parenting legislation due in 2015. All parenting policies are inclusive and apply to same-sex couples. Barclays' policies support mothers to balance work and home priorities. Employees are offered supermarket and childcare vouchers as a pre-tax benefit. Five days' paid emergency carer's leave helps manage the unexpected, whether relating to childcare or elder care. Likewise, holiday can be carried over or 'borrowed', or extra days purchased via a flexible benefits scheme. Discounted private healthcare for colleagues and their dependants is on offer. Flexible working options range from part-time to compressed weeks, with technology and concierge services making informal flexible working simpler.

A core focus at Barclays is on increasing the representation of women in senior positions. The bank wants to demonstrate that having children doesn't put a ceiling on careers. Maternity returner rates are closely monitored. In 2013, 95.7% of women on maternity leave returned to work, and this highlighted the need to address the practicalities of combining work and home priorities and the transition back to the office into sharper focus. Family-friendly coaching workshops for new and expectant parents support them through the transition back into work. Line managers of maternity leavers are also invited to attend the workshops to better understand their colleagues' needs, as the bank recognises they have a crucial role to play in staff retention.

Working Families and Carers networks are another valued support mechanism linking like-minded colleagues via events and online forums. Led by senior leaders who vocally and visibly express the importance of family life, these networks have a UK membership of around 1,500, which demonstrates how appreciated they are. Barclays has a

broad range of employee networks, with a total UK membership of around 7,500, covering each area of diversity and delivering inclusive support for every aspect of a mother's identity and at each stage of her career journey. Networks have researched a variety of subjects such as flexible working influencers, career progression patterns and maternity experiences, helping the bank to continually evolve and improve policy and practice.

Barclays' Women's Initiatives Networks (WiN) are highly active, with chapters in each business and across countries. With female career progression a significant focus, many mothers at different stages of their careers join WiN to enable them to fulfil their potential. This commitment to enabling careers is further demonstrated by signature events hosted on International Women's Day, by male and female senior leaders, many parents themselves, to reinforce the message that motherhood can combine successfully with career fulfilment.



**PageGroup**  
Sector: Recruitment

**Sarah Kirk**  
Global Diversity and Inclusion Director  
PageGroup



PageGroup says that its culture is based on three pillars: hiring the right people, developing them to their full potential and conducting its business in line with its values: take pride, be passionate, never give up, work as a team, make it fun. In practice, what this means is getting the policies and practices in place that allow mothers (and everyone else) to fulfil their potential at work. PageGroup's work with mothers sits within its wider focus on women and equality.

PageGroup launched a new scheme, Women@Page, in 2012, to create a more inclusive working environment and improve gender balance at all levels. Women@Page develops and supports the female talent pipeline, raises women's aspirations and dispels negative preconceptions of women's capabilities. It enjoys the support of CEO Steve Ingram and non-executive director Ruby McGregor-Smith (Chair of the Women's Business Council), and is supported by the Executive Board. The objectives are: to share best practice; develop, promote and execute global gender diversity initiatives; and be accountable for measuring and monitoring progress.

The Women@Page programme covers a range of activities and policies, to work towards these objectives. There is a global mentoring programme, supporting and bringing through talented women at management level. By the end of 2013, the number of female managers in the UK increased by 4% to 31% – currently 80 women in the UK are being mentored, many of whom are working mothers. There is a pre- and post-maternity coaching programme in the UK to improve retention of mothers returning from maternity leave. This aims to give all mothers-to-be the best possible maternity support, letting them know what resources are available; sharing best practice for managing their preparation for maternity leave and returning to work; and providing career development support. It also gives mothers access to a supportive network.

The Women@Page internal website showcases and profiles careers of successful women in PageGroup, sharing and celebrating visible role models at all levels; featuring pledges of support from senior leaders and giving tips and advice to help women achieve their aspirations, publishing quarterly updates with reviews of initiatives from around the world; and providing Q&As with the leadership team – and feedback about tools and actions. Page Group also regularly communicates by blog, and tweet to highlight what's changing and what works. In addition, PageGroup has Maternity@Page to inform mothers-to-be about everything to do with policies and procedures, including comprehensive FAQs. This is reinforced through line manager maternity guidelines, a detailed operational checklist to help managers support the women in their businesses through the maternity journey.

In 2013 PageGroup undertook its first worldwide employee engagement and diversity survey, with a key focus on understanding more about actual and perceived barriers women and mothers face within the organisation. The global views of employees on engagement, diversity and inclusion across PageGroup are shaping policy making and practice. It has engaged in benchmarking and external assessment and taken membership of external bodies to boost the number of women getting senior roles. Internally, it has refined and improved annual statistics tracking maternity return and retention rates, the percentage of women in management roles, and the gender proportions of new staff. Maternity, paternity and adoption policies are also under continuous review.

PageGroup offers a wide range of flexible working practices to mothers, including term-time-only working. The aim is to help mothers get a good work-life fit, without having to step off the career ladder. It is creating a new training programme to ensure diversity, inclusion and equality awareness is incorporated in every level of training, so that these values are reinforced throughout each employee's working life.

 **Finalist**

## **Lloyds Banking Group**

Sector: Banking & Financial Services

**Fiona Cannon**  
Group Director  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Lloyds Banking Group



Lloyds Banking Group is committed to providing the best possible support to all colleagues who are experiencing, or about to experience, motherhood. Its maternity policy, which doesn't have any service length requirements, allows mothers to take up to 63 weeks' leave, with the benefit of enhanced pay and the option to return on a phased basis.

Following a review of its gender approach, Lloyds Banking Group found that becoming a parent was seen as a barrier to progression for some employees. Additional specific research reviewed the experience women had of going through the maternity transition. This revealed that policy was seen as strong, but the practical experience could be variable and was heavily dependent on the role of the line manager. In response to this feedback a comprehensive new package of support was rolled out. This is a blended solution, enabling the bank to be confident that line managers have strong capability to manage the maternity transition effectively and provide women with additional support.

Commitment to mothers also extends beyond maternity. In Lloyds Banking Group's values is a specific commitment to respect employees' work-life balance, which is particularly valued by their working parents. This is supported by a comprehensive, high-profile flexible working scheme. All staff can use the flexible benefits scheme to purchase childcare vouchers and medical cover for the whole family, as well as to buy/sell additional holiday leave.

This package includes an online portal with policy information, colleague and line manager guides, step-by-step planners, case studies and a link to Tommy's Pregnancy at Work, a scheme which gives women access to further information and support, including access to specialist midwives.

The specialist maternity service is resourced by a small team of experts who hold mandatory calls with the staff member and their line manager pre-leave and pre-return. This has two purposes: to ensure the process is properly understood and followed, and to make sure the emotional aspects of the transition are taken into account. The aim is to create a collaborative and highly connected approach, which minimises any potential negative impact on the business and ensures the woman feels fully supported and equipped to return. The bank was aware of the time

pressure line managers are under, and wanted to provide them with an intervention that was specifically tailored to meet theirs and their team members' needs. However, it also recognised that for the employee, having the opportunity to hear other perspectives would be valuable. Since this service was launched, over 900 colleagues have registered to use it.

Lloyds Banking Group has also introduced a suite of e-learning modules for mothers to complete at each stage of the maternity transition, including pre-leave, on leave and upon their return to work. These cover topics like taking stock, communicating your maternity status and leave, making the adjustment to having a dual career and managing competing demands, and how to maintain development focus post-leave. The idea is for colleagues to complete the modules prior to the call with the specialist service, so they can come to the call feeling empowered, and ensure the call time can be used in a really focused way.

One of the greatest sources of support for Women at Lloyds Banking Group is Breakthrough, the Group's women's network. Comprised of 10,000 members and led by sponsors at director level it provides a wealth of support and advice to mothers within the Group. It has a highly populated parenting arm which includes an online forum, regular parenting events and a mentoring scheme. The volume of events the parenting network holds is substantial with an average of two to three events per month and attendance is always high as is audience participation. The events cover a wide range of topics and are not just focused on colleagues who have been through the maternity leave transition. The network also recognises that sadly colleagues sometimes experience very difficult situations and events have been supported by closes online forums enabling colleagues to connect and share experiences around sensitive subjects in a discreet way.



**University of Lincoln**  
Sector: Higher Education

**Jayne Billam**  
HR Director  
University of Lincoln



The University of Lincoln provides a suite of support for employees through all stages of motherhood. The university has made every effort to help employees balance their work and personal commitments and at the same time pursue career development and growth.

The university has a set of provisions, along with a 'supporting new and expectant families' policy. These are widely promoted as part of the benefits package from the outset of employment, and are continuously communicated via the internal communication channels and a 'me at Lincoln' well-being site. Recognising that individual circumstances are different, the university's policies include maternity, paternity, adoption, parental and emergency leave. Expectant mothers can take paid time off work to attend their antenatal appointments (including any time needed to travel to the hospital, GP or clinic) and also to attend relaxation classes and parentcraft classes. Enhanced maternity pay provides mothers with better financial benefits during the period of their maternity leave. They can also benefit from a generous leave entitlement and additional concessionary days that accrue during their maternity leave.

In order to allow mothers to stay in touch and connected with the university during their period of maternity leave and also to ease return, Lincoln offers paid 'keep in touch days' and a phased return to work to help to smooth the transition back into the workplace. In addition, the recently introduced R2F scheme (Returner's Research Fund) provides a unique opportunity for mothers in science to apply for up to £10K research funding to help sustain research activities during or after their maternity leave.

Mothers can request flexible working, including job share, at any point while bringing up their children. Other flexible arrangements, such as time off for emergencies or unpaid leave options, have been incorporated into the university's policies and procedures. Managers are encouraged to approach requests for flexible working in a positive manner and work with staff to find and agree mutually acceptable flexible working solutions.

Mothers and fathers can purchase childcare vouchers. While the university does not have nursery facilities, it has actively established a good relationship with a privately owned nursery located within the campus which offers special rates for university staff. To help employees deal with childcare breakdown, Lincoln has developed a guiding statement, 'Children in the workplace', which allows employees to bring their children (who are old enough and capable of caring for themselves) into work. Grandmothers as well as mothers can benefit from other policies under the heading of work-life balance, which enable them to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with a broad range of circumstances, such as unexpected or sudden emergencies.

The university's senior management team fully supports mothers. Senior females are willing to share experiences of balancing career and motherhood. Through their 'WiSE at Lincoln' website, female academic colleagues who successfully progressed their careers while bringing up their children and meeting other family commitments share their personal stories. The work-life balance aspect is also covered in the talks and events organised by specific focus groups such as Women into Research Network.

In the recent staff survey (2013), 74% of employees agreed that the 'university provides good support to help them balance their work and personal commitments', and 84% of employees confirmed that they 'can approach their manager to talk openly about flexible working'. In addition, in a recent 'Employer of Choice' benchmarking report, Lincoln was ranked second out of 44 higher education institutions.

## The E-ON Best for Engagement Award



**American Express**  
Sector: Banking &  
Financial Services



**Julie Pope**  
Vice President of HR for Europe,  
American Express



At American Express, flexible working is central to employee engagement: the business understands the challenges employees face with balancing work, family and other personal commitments. Over the last year, it has reviewed its policies on flexible working to reflect changes in legislation, and has gone a step further by creating an alternative working policy under which all employees, not just parents and carers, have the right to request flexible working. All flexible working policies have been reworded to ensure they are clear and easy to follow, and American Express has also created a 'Leader's Guide' to help leaders manage requests fairly and consistently. By improving the ease of use of flexible working policies, American Express aims to ensure that employees who wish to apply are not daunted by the process, and that managers can support them appropriately.

In order to raise awareness of the availability of flexible working, American Express delivered specialist training through seminars and webinars. These included: '10 Top Tips for Highly Effective Parents and Carers'; 'Work and Life in a Changing World'; 'Unconscious Bias'; and 'Supporting Carers of Adult Loved Ones: preparing for the time bomb'. The Work Life team has developed a back-up care programme as a support tool and is letting staff know that it is open to carers of adult loved ones as well as working parents. American Express has also rebranded its Employee Assistance Programme 'Healthy Minds', and is encouraging employees with caring responsibilities to consider using the service.

In January 2014, American Express reviewed its flexible working agreement process, which is open to all employees. Although a clear policy and process had been developed, it wanted to improve consistency across the organisation. A selected pilot group – one of the customer service centres, made up of 300 employees – was analysed to see what flexible working agreements were in place (both formally and informally). In particular, the study looked at how these flexible working agreements were benefiting both the employees and the organisation. The results showed that one-third of employees in the pilot group had a flexible working arrangement, and of that number, 65% had the arrangement in order to care for children or grandchildren, 11% for adult dependent care and 24% for medical and disability reasons. What was also apparent was how beneficial these flexible working arrangements were to the business, as well as to the employees – just under half of the employees were on shifts that enabled the business to operate more efficiently and successfully.

This data told a tangible story that could be communicated to the business and further embed the value of flexible working at American Express. Using this positive story, the leadership team re-communicated the flexible working process to the pilot group, with two objectives: to clarify the purpose of flexible working so all employees understood the process and how to apply, and to ensure a transparent and equitable process for all employees. As a result of this successful pilot, American Express is looking to establish similar reviews in other areas of the business. It has evidence that employees who work flexibly are more engaged than those who don't, and can see a correlation between engagement and retention rates.



## Northern Trust

Sector: Banking & Financial Services

### Gill Pemberton

Executive Vice President and Head  
of Corporate Support Services  
Northern Trust



Northern Trust has a longstanding commitment to care for its employees. To this end, the Company has established a flexible working and family-friendly culture that respects and supports work-life balance. In 2012, responses to the Employee Engagement Survey suggested areas for possible enhancement, so it became one of Northern Trust's three global priorities. Additionally, following an overwhelmingly positive response to the alternative work location programme that the Bank had implemented during the Olympics, a feasibility study was conducted with a view to extending and formalising these arrangements in the London office.

As a result, in July 2013 Northern Trust implemented a pilot 'work from home' scheme called WorkSmart across four business areas. Partners whose roles were identified as being eligible could choose their preferred place of work between home, office, or a suitable alternative location of their choice. Of the 120 employees initially able to participate, 60% elected to adopt the new, more flexible arrangements. The programme involves employees giving up their traditional desk space and being provided with a laptop with integrated soft phone technology. When on-site, employees worked in a 'hot desk' environment.



Throughout the pilot, Northern Trust conducted weekly surveys. At the beginning of the pilot, 82% of staff positively supported WorkSmart; upon conclusion, that figure had risen to 92%. Feedback also indicated that: the majority of participants worked two days from home and three in the office; most cited a significantly improved work-life balance (flexibility of arrangements, empowerment through choice, reduced commute times and cost savings, ability to perform tasks in a more productive environment). Those who did not participate in WorkSmart experienced no disruption to their normal business routine or to team morale and were equally supportive of the programme (even though they had chosen not to participate). Managers also noted no adverse impact on morale or team performance. As a result of the positive feedback WorkSmart received, Northern Trust officially launched the programme in October 2013 and more employees are joining the scheme throughout 2014.

Northern Trust believes in taking a proactive approach to alternative working practices and therefore introduced a flexible benefits scheme in 2013, allowing employees to choose benefits to suit them and their families. For example, employees can 'buy' an additional (up to) five days holiday or 'sell' (up to) three days. Dental, private healthcare and life assurance are also available for their families, as well as childcare vouchers. Their well-being programme, nGood Health, encourages and supports employees and their families to embrace a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance. Working to foster an effective, active and healthy workplace, the programme includes health-risk assessments, wellness screening, incentives for healthy lifestyle practices and frequent healthy lifestyle information and webinars.

Northern Trust also has an array of work-life balance policies and programmes, including an Employee Assistance Programme. This supports all employees and their families with telephone or face-to-face counselling on both personal and professional challenges.

Maternity, paternity and adoption paid leave are enhanced and with a wide range of flexible work schedules, the bank's maternity returnees are able to find flexibility to suits their needs. Maternity coaching is also on offer.

The bank believes that it is its genuinely positive approach to flexibility and not their policies that drives success. In the past year, 90% of flexible working requests were approved and currently 20% of employees are working flexibly, of which 33% are men (10% have senior positions). Requests are approached with a 'can do' attitude and where a request cannot be met, the bank endeavours to find an alternative solution. While 67% of flexible working requests received in 2013 were approved without any change to the original request, 23% were adapted to suit the needs of both parties.

In Northern Trust's last Employee Engagement Survey, 83% of employees felt engaged with the organisation and 75% felt they had sufficient flexibility to meet personal and family needs. These statistics were reinforced in 2013 by a retention rate of 94% for employees working flexibly and 93% for all other staff.

# The DTCC Best for Innovation Award

## DTCC

Securing Today. Shaping Tomorrow.™

**Scottish Government**  
Sector: Public



**Lesley Fraser**  
Director of Housing  
Regeneration & Welfare  
Scottish Government



Innovation: **Location Neutral Policy**

The Scottish Government is moving to be a smaller, more flexible organisation, operating within constrained running costs. It needs to embrace new ways of working within the office environment. At the same time, it recognises that staff would benefit from working more flexibly, in the hours they work, how they work and increasingly, where they work. By introducing more flexible ways of working, the Scottish Government can improve career opportunities, development and work–life balance. Innovating around flexible working was therefore both business and people driven.

A key initiative has been the development of ‘location neutral’, a policy that brings with it a substantial change in culture. Applicants for advertised internal posts can be based in a location remote from the business office and still fulfil the duties of the role. This policy can also apply where business restructuring is taking place and the work is moving from one location to another.

As part of a major restructuring exercise, Scottish Government Department, Housing, Regeneration and the Commonwealth Games Directorate made posts location neutral rather than having employees move office or go to redeployment. This enabled employees to work flexibly and resulted in minimal disruption. There has been considerable research to measure the success of the initiative and whether it can be successfully rolled out across the whole organisation. Staff support has been extremely positive.

The clear aims of location neutral from inception will help the organisation measure success and meet challenges. These aims include improved recruitment and retention, improved motivation and productivity, reduction in absenteeism, increased employee satisfaction and morale, more flexibility in service provision, better utilisation of office space, improved work–life balance, improved commitment and trust, reduction in travel time and associated costs, greater choice about workplace and helping people to remain in work because their work–life balance is better.

There is already solid support for location neutral at all levels across the organisation – particularly staff located outside the central belt. However, the importance of having senior buy-in and putting this at the heart of local workforce planning, development and team communications and culture is seen as essential. The organisation understands that it is unlikely to work well for the individual or the team without this commitment. It is also aware that the success of location neutral is very much dependent on the support provided to individuals by line management. Communicating the success to the wider business, therefore, is a key element in changing the culture around flexible working.





**Informa Business Information**  
Sector: Publishing

**Lynne Smith**  
HR Director  
Change Management  
Informa



Innovation: **Principles-based approach to flexible working**

Informa Business Information (IBI), a division of Informa PLC is a publisher of predominantly digital information, concentrating on the financial sector. When the organisation decided to move offices in London in 2013, it saw an opportunity to look at the way that its employees really worked, and to use the move as a way of reinvigorating the workforce. With pressure on costs, it decided a smaller office could be an option if employees were able to work more flexibly. Analysis of working patterns showed that this should be feasible, as a maximum of only 67% of people were in on a given day, using just over half the available desks. Employees' generally positive view of flexibility meant that an initiative to expand the use of remote working was well received, although a staff survey did reveal that a small group who wanted to work more flexibly felt that their manager was not supportive. In order to change this perception, when the premises move was announced, so was the formal commitment to roll out flexible working to all employees, regardless of grade, role or length of service. Employees could become permanent home workers or work flexibly.

The Division applied a principles-based approach to flexible working instead of creating a raft of policies and processes. The goal was to keep administration to an absolute minimum. To help drive this huge cultural change and to ensure the initiative wasn't influenced by individual preferences, managers were not allowed to reject home-working requests or refuse staff permission to work flexibly. Training was a fundamental element of the move to more flexible working, and key to the success of the implementation. Training in dealing with change was available to anyone who wanted it, and every manager and employee has been given training on working in a flexible environment.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Since August, almost 100 employees have become permanent home workers. A small number of staff remain based full-time in the office and sit at fixed desks, but the majority work flexibly. The most common work pattern is to work three days in the office and two days at home, although this can vary from week to week, depending on business need. There have been very few new formal requests for flexible working arrangements (typically, they relate only to a reduction in hours) as they are no longer needed. The way that people work in the office has also radically changed. Other than the permanent office-based staff, no one has a permanent desk or an office, not even the CEO. This is deliberate, and conveys the commitment and support for the initiative from the top. The office is organised in 'neighbourhoods' but employees can choose to sit anywhere. Home workers and flexible workers all have laptops, and Informa has a standard IT set-up which enables everyone to work anywhere in the office or at home just as easily.

Although the catalyst for introducing flexible working was the office move, Informa fundamentally believes that offering flexible working makes employees happier, more productive, and results in a more loyal workforce. The organisation has already seen positive tangible benefits. From a financial perspective, reducing the real-estate footprint will save around £500,000 on rental costs per year. Many employees say they are more productive now, and there's an upbeat positivity throughout the office. Colleagues who rarely mixed before sit alongside one another, and Board members are much more visible and approachable because they sit out on the open floor. Employees describe it as feeling as if they are working for an entirely different company.



**The London School of  
Economics & Political Science**  
Sector: Higher Education

**Gail Keeley**  
HR Manager  
Policy & ER  
LSE



Innovation: **Paid research leave**

The London School of Economics (LSE) is a leading teaching and research university. To sustain its reputation as a world-leading academic institution it needs to be able to recruit and retain the best people, through being a flexible, fair and diverse employer and ensuring that employees can progress their careers at LSE without having to sacrifice their work-life balance. To this end, it has developed innovative solutions that address some specific issues.

There is a clearly defined business case for supporting employees. As a research university, the amount and quality of research output is critical in order to be competitive in the global higher education sector. Helping academic employees to perform well in this respect is mutually beneficial. Part of this involves creating a work environment that promotes more female academics, because at the moment there is an under-representation of women at professoriate level. But it also means a commitment from LSE to support men and women to be parents and develop their careers, and to provide the means for fathers to share the role of parenthood in society.

LSE has introduced a term's research leave on full pay for academic employees who take six months' maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave (APL). This scheme offers the opportunity for academic employees to share leave with their partners and not put their career on the back burner. It has already proved an incentive (together with contractual pay) for fathers to take up APL. Within months of the introduction of the scheme, there are two examples of employed academic couples at the LSE who have chosen to take up the career and financial benefits of the scheme; the female employees opting to take 26 weeks' maternity leave on contractual maternity pay and the male employee to take 26 weeks' APL on contractual paternity pay. The scheme also provides the means to guard against indirect discrimination against women, because the number of research papers an academic publishes affects his or her promotion prospects.

Although an innovative and relatively new scheme, LSE has put into place a system to both measure the success of the initiative and ensure that it will survive beyond the departure of the key staff who created and implemented it. Success will be measured by: an increase in the number of men choosing to take APL for up to 26 weeks; LSE's successful registration for a bronze institutional award as part of the Equality Challenge Unit's Gender Equality Mark for staff in higher education; checking that there is a clear understanding of the purpose of research leave to avoid any misconceptions that research and writing can be conducted while on parenting leave (part of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan); annually monitoring the take-up of female academics of research leave (an additional term's leave given for absences on maternity leave or APL of 26 weeks or more) as part of the implementation of the New Academic Career structure and measuring the impact of the leave on their career progression; and a review of the current practice for staff returning to work following a career or maternity/paternity break.

As the scheme was introduced as part of negotiations with the trade unions and is part of the terms of employment, it will survive the departure of the members of management who introduced it.



## Lloyds Banking Group

Sector: Banking  
& Financial Services

**Fiona Cannon**  
Group Director  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Lloyds Banking Group



Innovation: **No travel week**

With just over 91,000 employees working from multiple head office and branch sites across the UK and overseas, business travel plays an important part of Lloyds Banking Group's operations.

In June 2011 Lloyds Banking Group launched No Travel Week; an initiative introduced to reduce the cost of business travel by actively encouraging staff to avoid all but the most essential travel for one week a month.

Since then, No Travel Week has not only generated considerable financial savings, but has increased productivity (as staff have been able to reallocate time that would have otherwise been spent travelling), improved staff wellbeing (through promoting a better work life balance) and also had a positive impact on the environment by reducing carbon emissions.

A key element of its success has been that No Travel Week has been positively associated with work-life balance and agile working, with the more qualitative benefits of the scheme regularly communicated to help employees recognise the positive impact that less time travelling can have on both the environment and their own wellbeing. Lloyds Banking Group has been able to quantify the success of No Travel Week, which has helped to ensure its acceptance as a normal part of the way that the business works. The initiative is actively monitored, with senior management and stakeholders updated on a regular basis to ensure they are aware of their successes and where improvements can be made.

As the scheme has grown, Lloyds Banking Group has launched a No Travel Week Resource Centre – a micro-site that enables its staff to easily find information about the programme and access a range of conferencing technology that supports collaborative working without the need to travel. Employees across the Group have responded positively and are now far more selective over their need to travel. Audio and Video Conferencing and 'Live Meeting' are used as alternatives to face-to-face meetings, which has helped to increase productivity and given staff more time to focus on their own wellbeing.

No Travel Week has also allowed Lloyds Banking Group to deliver early on its environmental commitments. Having set a target to reduce business travel by 20% by 2020 (from Oct 09 – Sep 10 reporting period), the introduction of No Travel Week in 2011 meant that by as early as 2012, business travel had reduced by over 25 percent.

Lloyds Banking Group is keen to continue the success of No Travel Week through further investment in virtual conferencing technology; the promotion of more sustainable travel options and a drive to transform the travel culture of the Group.

Not only does No Travel Week now play an integral role in managing the cost of business travel and in reducing carbon footprint, but it has also helped create a more flexible working environment that enables its staff to focus on providing an excellent service to their clients and customers.



## RBS

Sector: Banking &  
Financial Services

**Tim Yendell**  
Head of RBS Choice  
RBS



Innovation: **Flexible working one-stop shop**

RBS is a UK centred bank and is committed to flexible working, understanding that it brings with it customer and business benefits as well as helping individual employees achieve a good work–life fit. But in order to ensure that its flexible working programmes were successful, RBS realised that it needed to help employees feel confident in requesting flexible working, and managers to be skilled and equally confident in how they handled requests and managed flexible workers.

Rather than address the issue passively by developing materials that just sat on the intranet and in handbooks, RBS has developed a flexible working one-stop shop called 'Our Choice Portal'. This is a clearly signposted destination where employees and managers can find out everything they need to know about all the different types of flexible working. It includes an interactive suitability checklist that employees can use to ascertain whether their roles are suitable for the type of flexible working they're interested in and if not, which alternatives could work. It provides guidance on the various things people need to consider for different types of flexible working, and ensures that employees understand all the aspects that combine to make a successful flexible working arrangement. In this way, when they talk to their line manager, they are fully prepared and have thought about the business case for their request. This section of the website links to an online flexible working request form that the member of staff can submit to his or her line manager. The result has been that requests are becoming more about an adult dialogue between the member of staff and the manager, with both parties being comfortable with an informal approach.

RBS also provides tools for line managers to enable them to manage flexible teams and handle requests to work flexibly more efficiently. Support and guidance are available for topics such as getting the most from a meeting discussing a flexible working request, and how to manage a team working flexibly.

Flexibility in teams is also covered. Those who want to introduce flexibility in their teams, whether to promote working pattern flexibility, or to introduce more home working and desk sharing, are able to access support and guidance. Teams who are already working flexibly are able to find out how to maintain this approach, through guidance on managing cover, and using technology and e-learning modules on flexible working.

The Choice portal is well used, and has exceeded its initial targets. Launched via RBS's employee networks, there have been over 30,000 page views. RBS plans to continue development of the portal, and to cross-link it more widely in internal bank communications.

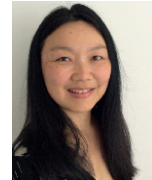
# The Centrica & Carers UK Best for Carers and Eldercare Award



**Islington Council**  
Sector: Public



**Linda Wan**  
Carers Commissioner  
Islington Council



Islington Council is an inner London local authority, employing more than 4,000 people. It has developed a joint carers strategy in partnership with the local health authority, NHS Islington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This policy covers both employees, and carers Borough-wide. One of the council's aims and objectives is 'to influence the whole system of health and social care services, as well as employers and universal services to 'think carer'.

To do this it has developed a range of support that is available to all carers, as well as policies for its own workforce. This support includes: a Carers Hub service offers a one-stop-shop for all carer advice, information and support; a generous carers personal budget payment, for those eligible for social care assistance. This is based on the level of support provided by the carer which could be up to £500 for low support and up to £1,500 for high support per annum; and a flexible breaks fund (ranging from £200 for individuals to £600 for families) for those who aren't eligible for any health or social care support.

There is also a wide range of policy and provision for employees who are carers. This enables the council to set a good example to other local employers to encourage them to develop a carers-aware approach. It also positions the council to drive the care agenda forward locally in the future.

Crucially there has been the development of a staff carers forum, established by a Carers Commissioner. This is open to all council staff and their NHS partners. It meets quarterly and all managers are encouraged to ensure that team members can attend if they wish. The forum is promoted heavily via the intranet and other channels, to keep carers visible and high on the corporate agenda.

Other ways the council supports carers includes induction and equalities training which acknowledges carers, explains their rights and signposts them to help. Carers requesting special leave for their caring role are monitored through the carers' staff forum to scrutinise approval/decline rates across the council. Forum members are all also offered a free, bespoke carers app, Jointly. This web-based tool is designed to help the circle of people involved in caring organise diary keeping, medication notes, GP contacts between them, enabling them to make good use of new technologies in their support role.

The council is continuing to expand its support for carers. This includes developing a dedicated policy to make it easier for staff and managers to understand the scope of the offer. The council is also looking to ensure carers' needs are included in the development of other HR policies such as flexible working and will be providing training to staff carers in their caring role. Finally, there is a carers motion to request that staff can officially register themselves as carers, so that the council can demonstrate and evidence that it is meeting the requirements under the Equalities Act 2010.



**The London School of  
Economics & Political Science**  
Sector: Higher Education

**Gail Keeley**  
HR Manager  
Policy & ER  
LSE



The London School of Economics (LSE) aims to sustain its strong track record as a diverse, fair and flexible employer that attracts and retains the best employees and demonstrates its support for them throughout their working life. As part of this it is addressing what it describes as the 'iceberg' of caring for adults by encouraging greater awareness and openness at work, and providing advice and support for employees and their managers.

A number of policies and practices are in place to help carers. For example, account is taken of leave (and reduction in working hours, if applicable) to care for others in terms of career development and work output. Any academic who has been absent for more than 26 weeks gets a teaching-free term on full pay to catch up on research, and the clock is stopped for research purposes while he or she is away. Paid leave may be given when a close relative is terminally ill or when, in the absence of other nursing arrangements, members of staff are responsible for care. The total amount of leave should not normally be more than 15 working days. Employees have the opportunity to attend the regularly held 'Balancing Work and Being the Carer of an Adult' course. Places are also offered to partners of employees, even if they do not work for the LSE. Attendees are given a workbook at the event which is useful for subsequent referral.

Employees also have access to one-to-one advice from HR and a dedicated webpage that provides information for carers including: their rights in the workplace (on flexible working, time off for emergencies and parental leave); staff counselling; the Employers for Carers' Distance Caring Toolkit; the Employer's Guide to Supporting Working Carers, and to external support web-links. A copy of the Macmillan 'The Essential Work and Cancer Toolkit' is also available to those experiencing cancer either directly or indirectly. Macmillan facilitated a workshop for HR partners and other HR professionals that addressed some of the challenges faced by people at work who are living with or caring for someone with cancer.

In addition, managers are trained and given practical advice (webinars, a toolkit and one-to-one discussions with their HR partners) on how flexible working can work and be good for work engagement and business.

The LSE also runs a successful Carers Network. The network meets to offer mutual support and exchange ideas on how to raise awareness and increase support for carers. To date, the ideas of the network have resulted in the setting-up of a Yammer group and action to support those caring for adults with dementia.

The importance of supporting employees who are carers is demonstrated by the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, which specifies that the LSE monitors the application and take-up of flexible working (with special reference to data on carers) to ensure consistent family-friendly practices across the School. The LSE's attention to carers is already bearing fruit, evidenced by the increase in submissions for reductions in research outputs, which it feels demonstrates that more academic employees are increasingly open, and their managers more supportive, about caring for adults.



# The National Grid Best for Flexible Working Award

**nationalgrid**

**Centrica**  
Sector: Utilities



**Alison Hughes**  
Head of HR Policy and Practice  
Centrica



Centrica wants to be the leading energy company, and it recognises that its people are the key to realising this ambition. To this end, it has committed to developing flexible working as a way to create a working environment that is inclusive, attracts and retains the best people, and encourages them to fulfil their potential.

Centrica realises that people have a life outside work, and that ideally work needs to fit in with other commitments. Thinking creatively about new ways of working that improve retention, productivity, motivation and morale, enlarge the recruitment pool, increase diversity and talent and reduce property costs across the company is essential. This means that, in practice, Centrica will always consider, and where possible, implement flexible working arrangements. Over 60% of employees have some form of flexible working arrangement in place, including changing hours, working pattern or place of work.

Centrica has a decade of experience of flexible working, but is striving to embed flexibility right across its business. A Policy Steering Group has therefore been established with senior sponsorship to examine how flexible working can be shown to have tangible business benefits, and is not just viewed as an employee benefit. This has led to a number of new activities. Centrica has conducted research into what the influences are on women in the business which has enabled them to build a qualitative understanding of what it's like to be a female working in Centrica. This research informed measurable recommendations for change in the area of flexible working.

Line manager workshops were developed to support the flexibility required by employees with caring responsibilities. The workshops included: an introduction to an evidence-based toolkit to identify the flexible options in any role, top tips for leading high performing flexible teams, demonstrating how engaging carers and a flexible approach to work maximises engagement, drives performance, optimises assets and increases innovation and customer service. The training was initially rolled out to managers in Customer Services. The leadership team has subsequently requested this is now rolled out more widely across the business to more line managers.

A new online 'Benefits Plus' package has been designed to support the way people work and offers more choice to support flexible workers in the areas of childcare, elder care and additional leave.

Flexible working is now promoted at induction and included in a New Manager toolkit. It is also promoted on the British Gas jobs website: resourcing teams are looking at promoting it throughout the recruitment and joining process. In addition, relevant policies were refreshed to actively promote flexible working. Greater awareness of these policies has led to a significant increase in the number of men and women in senior roles working flexibly. Centrica has also seen its carers network grow from 700 to 800 in the last year, which it ascribes to targeted awareness raising of the options available.

Research identified that flexible working was not working as well as it could in the Service and Repair business within British Gas (circa 10,000 engineers). It was felt that the current approach did not fully address the employees'

or the organisation's needs for flexibility, which raised concerns around consistency, fairness and line manager capability. As a result the senior leadership team signed off a number of recommendations including:

- The appointment of a flexible working champion (from the senior leadership team)
- Investigating the work scheduling system and ascertaining whether it could be used more flexibly
- Reviewing the scope for flexibility during the initial training period to ascertain whether changes could be made
- Developing and sharing a case study/role model and sharing it
- Using existing Centrica training programmes to upskill managers and create an open and transparent environment for dealing with flexible working requests
- Making an external commitment to flexible working – to consider flexible working kitemarks/standards



## **BT Group plc**

Sector: Telecommunications

**Paul Litchfield**  
Chief Medical Officer  
BT Group



BT facilitates agile working and promotes it where it is appropriate for the needs of its customers, the business and its people. They equip employees to work flexibly in both time and place. Agile working is a major element in their transformational workplace strategy and is one of the things which make their business a great place to work. It says that being tied to a desk from 9 to 5 is anathema to its employees; it's simply not a way of working that they would recognise as being either efficient or desirable. In a large business with dispersed teams and multiple locations, flexibility is a necessity. But it's not just about effective business practice, as BT recognises. It's also about ensuring that employees, whatever their needs, are able to find the right work-life fit they want at the same time as having a successful and fulfilling career with the company.

Teleconferencing and video-conferencing are not only more convenient for employees but also improves business efficiency. Evidence shows that at least 1,040,000 face-to-face meetings have been eliminated, each with a mean travel saving of 197 miles. At the same time, BT staff are making significantly more conference calls than five years ago, illustrating the adoption of smarter working practices. BT is able, crucially, to quantify the benefits to the company: it has cut accommodation needs by 48%, which has meant a significant reduction in both energy consumption and carbon emissions. Reducing physical office space has yielded global savings of £100 million per annum.

Flexible working is seen as a key part of retaining employees. Support is available to all employees who need flexible working, either as a short-term adjustment or a longer-term requirement. Having agility embedded in the culture means that people rarely need to make a formal request for flexible working, because potential issues are addressed at an early stage. Line managers and employees almost always agree a mutually beneficial arrangement. Allowing short-term flexible working helps retain talent in the business, and has a positive effect on longer-term productivity and employee engagement.

BT recognises that caring responsibilities can be a major barrier to retaining people. It may be childcare, elder care or other circumstances, but whatever the responsibility is, BT has developed a specific 'Family and You' portal to provide advice for employees and to guide them through the various options available to them. BT ascribes its success in helping over 97% of female employees to return to work after maternity leave to the flexible working



options it provides. The savings to the business from reduced recruitment and training costs to lost revenue are calculated at £5m per year.

Caring is not the only reason why people at BT adopt more agile working patterns. The organisation has developed a number of additional tools to support employees as part of a mutually agreed career and/or life plan. BT says that many of their most valuable people are mature in years. Losing scarce skills and experience in a precipitant manner can be damaging to the business, and therefore it offers a range of flexible retirement options easing employees' path into full retirement. These include: wind down (part-time or job-share); step down (moving to a lower grade); time out (phased sabbaticals); helping hands (secondments either full- or part-time) and ease down (a gradual reduction of hours or responsibilities).

Employees with disabilities at BT also have access to flexible working options, and the organisation focuses on ensuring that they are able to put in place working arrangements that allow them to carry out their jobs. Home working is particularly popular and is well supported through technology and BT's own knowledge and expertise in remote working skills, which it has developed over a number of years. There are more than 6000 permanent home workers, with many more employees working remotely on a part-time basis. Commenting on BT's ongoing commitment to flexible working, Paul Litchfield, Chief Medical Officer said "Agile working is central to BT's philosophy of being a responsible and sustainable business leader. We believe that the power of communication can drive a better connected society to the benefit of businesses, our customers and the lives of all our people. Technology is a key enabler but delivering a material change in the way we work requires a shift in mindsets.



**Lloyds Banking Group**  
Sector: Banking & Financial Services

**Fiona Cannon**  
Group Director  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Lloyds Banking Group



Lloyds Banking Group has a long track record in flexible working, as one of the first employers to open up flexibility to all employees more than 15 years ago. However, it recognises that it needs to be proactive in this area as employee expectations around work-life balance increase, and the business environment changes too. The bank is clear in its values: it explicitly includes a commitment to value and respect colleagues' work-life balance. The banking industry has undergone substantial change. Driven by an increase in competition and easy access to more advanced technology, customers now desire a 24-hour service and access to their money at a time convenient to them. Lloyds Banking Group's aim to become the best bank for customers can be achieved, it believes, only if it meets customer demands. Creating and maintaining an agile and flexible organisation is therefore seen as vital.

The WORKWise programme is designed to enable employees to work in a more agile way, and ensure the business is able to use office space in more efficiently. Traditionally, employees worked in offices and offices had become an expensive resource. As a consequence of flexible working practices and virtual technology, Lloyds Banking Group now uses five desks for every six workers in 20% of its offices. In doing this they have been able to reduce their office footprint, improve their environmental impact and drive significant cost savings for the Group.

New technology and WORKWise have enabled more employees to work remotely, including from home. A Remote Working Toolkit provides easy access to documents, links and useful information for remote-working colleagues, teams and their line managers. The toolkit also contains an e-learning module which explores why remote working

is beneficial for the organisation, teams and individuals, as well as sharing practical tips and techniques around effective flexible working.

During one week in every month, employees are encouraged not to travel (unless it is business critical) and to use remote technology instead. This initiative has changed the way that people work, not just during the prescribed No Travel Weeks, and has enabled Lloyds Banking Group to operate in a much more agile way, benefiting colleagues and the business. *“No Travel Week has allowed the Group to deliver early on its environmental commitments. Having set a target to reduce business travel by 20% by 2020 (From Oct 09 – Sep 10 reporting period), the introduction of No Travel Week in 2011 meant that by as early as 2012, business travel had reduced by over 25%”.*

Lloyds Banking Group was a leader of the Agile Future Forum, and within the bank it has put an Agile programme into place. The programme will look at agility that serves customers, the business and staff, with the aim of introducing a framework that delivers for all three. Pilot programmes have enabled Lloyds Banking Group to fully test the process across a wide variety of types of working environments. The focus is now on embedding this into day-to-day operations, business unit reviews, team restructures and redeployments, recruitment, talent and role design processes. This will allow business leaders within Lloyds to analyse their team configurations differently. The bank is also reviewing its approach to colleague-led applications and embarking on a comprehensive programme of activity. For example, it has changed its recruitment processes, so that flexible working is an option for all roles. If a role cannot be worked flexibly, there must be a clear rationale as to why this is so.



## American Express

Sector: Banking & Financial Services

**Julie Pope**  
Vice President of HR for Europe,  
American Express



American Express has taken the approach that flexible working is business as usual, and that it isn't simply an optional add-on. Flexibility, in its view, is a necessity to help employees work to their full potential.

American Express has developed a programme, BlueWork, that integrates flexible working into the core culture of the company. It has proved successful over time in delivering positive cultural change for the company, focusing on three goals: flexibility, collaboration and organisation. BlueWork is about how work is done, and provides the tools that are required to compete in a global market. It also presents a clear framework for flexible working – employees understand when they start a role which type of BlueWork style is appropriate. This also brings clarity for managers, who know what expectations will be, and reduces the potential for anxiety and worry about putting in place flexible arrangements.

American Express believes that employee choice about how and where they work creates the best environment possible to drive results. Since most work doesn't require people to sit in the same seat every day, and some jobs allow people to work outside the office on an infrequent, frequent or permanent basis, it has established four work styles to meet these needs: Hub, Club, Home and Roam.

Hub employees have a fixed desk and are in the office every day; Club employees have flexibility about where they work and share their work environment; Home employees work out of their home three or more days a week; Roam employees are mainly on the road or working at customers' sites and seldom use an American Express office. By

creating the right work environment to suit different role types and different people, it supports employee effectiveness, and also attracts and retains the best talent for the business.

BlueWork allows American Express to use their real-estate space more efficiently. Costs are reduced, and the money saved reinvested into more ergonomic, better-designed workspaces. The workspaces are connected and flexible in order to support interaction within and across teams, and feature hot desks, collaboration spaces and huddle rooms. Technology plays a big part in making BlueWork a highly collaborative and productive working environment.

American Express has created an employee network, BlueEN, which focuses on supporting personal development and career progression, as well as ensuring a consistent experience for employees. BlueEN provides a voice for employees who work flexibly and helps to maintain a high level of engagement throughout the organisation.

American Express strongly believes that providing employees with choices about where and how they work leads to higher overall satisfaction, and has gathered evidence to support this view. Employee engagement is consistently higher among those who are in a BlueWork style of working – Club, Roam and Home – versus the traditional desk-based working style. Loyalty among Club workers is highest and Club and Home workers feel the strongest sense of belonging to American Express. More than half of BlueWork employees feel they can make the next career move at American Express.

Employees benefit from the flexibility in their personal lives, too. Work–life balance is improved by reducing commutes through increased home working. Being responsible for results and output provides employees with more choice about how and where they get their work done, thus allowing work to fit around life more successfully. Employees also feel more productive in BlueWork styles and, interestingly, performance is highest among those who Club or Home work. The ambition is that increased control and autonomy will create greater freedom and trust, which in turn contributes to loyalty and respect for the organisation.

Through the use of BlueWork, American Express has been able to adopt an extremely collaborative and results-oriented mindset that measures staff by what they do and not where they work. Currently, 4420 employees work out of a BlueWork environment in the UK: that's 80% of the UK-based workforce.

 **Finalist**

## **Barclays plc**

Sector: Banking & Financial Services

**Derek White**  
Chief Design Officer  
Barclays



Barclays' aim is to foster an organisational culture where flexible working is recognised, appreciated and valued, because it sees the benefits it brings in productivity, responsiveness to customer and client needs and the attraction and retention of talent. Flexible working is seen as standard practice, and employees have a comprehensive suite of working patterns, including remote working, flexible hours, job-sharing and part-time working. Arrangements are informal and formal. Employees can draw on resources and helplines to help them put forward business-case-aligned requests to line managers, and managers are empowered to make decisions on requests.

Barclays offers flexible working opportunities from day one, with all roles eligible for flexible working (for both current and prospective employees). Barclays' own careers site showcases the variety of locations, environments and job

styles on offer. Resourcing teams proactively engage with their external recruitment partners to ensure they fully understand the inclusive ethos and act as they would expect when sourcing candidates, enabling the bank to recruit from an expanded pool. Flexible working is not the preserve of those with caring responsibilities: employees can choose to work flexibly for any reason.

Barclays has a particular commitment to promoting job-shares, and has revamped its internal job-share register. The bank has committed to the goal of having all UK Retail and Business banking roles being open to job-share applicants, with support from the most senior levels. Employees interested in job-sharing are able to search for a job-share partner, and to access tools and resources to help them find out more about how job-sharing works.

The commitment to flexible working is reiterated throughout Barclays, in a variety of ways. Through blogs, in-house magazines and online messaging, as well as leader-led engagement events, examples of policies and practices in action are highlighted. This helps to drive home the message that flexibility is for all, regardless of grade or role, and that flexible working is no impediment to career success. Internal networks (such as the Working Families and Carers networks) offer support and opportunities for employees and act as promoters of flexible working arrangements.

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## The Childcarescheme Top Small Family Friendly Employer Award



There are two organisations who tied for first place in the Small Employer Benchmark this year:

**Brand Learning**  
Sector: Professional Services



**Cathy Winsey**  
HR Operations Director  
Brand Learning



Brand Learning is a global consultancy with unique expertise in lifting the capabilities of people and organisations to drive growth by creating better value for their customers. Founded in 2000, by Mhairi McEwan and Andy Bird with hubs in London, Singapore and New York, the team of 120 employees have worked with over 100 leading multinational organisations (including Unilever, Shell, PepsiCo and AstraZeneca) in more than 60 countries to create sustained performance change in their commercial teams.

Cathy Winsey, HR Operations Director, explains “*we have a mature culture, based on trust and positive intent, allowing people in the organisation to work flexibly to meet their work commitments but also balance family life*”. This desire to treat employees as responsible adults underpins Brand Learning’s attitude to flexible working. Flexible working can be agreed from day one of employment, there is “*no closed door agenda*” and every flexible working request is approached from the same point of view: “*is it possible to meet the individual needs and also the needs of the business?*”. It is recognised that employees work hard in a high performance, competitive environment and

a lot is expected of people, but with performance management focused on outcomes and achievements, rather than on time spent in the office, employees have freedom in how and where they work. *“Our clients and our people tell us that working with us feels different: we pride ourselves on being engaging, supportive partners, driven by our strongly-rooted values: Expert, Engaging, Inclusive and Inspiring Change”* says Cathy.

Brand Learning underpins its approach with policy but the main strength of their flexible working provision is the culture of the organisation. Cathy feels that having a straightforward form for applying for changes in working hours and days enables employees and their supporters (line managers) to really think through how the pattern of flexibility might work for them and what the impact on colleagues and the business might be so that the optimum approach can be agreed. As Cathy says *“people need to be mindful that this is a two-way commitment and we need to be mindful of both the individual and business”*.

Much of Brand Learning's flexibility supports working parents. The company has an impressive track record in both encouraging parents to return to work after maternity leave, but also in retaining them through the second child and beyond. It is important to the company that flexible workers progress and employees will be promoted on merit regardless of working pattern.

Brand Learning's directors lead the way with their own flexible working patterns and *“flexibility, fairness and maturity”* are important guidelines to follow, recognising that work and life demands ebb and flow and there has to be give and take.

Brand Learning is keen that all employees have some sort of work flexibility to help meet home commitments and following the annual “happiness survey” realised that their Operations Team, due to the nature of their roles did not have opportunities for working from home. On reviewing this, the Operations Team were given 4 days per year in addition to holiday to work from home and meet home commitments such as deliveries or to get the boiler serviced for example. As Cathy says *“we know that flexible working is key for retention and engagement so we will continue to consider how we can be even smarter around flexibility in the future”*.

**CiC Employee Assistance**  
Sector: Healthcare/Professional Services



**Kate Nowlan**  
Chief Executive  
CiC Employee Assistance



CiC Employee Assistance is an employee assistance provider, specialising in trauma and critical incident management, which delivers programmes to organisations covering 450,000 employees across the globe. Their support lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and provide a service to all sectors from the NHS to corporate banks.

CiC's focus on flexibility has been crafted both from their need to operate round the clock but also from their base as a clinical service. Just as they operate to support organisations and their staff, CiC want to support and listen to their own employees. For Kate Nowlan, Chief Executive of CiC Employee Assistance, it's always been important to offer flexible working to employees, giving them the opportunity to make changes to the way they work in order to respond to short-term or long-term events and issues in their roles and responsibilities outside of the workplace: *“From CiC's perspective we've always been open to flexible working requests from employees and consider each individual request against the same criteria, considering how it will impact on the business and how we can work with an employee to make a change in working hours or days, or incorporating more time working from home”*.

Kate says her job is *“to support employees to be as creative as they like”* when it comes to flexible working. While recognising that the organisation has to function and that not all types of flexibility suit all roles, with discussion, employees and their managers work out what is best for them, the team and the organisation. Team work has been key to their flexibility success. There are three distinct teams in CIC (Clinical, Sales and Administration) but all teams support each other and staff cover for each other to get the job done.

Enabling and supporting people with childcare and eldercare responsibilities are a central feature of CiC’s flexibility. There are 30 staff but at least half are part-time. As Kate says *“as 74% of the workforce is female, it’s been natural that some flexible working requests have been related to motherhood and childcare. But at CiC we also readily acknowledge that flexible working goes much further than helping an employee to balance childcare and other caring needs”*.

Achieving work-life balance is another aim. Many staff work from home and CIC has invested in secure technology to enable this. Account managers, for example, regularly travel and the company is keen that they work from home when they can to enable work-life balance to be achieved. Further education courses and other professional qualifications are also supported through flexibility. Kate estimates that one-third of flexible working requests relate to education and training.

CiC have established a mature relationship with staff. The work is demanding but support is there and staff work in the best way for them and for their colleagues in an environment of trust and support. As a result staff turnover is very low. As Kate says: *“In my experience, if as an employer, you can actively show you’re prepared to be flexible with your employees, they’re much more likely to give back to you in return and be much more engaged with their work. The impact of this on performance and productivity is obvious and something that shouldn’t be underestimated.”*

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## Support for Employers

Working Families leads the way in helping organisations and employees integrate their worlds, through building enabling and flexible environments that enhance productivity, creativity and wellbeing so that work works for everyone.

With over 30 years of research combined with deep, cross sector, industry experience, we provide expert, evidence-based advice and teaching to help employers and employees succeed.

To find out how you can benefit from our support, please contact:

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