

Top Employers for Working Families

Special Awards

2015

Top Employers for Working Families **Special Awards 2015**

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Introduction



Sarah Jackson
CEO
Working Families

The 2015 Top Employers for Working Families Awards showcases some of the best and most innovative current practice that there is when it comes to family friendly and flexible working. Long established categories like motherhood and maternity are still hot topics as organisations refine and develop their policies, whilst innovation is strong as they think about where, when and how work might be done. The introduction of Shared Parental Leave has been especially interesting this year, and it is evident that it has really stimulated some employers to move forward their provision for parents.

One of the key themes this year has been around refreshing and refining family friendly working. We have seen examples of investment in support for job-share, and repositioning and communicating existing flexible working opportunities as part of an organisational refocus on building a flexible culture appropriate for all employees. Culture is important, and the Awards demonstrate that employers are really embracing this. Getting it right can be a challenge, and one of the questions we asked this year was about evidence: how do you know that what you are doing is working? More than ever, employers have been able to back up their entries with metrics. The evidence base that employers were able to submit is important for two reasons: it shows how they are working to understand how policy unfolds into practice; and it gives a useful example to other employers who are wondering how they might start to quantify some of their own family-friendly programmes.

Related to culture, another theme that came through strongly was a focus on the importance of line managers (not just in the Line Managers award). Line managers are increasingly seen as the key to unlocking the full potential of flexible working, but to do this they need support and training to develop skills around managing different working patterns, and building trust with their teams. In this context, line manager training around flexibility is moving away from an opt-in option, to a required competence. Getting line managers to see the benefits of flexibility is, as these case studies demonstrate, easier when it is clear how it aligns with the overall strategy and plan, and people understand the 'why'.

These case studies capture both responses to specific issues, and the evolution of existing practice. They showcase ideas that are well thought out, are designed to be embedded and long lasting, can be tested for effectiveness and, most importantly, are useful for employees. Any organisation interested in developing their own family friendly policy and practice can find a lot to learn from the 2015 Top Employers for Working Families.

The Judging Panel



Katie Jacobs Editor, HR Magazine

Katie Jacobs is editor of HR magazine, the leading publication for people-focused, forward-thinking business leaders. She joined the magazine as features editor in September 2012, being promoted to deputy editor in March 2014. She was promoted to editor in February 2015. Before joining HR magazine, she worked across a range of titles at Haymarket Media Group. She has an MA in magazine journalism from London's City University.

In 2014, Katie won HR Trade Journalist of the Year and Employee Engagement Journalist of the Year at the Towers Watson Media Awards, which celebrate excellence in HR and management journalism. Her areas of particular interest include sustainable and responsible business, culture and organisational values, leadership, OD, diversity and inclusion, HR analytics and metrics and corporate reporting.



Charlotte Sweeney Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, RSA, PSA, CIPD

Charlotte Sweeney has specialised in large-scale change programmes with a focus on diversity, inclusion, engagement and wellbeing for over 15 years. She is seen as a thought leader in her field and works with companies and executives from the private, public and third sectors to drive leadership and cultural change.

Charlotte worked for Blue Chip companies in the Financial Services sector for 25 years (Barclays, Barclays Capital, HBOS and Nomura International) before creating her own consultancy. She is a Non Executive Director at the Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust. She conducted an independent review on the Voluntary Code for Executive Search firms in relation to getting more women onto boards for the then Secretary of State Dr Vince Cable, which is now referred to as "The Sweeney Report". She is Vice-Chair of the Dept of Business, Innovation and Skills external Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Panel and is leading the Lord Mayor of the City of London's Diversity Programme "The Power of Diversity" on behalf of Dame Fiona Woolf CBE. Charlotte writes for a number of professional publications globally as well as presenting and chairing at international conferences.



Suzan Lewis Professor of Organisational Psychology,
Middlesex University Business School

Sue Lewis is Professor of Organisational Psychology in the School of Leadership, Work and Organisation at Middlesex University Business School. Her research focuses on work-personal life issues and workplace practice, culture and change, in diverse national contexts. She has led many national and international research projects on these topics and has worked with employers and policy makers on work-life issues in Europe, Asia and North America. Her numerous publications include *The Flexible and Profitable Workplace. A Guide to Implementing Flexible Working Practices in Professional Services*; *Work-Life Integration. Case Studies of Organisational Change*; *The Myth of Work-Life Balance* and *Work, Families and Organisations in Transition: European Perspectives*.

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

Sarah Jackson is the Chief Executive of Working Families and has led work-life balance campaigning and culture change for over twenty years. Sarah is an acknowledged expert and has worked across the political spectrum to push for positive change including the right to request flexible working, maternity and paternity leave and fathers' rights at work.

Sarah works collaboratively with the third sector, trade unions, employers and business leaders to argue for change. Sarah chairs the judging panel for the respected Top Employers for Working Families Employer Awards and for the new Scottish Top Employers for Working Families awards. She is called upon for her expertise including in 2010 being a member of the Family Friendly Hours Task Force. Between 2011 and 2013 Sarah chaired the Promoting Flexible Working: Private Sector Employers Group for the Department for Work and Pensions. Sarah spearheaded the introduction of the 'happy to talk flexible working' strapline to encourage a greater spread of flexible work in job advertising which has recently received the endorsement of the CBI and TUC.

In 2007 Sarah was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to Quality of Life Issues. She is a member of the Policy Advisory Board of the Social Market Foundation and a Fellow of the RSA.

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

Mary Mercer is an Associate 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 has led 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** Research Officer, Working Families

Jonathan Swan is the Research Officer at Working Families. 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 and active ageing. He is responsible for the annual Top Employers for Working Families benchmark for organisations and the Time, Health and Family series of reports, and Modern Family Index in 2015. He is currently part of the ESRC funded research consortium that is examining work-life balance and the effects of austerity.

Finalists' case studies

The Santander Best New Flexible Working Initiative Award



**Foreign and
Commonwealth Office**
Sector: Public



Matthew Lownds
Deputy Head of
Projects Task Force



The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has implemented an ambitious initiative to enable people to take significant leave when needed and return to work against a background of austerity and the challenge of overseas working. The FCO's Special Unpaid Leave (SUPL) offer is unique, allowing employees breaks from the office for up to five years while moving for a partner's role, or undertaking study, and up to 10 years for childcare, with employment held open. The FCO also offers a career break option that enables an employee to come back, after several years, and bid for roles. Given the FCO's overseas footprint, there are many families in which either one or both parents work overseas, and SUPL gives a flexibility for staff to build 'lattice' careers around the various scenarios that arise; for example an employee accompanying his or her FCO spouse on an overseas posting and doing non-FCO work or parenting for a few years.

However, long periods of SUPL do present challenges for returning to the workplace and the FCO has been working to address this. Firstly, the FCO found that people struggled to be successful at interview against colleagues; and secondly, it discovered that there were many who wanted to return to work in a flexible way, but were unable to, due a lack of flexible options for them. So the organisation decided to run a pilot to offer project work to those on SUPL and maternity leave. The FCO sought to identify projects that could be done by people in their own preferred hours, in most instances working from home. Remote working was at this point a fairly radical concept in the FCO, with just a few lone trailblazers. The aim of the pilot was to test the benefits – to both the organisation and staff – of providing an alternative route back to work, other than directly through the challenging and competitive FCO internal and largely full-time jobs market. The FCO hoped that this route would encourage more staff to transition back into work in a smoother way and tap into a highly skilled and under-used pool. The pilot was also designed to provide additional flexible resources that could be used by teams across the FCO to deliver priority areas of work.

At the end of the one-year pilot phase, a full independent evaluation was carried out. Thirteen projects across eight departments were carried out, each on a part-time and remote basis. Projects included the NATO Summit, a review for the Middle East department, WW1 commemorations and a conference. The grade breakdown ranged from junior to senior managers with an average working pattern of 10 days per month. The duration of the project ranged between six weeks and six months.

Staff who participated in the pilot phase were positive about the experience; those who wanted to return to the office said it helped them prepare for applying for roles and gave them recent examples of successful work that

they could refer to in interviews. Feedback from host departments was that the pilot provided a steady flow of personnel to busy departments, adding value and targeting people who wanted to come back into the workforce. Pilot candidates stated that the scheme boosted morale, confidence and a sense of connection with the FCO. Of the 40 people on the pilot, three have now returned, one is returning shortly and eight have gone from being uncertain about returning to definitely wanting to return or the pilot has hastened their return. Most felt reconnecting with former colleagues and updating themselves on current FCO practices would make it easier to bid for jobs and make them more confident on return. Most also felt that the goodwill factor generated by the pilot was worthwhile, that the FCO valued returners and was willing to be flexible.

The pilot phase lasted one year (2013–14) and in February 2015 the FCO board agreed that the pilot should be turned into a permanent arrangement. It has already been shared as part of the implementation of the Civil Service Talent Action Plan's strategy in support of diversity.



EY

Sector: Professional Services

John Croxford

Senior Manager, UK Advisory
John designed and managed EY's
Flexible Working change programme



EY (previously Ernst and Young) recognised that introducing flexible working was more about a change in culture than a change in policy or legislation. For that reason EY engaged a dedicated Change Management specialist to design and manage their internal programme. The change programme, which impacted almost 10,000 employees in the UK, was designed around the EY Vision to be leaders in Flexible Working in the professional services sector. At the heart of the change they identified six key behaviours (e.g. trust, focus on outputs, embrace diversity) that underpin successful flexible working for them.

The timeline was very ambitious: EY wanted to achieve adoption and benefit realisation within 18 months. The business case identified potential benefits in terms of:

- improved employee engagement
- improved productivity
- improved staff retention
- improved staff attraction
- real estate optimisation
- reduced travel between offices

EY's change programme was robust, structured and well sponsored which contributed to its success. Early buy-in from leadership helped the programme gather momentum; each of the service line leaders became role models for the change. In fact EY established 25 diverse role models at all levels of the organisation and published their stories on its internal Flexible Working Portal to help others identify a role model they could relate to.

EY also established a network of 'change agents' throughout the business. These change agents were given specific training in classic change management, the six key behaviours and tools and templates to enable them to run workshops with their local teams. EY also introduced a mandatory 45-minute online training course for all staff based around the six key behaviours.

In terms of success, EY estimates that it has already achieved benefits of at least £15 million per annum. Measuring adoption is equally important. For that, EY has developed a Flexible Working Healthcheck based around a

straightforward 10-minute survey sent to all staff. The results of the December 2014 Flexible Working Healthcheck were very positive and confirmed the change has been adopted and sustained some 12 months after completion of the change programme. Since the programme, EY have been delighted to have been contacted by a number of their clients who are interested to learn from EY's Flexible Working experience, particularly the challenge of designing a change programme.



UK Civil Service

Sector: Public

Caroline Thomas

Civil Service Job Share Working Group



Civil Service Resourcing and the Civil Service Job Share Working Group have developed an online tool which allows all civil servants to identify and contact each other when looking for a job-share partnership. The aim is to uphold the Civil Service's commitment to being a flexible employer and to increase the number of staff finding and applying for job-sharing roles. There is an expectation that up to 2000 staff may use the finder to look for job-share partners within the first year of operation.

The Civil Service 'Job Share Finder' was launched on 9 March 2015 and is backed up by excellent technology. The tool is easily accessible by smart phones and tablets (including personal devices) as well as by PCs, to fit in with busy lives of civil servants, who may need to use the tool away from their departments as well as in their offices. Searches happen automatically on registration by grade, location, department and area of expertise. Previously, job-share partners could only be identified either by managers putting two part-time workers together, or by word of mouth. This meant it was not very easy to find a compatible partner, especially across government departments. Rather than a top-down initiative, the Job Share Finder was an idea discussed at various job-share, part-time staff and women's networks. It was further supported by large attendances at job-share networking events organised in London in June and November 2014 – approximately 150 people came to each event.

An agile process was used to build the finder to ensure that it would provide the required service. This included identifying user stories to ascertain what it needed to do and organising work groups of job-sharers, those interested in job-sharing and those who had not considered it as a flexible working option. Over 50 potential users, including staff from disability networks, tested the 'live' prototype that was hosted on a private space. The results of this testing were used to build the finder and incorporate the functionality users were expecting – for example the ability to message each other from the finder and a URL link to the Civil Service jobs website. A secure process for accessing the site while not in the office was developed, to ensure people, such as women on maternity leave, could benefit from it.

Within the first weeks of launch there were over 200 registrations (22 at director grade), and at the recent 'Champion Difference' event to launch the updated Talent Action Plan, Sir Jeremy Heywood, the current Head of the Civil Service, hailed it as one of the five key 'reasons to cheer' for the year.

The tool will provide valuable statistical information about people looking for job-shares and their journey to find a job-share partner, which has not been available in the past.



Barclays plc

Sector: Banking &
Financial Services

Wendy Papworth
Director,
Global Diversity and Inclusion



Barclays has made its belief in flexible working real through a wholesale commitment to change. Its year-long Dynamic Working Campaign (DWC), developed in 2014, recognised that people have many roles throughout each life stage, at home and at work, and need time, flexibility and energy to fulfil them all. DWC has developed a culture where working dynamically in non-traditional ways is embraced. The aim was to fundamentally 'refresh' the practice of flexible working, a day-one right at Barclays, to reduce costs and capitalise on the greater productivity that agile staff bring and to further improve the working culture for 140,000 UK and global employees.

DWC designed work wherever possible around employees' needs to foster a greater sense of wellbeing, an important aspect of Barclays' stated goal of becoming the 'Go-To' bank. DWC provided a 'holistic wrapper' to make workplace agility the norm by revitalising policy, process and practice. Refreshing the topic meant that all staff started to see work differently and to regard flexible working as something 'for me' rather than 'for them', encouraged by the DWC strapline of 'how do you work your life?'. For example one line manager said about a DWC event: *"I found it extremely useful. The content was well structured and enabled constructive dialogue for those who couldn't see how DW would work in their areas, positively promoting the benefits not only to the individuals but also to the business."*

The changes employees have made range from small yet significant adjustments to more formal contractual arrangements, including, for example, occasional leave to train with the Territorial Army, flexibility when moving house, daily eldercare-related requirements and transitional working-pattern changes for new parents.

DWC encompassed research data demonstrating organisational benefits of flexible working to use in with key stakeholders and influencers. This data included usage aspects such as DWC portal hits and wider impact measures related to talent attraction and retention – for example monitoring data (working parents and female talent), engagement (via employee opinion scores) and employee wellbeing (via absenteeism and sickness rates). Relevant metrics are collated and analysed half-yearly by senior leaders in support of the wider 'Go-To' employer goal.

Four main components have brought DWC to life for employees: case studies; line manager clinics; 'real role model' champions and dedicated 'knowledge events'. DWC also showcased how technology and policy enabled people to work dynamically – for example, through Barclays' updated shared parental leave policy and its innovative 'Stay in touch' app for those on maternity or paternity leave.

Barclays feels that personal stories are at the core of DWC and are what appeal to employees, so the next phase will expand on senior leader messages about how they 'work their lives'. This is in response to feedback and lessons learnt about what made DWC effective following the UK launch. In preparation for the global launch of the campaign Barclays has already engaged colleagues in overseas locations via 'listening groups' and employee networks. It wants to ensure cultural concepts and positioning are embedded from the start so that both colleagues and the business gain maximum benefits from the global launch of DWC.



DLA Piper
Sector: Law



Mitra Janes
Diversity and Inclusion Manager

DLA Piper's initiative has given a real boost to flexibility by rebranding and relaunching it as 'agile working'. In particular, DLA Piper has focused on career progression, often a challenge for flexible workers, through the use of job-sharing supported by clever use of technology. For the rebrand, the firm developed two guides: one for employees and one for managers and partners. The guide for employees includes examples of different types of agile working arrangements and detailed guidance on how to prepare for them. The guide for managers and partners also includes critical success factors for agile working, how to consider an agile working request and examples of client perspectives on agile working. Both guides contain examples of actual arrangements and quotes from employees and clients. DLA Piper felt it was important to showcase a number of different arrangements for both male and female employees to challenge the view that flexible working is just for mums who want to work part-time. The guides and new policy were sent out directly by the UK Managing Partner with a personal message.

In addition and crucial to its agile working strategy, DLA Piper has explored job-sharing, believing that effective job-share partnerships can be key enablers for career progression for agile workers. The firm was determined to take a 'smart' approach, focusing on agile working arrangements that not only suited an individual's personal circumstances but also provided them with career development opportunities. In the past there has been some resistance to giving part-time employees key client-facing work and this may have inhibited career progression. However, job-sharing effectively addresses this issue for DLA Piper, providing support and development opportunities to both parties. DLA Piper has also delivered a webinar for all of its UK HR staff to introduce them to job-sharing, address some fears and concerns and explain the practical steps to making job-sharing arrangements effective. The firm has utilised technology effectively so that employees are able to work seamlessly from other locations and at times that suit their own individual needs and requirements (whether that be on the train, at a client's office or at the kitchen table!). It is DLA Piper's aim to be the leading law firm for agile working.

DLA Piper has joined the Agile Future Forum and hosted an external Women In Business Law seminar on agile working, with a panel including senior leaders from other organisations. The launch of the new policy saw the introduction of 44 agile working arrangements and two very effective job-share partnerships which involved four lawyers.

The DTCC Best for Innovation Award

DTCC

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Deloitte

Sector: Professional Services

Joint Winner



Emma Codd
Managing Partner Talent

Deloitte's Time Out initiative, which allows employees to take an extra four-week block of leave each year, has proven to be a popular addition to the firm's agile working practices. As the firm says: *"It helps our people to achieve*

a better balance between their career and other commitments such as family. Our people say they love the policy.” Time Out is an excellent demonstration that sometimes a simple and straightforward approach can be incredibly successful in attracting and retaining the best people and giving a competitive advantage.

Time Out was introduced in summer 2014 in recognition of the fact people were balancing family and other personal commitments alongside demanding careers. Time Out allows any employee with over a year’s service to request a four-week block of extra leave, unsalaried but with continuing benefits allowances, to be taken at a mutually acceptable time. Employees can request a Time Out each year with the hope they return to work re-energised. Over 200 people, from all parts of the business and at all levels, have requested a Time Out since June 2014. The firm has seen that people request Time Out for a variety of different reasons, for example: *“I am taking off the last two weeks of August to spend some quality time with the children before both are in full-time education. I will then also have the first two weeks of September off to settle my son into school – something I don’t want to miss and I’m glad Deloitte allows me the time to do this. The children have been desperate for a dog for some time now so I also plan to use my Time Out to settle and train a puppy!”*

The organisation monitors Time Out requests each month and has been delighted that the majority of people have been able to take their preferred dates, with only four being asked to identify alternative dates to better match business resource needs.

Time Out has been very successful in supporting the organisation’s women in leadership ambitions with 55% of the requests coming from female employees, the majority of whom are operating at the level of manager or above – a critical retention point of women for Deloitte. The initiative has been championed at senior level and awareness raised by the executive group through a range of engaging communication activities. Feedback has included: “I thought Time Out was a stunning idea. Likely to make people stick around. Well done!” and “The programme for 4 weeks’ unpaid leave is very positive. Whether people choose to use it or not, having the option to do so reinforces that Deloitte values work–life balance.”

Six months post-launch, Deloitte ran a campaign to identify role models to champion the benefits of agile working and address any potential stigma associated with working flexibly. These case studies include representatives from all areas of the business and at all grades. All of this activity has helped to make agile working Deloitte’s most improved item in the 2014 People Engagement survey, up by 12%.

Ministry of Justice
Sector: Public



Matthew Coats
Chief Executive, Legal Aid Agency and
Director General for MoJ Corporate Services



The Ministry of Justice’s (MoJ) ‘commuter hubs’ have shown that both individual and business benefits can be derived from excellent, creative flexible working solutions. The impetus came from the MoJ engagement survey which showed that staff wanted a better work–life balance. The issue seemed to be acute in London where many employees faced a long commute, some up to three hours each way, each day. There was also a need to reduce and rationalise estate costs.

The MoJ saw an opportunity to act on this through ‘the Way We Work’ programme (TW3,) a part of Civil Service reform concentrating on introducing smarter ways of working. The idea of commuter hubs was developed, with the aim of providing the guarantee of a desk in a convenient location to an individual’s home, meaning they would

spend less time commuting but maintain all the advantages of being in the main office, such as interaction with other staff, a desk and visibility. This allowed people to have a clear distinction between home and work life and assisted those with caring and family responsibilities in particular. It also supported people who are not able or do not want to work from home to have a choice. The initiative was facilitated by the deployment of modern technology, PCs and mobile phones, thereby enabling the individual rather than the space.

An easy-to-use booking system allows staff to view and reserve available desks at any of nine locations in London and the South East and download all the relevant information regarding the office, for example availability of parking, hearing loops and disabled access.

As well as making the organisation a better place to work for existing employees and attracting new ones, the initiative has enabled the MoJ to reduce its running costs. Specifically, over the last four years the MoJ has significantly reduced its London HQ presence: by the summer of 2015 the number of holdings will have reduced from 18 to two, and there will be just one by 2016. The '1 HQ' project will save the department at least £7 million per annum over the course of the next 10 years. The feedback on the nine commuter hubs has been very positive. Examples include:

"The commuter hubs help me in bringing and picking up my children from school. Having a commuter hub close by, I am able to start earlier as I do not have to commute to Central London. I am able to pick up my kids from the clubs which otherwise would not be possible, and it helps reduce childcare costs."

"I wanted to work flexibly away from London in order to reduce my travel time to work. My journey takes an hour and a half door to door; which is three hours per day, and 15 hours per week. I found this journey tiring; especially as I'd been commuting to London for nearly 15 years. Even though I travelled on the train, it was always surprising to me quite how exhausted I felt at the end of the week. I found that when I got home I was usually only fit for a quick catch-up with my wife and children, dinner, then bed and in the morning I'd get up and do it all again. When the opportunity became available to work at a local commuter hub I jumped at the chance to give it a try. Working at a commuter hub is something that I genuinely look forward to each week. Having one day a week working at the hub is great. It enables me to take my time in the mornings; I can take the children to school, pick them up from after-school clubs and sit down to dinner with them in the evening, which is something I cannot do when I work in London. I have also found that I actually have some time and energy to do other things in the evening. Overall, I have a much better home/work-life balance."

The MoJ's plan is to create more commuter hubs. It aims to have a 1000 hub places by the end of 2016 and will be surveying staff to find out where the most convenient locations to best support staff might be.

 **Finalist**
Barclays plc
Sector: Banking & Financial Services

Wendy Papworth
Director
Global Diversity and Inclusion



Barclays recognises the importance of enabling colleagues to grow their careers while they grow their families. Feedback from employees after a bespoke event on maternity and paternity was the catalyst for their innovative 'Stay in Touch' app that helps those out of the business on maternity or parental leave to feel connected.

At the event, new mums said there were challenges in maintaining line manager contact while on maternity leave.

Designated 'Keep in Touch' days added value but they wanted more flexible options for staying connected. In response, a 'Keeping in Touch' project was set up, with a team of cross-business volunteers, ER/HR/IT partners, business leaders and employee network leads, to collaborate on finding solutions.

One idea stood out to the team: an app that would keep line managers and maternity leavers in contact during the maternity leave period, and also provide access to relevant resources and information. The app is located on 'My Zone', a colleague community site which can be accessed from personal smart phones and tablets, thanks to Barclays' 'Bring Your Own Device' software. It offers useful bite-size information in a family-friendly tone, to support both employees and their line managers. The kinds of information on the app include: maternity-relevant policies, forms and guides; the pregnancy journey, including baby-growth guides and pre-/post-birth 'milestones'; useful websites, partner websites and phone numbers; hints and tips on, for example, when to apply for childcare vouchers; key activities, prompts and reminders for line managers about creating positive maternity leave experiences; and a guide for line managers and employees about return-to-work dates and new working patterns.

Well-planned internal communications were reinforced by word-of-mouth recommendations. All employee diversity networks cascaded information, with Barclays' working families and gender networks taking a key role. Barclays' inclusive approach to parenting meant same-sex parents were expressly included in all information and communication. In the first week, the app received more than 150 hits with highly positive feedback. As a personal illustration of the benefits, the story of how Lina (and new daughter Emma) successfully stayed in touch during her maternity leave thanks to the app is now included in the 'Million Stories' campaign, which highlights how Barclays' people 'make our business great'. Life-size posters in prominent places carry the stories, while more usual channels, such as intranet articles, bring to life how employee innovations, such as the app, change lives.

The next stage of development for the app includes an interactive community site, to enable maternity leavers to connect and communicate collectively, as well as a family finance calculator.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Sector: Public

Liz Ketch
Head of Projects Task Force



The Projects Task Force (PTF) was set up in 2012 in response to a need for greater flexibility in dealing with emerging priorities and a belief that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was not maximising the benefits of staff looking to work atypically (part-time or remotely). The organisation saw this as an opportunity to create a team that would work flexibly to better address its changing priorities. At the same time, the FCO wanted to demonstrate that staff who worked atypically (often so that they could balance family commitments with work whether in the UK or overseas) could perform successfully in a wide range of challenging and high-profile roles. The broader operating context was one of reduced budgets and headcounts, which meant making use of valuable talent even more crucial.

The formation of the PTF was communicated to staff by messages from the board and department leads, open days and guidance documents, including bid timetables and examples of bid forms and projects (as these built up) on the FCO's intranet.

In just two years, the PTF has become a beacon of best practice and innovation in the FCO and throughout Government. The PTF is a team of 64 people (55 FTE) who work with directorates in the FCO to deliver high-priority projects across the entire range of policies and services. The PTF has a large number of job-share, part-time and

remote workers. Over 60% of the team works flexibly, with only 13 members working five days a week from the London office. The PTF's atypical workforce includes people who work from overseas, which is particularly important in a global organisation as it has helped staff develop their careers in tandem with those of their partners, whether in the FCO or other organisations. The PTF has enabled individuals to find the right work-life balance for them without sacrificing the opportunity to work on high-profile issues and priority areas.

One project carried out by the PTF involved looking at how the FCO could use better diversity data to track the impact of policies on staff. The FCO had identified the need for this work, but its HR department didn't have the capacity to take it on. Therefore two members of the PTF successfully bid for a project to identify, consult on and cost options to improve diversity data. Both worked remotely: one from an FCO office in Ankara in Turkey and the other from home in Northern Ireland. They reported to the FCO's HR team in London and to a project board, which was also chaired remotely, ensuring that all members were able to contribute regardless of their location or time zone. During the project, the team made two visits to scope and then finalise a paper setting out their findings and recommendations, but all the other work was completed remotely, via telephone, email and teleconferences.

The PTF successfully delivered the project, and it has made the single biggest difference in the FCO's data handling for some years.

The PTF received the 2013-14 FCO Diversity and Inclusion Award for pioneering new ways of working across the FCO. This was formal internal recognition that the PTF had made a difference. The FCO is sharing its approach with other Whitehall departments who are setting up their own flexible teams.

The Centrica Best for Flexible Working Award

centrica

Cafcass
Sector: Public



Jabbar Sardar
Director of HR & OD



Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) is a non-departmental public body that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children; gives advice to family courts; makes provision for children to be represented; and provides information, advice and support to children and their families.

Cafcass has undergone a wholesale transformation; in 2010 the Public Accounts Committee declared Cafcass as 'not fit for purpose' and Ofsted inspections between 2007 and 2010 raised significant concerns. Furthermore, from 2009 Cafcass faced additional challenges, with care application demand rising 75.4% between 2008/09 to 2013/14 and their budget reducing by £6m from 2010 to 2014.

The total organisational and cultural transformation has been enabled by becoming entirely flexible. Cafcass has invested in technology to enable staff to focus on the front line, and provided its workforce the tools and resources they need to allow daily routines around work, family and personal commitments to be managed by the individual. All staff have been given 4G laptops or tablets, as well as BlackBerrys, allowing them to work flexibly at home, in

the office, at court, or when travelling to visit service users. Video-conferencing facilities were introduced, which can be accessed via individual laptops, thereby reducing the need to travel to offices for meetings but maintaining face-to-face communication.

Cafcass has also become almost entirely paperless. Case files are digital and available online, so social workers no longer have to transport heavy case bundles to court. A new electronic case management system is also now available, which drastically reduces the time taken by social workers on case bureaucracy. There is no requirement for staff to be in the office as performance is measured on output, not visibility, while a workload weighting system ensures a fair distribution of cases within a team.

Cafcass has measured its outcomes and registered impressive results:

- 105,000 hours, previously spent on administrative activities, have been freed up by 4G laptops;
- 94% of staff work remotely (at court, while travelling or at home) once a month;
- Sickness rates have decreased by 55% from 16.2 days per person in 2009/10 to 7.3 days per person in 2013/14, reducing the cost of absence from £3.2 million to £1.8 million.

Most importantly, flexible working has contributed to improved service delivery timescales: care and adoption cases (public law) have reduced from 57 weeks in 2011/12 to 31 weeks in 2013/14, while completion times for divorce and separation cases (private law) have reduced from 29 weeks in 2011/12 to 18 weeks in 2013/14.

The transformation has been validated externally. In 2014 Cafcass was assessed as 'good with outstanding leadership' by Ofsted. The report highlighted the impact technology and flexibility has had on enabling a cultural shift that has supported frontline practice improvement.

Cafcass plans to continue to harness the latest technologies to drive further efficiencies and to support and encourage more flexible working for the ultimate benefit of the vulnerable children it supports.



American Express

Sector: Banking & Financial Services



Julie Pope

Vice President Market HR Europe

American Express (AmEx) has taken a multi-stranded approach to ensuring flexible working is, as it suggests, "embedded into its very DNA". It is clearly outlined in formal policies, and accompanying leader guides have been created to support the implementation and understanding of these policies. Training on how to manage flexible working requests is also available to all managers. Managers are encouraged to consider what working arrangements are required for employees returning from maternity and adoption leave, moving the onus away from the employee to initiate a flexible working conversation with their leader. The focus on supporting and training line managers has been a cornerstone of AmEx's success. When surveyed, 90% of UK employees responded favourably to the question "My leader gives me the flexibility I need to balance my work and personal life". The score was highest among flexi (94%) and home workers (97%).

Amex's 'BlueWork' programme enables employees to work from a variety of locations, sending a clear message that output is valued over physical presence. Evolving and upgrading the technology available, such as the remote network (VPN), video-conference software, live meeting software and soft-phone technology, has been paramount in making AmEx a highly collaborative, productive and flexible workplace.

To build additional flexibility into their lives, employees are able to buy extra holidays, take unpaid sabbaticals (depending on their length of service) or enjoy summer hours (flexitime/time in lieu for some lines of business in the summer months). To enable employees to balance life commitments while in office buildings, personal WiFi is now available to all.

Over three-quarters of UK employees respond to AmEx's Annual Employee Pulse survey. Across key areas such as loyalty, overall engagement and leadership ability there was no difference in responses given by those in a traditional working arrangement and those working flexibly, in the last survey. This clearly demonstrated that flexible working is embedded in the culture. Perception of fair treatment is the same for flexible workers and those working in traditional working styles. Indeed, the career development score is slightly higher among flexible workers compared with the baseline in terms of support given by leaders and development opportunities.

AmEx has endeavoured to engage with home workers, part-time workers and employees out on family-related leave. The organisation reached out to employees through innovative methods, as well as through traditional approaches such as benefit fairs, posters, desk-drops and email communications. One example was the augmented reality app 'Blippar', which was used to bring to life the benefits package and showed employees where to go for further information via their personal devices, enabling engagement outside of office locations and on the go. By simply hovering their smart phone over literature, employees could interact with key benefits information online. This was found to be especially useful for employees on or returning from maternity and adoption leave.

The results were very encouraging, showing an increase in the uptake of employee benefits, including childcare, which at AmEx is now more than double the national average.



National Assembly for Wales
Sector: Public

Claire Clancy
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly
Lowri Williams
Head of Human Resources



Flexibility has been embedded within the National Assembly for Wales through the creation of the 'People Strategy' which stresses the need for the Assembly to be an exemplar and leader of best practice, especially in the way it acts as an employer. Employees have access to a range of flexible working options, including; flexible working hours, part time working, term time working, career breaks, compressed hours and job sharing. Most notably they have this from day one of employment. All new starters are presented with the flexible options available to them as part of the induction process. Flexible working options are even advertised during the recruitment process. The Assembly has developed a suite of documents to promote flexible working, including factsheets, booklets, guidance and flow charts. In the last year, 92% of flexible working applications were authorised without any amendments made to them.

Every new role that is created or being replaced must accommodate flexible working unless the manager submits a business case demonstrating the reasoning and evidence behind why it cannot. This system ensures that, unless a strong case to the contrary is put forward, all of The Assembly's jobs are advertised as being open to flexible working.

Managers are supported in managing flexible teams. Courses are run helping managers to understand and respond to a flexible working requests. Furthermore, the Assembly has created a Management Development Programme to enable managers to create high performing, flexible teams. This has been very successful. The Security department, which is a large, male dominated, shift orientated department put its managers through the programme

to ensure that they were confident in applying the principles of the policy and dealing with applications for flexible working in a fair and consistent manner. In the last eight months, two female and one male employee applied and have been granted term time working and change of hours. The department is currently processing two further applications from fathers who wish to take additional paternity leave and to change their hours, demonstrating that, even in more complex work environments, flexible working is possible.

In the 2013 Staff Survey, 93.8% of The Assembly's employees strongly agreed that their terms and conditions (family friendly policies, flexible working) motivated them to stay at the Assembly.

The Citymothers Best for All Stages of Motherhood Award

Citymothers

iCrossing
Sector: Digital Marketing



Rachel Collier
Chief Talent Officer



iCrossing's approach to supporting its mothers is fresh and innovative. Over the past five years the company has actively set out to increase its female workforce, believing that a more diverse working demographic will benefit both its culture and its clients. iCrossing has a desire to attract and retain the best in a competitive industry. Nevertheless, it takes an individualised approach to each mum-to-be, acknowledging the fact that each new mum, and each pregnancy, is different. There is no 'one size fits all'. In this spirit, when a woman has revealed that she is pregnant, she is offered a meeting with HR to discuss how she wants to manage her pregnancy in the workplace and also to check that she feels healthy enough to travel to and work in the office. In this meeting she is given the option to tailor her working pattern through, for example, home working or a change in hours. She is also able to talk about her pay during maternity leave, KIT days, returning to work and how much communication she wants with work while she is off.

The week before her planned final day of work, the pregnant employee is offered a meeting with her line manager to discuss performance and any promotion opportunities in the pipeline (and whether or not she would want to be considered for promotion while on maternity leave). She is also asked if she would like to participate in any training activities while on maternity leave. The purpose of this is not to add pressure but to ensure that no one on maternity leave misses out on career or progression opportunities.

All mums-to-be and returning mums are reminded of iCrossing's flexible working policy. Where appropriate a staggered return to work over several months is offered; this is particularly appreciated by first-time mums who prefer a more gentle approach which allows them to negotiate their new dual role over time. Mums also have the benefit of knowing that iCrossing's line managers are trained in how to manage teams flexibly – supporting the company's ethos that flexible working needs to be culturally driven and not simply detailed in policy.

This year iCrossing has introduced a new initiative called 'Together Time', which aims to promote a culture of flexible working for everyone with caring duties, regardless of whether they work part- or full-time. Together Time allows

staff to take two hours out of their day for caring duties without having to use their annual leave. Examples where this might apply include going to see their child's nativity play, going to a school assembly in the middle of the day or taking an elderly relative to the doctor's. By launching Together Time, iCrossing hopes to engender a culture where staff openly balance home with work life and celebrate family life at work. Staff know that they are trusted to get their work done and manage their own time, which enhances their loyalty to iCrossing as an employer.

iCrossing also offers a mentoring scheme, iFamily, which matches new mums or mums-to-be with seasoned parents who can guide them through their re-entry into the workplace. At least half of the mentors are dads, which underlines to mums that, at iCrossing, dads are supported to take an equal role in parenting. iCrossing hopes that mums feel empowered and strengthened by this attitude.

iCrossing is achieving its business aims of attracting and retaining women. In 2009, the workforce was 35% female; this figure has increased to 44% in 2014. The average length of service for mums on the iCrossing executive board is eight years and six months, proof that the company retains working mums at the top and supports them on their way up there. Of the mothers at iCrossing, 50% work flexibly, further evidence that the flexible working ethos is culturally embedded. The expectation is that this figure will rise to 61% this year.



UK Civil Service
Sector: Public

Janet Hill
Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion
Programme Director



The Civil Service employs over 400,000 people, 53.3% of whom are women. It believes that to deliver high-quality services every talented individual must have the opportunity to progress. Becoming a mother should not be a barrier to career success. Currently 37.9% of the Senior Civil Service are women. The Civil Service is committed to co-ordinated action across Government to address barriers and bring together best practice.

The new Cross-Government Women's Network was formed in January 2015 and shares best practice across departments such as the work of the Home Office Women's Network and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' Parenting and Part-time networks. All women returning from maternity leave are required to complete a questionnaire capturing their experiences and views on departments' management of maternity leave. The results of these questionnaires are used to identify issues and monitor the performance of departments.

In March 2015, the new Civil Service 'Job Share Finder' was launched to facilitate job-share partner-matching across departments. The Job Share Finder allows the Civil Service to retain talented individuals and ensure that it remains an employer of choice. This new tool supports flexible working for employees with caring responsibilities, as well as those wishing to change their working patterns, and will particularly benefit women, who make up the majority of the Civil Service's carers. It enables users to search for partners by Government department, geographical location and grade. Through this tool users can establish a job-share partnership and apply for new and challenging opportunities, while balancing carer responsibilities.

The Civil Service Job Share Finder is accompanied by new Civil Service Job Share Guidance, which provides advice to staff and managers on setting up a partnership, recruiting, managing a job-share partnership and includes real-life case studies. Together these products demonstrate the Civil Service's determination to ensure that becoming a parent or choosing to work flexibly does not mean the end of career progression.



The London School of Economics & Political Science

Sector: Higher Education

Gail Keeley
HR Manager
Policy & ER
Human Resources Division



The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) wants to ensure that it provides a work environment that allows mothers to focus on both their career and their family. For the LSE this makes good business sense and has a positive effect on gender equality. To meet the aim, the organisation offers a comprehensive set of initiatives to support the whole of motherhood. This includes:

- workshops for parents:
 - *Balancing work and being mum* (places are given to partners, even if they are not employees, to support the mums who are employees)
 - *Balancing work and being dad* (places are given to partners, even if they are not employees, to support the dads who are employees)
- *Building resilience in our primary age children and ourselves*
- *Balancing work and being the carer of an adult*
- networks for parents
- flexible working
- paid time to attend antenatal appointments
- excellent maternity and adoptive leave and pay
- phased return to work
- on-site subsidised nursery that also provides emergency childcare when usual childcare arrangements fail
- emergency leave on full pay
- one-to-one meetings with HR staff to provide tailored advice on leave/keeping in touch/flexible working
- the opportunity to seek support from a trained mentor on managing the transition to becoming a working mother

In addition, to ensure that women taking maternity leave do not slip behind colleagues in their research endeavours, the LSE offers academic employees, who are absent for more than 18 weeks, a teaching- and administrative-free term on full pay to catch up on research. This can be an enormous support to the careers of academic staff.

"It makes a big difference if your employer understands and supports families," said one of the LSE's assistant professors. She and her partner, who also works for the LSE, decided to share the care of their child equally, each taking six months off, followed by a term of research leave on full pay. She felt enormously creative on return and really benefited from the term free of teaching and administration responsibilities. *"It was a time of turbulence and creativity. If your institution can support you during this period they can reap the rewards of harnessing that creativity."* She is publishing more than she ever did, has recently taken on the centre directorship and feels her career has been boosted by just having the space to focus on research at that time.

The LSE monitors application and uptake of all its maternity-focused policies to ensure consistency in management approach and provides training to manage unconscious bias as a mandatory requirement for all staff involved in making decisions on recruitment, review, promotion and reward of their colleagues.

In the future, the LSE will continue to encourage the uptake of shared parental leave and research leave and is working towards introducing a new workshop to help parents to meet the challenge of bringing up teenagers.



Hogan Lovells

Sector: Law

Gill McGreevy

Partner and Co-Chair of
Working Families Network



Hogan Lovells is dedicated to supporting its talented female employees at all stages of motherhood. In order to do this it has increased focus on gender diversity throughout its talent pipeline as part of its Global Diversity Business Plan. Hogan Lovells offers mothers generous benefits to help them achieve a greater work-life balance and provides support for them both at work and at home as it believes this will increase their job satisfaction, motivation and engagement, which will in turn create an overall high-performance culture.

Hogan Lovells is notable in that it offers mothers support at all stages of motherhood, from planning and pregnancy through to when their children reach adulthood. It provides an enhanced maternity package which pays six weeks' salary at 100% and the remaining weeks at 40%, for up to a further 46 weeks. The company also offers 10 free sessions of emergency childcare to all employees on an annual basis. As part of its Working Families Network, it runs quarterly 'New and Expectant Parent Drop-in Sessions' and hosts a range of talks on a breadth of topics covering, amongst other things, all stages of motherhood including child internet safety; the effects of birth order on family life; fertility awareness; developing child confidence through play; school choices and 'empty nesting', to name but a few. Mothers who are returning to work can apply for flexible working, and a mentoring programme is available for mothers at all stages of parenthood.

Hogan Lovells has established clear, measurable targets for monitoring gender diversity and since the establishment of the Global Diversity Business Plan, it has seen progress against these targets including:

- an increase from 20% in 2012 to 37.5% in 2015 in the number of women promoted globally
- an increase from 28% in 2012 to 32% in 2015 in the number of women in management roles
- an increase from 22% to 24% in the number of women partners in London over the last three years
- agreement by the firm's management committees to create a new agile working policy
- the implementation of shared parental leave with pay equalised with enhanced maternity pay

Hogan Lovells will continue to work on the achievement of its Global Diversity Business Plan in 2015 and beyond.

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
Human Resources Division



The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is working hard to equalise the opportunities it gives

to fathers and mothers and is showing a genuine commitment to changing the 'mum carer, father provider' stereotype. This makes business sense and has a positive effect on gender equality at the LSE.

The following workshops are open to both mothers and fathers:

- Balancing work and being mum (places are given to mums, even if they are not employees, to support the dads who are employees)
- Balancing work and being dad (places are given to partners, even if they are not our employees, to support the dads who are employees)
- Building resilience in our primary age children and ourselves
- Balancing work and being the carer of an adult

The LSE also offers fathers:

- networks
- flexible working
- paid time to accompany the birth mother (partner or surrogate mother) to attend antenatal appointments
- two weeks' fully paid paternity leave
- excellent, paid adoptive leave
- phased return to work
- on-site subsidised nursery that also provides emergency childcare when usual childcare arrangements fail
- emergency leave on full pay
- one-to-one meetings with HR staff to provide tailored advice on leave/keeping in touch/flexible working
- the opportunity to seek support from a trained mentor on managing the transition to becoming a working father

Fully anticipating that fathers, like mothers, will want to be absent from work to care for a new-born or newly-adopted child, the LSE offers academic employees, who are absent for more than 18 weeks, a teaching- and administrative-free term on full pay to catch up on research. This ensures that those who have taken a career break do not step off the career track.

The LSE has also fully signed up to the spirit of shared parental leave and already offers up to 16 weeks' leave on full pay to follow on from full pay for Additional Paternity Leave.

The wife of an associate professor, took the first six months off after their son was born and then the associate professor took six months on full pay. After this he benefited from having a term's research leave to re-establish his research trajectory. When his son learnt to speak he called his parents 'mamadaddy', fusing the two words together. It was a very positive experience and the associate professor is grateful for the LSE's support; it has made him more loyal and more productive. *"This makes an enormous difference to our wellbeing as a family. The childcare is genuinely shared. If employers are genuinely committed to equality this kind of scheme is a must. It has allowed us to institutionalise a fair childcare system and keep both our careers on track."*

The LSE monitors application and uptake of all its paternity-focused policies to ensure consistency in management approach and provides training to manage unconscious bias as a mandatory requirement for all staff involved in making decisions on recruitment, review, promotion and reward of their colleagues.

In the future, the LSE will continue to promote shared parental leave and research leave and is working towards introducing a new workshop to help parents to meet the challenge of bringing up teenagers.



West Dunbartonshire Council

Sector: Public

Vicki Rogers
Head of People
and Transformation



West Dunbartonshire Council has shown that it is fully committed to supporting working fathers to achieve balance between work and family life. The council's workforce is predominantly female (71%) and it is widely recognised that women are more likely to undertake caring responsibilities and to work flexibly and/or part-time. Through encouraging working fathers to take on a more active role in family life, the council felt it could benefit from greater engagement, retention and attraction of high-quality and committed male employees. One dad who works a compressed four-day week for West Dunbartonshire agrees: *"It is a great commitment from both my manager and the council and it means I am more engaged and productive at work and thus committed to working for the council."*

The council's commitment is led by its 'Fathers' Champion', Richard Cairns who is also Executive Director of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department, predominantly male dominated occupational areas. This demonstrates West Dunbartonshire Council's commitment to identifying and targeting male roles to encourage change.

The childcare voucher scheme has recently been promoted specifically to male workers across the organisation as, following a comprehensive study, the council found that over three-quarters of the employees who were taking advantage of childcare vouchers were female. The council identified a real opportunity to engage directly with fathers within the organisation, through this promotion. Supported by senior management, the childcare voucher scheme was actively marketed in roles where employees are predominantly male, for example road workers, trades people, refuse collectors and gardeners. Father's Day served as a means of promoting the message and publicity included payslip messages, articles aimed at fathers on the intranet, posters, flyers and a global email sent to all council employees. Crucially, the posters were also displayed in depots, on noticeboards and next to rotas and local notices. In addition, the promotion was discussed at 'toolbox talks', and leaflets were left in council vehicles for employees who were out on council business to read during tea and lunch breaks. This approach attracted positive feedback.

As a direct result of the promotion uptake of the scheme increased by 5%. The council used this success as a test run for broader engagement with male workers and created a template for dissemination of other opportunities to this work group, including promotion of paternity leave, maternity support leave, shared parental leave and 'Healthy Working Lives' activities, such as men's health checks.



Scottish Parliament

Sector: Public

Paul Grice
Clerk/Chief Executive of
the Scottish Parliament



The Scottish Parliament wants to play its part, as a public sector employer, in embracing change in parenting and giving fathers a voice, because it believes that society can only change and make parenting a more equal partnership if employers make their contribution through how they promote their policies on maternity, paternity and adoption and make sure these are inclusive of men and women. The Scottish Parliament has a long history as a 'family-friendly' organisation and has shown real commitment to achieving this culture. Just over 94% of staff agreed in a survey (2013) that they work for an inclusive organisation that supports and values diversity in the

workplace. In 2011, the organisation made the decision to go beyond the statutory requirement and gave the right to request flexible working to all staff. As the median age of the workforce is 44, the Scottish Parliament recognises that many staff will have family and other caring responsibilities, so employees have been allowed to take on different working patterns, for example compressed hours and home working, to support their caring roles.

The Scottish Parliament has shown commitment to the role of fathers from the very top: its Chief Executive works flexibly to help meet his family commitments; its Assistant Chief Executive has also been a carer and has taken time off to care for an elderly dependent; many of the men in the organisation's Leadership Group work from home and one of the team works compressed hours to help with childcare commitments.

In the Scottish Parliament, fathers are seen as equally important from before the birth of their child through to when they return to work. The maternity mentoring programme is open to men who wish to take extended leave and there are male mentors to support any men planning to take an extended period of time off. The Scottish Parliament was the first organisation in Scotland to be accredited for this scheme. In a move led by a father, a new part-time virtual network has been set up. This is owned by the staff but is supported by HR and gives fathers the opportunity to influence any internal policies that might affect them.

Already, the Scottish Parliament's shared parental leave policy mirrors its maternity provision, which offers up to six months off on full pay. Fathers are entitled to attend antenatal appointments (which are paid); they can use a crèche and a parenting room in the parliament building; and also make use of childcare vouchers. In addition, they are supported to have a phased return to work to help them settle back in gradually. Staff have been offered the choice of a PC or a laptop, which means fathers can now easily access the server outside the office and have the flexibility to work from home.

The Scottish Parliament's approach to fathers has had an impact on mothers and shows that caring responsibilities are becoming more equally shared. The organisation is finding that women coming back to work change to different working patterns but are working longer part-time hours than before, indicating that they are sharing childcare with their partners.



iCrossing

Sector: Digital Marketing

Malcolm Leach
Chief Technology Officer



iCrossing has demonstrated its totally flexible approach to achieving balance between work and home life through the way it considers fathers. This approach is based on a well-considered and well-executed business case: the company is aware that, in the digital industry, demand is high for the most talented experts and tenure can be short. It is in competition with other businesses to hire the best. As a result, one of its HR objectives has been to focus on retaining and attracting digital staff with several years of experience; typically this means focusing on policies that will appeal to those in their 30s. People in this age bracket are likely to have a young family or be thinking about starting a family.

As well as laying the groundwork for excellence in benefits for fathers (two weeks' paid paternity leave which can be split), this year iCrossing has introduced a new initiative called 'Together Time', which aims to promote a culture of flexible working for everyone with caring duties, regardless of whether they work part- or full-time. Together Time allows staff to take two hours out of their day for caring duties without having to use annual leave. Examples where

this might apply include going to see their child's nativity play, going to a school assembly in the middle of the day or taking an elderly relative to the doctor's. By launching Together Time, iCrossing hopes to engender a culture where their staff openly balance home and work life and celebrate family life at work. This flexibility underlines iCrossing's trusting, adult relationship with employees and reassures staff that the organisation knows they will get their work done and manage their own time.

iCrossing knows that there are occasions where parents get stuck. Often it is the mother who is expected to take time off and be at home, but iCrossing is flexible about staff bringing children into the workplace when usual childcare arrangements fail. One dad looked after his young baby while working at his desk recently. This allowed his wife to go to a doctor's appointment. Although not a permanent solution to childcare, on an ad hoc basis, kids are welcome in the workplace if it helps staff to manage their time.

iCrossing also offers staff a mentoring scheme. iFamily (originally called iParent but renamed in the hope that it could also support carers) matches new dads or dads-to-be with seasoned parents who can guide them through their re-entry into the workplace after having a baby or adopting a child. Uptake is good, and 50% of the mentors are dads – which only serves to highlight how embedded the belief has become that caring for children is not purely a female issue at iCrossing.

iCrossing has made a point of understanding who their fathers are and examining their career paths: 50% of their senior management team are dads, as are 80% of their executive team. This includes the Chief Technology Officer who, on average, works two days a week from home. He adjusts his working week to fit the differing levels of demand on his time from family life. For example, during school half-term he works every day from home so he can help with childcare. He is very clear about the benefits that this gives to him: *"It gives me three hours of my day back to spend with my family or get useful stuff done. My sense of wellbeing is enhanced by the trust that I am shown and can confer on the rest of the team."*

 **Finalist**
National Grid
Sector: Energy

Chris Mead
Lead HR Partner



National Grid's approach to fatherhood is a passionate one, ensuring every staff group is included and addressing every step of the journey from pre-conception to grandparenthood. National Grid's vision is that every dad is able to be the dad he wants to be, and the best employee he can be, achieving a real work-life balance. National Grid's goals are to:

- promote a culture which supports a work-life balance that achieves the vision
- educate and support line managers/supervisors to support their teams through the journey
- obtain support and a continued message from the senior leadership team to challenge existing ways of working, and find better ways
- review and continually improve all existing HR policies and procedures that impact on parents and display them on one simple internal 'infont' page
- raise awareness of its Fathers' Programme, internally and externally

National Grid has, over the last two years, delivered workshops to over 100 new and expectant dads, provided training for line managers and created a trained mentors support network. These activities have been delivered mainly in central office locations, but National Grid has made progress on getting workshops out to the operational

staff too. National Grid is proud to have run two full workshops, and promoted the Fathers Programme, to five different operational teams through conferences, 'Safety Stand Down Days', team meetings and company magazines.

National Grid has decided that these courses, along with lunchtime webinars for managers and mentoring workshops, will be offered permanently as part of its suite of development opportunities. This way it can ensure that they are organised and delivered professionally and sustainably.

The organisation has just started measuring dads' responses about the effectiveness of the programme against its objectives. These responses will be used, in turn, to promote the programme and a social network page on National Grid's corporate Yammer site, where fathers can share stories, ask questions and divulge hints and tips on a whole range of fatherhood issues.

The plans for 2015 are to continue to promote the Fathers' Programme to the operational and field force staff through a detailed plan of activities, communications and face-to-face meetings. The network is also planning a fun, challenging and ambitious activity during Father's Day in which dads from all areas in National Grid can enter a photography competition and win prizes for different categories: family photo, father and child photo, and dad and child selfie. To promote the competition, and network afterwards, National Grid plans to publish the photos in a video and will use a song that has been especially written, composed and sung by a dad at National Grid.

The National Grid & Carers UK Best for Carers and Eldercare Award

nationalgrid

carersUK
making life better for carers

Centrica
Sector: Utilities



Alison Hughes
Head of HR Policy and Diversity



Centrica recognises that carers make a substantial contribution to its business and remains committed to providing an inclusive and diverse workforce that works well for its customers. The company believes that supporting carers reduces staff turnover, cuts recruitment and training costs, retains talent and experience, builds resilience and improves employee engagement and wellbeing. Centrica estimates cost savings of £2.5m through increased staff retention and £4.5m through reduced unplanned absenteeism. Centrica's offering to carers is well rounded, thorough and based on a real understanding of what its carers want as well as what will enhance its business.

Centrica has a well-established, employee-led carers network, which has been active since 2005. The carers network provides a valuable source of support and guidance and enables carers to share information and experiences. It is sponsored by the Managing Director of British Gas, and Centrica believes that senior sponsorship has been crucial to its continued success and sustainability.

Centrica also has an innovative carer's leave policy, which offers up to one month matched paid leave per year to

help with caring responsibilities, for example, to nurse someone after a serious illness or discharge from hospital, or to help someone move into residential care. Carer's leave is in addition to dependent and emergency leave and there is no service requirement to be eligible. The policy includes close friends as well as family members, which makes the definition of carer all-encompassing.

At Centrica, flexible working is a day-one right, enabling employees to balance work with their caring responsibilities. Employees experiencing difficult family issues can seek professional advice from independent counsellors through a 24-hour employee assistance programme, which is also available free to family members.

In December 2014, Centrica launched a new online portal for working parents and carers, giving them easy access to a range of family-friendly resources and services, including information on back-up eldercare, a webinar series and specific resources for working carers.

Centrica has also launched a pilot training programme to up-skill line managers in managing flexible workers and in particular people with caring responsibilities. The pilot has been a success, a key finding being that managers feel more confident about having effective conversations regarding caring. Centrica is now investigating a wider roll-out which would incorporate the training into existing line manager training modules.

Centrica's approach to carers has had a real impact. As one employee reports: *"I have gained significant benefit from the approach Centrica takes to people with caring responsibilities. From the company carers policy and framework, through the Centrica carers support network and my line manager support, I have been able to work in a flexible way, including the use of carer's leave, that has enabled me to balance complex caring responsibilities while delivering on my work activities. Without the understanding and support of the company my caring responsibilities would be difficult to balance with my workload and both would suffer. I really appreciate the flexibility and support I have been given."*

Centrica works closely with Carers UK and is an integral part of the leadership group of Employers for Carers.



Finalist

University of Lincoln
Sector: Higher Education



Jayne Billam
Human Resources Director

The University of Lincoln is committed to supporting staff health and wellbeing by providing a number of solutions to help carers balance their workplace needs with caring responsibilities. A key component of the University's work is a focus on making provisions for emotional wellbeing, stress and resilience readily available to support staff with caring responsibilities.

The University's suite of policies and procedures, which enables a range of flexible provisions including paid and unpaid time off for carer's leave, are supported by online resources and a line manager's toolkit that helps managers to respond to carers' needs in the most efficient and mutually beneficial way. Staff also have anytime, anywhere access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which recognises the diversity of staff needs including the challenges and demands of caring. In addition, a web-based tool, the 'Jointly' app, is available to carers for free, which helps users to manage daily tasks and responsibilities and eases contact and communication between other carers from the same circle.

The University's wellbeing 'me@Lincoln' site provides information on a number of topics and signposts people to appropriate additional resources. In addition, carers have their own dedicated web area, through which they can get in contact with local organisations for carers and book online training on the topics specific to their needs.

The University believes that a flexible approach to balancing work with caring responsibilities does not need to result in a huge upheaval in work and sometimes small adjustments and a supportive culture can deliver more positive outputs. The University's positive attitude to flexible working arrangements was recognised by staff in the recent staff survey, when 84% confirmed that they *"can approach their manager to talk openly about flexible working"* and 74% agreed that *"the university provides good support to help them balance their work and personal commitments"*.

Employees' health, wellbeing and resilience are of great importance to the University of Lincoln. It has created an environment where staff feel supported, and where their holistic sense of wellbeing is provided for, through a diverse range of provisions including offering mindfulness and meditation programmes. This work is believed to have contributed to a significant positive impact on staff's overall sense of wellbeing and has helped to reduce the recorded level of absence in the associated health categories of stress/anxiety by 39.8% compared to same period in 2013/2014. 92% of staff have overwhelmingly stated through their feedback that they would recommend the programmes to fellow colleagues.

 **Finalist**
Ministry of Justice
 Sector: Public

Stephen Muers
 Director, Criminal Justice Policy and
 one of two MoJ Carers Champions



The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) appreciates that carers can bring valued skills to the workplace, and wants to retain these valuable staff. The MoJ has shown its commitment with a solid business case, senior level support and excellent career tracking, in addition to the implementation of the 'Carer's Passport' scheme.

The MoJ has two Senior Civil Service level 'Carers' Champions', who help to raise awareness of issues that may affect carers. They have their own intranet page to ensure staff know who they are and how to contact them. They have run both telephone and drop-in sessions to introduce themselves and to give staff the opportunity to raise issues which affect them. The Champions are Luigi Strinati (Delivery Director HMCTS, Wales) and Stephen Muers (Director Criminal Justice). Luigi Strinati, says: *"As a father of two and an only child with sole caring responsibilities for parents in their late 80s, I believe I have hands-on experience of some of the issues that affect carers in the workplace. Over a third of our workforce in the MoJ have some kind of caring responsibility and I think it is essential that we work with all staff to raise awareness of the issues that affect carers in their day-to-day working lives, and the policies/guidance available to assist them."*

'Phoenix', the MoJ's staff self-service system, asks staff if they have caring responsibilities. This recent addition is helping the MoJ to identify exactly how many carers there are in the workplace and collect other useful information such as what age bracket they fall into, their working pattern and their grade. The intention is that in the near future the MoJ will have enough data in relation to carers to monitor their career opportunities and development; for example if they are offered temporary responsibility allowance and what grade they are compared to staff who don't have caring responsibilities. This will help the MoJ to identify any areas where there are disproportional impacts on carers' working lives and careers.

The MoJ has introduced and promoted the Carer's Passport, enabling staff to move through the organisation without having to re-explain their caring responsibilities to each new manager and in each new situation. To date over 100 MoJ staff have been granted a Carer's Passport by the Charity for Civil Servants. The MoJ has published intranet articles and includes information on its intranet pages to encourage staff to take advantage of the Carer's Passport. One user says: *"I care for two elderly relatives who have terminal cancer. Having a Carer's Passport has really helped as I don't need to worry about explaining my situation to anyone, especially if I change managers. It makes everything clear, and sets out what I might need to help me combine working with caring."* The manager agrees: *"From a management perspective, the Carer's Passport is really useful. It sets out what the employee's requirements are in relation to their caring role. This has helped me in my management role – if I know what the employee needs, it is much easier for me to support her whilst also giving me the opportunity to consider how business needs can still be met if she is not in the office. A win-win situation for all."*

In the future the MoJ aims to continue to raise the profiles of the Carers' Champions to ensure staff know who they are and how to contact them, and to promote the Carer's Passport and monitor its uptake. The MoJ also recognises that it is vital to continue to encourage staff to complete the caring responsibilities section on the 'Phoenix' system.



Finalist

West Dunbartonshire Council

Sector: Public

Vicki Rogers
Head of People
and Transformation



West Dunbartonshire Council is fully committed to creating an environment that will enable both the organisation and its employees with caring responsibilities to thrive, through engagement, retention and recruitment of high-quality, loyal people. The council's 'Be the Best' strategy incorporates its family-friendly policy, which recognises that 'getting the balance right for employees also enables the organisation to flourish'.

The council has recently introduced a creative carer's leave scheme, specifically aimed at those employees who need to balance caring responsibilities with work. The council recognised that from time to time a number of employees need time away from the workplace to care for someone. The majority of employees with caring responsibilities were able to access existing support but some found their caring demands too great and could not continue to work. While other family-friendly policies facilitate paid time off at short notice, the carer's leave scheme allows for an extended period of leave in order to care for a dependent. The scheme is unique in that it allows the employee to spread the cost of extended (unpaid) leave over a long period to minimise the financial impact of what is essentially a career break.

This scheme really demonstrates the council's commitment to retaining its employees with caring responsibilities, people whose only other option might be to leave employment. There is no break in service and employer pension contributions and other employee benefits such as annual leave and promotion opportunities are unaffected. The council benefits by retaining skills, knowledge and experience and improving staff wellbeing, resulting in improved engagement, loyalty and retention.

Carers are supported by managers who are encouraged to take ownership of day-to-day decisions affecting their team members. As a result, the council feels it has a confident and mature team of managers, working hard to make life easier for carers, whatever their circumstances.

West Dunbartonshire was the first local authority in Scotland to have been awarded the Carer Positive Kitemark, by Carers Scotland, and achieved 'Engaged' Status in February 2015. This gave the Council the motivation and impetus to strive for the next level and in a very short period of time, with concerted focus and effort, West Dunbartonshire was awarded 'Established' status in April 2015 which is a significant achievement for a relatively small local authority. They have more carer's initiatives in the pipeline and are now working towards 'Exemplary' status.

The Direct Line Group Best for Line Managers Award



iCrossing
Sector: Digital Marketing



Rachel Collier
Chief Talent Officer



In a competitive sector, iCrossing has shown that the foundation to embedding flexible working is set by supportive managers who want to make it work and who understand the benefits that it can bring to them and their business, including high performance and happy individuals. Their philosophy is that good management is integral to good performance, not separate from it. Managers feel empowered to make their own decisions regarding how they manage their teams, and they have the confidence to do so flexibly. All iCrossing's line managers are trained in approving and managing flexible working and the company is firmly of the belief that it cannot simply be offered as a policy hidden away in a lengthy company handbook: it needs to be lived, breathed and implemented across the business. iCrossing has made excellent use of technology to enable this to happen.

iCrossing's managers are trained to become experts and are brave enough to accommodate requests for flexible working as and when they are made. For example, 100% of the Chief Technology Officer's team work flexibly: "In general, software developers need an environment where they can concentrate for long periods of time and yet also be able to easily collaborate with the team. Flexible working enables them to choose the right environment for them for any particular task and I fully support it. This could be working at home when there is some hardcore coding to be done and using video for scrum meetings and estimation sessions. Mostly the team choose to come into the office on sprint 'review and retrospective' days (once every two weeks) to have quality face-to-face time.

"We've been gradually refining our systems and processes over the last few years to make sure that everyone stays on track. We use JIRA and Agile to keep everyone task- and goal-focused and HipChat for the continuous 'stream of consciousness' that means remote workers don't feel left out. We also have team nights out every so often to make sure it's not all work and no play, where a good time is had by all. For me, I can see my sons most mornings and evenings and also fit chores in around my work. I cook dinner most evenings and we all get to sit at the table together and chat about the day's events."

Although flexible working is in the early stages of evaluation, anecdotally iCrossing has seen very good uptake over the past 12 months, right across the business, with people of all levels of seniority adopting varying degrees of flexible working, and understanding the benefits of being able to do so. The person working from home, or who

gets in a bit later every day, is no longer seen as lazy or slacking; it is just understood that this way of working suits them best. iCrossing is also launching some ebooks on flexible working for line managers and staff so that they can understand the logistics and the benefits without having to wade through complex company handbooks.



Wales and West Housing

Sector: Public

Anne Hinchley
Chief Executive



Wales and West Housing (WWH) demonstrated that it was really thinking about the role of the line manager in establishing culture and performance, essential for implementing effective flexible working, by embarking on a journey called 'Developing heroes to make a difference'. This is a bespoke employee development programme which includes 'Development Conversations' training for all staff and a five-day leadership programme for all line managers based around WWH's own leadership model. WWH wanted to bring leadership to the top of the agenda in its drive to achieve excellence for its residents and staff.

To inspire managers to support, enable and develop their people WWH created a 'WWH hero', 'making a difference a life at a time, a contact at a time'. Leadership at WWH is not about the job title, position, level or status – it's about behaviour, skills and attitude. The organisation is investing in its leaders to develop their thinking and actions to build great relationships and enable effective conversations on all topics. At the opening session of the programme, the CEO introduces the leadership model and training programme and participants go on to learn a number of practical skills and tools to apply immediately. These all relate directly to WWH's organisational values and operating principles and include self-awareness; the different values that drive people's behaviour; the impact that they can have on others; communication and coaching skills; and tools to manage change more effectively. All line managers, whether a head of service or a part-time scheme manager, must attend each of the seven days' training. Fairness is one of WWH's five values and it invests equally in all staff regardless of their working pattern, personal circumstances or gender.

WWH assesses leadership strengths, not just operational performance. An individual's responsibility for delivering great leadership is an explicit part of their role profile and is assessed during recruitment and as a specific part of 'Development Conversations' held throughout the year.

Managers now have better conversations on a wide variety of topics, from discussions around work-life balance and workloads to issues of performance or conduct. These open conversations provide a greater opportunity to understand and support their teams in a way that matters to them.

So far 123 managers have completed the programme, including 19 part-time managers.

Having listened to feedback from managers, WWH is designing an additional suite of development events to further enable managers to have effective conversations. These are likely to include skills and tools around communication; managing personal biases; and being assertive in the right way.

SPL Pioneers

The introduction of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) has given employers the chance to think about what they expect from men and women in their workforce when they become parents, and to re-assess their policy frameworks to provide more choice for new mothers and fathers. Employers have responded to this opportunity with creativity and commitment. New SPL policies are generous, both in terms of provision and in intention and there are really encouraging examples that are designed to remove as many obstacles to parents using SPL as possible.

What characterises good policy? What elements are essential, and what can other organisations learn and replicate to develop their own SPL scheme? Firstly, SPL should be easy to take and, ideally, patterns of leave should be neutral: certain configurations shouldn't be prioritised or incentivised over different ones. Maintaining choice is important. Pay is also important, and evidence from other countries has consistently shown that any kind of paternity leave needs to be paid generously enough to make it a viable option for families.

What organisations here have recognised is the new opportunity that SPL affords men who, for the first time, can take extended periods out of the workplace for childcare reasons if they are eligible. Using SPL, they are able to close the gap between paternal and maternal statutory provision and organisations fundamentally understand SPL is also a way to address some of the persistent issues that have affected women's careers post childbirth. Good SPL policies are more than a benefit for individual families. They are a useful tool for any organisation that is interested in equality and opportunity, talent retention and development.

What we can see is very encouraging: the Working Families SPL Pioneers are employers who have really stepped up and delivered innovative SPL policies and they're all very different. The coming year will be interesting, as fathers and mothers begin to take these policies up and no doubt there will be refinements and tweaks as these new opportunities bed in. Rates of take up will be particularly interesting. It's still the case that, after a new baby arrives, most fathers remain full time at work whilst mothers reduce their hours. Will SPL start to change this – shaping domestic and parenting habits as they are forming, and allowing couples to look afresh at not only how they share care, but how they share work, too? We will have to wait and see. The details of the SPL policies being offered by our Pioneers can be found at www.workingfamilies.org.uk/employers.

Congratulations to the organisations listed here, who have been recognised not only for their new SPL policies, but also for the way in which they have embraced the opportunity to make a real difference to both families and to the wider workplace culture around family and care.

Accenture
Addleshaw Goddard
AIG
American Express
Barclays
Brunel University London
Citi
Deloitte
Discovery Corporate Services
DLA Piper

EY
Hogan Lovells
JP Morgan
King Wood Mallenson
KPMG
Linklaters
Lloyds
LSE
Mayer Brown
National Assembly for Wales

PWC
RBS
Royal Air Force
Royal Bank of Canada
Scottish Parliament
Scottish Power
Societe Generale
TSB
UBS
UK Civil Service

Support for Employers

For the past 35 years, Working Families has been working with employers interested in how supporting employees through the various life stages, and leveraging flexible working, can increase organisational performance.

We've got a unique combination of working on practical, real-world problems with three key groups: employees, Government and employers. This has given us an unrivalled understanding of the complex interactions between organisational performance, individual motivation, team and project working, and parental and flexible working legislation.

As a result, our employer membership and training programmes bring together the latest real-life insights into what really matters to employers and their staff members.

Working Families provides a range of Consultancy and Training services that will enable you to build a flexible, high-performance and family-friendly workplace that benefits your organisation, employees and their families.

To find out how we can support you, please contact:

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