


A black and white photograph of a man in a light-colored button-down shirt and dark pants, smiling and helping a young child ride a bicycle. The child is wearing a helmet and overalls, and is laughing joyfully. They are on a paved path with trees in the background.

**Working  
Families**

**National  
Work  
Life Week**

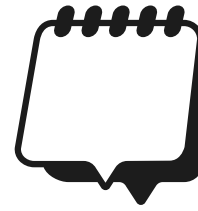


**7-11 October 2024**

**#WorkLifeWeek**

**Employers Toolkit**

# What is National Work Life Week?



National Work Life Week is the annual campaign designed to highlight the value of flexible and family-friendly practices in the workplace. It's run by Working Families, the UK's national charity for working parents and carers.

As an employer, you can use the week to showcase how your workplace is enabling everyone to thrive both at work and at home. This short guide is your starting point, full of tips on how to involve your staff team and let the wider world know that you are an employer that makes the wellbeing of your people a high priority.

But you don't have to stop there! Let your imagination run wild and ask your staff, family network groups (if you have them), and the senior team for ideas that will suit your own unique culture.

Make sure you spread the word by sharing what you're doing using the tag:  
**#WorkLifeWeek**



## What does flexible working mean to you?

Flexible working can mean many things. For some, it's the way you work so you can lean into your work and your home life, for others, it's what it enables you to do to support the ones you love, take care of your needs or get more out of life.

This year's theme - **what does flex mean to you?** - is about sharing the possibilities of flexible working, because everyone can feel the benefits of working flexibly, no matter what your job or who you care for.





# What does flex mean to you?

**"I am far less stressed about managing my health conditions now that they no longer have such a big impact on my work life."**

**"I have more energy, feel less exhausted; and generally much happier."**

**"As a single mother, it means I can actually work and provide for my daughter. Otherwise, we would not be able to live where we do and she wouldn't have the opportunities she has"**

**"Ability to care for family - elders especially. I've been able to relocate to the home of my parents-in-law to look after them when needed, which has made all the difference in the world, not only to them but to my anxiety levels."**

**Working reduced hours has allowed me to continue to pursue my career while raising a family. My work is an integral part of my identity. Being supported to work reduced hours in a challenging role allows me to feel fulfilled in my career while also enabling quality time with my family.**





**More than  
ever, we need  
to prioritise  
flexible and  
family-friendly  
working for all.**

## **Why does flexible working matter?**

Flexible working is no longer just a perk or a nice-to-have. For many, it's a must-have, and is the difference between having a job and not.

And yet, not everyone who needs flexible working has access to it. Our 2023 *Working Families Index* Spotlight Report found that those on lower incomes face barriers accessing flexible working and are twice as likely to have an informal flexible working request rejected than those on higher incomes. We know that flexible working is a way for more people to participate and progress in work, as well as having a positive effect on their lives. But it can't just be reserved for those on higher incomes working behind a desk. No matter what your job, everyone should be able to unlock the benefits of flexibility.

## Flex is for everyone

Flexible working comes in many forms, not just home and hybrid working. Thinking creatively about flexible solutions can help to meet the needs of the 46% of UK working parents who work in 'place-based roles' (roles that must take place at a specific location).

## Flex can be good for you

Our research shows that parents and carers on a lower income who are able to access flexible working are a third less likely to have to quit their job to manage childcare, 25% less likely to fall into debt, and half as likely to feel their mental health was negatively affected by the struggle to find childcare.

## Flex opens doors

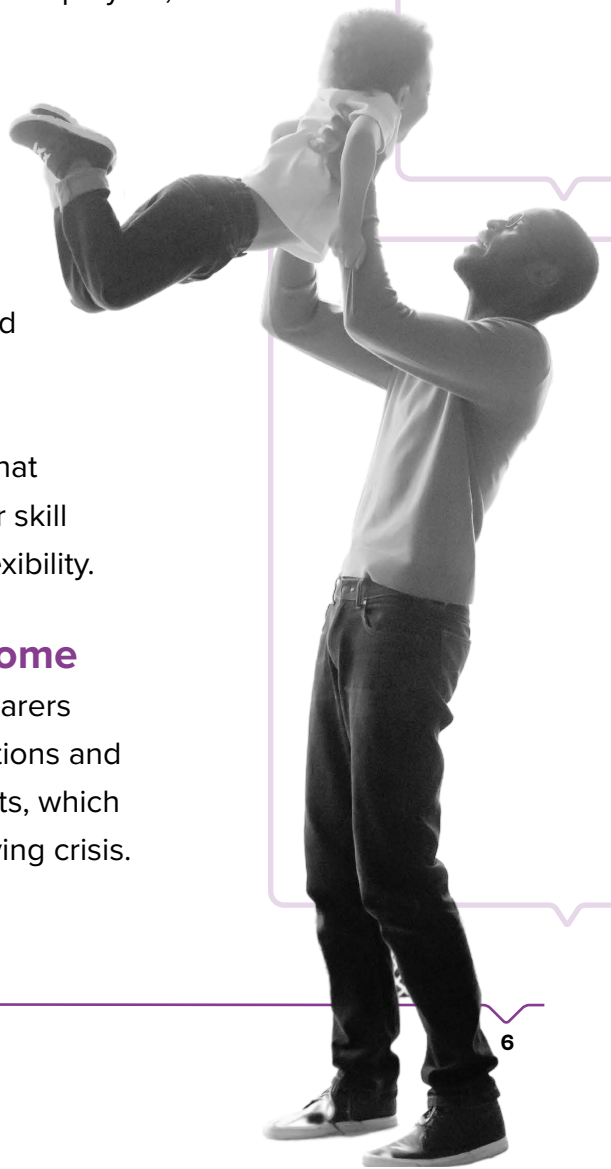
Advertising flexible jobs helps more people into work. Our research showed that 82% of UK parents would apply for a job that advertised flexible working options, compared to only 31% that would apply for a job that didn't. For employers, this means that flexible working can dramatically increase your talent pool.

## Flex is a priority for many

For many, flex is a deal maker. Over half of UK parents (55%) would be likely to consider leaving their job if they found another one that offered more flexible options. Flex can also unlock untapped talent, reaching the 3 in 10 UK parents that are currently working in jobs below their skill level because their jobs offer greater flexibility.

## Flex can free up valuable income




Flexible working can help parents and carers respond to ever-evolving financial situations and save money on childcare and travel costs, which can be a lifeline in the current cost-of-living crisis.





# Happy to talk Flexible Working

The Flexible Working Act that came into effect this year aims to help employers and employees reach flexible solutions that work for everyone. They include:

-  Employees can apply for flexible working from day one in a job and can make two formal requests a year.
-  Employers must make a decision within two months.
-  If the employer feels it isn't possible to accept the request, they must consult with the employee. This aims to open up a dialogue that will hopefully lead to a better outcome for both parties.

Your organisation can get ahead by thinking about how all roles can be done flexibly. To help adopt a flex mindset, and to let people know you're open to flexible working, we have developed the Happy to Talk Flexible Working logo. **Visit our website** for step-by-step instructions for designing and advertising flexible roles that work for your organisation.

**How can employers attract the best talent?** By designing jobs as flexible by default and telling potential hires you're...



Happy to talk  
**Flexible  
Working**



# Flex-fit Job Analysis toolkit

There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to flexible working, but our **Flex-fit toolkit** can be used to identify the potential for flexibility in any role. It has been used successfully for almost 20 years in multiple industry sectors and for many different roles across many different business functions and seniority.

The **Flex-fit Job Analysis toolkit** enables an individual to:

- 📌 identify which parts of a role could be done at different times or in different locations;
- 📌 identify how the role can be split to form reduced-hours and/or job-share options; and
- 📌 provide a framework for discussion about flexible working that is evidence-based and transparent.

**To celebrate National Work Life Week we are giving away the Flex-fit toolkit for FREE from August to October!**

# Top tips on taking part in National Work Life Week

## Lead from the front

One thing we know is that for culture change to work, it needs to be led by action and role modelling from the top. Involve senior leaders and your CEO in National Work Life Week from the start (get it in their diaries now!) and make sure they are a visible part of your activities.

- **Do any of your senior team work flexibly?**

Part-time or flexed hours? Job share? Different locations? Ask them to write a blog to mark the week and share their experiences of flexible working.

- **Would your CEO be willing to lead a webinar?**

This could be alongside team members with different experiences (parents, carers, people with other commitments outside work) to highlight the benefits diversity, flexibility, and family-friendly working brings to the organisation.





## Get the conversation going

Use this week as a chance to put flexible working and work-life fit at the top of the agenda by starting a conversation about different ways of working with a staff webinar, a roundtable, or a **Working Families lunch and learn**. Topics could include top tips for flexible working, returning to work after family leave, flexible recruitment, and best-practice policies for parents and carers. You may want to invite some inspiring speakers who can talk about balancing work and family life, building confidence, and prioritising self-care.

Why not keep the conversation going? Invite colleagues to share what flexible working helps them to do - whether it's getting into sports, being able to pick the kids up from school, taking a loved one to an appointment, or getting the shopping done when it's quiet. Set up a space on your intranet or internal social channels to share pictures and stories.

## One size doesn't fit all

Although there has been a lot of emphasis on home-working and hybrid working recently, there are so many other ways in which people work flexibly; for example, job sharing, annualised hours, term-time working, shift swapping, and compressed hours. Take the opportunity to broaden the understanding of flexible working in your organisation by showcasing different working patterns. Testing a new way of working using a trial period is a really good way to understand if it is going to work for the individual and the team. If it works, then share it within the organisation - it may benefit another team or give a colleague the confidence to make their own request. Consult with employees who can't work from home. Do they have an alternative vision for flexibility? You may discover they have their own solutions that will work well for the team and the organisation, such as self-rostering.

## Looking for inspiration?

Check out our **case study library** and see how progressive organisations have embedded flexibility and reaped the benefits.



## **Support your managers**

Good line manager support is vital to the success of flexible working. Set your managers up for success by giving them the skills and **resources** they need to manage flexible or hybrid workers. Working Families' expert consultants can provide tailored **coaching** for line managers in supporting high-performing, flexible teams. Encourage managers to speak to and support each other - discussing what works and doesn't work in one team might help someone in another area.

## **Communication is key**








Use this week as a chance to put the spotlight on your own family-friendly policies and employee benefits. Run seminars, use your intranet to highlight a different policy each day, or do an all-staff Q&A to help promote what you are already doing and to ensure you reach the widest audience possible. If you have a parent and carer or family network, you could also emphasise the vital role they play in supporting parents and carers within the organisation.

## **Shout about switching off**

Use this week to ensure that your staff team is finding time to disconnect, and check that line managers feel they have the skills and messages to encourage their teams to switch off on time. Encourage senior leaders to 'leave loudly' and message their teams when they stop working, sharing what they are going to do in their free time. Use it as an opportunity to show that productivity doesn't decrease when people finish on time; it often increases!

Remember to share what you're doing using the hashtag **#WorkLifeWeek**. Letting your communications team know about it well in advance will help make sure your organisation is primed and ready to make a big noise about all the great work you're doing.

# How will you be celebrating National Work Life Week?

-  "Our Head of HR will be talking about her experience of flexible working when returning from maternity leave."
-  "We're passionate about women's voices being heard by all, so we've written a blog that we will launch during this week about flexible working and supporting women to get back into work after a career break or to raise children."
-  "I am planning to mark National Work Life Week in my Facebook community."
-  "Line manager training on benefits of working from home for employees and the business."
-  "We are bringing in some fruits and cakes for everyone to share."
-  "We are giving out happiness calendars to all staff so we can all actively think and discuss how to make each day fulfilling and implement self-care practices into each day, even when we're at work."
-  "We're kick-starting a month-long step challenge to encourage everyone to get fit and healthy."

# Tips for SMEs

Running a smaller organisation? There are lots of ways you can encourage your team to think about and improve their wellbeing at work for National Work Life Week.

**Here are some suggestions to get you started:**

## Switch up the communication

Instead of virtual chats, why not make them telephone calls and walk together outside? Enjoy some time in nature and get your steps in!

## Share your stories

Ask your team to share what they are doing to aid their wellbeing during the week. It could be going for a run, spending time with loved ones, or taking up a new hobby.

## Offer staff a different experience

Even if you don't have a big budget, there may be options, such as asking a local organisation if they can offer a virtual yoga class or meditation taster session.

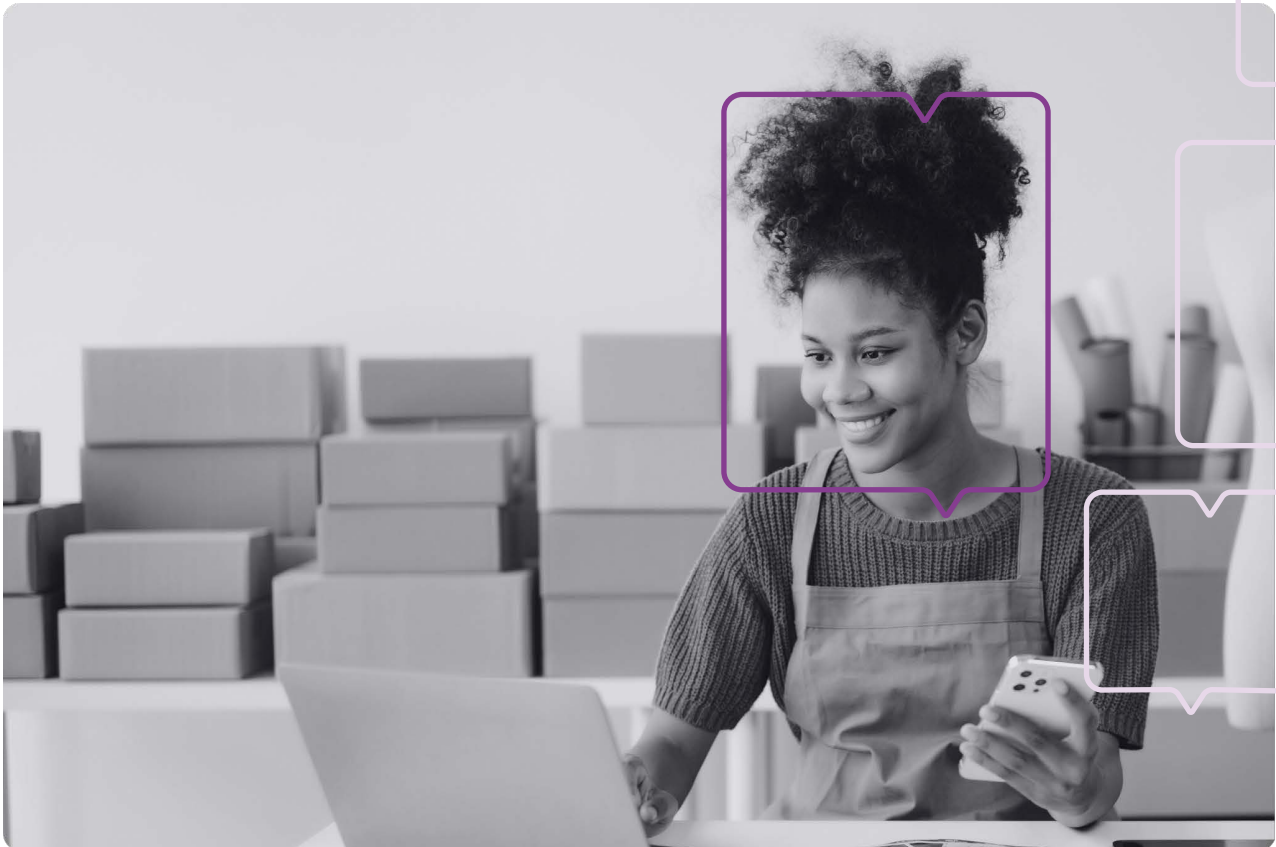


## Highlight what you've already got

Whether that's coffee catch-ups with the CEO, access to support via a virtual app, or group fitness sessions, make sure you shout about it. And always share your own flexible working to inspire others.

**Working Families** has a support package specifically tailored to the needs of smaller businesses - for more information head to [our website](#).

We also have **FREE** resources for **SMEs** about managing maternity leave, flexible working, and flexible recruitment, which you can [download here](#).



# Resources and training

Running a training session for staff during National Work Life Week is a great way to show that you are actively encouraging a better balance at work.

**Book early to avoid disappointment!**

## Lunch and Learn sessions

Are you looking to support your employees and managers to work flexibly, optimise team engagement, and ensure high productivity? Why not take a look at our updated **[lunch and learn programme](#)**? Each interactive 45-minute session, delivered by our experts, provides insight, guidance, and practical tips on a range of topics.

We've recently added a new session all about flexible recruitment, exploring job design, the flexible recruitment process and how flexibility fits within teams, with best practice case studies of flexible recruitment in action from progressive employers. Working Families employer members can benefit from a free or discounted Lunch and Learn, depending on their level of membership, or they can be booked separately by non-members.

## Speaker slots


If you are running a panel event, you can book one of our expert speakers to share insight, inspiration and best practice on family-friendly and flexible working.

## Policy reviews and virtual consultancy

Our experts will help you review your policies and share with you what best practice looks like for flexible working and family-friendly policies. If you don't have policies, we can help you create them. We'll also provide you with comprehensive toolkits comprising tools, templates, factsheets, and guides for senior leaders and line managers.

## Flexible working group coaching

Our group coaching workshops will give you and your staff the strategies, skills, and tools they need to implement effective flexible working across your organisation. We can tailor the coaching for line managers, for employees, or for the senior leadership team and board. [Watch our taster films.](#)

 Contact **[employers@workingfamilies.org.uk](mailto:employers@workingfamilies.org.uk)** to find out more about what we offer.

**"A HUGE thank you to both of you for such a fantastic presentation. We've been receiving so much positive feedback already and it's set a precedent on the type of culture we'd like to create for our working parents... thank you and well done!"**

Southern Water



## Life after National Work Life Week...

After a week of focusing on flexibility and creating a culture of wellbeing at work, it's easy to slip back into our old ways.

If you want to build a family-friendly, flexible organisation that works for your employees and delivers significant business benefits, then we can help.

### Become a Working Families member

Keep your business at the forefront of best practice with a Working Families membership. Our membership scheme works for all types of organisations, regardless of size, maturity, and working dynamic.

The way to attract and retain the best talent, whatever sector you're in, is to make sure your ways of working are outstanding.

Members have access to a wealth of information, support from experts, and easily accessible toolkits designed to help you to create a new culture, mindset and behaviours to embed flexible, high performing ways of working within your business.

You can expect access to our Top Employers for Working Families Benchmark and in-depth analysis, regular round tables, network chair discussions and webinars, as well as newsletters and updates on changes to legislation, case studies, and opportunities to share ideas and best practices with the UK's leading employers.

**Join today!**  
**Email us**  
**to find out more!**





## Get in touch

We would love to hear from you!

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For more information on our work and mission, please visit

**workingfamilies.org.uk**

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