

# Webinar

## Leading flex from the front



### Engaging and empowering senior managers

**Date of event – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

#### Speakers

We were delighted to be joined by:

- Mike Bambrook, Head of Performance and Program Management, Public Policy and Corporate Responsibility at Barclays
- Sam Skerry, SVP Mergers & Acquisitions and Business Development at bp
- Susanne Jacobs, an organisational behaviour and performance expert and coach

#### Our Top Takeaways:

##### Start with communication

- Take time to understand the individual needs in a team. Applying policy in a vacuum can be challenging or ineffective.
- Raise awareness of policies. Remind staff of the policies that are available on a regular basis and as they enter different phases of life to make take-up acceptable.
- Listen to networks or employee resource groups to hear the voice of what matters to staff or what can be improved.
- Normalise talking about family or caring responsibilities. It will help everyone feel they can bring their whole selves to work and advocate for their own needs.

### Be a 'real model'

- Leaders at every level of an organisation are constantly 'on stage'. As such, others look to them for permission and their actions can have a big influence on the perceived ability to work flexibly.
- Don't role model perfection. Be honest about how hard parenting or juggling work with caring is. Authenticity is much more powerful.
- Encourage managers to draw on their own experiences to motivate them to lead by example.

### Adopt a flex frame of mind

- Start with a solutions-based mindset. From a position of wanting to make it work, if the request made is not possible, what else is available?
- Trust is the ultimate foundation to high performing teams. Scientific evidence points to a sense of control and choice leading to better productivity.
- Instinct can be a great guide in achieving an outcome, within the guardrails of a policy framework.
- Modern work is about partnership and human relationships. Transparency and dialogue help teams bond over a common purpose where different working arrangements are less of an issue.

### Think practically

- Equip managers with knowledge, tools and knowhow. Good policy doesn't automatically translate into good practice, so help managers by busting myths around flexible working.
- Use time, place and space wisely. Encourage managers to think about which tasks need connection and which need concentration to use out of office and in office to the best advantage.
- When people flex or leave is taken, support people to unplug completely to enable the employee and organisation to reap the benefits.