



Top Employers for  
Working Families

 **Special Awards**

**2017**

# Special Awards 2017

## The Judging Panel

### Sarah Jackson OBE

Chief Executive, Working Families (Chair)

### Clare Kelliher

Professor of Work and Organisation, Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield University

### Mary Mercer

Associate Principal Consultant, Institute for Employment Studies

### Pauline Miller

Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Lloyd's Corporation

### Jenny Roper

Editor, HR magazine



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# Foreword



In many ways, flexible working and family friendly working have never been more part of the bloodstream of British businesses.

Work life balance is frequently cited as high in the list of desirable criteria for graduates and people well established in their careers alike. This year, we have created new categories within our awards to enable organisations to shine out as a top employer in their sector – recognising the extent to which agile working has become a key competitive advantage.

The variety of entries we had for our Innovation Award shows the many different ways that organisations are putting flexibility and work life policies into practice – supporting employees who have become new parents, supporting those who have been working parents for some time, and supporting people who have taken time out of the workplace in order to focus on caring commitments.

We've also seen a greater emphasis on impact measurement this year, with those employers who are really at the top of their game able to show the difference that their interventions have made to their employees' lives and to their organisational culture. Our awards, together with our Top Employers benchmark, are focused on moving beyond policies to real, lived experiences in the workplace.

I'm also delighted to see strong entries for our Best for all stages of Fatherhood Award, reflecting the need for workplaces to keep up with a new generation of fathers who want to do things differently. Research we published at the start of the year reported worrying indications that fathers and mothers both feel they might have to downgrade their careers in order to care for their families, and that fathers are concerned about being viewed negatively if they work flexibly.

Congratulations to all the winners in this year's awards. I look forward to working with all of you to make work work, for people, families and the economy, so that families thrive and business prospers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Jackson'.

**Sarah Jackson OBE,**  
Chair of the Judging Panel





## The Cross River Partnership Best Flexible Working Initiative Award

# Alexander Mann Solutions



- ☆ Specific business objective that 'all roles can flex in some way' to establish an agile workforce.
- ☆ Collaborative technology platforms introduced to give more team members the tools to work flexibly.
- ☆ Passionate promoters at all levels demonstrating company-wide support for flexibility.

*"The progress made in 2016 is astounding."*

Quote from 2017 employee survey

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Talent acquisition and talent management leader Alexander Mann Solutions (AMS) last year launched a global flexible working programme to increase the take-up and consistency of flexible working. It placed flexible working at the heart of its global business strategy.

AMS set out to create a more agile workforce to respond to the changing demands of its global clients and embrace wider business trends. This includes support from chief executive Rosaleen Blair; educating employees and their managers on the benefits of flexible working; and enabling varying work patterns across its international operations.

The company conducted regional employee surveys to gauge the existing take-up of, appetite for and barriers/enablers to flexible working. It created a programme to gather data, build awareness, train staff and enhance technology ahead of a full rewrite of its flexible working policies.

The company encourages a wide range of working practices within its workforce including 'liquid' contractors and associates. A new technology platform enables meetings to take place remotely and a virtual training and development platform has been introduced.

Local champions and initiatives drive activity in the company's major hubs, from Manila to Krakow and Cleveland to Bracknell. These offices have increased their flexible working uptake while growing in size. Steps taken include the reorganisation of office space to create more flexible hubs and hot-desking facilities.

AMS has a flexible working group on Yammer – 15 per cent of the workforce has joined. It has also filmed video case studies, sharing the benefits of working flexibly and offering advice.

In its 2016 flexible working survey, 48 per cent of UK respondents said they had a degree of flexibility – now 66 per cent in 2017. In Asia Pacific, this number grew from 25 to 54 per cent of respondents.

Significant change has been made and AMS intends to enhance this further.

## The Direct Line Group Best for Embedded Flexibility Award



# Turn IT On

**ICT support business Turn IT On actively recruits staff to work flexibly, innovating to support those who work in non-traditional ways. Flexible workers are valued and recognised for their efforts.**

The management team at Turn IT On fully supports flexible working – four out of 11 managers work reduced hours and nine work from home on a regular basis. Across the business, 34 per cent of staff have flexible part-time working arrangements and 66 per cent are teleworkers or based from home.

Employee engagement surveys show that the great majority of staff feel the company offers good flexibility and supports parents and carers.

Opportunities to work remotely and flexibly are actively promoted, with a focus on helping mothers and fathers take sufficient leave. Shared parental leave has already been taken by a manager and all flexible working requests made in 2016 were granted.

Turn IT On has an open approach to staff working from home. Technology such as Skype is used to reduce the need for unnecessary travel.

Many staff are part-time – they are recognised as doing a great job in those hours. Monitoring shows part-

time staff and teleworkers do not appear to be impacted negatively due to their flexible status when it comes to performance measurement.

Staff are encouraged to talk about changing their terms where needed, such as for health, children and caring responsibilities. The company offers a gradual return to work for those with poor health, offers time off for IVF treatment, and has introduced sabbaticals.

Flexibility options are highlighted in adverts for new staff and advertising tailored to attract those looking for part-time and flexible work.

Managers are coached on handling flexible working requests and supporting staff with health and family issues. A new management training programme will include flexibility in the workplace.

- ☆ Managers act as role models in their use of flexible working and shared parental leave.
- ☆ Options to work flexibly are actively promoted.
- ☆ Performance of flexible workers monitored to ensure their work is fairly recognised.

*"Turn IT On were so accommodating and flexible from the outset. They really do care about the well-being of their employees and this has given me the perfect work life/home life balance."*

**Turn IT On employee**

Turn IT On employee

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## The Allen & Overy Innovation Award



COMMENDED

# Anglia Ruskin University

Anglia Ruskin University's formation of a Part-Time and Flexible Working Forum in response to employee concerns about work life balance was noted by the judges.

The Forum has worked to improve career development for flexible workers, promote the benefits of flexible working to reluctant line managers and generally display the organisation's commitment to flexibility. Evidence from staff shows attitudes towards flexible work and workers are changing and this is reflected in new working patterns being arranged. The University has taken steps to understand the issues managers are grappling with and has found ways to support them and innovate.



# Grant Thornton UK LLP

Advisory firm Grant Thornton UK LLP has pioneered a flexible approach to family leave. Their policies recognise that every family is different and individuals are best placed to choose how they tailor their pay to meet their needs. Under the new approach, people on maternity and adoption leave are given a percentage of their salary, and can choose how to use this.

The new policies were developed following feedback from employees that there were financial barriers to taking longer periods of leave, which the previous return-to-work bonus scheme was unable to address. The firm's CEO, Sacha Romanovitch, and the leadership team were fully supportive of the new approach.

On top of their statutory pay, employees are given a percentage of their salary as a 'pot' and can use this to top up their pay while on leave to 50 per cent, 75 per cent or 100 per cent of their weekly pay. They can also choose to take periods of unpaid leave. Mothers and primary adopters can transfer some of their allowance into shared parental leave pay.

In addition, fathers/partners are entitled to four weeks' fully paid shared parental leave, which can be paid flexibly, on top of two weeks'

ordinary paternity leave. These policies are a key part of Grant Thornton's culture and approach, recognising that every family is different and that their people are best placed to choose how to tailor their pay to meet their needs.

The firm is happy that the introduction of Family Leave Allowance has reduced the number of people taking shorter periods of leave. The number taking nine to 12 months' maternity leave has increased by 13 per cent.

A family leave calculator helps employees experiment with different ways of using their allowance. The firm also offers transitional coaching to all people taking long term leave, facilitated by internal coaches.

- ☆ Introduction of flexible family leave allowance.
- ☆ Shared parental leave enhanced for mothers and fathers.
- ☆ Transitional coaching for all employees taking long-term leave.



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The Cityparents Best for all stages of  
Fatherhood Award



# Imperial College London

- ☆ Case studies and high-level role models demonstrate support for fathers.
- ☆ Post-leave academic fellowship extended to fathers.
- ☆ Shared parental leave pay enhanced to match maternity pay.

*"Hearing other dads' experiences helped me realise it isn't just me."*

New Fathers'  
Workshop delegate



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**Imperial is enacting cultural change in a traditionally male-dominated academic institution. Initiatives aim to break down traditional assumptions around parenthood and ensure fathers can take an equal role.**

At Imperial change is led from the top. Provost James Stirling champions all family friendly initiatives including those relating to fathers. He has described his own experience as a father and his personal challenges around work life balance throughout his career, as well as highlighting and championing the support and resources on offer at Imperial.

Reducing stigma and promoting role models for working fathers is important. For example, the College has published interviews with male leaders on how flexible working has helped them.

Since shared parental leave was launched in April 2015, 30 fathers have taken it, and pay is matched with maternity provision. The College has extended the Elsie Widdowson Fellowship to fathers so that they can take time out to concentrate on their research on their return from shared parental leave.

In addition, new fathers' workshops and opportunities to meet other Imperial fathers are offered, as well as a group for informal networking

and Parents' Network – a website for Imperial parents. A number of fathers have also trained as parent mentors.

Fathers report positive experiences – workshops have a 95 per cent satisfaction rate. The College also has a high level of informal flexible working, with 84 per cent of male staff saying they are able to work flexibly to fulfil their role.

Imperial has launched an online training course for managers of staff going on family friendly leave. It is piloting a workshop for managers on supporting flexible working, which will be rolled out college-wide.

In 2016, 85 per cent of fathers felt supported, compared to 79 per cent in 2013, and 52 per cent of fathers had extended their paternity leave using paid/unpaid leave (39 per cent in 2013). Crucially, 19 per cent of fathers extended their paternity leave by more than a month – up from 3 per cent in 2013.

## The Deloitte Best for all stages of Motherhood Award



# Dulas



Engineering firm Dulas is bucking the trend in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics) businesses, with its extremely successful retention strategies for new mothers – resulting in a 93 per cent retention rate over a ten year period. Enhanced maternity pay, flexible working and focus on career progression are key.

- ☆ 100 per cent retention rate for mothers five years after the birth of their first child.
- ☆ All requests for flexibility approved.
- ☆ Mothers make up two-thirds of the senior management team.

In an industry in which 26 per cent of the workforce is female, rural SME Dulas has worked hard to provide equal opportunities for mothers to progress and strengthen their careers. It now boasts a workforce that is 42 per cent female, most of whom are mothers - way above the national average for an engineering company.

A key factor in enabling working mothers to succeed is flexible working – including time off in lieu and homeworking. Dulas has actively promoted flexible working options and has approved 100 per cent of related requests.

Work to support mothers begins at recruitment, with the organisation actively targeting women through web and media advertising.

New mothers have clear role models for progression. The board has 33 per cent female representation and 66 per cent of the senior management team are women, all of whom are mothers. This reflects targeted intervention to ensure equality of opportunity.

Dulas offers generous maternity provision: 18 weeks' full pay and eight weeks' half pay. There is no payback clause if an employee resigns during maternity leave.

For example, as part of succession plans to develop in-house skills, six women have successfully attained level five Institute of Leadership & Management accreditation and two others are working to level seven.

All mothers are offered a return to work induction tailored to their specific interests. A communication plan is developed for periods of leave so they can choose the amount of information they wish to receive.

Strong parental support, equal opportunity for development and equal pay all help attract and retain mothers at the senior level of the business.

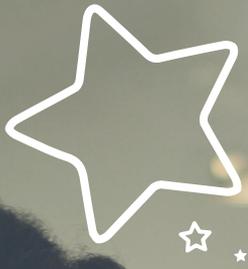
*“During my first and second pregnancies I was really well supported. Being able to adapt my working hours to suit childcare requirements has made all the difference.”*

**Laura Hiscox**

Senior Marketing  
Communications Coordinator

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**Deloitte.**



## The Best Small Employer Award



COMMENDED

### Virtual Sales Team

Virtual Sales Team was formed ten years ago as a family friendly organisation with flexibility at its core.

The judges were impressed with its excellent levels of staff retention, with employees enabled to start late or finish early for school run reasons, flex their shift patterns, work part-time and reduce or increase hours on a weekly basis. Virtual Sales Team offers a drop in 'surgery' where staff can ask for extra advice, support or training. Employees stay an average of 3.2 years – over double the telemarketing/call centre industry standard. Flexibility is ingrained in the culture of the business.

## The Best Small Employer Award

# Brand Learning

WINNER



The judges were impressed with Brand Learning's thoughtful approach to enabling staff to perform. Its family friendly culture recognises the need to balance work and home life demands.

As a consultancy, Brand Learning strives to mitigate occasional need for long hours by providing a flexible, family friendly approach to working patterns.

Brand Learning is led by parents, who appreciate that if home life is compromised work will suffer. Seven out of 12 members of the operating board are working mothers and the majority of the executive team are parents.

All employees have the option to work flexibly, subject to their role and business needs. Managers are given guidance on flexible working principles and flexibility is discussed in a fair and sensible way.

Qualifying mothers benefit from a maternity bonus that makes up the difference between statutory maternity pay and full salary for the first six weeks. Enhanced provision of four weeks' leave at 50 per cent of salary (or two weeks at 100 per cent) is offered for maternity and shared parental leave (SPL). This is also

offered to fathers and paternity leave is paid at two weeks' full salary. Two employees took SPL in 2016.

In the last two years, 12 out of 15 women have returned from maternity leave, with an additional employee returning to work for the company as an independent contractor. Four people have been promoted during or after maternity leave.

Requests to work reduced hours are positively reviewed (38 per cent of employees do so) and an 'earlies' rota enables the office-based operations team to leave early every other week. Brand Learning also considers a bespoke approach to flexibility, eg setting up and supporting one of our employees to permanently work remotely, following her moving further away.

Brand Learning holds forums and a quarterly survey to get feedback and ideas from the team.

- ☆ Bespoke and common sense approach to flexibility.
- ☆ Enhanced maternity, paternity and shared parental leave offers support for mothers and fathers.
- ☆ Creative solutions include options to 'buy' more holiday and spread the payments.

*"Brand Learning adopted a flexible shared parental leave approach allowing my husband to become a temporary stay-at-home dad whilst I returned to work."*

**Emma Ellins**

Client Capability Director



## The Best for Flexible Recruitment Award

# Lloyds Banking Group

- ☆ Job advertisements are specific about the types of flexible working that are possible in the role.
- ☆ Role design and agile hiring tool kit for line managers launched.
- ☆ Massive technology investment to support agility.

**Lloyds Banking Group has extended its agile approach into the hiring process. The bank has worked with candidates and managers to enhance advertising and recruitment practices, enabling flexible workers to progress.**

Lloyds Banking Group is tapping into widespread demand for flexible working: 26 per cent of UK employees work part-time or in an agile way. The Group now proactively considers agility at the point of hire, and has moved from printing a generic agility statement on recruitment advertisements to naming specific types of flexibility available.

A survey of 6000 candidates showed 90 per cent in favour of seeing a list of specific types of flexibility on job advertisements. Managers are now asked to select from a broad range of agile working practices and/or say that they are open to other suggestions from candidates.

This reassures candidates that hiring managers have considered which agile working options are appropriate for the role, meaning their experience is more likely to match.

The business provides a role design and agile hiring tool kit for managers, explaining the business case for agility, the agile working practices

available, guiding principles and case studies. Managers who advertise roles without agility are expected to provide justification.

Since launch, 90 per cent of all new vacancies have been agile. For example, in the first four months of the year, 140 vacancies were advertised as specifically open to job sharing.

The Group sponsors the Timewise Hire Me My Way campaign, which aims to treble the proportion of quality part-time and agile jobs to one million by 2020.

In addition, Lloyds Banking Group is investing £1bn over the next three years to develop its digital offering and ensure technology is sufficient for agile working to be embedded in the business. This is in addition to asking divisions to re-think traditional ways of working and how whole teams are configured.



The Carers UK and Centrica Best for Carers and Eldercare Award



# Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Public sector body Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is working hard to improve the experiences of its carer population. Having consulted on and established a Carers' Policy in 2016, it offers a range of practical support to suit individual circumstances.

HIE has established an informal register to identify carers. All new staff have a one-to-one meeting with the HR manager to highlight the support available to carers and encourage those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves.

Managers are trained in understanding that carers have specific needs that differ from those of employees with mainstream childcare responsibilities. Line managers know carers may have unexpected emergencies to deal with and will agree contingency plans with them.

Employees can also approach the HR team, where there is a dedicated carers' champion to raise awareness about caring issues, promote carer-friendly policies and practices and ensure equal treatment for carers across the organisation.

HIE operates a passport scheme that carers can use to document their needs at work and identify solutions to those needs. This means

information can travel with them if their role or line manager changes.

In addition, carers are entitled to paid special leave, private time and space to make calls about their caring responsibilities, and a car parking space close enough to enable them to get to and from work easily.

HIE offers both adjustment leave and short-term flexible working at the employee's request. These allow carers to adjust to unexpected changes or a new caring situation.

Carers can refer themselves to HIE's Occupational Health Service for advice, support and help in understanding specific conditions, medication and side-effects. The employee assistance programme also offers information and advice on practical issues that carers may face, including claiming benefits and allowances, organising short breaks, fundraising and obtaining specialised equipment. HIE additionally provides information on external sources of support.

- ☆ Informal carers' register identifies staff with caring responsibilities.
- ☆ Managers can access a range of supportive initiatives, including training, to help address the specific needs of carers.
- ☆ Practical support provided and signposting to a range of additional services.

*"Having the flexibility of working hours meant I didn't feel under pressure at any time and was able to balance work and domestic commitments while caring for my wife."*

**Donnie,**  
Western Isles

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**centrica**

**carersUK**  
making life better for carers



## The Best Public Sector Employer Award

★ **COMMENDED**

# Civil Service

The Civil Service has shown consistent leadership and innovation in flexible working and inclusion.

In total, 24 per cent of employees work part-time and many others work flexibly in some way – such as home working, term time working or compressed hours. Managers are trained on flexible working and job sharing is actively supported – a job share database helps employees find suitable job share partners. There are many networks and support groups for employees and most vacancies are advertised as being suitable for flexible working. Senior champions ensure that inclusion is led from the highest levels of the 400,000-strong organisation.



# West Dunbartonshire Council

**West Dunbartonshire Council's (WDC's) commitment to being the best was clear to the judges in the steady progress made in its family friendly provision.**

WDC understands what employees want and demonstrates commitment to making it work. A significant proportion of WDC employees are parents or carers, and the Council offers a wide range of practical support. It provides paid bereavement leave and offers flexibility through carers' leave, 'buy or bank' leave, paid disability leave and personal days.

Managers are empowered to make day-to-day decisions. Masterclasses are run with HR and organisational development on family friendly policies and schemes. The Council offers a range of flexible working policies and has significantly improved mobile IT capabilities, enabling many employees to work from home.

The first Scottish local authority to adopt the Happy to Talk Flexible Working strapline, WDC will now ask prospective employees if they wish to work flexibly and which hours they would prefer.

WDC has an Employee Carers' Support Network supported by Carers of West Dunbartonshire, MacMillan Cancer Support and Money and Welfare Advice Service – representatives of which attend the

day-time meetings. It also has an Armed Forces Support Group.

The Council's chief executive is a working mother and the champion of its Carers' Support Network. There is also a fathers' champion who is responsible for occupational areas where men are predominantly employed.

WDC aims to attract the best talent and provides the opportunity for prospective employees to re-enter the workplace following a break from employment for the provision of care of a child or an adult. Subject to the specified criteria of the post, all vacancies advertised will offer a guaranteed interview for candidates returning from a break from employment following a period of providing care.

The organisation has seen an average absence fall of 20 per cent from October 2015 to September 2016. Stress absence is down 33 per cent over the same period and there has been a 14 per cent reduction in vacancies. It believes the new approach to employee flexibility has contributed significantly to this.

- ☆ Extending flexible recruitment to proactively ask candidates what flexibility they desire.
- ☆ Extensive support for carers and bereaved employees.
- ☆ Making strides to support fathers in equal parenting.

*"At the time of my father's passing, the Bereavement Leave Scheme had just begun. My manager filled in the appropriate paperwork and I did not have to come into the workplace at a time when my emotions were all over the place."*





## The Best Large Private Sector Employer Award

★  
**COMMENDED**

### **Sky**

Sky has worked hard to challenge myths about flexible working and 90 per cent of the organisation works on a flexible basis.

The culture focuses on employee performance instead of desk time and is committed to helping employees achieve their personal goals and work life balance. Leaders have begun to talk about flexibility and promote the benefits. The business uses national campaigns to focus attention on changing ways of working. Employees are empowered to choose times and spaces to work. Sky's Family Leave Policy recognises that there is no such thing as a typical family and aims to give individuals choice and support.

## The Best Large Private Sector Employer Award



# Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group puts flexible work at the heart of its business, focusing on agile workers, parents and carers.

Agile working is key to the Group's strategy. Over a third of employees work in an agile way. The company receives 100 formal applications per month, of which more than 90 per cent are approved.

Around 43 per cent of employees at Lloyds Banking Group have parenting or caring responsibilities.

Extended maternity leave of up to 63 weeks is offered and pay is enhanced for maternity, adoption and shared parental leave. Partners can also take extended leave and parents can take leave to support their children at critical times, such as school transitions.

The company's maternity support package is leading-edge, with e-learning modules for each stage of the process, including modules for fathers and partners. A specialist support team helps colleagues and line managers ensure an effective transition.

Shared parental leave (SPL) has been rolled out to all. Of all SPL cases to date, 84 per cent were by male colleagues, and further initiatives will be launched for fathers this year.

In 2016, Lloyds Banking Group launched a new network to support parents and carers. The network's three chairs all have parenting and carer responsibilities and are agile working champions. Some 11 per cent of employees (8,500) participate in the network, which offers support through monthly events, networking, coaching and masterclasses.

Lloyds Banking Group also operates a returners' programme for professional men and women who have been on a career break of two years or more. It has created professional internships for 28 candidates, and will place 45 in 2017.

In 2016 the company launched a new approach to hiring. Actively promoting flexible options led to 93 per cent of new advertised roles being agile. The bank also analyses performance management results for part-time vs full-time workers, feeding them into line manager guidance and objectives.

Employee engagement surveys show an upward trend in the experiences of flexible workers, parents and carers.

- ☆ Enhancements offered for all family leave.
- ☆ Proactive support for flexibility in recruitment processes.
- ☆ Launched a colleague network for parents and carers.

*"Working for the Group has been absolutely ideal for me. It allows me to use several different agile practices to help balance my work and home life."*

**Cathy Meston,**

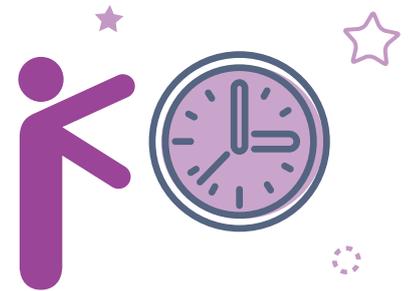
Manager, Retail Engagement and Responsible Business





## The Best Third Sector Employer Award

# Inspiring Scotland



- ☆ Uses flexibility to compete with the salaries offered by larger organisations.
- ☆ Flexibility is proactively offered and is the norm.
- ☆ Employees are encouraged to suggest new ways of working.

*“Inspiring Scotland understood my domestic commitments prior to employing me, and have supported my flexible approach to working. There is the same expectation of high performance but without a restrictive ‘9 to 5’ view of a working day. This has provided me with the ability to not only support my children appropriately but to enjoy a challenging and rewarding job.”*

Arran

**The judges were impressed by the way Inspiring Scotland uses time to compete with private sector organisations offering bigger salaries. Its flexible culture attracts and retains high calibre staff.**

Flexible working is at the heart of Inspiring Scotland’s business – 87 per cent of employees work flexibly, including three out of five members of the senior executive team.

The leadership team all have children, and understand that when work life balance causes family pressures, employees are less positive, productive and likely to go the extra mile for the organisation.

The organisation pro-actively encourages staff to consider flexible working. It offers home working, reduced hours, compressed hours, sabbaticals and non-standard working hours to all and encourages staff to suggest new ideas. One staff suggestion for enhanced wellbeing and work life balance was to introduce a cycle scheme. A third of staff have now participated in the scheme.

It is accepted, and expected, that many colleagues are only in the office one or two days a week. Flexible working is the norm rather than the exception, and the times that people are in the office are relaxed and focused.

Enhanced maternity pay provides an extra £100 per week in weeks seven to 39 of the maternity period. All keeping in touch days are paid, in addition to the statutory and enhanced maternity pay entitlement. Paternity leave is paid and shared parental leave is enhanced in the same way as maternity leave. All employees are encouraged to take the time they need.

As a third sector organisation Inspiring Scotland is unable to compete with the salaries offered by commercial organisations, but its staff-centric culture enables it to attract a calibre of colleague that salary alone could not. The majority have taken pay cuts of 30 – 60 per cent to join the organisation, helped significantly by the flexible working culture. Staff retention rates are significantly above the sector norm.

# Judges' Notebook

The panel was impressed by the entries of all the shortlisted organisations.

## The Cross River Partnership Best Flexible Working Initiative Award

### AB World Foods

- The 'Summer Hours' initiative was introduced to enable employees to go home early on a Friday in the summer months.
- In return for working extra hours Monday-Thursday, employees can finish work from 12.30pm on Friday, allowing them more flexibility in the traditional holiday period.
- Initially introduced as a trial, it received excellent feedback and was requested by employees as a recurring summer working initiative. Take-up rate was 62 per cent and the scheme has proved very attractive when hiring.

### Holiday Extras

- Extended its flexible working scheme Anywhere Anytime to give complete flexibility to the team.
- Under Anywhere, Anytime+ employees can work wherever and whenever they want as long as their objectives are delivered and they are contactable.
- Managers trained and given autonomy to make agreements that are right for their team and the business.
- All team members equipped with technology to keep connected and social media tools used to stay in touch.

FINALISTS



## The Direct Line Group Best for Embedded Flexibility Award

### Inspiring Scotland

- Flexibility is embedded in Inspiring Scotland. In total 87 per cent of employees have formal flexible working arrangements, including home working, reduced hours, compressed hours and non-standard hours.
- The organisation actively promotes flexibility, seeing it as a normal way of working and using it to attract high calibre staff keen to achieve work life balance.
- Inspiring Scotland has high levels of staff retention and success in retaining employees after maternity leave.

### Lloyds Banking Group

- Lloyds Banking Group receives around 100 requests for agile working a month and has agreed more than 90 per cent of them.
- Its agility programme encompasses culture, job design, hiring, property and technology and is designed to embed a flexible approach across the organisation. Around a third of employees now work in an agile way.
- The bank has improved access to the tools and technology needed to enable effective remote working.



## The Allen & Overy Innovation Award

### Barclays

- Welcome back to work programme offering 12-week placements for senior women who have taken a multi-year career break and want to explore ways of getting back into the working world.
- Direct channel to recruit high potential senior women from a previously-overlooked talent pool. Six initial placements led to four extended contracts and five seeking permanent roles at the firm, one of which has been secured.
- Following its initial success the scheme has been introduced in the US.

### EY - Career returner programme

- EY Reconnect was created to provide a bridge back into the workplace for experienced professionals following career breaks of 2-10 years.
- EY Reconnect aims to encourage the attraction and retention of diverse senior talent across the business, especially relevant for those who have had a break for family commitments.
- The pilot programme attracted nearly 300 candidates several of whom have joined the firm on a permanent basis. The scheme is now being rolled out across the UK.

### EY - New parent mentoring scheme

- Maternity buddy scheme replaced with transition mentoring scheme open to all parents, complementing existing formal career and family mentoring/coaching.
- New scheme based on requests from members of EY's Family Network for targeted support during the transition to parenthood, ideally from colleagues and peers who understand the working environment.
- Scheme designed to be self-sustaining, encouraging today's mentees to become

tomorrow's mentors. Video guides designed for mentees and mentors are available online.

## The Cityparents Best for all stages of Fatherhood Award

### Barclays

- So far 162 parents have taken shared parental leave at Barclays – 95 per cent of them fathers. There are also high levels of paid paternity leave take-up.
- Dedicated coaching sessions and webinars are run to support fathers and of 3,085 members of the bank's family network, 42 per cent are men.
- Fathers are supported at all stages of parenthood, not just after the birth of a child. For example fathers have taken time off around a child's exams at secondary school.

## The Deloitte Best for all stages of Motherhood Award

### Barclays

- To increase retention, Barclays introduced a programme of support from pre-post maternity, including workshops, networking, briefing packs for employees and managers and KIT sessions.
- A mentoring tool was developed as a platform for career development discussions and dedicated portal Woman@Barclays created to bring together support resources.
- Dynamic (flexible) working campaign to reduce discrimination by promoting flexibility for all.
- Retention rate for mothers 99 per cent (within 12 months) and 94 per cent (12 months+). Senior levels have seen the greatest retention shift.

### JP Morgan

- Senior steering committee set up to review maternity support offered and how it can be strengthened.

## FINALISTS



- Maternity buddy programme expanded, sitting alongside coaching and line manager training.
- Quarterly returner lunches for those back from leave, plus re-entry programme for women out of the workforce for two or more years – 100 per cent of candidates received permanent positions in its second year.
- Mothers' lounges and emergency childcare offered as well as networking and targeted events.

### PageGroup

- Pre/post Maternity coaching, mentoring for new mothers and parenting seminars across a range of topics, chosen by our parents.
- Launched Dynamic Working programme to give all employees flexibility and choice.
- Creation of a portal for work and family with access to free emergency back-up childcare, webinars, information and expert advice.
- Series of networking groups and social events to support parents.

## The Best for Flexible Recruitment Award



### Berwin Leighton Paisner

- A new office was set up to operate in a more flexible way, challenging law firms' traditional ways of working. Home-based team of real estate lawyers recruited as part of this drive.
- Flexi-time system trialed in the firm's Manchester office. Together with formal flexible arrangements this means 96 per cent of the Manchester office have the ability to work flexibly.
- Case studies and clear messages convey BLP's support for flexibility at recruitment.

### OUTiCO

- Pharmaceutical SME OUTiCO actively recruits on the basis of flexibility. As well as using the Happy to Talk Flexible Working strapline, it is including flexibility in the advert headline, attracting candidates who are looking for better work life balance.
- Flexible contracts are offered as standard – 100 per cent of staff have flexibility.
- The company uses its blog to highlight the value and benefits of flexible working, linking to relevant news articles and demonstrating its support.

### Virtual Sales Team

- Virtual Sales Team's business model is designed on flexibility and all external roles are advertised as flexible.
- The company has set a target that full-time staff will not exceed 20 per cent of the workforce, aiming to create a diverse team of employees who provide a better quality of service for clients.
- Overall, 83 per cent of staff work part-time and two senior managers work four-day weeks. Surveys show 90 per cent of staff are happy with their work life balance.

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

### West Dunbartonshire Council

- Confidential Carers' register enables carers to identify themselves.
- Carers' Support Network set up to offer support and practical assistance during the working day, attended by external advice and support agencies: Carers of West Dunbartonshire, MacMillan Cancer Support and Money and Welfare Advice Service.
- Wide range of flexible leave options available to suit the needs of carers in the organisation.
- WDC's credentials as a flexible and caring employer actively promoted at the recruitment stage.



## The Best Public Sector Employer Award

### Highlands and Islands Enterprise

- All staff can access flexible working and have the technology to work remotely.
- The organisation recruits from a large geographical area and does not see location as a barrier.
- 25 per cent of staff have agreed flexible working arrangements in place, with informal local flexibility such as remote or occasional working from home encouraged.
- New carers' policy developed in conjunction with staff and initiatives introduced to help carers in the workplace find practical assistance and emotional support.

## The Best Large Private Sector Employer Award

### AB World Foods

- Enhanced and competitive family-related benefits.
- 'Summer Hours' scheme enables employees to finish early on a Friday – 62 per cent take up.
- New flexible working trial: Employees in the commercial departments now have the flexibility to be able to work from home on a Monday and Friday and benefit from core office hours of 10am-4pm Tuesday-Thursday. This helps to avoid the busier commuting days and also allows parents time at the beginning and end of the day for the school run.
- 100 per cent return rate for mothers on maternity leave, with strong connections during the leave period.

### Berwin Leighton Paisner

- Recruitment advertising promotes the firm's increasing levels of flexibility.

- Senior management encourage informal flexible working and 25 per cent of the workforce have formal flexibility agreements.
- Training offered for managing remote workers, networks launched to support parents, family day introduced and series of talks provided on a range of family issues.
- Shared parental leave enhanced to the same level as maternity leave, and taken by over 35 per cent of eligible fathers.

## The Best Third Sector Employer Award

### SeAp

- Across the organisation, 85 per cent of staff work flexibly and have access to technology to assist them. Jobs are advertised as open to flexibility.
- Managers are trained on dealing with remote working and preventing staff becoming isolated, using video calling to keep in touch.
- Line managers given autonomy to offer individuals day-to-day flexibility as needed.
- Senior management team promote the benefits of flexibility and act as role models.

### Southdown Housing

- Flexible working is embedded in the organisation's culture: 20 per cent of the senior management team work part-time and many staff also work remotely or from other locations.
- Roles are advertised as flexible by default in the recruitment process.
- The organisation makes a pledge that it will be a flexible employer and managers are recruited and trained to promote flexibility.
- Support is offered for those returning to work after long career breaks.

# Support for Employers



Working Families is the UK's work life balance organisation. We've spent the last forty years helping organisations develop an agile, flexible and family friendly approach to work that maximises engagement, wellbeing and on-going high performance – the key to business success.

Through employer membership, benchmarking, training and consultancy, we help employers develop an inclusive high performing workforce, fit for the future.

We've developed the Happy to Talk Flexible Working strapline for employers to show the flexibility on offer in their vacancies, opening up the application process to more people with the right skills and talents. Crucially, the strapline encourages managers to think through the best way to get the job done.

*"Working Families' thought leadership has been critical to the evolution of both our practice and our strategy and they understand the commercial world and the challenges and opportunities it can bring in achieving these goals."*

American Express

*"From support in embedding our flexible working policies, to showcasing us as a Shared Parental Leave Pioneer, we have valued the advice and expertise provided by the organisation. We are proud to be named in the Top 30 Employers for Working Families for the 8th year in a row, and use the benchmark as an opportunity to continuously improve all of our family friendly policies."*

KPMG

*"Membership of Working Families has proven to be one of the best diversity budget spends to date. Not only do they provide a wealth of experience and solid evidence based support for our internal diversity programmes of work, Working Families also provides our employees with expert advice on all aspects of being a working parent and carer"*

E-ON UK

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

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