Committee for Finance and Personnel

Report on the Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland Volume 3

Other Papers *(continued)* and Assembly Research Papers

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THE REPORT REMAINS EMBARGOED UNTIL COMMENCEMENT OF THE DEBATE IN PLENARY.

Mandate 2011/16 **Eleventh Report - NIA 200/11-16**

Membership and Powers

Powers

The Committee for Finance and Personnel is a Statutory Departmental Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, Section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Assembly Standing Order 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department of Finance and Personnel and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has the power to;

- consider and advise on Departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee Stage of primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the Minister of Finance and Personnel.

Membership

The Committee has eleven members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, with a quorum of five members. The membership of the Committee during the current mandate has been as follows:

- Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)[1]
- Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mrs Judith Cochrane
- Mr Leslie Cree MBE
- Ms Michaela Boyle [2] [3]
- Mr Paul Girvan
- Mr John McCallister [4] [5]
- Mr Ian McCrea [6] [7]
- Mr Raymond McCartney [8]
- Mr Adrian McQuillan
- Mr Peter Weir [9]

1 Mr Daithí McKay replaced Mr Conor Murphy MP with effect from 2 July 2012

2 Ms Michaela Boyle replaced Ms Megan Fearon with effect from 2 December 2013

3 Ms Megan Fearon was a member of the Committee from 10 September 2012 until 2 December 2013

4 Mr Roy Beggs replaced Mr Ross Hussey with effect from 23 April 2012

5 Mr John McCallister replaced Mr Roy Beggs with effect from 15 October 2012

6 Mr Ian McCrea replaced Mr David McIlveen with effect from 16 September 2013

7 Mr David McIlveen replaced Mr David Hilditch with effect from 1 October 2012

8 Mr Raymond McCartney replaced Mr Mitchel McLaughlin with effect from 6 October 2014

9 Mr Peter Weir replaced Mr William Humphrey with effect from 1 October 2012

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Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this Report

ADSL	Asymmetric digital subscriber line
ALB	Arm's-Length Body
BCO	British Council for Offices
BP	British Petroleum
BT	British Telecom
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Family
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DoE	Department of the Environment
DoJ	Department of Justice
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EC Harris	Edward Charles Harris
GB	Great Britain
GSK	GlaxoSmitheKline
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IBEC	Irish Business and Employer's Confederation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IT	Information Technology
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
MLAs	Members of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NI	Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIPSA	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PCs	Personal Computers
PfG	Programme for Government
PwC	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
REC	Recruitment and Employment Confederation
RoI	Republic of Ireland
SEELB	South Eastern Education and Library Board
SELB	South Eastern Library Board
SSL	Secure Sockets Layer
TOIL	Time off in lieu
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VPN	Virtual Private network
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent
3G	Short form of third Generation, is the third generation of mobile telecommunications technolog

Cabinet Office

HM Government

The Way We Work
A Guide to Smart Working in Government

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

The Way We Work A Guide to Smart Working in Government

Foreword

The Challenge of Reform

It is said that people are an organisation's greatest asset. I strongly agree. The dedication and commitment of our colleagues is one of the best things about working in the Civil Service.

But all too often people are delivering high quality services against a background of outdated IT, poorly designed workplaces and inflexible working practices. People can only realise their full potential, and that of the organisation they work in, if we empower them with the right tools and the right environment. More than anything we have to free-up the culture of work so that people can just get on with it unhindered. This is why the way we work is so very important.

The Civil Service Reform Plan sets out a goal of 'Creating a decent working environment for all staff, with modern workplaces enabling flexible working, substantially improving IT tools and streamlining security requirements to be less burdensome for staff'. The Way We Work will help us realise this goal.

Working smarter means that we have to challenge all the assumptions of our traditional ways of working and bring in new approaches to management and teamwork, with a sharp focus on management by outcomes. We need to develop skills and shared expectations about how work is done, and be innovative in developing more effective and efficient ways of working.

Transforming the way we work is not a 'nice-to-have'. It is the only way to make sure we provide the services our customers expect and demand – now and in the future.

This book is a guide to smart working in central government. It throws a spotlight on best practice that is really making a difference to the way people work.

We all have our successes – but rarely in all areas. Where people are doing things that are clearly working, adopt them as your own. I encourage you to go for it – and then share what improved!

Martin Donnelly
Permanent Secretary, Business Innovation and Skills, and Chair of the TW3 Delivery Board

The Way We Work A Guide to Smart Working in Government

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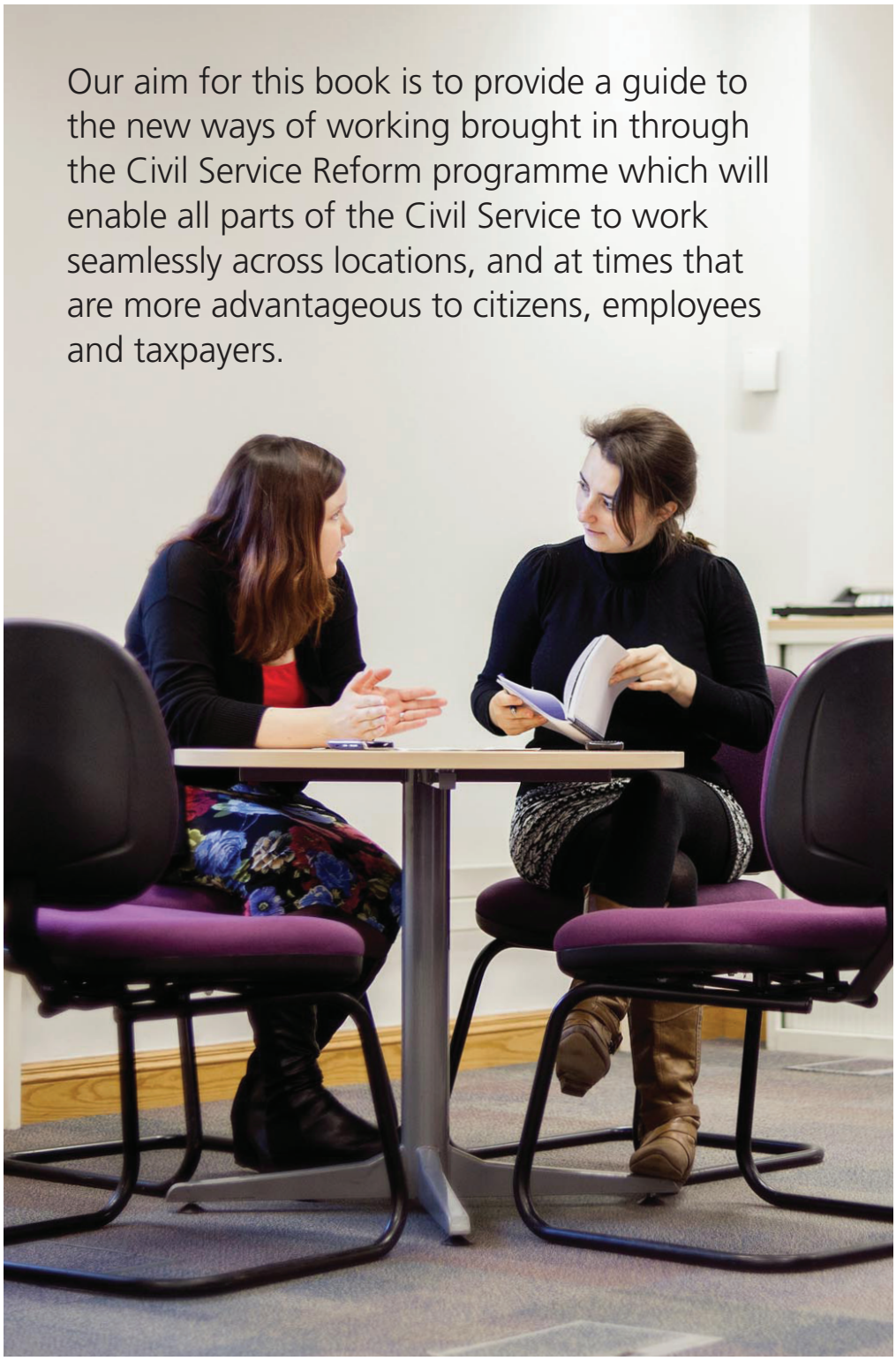


The Way We Work A Guide to Smart Working in Government

1 The vision

The way we work is changing – but not fast enough. In the current challenging climate, most companies and public sector organisations are looking closely at what they do and how they do it.

Now is the time to take steps not only to weather the current economic pressures, but also to plan for the longer term. Working smarter should be at the heart of transforming and streamlining our organisations.

This goal is at the heart of the Civil Service Reform Plan. So we are setting out the vision that by 2015 the Civil Service will be more efficient and a better place to work, where people:

- Focus on outcomes not process
- Are empowered by technology
- Work flexibly and cost-effectively
- Collaborate more effectively with other teams in their own department and other departments
- Maximise productivity and innovation while reducing environmental impact.

We aim to ensure that, by end 2015, we will be well on the way to a Civil Service in which:

- Well-designed workplaces support how people work best, with location options such as shared hubs, hosted space, HQs and home
- Work is being done in a variety of appropriately designed shared settings within those workplaces, no longer tethered to a desk
- IT is usable, convenient and works just as well in and away from the office; and is comparable to the technology people use at home
- Connectivity to colleagues and to data can be provided from virtually anywhere
- Security and access arrangements make it easy and safe to work in a variety of settings
- Leaders embrace and exploit the flexibility, productivity and effectiveness offered by the changes to our workplaces.

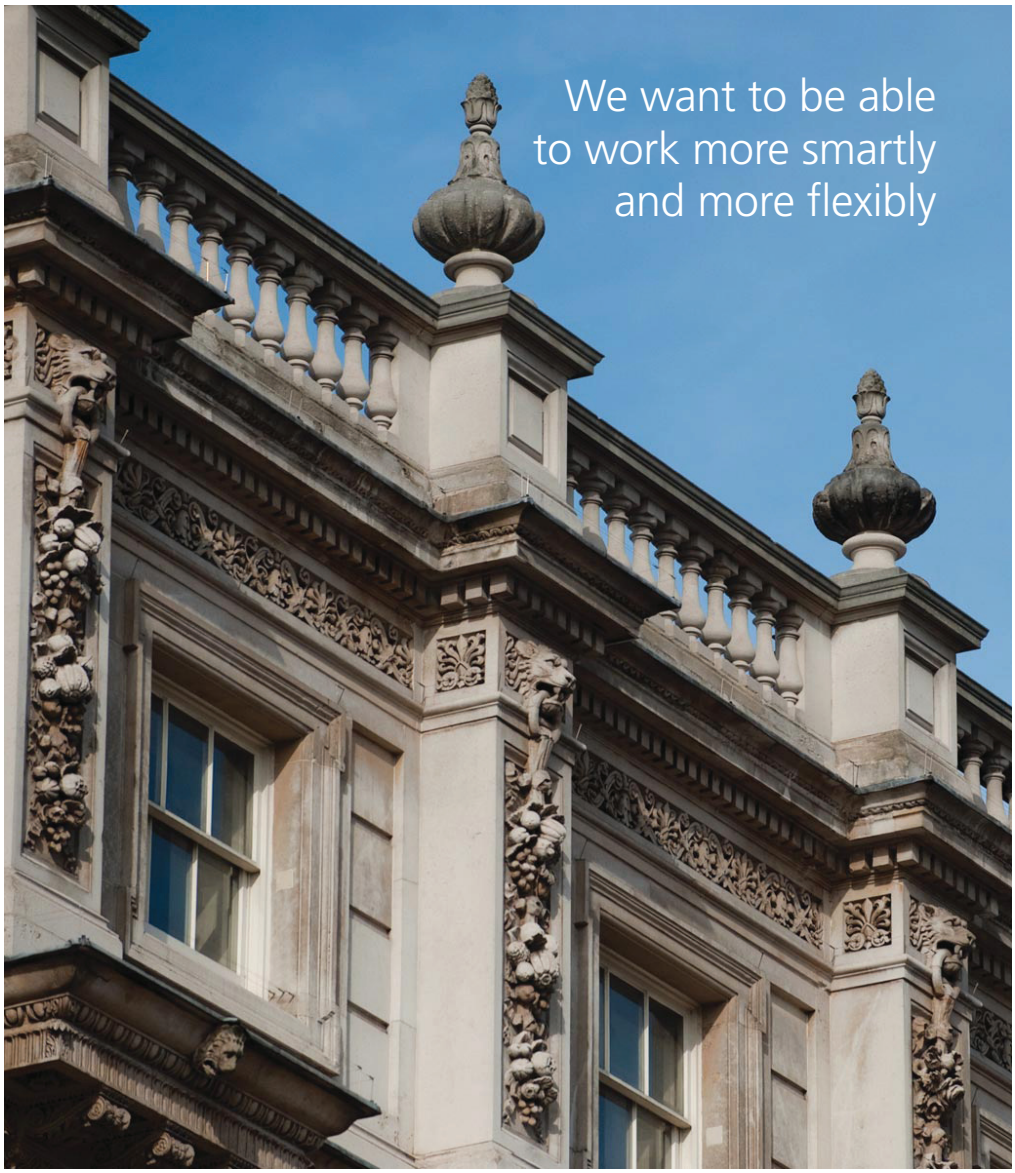
Work in the 21st century is about what you do, not where you do it. Strategic use of new technologies enables much of the work we do to be carried out from many other locations as well as offices.

Our aim for this book is to provide a guide to the new ways of working brought in through the Civil Service Reform programme which will enable all parts of the Civil Service to work seamlessly across locations, and at times that are more advantageous to citizens, employees and taxpayers.

We call this Smart Working

The Way We Work (TW3) is the Cabinet Office led cross-departmental programme designed to help realise the Civil Service Reform Plan's aim of 'Creating a decent working environment for all staff, with modern workplaces enabling flexible working, substantially improving IT tools and streamlining security requirements to be less burdensome for staff'.

Transforming the way we work is not a 'nice-to-have'. It is the only way to make sure we provide the services our customers expect and demand – now and in the future.



Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office itself has ambitious plans for transformation linked to IT, workplace and cultural reforms and Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office leading this programme says: "I am determined to create in the Cabinet Office the best possible working environment, with technology that meets people's needs. We want to be able to work more smartly and more flexibly, better able to collaborate across all our teams and to be more creative, innovative and productive. In the near future staff will see more choice in the workplaces they can use and the IT they are offered, whether they're in the office or on the move. Their IT will be more like the range of devices and software we are all used to outside work. Like others we're transforming the way we work and I'm pretty sure that when we get this right Cabinet Office will be up there with the best."

2 Key principles of Smart Working

Smart Working is about taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to modernising working practices across Government.

It is based on the following principles:

- Work takes place at the most effective locations and at the most effective times, respecting the needs of the task, the customer, the individual and the team
- Simplified collaboration and connectivity virtually everywhere means sharing information and working with others regardless of location
- Space is allocated to activities, not individuals and not on the basis of seniority
- A Flexibility First approach where flexibility is the norm rather than the exception. Everyone is assumed to be capable of Smart Working without assumptions being made about people or roles
- A shared and agreed approach to Smart Working balances the freedom to choose with the responsibility to meet business needs
- The processes people are asked to work with are continuously challenged to make sure they are fit for purpose
- Managing performance focuses on results and outcomes rather than presence

The outcomes of adopting Smart Working will be:

- Greater productivity and services delivered more effectively
- The costs and environmental impacts of work reduced as space is shared and used more intensively
- People having more choice about when where and how they work, supported and connected by effective and appropriate use of technology
- People have the opportunity to lead more balanced and healthier lives.

What will this mean in practice?

For **departments**, this means a new approach to thinking about the way people work in terms of Smart Working principles.

Smart Working provides a strategic and business-focused framework for adopting smart, agile working as the norm. This means taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach to flexibility, by seeking out the benefits rather than waiting for individual employee requests. Limitations on flexibility need to be based on clear operational need.

Management by results rather than presence – which is best practice in any case – will become further embedded as a core management competence.

Assessing the total costs of how we work should inform decisions about work styles. This includes both the financial costs and the environmental costs (e.g. in relation to use of buildings, resources, and travel). In essence, the footprint of work is reduced.

As a result of the greater flexibility and agility, departments will become more adaptable to change. For example, working in project teams across departments, changes to organisational structure and changes to headcount will become much easier to manage and involve few of the physical changes to workplaces that are currently involved.

Business continuity will be enhanced by the ability to work in an all-electronic environment and from a much wider range of locations. In effect, the office is the network.

For **individuals**, this means being empowered to choose the best times and places to work, varying start and finish times and choosing work settings that suit the nature of the task and personal preferences so that the job can be done well and quickly. Managers focus on the output and employees choose how it is delivered.

As a result, trust-based relationships become central for both employees and managers as people take greater ownership of their work style.

This greater autonomy will increase the opportunity to lead more balanced and healthy lives. Smart working patterns also underpin and add new dimensions to diversity and equality.

In summary there are positive impacts from Smart Working on the 'Triple Bottom Line' – benefits for public service, for people, and for the environment.

An end to wasteful working practices

Wasteful practices are built into traditional ways of working:

- The average UK worker commutes for just under an hour per day – equivalent to 4 years over a working life
- The average full-time employee is absent for 6.8 days per year, 7.9 in the public sector
- There are some 10 million office workers in the UK occupying 110 million m^2 of office space…
- …with average occupancy in a traditional office over the working day at around 45%.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport has a high requirement to be adaptable to changing demands and the requirements of its project-based work. Being smart and flexible has given the DCMS the agility it needs.

Since 2007 the DCMS has been on the path of working smarter. Initially going open plan and consolidating four buildings into two, the substantial shift to Smart Working came in 2010 with a move to hot-desking. Since then working smarter has become part of the DNA of the DCMS.

At 100 Parliament Street everyone works in open plan areas, including the Permanent Secretary and the Executive Board. There is a 7:10 desk-sharing ratio. Working is set up to be completely mobile, and everyone is able to work remotely including from home.

'It wasn't a significant culture change for us. People worked pretty flexibly already,' says Paul Walker, Head of IT and Estates. 'We also have flexible resourcing, with project teams brought together for limited periods. About 30% of people are on secondment from other departments. People are always moving around. So the flexibility in the teamworking needed to be matched by flexibility in the organisation of space, and the provision of the right IT tools.'

There are two kinds of work areas: team hubs, e.g. 35 people with a hub of 10 desks, and project tables, where a team is brought together, and disperse when the project is completed. The project tables are set in bays with distinctive graphics to define their identity, and walls that can be written on.

Other activity-based flexible spaces include bars with high stools, study booths, breakout areas with soft seats and acoustic sofas, meeting pods, and a quiet work room with no telephony allowed. The office as a whole has a very modern and informal feel.

Large numbers of staff have a Blackberry as well as a laptop. The whole office is covered by wi-fi. The Department uses an electronic data records management system, and there is no paper filing except for the lawyers.

If people work from home they can access exactly the same systems and information as they can in the office. On some days 15-20% of people work from home or other locations, and most teams have one or two people doing so every day. There are no fixed formulas for working from home: teams work it out amongst themselves – a good example of being flexible about flexibility.

The property savings come to £2.5m per year. But the main value is in having working practices that are completely tailored to the operation of the business.

6 The Way We Work

3 People, workstyles and culture change

Because of the complexities of the changes involved, it can be tempting to see Smart Working as being all about designing offices and setting up new IT. But this really misses the point. While these are key enablers, Smart Working is essentially about people and culture change. It is about bringing about change in the way people work, and empowering them to work in smarter ways to deliver better services.

Change, however, is inevitably challenging and the new ways of working need to be managed well. It is partly about managing work in new ways, and partly about managing behaviours.

Getting smart about flexibility

The Civil Service has a good track record in responding to requests for flexible working. Smart Working takes this a stage further and extends the possibilities for working at different locations and at different times, to increase the effectiveness of how we work.

In many cases, employees will blend different smart/flexible working options, according to the need of the tasks in hand. Enabling this involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single particular alternative workstyle that is set in stone. All the options are important in terms of equal opportunities and diversity.

Choosing which styles of work are appropriate depends on:

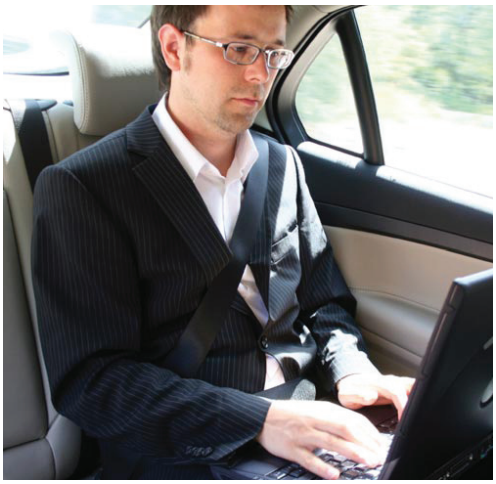
- Examining the tasks involved in the job role, in terms of how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations
- The preferences of the employee and being able to meet their aspirations
- The potential of smarter working choices to reduce the financial and environmental footprint of the organisation's working practices
- Any impacts on teamwork that may arise, e.g. how team communications and grouping of tasks might need to evolve to maximise the benefits.

There are of course roles that are quite place-specific. Often these are in local offices in customer-facing roles. In these instances the possibilities for other kinds of time-based flexibilities may be appropriate and may, for example, enable services to be better aligned with customer needs.

In such instances it is often appropriate to look closely at the tasks within a role, as better organisation of tasks may bring more scope for working at more effective places and times. Most roles have scope for some flexibility, and employees should have the opportunity to suggest ideas for working smarter and more efficiently.

Figure 1 overleaf outlines some of the critical choice factors when thinking about the most effective times and locations for tasks. Work may have to take place at a specific time and a specific place ('Specific place' and 'Specific time'). The time of work or the place of work may be varied, and in some cases both.

Round the outside of these time/place combinations are a range of 'critical choice factors'. These are the factors that managers and teams should take into account when making judgements about where and when work should take place.



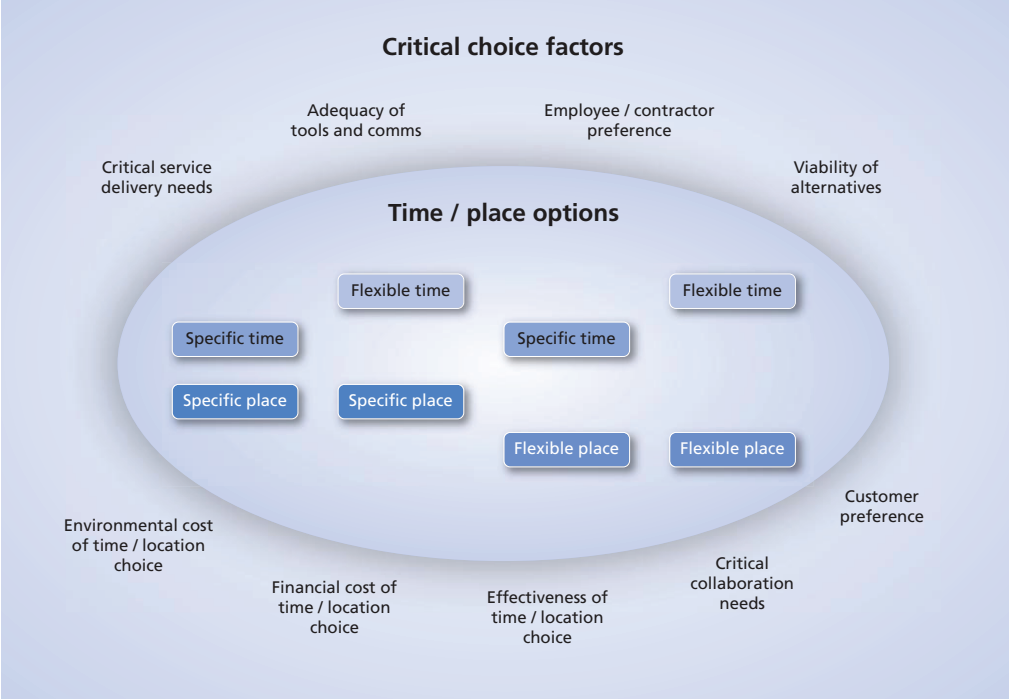


Figure 1: Choice factors for deciding the time and place of work

It is important to challenge old assumptions of necessity around traditional working places and times, and the default position of working 9-5 at the office. Managers and team members should think how changing times and places of work can improve effectiveness, reduce travel and resource use and drive down the cost of work.

Smart Working is for everyone

Smart Working involves changes for the way all people work. It is not a question saying some roles are eligible and some are not. It is true some roles may have more hands-on, place-specific or time-critical components to the work, and this may restrict the range of flexible options that are possible. They will however be working with other people whose workstyle is changing: the nature of the tools they use and the interactions with colleagues are likely to change as a consequence.

So it is not a question of some roles carrying on unchanged in traditional ways of working while others become flexible. At every opportunity we must be looking for ways to improve work processes and be smarter in the ways we work.

One important principle is that work times and locations need to be evaluated on the basis of the tasks involved, rather than whole jobs. It is too easy to say, on the basis of traditional practices, 'This sort of job can't be done flexibly'. Increasingly work has more knowledge-based components and is being untethered from physical resources. This requires new thinking about how, where and when work can be done.

Maintaining flexibility

It is important to avoid as far as possible new working arrangements that inject new inflexibilities that could compromise business efficiency. Examples of this would be people saying they must always work in a local office or at home on a certain day. While respecting existing flexible arrangements, it is important to have the flexibility to alter them on occasion to meet service delivery needs or for essential face-to-face meetings.

It is then the responsibility of all employees to make Smart Working work effectively to deliver both business and personal value.

All of the Smart Working options have an impact on how space is used. Flexible location options will mean that the base office will be used less, though it may be used somewhat more by visitors. Flexible time options mean that the office space will be used differently, with use spread out more across a longer period of time each working day.

Managers need to think through how the changes in occupancy affect the way the office is used. These changes are covered in Chapter 4 of the Guide.

Managing Smart Working

Managers have a key role to play in ensuring that Smart Working is implemented effectively and in setting an example of how it works in practice. Our case studies show examples of senior managers setting the pace with new working practices and leading the way to a new working culture.

On a day to day basis, managing Smart Working means moving away from managing by presence to managing by outcome. This involves different ways of keeping in contact with staff, of assessing workloads and monitoring and measuring performance.

For the team this will involve greater sharing of schedules with colleagues and managers, filing information so it can be accessed by others and updating each other about work-in-progress.

However, we should not exaggerate the changes involved. Many of the management skills required are the same as always, only they need to be applied properly with more discipline so that people working at a distance and in the office are not treated differently or excluded from the team. Managing by results should be the norm wherever work is done. In addition, only in relatively few cases will people be spending most of the time in a different location from their manager and other team colleagues. Over time, however, the amount of working in geographically dispersed and virtual teams can be expected to increase, so management and teamworking skills need to evolve accordingly.

For teams it is important to develop protocols about communication and reporting, so as to work effectively and maintain team cohesion. When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddying and mentoring schemes for new recruits, bulletin boards, instant messaging and social networking.

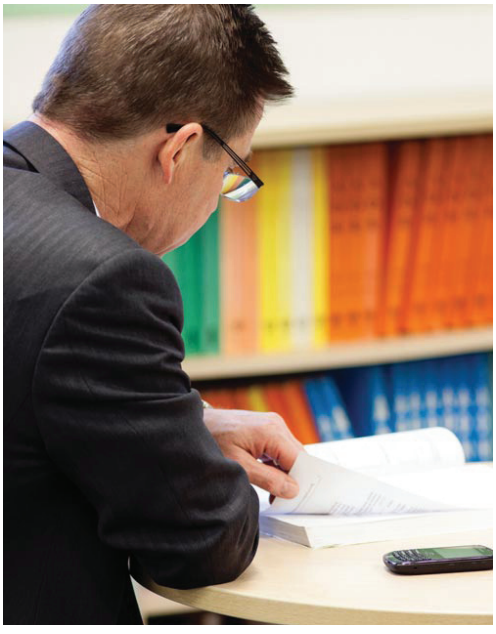
Teamwork protocols

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team.

Protocols should be established to cover:

- A requirement to let others know where and when you are working
- Clear reporting structures
- Sharing of calendars and schedules
- Rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible
- Being flexible about flexible working – to ensure that no individual is disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g. in providing office cover or attending evening meetings
- Etiquette in online communications, and behaviour in virtual meetings
- Signposting availability for phone contact or online discussion
- Fairness in use of space when in the office.

Just as with space sharing there needs to be a degree of enforcement, at least in the initial stages, to bring about the changes in work culture required. But experience shows that to a large extent teams should be able to do this themselves, and monitor their own team members' adherence to the standards required.



Rethinking meetings

It is important also to rethink meetings. Routine sharing of information can be carried out through online processes: physical meetings should be reserved for important collaborative work involving activities such as training, brainstorming and decision-making.

The benefits of Smart Working can be undermined by insisting on being present in person for routine meetings. Wherever possible, when employees are working in different places meetings should be held using audio, video or web conferencing. In reaching decisions about holding meetings, attention should always be given to the cumulative effects of meetings, and the need to reduce our need for office space and to reduce the need to travel.

A common complaint within the Civil Service is of having too many meetings or of a 'meetings culture'.

The new ways of working provide an opportunity to:

- Replace physical meetings by online interaction
- Replace 'set-piece' formal meetings by shorter interactions, in person, online or mixed physical/virtual
- Reduce the number of people at a meeting for the whole session, calling people in remotely when needed, or having them primed to respond to questions by instant messaging if needed.

Managers should consider setting targets for reducing the numbers of meetings, to liberate more time for other kinds of work. Following this guidance it should be possible to reduce the number of physical face-to-face meetings by at least one third.

Highly collaborative and dynamic teams

The aim in moving to Smart Working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically, and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact.

Though they may no longer always sit at adjacent desks, Smart Working with new technologies and team protocols should facilitate much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before from anywhere.

It is important to note that the changes affect mainly team members who are mostly based in the office. There needs to be a single culture of working according to shared values and respect for the team as a whole, avoiding a situation where a traditional office culture dominates amongst office-based staff (e.g. relying on face-to-face interaction and management by presence) while mobile and remote team members operate according to different and more modern principles.

Dealing with problems and issues

Before adopting flexible working practices, people are sometimes worried about issues such as:

- being isolated
- loss of personal space in the office
- difficulties with time management
- loss of team spirit or team effectiveness
- dealing with technology and getting appropriate levels of support when working remotely
- intrusion of work into home life
- 24/7 working
- managing performance
- loss of opportunities for career progression or training.

The evidence from implementations of Smart Working is that many more problems are anticipated than actually arise. Usually this is down to over-estimating the amount of time that people will be out of the office and under-estimating the potential of the modern communication tools for keeping teams in touch with each other.

Once the new ways of working are embedded most people appreciate the greater flexibility and autonomy that Smart Working brings. Few want to return to the old ways of working once they get used to working smarter and have the tools and new work spaces to support it.

All the same, problems can occur as in any traditional workplace. It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and in particular for managers and members of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance.

If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the particular problem.

Getting the policies right

Existing departmental policies and guidelines will need to be reviewed in the context of Smart Working, for example:

- flexible working policies should address not only legal requirements but actively promote Smart Working to address work-life balance and business performance issues
- health, safety and security policies need to reflect the more diverse working environments
- equality, diversity and inclusion policies can be stronger if people can work more flexibly
- recruitment policies need to encourage managers to offer smarter flexible work styles wherever practicable.

New guidance for departments is being developed to reflect the incoming legislation.

Work-life balance

Smart Working empowers staff with greater autonomy and the ability to make mature decisions about how they work, always informed by business needs.

This allows employees greater scope to balance or blend work with other aspects of life. It adds new dimensions to work-life balance policies, by creating a strategic context in which to exercise choice. Rather than flexible working being exceptional or seen as some kind of privilege, it becomes a normal way of working. Patterns of work may vary in different stages of an employee's life.

Traditional approaches to flexible working historically bracketed flexibility with parental and other leave arrangements. Integrating Smart Working into the DNA of organisations enables organisations to take a proactive and supportive approach to maternity and paternity leave, and arrangements for carers as well.

A new culture for 21st century working

The Way We Work (TW3) involves developing a new Smart Working culture.

It is not about doing things in the old way with some new technologies and redesigned offices – it is about new ways of working using new tools, new processes, and new approaches to management and teamwork. This requires different types of behaviours and different expectations about how work is done.

The new working culture will be developed through embracing practical measures. For example, a more collaborative culture develops from sharing space and resources more effectively and through having different kinds of meetings; a trust base culture is developed by developing new techniques and protocols for teamwork and through managing by results; being open to further change becomes a habit of mind when people feel empowered to challenge and improve processes and behaviours.

These are the ways in which Smart Working will become embedded in the Civil Service. TW3 is supporting these changes with tools, training and guidance.

Continuous challenge and improvement

Central to Smart Working is a constant quest to improve working practices and business processes as new opportunities emerge. It involves challenging current ways of working and asking questions such as:

- Why are we doing *this* (at all)
- Why are we doing this *here*?
- Why are we doing it *in this way*?
- Why are we doing it *at this time* (rather than another time)?

It is about challenging the assumptions of necessity around traditional or habitual ways of working.

Having identified practices and processes that could be done differently, the next questions to ask are whether using Smart Working techniques there are ways of doing these things that are:

- Faster?
- More flexible?
- Lighter (i.e. less heavy on resources – time, energy, physical resources)?
- More in line with customer needs?
- More in line with employee aspirations?

People are encouraged to propose new ways of working that will deliver benefits. Focusing on practical questions in this way not only delivers benefits, but will help to embed Smart Working behaviours and mindset.

Engaging with better ways of working at BIS

A key feature of the BIS 'Ways of Working' programme is the role of users as both architects and builders. The programme has been designed in consultation with people across the Department, based on survey evidence to inform direction.

The core work areas are being led by user groups, not senior leaders nor the corporate centre. Arriving at solutions designed by and fit for users is the primary goal. Typical of the approach is a continuing programme to simplify processes. A call for ideas resulted in over 800 being nominated and half of BIS then voted to select the priority five.

Staff-led groups have taken forward specific ideas for improvements in IT processes and hardware, use of meeting rooms, booking systems and remote working. Ninety change agents across the Department act as advocates and a focus for conversations between employees and the Ways of Working Team.

Having the evidence to support change has been central to designing solutions. Although many people think their role is 'desk bound', a space audit showed the overwhelming majority of people spent less than 50% of their time at their desk. Currently the change team are transforming shared spaces to encourage and support more collaborative and innovative ways of working.

'Being open and transparent has been key to bringing people on board. People have been involved every step of the way,' says Greg Chammings, Deputy Director, Ways of Working. 'And the new spaces we have introduced have been enormously popular. We're trying to promote innovation and collaboration, but to support people working this way you have to provide them with the right tools and spaces. We are trying to tackle the culture of non-stop formal meetings which is the bane of most of our lives.'

IT changes are intended both to modernise working practices and support greater mobility. Lightweight laptops and smartphones are the essential kit, supported by desktop keyboards and large screens in the office and secure remote access when away. Desk phones are being phased out in favour of smartphones.

All these changes are working towards the change programme's vision to enable staff 'to work effectively anytime and anywhere.'

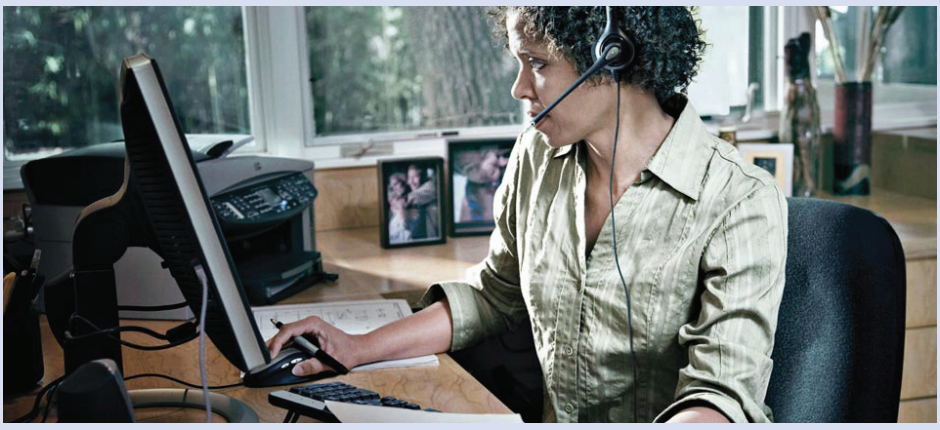
Smart Working incorporates the full range of flexible working options. These broadly fall into two areas: flexible place and flexible time.

Flexible place options include:

- **Mobile working:** Employees who work in many places need to be empowered and equipped to work when travelling, in public settings, and touching down in offices as needed.
- **Sharing space in the office:** Employees do not have a permanent desk, but choose a work setting appropriate to the task in hand (see Chapter 4).
- **Working from other offices:** Staff may choose to work from other offices – offices belonging to the organisation, third party serviced offices or partner/client offices, as appropriate.
- **Working as virtual teams:** To prevent relocation or frequent travel, staff work flexibly as virtual teams, using online communications and collaboration techniques.
- **Working from home:** When employees regularly work from home it is typically for 1-2 days per week. Some roles may be based at home full-time. More mobile staff may work using home as a base rather than, or as much as, using the office as a base.

Flexible time options include:

- **Flexi-time:** employees can vary start and finish times. Sometimes this is limited by a 'core hours' requirement.
- **Time off in lieu (TOIL):** TOIL is a form of flexible hours working that allows hours to be varied across days, by paying back extra hours worked on one day with time off on other days.
- **Annualised hours:** employees are contracted annually to work a set number of hours, which can be worked flexibly over the 12 month period. This is useful for coping with peaks and troughs in work, as well as for meeting personal requirements.
- **Compressed working weeks:** employees work their standard working hours in fewer days – e.g. one week's hours worked in four days, or two weeks' worked in nine days. There are a range of patterns of varying complexity.
- **Term-time working:** this enables staff who are parents to work around school terms and holidays.
- **Part-time working:** staff are sometimes recruited on a part-time basis, while others seek to reduce their hours, with pro-rata reductions in pay and benefits. It is typically associated with parenting responsibilities, but surveys indicate this is an option of interest to older workers who are thinking in terms of phased retirement.
- **Jobshare:** this is a particular form of part-time working, where two (or occasionally more) people share a full-time job.
- **Self-rostering:** teams take control of their own shift patterns and cover arrangements, which can be especially valuable in roles that are very location-specific or have a 'hands on' requirement.
- **Career breaks:** the option to have a career break or sabbatical to pursue professional or personal development.



14 The Way We Work

4 New environments for new ways of working

The Way We Work (TW3) aims to create attractive and inspiring work environments across Government that support the new work styles, increase the adaptability of space, and increase business performance. A smart and flexible approach to office design seeks to achieve these benefits while at the same time achieving significant savings and efficiency gains.

Adopting the principles of Smart Working will also enable a range of new working environments beyond the traditional office.

Unlike traditional offices, which are based on having ranks of personally allocated desks, smart office environments should have a mix of work positions and meeting spaces where work activities can be carried out.

While one of the aims of TW3 is to have offices utilised more efficiently and to save costs by eliminating wasted space, it is also an aim to use under-occupied space to provide alternative non-desk work spaces that are closely aligned to the needs of modern Smart Workers.

As desk-based tasks can increasingly be carried out from anywhere, the need in offices is less for ranks of workstations, and more for a mix of other functional spaces such as:

- flexible meeting spaces – small meeting rooms, breakout spaces and café areas
- space for quiet and concentrated working
- spaces for confidential work and phone calls
- touch-down spaces for people working on the move
- team tables
- resource areas
- special project areas
- flexible multipurpose spaces.

How much is your office used?

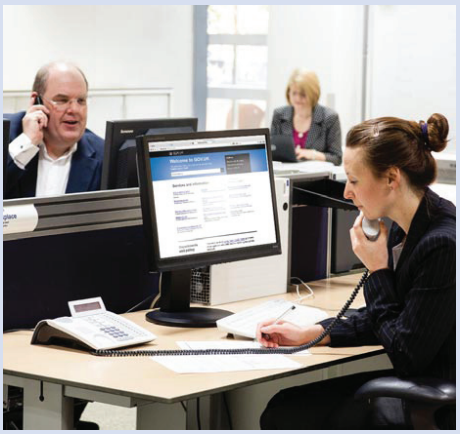
- A traditional office used 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday is used only 30% of the time
- Holidays account for 12% of an employee's time
- Typical desk occupancy is around 45%
- Office costs per desk are around £5k on average, rising to £10k in London

Time to do the maths on empty space!

Desk-sharing and clear desk protocols

The following are suggested protocols that can be adopted or adapted to ensure that space-sharing works effectively:

1. Use of space is determined on the basis of the activities being carried out.
2. Space is not to be allocated on the basis of seniority, habit or personal preference.
3. Where team priority zones are designated, this should be seen as non-exclusive team-space, available also to other employees of the organisation as the need arises.
4. Non-team members working in specified team areas should be made to feel welcome. This will help to break down silos and encourage cross-team working.
5. Staff should use the appropriate space for the activity – e.g. informal meetings should not take place at desks but in break-out areas or meeting rooms.
6. If your plans change, rethink your space requirements and move to a more appropriate work setting.
7. Calls or discussions with private or confidential subject matter should be held in a workspace designed for privacy.
8. Work-in-progress should not be stored on desks, but in team storage or project areas.
9. Personal items should be stored in lockers, and only located on desks during periods of active occupation.



10. If a desk or other work area is to be left unoccupied for more than 2 hours the desk should be cleared for use by others.
11. When a desk or other work area is vacated it should left completely clear for use by other members of staff.
12. Teams are advised that exceptions to these protocols should be few, and based on genuine need, e.g. reasonable adjustment for staff with disabilities, or a specialist function that requires a particular location, e.g. receptionist.
13. Finally employees who are allocated personal desks should still abide by the clear desk policy and expect others to use their desks when they are absent.

Understanding space requirements

It is essential to have an evidence-based approach to understanding the amount of space needed in the office, and the mix of different kinds of spaces. This should typically be based on:

- An accurate space audit, measuring how space is occupied across the working day over a number of days
- An analysis of how, when and where work is carried out
- An analysis of work processes and technology use, and how changing these impacts creates opportunities for change in the workplace
- A storage audit and an assessment of the scope for storage reduction
- Consultation with staff to understand their working practices and preferences
- Mapping of the relationships and interactions between departments and teams.

Space audits in government offices with traditional working practices have shown average desk occupancy levels of well under 50% over the working day.

The main value of a space audit is that it will deliver objective figures in terms of how often desks are occupied, how often they are "claimed" but with no one at the desk, and how often they are empty.

Figures of less than 45% average occupancy are normal for professionals and managers in most "pre-smart" office environments. Because of the impact of meetings, site visits, training, leave and sickness average occupancy for admin and support staff rarely rises above 60%, despite what most managers would expect. Peaks may be around 60% for managers and professionals and around 80% for administrative staff, but are rarely higher. Individual teams will show higher peaks, but these peaks do not occur at the same time: this is the main reason why staff often have a perception of higher occupancy than the data shows.

The end result can provide indisputable data showing that space is not being used efficiently and that resources are being wasted – vital for developing the business case for change.

Modern, more mobile working practices and current flexible working options lead to a lower overall requirement for desk space. Smart Working staff surveys (see Chapter 7) will provide evidence of enthusiasm on the part of staff for greater flexibility, and for higher levels of trust to manage their own work styles. This will lead in time to further reductions in demand for desk space, and adaptations in the office to support more flexible work styles.

The evidence gathered from these analyses underpins the design of new office space. The number of desks will reduce, and more collaborative spaces will be introduced. The exact proportions will depend on the evidence gathered locally. The government's National Property Controls require that all departments and their agencies should meet an average space usage target of 10 square metres per FTE for occupied space on their administrative estate by December 2015 (8 square metres for new office space). This can be achieved effectively through Smart Working. Some organisations in the public and private sectors are able, because of the way they work and the work they do, to work comfortably providing 5 or 6 desks per 10 FTEs including the Government Property Unit in the Cabinet Office which, at the time of writing, works on a ratio of 5 desks per 10 FTEs in its London HQ.

It is important not to be rigid about such a ratio at team level though, as: 1) requirements will vary across teams, and provision should be based on actual need rather than an average figure; and 2) office design can remain excessively focused on desks, rather than the range of alternative work positions. A highly mobile team, for example, may need many fewer desk positions than average, but need more in the way of collaborative space (e.g. breakout space and project areas). In both cases, opportunities for efficiency and good design may be missed.

1 http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/pam/property-asset-management-in-government/estate-rationalisation/national-property-controls

New environments for new ways of working **17**

Sharing work positions

As the number of desks is reduced to align more closely with actual occupancy, desk-sharing solutions will need to be introduced. But it is important to note that sharing space is not all about desks. The DCMS and DfT case studies, for example, show how these departments use a mix of desk and project table settings for regular work in the office.

Smart Working does not envisage 'hot desking' policies that move people all around the building from one day to the next, dividing people from their teams.

Maintaining team cohesion and joint access to nearby resources is important, and space sharing arrangements that are agreed by colleagues in teams are more likely to work well. The Smart Working development process encourages team involvement in the design of new office environments.

However, it is a key principle that while broadly defined team "zones" can be useful, these cannot be exclusive spaces. To increase occupancy levels and achieve the savings necessary to support new working styles, vacant work positions must be open to people from other teams to use, without their being made to feel that they are intruders or that they are violating someone else's personal space. The results should be one of non-exclusive team-based space sharing.

Space design needs to allow for fluidity of movement. As well as sharing positions within a team zone, there is likely to be some touchdown space for visitors, for staff touching down briefly, e.g. between meetings, and for meeting peaks in demand.

Any approach that allocates 1:1 desks to most of a team with a handful of hot desks for people working more flexibly should be avoided. 'Hotdesking at the margins' rarely works. This is because people who are mobile and newly formed teams find themselves squeezed for space while allocated spaces lie empty. It will also not achieve the space savings necessary to introduce more innovative and varied 'activity-based' settings and can be divisive of the team in terms of perceived fairness.

As well as helping to clear the way for more collaborative space, space sharing can help to break down barriers between teams, and help to end 'silo working'.

Space-sharing needs also to take into account the needs of staff with disabilities for any specialist IT or ergonomic equipment.

Again, new arrangements must be careful not to focus excessively on desks. As our case studies show, some teams may be based in project areas or at team tables, allowing greater flexibility to be combined with team or project identity.

Open plan and activity-based settings

Bearing in mind that there will be a range of other work settings, open plan should be the default setting for desk-based work. Wherever possible, private offices should be removed as they are very wasteful of space and can hinder good collaborative working practices.

However, open plan does not mean having vast open spaces with ranks of desking. Good design can create identifiable team areas, where desks are interspersed with other flexible work settings such as confidential rooms, break-out spaces and tables for nearby teams to use.

In the new office settings, greater emphasis will be on shared mixed-use spaces where people can work together. As much work involving computers and telephones can be carried out from almost anywhere, the focus in office work will shift towards interaction between colleagues.

The Department for International Development

At the end of 2012 The Department for International Development moved into 22 Whitehall, occupying offices that are about half the size of their previous building, with 800 people now working in offices that previously accommodated 600. A key part of their challenge has been to move to smarter ways of working and create a modern working environment while respecting the character of a historic building – and all in a tight three-month timescale. The project has reduced property costs by £7m a year.

The office move has been used as a catalyst for change in working practices. Before the move a space audit showed 50-60% average desk usage. This provided the confidence to move to an average desk-sharing ratio of 8:10 – with 7:10 in the open plan areas, whilst making best possible use of the cellular offices in the historic buildings for shared desking and meeting rooms. No member of staff has a private office, with the Permanent Secretary happy to work in the open plan areas and use the other activity-based settings as needed. So the change process has enjoyed strong support from the top.

The old canteen has been turned into 'The Exchange', a communal meeting space to promote collaboration, and includes a café and flexible space for informal meetings. A number of small and informal meeting spaces have also been created throughout the building.

DFID has put a lot of effort into communications to support the change, with user representatives, discussion forums, design groups, presentations and displays. There has been much team discussion about protocols. For instance, the clear desk protocol includes the requirement to log off if away from a desk for more than 3 hours and if only in for a meeting, staff shouldn't tie up a desk, but work in one of the alternative spaces.

The Department also moved to an all-laptop environment, and installed wi-fi throughout. There is flexible telephony, so staff can log on at any desk and also transfer calls to a mobile or home phone. There are well-used video-conferencing facilities in nearly all meeting rooms.

According to Gary James, Head of Sustainable Facilities Management, 'The evaluations we've carried out show that the changes have gone down well with staff, who appreciate the modern, uncluttered working. And we've created an adaptable workplace that can accommodate future changes at minimal cost.'

Choosing the right space for the task, allowing users to adapt that space to meet their own needs and making sure people can communicate and interact with one another in the way they need to are all vital components of Smart Working environments.

Our DCMS case study provides an example of how to set up good project environments to support fast-changing and highly collaborative teams. Such spaces will be flexible and reconfigurable according to the needs of teams located there.

Space audits indicate that in most organisations the design and number of meeting rooms is not fit for purpose. The demand is for more flexible meeting spaces, for the most part to be occupied by small groups of people.

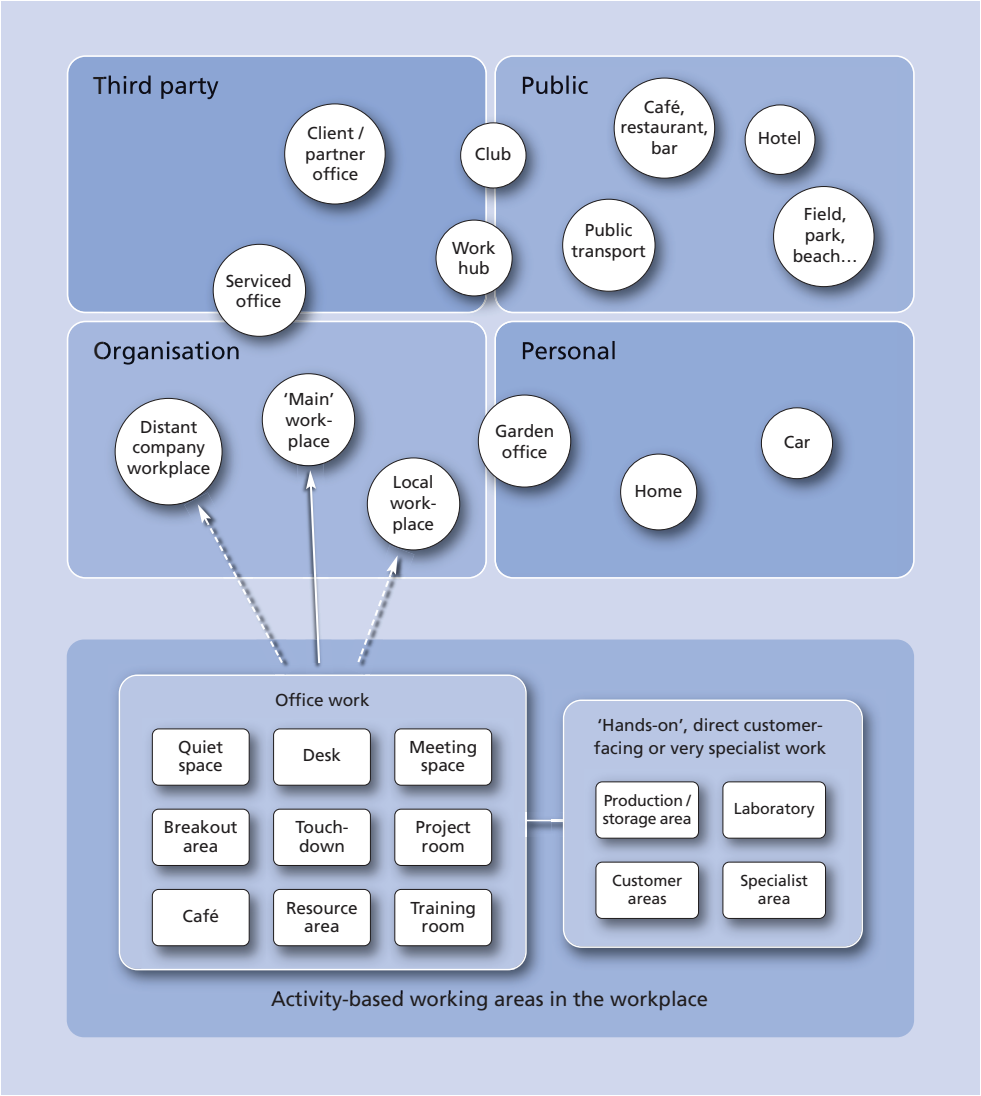


Figure 2: Settings where people choose to work, in and beyond the office

A range of different meeting spaces is therefore part of the mix of 'activity-based' work settings that typically include:

- Formal, bookable meeting rooms, in a range of sizes
- Ad hoc meeting rooms, with a time limit for use (e.g. 15 minutes)
- Two-person confidential meeting rooms or pods, e.g. for appraisals – can double as a space for confidential calls
- Breakout areas for informal ad hoc collaboration, around tables or in areas of reconfigurable soft seating
- Non-bookable quiet work spaces
- Resource areas
- Project areas

With Smart Working, space is used according to need and is related to the tasks being undertaken, rather than being allocated on the basis of status.

Clear desk policy

Successful space-sharing requires a 'clear desk policy'. This means that personal items – including 'personal professional' items – must be cleared from all desks and tables when vacated. These items should be stored in personal lockers and team storage respectively.

Even those who work only in the office should be part of the clear desk policy, not only to allow all desks to be available for use but also to maintain the quality of the working environment and a consistent storage and security discipline.

There are different approaches to this, depending on local circumstances. It is generally not good practice to allow someone to book or lay claim to a desk for a whole day when during that day they may be gone for hours at a time. Typically a threshold of two or two and a half hours is applied. That is, if the desk is to be left unoccupied for such a specified period, then it must be cleared for someone else to use.

Booking systems

Offices may consider space booking systems, primarily for meeting rooms. Desk booking systems will not be required in offices where teams can work out their own arrangements, but may occasionally be appropriate in some high footfall 'hub'-type settings.

Meetings spaces will include a mixture of bookable and non-bookable spaces, and the default position for smaller, non-confidential meetings should be to use the wide range of break-out and informal spaces that should be provided if the workplace has been properly designed for Smart Working. This leaves bookable meeting rooms for the occasions when they are really needed.

A key problem with space booking systems is that space is often booked for longer than is needed, so measures need to be taken to ensure that space is released when not needed, and cannot be 'blocked out' for long periods. Clear desk thresholds should still apply.

People sometimes focus on booking systems because they worry about potential lack of space. But in well-planned Smart Working implementations there will be adequate space to cope with peak demand. People may work in touchdown positions, other alternative work settings and spare space elsewhere in the building which is under-occupied. People will often choose these alternative settings anyway, preferring them for particular pieces of work and so relieving pressure on the team area. Shared calendars and instant messaging applications can be used to identify where people are working. A location board system – e.g. magnetic or stick-pin – is a useful and simple-to-manage alternative, so that staff can find out where their colleagues are and where there are available seats.

When there is extensive desk-sharing and people are working in distributed teams, it can be useful to develop a 'concierge' role as part of a reception or administrative support function. The concierge manages the smooth working of the flexible workplace, shared resources such as printers, space booking and release processes, and keeping track of where and when colleagues are working.

De-cluttering offices and smarter storage

A key constraint on the introduction of Smart Working is a dependency on paper documents and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic-based working.

Typically in organisations where there are crowded, untidy and inefficient offices, people complain of lack of space. But space audits usually find they do not have high levels of desk occupancy: instead they are crowded with "stuff" that is not rationally organised.

In most departments where paper-dependency is high there are significant space savings that can be made by reducing duplication, archiving, and moving to electronic-based working.

In developing smarter working practices, there are essentially three trajectories for reforming storage practices:

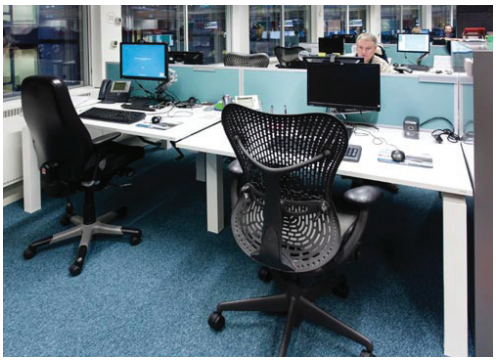
Personal	Team
Physical	Electronic
On office floor	Off floor / off site

In a space-sharing environment there can be no personal shelves of storage allocated to individual desks, nor can there be permanent desk pedestals. Files and resources used for professional work should be kept in team storage areas – this is good practice anyway, reduces duplication and makes resources easier for other people to find.

Personal storage should be in lockers provided. One technique is to use boxes that can be used to transport necessary items from locker to desk and back. Mobile pedestals are another alternative.

Increasingly, the use of paper processes is being replaced by electronic ones. There is still some way to go in most departments before we reach the Holy Grail of the 'Paperless Office'. All the same, it is important as an aspiration to move towards.

The use of electronic processes is essential to Smart Working, and 'untethers' people from the office, enabling more effective working from other locations.



It also enables a rethink and helps to challenge assumptions about the location of work for those involved in process work. Many organisations, for example, now have home-based call centre or data processing workers.

If remaining in physical format, as much storage as possible should be moved off the office floor. Office space is extremely expensive, and must be prioritised for human interaction, not storage.

Working beyond the office

A growing proportion of work is being undertaken beyond the office, for example in:

- Other people's offices: clients, suppliers, business partners, shared offices, etc
- Cafés, hotel lobbies and airport lounges
- Trains, planes, buses and cars
- Homes

The ability to work anywhere is made possible by laptops, tablets and other smart devices with wireless internet connections and by mobile phones.

The main issues are to do with security, confidentiality, safety and health.

Security concerns relate both to personal security (e.g. using portable equipment while driving, or the risk of being mugged) and data security.

Safety concerns relate primarily to the prolonged or incorrect use of Display Screen Equipment (PCs, Laptops, tablets etc).

These kinds of issues are sometimes raised as reasons for not working more flexibly. The key principle is the same as for homeworking: the employer's duty of care is the same wherever employees are working, whether in the employer's workplace, at home, on the move or in some other 'third place'.

This means that people need to be properly equipped and trained to work in these other places, and a mechanism needs to be in place for proportionate, periodic assessment of risk.

It's the intention of the Civil Service Reform Plan[2] and the new Government Security Classifications system[3] that there's greater emphasis on personal responsibility, reducing expensive and overbearing technical controls. This requires proper training to assist employees in handling sensitive information, and auditing to verify employees are acting responsibly.

People should be trusted to carry out their roles and given the responsibility and training to do so securely, together with technical and physical security controls that help defend individuals against threats that they themselves cannot reasonably defend.

The aim has to be to enable rather than prohibit – that is to enable people to work safely wherever is the most effective and efficient location to get the work done. People will have the flexibility to work in a wide variety of locations.

Government departments are increasingly taking advantage of shared workplaces, as our case studies of Apex Court and the Home Office illustrate. At the moment departments tend to have their own base areas with shared communal and meeting facilities. This should evolve over time towards areas of shared desking or 'co-working'. The new One Public Estate strategy should give more opportunities for this kind of sharing, including with local government and other partners. The Natural England case study provides an example of this.

At local level there are an increasing number of 'Workhubs' – places for touching down and collaborating, sometimes supported by public funding. Using local workhubs could reduce employees' need to travel and increase the opportunity to reduce central office requirements while finding local bases closer to citizens and partners.

2 http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Civil-Service-Reform-Plan-acc-final.pdf
3 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications

Sharing space at Apex Court, Nottingham

Between June 2011 and May 2013 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has established a multi-occupied Civil Service hub at Apex Court in Nottingham.

Reductions in the Civil Service estate in the East Midlands over the period have seen staff from 9 separate buildings moving to Apex Court. This has reduced the cost of the government estate by £1m per annum and by over 4,000sqm.

Apex Court now houses around 370 staff – from BIS, Defra and the Cabinet Office working in open plan environments and using shared facilities.

Rowena Limb, Chair of the Senior User Group commented, "From early in the project at Apex Court we established a Senior User Group to engage the leaders of all teams who were moving in. The Group established our working protocols, agreed the use of space in the building and ensured effective communications to staff. A Cross-Departmental Working Group was also set up and staff have been engaged in addressing both early and continuing challenges. We are building good relationships across teams, aided by open-plan working environments and we are keen to look further at how far we can share expertise and work collaboratively in the future."

Increasingly social activities are being arranged to ensure good linkages between staff working for different departments and the office has already held a number of office-wide charity events.

The home workplace environment

When people are working more than occasionally from home, it is important that their home workplace environment is set up properly with a desk and appropriate chair, and suitable lighting. If a member of staff is designated as a 'home-based' worker then the department's policies may specify the required furnishing and set up of the home 'office' environment.

There are no specific health and safety regulations for homeworking as such: all the provisions that apply in the workplace apply wherever an employee is working. In general, however, the evidence is that working from home does not carry substantial additional risk, and where it reduces travel it plays a part in reducing risk. Even so, it is necessary for everyone to be aware of the regulations that need to be observed and how to optimise their remote work spaces ergonomically and safely. There are issues of good practice that are mainly a question of common sense and taking ownership for one's way of working.

The Health & Safety Executive has published a helpful booklet on Homeworking[4].

When working at home, people should be fully contactable and able to connect to all office systems and processes. The ideal scenario is one of seamless connection, with the computer integrated with the office network and the phone acting as if it were an extension within the office.

It is also important that home-based working has a 'professional face'. While it can help staff achieve a better work-life balance it is important that home does not intrude into work, e.g. having domestic interruptions when on business calls.

The reverse also applies – employees need to feel in control of the home/work interface, and not feel pressured into allowing work to intrude into their personal time.

Implications for property strategy

Smart Working, it is clear, has very significant implications for every organisation's property strategy.

As the nature of work changes and organisations use a wider mix of physical and virtual spaces for doing business, real estate needs to become a flexible resource to be deployed according to the changing requirements of the business.

In the short to medium term, the opportunity is there for organisations with an extensive property portfolio to reduce the amount of property they have and to consolidate on the best performing and most strategically located buildings.

This may bring capital receipts, but most importantly will reduce the running costs of the organisation as many of the case studies show. There will probably be changes to strategy in terms of escaping from longer leases and greater use of third party offices.

4 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf

The nature of property strategy will also change as Smart Working is implemented. Traditional approaches connecting buildings to headcount and restructuring need to be rethought: as well as enabling concentration on the best-performing and most appropriately situated assets, the new approach enables a degree of 'spaceless growth' and radically reduces the costs of internal moves.

Smart Working also provides an effective and increasingly important way to comply with the National Property Controls and government's workplace standard.

The development of a strategy that embraces Smart Working requires the integration of expertise in people, property, technology and business process improvement into a single vision, so that the smart workplace can continue to evolve as new opportunities for business improvement and cost savings emerge.

5 Working Beyond Walls http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Working-beyond-Walls.pdf

'OneTeam work' at Defra

Defra, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, launched a new Estates Strategy in 2011, taking advantage of lease exit opportunities.

The Defra Network has reduced its London office floor space by half, with retained offices fitted out to a design approach that adopts the recommendations of the publication 'Working Beyond Walls'[5] where desks are utilised on an average 80% ratio.

A flexible approach to working is supported by Defra's standard use of laptops and mobile technology. Further steps have been taken to reduce storage and support flexible occupation with all pedestals removed in exchange for personal lockers installed nearby floor entry points. Stationery has been centralised and storage reduced to 1.1 linear metres per person.

Desks and bench desks have the same IT kit to support all members of staff sitting anywhere in the building to work. The culture of 'work is an activity not a place' and 'OneTeam work' have been promoted and adopted from the Permanent Secretary down to all staff. This culture aims to remove boundaries between teams and improve collaboration between different business areas including NDPBs.

In London, additional capacity to the 1,465 desks was created by installing 161 new work settings that support short term work for those visiting the building. New project space, an expanded business centre and more meeting rooms also support a wider range of business needs. The new furniture solutions are innovative and attractive and because they have power integrated and access to Wi-Fi throughout the office they are well used.

Decision making on the changes was achieved by regular contact with the business through a stakeholder group. A wide variety of different communications and workshops were used to communicate the physical works and the behaviours we wanted to encourage. The impacts are monitored through post-move surveys.

New WINE in new bottles at Natural England

As the successor to three separate organisations when it was created in 2006, Natural England inherited 67 offices and traditional working practices. From 2009 the WINE – Working in Natural England – programme began to introduce Smart Working and office rationalisation.

WINE aimed to reduce the number of offices to 22 by 2014. Natural England now has 25 offices, and is on track to meet the target. This has generated £3.3 million of savings per year, and reduced office space from 45,000m^2 to 25,000m^2. Total savings by 2015 are set to be £4.56m and 21,000m^2 of space.

The Carbon Reduction Challenge set by government for the public has been a key driver. Natural England set an ambitious reduction target of 50% CO_2. Audited savings are 2650 tonnes of CO_2 – a 61% saving against a 2007 baseline.

Natural England is an outward looking organisation with a highly mobile workforce. Smart Working is the natural way to increase the effectiveness and productivity of the workforce, as well as delivering efficiency and environmental savings.

New workstyles have been introduced for the 2,500 staff, with flexible, multi-site and home-based workers. Around 20% of staff are contractually home-based. Staff with an office base operate on an 8:10 desk ratio, with every desk a flexible desk. Touch-down spaces are available for people coming to an office for short periods, plus a range of activity-based settings such as meeting pods and breakout areas. There are no private offices for management, with the CEO and Executive sitting in open plan.

Touchdown space is also negotiated with external partners such as local councils and wildlife trusts on a grace and favour basis. This helps to strengthen local ties. Staff can also touch down in other Defra family offices. The principle remains the same: touchdown is limited to occasional use, and is not an office base.

There has also been a major purge on paper, with an offsite archive service for closed files and a working guideline of one linear metre per person for team storage, with personal storage moving to Lockers rather than pedestals. A single mail hub in Worcester takes care of post for home based staff.

Remote meetings have become a normal feature of working life, with both teleconferencing and web conferencing.

According to Carole Joseph, Estates & Facilities Manager, "Changing the culture is one of the biggest challenges. There's always a fear factor beforehand, because it's unknown. Once people have been doing it for a while, it becomes the norm and everyone settles into a new routine".

5 Technologies for Smart Working

Effective use of new technologies is central to Smart Working and The Way We Work (TW3).

With the right technology choices, people can work more effectively in the office and away from it, using the internet, broadband and wireless communications to work at the most effective times and locations.

Modernising IT for people

Government IT must be focused on empowering employees wherever and whenever they work with productivity tools, collaboration tools and access to systems and data.

The 'device of the future' for government users will increasingly be the same as the devices people use in everyday life – easy to use, flexible and almost 'invisible'. Government needs people to become 'digital natives' and users want the same rich experiences in work as they have at home.

The aim is to have devices that:

- provide a great user experience
- are secure
- are independent from content and services
- require minimal or zero support.

Transferring this consumer technology vision to the workplace has been successfully proved by many progressive organisations and is integral to TW3. In time this may include approved employee-owned devices.

Becoming 'Digital by Default' in how we work

The government is committed to modernising services by making them available online – Digital by Default.

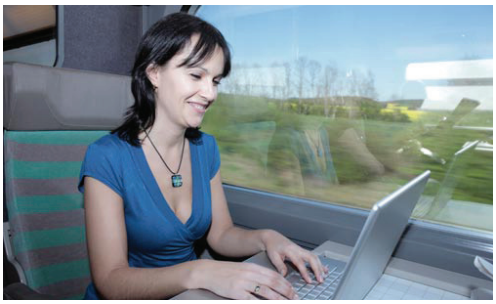
This has implications for the way we work in delivering services. Over time, this will reduce some of the requirements to work in particular places and at particular times.

Many processes that used to require manual intervention are becoming automated and the need to re-process information supplied by citizens and partners is being reduced. These kinds of efficiencies should free up time from routine process work to enable people to work more effectively in front-line services. The Home Office case study provides an example of the benefits that can be achieved.

> "Government's aim is that, as much as possible, the public sector workforce will be able to work from any location on any suitable government or non-government end user device."
>
> End User Device Strategy, 2011

As the front end of service delivery is supported by digital services, so the behind the scenes work of administration and team interaction should increasingly be 'digital by default', with other channels of interaction, such as physical face-to-face meetings, coming into play where they add significant value to the way we work.

Smart Working depends on moving towards a digital by default working environment. Anywhere where work is done becomes, in a sense, part of 'the office' and so common systems, processes and tools should be available to all staff wherever they are working. In this way 'the office is the network'.



What is Modern IT for the Civil Service?

IT modernisation in government aims to have technology that people are proud of, and that makes government work elegantly for citizens.

Government's guidance for departments *End User Device Strategy: Design and Implementation*[6] published in February 2013 establishes the technology, commercial and security principles for designing the modern IT infrastructure. Detailed definitions of the interoperability and security standards were also published at the same time and by using these guides departmental change programmes can be designed that are aligned to government IT strategy.

In strategic terms, it means getting 4 basic things right[7]:

For departments moving to Smart Working people will need IT that supports them wherever they are working. This includes different places in government buildings, as well as outside the office. This means technology that supports mobility.

It does not mean that people are necessarily expected to be mobile and work outside of offices – but it provides the capability to do so. The capability to be mobile and work in new ways underpins the potential benefits of Smart Working.

Increasingly there is no difference in the technologies people use whether they are in an office, with their clients, at home or on the move.

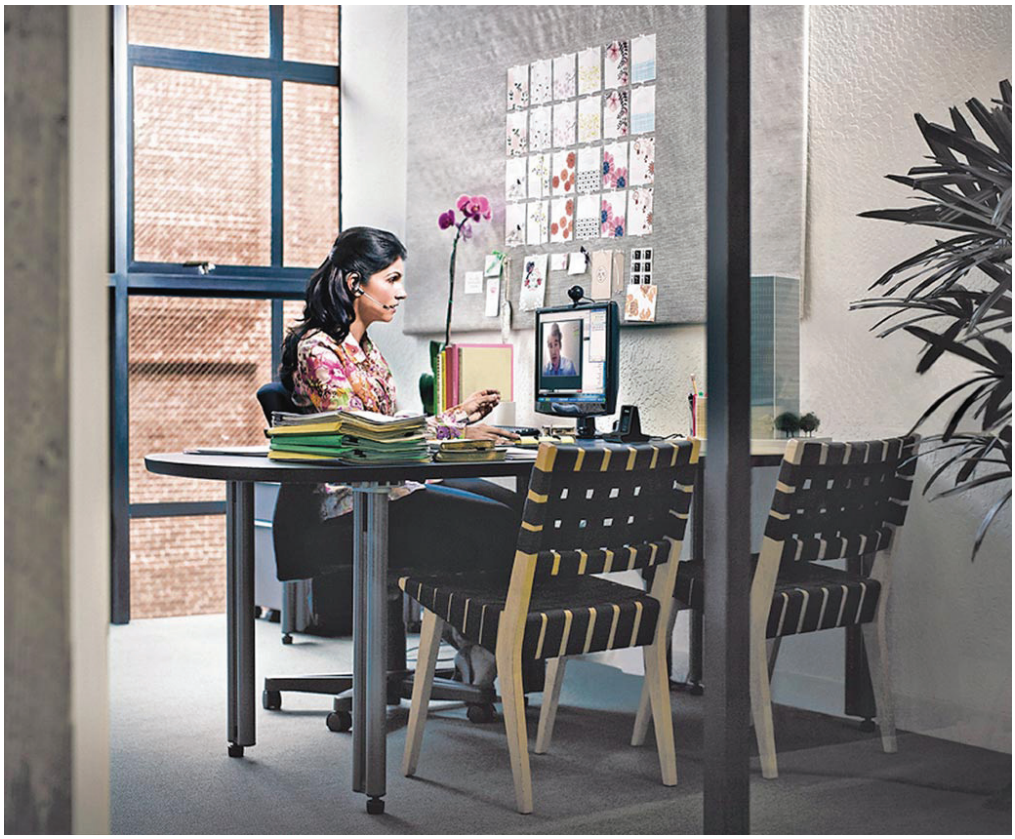
Area	Approach
User Experience	We need to design services with users' needs in mind – and that goes for our own technology as much as it does for what we produce for the public
Proportionate Security	Security should be proportionate to the risk, and for the vast majority of government business, this means using controls in the same way that a well run commercial business would
Sustained Value	Making sure that value can be sustained after something has been bought. This means designing for change, and opening up access to all types of suppliers, including open source or small businesses
Consumerised IT	We need to make it possible to use the kinds of general, commodity technology that works well for consumers and for other businesses

6 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175621/EUD_Design_Implementation.pdf
7 https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/technology/end-user-devices.html

In practical terms, the range of technologies for Smart Working is likely to include:

- Laptop rather than desktop computers that support greater mobility of work both within and away from the office
- Alternatively, 'thin client' technology that allows users to log into their desktop at any terminal, and can be replicated with a 'thin client' application operating from a laptop or home computer
- Tablets which are increasingly being used to support working away from the office, and we can expect their functionality as business tools to continue to develop
- Smartphones which are already almost ubiquitous and increasingly overlap functionality with tablets
- Wi-Fi networks in offices and many other public and private locations
- 3G or 4G mobile phone networks using embedded and mobile Wi-Fi devices
- Cloud storage and application hosting allowing access to data and applications from anywhere without having to download or return to an office to update.
- Electronic document management and records systems that replace paper processes and can be accessed from anywhere
- Remote access technologies that allow employees to access their corporate networks, including legacy applications, securely from home and on the move
- VOIP (voice over internet) telephony to enable people to use their computer as a telephone
- Conferencing technologies – audio, video and web conferencing, mobile and static
- Online collaboration and social networking technologies that let dispersed teams work together on 'live' documents, chat to one-another (e.g. instant messaging) and organise projects, tasks and timetables in a shared virtual space

Technology strategy and choosing the right technologies for staff need to be based on a rigorous assessment both of operational and user needs, and an awareness of the ever-increasing possibilities as technologies evolve.



Technologies for teamwork over distance

One of the major concerns that people express about Smart Working is about maintaining the integrity of teams and preventing isolation and 'atomisation' of the workforce.

There are effective technologies for remote meetings using web, audio and video conferencing techniques that are used extensively in leading organisations. These not only enhance productivity, they also contribute to the bottom line through business travel savings. Solutions chosen need to be flexible to allow people to participate from any location as long as they have access to an internet connection. They must also be simple to set up and make it easy to include additional participants as needed. They will be most effective when combined with active initiatives to 'rethink meetings'.

Unified communications (UC) are also becoming increasingly important for virtual teamwork. UC integrates into a single user interface services providing both real-time communication (voice telephony, instant messaging, video conferencing) and non-real-time communication (voicemail, email SMS and fax). It incorporates call control to route calls/messages according to the selected preference or status of users, and may include advanced features like speech recognition and text-to-speech software to convert messages from voice to text or vice versa.

Organisations that embrace UC may dispense with desk phones, as calls are routed to portable devices such as laptops or smartphones. This streamlining of devices can offer both increased productivity and cost savings.

Using instant messaging and 'chat' solutions – often bundled with other communications software – enables teams to keep open channels while working, allowing people to dip in and out of conversations as needed. Typically, a user would leave the service running in the background while working on other things, switching focus when a break is needed or when you need to ask a specific question. Anyone on the team would be able to respond with information, suggestions of other people to talk to, and so on. Because it is network based it will also work regardless of geography so distributed teams can continue to communicate as if they were in one room.

These solutions are also useful for 'presence management', so users can indicate their availability status and, if necessary, their location.

Investment in these and other technologies that provide on-line information, interaction and community supports the principles of Smart Working as well as delivering cost savings. Promoting their use is a key part of taking a practical approach to changing behaviours and achieving the desired cultural change.

Technology and the work environment

Technologies need to be appropriate to a range of working environments, and enable staff to work comfortably as well as productively. For example, using laptops for prolonged periods requires the use of a laptop stand and/or additional properly positioned screen, with possibly a separate keyboard and mouse. When working on the move, in transition between meetings or for lively collaborative work with colleagues, working directly on a mobile device is easy and convenient.

The acoustic environment needs also to be considered. In noisy environments there need to be alternative settings for dealing with phone calls and concentrated work. In environments that are too quiet it may be important to provide background noise. Wireless headsets that enable mobility, noise cancellation capabilities and/or 'white noise' may be important considerations.

Meeting room technologies should be designed for ease of incorporating colleagues, partners and customers who are not physically present. This should include audio and screen or surface technologies that support collaborative working with remote participants. They should also support paperless meetings by enabling participants to access all information on screen and to transfer control of the screen to different participants, whether physically present or not.

Technology also has an important role to play in the day-to-day management of Smart Working. For example online booking systems can help optimise the use of meeting rooms and other valuable resources and self-service HR systems streamline the management of flexible working arrangements. Moving from paper to electronic processes and records is an essential part of this transition and an approach to paper reduction is outlined in Chapter 5 on Smart Workplaces.

Cloud computing and virtualisation

On 5th May 2013 government announced its 'Cloud First' policy. When procuring new or existing services, public sector organisations should consider and fully evaluate potential cloud solutions first – before they consider any other option. This approach is mandated to central government and strongly recommended to the wider public sector. Departments remain free to choose an alternative to the cloud if they can demonstrate that it offers better value for money.

The 'cloud' is basically the internet, and by using the cloud departments in the future won't need to host their own IT at all. Software and applications will be provided as a service rather than installed on computers, which will enable greater adaptability and agility as technologies evolve or circumstances change. Most people are familiar with using the cloud through their mobile phones and tablets using mobile web applications, streaming video and on-line storage such as photo galleries.

With everything accessed over the internet, there is no need for any permanent local storage or applications on any device people may be using. In this sense, even the staff working in the office will be 'remote workers'. The office may still be a good place to be based and to collaborate with colleagues, but it will no longer be the only or even, in some cases, the best place to do most of our work.

A related trend in corporate IT is towards 'desktop virtualisation'. What this means is that, rather than running their own programs, user computers run all their applications through a server. Support and upgrade costs can be cut dramatically and flexible location working is supported automatically.

'Thin client' technology is being used in several departments. This means that the computer used at a desk has little independent capability but instead operates as a 'dumb terminal' accessing information and systems on a remote server. A thin client application can also run on a 'normal' laptop or PC and operate like a thin client device while the user is logged on.

A department does not need to embrace cloud computing and virtualisation before they can start to develop Smart Working. But any technology that helps people to work more effectively and efficiently wherever they are needs to be considered.

It is also important that organisations do not develop IT strategies for cloud computing in isolation from a wider approach to Smart Working. Through Smart Working the IT strategy can be linked to savings in property and travel, as well as potential increases in productivity.

The Home Office

Modernising IT, rationalising estates and introducing shared services have been central to introducing Smart Working at the Home Office.

As a large department with a wide range of responsibilities and activities, major efficiencies have been achieved by introducing shared business services (transactional HR, Procurement, Finance), IT and Estates. The introduction of ERP services is on track to achieve net savings of £123m by automating processes and putting them online, driving standardisation and simplification across the organisation.

Moving processes online – e.g. annual leave, sick leave, absence, expenses, performance and more complex HR activities too – has driven out waste and speeded up processes. This has improved experiences for staff, hugely increased compliance and created much more visibility around spending.

According to Fiona Spencer, Director of Transformation, 'It's not just about digitising what we do, but also about thinking everything through from a digital customer perspective. We're getting to the stage where working smarter is natural: we've got used to it. People coming in from other parts of government often experience a culture shock. So one tip is to make sure you think about acclimatising incoming staff and organisations to your smarter ways of working.'

Virtualisation of processes makes these systems accessible wherever people are working. Desktops have also been virtualised, enabling staff to work anywhere. This was one of the key goals for a major IT change programme recently completed by the Home Office.

The 'Extend & Blend' programme had four aims:

- Cutting IT service costs by around 25% over five years – which has already been exceeded
- Delivering more efficient, accessible IT services, with greater mobility and flexibility
- Modernising IT systems, making them more reliable, resilient and sustainable
- Putting in place a strategic platform for use by other parts of the department and for future development.

As well as supporting 'anytime, anywhere' working, Extend & Blend is set to deliver net contractual savings of £142.9m plus significant further efficiency and other benefits estimated at £165.3m, against investment of £72.3m.

The flexibility brought about by improved IT is also reflected in changes to Estates. A five year programme is consolidating buildings, and reinforcing the Department's established model of regional hubs. Sharing of estates services, introduced in 2008, has saved £70m in facilities costs alone over five years, with further savings expected going forward. Desk-sharing and the provision of touch-down spaces, coupled with flexible IT, enable staff to work in any centre. There is more to come in modernising spaces with a greater emphasis on collaborative work, with further reduction of paper and adoption of smarter ways of working across all parts of the Department.

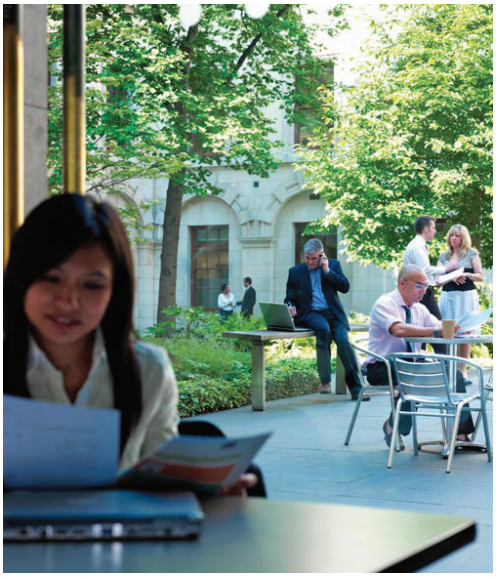
There is a further catalyst for change with the move to share space at Marsham Street with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). There will be common shared meeting, breakout and other collaborative spaces, with more touchdown places and open access Wi-Fi. The innovation is set to continue.

Security

Smart Working throws up new areas of risk in terms of data security and physical security. The risks need to be managed, and should not be used inappropriately as reasons to restrict business, mobility and innovation. Security should be proportionate to the risk, and for the vast majority of government business, this means using controls in the same way that a well-run commercial business would.

Policy and technology play a part, but managing risk is primarily about taking personal responsibility for proportionately protecting the official information and assets being used.

This includes keeping them physically safe when in transit and securely storing all devices and information – including both papers and electronic information – both when working and when work is finished. It means protecting information from being overlooked when working in public areas, and choosing working locations with an appropriate level of security to work in.



When working from home it is the responsibility of individual people to make sure information is safe, and that household members understand the need for the security measures taken.

People should consider the sensitivity of the information they will be working on and handle it in line with departmental policies. When working remotely, employees are still required to comply with all relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act (1998).

Generally, information should not be stored locally but in shared document/records systems. When data is captured in the field and the user is not in a position to connect directly with central systems, it should be transferred to the shared system as soon as possible so others can access it.

Departments will have different policies on the use of personal IT equipment for official business. This will differ between organisations depending on the sensitivity of the work involved.

Apart from the physical security of devices and documents, the ability to work in an increasing number of alternative government buildings can give rise to new risks alongside the opportunities and benefits. One example would be being alert to an intruder trying to tailgate someone with a pass into a secure area, and being prepared to challenge.

It is important to act appropriately in other office settings in terms of protection of information and property, and to develop a social awareness of security – watching out not just for oneself but for everyone.

Each Departmental Security Unit (DSU) can provide specific security advice and guidance for people in their department and must be informed of any security incident as soon as possible whether it happens in the office or away from it. Government's policy statements and guidance for departments are contained in the *Security Policy Framework*[8].

Wider involvement in technology decisions

Non-technical staff may shy away from dealing with technology issues. This contrasts with office design and flexible working policies, where everyone seems happy to take a view and fight their corner.

However, with the focus now on user needs and as people in general become familiar with using IT in their daily lives people should be encouraged to think about the possibilities offered by new technologies and get involved with IT teams in working out how to use IT to improve the effectiveness of their work.

The key principles are that:

1. Business need, in the context of Smart Working, has to drive the strategy for IT and for the technology procurement decisions for working both in the office and beyond
2. IT strategies need to be integrated with property and people strategies in order to maximise the business benefits of Smart Working.

By inviting more people to propose and contribute to IT solutions government will encourage innovation and the Government Digital Service will support departments and teams in finding the best technologies to support their business needs.

8 www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-policy-framework

The Government Digital Service

The Government Digital Service are leaders in developing digital public services for citizens and businesses. Initially formed out of existing government departments, their tools were expensive, with security constraints that made working effectively challenging or impossible. As GDS formed, it urgently needed digital tools that would enable it to work with agility and enable effective and easy collaboration both internally and externally.

GDS selected the web-based Google Apps for Business for their office productivity and collaboration needs, using both Apple MacBooks and other laptops and devices of their choice. Google Apps provides email, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation and diagramming, calendar, blog and wiki functions, social working and also online video conferencing.

Network connectivity is achieved through any wireless route to the internet, be it a café Wi-Fi hotspot, home broadband or the office network. Support and updates operate as with any commodity consumer cloud service. Updates take place seamlessly without any need for internal or outsourced IT function.

The solution was found to be 80% cheaper than the alternative available system, with 100% of users expressing preference for using the GDS solution.

Users find access to digital and online tools and services, including the ease of adopting new tools, both pleasant and productivity-enhancing. A pure web-based productivity solution enables users to collaborate freely amongst colleagues and with those outside government. It also liberates them to work with a wide range of current and future tools and devices, because there is no dependence or lock-in to any particular device, supplier or tool. And it liberates them to work from any location too.

The use of cloud services minimises the need for internal IT and the associated expense and disruption of technology procurement, testing, deployment and service management. A key benefit of pure web digital services with zero footprint on user's devices is that there is effectively no need for technical integration with its associated costs, complexity, and technical risks.

On the security side, users rarely need to access RESTRICTED material, but when they do they use accounts hosted by other departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions or Cabinet Office for this purpose, and can use a small number of accredited shared terminals to do so. The ratio between RESTRICTED terminals and users is approximately 20 to 200 (1 to 10), and is expected to be brought down further by both challenging the need for such terminals, and also by making applications available without the need for a RESTRICTED terminal.

36 The Way We Work

6 Smart, sustainable and healthy

Environmental sustainability

Most, if not all, departments are taking initiatives to make their office buildings more sustainable. These need to be complemented by the development of more sustainable working practices.

The biggest component of the carbon footprint of work for most organisations relates to travel – primarily in the commute journey.

Greening the office and greening the home count for little if at the end of the day we are still building and running too many offices and requiring people to make unnecessary journeys.

The carbon cost of work in the UK

- Every year UK workers clock up 80 billion car miles commuting to work
- The typical carbon footprint of a workers in an office is around 1.5 tonnes of CO_2 per year
- Business travel accounts for around 70 trips per worker per year, with an average distance of around 20 miles. 69% is by car.
- Mobile workers using company cars clock up an average 6000 miles per year.

Source: Department for Transport and RAC Foundation

Becoming a sustainable organisation is not just about engineering solutions and complying with new building standards. It involves changing behaviours and assumptions about how we work.

Having the UK working population travel billions of miles each year to spend time using computers and telephones – work that can be done from anywhere – is an intrinsically unsustainable thing to do.

The decisions we make on a daily basis about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources.

Saving carbon by eliminating journeys

A study by Oxford University's Transport Studies Unit[9] evaluated the comparative impacts of teleworking versus office carbon impacts. This proposes a typical carbon cost of using a room for home-based telework as being 173kg CO_2 per year if one day per week, and 865kg per year if five days per week (costs of heating and lighting a room plus equipment energy use).

This is about half the carbon per person of working in a modern office and a quarter of the carbon cost of working in a poor-performing office. And there are further savings to be achieved in travel reduction.

The following table shows miles, time and CO_2 saved per year by not driving to an office.

Average savings from avoiding commuting:

Annual savings	1.5 days per week	5 days per week
Distance	1175 miles	3915 miles
CO_2	365 kg	1187 kg
Time	61 hours	203 hours

Calculated on basis of 45 working weeks per year, and average UK commute distances

9 Banister, Newson & Ledbury (2007) *The Costs of Transport on the Environment: The Role of Teleworking in Reducing Emissions.* Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University.

Saving travel through virtual meetings

- Aviva UK has calculated that the full CO_2 cost of a full meeting of the executive committee is 6.4 tonnes. Telepresence is now being used to replace these face-to-face meetings.
- BT teleconferencing replaces 340,000 trips 54,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year – around 40kg of CO_2 for each call that replaces a physical meeting
- Use of conferencing technologies at Vodafone has led to a reduction of 12,000 tons of CO_2 from business mileage

Sources: CBI (2010) *Tackling Congestion, Driving Growth: A new approach to roads policy.* Case Studies from Lake (2013) *Smart Flexibility.* Gower Publishing.

Using online conferencing (audio, video, etc.) is already saving some organisations tens of thousands of business miles, saving costs and increasing productivity as well as playing a role in saving the planet.

Taking a practical approach: setting targets

The figures quoted here on organisational savings are based on measured studies, not wishful thinking.

Departments can take a practical approach to target setting for travel reduction, both for business travel and for staff commuting. Targets can be of the form: 'We will reduce our travel for (specified kinds of) meetings by x% by this date', or we will reduce business travel in our department by x% per year over the next 5 years'.

Similar targets can also be set for reducing consumption of other resources, such as paper. Bringing in electronic processes and centralised printing should be accompanied by paper reduction targets. Such targets need to be reinforced through cultural change programmes.

Reducing waste in office space

Realising the environmental savings when people move to working smarter critically depends on reducing office requirements, as per the guidance in Chapter 5 above.

Unless this property rationalisation takes place, the risk is that by keeping unused space in the office plus working from home and in other places, energy use will actually increase. This could entirely erode the savings made from reducing the need to travel.

Savings can often be made by better office design and more modern choice of furniture. Recycling is good for the environment and may be financially necessary. However, too strong a focus on using existing furniture even when it is outdated or inappropriate can constrain the options for space saving, energy efficiency and improving work effectiveness. This is where the overall whole life carbon saving return on investment needs to be considered alongside the financial returns and other business benefits.

Making smart offices more sustainable

Designing new offices or refurbishing existing ones also creates the opportunity to make the buildings work smarter, as well as their occupants.

The different, and more intensive use of offices means that there will often need to be changes to building services – and this means a chance to make the building itself more sustainable.

Potential wider impacts in the UK

It has been calculated that if the 40% of employees who could work from home did so for two days per week, the country could:

- Reduce road travel by 6.3 billion miles/year
- Reduce greenhouse gases by 6.2 million tonnes/year –
- Save the average commuter 11 working days of travel per year – and over 4 working weeks for longer distance commuters

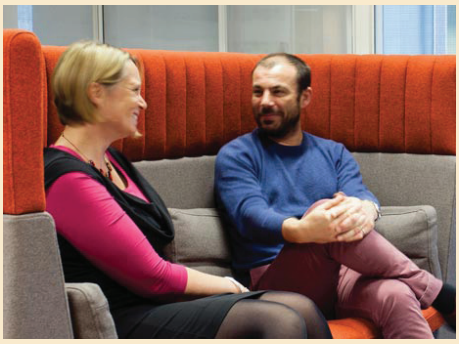
Source: Telework Research Network (2011) *The Shifting Nature of Work in the UK: Bottom Line Benefits of Telework*

The Office of Rail Regulation

Smart Working at the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) focuses on creating more opportunities to interact and collaborate. At the same time, changes to the offices in Holborn will reduce the costs of operation by enabling half a floor to be sublet to another organisation. The project will pay for itself just on this basis in less than three years and make savings in running costs beyond that. The wider organisational benefits are yet to be quantified but expected to be incremental and significant.

The new Smart Working office layout alleviates pressure on meeting rooms by creating a number of new smaller rooms for 1 to 1s and quiet working. There is a modern break-out and kitchen area for more collaborative working, touchdown points for those in the office for a short time and a more comfortable environment for visitors to work or meet with staff.

"We're having a big push to become more online-centric,' says Operations Director Tom Taylor. 'We're getting rid of the blockers to working smarter, e.g. introducing paperless processes and trialling new IT. And we're challenging practices that have never been questioned, like excessive paper storage, in-trays and presenteeism. Senior leadership buy-in is really important – it requires someone senior to be an agitator and an exemplar, or even an evangelist.



That helps overcome obstacles.' Tom's team have chosen to have paperless meetings – consciously setting an example from the top.

The ORR are aiming to reduce business travel costs through the introduction of new technology and working practices. The new layout at One Kemble Street will facilitate remote meetings by providing for more small private working spaces reducing pressure on meeting rooms and reducing the need for staff to travel for meetings. About a third of the staff are mobile, and the ability to work remotely reduces the need to travel back to base.

It's all about giving staff greater autonomy to challenge how and where they work, to maximise their productivity.

The Greening Government Commitments have set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and business-related transport by 25% by 2015 (from a 2009/10 baseline).

Social sustainability

Working smarter can also bring benefits to society, by:

- Extending work opportunities into more remote areas and to disadvantaged groups
- Enabling people with disabilities or caring responsibilities to work in places or at times more suitable to them
- Indirectly supporting local communities and services by enabling people to work at or nearer to home
- Enabling people to dovetail volunteering activities with their work commitments.

These can also have benefits for employers, e.g. in retaining staff when they relocate, being able to recruit from a wider pool of applicants and being an employer of choice.

Healthy working

Full-time employees spend almost half of their waking hours working, travelling to and from work or thinking about work. It therefore makes good business sense to take care of their health and fitness.

According to the report 'Working for a Healthier Tomorrow'[10] the annual economic costs in the UK of sickness absence and worklessness associated with working age ill-health are estimated to be over £100 billion. Around 175 million working days are lost each year, effectively adding around £650 to the annual employment cost of each employee. On top of this, staff with poor health under-perform when they are at work and this is often compounded by employers providing unhealthy working environments.

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, departments should promote flexible working practices that can reduce absence and in particular reduce stress.

A significant proportion of absence from work is due to minor ailments that make the thought of commuting and sitting in an office with colleagues unbearable – being able to work on occasions from home can have a significant impact on 'sick leave'. Similarly many people struggle to get to work when their children, disabled or elderly relatives are ill and need their attention. Smart Working can ease this problem.

People are more productive and happier in offices that are tidy, clean and well cared for. Air quality and lighting can have a profound impact on mood and performance. In redesigning environments for Smart Working, the need to create healthy workplaces needs to be taken into account.

This can mean designing in areas for relaxation in offices. But it can also mean using local alternatives including potentially other departments' offices closer to home that can encourage people to walk or cycle when they need to access office facilities.

Impacts on health and happiness are factors that can be measured, and should be included in consultation before Smart Working and in evaluation after implementation.

10 Black, C (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow.*

7 Making the case and implementing change

It is vital that the move to Smart Working has strong support from the top. Without strong messages coming down, individual managers may resist or introduce compromises that will in the end lead to the failure of the project. So the vision and the broad direction of the changes need to be clearly understood by everyone at the outset and throughout implementation.

The business case for Smart Working should be relatively straightforward to represent:

Invest in	Benefits are
The working environment	Lower operating costs
Technology and business processes	Higher productivity
Flexible working practices	Improved staff performance
	Better service delivery

In addition, non-financial benefits can include improved environmental and social sustainability and better employee health and wellbeing.

In summary, investing in a combination of new working environments, technology, business processes and more flexible working processes *can* deliver substantial business benefits.

Planning and rolling out the changes

Implementing the changes will involve close liaison between senior leaders, the estates and facilities, IT and HR functions in a department, working with the management of the teams undergoing the transition and is likely involve rethinking the culture and management practices of the department. It will be necessary to form an inter-disciplinary programme team to manage the changes and as a business transformation programme rather than simply a property project.[11]

It is recommended that programmes are run in accordance with government guidance on Managing Successful Programmes.[12]

A plan will need to be developed detailing the costs, timescale and risks.

11 This can be no more than a brief summary to point out the main component tasks of putting together a business case for Smart Working and implementing a change programme to help get started in the right way. More advice is available in *Working Beyond Walls* http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Working-beyond-Walls.pdf
12 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-practice-and-methodology-projects-programmes-and-portfolios

The following is a simple 'timeline' for implementing Smart Working:

1. Work with senior team to understand the possibilities, and agree the Vision
2. Establish senior team to drive the change programme forward
3. Gather the evidence – desk occupancy, workstyles, travel, productivity, staff preferences, technology use, customer locations and needs (etc)
4. Consult staff, staff networks and Trade Unions
5. Prepare the business case,
6. Identify and address any health and safety and equal opportunity and diversity issues
7. Set targets and priorities
8. Plan any changes to technology, working with IT team
9. Plan any changes needed to the office space, working with the property and facilities team
10. Run awareness raising and training sessions with managers and teams, working with the HR team
11. Develop any specific local protocols for Smart Working
12. Set up a fast-track pathfinder/trailblazer implementation to learn from, and make any appropriate modifications
13. Roll out the changes to the rest of the organisation
14. Continue culture change processes and training
15. Evaluate, and monitor progress for lessons learned as well as any necessary reporting
16. Modify further in the light of evaluation findings

The importance of top level support and enthusiasm

We have stressed the importance of consultation and getting staff buy-in and enthusiasm.

Implementations that are purely cost-driven and ignore staff aspirations and the importance of culture change will run into trouble.

However, experience shows that one of the biggest barriers to success is lack of engagement at the top level. Our case studies highlight the importance of top level support and example-setting.

Any Smart Working programme needs to have clear and dynamic support at CEO level. Without this projects can often die the death of a thousand compromises as programme managers struggle against powerful interests who may resist or seek to divert projects into their own pet schemes.

The vision has to be clearly endorsed and communicated. The message is 'This will be done. We'll consult on and adapt the detail, but the vision and principles are not in question'. This empowers the programme managers to move ahead confidently.

Outside of the Civil Service, there have been a number of high profile implementations where director-level staff row back on their own working practices – e.g. reintroducing personal offices for themselves or not allowing flexible work for staff working closely with them. 'Do as I say, not as I do' is a message that will undermine the success of Smart Working.

Can't do it all at once?

We strongly advocate a strategic and comprehensive approach to change. But we recognise that not all departments are in a position to do everything in one go.

In circumstances where there is limited scope for investment in new IT or refurbishment of premises, it should be remembered that much can be achieved in moving towards new ways of working using existing technologies more effectively and placing more of an initial emphasis on cultural change.

But it also needs to be remembered that under-utilised space, inefficient processes and unnecessary travel constitute major ongoing costs. Savings not achieved can have a negative impact on the ability to deliver front-line activities. The same goes for underachieving on the productivity front by not moving to more effective working practices.

When the business case identifies significant savings, it is worth reminding people of the weekly or monthly cost of not realising those savings.

A systematic approach to making the Business Case

Successful implementation of Smart Working involves a systematic approach consisting of:

- Gathering evidence
- Consultation
- Analysing the work people do
- Calculation of costs and savings (business case)
- Establishing key metrics
- Planning and delivering the changes to IT, communications, premises, HR policies, etc.
- Training
- Evaluation.

Evidence gathering

Before planning major changes to how people work, it is essential to pull together accurate information about where and when people work, how much space they use, the resources they use and the people they need to interact with.

The evidence needs to be gathered in a systematic way.

A **space audit**, ideally carried out over two weeks in a non-holiday period, will enable you find out actual space occupancy, how much time desks are 'claimed' but not actually occupied, meeting room occupancy, use of break-out spaces and kitchens, etc. It will also show peak demand.

It is best if the survey is carried out at frequent intervals throughout the day. Relying on just one or two observations during the day will probably inflate average occupancy and not record times of peak occupancy.

A staff survey (see also below), carried out over two or three weeks to maximise response rates, should be used to harvest additional practical information about work styles. This should include details about where and when people currently work, the amount of travel, their use of technologies and other resources, whether their work involves external interactions with the public and partners, or is primarily internally facing, and whether it is subject to peaks and troughs of demand. Workstyle analysis will need to be based on a clear picture of who works where and why – information that can be surprisingly tricky to pin down in many large organisations.

A rigorous **storage audit** (see Chapter 5) needs to be carried out.

A programme of **structured interviews** with senior management and stakeholders is important to identify key operational requirements, current styles of working, key issues and changes in strategy and/or headcount that may impact on changes to Smart Working. Managers may hold radically different views, and the process may also highlight the need for management training and awareness-raising.

For a fully integrated programme involving redesigning the office, there also needs to be an **assessment of the office layout and building services**, to see the scope for change, identify constraints and provide a basis for both modelling possible new work environments and identifying the costs of change.

Initial evidence gathering should include a **technology audit**, to identify what forms of Smart Working existing technology can support, and the investment that may be needed to support more extensive Smart Working.

To provide a baseline for future evaluation of the impacts of change, it is helpful to gather data on absence, staff turnover and staff satisfaction.

From this an accurate picture of current ways of working can be drawn, and a baseline established that will help in future evaluation of the impacts of the project.

Consultation

Consultation about Smart Working has three main aims:

- Playing a part in the evidence gathering process (as previous page)
- Finding out requirements and aspirations for new working patterns
- Involving people and Trade Unions in the process of change, to motivate them and to ensure buy-in and success.

Involving staff will stimulate further discussion within departments and teams about the practicality and impacts of different work styles, how (if adopted) they need to be managed, and what kinds of new tools, processes and training might be needed.

Extensive consultation with people – the users – should be the foundation of making sure that new environments, IT and working practices meet their real needs and support them in doing their work as well as possible.

Analysing the work people do

One obstacle to implementing Smart Working is making assumptions about how work has to be carried out. For example, some people might say "This role has to be based in the office", or "I always need my team close at hand".

Some jobs may be site-specific or time-specific. But it is important to analyse the various tasks involved in the job. When analysed, some tasks will prove to be more 'location-independent' than others.

It is also important to analyse what is tethering tasks unnecessarily to the office and/or the desk, and whether that can change in the context of Smart Working. For example, is it over-reliance on paper processes, an excessive 'meetings culture', traditional management styles, or lack of remote access technologies? If so, strategies can be developed to modernise the processes or cultures involved.

Calculation of costs and savings

Data will be needed about the costs of running the office on a per-person and per-sqm basis. Scenarios can be developed around different work patterns and sharing ratios and the potential savings can be calculated.

The costs and environmental impacts of travel – both business travel and commute travel – should also be calculated.

Costings will also be needed for investment in new IT, any alterations to premises, training in new systems and processes and for supporting cultural change.

A cost/benefit analysis and a business plan can then be put together, looking at the potential savings and the investment required to achieve those savings through working smarter.

Business savings for employers

Findings from the *Shifting Nature of Work in the UK* report (2011) show that businesses could:

- Save £550 for every employee who works an average two and a half days per week from home
- Save £4.2 billion in property costs (on the basis of a 20% reduction)
- Save £3.2 billion from reduced absenteeism

Establishing key metrics

Moving to Smart Working involves having a clear idea of the benefits that are to be achieved. Working from the evidence gathered, metrics would be likely to include:

- Increased productivity
- Improvements in business outcomes
- Improvements in the specific business processes and working practices targeted for change
- Cost Savings
- Energy Savings / Carbon Reduction
- Office space reduction
- Improved staff satisfaction with space, IT and management culture
- Travel reduction – both business travel and commute travel
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved staff retention
- Improved wellbeing.

Department of Health

Being able to adapt to organisational change is central to working smarter at the Department of Health (DH). In particular, the Health and Social Care Act has brought about many changes in DH and its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs), including the need to accommodate six new ALBs.

According to Robert Edmondson-Jones, Director of Information Services, 'As well as responding to structural changes, we have had to save money, hit efficiency targets and make better use of the resources we have – and do it all very quickly. Our aim is to have a dynamic estate and IT that enables people to do what they need to do'.

The transformation programme has reduced overall estate running costs by £27m. 22 leases have been surrendered, and £9.5m has been raised from 24 property sales.

Each DH directorate now has fewer desks than people, with a range of flexible spaces: project areas, bigger meeting rooms, touchdown desks, unbookable quiet rooms and breakout areas.

There is also a health & wellbeing centre with a managed fitness suite. The aim is to make the DH a great place to work, and to live by the principles they advocated in their policy work.

Changing the way people work includes harnessing the potential of the latest IT developments. A new outsourced shared IT services contract is based on a new vision for a 'secure multi-tenant private cloud' for the Department and the ALBs. The solution is scalable, modular and flexible. It delivers not only an improved infrastructure for modern working but also one which can evolve and rapidly adapt to future changes. New access arrangements enable staff to work from terminals in any building.

As well as supporting more remote and collaborative working, there has also been a new approach to video communications to increase efficiency and reduce travel costs. The aim was to embed videoconferencing into day-to-day business processes. New VC systems have been installed that make meetings more flexible and reduce routine travel between sites. The next phase is to integrate wider access to desktop video for local teams.

Training and awareness-raising

Smart Working may fail to realise the full range of benefits if managers and staff are not properly prepared for working in new ways and for playing their part in developing a Smart Working culture.

Training and awareness-raising for managers should include:

- Understanding the benefits of new ways of working
- Understanding the flexible and smart working options available
- Understanding the linkages between new technologies and the possibilities for new working practices
- Understanding how to involve and motivate staff to implement Smart Working
- How to manage a dispersed workforce
- How to manage by results rather than presence
- New approaches to empowerment and trust
- Performance issues resolution
- Equality and diversity issues
- Dealing with communication issues
- Understanding the pitfalls and issues that may arise, and how to deal with these.

Training and awareness-raising for teams should include:

- Being clear about the type of workplace culture that it is hoped to develop
- Understanding the benefits and goals
- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Developing skills and understanding in working more flexibly:
  - working with less direct supervision
  - communicating with colleagues and partners
  - time management
  - monitoring and reporting arrangements
  - health and safety in new working environments
  - responsible risk management for personal and data security
- Working in a 'non-territorial' environment – sharing space and resources, and choosing appropriate work settings
- Working with Smart Working technologies and understanding the processes for having issues resolved.

Evaluation

To understand whether Smart Working has achieved the benefits anticipated, an evaluation study should be carried out around 9-12 months after implementation and thereafter on an on-going basis using Balanced Scorecard and efficiency and effectiveness benchmarking.

It is vital that baseline metrics have been established in order for the evaluation to be robust. The achievements can then be evaluated against this baseline. Where necessary, further changes can be made where expected targets are not met, or where further consultation and feedback show that there are particular difficulties or issues.

Smart Working will also continue to evolve, and involves openness to future change. So the evaluation process has to take account of new possibilities for increasing flexibility and agility. It should take account of new technological possibilities and the changing context in which the Civil Service operates.

Department for Transport

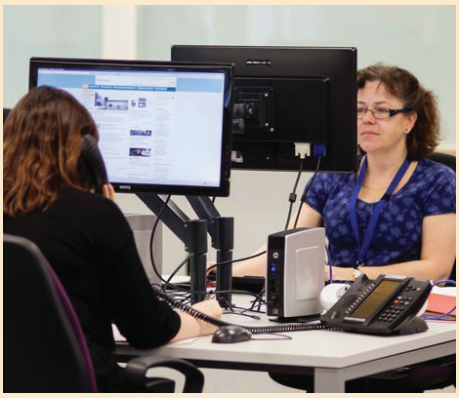
Following its advocacy and experience of flexible working during the Olympics, the Department for Transport has embarked on a journey into Smart Working.

'It's really about moving to a much more modern and professional environment, and people really respond to that when they see it. It's about better and more flexible ways of working. One of the biggest challenges is getting people to see it's about business change not just about workspace,' says Head of Property Malcolm Twite.

So the change team at DfT worked hard to gather compelling evidence for change and in getting everyone on board to work smarter. An initial audit of space based on entry cards found that there was a minimum of 300 desks unused every day, and desk occupancy at around 50%. The case for using space better was overwhelming.

The programme is transforming the three key areas of People, IT and Property, which are tackled in that order. A big effort is being put into communications, engaging everyone in designing their new space and in agreeing new and smarter ways of working.

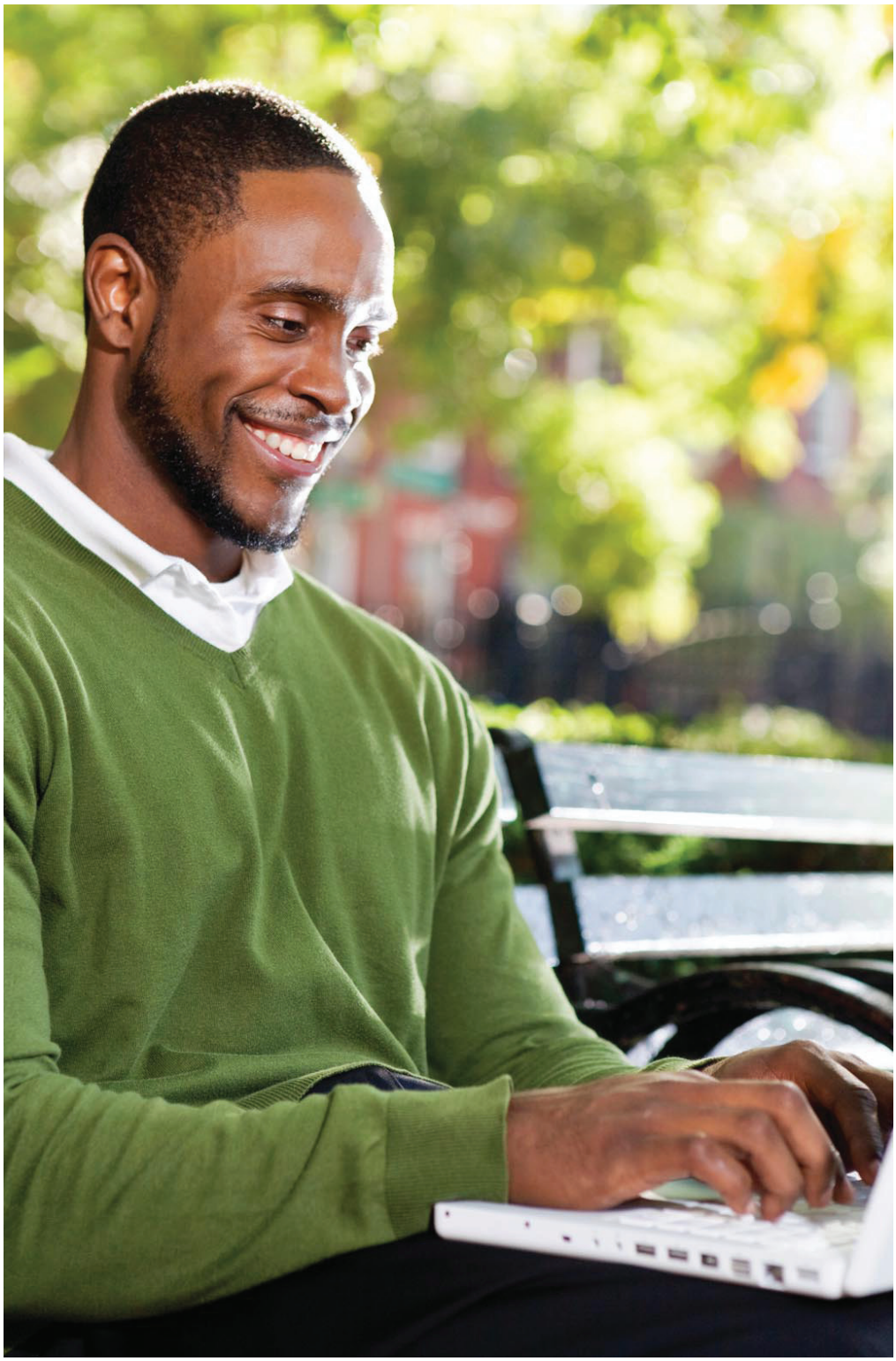
The changes are being made without any dedicated decant space. Instead staff indicate with slips of paper when their desk will be available for others to use. So teams find and coordinate their own space to work. This two week period without a team zone provides a good opportunity to start working more flexibly if they are not already doing so.



There are no personal desks (except for reasonable adjustment). There are a mixture of desks, including some height adjustable ones, and square project tables. The desks are set up for thin client working. The office is zoned with team bases, so people can sit close to colleagues when they want to.

There are a range of new informal meeting spaces, encouraging more collaborative working and taking the pressure off meeting rooms. Already there is much more cross-team interaction, which was one of the key aims. There are also quiet spaces where people can get away from phones to do concentrated work.

There is a fair amount of homeworking already, and staff are supported to work wherever is most effective to get the work done. Looking to the future, the aim is to enable people to go into any DfT building and work, anywhere in the country.



8 Moving forward

Many of the people we spoke to in the course of preparing this Guide spoke of the move to Smart Working as a journey. And it is one that continues.

As with all large organisations, not all departments move at the same speed. Within departments and agencies there may also be variations in progress.

The 'Smart Working Maturity Model' below outlines the main phases of change that organisations go through on their journey to embracing smart and flexible working in a strategic and integrated way.

The model also summarises the typical stages that bridge the gap from one phase to another.

Departments and agencies can use this Maturity Model to assess where they are positioned on the road to better ways of working, and to scope what their priorities should be in moving forward.

Larger organisations may find that different areas of the business are moving forward at different speeds. The Maturity Model can help in measuring progress across an organisation in such cases.

Changing places

Future changes to working environments are likely to include a greater emphasis on sharing – sharing between office bases between departments, being able to work in other public sector offices, and working from local centres. These latter may be provided by various bodies in the public sector, or by the private sector.

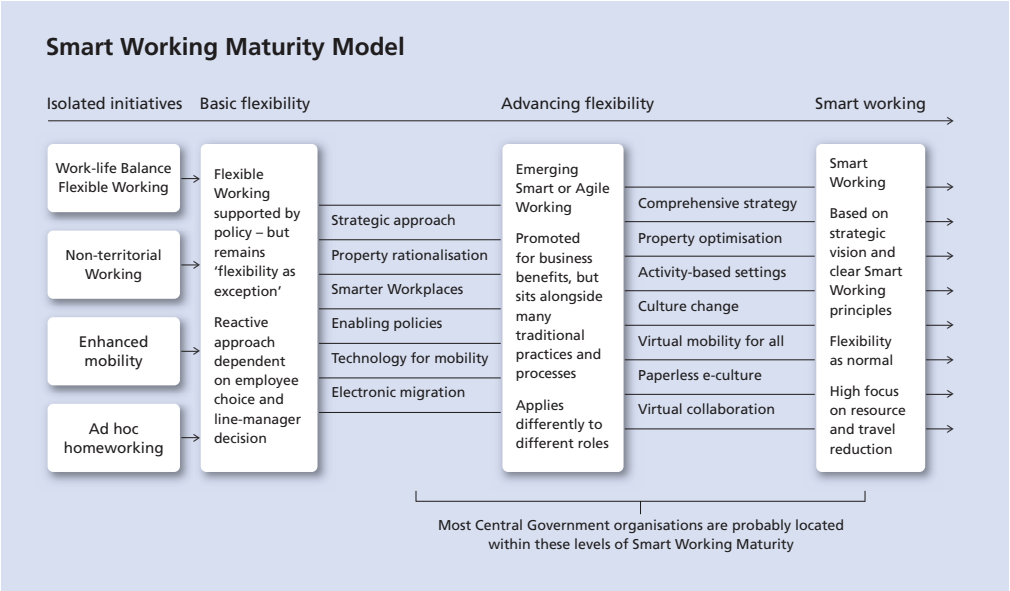
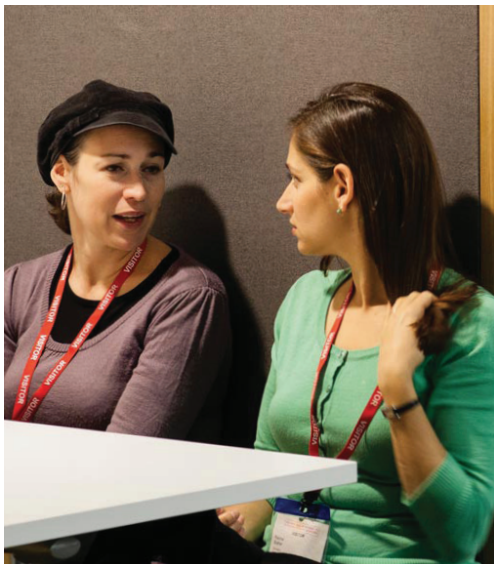


Figure 3: The Smart Working Maturity Model based on Smart Flexibility



The design of these offices and hubs is likely to move further away from the central importance of the desk and towards an increased range of shared flexible work and collaborative work settings.

Continuing technology changes

However, the story does not stop here. Further innovations in the world of work are bound to impact on the potential for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

While many organisations are wrestling with making best use of current technologies, new technologies are coming on stream all the time. New generations of portable devices, new screen and surface technologies, social media applications, communications technologies, voice recognition technologies and ambient computing will over the next decade further transform the nature of work, and the spaces in which we work.

To reap the benefits, The Way We Work programmes must remain open to the future possibilities for supporting greater mobility and flexibility.

9 Further resources and information

TW3 resources

Contact us
For more information about The Way We Work programme please contact the TW3 team on:
TW3information@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

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Flexibility.co.uk

Flexibility is a free resource providing guidance, case studies and features on new ways of working. Beneath the home page there is a wealth of resources, articles, reports and guides.

You can sign up for a regular newsletter and also receive early notification of forthcoming events. Further details at www.flexibility.co.uk

Smart Work Network

The Smart Work Network was launched in Autumn 2007 to bring together practitioners of flexible working from large organisations across the UK. Members are people working in private, public and voluntary sector organisations to roll out substantial **programmes of flexible work**.

Currently there are over 200 members, from 160 subscribing organisations. Further details at www.smart-work.net

Acknowledgements

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The guide has been produced by the TW3 team led from Cabinet Office to help UK central government departments implement Smart Working. The team includes policy advisers and experts on workplace, IT, employee policy and security

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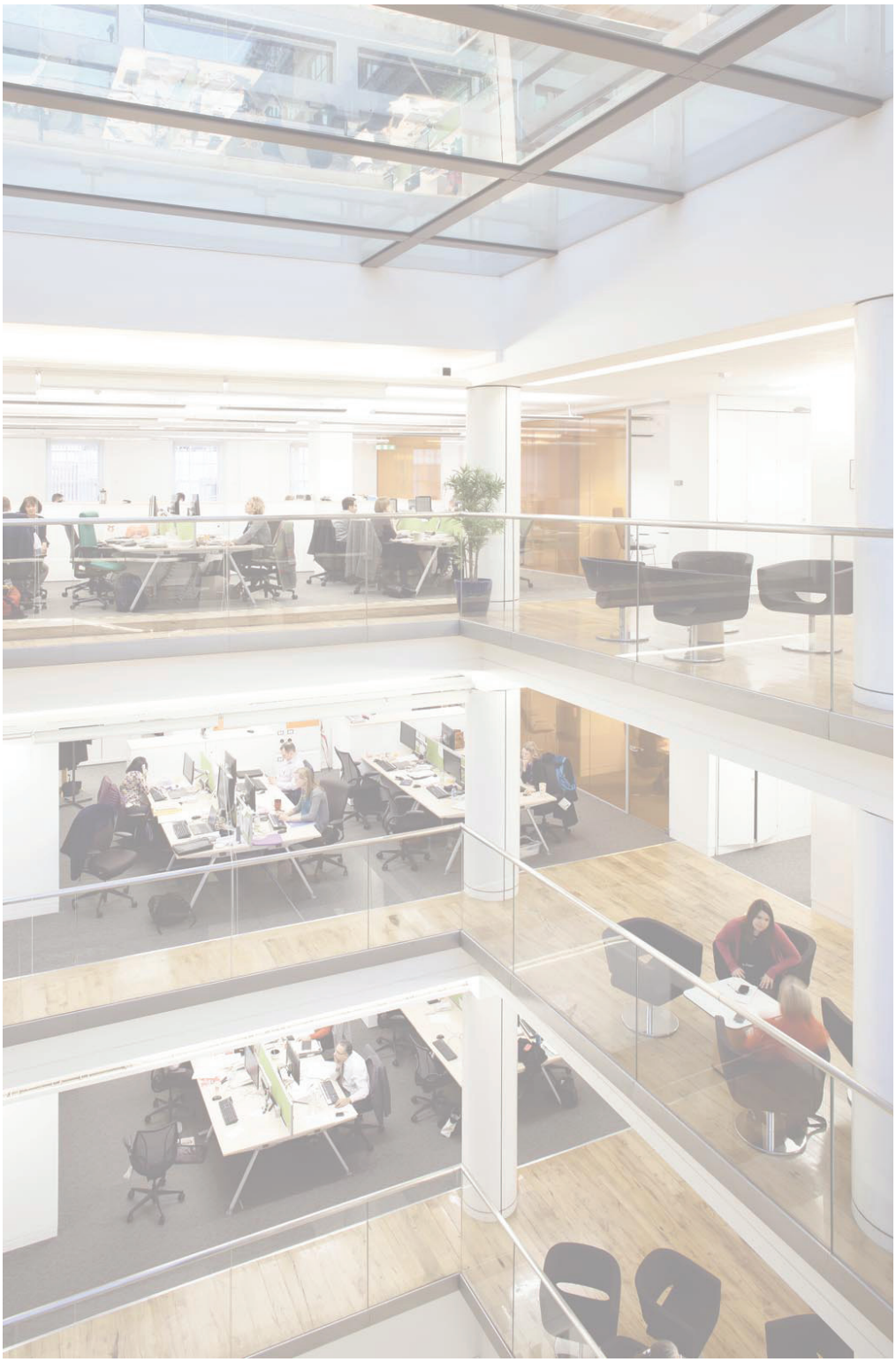

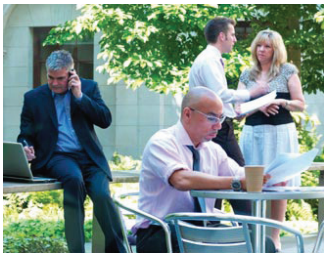

The Way We Work (TW3) is the Cabinet Office led cross-departmental programme designed to help realise the Civil Service Reform Plan's aim of 'Creating a decent working environment for all staff, with modern workplaces enabling flexible working, substantially improving IT tools and streamlining security requirements to be less burdensome for staff'.

Our aim for this book is to provide a guide to the new ways of working brought in through the Civil Service Reform programme which will enable all parts of the Civil Service to work seamlessly across locations, and at times that are more advantageous to citizens, employees and taxpayers.

"Transforming the way we work is not a 'nice-to-have'. It is the only way to make sure we provide the services our customers expect and demand – now and in the future."

Martin Donnelly
Permanent Secretary, Business Innovation and Skills, and
Chair of the TW3 Delivery Board

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HM Government

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Northern Ireland Civil Service Homeworking Policy

WORKING AT HOME

THE NICS HOMEWORKING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

CENTRAL PERSONNEL GROUP

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INTRODUCTION

1 The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has for many years recognised the benefits, in business terms, of enabling staff to achieve and maintain a better balance between work and home, and has developed one of the most extensive ranges of work-life balance policies and practices within Northern Ireland.

2 Working at home is not a new development in the NICS – it has been available by local arrangement, mainly on an informal basis, for many years. The introduction of a corporate NICS Homeworking Policy will help, as far as possible, to ensure consistency across the Service in the handling of requests from staff to work at home.

3 The following guidance introduces the NICS Homeworking Policy, explains the application process, and guides staff and their line managers through the issues that must be taken into account before any request to work at home can be approved.

4 Staff should note that this policy does not in any way affect either an officer's right to apply to work at home under the flexible working legislation, or the consideration of reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It should also be noted that an officer working at home under this policy has the same terms and conditions and employment rights as any similar office-based staff

SECTION 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Working at home is a voluntary flexible working arrangement whereby an individual, with the agreement of their line manager and Head of Branch, spends part of a working day(s) or week working at home. Working at home can be combined with any other working pattern - for example, part-time working or compressed hours.

1.1.2 In line with NICS work-life balance policies, line managers are expected to adopt a sympathetic, flexible approach when considering requests for working at home arrangements, while taking account of the legal requirements and equal opportunities issues.

1.1.3 Working at home may be considered either as a short or longer-term arrangement. No working at home arrangement should, however, be viewed as permanent and all working at home arrangements will be subject to regular review (see paragraphs 1.9.1 – 1.9.3 below).

1.2 POTENTIAL BENEFITS

1.2.1 While greater flexibility to balance their work-life commitments is likely to be the main driver from the individual's perspective, an increasing

number of organisations are recognising that working at home can also be good for business. The principal benefits that have been reported include:

- increased productivity attributable to higher levels of concentration achieved away from office distractions;
- improved staff commitment;
- reduced absenteeism;
- happier staff; and
- a more diverse, flexible workforce.

1.3 TYPES OF WORKING AT HOME

1.3.1 The NICS recognises two broad categories of working at home: regular and occasional. Both are voluntary flexible working arrangements that require mutual, continuing agreement between the officer and their line managers. There is no formal variation to the officer's terms and conditions.

Regular working at home

1.3.2 A regular working at home arrangement provides an opportunity for staff to work at home for an agreed period of time each week (or any other regular pattern), business need permitting. This may be for whole or part days but should not normally exceed 3 days per week for full-time staff, other than in exceptional circumstances (the extent of working at home approved for staff on alternate working patterns must be considered on an individual

basis). This is partly because of the risk of isolation but also because face-to-face contact is an essential part of most jobs.

1.3.3 Regular working at home requires specific criteria to be met and an agreement to be signed by the officer, their line manager and Head of Branch before working at home begins. Any officer who wishes to apply to work at home on a regular basis must complete both a Self-Assessment Form (see Annex 1) and an Application Form (see Annex 2).

Characteristics of a regular working at home arrangement

1.3.4 The main characteristics of a regular working at home arrangement are as follows:

- This is a voluntary flexible working arrangement – it does not create a right to work at home on any given day.

- The arrangement is covered by a written Working at Home Agreement between the officer and their line management (see Annex 3).

- The way in which working time is split between the home and office locations will be defined in the Working at Home Agreement. However, the officer can be required by management for legitimate business reasons to attend the office on agreed “working at home” days.

- Any necessary furniture and/or IT equipment will be provided by the officer's department if the department considers that it is cost-effective to do so.

- The officer is required to participate in the Health and Safety risk assessment process by providing information that will enable a risk assessment of their proposed home workspace to be carried out.

Occasional working at home

1.3.5 Occasional working at home involves the officer, with the agreement of management, working at home on an ad hoc basis either to assist in completion of a specific task or to suit personal circumstances that do not require an ongoing commitment. If an officer wishes working at home to become part of their normal working pattern (business need permitting), then this is considered to be regular working at home, regardless of the number of days, part days or hours per week or month they wish to work at home. Where this is the case, the application process for regular working at home must be followed.

1.3.6 Where an officer wishes to work at home on an occasional basis, they must complete and submit an Occasional Working at Home Application Form (see Annex 5). The agreement of the Head of Branch must

be obtained, and the expected outputs from the working at home agreed, in advance of each separate occasion.

1.3.7 Examples of circumstances in which occasional working at home may be appropriate include the following:

- To allow staff the opportunity to work more effectively on a particular piece of work where concentration is important in order to avoid the interruptions that are part of the office environment.
- To provide a solution to a temporary problem where staff may be unable to travel to the office, eg where a particularly severe spell of weather has been forecast or in the event of a planned disruption of public transport. (Where a problem is unforeseen, it is very unlikely that staff will have access to the resources they would need to work at home, unless they already have a regular working at home arrangement in place. Even when this is the case, the officer must seek the agreement of their line management to work at home on a day on which they were due to work in the office.)
- Where attendance at meetings away from the normal place of work during a workday make it impractical to return to the office.

1.3.8 Equipment and furniture will not normally be provided at the officer's home to facilitate this type of arrangement. However, where it is necessary, and such equipment is available, it will be provided, for example, an officer may be permitted to use an office laptop at home.

1.3.9 While some of the information in the remainder of this guidance does not specifically apply to occasional working at home, officers and their line managers must be aware of the many issues such as health and safety, and IT and document security, which apply to working at home in any situation. It is important, therefore, that staff familiarise themselves with this guidance before applying to work at home on an occasional basis.

1.4 WHO CAN APPLY TO WORK AT HOME?

1.4.1 Any officer may request to work at home and all applications will be given serious consideration. However, staff should note that there is no automatic right for any officer to work at home, nor can any officer be compelled to work at home. The opportunity to work at home (even on an occasional basis) will, in all cases, be dependent on the suitability of the job, and the home environment, within the constraints of business needs.

1.4.2 Managers are required to make a sound business decision and the aim of this policy is to ensure that these decisions are reached fairly after a flexible approach to the request has been adopted. Although this policy ensures all staff can apply for a working at home arrangement, it is important to understand that this does not mean that all requests can be accommodated.

1.4.3 The application will initially be considered by the officer's line manager (at or above Staff Officer or analogous grade)[1] who will make a recommendation to the Head of Branch. The final decision to approve/reject an application to work at home will be taken by the Head of Branch, taking account of the views of the individual, their line manager and, where appropriate, other colleagues.

1.4.4 Requests to work at home are evaluated on their impact on the business, and the needs of customers and colleagues. Any request is expected to have a positive (or at least neutral) impact on the business. If the proposed arrangement will not work for the business, it will not be approved.

1.4.5 Staff should note that it may be necessary to end a working at home arrangement for one of the reasons detailed in section 1.10

Application Forms

1.4.6 Standard forms have been developed to assist individuals and their managers through the application process and to help them think through the proposed arrangement, including how it would affect customers and colleagues. Section 2 of this guidance explains the application and assessment process in detail.

[1] **Note**: Throughout this guidance the line manager is referred to as "at or above Staff Officer and analogous grades". Where an applicant's line manager(s) is below SO level, the first line manager at or above Staff Officer or analogous grade must carry out the assessment of the application, and the development and implementation of any subsequent working at home arrangement and agreement, in conjunction with any line manager(s) below SO level. In all cases it remains the responsibility of the first line manager at or above Staff Officer and analogous grades to ensure that the responsibilities outlined in Annex 12 are carried out.

1.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.5.1 It is essential that all staff who apply to work at home under this policy are fully aware of both the potential health and safety risks of working at home and their responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation. Greater responsibility is inherently placed on an individual who works at home given that options for supervision, control etc are generally significantly reduced. Irrespective of business need, job suitability etc, an officer will not be able to work at home unless their home provides a safe and healthy working environment. Further information on Health and Safety issues is contained in Annex 6.

1.6 COSTS

1.6.1 If the Head of Branch considers that working at home is feasible, the Personnel/Establishment Branch will consider the cost-effectiveness of providing any necessary furniture and/or equipment. Where an application to work at home is approved, the employing department will bear the start-up and ongoing costs associated with establishing the arrangement, excluding any increase in domestic insurance premiums (see paragraph 1.20.6) or additional household costs (see paragraph 1.20.11).

1.6.2 The department will not reimburse the officer for any costs incurred in changing furniture or furnishings (in order to accommodate any furniture and/or equipment provided by the department) to facilitate working at home, or for wear and tear in the home.

1.7 TIMESCALES

1.7.1 The actual timescale will depend on the requirements of each case. However, where possible, managers should aim to adhere to the following limits:

- Within 14 days of receiving the application, the line manager should meet with the applicant to discuss the request.
- Within 14 days of meeting with the applicant, the line manager should submit their recommendation to the Head of Branch.
- Within 14 days of receiving the recommendation, the Head of Branch should inform the officer of the outcome of their application.

1.7.2 While managers should, in all cases, aim to adhere to the timescales outlined above, staff should be aware that there may be circumstances in which line management or the department requires more time in order to consider other factors such as additional cost, the availability of equipment etc. Where the timescales above cannot be met, the officer must be kept informed.

1.8 MONITORING THE WORKING AT HOME ARRANGEMENT

1.8.1 Once a working at home arrangement has been established, the line manager will monitor the effectiveness of the arrangement (including the impact on the officer, their colleagues and the business area as a whole) on an ongoing basis. Any concerns, which could affect the continuation of the arrangement, must be addressed promptly in consultation with the officer. A TUS Representative or work colleague may attend if this is agreed by all parties prior to the meeting.

1.9 REVIEWING WORKING AT HOME ARRANGEMENTS

1.9.1 Line managers must formally review regular working at home arrangements every 3 months or more often if necessary, for example, if an officer is working at home as part of a phased return from sickness absence, or when new applications to work at home are made within the Branch[2]. The form at Annex 4 must be used for this purpose and a copy of the completed review form must be forwarded to the Head of Branch and the Officer for information.

1.9.2.1 Regular working at home arrangements must be reviewed in the following circumstances:

[2] The NICS Homeworking policy aims to facilitate an informal, mutually agreed flexible working arrangement – it does not give anyone a right to work at home. Requests to do so will be accommodated as far as possible, subject to business needs, and other requirements such as health and safety, being satisfied. In the interests of equity, management retain the right to review all working at home arrangements within their business area at any time and to amend/end these as necessary.

- in the event of a change in the role of the officer;
- in the event of a change in any of the officer's line management[3];
- on return from a period of long-term sick absence (see paragraph 1.15.2);
- following any absence of more than 20 working days;
- if the officer is put on a trial period under the inefficiency due to sickness absence procedures (see paragraph 1.15.4).

1.9.3 Line managers must review the effectiveness of occasional working at home after each occasion.

1.10 AMENDING/SUSPENDING/ENDING A REGULAR WORKING AT HOME ARRANGEMENT

1.10.1 Under this policy, a working at home arrangement is voluntarily requested by the officer and granted at the discretion of the Head of Branch. The Head of Branch retains the right to amend, suspend or end any such arrangement if business needs change. or the arrangement is causing performance issues. Where such action is necessary, the officer will be provided with a full explanation in writing and given as much notice as possible. . If the individual still has issues of concern, and a meeting is required, a TUS representative or work colleague can attend. However, staff should be aware that in exceptional circumstances business reasons may

[3] For business reasons, the new line manager may need the officer to be present in the office more frequently than the former manager, particularly while they are becoming familiar with their new post in the short term.

necessitate immediate suspension or termination of any working at home arrangement.

Amending/ Suspending the Arrangement

1.10.2 An officer may seek to have their regular working at home arrangement amended or suspended. This request must be put in writing to the Head of Branch, outlining the proposed amendment(s) and their reason(s). If the proposed amendment is agreed, a new Agreement must be drawn up, signed by the officer, their line manager and the Head of Branch, and copied to Personnel/Establishment Branch. Personnel/Establishment Branch must also be notified in writing when a working at home arrangement is suspended.

Ending the Arrangement

1.10.4 A working at home arrangement will end automatically if the officer leaves the post for which the agreement has been drawn up. This does not preclude the possibility that this post may also be subject to a working at home arrangement in the future. Should the officer wish to avail of a working at home arrangement in a new post, they should submit a new application.

1.10.5 An officer may terminate their working at home arrangement at any time by notifying their Head of Branch in writing.

1.10.6 The Head of Branch may terminate a regular working at home arrangement by notifying the officer, in writing, that the arrangement is to end and the reason(s) why. The reason(s) given for the termination of the working at home arrangement must relate to the unsuitability of the job, the officer or their home workspace, or a change to the business needs of the branch. Where the agreement is to be terminated for a business reason that is foreseeable, as much notice as possible should be given, normally a minimum of 1 Month unless exceptional circumstances arise.

1.10.7 Regardless of whether a regular working at home arrangement is ended by the officer or the Head of Branch, the Head of Branch must inform Personnel/Establishment Branch as soon as possible.

1.11 PERSONNEL/ESTABLISHMENT BRANCH

1.11.1 Personnel/Establishment Branch must retain a copy of any Working at Home Agreement(s) on the officer's Personal File, along with notification of any amendments, period(s) of suspension or termination.

1.12 APPEALS

1.12.1 An officer may appeal a decision to refuse an application to work at home, or to end a working at home arrangement, by following the Grievance Procedure.

1.13 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1.13.1 An officer working at home under this policy has the same terms and conditions and employment rights as office-based staff.

1.14 FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

1.14.1 Officers who work at home under this policy will, where possible, be able to continue to work under their department's Flexible Working Hour's Policy. Line managers are reminded that there is provision to agree core times and flexible bands on an individual basis (see Section 1.12 of Chapter 1 Hours and Attendance of the Leave and Attendance Part of the NICS Staff Handbook).

1.15 SICK ABSENCE

1.15.1 Staff with a working at home arrangement must follow the normal procedures for reporting sick absence.

1.15.2 A working at home arrangement must be reviewed following a period of long-term sick absence as organisational or procedural changes in the Branch during the officer's absence may have an impact on the working at home arrangement. These matters will be discussed on your return (see paragraph 1.9.2).

1.15.3 An officer who wishes working at home to be considered as part of a phased return to work from sickness absence must follow the normal application and assessment process for regular working at home. There will be no relaxation of the requirements regarding the suitability of the job, the officer and the proposed home workspace. *Where a working at home arrangement as part of a phased return is approved, the duration of the Homeworking aspect of this phased return will be subject to normal review (see Paragraph 1.9.1). However, medical opinion will be sought on whether it would be detrimental to the officer's return to work to end any Homeworking arrangement prior to the scheduled end of the phased return*).

1.15.4 An officer with a written warning or final written warning under the inefficiency sickness policy will not normally be permitted to avail of the working at home provisions, unless there is medical evidence from their GP or consultant which recommends that such an adjustment could lead to an improved level of attendance. In such cases the Department may wish to consult with Occupational Health Service (OHS) before approving any request. In the case of an officer with an existing working at home arrangement, a medical opinion will be sought on whether it would be detrimental to the officer's attendance to end the arrangement before any action is taken.

1.16 ANNUAL/FLEXI/SPECIAL LEAVE

1.16.1 An officer working at home must follow the normal procedures when applying for annual leave, flexi leave or special leave.

1.17 TRAVEL EXPENSES

1.17.1 Where a working at home arrangement is approved the normal Travel and Subsistence arrangements continue to apply and the office remains the permanent station. Travel expenses will not be payable for commuting between the officer's home and their permanent station.

1.17.2 Entitlement to mileage allowance for official business will be calculated in accordance with paragraph 3.5.7 of the Official Travelling Chapter of the Travel and Subsistence Part of the NICS Staff Handbook.

1.18 OTHER EXPENSES

Telephone calls

1.18.1 The normal arrangements for reimbursing the cost of official calls from home apply (see Chapter 7 of the General Employment Issues Part of the NICS Staff Handbook).

Other expenditure

1.18.2 An officer working at home must obtain the prior approval of their line manager before incurring any other expense directly related to carrying out their official duties, eg postage.

1.19 OTHER POLICIES

1.19.1 Staff are reminded that while working at home all other departmental/NICS policies, for example arrangements for working overtime with the approval of management, will continue to apply.

1.20 OTHER ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Domestic commitments/Caring responsibilities

1.20.1 It is the responsibility of the officer to keep their domestic and work commitments separate and to put adequate care arrangements in place for dependants. Any officer who has caring responsibilities must make a written statement of their care plans in the Application Form (see Annex 2, part 1.8 for regular working at home and Annex 5, part 1.4 for occasional working at home).

1.20.2 The line manager must assess whether the care arrangements described by the applicant will allow the officer to carry out their duties.

1.20.3 An officer who works at home must inform their line management of any changes to their care arrangements as soon as possible.

Notification of working at home to External Authorities

Mortgage Lender/Landlord

1.20.4 An officer who applies to work at home will be required to inform their mortgage provider or landlord of their intention to work at home to ensure that there is no conflict with their existing mortgage or tenancy arrangement – sample letters, which can be used for this purpose, can be found in Annex 7. The officer must also check whether any restrictive covenant is attached to the lease or deeds of the property forbidding non-domestic activity (for example, as a result of a mortgage agreement or lease).

Household Insurers

1.20.5 The officer is responsible for informing their household insurers that they are proposing to work at home before any such arrangement commences - a sample letter, which can be used for this purpose, can be found in Annex 7. There is no evidence of insurers raising domestic premiums because employees are working at home, but informing them is important so that they cannot later use working at home as an excuse to disallow any claims.

1.20.6 It is unlikely that domestic premiums will increase as a result of working at home but, where this is the case, the officer will be expected to cover the cost of any such increase.

1.20.7 Equipment or furniture provided by the department must not be included on home insurance policies. The department will bear the cost of loss or damage to equipment and furniture, provided the officer was authorised to take the equipment home and has taken all reasonable care to prevent such loss or damage. In the unlikely event that damage is caused to an officer's home by equipment provided by their Department, advice should be sought from Personnel/Establishment Branch. While each case will be considered on its merits, it is likely that, given the circumstances, liability would rest with the Department, subject to, among other things, any possible claim against the equipment manufacturers or those charged with maintenance of the equipment.

Planning Issues

1.20.8 Working at home in normal circumstances does not require planning permission. It would only be required if the working arrangements expand and cease to be ancillary to the main use of the dwelling, which is unlikely in the context of civil servants working at home. Any officer who requires further advice on this matter should contact Planning Service Headquarters, Development Control Section, Millennium House, 17-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7BN (Tel 028 9041 6700).

Rates

1.20.9 A number of factors, such as the extent and frequency of business use and any special modifications made to the property, will determine whether the space which an officer uses as an "office" to work at home is liable for business rate. Staff should contact their local Valuation and Lands Agency Office for further advice.

Tax Issues

1.20.10 It is possible, although unlikely in most cases, that an officer who works at home on a regular basis may be liable for changes to taxation if the officer uses equipment provided by the NICS for personal purposes. HM Revenue and Customs advise that, since any such changes will depend on individual circumstances, staff should contact their HM Revenue and Customs Enquiry Centre to determine the possible implications for them of working at home. A sample letter, which may be used for this purpose, can be found in Annex 7.

Additional Household Costs

1.20.11 An officer may incur additional household costs, for example heating and lighting, as a result of working at home. The department will not reimburse any officer working at home for any such additional costs.

Provision of Furniture and Equipment

1.20.12 The cost of providing any necessary furniture and/or equipment is considered as part of the assessment process. The officer applying to work at home must identify in their Application Form any additional furniture and equipment that they will require to allow them to work at home. When the Head of Branch considers that working at home may be viable, the Personnel/Establishment Branch will be asked to consider the cost-effectiveness of providing any necessary furniture and/or equipment (see paragraph 2.2.24). The department will not reimburse the officer for any costs incurred in changing furniture or furnishings in order to accommodate working at home, or for wear and tear in the home (see paragraph 1.6.2).

1.20.13 Personnel/Establishment Branch are responsible for arranging the ordering, delivery, set up and return of all equipment and furniture supplied by the department.

1.20.14 Any equipment or furniture supplied to the officer will remain the property of the department and must be returned to the department when the working at home arrangement ends. In the event of a period of long-term sickness absence or any longer period of foreseen absence, such as a career break or maternity leave, the department will decide whether to retrieve any furniture and/or equipment supplied to the officer.

1.20.15 Electrical equipment provided by the department will be covered by normal departmental portable appliance testing (PAT) arrangements.

1.20.16 An officer who has been supplied with equipment or furniture in their home as part of a working at home agreement, will be permitted to use the equipment or furniture for their sole personal use, provided that the equipment or furniture is used in a manner consistent with health and safety regulations and all other departmental policies. Information on Health and Safety issues can be found in Annex 6.

1.20.17 It is NICS policy that only dedicated IT equipment, supplied by the employing department, should be used for work-related activities.

1.20.18 An officer who has been provided with internet and e-mail access by the department will be allowed access for their sole personal use, provided that such use is at no extra cost to the department and is in line with the Internet and E-mail Usage Policy as set out in Annex 10 of the Conduct Chapter of the Conduct and Discipline Part of the NICS Staff Handbook.

Security

1.20.19 Whether working at home using a computer or simply reading documents, an officer has a role to play in protecting themselves, their equipment, if appropriate, and any documents they use in carrying out their job. When working at home, as when working in the office, an officer must

adhere to the security requirements as set out in Annex 8. Therefore, any officer who is considering applying to work at home must ensure that they make themselves aware of these requirements and that their proposed home workspace will allow them to fully meet these requirements.

1.20.20 An officer working at home is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any data in their possession and is expected to take reasonable measures to ensure that equipment and data is held securely at all times.

1.20.21 Failure to comply with security requirements may result in disciplinary action.

Official Visitors

1.20.22 It is a condition of working at home under this policy that appropriate personnel must be allowed access to the home workplace from time to time, for example to deliver, install, repair or service equipment, or to carry out a health and safety risk assessment (see paragraphs 2.2.11-2.2.12 regarding the suitability of the home). All such visits to the officer's home will take place by prior appointment during the hours in which the officer has agreed to make themselves available for work (as set out in their Working at Home Agreement).

1.20.23 If an officer is required to meet with colleagues or members of the public in the course of their work, these meetings must not take place in the officer's home.

Attendance at the office

1.20.24 An officer who works at home on a regular basis will normally be required to attend their office for part of the week (see paragraph 1.3.2 above). Working at home under this policy is a flexible arrangement, rather than a permanent change to terms and conditions. Even where a request to work at home on a regular basis has been approved, the officer will in practice only be able to work at home when business need permits. The officer may be required by management to attend the office on any day covered by their normal working pattern.

1.21 FURTHER INFORMATION

1.21.1 Further information and advice that may be helpful to staff and line managers can be found in Annexes 9-12 of this guidance.

- Annex 9 contains some useful information on the types of issues that line managers must consider when managing an officer who is working at home.
- Annex 10 outlines the issues that managers who are working at home need to consider when managing staff.

- Annex 11 contains some useful practical information for staff who are about to, or are, working at home.
- Annex 12 outlines the main roles and responsibilities of the officer, the line manager, the Head of Branch and Personnel/Establishment Branch.

The next section of this document guides staff and line managers through the application and assessment process when working at home is being considered.

SECTION 2 - THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

2.1 OCCASIONAL WORKING AT HOME

2.1.1 Any officer who wishes to work at home on an occasional basis (see Section 1, General Information paragraphs 1.3.5 to 1.3.9) must familiarise themselves with this NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance and complete Section 1 of the Application Form in Annex 5. The application should then be passed to their line manager who will consider not only the suitability of the work that the officer proposes to do at home but also the expected outputs and potential benefits to the Branch, and will make a recommendation to the Head of Branch. The decision on whether to approve or decline the request will be taken by the Head of Branch.

2.1.2 A separate application is required for each occasion on which the officer wishes to work at home. As the completed application form is also a record of the agreement between the officer and their line management, a copy must be forwarded to Personnel/Establishment Branch to be retained on the officer's Personal File.

2.2 REGULAR WORKING AT HOME

2.2.1 The remainder of this section guides staff and their line managers through the issues that must be taken into account when considering any application to work at home on a regular basis.

ACTION BY THE OFFICER

2.2.2 If working at home is going to work effectively for both the officer and the department, it needs to be thought through carefully from the start. There are a number of issues that the officer will need to consider before formally seeking permission to work at home on a regular basis. These are as follows:

(i) Suitability of the Job

2.2.3 The officer should consider whether it is feasible for all or part of their job to be done at home.

2.2.4 There are no absolute criteria for assessing the suitability of jobs for working at home, but jobs with the following elements are more likely to be able to be done successfully at home:

- few physical requirements such as face-to-face contact, bulky equipment or storage requirements;
- clearly defined objectives and measurable outputs;
- clearly defined milestones and timescales so work can be planned;
- minimal requirements for supervision;

- clear methods of communication.

2.2.5 On the other hand, jobs that would be difficult to carry out at home usually involve one or more of the following:

- daily access to large equipment
- daily face-to-face contact with customers or colleagues
- daily access to materials only available at the office.

2.2.6 If a job requires access to equipment etc only part of the time, and these activities can be concentrated into part of each week, a working at home arrangement may still be feasible.

2.2.7 The impact of any proposed working at home arrangement on colleagues, and the needs of customers, must also be taken into account.

(ii) Suitability of the Officer

2.2.8 Whether working at home will be successful or not is likely to depend as much on the individual and their personal skills and attributes as on the type of work involved. Not everyone is suited to this type of working. Any officer who works at home, even on an occasional basis, will be working away from colleagues and the office environment, therefore it is important that they are able to adapt to a different way of working.

2.2.9 Research has shown that people who work at home effectively tend to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- a high level of self-discipline
- trustworthiness
- safety consciousness
- good time management
- technological literacy (if required)
- good communication and interpersonal skills
- decision-making and problem-solving skills
- the ability to work without close supervision
- self-motivation
- adaptability and self-reliance
- the ability to cope with the conflicting demands of home and work life
- the ability to cope with reduced social contact and isolation.

It is important to recognise that the list of characteristics above is provided only as a guide to the type of person who is likely to be able to work at home effectively; it is not intended as a framework against which managers are required to assess staff.

2.2.10 Some individuals, for example those who need a lot of direction from their line manager, may not be suitable. Before applying to work at home, an officer is therefore advised to carefully consider the following:

- **Working Style**

  The officer should think about their preferred/actual working style and whether they believe they are suited to working in isolation.

- **Self-motivation**

  Individuals who are self-motivated are more likely to be able to work at home successfully. Some people find it difficult to get started without the physical presence of their colleagues and may feel more motivated and productive with activity around them. If an officer believes that they need this in their daily working environment, they should think carefully before applying to work at home.

- **Self-discipline**

  People who are well-organised effective time-managers, and are able to work without supervision, are more likely to be able to work at home successfully. The officer should consider whether they have the skills and self-discipline necessary to cope with working at home.

- **Adaptability/Flexibility**

  It is vital that officers who work at home have an adaptable approach. Where regular working at home has been approved, the officer must be aware that, when required to do so by management, they must attend work-related events, e.g. training or meetings, even when these fall on their agreed working at home days. They must also be aware that

management can request that they attend their permanent station on any normal working day, if business need requires.

- **Work/life balance**

  For some people, a working at home arrangement will enable them to achieve an appropriate balance between their work and non-work activities. However, working at home is not designed to enable staff to care for a member of the family whilst working at the same time (see Section I, General Information, paragraphs 1.20.1 to 1.20.3). However, there may be some flexibility over the hours in which the work must be done and this could be agreed with line management.

- **Self-development**

  Where an application for working at home is approved, the line manager will need to make sure that the officer is provided with the necessary support and "tools for the job". In addition, as with office-based staff, the officer has a responsibility for their own development and should consult with and be supported by their manager on training and development needs for their role and the environment in which they work.

(iii) Suitability of the Home

2.2.11 An officer will **NOT** be able to work at home unless there is compliance with all relevant health and safety regulations. Details of the

health and safety standards to be met for working at home are set out in Annex 6. The home working environment must always provide adequate space for the work to be carried out safely. Allocation of a designated workspace is essential, the adequacy of which will be a key factor in the final decision-making process.

2.2.12 An officer who applies to work at home is required to participate in the risk assessment process by providing information which will enable an initial risk assessment of their proposed workspace to be carried out (see Annex 6 for more details). As explained in Annex 6, the line manager will forward the information provided by the applicant to a trained risk assessor for consideration. Based on this information, the risk assessor may consider it necessary to visit the officer's home to carry out the assessment or to seek further clarification/additional information from the applicant prior to doing so. This initial assessment must be reviewed after the workspace has been equipped with any furniture and/or equipment provided by the officer's Department, and any hazards must have been satisfactorily addressed before working at home can begin. The review should also include consideration of the following (if applicable) - manual handling, hazardous substances and any risks to new or expectant mothers. Risk assessors will be expected to record why a home risk assessment has not been necessary in relation to an application for regular working at home.

2.2.13 The Regular Working at Home Self-Assessment Form at Annex 1 is designed to assist officers to work through the issues at (i) to (iii) above.

(iv) Other factors to be considered

2.2.14 There are also a number of practical issues, which may affect an officer's ability to work at home (see Section 1 General Information paragraphs 1.20.1 to 1.20.24 for more information).

Application Form

2.2.15 Individuals who wish to apply to work at home on a regular basis must complete both the Self-Assessment Form in Annex 1 and Section 1 of the Application Form in Annex 2 and pass these to their line manager at or above Staff Officer or analogous grade.

ACTION BY THE LINE MANAGER

2.2.16 Under this policy, any officer can request to work at home and all applications will be given serious consideration. It does not follow that working at home is suitable for all jobs - it cannot be approved where it does not fit with business needs.

2.2.17 The line manager (at or above Staff Officer or analogous grade) is responsible for considering applications from their staff to work at home and for making a recommendation to the Head of Branch. The Self-Assessment Form (Annex 1) and Application Form (Annex 2) have been developed to

make the application as straightforward and objective as possible. Before considering an application from an officer who is on a trial period under the inefficiency due to sick absence procedures, the line manager must notify Personnel who will arrange for a medical opinion to be sought (paragraph 1.15.4 refers).

Arranging to meet the Applicant

2.2.18 Within 14 days of receiving an application to work at home, the line manager should meet the officer to discuss the application (see Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.7.1 – 1.7.2).

Assessing the Application

2.2.19 Line managers should bear in mind that some form of flexibility (which may or may not include working at home) is possible in most posts. Paragraph 2.2.4 above gives examples of the type of work that is more likely to be able to be done successfully at home, while paragraph 2.2.9 outlines the personal skills and qualities that people who work at home effectively tend to demonstrate.

2.2.20 Line managers should always take the following into account before deciding whether or not to support a request to work at home:

- The operational needs of the Division/Branch/Team including the effect on colleagues/team/customer.
- The nature of the work and its suitability to such an arrangement.
- The ability of the individual to remain motivated while working at home without direct supervision. Some staff, for example those who need a lot of direction from line management, may simply not be suitable.
- The likely effect on the individual of having a reduced level of social and business interaction with co-workers because of their working environment.
- The potential effect on a team if a team leader or team member is working at home.
- .The resource implications of the arrangement when looked at individually or together with other working at home arrangements in the Branch/Division.
- Any recommendations arising from the initial health and safety risk assessment.
- Consistency of approach.

2.2.21 The officer must have completed both the Regular Working at Home Self-Assessment Form and Section 1 of the Application Form before passing them to their line manager as these documents will form the basis of the discussion between the line manager and the applicant. The line manager must complete Section 2 of the Application Form following the discussion. There is no need for the line manager to wait until after their

discussion with the applicant before forwarding the relevant sections of the Self-Assessment and Application Forms to the risk assessor.

2.2.22 The line manager should aim to make a recommendation to their Head of Branch, on whether they consider the proposed working at home arrangement to be feasible, within 14 days of meeting with the applicant (see Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.7.1 and 1.7.2, for more information on timescales). This recommendation must be based on the information gathered in the Self-Assessment and Application Forms (including the health and safety risk assessment), their discussion with the applicant and the consideration of business need. Full supporting reasons for the recommendation must be given. Part 2.4 of the Application Form in Annex 2 must be used for this purpose.

ACTION BY THE HEAD OF BRANCH

2.2.23 Before making a decision on whether to conditionally approve or reject the application, the Head of Branch must fully consider all the information in the Application Form. It is the responsibility of the Head of Branch to ensure that the application has been dealt with fairly and that if the application is rejected, the reasons are appropriate and consistent with other applications that have been approved or rejected in the Branch.

2.2.24 Where the Head of Branch considers that working at home may be viable, they will refer the application to the Establishment Officer of the

employing department for a decision on the provision of any necessary furniture and/or equipment.

2.2.25 The Head of Branch should aim to notify the officer of the outcome of their application within 14 days of receiving the line manager's recommendation - Section 4 of the Application Form in Annex 2 must be used for this purpose. Where an application is rejected by the Head of Branch, a full explanation must be given.

2.2.26 Final approval to work at home will, in all cases, be subject to a satisfactory review of the health and safety assessment after any necessary furniture and/or equipment has been set up. It will also be conditional upon the following:

- satisfactory arrangements being in place for data/document security purposes and
- any other factor identified by any of the parties prior to working at home beginning.

2.2.27 A copy of all completed applications for working at home, whether approved or rejected, must be forwarded to Personnel/Establishment Branch for monitoring purposes and retention on the officer's Personal File.

THE WORKING AT HOME AGREEMENT

2.2.28 After approval to work at home on a regular basis has been confirmed by the Head of Branch, and before the arrangement can begin, a Working at Home Agreement MUST be completed by the line manager, and signed by the officer, line manager and Head of Branch.

2.2.29 The Agreement sets out the specifics of the agreed working at home arrangement such as the normal "working at home" days, communication arrangements and an inventory of any equipment/furniture provided under the arrangement. It also serves as a reminder of the commitments made by the parties to the working at home arrangement. A sample Working at Home Agreement can be found in Annex 3.

2.2.30 A copy of the signed Agreement must be forwarded to Personnel/Establishment Branch to be retained in the officer's Personal File.

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REGULAR WORKING AT HOME - SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

If you are considering working at home, the first step is to realistically assess whether you, your job and your home are likely to be a good fit for a working at home arrangement. This form will help you to do that.

NOTE: If you decide to submit an application for regular working at home, this form will be used to facilitate a positive discussion between you and your line manager and to assist the Head of Branch in reaching a decision on whether or not to approve your application. In addition, the information which you provide in Section 4 will be used in the Risk Assessment of your home workspace. Therefore, it is important that all sections are completed in full.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS (please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS)

<table>
<tr><td>Name</td><td rowspan="4">Office Address</td></tr>
<tr><td>Grade</td></tr>
<tr><td>Payroll Number</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tel No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of Line Manager</td><td>Office Address of Line Manager (if different from above)</td></tr>
</table>

2 YOUR JOB

Briefly describe the overall purpose of your job

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3 JOB/PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

3.1 Job Characteristics

After reviewing each item listed below, circle the letter that best describes your job. (The range follows: H = high; M = medium; L = low.)

a. Level of face-to-face communication required	H	M	L
b. Amount of interface with databases not on the PC required	H	M	L
c. Amount of interaction with line management required	H	M	L
d. Amount of in-office reference material required	H	M	L
e. Amount of access to in-office resources required, eg bulky office equipment, secure storage, typist.	H	M	L
f. Need for physical security of data	H	M	L
g. Frequency of unexpected changes in work schedule or tasks	H	M	L
h. Amount of time spent working at a terminal or PC	H	M	L
i. Availability of quantitative measures for assessing performance (number of reports, forms, cases completed, etc.)	H	M	L
j. Ability to group required face-to-face communications into part of the week	H	M	L
k. Ability to group in-office reference/resource requirements into part of the week	H	M	L
l. Degree of clear, well-defined work objectives	H	M	L
m. Ability to control and schedule own work flow	H	M	L

Working at home is more likely to be feasible (and successful) if (a) to (g) of the above are rated medium to low, while (h) to (m) are rated medium to high.

3.1.1 If you are a line manager, describe what impact working at home is likely to have on your ability to carry out your line management responsibilities.

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3.1.2 How would service to your customers be affected, if at all? Describe how you propose to adapt to continue to meet the needs of both your customers and the organisation.

3.1.3 How would you minimize the impact of your proposed working at home arrangement on your colleagues and/or their workload?

3.2 Personal Work Style Characteristics

After reviewing each item listed below, circle the number that corresponds most closely to your work style.

The range follows: 1 = never; 3 = 50% of the time; and 5 = always.

a. I work independently with minimal direct supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I work easily without frequent feedback from others.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I meet deadlines consistently.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I am able to plan work independently.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I use my initiative in requesting advice or clarification from others.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I display independent problem-solving abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I have the necessary computer literacy skills including elementary trouble-shooting skills.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I am comfortable working for periods of time without contact with people.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I can communicate effectively other than by face-to-face interaction.	1	2	3	4	5

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Working at home is more likely to be feasible (and successful) if the above are rated 3 or higher.

4 THE HOME WORKSPACE

Irrespective of business need, job suitability etc, you will NOT be able to work at home unless there is compliance with all relevant health and safety regulations. Your home must provide a safe and healthy working environment. (Information on the Health and Safety standards that must be met is contained in Annex 6 of the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance).

This section of the form will help you to work out whether your home is likely to be suitable for working at home. If you are not clear about any of the questions, you should request assistance from your line manager and/or the risk assessor for your business area.

NOTE TO LINE MANAGER: When a working at home application is being assessed, you must ensure that the information provided by the applicant in Section 4 of this form is forwarded to a trained Health and Safety Risk Assessor for consideration.

Hazard-Spotting Checklist

4.1.1 GENERAL DETAILS			
a. Describe where in your home you propose to work eg study, dining room.			
b. To what extent will the space described above be devoted to being a workplace? Eg wholly, during office hours only (dual purpose office/bedroom), not at all (lounge/living room).			
c. Who else lives in the house? Please state no of children: Please state no of adults:			
	Tick Box		**Considerations**
	Yes	**No**	

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d. Do you have any pets? If so, would you working at home expose them to any hazards?			*It is the individual's responsibility to ensure any pets are suitably protected.*
e. Are you aware of your responsibilities, as an employee, under Health and Safety legislation (as set out in your departmental Health and Safety Policy Statement)?			
4.1.2 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) ie computer or laptop			
a. Will the work, which you propose to do at home, require the use of DSE? If YES – complete the rest of this section on DSE work			
b. Is the work suitable for use of a laptop?			
c. Do you have a suitable[4] worksurface/desk at home?			
d. Have you received DSE awareness instruction/training?			
e. Do you have a chair that meets the following minimum standards? (a) Can the chair be adjusted for height? (b) Can the chair backrest be adjusted for height and tilt? (c) Does the chair have a five-star mobile base? (d) Does the chair have armrests (if required)?			
f. Is there enough space[5] to get in and out of the proposed work area easily?			
g. Is there sufficient space in the proposed work area to enable a DSE screen to be set up in such a way as to be: (a) free from glare and reflections, (b) at right angles to any			

[4] Work surface dimensions may need to be larger than for conventional non-screen office work, to take account of the range of tasks performed (eg screen viewing, keyboard input, printing, writing), the position and use of hands for each task, and the use and storage of working materials (documents, telephone etc). The worksurface must be stable, made from low reflective material, free from sharp edges and of a height that does not place the user at an unacceptable risk to health.

[5] Prolonged sitting in a static position can be harmful. It is most important that support surfaces for display screen equipment, and other equipment and materials used at the workstation, should allow adequate clearance for postural changes. This means adequate clearance for thighs, knees, lower legs and feet under the work surface and between furniture components. If a keyboard is used, the height of the work surface should allow a comfortable position for the arms and wrists.

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window?			
4.1.3 SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS	**Tick Box**		
	Yes	**No**	
a. Is the floor covering in the proposed work area in good condition?			*Make any necessary repairs to loose carpet etc.*
b. Are the walkways clear of tripping hazards?			
c. If the proposed work area is upstairs, is the floor covering on the stairs in good condition?			*Make any necessary repairs to loose carpet etc.*
4.1.4 WORKING ENVIRONMENT	**Tick Box**		
	Yes	**No**	
a. Are the lighting levels appropriate for all the tasks you propose to perform at the workstation eg not to bright or too dim to work comfortably?			*The lighting, whether artificial, natural, or a mixture of both, should be appropriate for all the work tasks to be performed at the workstation.*
b. Is there adequate heating and ventilation in the proposed work area?			*It is the individual's responsibility to maintain and adjust as required.*
c. Is the noise level within your home environment conducive to work?			
4.1.5 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT	**Tick Box**		
	Yes	**No**	
a. Would you require any electrical equipment in order to work at home?			
b. Do you have a convenient and reliable 13 Amp 240 volt earthed power supply available?			
c. Are you aware that the electrical system in your home is your responsibility?			
d. Could the required electrical equipment be set up and used in the workspace without the use of an extension lead?			
e. Could the workspace, with required electrical equipment, be operational with no trailing leads?			
f. Can you recognise evidence of overheating/electrical faults?			*For example, sparking, flickering, browning to wires etc.*
g. Are you aware that you should not attempt to fix any electrical equipment without the appropriate training?			*You should report any faults to your line manager. Any equipment supplied by your Department will be repaired by a competent person or replaced.*
4.1.6 FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE			
a. Is the proposed workspace tidy?			*Apply good housekeeping practices.*

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b. Are waste materials regularly disposed of?			
c. Are exit routes clear?			
d. Do you have an escape plan?			
e. Is a smoke alarm/detector fitted?			
f. Could you contact the fire brigade if necessary?			
4.1.7 ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING AND FIRST AID			
a. Are you aware of the reporting procedures for all accidents and incidents?			
b. Do you have adequate first-aid provision in your home?			*There is no standard list of items to put in a first-aid box – this will vary depending on the type and level of risk involved. If in doubt, you should seek advice from Personnel/Establishment Branch*

4.2 Other Factors

	Tick Box		
	Yes	**No**	
a. Are you satisfied that the home workstation, and any official equipment which may be supplied, would be secure? Will the work remain confidential?			*Eg Is there an alarm system? Are door/window locks suitable?*
b. Is secure/lockable storage available where necessary?			*For work documents, valuable equipment etc.*
d. Do you have home contents/buildings insurance? If yes, would plugging in NICS equipment invalidate this insurance?			
e. Have you contacted your mortgage provider/landlord to establish whether working at home on a regular basis would conflict with your existing mortgage or tenancy arrangement?			
f. Identify any distractions or obligations that might make			

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working at home difficult and describe how you would handle these eg care of dependants, casual callers to the home or the likelihood of being disturbed by other occupants.	
g. Describe any other factors that may impact on the suitability of your home to a homeworking arrangement, eg lease restrictions.	

Your home workspace is more likely to be suitable if you were able to answer "YES" to questions 4.1.1d to 4.2e above.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

IF, HAVING WORKED THROUGH THIS FORM, YOU WISH TO APPLY TO WORK AT HOME, YOU MUST COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM (SEE ANNEX 2) AND PASS IT TO YOUR LINE MANAGER (AT OR ABOVE STAFF OFFICER OR ANALOGOUS GRADE), ALONG WITH THIS FORM.

ANNEX 2

REGULAR WORKING AT HOME - APPLICATION FORM

SECTION 1 – To be completed by the applicant

NOTE: As this form will be used to assist the Head of Branch in making the decision on whether or not to approve your application, it is important that all sections are completed in full.

1.1 PERSONAL DETAILS (please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name	**Office Address**
Grade	
Payroll Number	
Tel No	
Name of Line Manager	**Office Address of Line Manager** (if different from above)

1.2 List the tasks that you propose to carry out at home. Consider how your line manager could assess your performance in meeting or exceeding expectations. Be as quantitative as possible.

Proposed Tasks	**How would your line manager assess your performance in completing this task?**

1.3 Describe your proposed schedule of working hours.

ANNEX 2

	In the office		Working at home	
	From	**To**	**From**	**To**
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

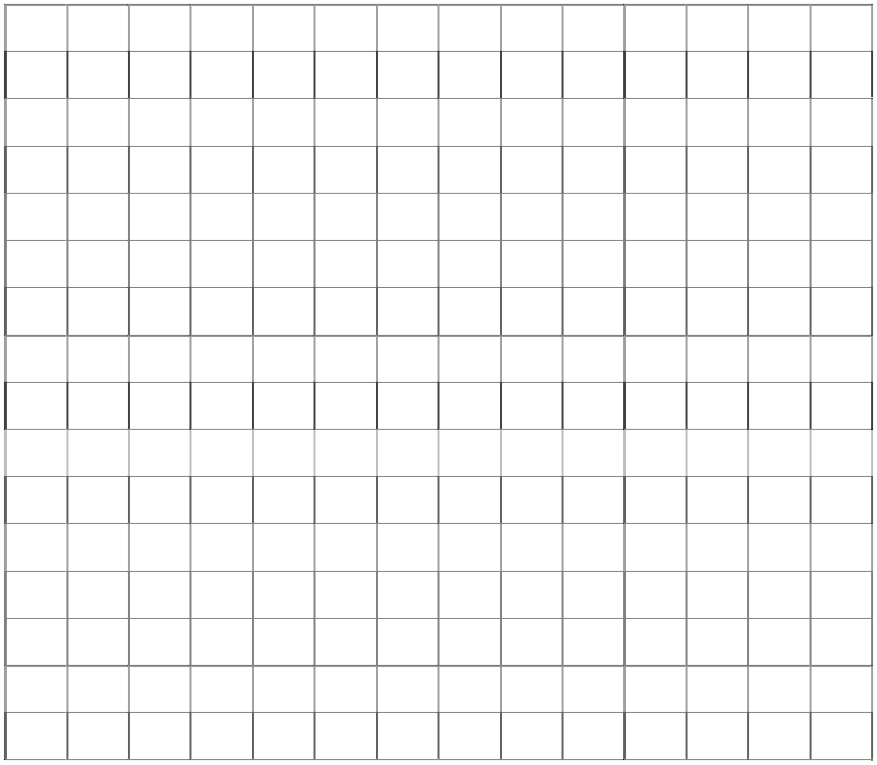
1.4 Given the amount of working at home you would like to do, and the types of work you propose to do at home, identify (i) the equipment/services you would need access to and (ii) the equipment that you currently have at the home. (Tick all that apply).

Equipment	**To do my job I need access to:**	**I have:**
computer/terminal		N/A
printer		
additional telephone line		N/A
software		N/A
desk (If you have a desk/workstation at home, please include dimensions.)		
chair		
filing cabinet		
photocopier		
fax		
internet access		
other (please specify):		

ANNEX 2

1.5 Plan/Photo of proposed home workspace

Assuming each square on the grid below represents 300mm/30cm/1ft, please sketch your proposed home workspace showing all furniture (existing and proposed), the position of windows and doors, the location and number of (single or twin) 13 Amp socket outlets and the position of any lighting.



Alternatively, you may wish to submit photographs of your proposed working area. You must, however, ensure that the position of the items listed above can be clearly seen on the photograph(s). Please attach the photograph(s) over the grid above.

1.6 Have you any plans to move house in the foreseeable future?

YES/NO

1.7 Please complete the following to supplement the information you have provided in your Self-Assessment Form (Section 4 – The Home Workspace) and enable an initial risk assessment[6] of your proposed home workspace to be carried out.

[6] See Section 2, paragraph 2.2.12 of the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance.

ANNEX 2

1.7.1 MANUAL HANDLING	Tick box		Considerations
	Yes	No	
a. Would working at home require you to carry loads? If yes, give details below.			*This includes loads to and from work; papers, briefcases, laptops etc.*
b. Would the load mentioned at (a) need to be carried more than 10 metres?			
c. Have you been instructed /trained in correct manual handling techniques?			

1.7.2 WORK EQUIPMENT	Tick box		Considerations
	Yes	No	
a. Where would the equipment listed in Q1.4 be kept when not in use?			
b. Have you been trained to use the equipment?			

1.7.3 HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES	Tick box		Considerations
	Yes	No	
a. Are you likely to need to use any hazardous substances for working at home? If yes, please give details.			*e.g. toner, printer cartridges*
b. Where would they be stored?			
c. Does anyone in the home suffer from asthma, skin rashes or skin irritation?			

1.7.4 NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS	Tick box		Comments
	Yes	No	
a. Are you pregnant?			

ANNEX 2

b. Have you given birth in the last six months?			
c. Are you breast-feeding?			

1.8 Do you have caring responsibilities (see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.20.1 to 1.20.3)?

YES/NO

If **YES**, please outline below the care arrangements that you propose to have in place, if working at home, to ensure that your domestic commitments would be kept separate from your work commitments.

NOTE: You must advise your line manager as soon as possible if these arrangements change prior to you receiving notification of the outcome of your application.

DECLARATION BY APPLICANT:

I have read and understand the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance and wish to apply for a regular working at home arrangement.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

THIS FORM MUST NOW BE SUBMITTED TO YOUR LINE MANAGER (AT OR ABOVE STAFF OFFICER OR ANALOGOUS GRADE), ALONG WITH YOUR COMPLETED SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM.

Your line manager will aim to meet with you to discuss your request, within 14 days of receiving your application, (see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.7.1-1.7.2).

ANNEX 2

SECTION 2 - ASSESSMENT OF WORKING AT HOME APPLICATION

To be completed by the line manager and submitted to the Head of Branch within 14 days of meeting with the applicant (see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.7.1-1.7.2).

The line manager should note that Section 2.3 of this form is to be completed by the Health and Safety Risk Assessor. In order to allow the risk assessor adequate time to fully consider the health and safety aspects of this application, a copy of this form plus Section 4 of the officer's Self-Assessment Form should be passed to the risk assessor as soon as possible after the line manager has received it.

Date application received: _____

In line with NICS work-life balance policies, line managers are expected to give sympathetic consideration to requests for working at home arrangements, while taking account of both legal requirements and equal opportunities issues. You are encouraged to adopt a flexible attitude and a creative approach. However, you must ensure that the proposed arrangements are practical and, above all, meet business needs.

You may find it helpful to work through this Section of the Application Form prior to meeting with the applicant. Any areas that are identified as potential problems can then be discussed in detail during the meeting.

2.1 Line Manager's Details (Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name of Line Manager	**Office Address**
Telephone No	

2.1.1 Suitability of the Job

Working at home cannot be adopted where it does not fit with business needs. However, a wide range of jobs could be carried out at home, at least part of the time (see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 2, The Application and Assessment Process, paragraph 2.2.4).

ANNEX 2

- Discuss the following job-related questions with the applicant and record any issues/concerns that arise, including any specific requirements or solutions to address them.

a. How is the job carried out? Consider the amount of time the job requires the officer to be: working alone at a desk, on a PC, telephone contact, face to face discussions, scheduled meetings, etc. Detail the level of contact needed with other employees, whether face-to-face, by telephone or by e-mail.
b. Which duties (if any) could be carried out effectively at home? Comment on the parts of the role that would be suited to working outside the normal office environment, eg reading, planning, analysis, PC work etc. Consider the benefits of uninterrupted periods of concentration. Take account of how much supervision or management involvement is necessary
c. What access is needed to files, post etc? Detail any information that the employee needs to perform their job, eg files, manuals, incoming mail etc? Is it information that others need to access? How would access be gained if the officer were working at home? Consider the frequency.
d. What software applications are required to do the job?
e. What would be the potential benefits/savings to the business of this work being performed at home?

ANNEX 2

	YES/NO	Issues/Requirements/Solutions
f. Do you agree with the ratings that the applicant has recorded in 3.1 and 3.2 of the Self-Assessment Form?		
g. Is there any element(s) of the applicant's role that can only be carried out in the office? If yes, - give reasons why and number of hours or days per week.		
h. Is remote access necessary in order to work at home?		
i. Is outgoing mail necessary? If so, consider how this could be handled, postage etc.		
j. Do you agree with the list of necessary equipment outlined by the officer in part 1.4 of this application form?		
k. List or comment on any concerns/ issues		
l. Give details of any other considerations in relation to the suitability, or otherwise, of the applicant's job for a working at home arrangement.		

ANNEX 2

2.1.2 Management Issues

Managing people from a distance brings its own set of challenges and care must be taken to make sure that officers who work at home are not disadvantaged by their remoteness from an office-based team.

The following questions will help to identify any constraints to working at home from a management point of view.

a. **Performance Management** Consider the objectives in the officer's Personal Performance Agreement. How would you measure the contribution and behaviours of the officer if working at home were approved? Are there clearly defined and measurable outputs and targets? Is it any different to office-based working?
b. **Contact arrangements** Consider what contact arrangements you would need to have with the officer. What arrangements would need to be put in place for handling the officer's telephone calls/urgent post/emails? Would there be predetermined times when they are available/not available for contact? NOTE - This must take account of flexible working arrangements already in place.

ANNEX 2

c. **Working time** How would the officer account for their working time?
d. **Keeping in touch** What, how and when would information that is communicated to office-based staff be provided to the officer working at home?
e. **Team working** How would you ensure they continue to feel part of your team? What arrangements would you need to make to ensure that the officer is included in team meetings, updates, training and development activities and opportunities for promotion or alternative work?
f. What might affect the officer's ability to perform their job away from the normal office environment and what could be done to overcome this? Consider the effects of, and possible solutions for, overcoming any anticipated difficulties, eg availability, customer service issues, demands on manager's time, some workload transferred to other team members.

2.2 Suitability of the Applicant

Working at home will not be appropriate for everyone. If a working at home arrangement is to be a success, it is important that the officer concerned demonstrates the personal qualities that are generally considered to be compatible with working unsupervised or being supervised remotely.

ANNEX 2

- Discuss the following with the officer and record any issues that arise, including any specific requirements or solutions to address any issues/concerns.

	YES/NO	Issues/Requirements/Solutions
a. Consider the working style of the officer. Are they self-motivated and able to cope with minimal social contact?		
b. Is the officer self-disciplined, able to organise their work and manage their time?		
c. Is the officer capable of working with minimum supervision?		
d. If the applicant has caring responsibilities (see section 1.8 of this application), are you content that the proposed care arrangements will allow the applicant to carry out their duties?		
e. Does the officer demonstrate an awareness of their obligations under health and safety legislation?		
f. Is the officer a good communicator and willing to speak up to share any concerns?		
g. Is the officer a team leader or team member? Please state how the officer plans to continue to operate effectively and efficiently as a team leader/member.		
h. Summary of potential benefits to the officer		
i. Summary of potential benefits to the Team/Branch/Division/Department		

ANNEX 2

j. List or comment on any concerns/ issues
k. Detail any other considerations in relation to the suitability (or otherwise) of the applicant to a working at home arrangement

2.3 Suitability of the Officer's Home (To be completed by Risk Assessor)

NOTE TO LINE MANAGER: A copy of the information contained in the Self Assessment Form, the plan/photographs and Part 1.7 of this Application Form must be passed to a trained Risk Assessor for consideration and completion of the section below.

NOTE TO RISK ASSESSOR: The home must provide a safe and healthy working environment. To assist in the assessment of suitability, the officer has completed a hazard-spotting checklist (see Section 1, Part 4 of Self-Assessment Form) and has provided a plan/photographs of the proposed home workspace. Please contact the applicant if you require additional information or clarification of any of the information provided. If you consider that a visit to the home is necessary, you should contact the applicant to arrange a mutually convenient time. If you do not consider a visit to the home is necessary you should record the reasons why this is the case in the general comments box.

2.3.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

Name of Applicant:

Hazards identified	Who is exposed to the hazard?	Evaluate the risk (severity x likelihood)	Control measures		Control/preventative measures required	To be completed before final confirmation that application has been approved	
			Existing Yes/No	Adequate? Yes/No		Implemented by	Date

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Other Papers

ANNEX 2

General Comment

Date of Initial Assessment:

Assessment completed by: (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed (Risk Assessor):

Date of Review (ie after workspace has been equipped)

Review completed by: (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed (Risk Assessor):

WHEN INITIAL ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE OFFICER'S LINE MANAGER

ANNEX 2

It is the responsibility of the Head of Branch to ensure that any preventative or control measures identified through the Health and Safety risk assessment process have been addressed before any working at home arrangement is put into practice.

2.4 RECOMMENDATION TO THE HEAD OF BRANCH

Either:

(i): I support this application to work at home on a regular basis for the following reasons and subject to the following conditions (if any):

or

(ii) I do not support this request to work at home on a regular basis for the following reasons:

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS)_____

SIGNED_____ DATE_____

WHEN SECTIONS 1 OR 2 HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, THE APPLICATION MUST BE FORWARDED TO THE HEAD OF BRANCH FOR CONSIDERATION AND INPUT FROM THE PERSONNEL/ ESTABLISHMENT OFFICER.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF BRANCH:

Date application received: _____

If, after considering the information provided, you consider that working at home may be viable, this application must be referred to your departmental Establishment Officer for a decision on the provision of any necessary furniture and/or equipment.

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If you do not consider this application to be viable, proceed to Section 4.

DATE FORWARDED TO ESTABLISHMENT OFFICER _____

SIGNED (HEAD OF BRANCH): _____

SECTION 3 - PROVISION OF FURNITURE AND/OR EQUIPMENT

To be completed by Establishment Officer of the employing department

The department has considered the requirements set out in Section 1.4 of the Application Form and have approved the provision of the following items of furniture and/or equipment (please specify)	
The department does not consider it cost-effective to provide the furniture and/or equipment necessary to support this application.	

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS)_____

SIGNED_____ DATE_____

WHEN SECTION 3 HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THE APPLICATION FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE HEAD OF BRANCH

ANNEX 2

SECTION 4 - OUTCOME OF WORKING AT HOME APPLICATION

To be completed by the Head of Branch within 14 days of receiving the application as set out in the HR Handbook (see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 1 General Information, paragraphs 1.7.1-1.7.2).

This application to work at home on a regular basis has been (indicate as appropriate):

a. Approved in principle as per application form. Final confirmation will be subject to a satisfactory review of the Health and Safety Risk assessment and will also be conditional* upon the following (please specify): *For example:* *- a satisfactory outcome to any data security issues* * see NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance Section 2, The Application and Assessment Process, paragraph 2.2.26	
b. Denied for the following reason(s): **NB** A full explanation of the reasons preventing approval of the application must be given.	

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

SIGNED _____

DATE_____

A COPY OF ALL APPLICATIONS FOR WORKING AT HOME MUST BE FORWARDED TO PERSONNEL/ESTABLISHMENT BRANCH TO BE RETAINED IN THE OFFICER'S PERSONAL FILE.

Where approval to work at home on a regular basis has been confirmed by the Head of Branch, a Working at Home Agreement must be completed by the line manager, and signed by the officer, line manager and Head of Branch before the arrangement can begin. A copy of the signed Agreement must also be sent to, and retained by, personnel/establishment branch.

ANNEX 3

REGULAR WORKING AT HOME - SAMPLE AGREEMENT

This document must be completed by the line manager, authorised by the Head of Branch and signed by the officer.

Name of Applicant	**Office Address**
Payroll Number	
Grade	**Office Tel No:**
Branch	**Home Address**
Name of Line Manager	
Name of Head of Branch	**Home Tel No:**

This Working at Home Agreement is established between the officer named above, their line manager and the Head of Branch.

The Regular Working at Home Arrangement outlined below will be effective from_____ and will remain in place until ended (or suspended) as provided for in the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance, Section 1, General Information, paragraphs 1.10.3 to 1.10.6. If it is necessary to amend the working at home arrangement, as provided for in Section 1, General Information, paragraph 1.10.1 to 1.10.2, a new Agreement must be drawn up. The effectiveness of the arrangement will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the line manager and will be formally reviewed every 3 months, or more often if necessary.

This arrangement will, where business need permits, allow the officer named above, to divide their working time between their office workplace (ie their permanent station) and working at home, as follows:

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	In the office		Working at home	
	From	**To**	**From**	**To**
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

The officer has agreed to be contactable by telephone during the periods listed below while working at home.

	Contactable Periods			
	From	**To**	**From**	**To**
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

The officer can be contacted on telephone number _____ or _____.

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED

Under the terms of this Regular Working at Home Arrangement, the following equipment will be provided to the officer by the department for use at their home workspace (please tick as appropriate).

computer/terminal		chair	
printer		filing cabinet	
desk		photocopier	
additional telephone line		Fax	
software		internet access	
other (please specify):			

ANNEX 3

DECLARATIONS

BY THE OFFICER

As the officer for whom this Regular Working at Home Arrangement has been approved, I agree that:

- I will record my daily hours worked in accordance with current departmental policies
- I will ensure that all departmental information available to me is stored and used in a manner consistent with existing departmental policies.
- I will maintain my home workspace as a safe and healthy work environment in accordance with the requirements of all relevant Health and Safety Regulations.
- I will ensure that all other relevant departmental/NICS policies are adhered to.
- I am fully aware of any implications for my mortgage/home insurance/personal taxation etc of this working arrangement.
- I will ensure that I am contactable during the periods outlined in this agreement and will notify my line manager in advance of any necessary variation. (I am aware that, where necessary in exceptional circumstances, my line manager may on occasion contact me outside of these designated periods.)
- I am aware that I may be required by my line manager to attend the office, or any other work-related location, on any of the agreed “working at home” days.
- I will seek approval from my line manager for any annual/flexi leave, special leave and notify sickness absence in line with current departmental procedures.
- I will consult my line manager prior to incurring any additional expense associated with carrying out my official duties at home, eg postage.

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- I will inform my line manager as soon as possible of any change that may impact on my ability to work at home under the terms of this Working at Home Agreement (including care arrangements).
- I understand that any furniture/equipment provided by the department will remain the property of the department and must be returned to the department on termination of this arrangement.
- I will ensure that any equipment on loan to me as a result of this arrangement is used and stored in accordance with current departmental policies.
- I will allow access to my home workspace to appropriate personnel by prior notice as required.
- I am aware of my obligations under the Data Protection Act.
- I will cooperate fully with my line manager in providing input to the ongoing monitoring and formal review(s) of this arrangement.
- I will monitor the impact of my working at home arrangement on the staff I manage, my colleagues and my line manager on an ongoing basis and take all necessary steps to address any concerns as quickly as possible
- I understand that my Head of Branch can, in exceptional circumstances, end this working at home arrangement at any time and that, if so, the reason(s) for this will be given to me in writing.
- I understand that this agreement will end automatically if I leave the post for which this Agreement has been drawn up.

I have read and understood the contents of this Agreement and agree to abide by its provisions.

Signed (Officer) _____

Date _____

ANNEX 3

BY THE LINE MANAGER (AT OR ABOVE STAFF OFFICER OR ANALOGOUS GRADE)

As the line manager responsible for the officer working at home under this arrangement, I agree that:

- I will ensure that any line manager(s) below SO level is fully informed of, and where necessary involved in, the operation of the working at home arrangement.
- I will develop, and agree with the officer, objectives for the time working at home in conjunction with any line manager(s) below SO level.
- I will ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, all telephone contact with the officer who is working at home will be within the periods listed in this Agreement (see paragraph 1.2.6 of Annex 9 of the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance).
- I will ensure that other staff/colleagues are, where appropriate, made aware of the arrangements for contacting the officer working at home.
- I will, as far as reasonably practicable, include the officer in all Team Briefings. Where this is not possible, I will ensure that the officer is briefed on return to the office.
- I will ensure that the officer has access to the equipment necessary to allow them to carry out their duties at home.
- I will ensure that the officer has equal access to all information issued to staff eg trawl notices.
- I will ensure that the officer is given adequate notice when it is necessary for any appropriate personnel to visit the home workspace.
- I will monitor the effectiveness of this working at home arrangement on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is no negative impact on the business of the team, branch, division or department.
- I will formally review this Agreement every 3 months, or more often if necessary.

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I have read and understood the contents of this Agreement and agree to abide by its provisions.

Signed (Line Manager)_____

Date _____

BY THE HEAD OF BRANCH

As the Head of Branch responsible for the officer working at home under this arrangement, I agree that:

- I will ensure that a copy of this Agreement is forwarded to Personnel/Establishment Branch for inclusion on the officer's Personal File.
- I will ensure that, if it is necessary to amend, suspend or end this Regular Working at Home Arrangement, appropriate notice and full reasons for the decision are given to the officer in writing.
- I will monitor the impact of this working at home arrangement on the ability of the Branch to meet its business objectives.

I have read and understand the contents of this Agreement and agree to abide by its provisions.

Signed (Head of Branch)_____

Date _____

ACTION: A COPY OF THIS AGREEMENT MUST BE PROVIDED TO THE OFFICER AND THEIR LINE MANAGER AND A COPY SENT TO PERSONNEL/ESTABLISHMENT BRANCH TO BE RETAINED IN THE OFFICER'S PERSONAL FILE.

ANNEX 4

REVIEW OF REGULAR WORKING AT HOME ARRANGEMENT

This form should be completed by the Line Manager (at SO level or above) with appropriate input from the officer who is working at home.

NAME OF OFFICER WORKING AT HOME _____

REVIEW PERIOD _____

DATE OF REVIEW _____

REASON FOR REVIEW _____

(eg 3 monthly, return from long-term sickness absence)

1. Please complete the following as appropriate:

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
Work carried out by the officer at home has been successfully completed.				
Comment				
Communication between the officer working at home and line management has been effective.				
Comment				
Communication between the officer working at home under this arrangement and their work colleagues has been effective.				
Comment				
The overall effectiveness of the Branch has not been adversely affected by this working at home arrangement.				
Comment				
Any concerns or problems that have arisen were addressed and resolved in a timely manner.				
Comment				
Overall, the working at home arrangement has been beneficial to the work of the Branch.				
Comment				

ANNEX 4

2. Has the layout of the home workspace changed in any way since the last health and safety risk assessment?

YES/NO

If YES, details of the changes should be forwarded to a trained risk assessor to determine whether a new risk assessment is necessary.

3. In your opinion, what (if anything) could be done to improve the effectiveness of this working at home arrangement for the future? (Consider the Branch, the officer and others in this response.)

4. If this review highlights a need to amend, suspend or terminate the working at home arrangement, please give full details below.

Signature of Line Manager _____

Name in Block Capitals _____

Date _____

Signature of Officer _____

Name in Block Capitals _____

Date _____

A COPY OF THE COMPLETED REVIEW FORM MUST BE FORWARDED TO THE HEAD OF BRANCH FOR INFORMATION.

ANNEX 5

OCCASIONAL WORKING AT HOME - APPLICATION FORM

Approval from the Head of Branch **MUST** be obtained in advance for each occasion where an officer wishes to work at home. The expected outputs from working at home must also be agreed in advance between the officer and their line manager and recorded on this form.

NOTE: This form may cover a single occasion of one day or more. However, a separate application must be completed for each occasion.

PART 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

1.1 APPLICANT'S DETAILS (please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name	**Office Address**
Grade	
Payroll Number	**Tel No**
Name of Line Manager	**Office Address of Line Manager** (if different from above)

1.2 DETAILS OF REQUEST

a. I wish to apply to work at home on the following date(s):
b. I propose to carry out the following task(s) at home:
c. I expect to achieve the following output(s):
d. I expect the potential benefit(s) to my Branch of me working at home on this occasion to be as follows:

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1.3 Will you require the use of an official laptop?

YES/NO

1.4 Do you have caring responsibilities (see NICS Homeworking Policy, Section 1, General Information, paragraphs 1.20.1 to 1.20.3)?

YES/NO

If YES, please outline below the care arrangements that you propose to have in place, if working at home, to ensure that your domestic commitments are kept separate from your work commitments.

1.5 Are you aware of your responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation (see NICS Homeworking Policy, Annex 6, Health and Safety When Working at Home)?

YES/NO

1.6 Are you aware of the potential health and safety risks of working at home (see NICS Homeworking Policy, Annex 6, Health and Safety When Working at Home)?

YES/NO

1.7 Have you advised your home insurance provider that you may be working at home on an occasional basis?

YES/NO

1.8 Have you contacted your mortgage provider/landlord to establish whether working at home on an occasional basis would conflict with your existing mortgage or tenancy arrangement?

YES/NO

DECLARATION BY APPLICANT:

I have read and understood the NICS Homeworking Policy and guidance and wish to apply to work at home on the date(s) specified in part 1.2a above.

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SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

ACTION: SUBMIT THIS FORM TO YOUR LINE MANAGER (AT OR ABOVE STAFF OFFICER OR ANALOGOUS GRADE).

PART 2 - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LINE MANAGER

2.1 LINE MANAGER'S DETAILS

Name of Line Manager **Telephone No**	**Office Address**

2.2 In your opinion, could the tasks described by the applicant in part 1.2b above be carried out effectively at home?

YES/NO

2.3 If the applicant has caring responsibilities (see part 1.4 above), are you content that the proposed care arrangements will allow the applicant to carry out their duties effectively?

YES/NO

2.4 Does the officer demonstrate an awareness of their obligations under health and safety legislation?

YES/NO

2.5 If working at home is approved on this occasion, what are the expected outputs?

2.6 Summarise the potential benefits to the Branch of approving this request.

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2.7 List any concerns/ issues.

2.8 RECOMMENDATION TO HEAD OF BRANCH

Either:

a. I support this request to work at home for the following reasons:

or

b. I do not support this request to work at home for the following reasons:

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

ACTION: FORWARD THIS FORM TO THE HEAD OF BRANCH.

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PART 3 - TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF BRANCH

3.1 This request to work at home is (indicate as appropriate):

a. Approved;	
b. Denied for the following reason(s):	

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

ACTION: ADVISE OFFICER OF OUTCOME OF REQUEST.

PART 4 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LINE MANAGER

4.1 Were the agreed outputs for this working at home occasion achieved?

YES/NO

If NO, give reasons below.

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

ACTION: FORWARD A COPY OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO PERSONNEL/ESTABLISHMENT BRANCH FOR INFORMATION.

ANNEX 6

HEALTH AND SAFETY WHEN WORKING AT HOME

1 The Employer's Responsibilities

1.1 Health and safety is an issue which the NICS takes seriously. Under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, and other regulations made under it, employers have a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees as far as is reasonably practicable, whether they are working on the employer's premises or somewhere else, such as at home. Therefore, the NICS must provide and maintain systems of work, which are safe, and without risk to health. There is also a duty to provide the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to use the relevant equipment safely.

1.2 Employers are required, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) to do a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of all the work activities carried out by their workers. A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work activities, could cause harm to people, so that the employer can weigh up whether they have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The risk assessment must take account of display screen equipment, work equipment, handling loads, electrical equipment, substances and materials and include any specific risks to females of childbearing age, and any risks to new and expectant mothers. This includes any risk to the unborn child or to the child of a woman who is still breastfeeding – not just the mother.

1.3 While there is more than one way to do a risk assessment, there are 5 basic steps that an employer needs to take to make sure that a proper risk assessment is done. These are as follows:

(i) Identify the hazards.
(ii) Decide who might be harmed and how.
(iii) Evaluate the risks and take appropriate action to remove them or reduce them as far as possible.

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(iv) Record the findings and implement them.

(v) Review the assessment from time to time and update if necessary.

1.4 Any part of the home used for carrying out work must be risk assessed. The assessment needs to identify any hazards, ie anything that may cause harm to the officer concerned or anyone else in the house, assess the risk[7] that someone may be harmed by the hazard, and make decisions on how to manage such risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, to comply with health and safety law.

1.5 Some of the most common hazards which may affect staff who work at home, along with examples of how they can be managed (control measures), are set out below. Please note that this information is intended as **a guide only** - there may be additional hazards and control measures that will need to be considered.

Hazard - Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	
Who may be affected?	Officer working at home
How affected?	Upper limb strain from seating position or repetitive movement
Examples of control measures	• DSE provided is suitable for intended purpose. • Use and maintenance of DSE is restricted to designated persons who have adequate training. • DSE is checked regularly and kept in a condition that does not cause harm. • Provision of suitable seating. • Officer should take regular breaks when working at home.

Hazard - Using Work Equipment at Home	
Who may be affected?	Officer, family members (eg young children), visitors
How affected?	Trapping, entanglement, electrical risks,

[7] This involves determining the severity of the hazard and the likelihood of injury or ill health.

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	musculoskeletal problems.
Examples of control measures	• Ensure work equipment is suitable for intended use. • Ensure work equipment is safe for use and maintained in a safe condition. • Ensure a suitable standard of lighting is provided. • Ensure that work equipment is used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training.

Hazard – Electricity	
Who may be affected?	Officer, family members (eg young children), visitors
How affected?	Electric shock or fire.
Examples of control measures	• Plugs are correctly wired and maintained. • Plugs, leads, wires and cables are checked regularly and kept in a condition that does not cause harm.

Hazard - Manual Handling	
Who may be affected?	Officer, family members, visitors, consider vulnerable persons (eg new or expectant mothers).
How affected?	Musculoskeletal strain or injury, particularly to the back.
Examples of control measures	• Avoid heavy, bulky loads or materials. • Avoid steps or steep ramps • When lifting is necessary, the officer must be informed, instructed and trained in good techniques to help reduce the risks.

Hazard - Slips, Trips and Falls	
Who may be affected?	Officer, family members, visitors, consider vulnerable persons (eg new or expectant mothers, young children).
How affected?	Physical injury.
Examples of control measures	• Keep work areas tidy and clear of obstructions or objects lying around that may cause person to trip. • Clean up spills immediately. • Arrange furniture in order to avoid trailing wires. • Ensure mats are securely fixed and do not

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	have curling edges. • Try to avoid changes of level. • Ensure suitable footwear. • Ensure suitable lighting.

Hazard – Isolation	
Who may be affected?	Officer
How affected?	Stress and depression
Examples of control measures	• Regular face to face contact between line management and officer working at home. • Access to same information and support as colleagues working in the office. • Facilitate communication with colleagues in the office. • Take regular breaks.

2 Nature of the Risks

2.1 It is important to keep the nature of the risks in perspective. Many of the health and safety hazards faced by staff working at home are no different from those faced in a conventional office environment. These include poor posture, dangerous electrical wiring and trailing cables.

2.2 There is no evidence that staff who work at home are exposed to any major additional or unique risks as a consequence of their DSE work. Officers who work at home generally face non-immediate risks, eg bad posture or working in poor lighting, which may result in harm in the long term if done persistently. The extent to which an individual works at home is therefore an important factor to bear in mind.

3 Initial Assessment

3.1 Irrespective of the outcome of consideration of business need, job suitability etc, staff will **NOT** be permitted to work from home unless there is

compliance with all relevant health and safety regulations. The suitability of the home environment for working at home must, therefore, be addressed.

3.2 Officers who wish to work at home on a regular basis are required to participate in the risk assessment process by completing a hazard-spotting exercise (see part 4.1 of the Self-Assessment Form in Annex 1) before submitting an application to their line manager. Assistance can be sought from the line manager, risk assessor or departmental Health and Safety Officer, if required. The officer must also provide a plan (or photographs) of the proposed home workspace (see part 1.5 of the Application Form in Annex 2) and additional information to enable a risk assessment to be carried out. The floorplan defines the area that must be treated as a place of work during working hours and which is subject to a risk assessment. Other areas of the house are not considered to be part of the place of work although officers who work at home are to be expected to visit other parts of the house during breaks in the work.

3.3 The line manager will pass the information provided by the officer in the Self-Assessment Form and Application Form to a trained Risk Assessor who must evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or identify what more should be done to reduce the risk. To allow the Risk Assessor adequate time to fully consider the health and safety aspects of the application, the required information should be passed to the risk assessor by the line manager as soon as possible after they have received it. Based on the information provided by the officer, the Risk Assessor may need to seek clarification or further information from the officer, or consider it necessary to visit the officer's home.

4 Reviewing the Assessment

4.1 After any equipment or furniture that is being provided by the Department has been put in place, and before final approval for the Working at Home arrangement can be granted by the Head of Branch, the initial assessment must be reviewed to check that the precautions for each hazard

still adequately control the risk. The review should include consideration of the following (if applicable) - manual handling, hazardous substances and any specific risks to new or expectant mothers. A copy of the completed risk assessment must be given to the officer.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the Head of Branch to ensure that the initial risk assessment is reviewed after any necessary equipment has been set up and that, where the Risk Assessor has identified the need for any control/preventative measures, the necessary action has been taken before working at home begins.

4.2 Subsequent reviews must take place annually or when changes are made that may introduce new hazards, eg if the officer moves house or changes the location of their work area within their home.

5 New and Expectant Mothers

5.1 As mentioned in paragraph 1.2 above, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers who work. The regulations cover female employees of childbearing age who are, or in the future could be, pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months, or are breastfeeding.

5.2 Once an employee has given their employer written notification that she is pregnant, has given birth in the last six month or is breastfeeding, the employer must arrange for a specific risk assessment to be undertaken. This should take into account the original risk assessment and any advice given to the individual by their GP/midwife. The employer should regularly review any assessment made to take account of possible risks that may occur at different stages of pregnancy.

6 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

6.1 To satisfy the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997, departments have a duty to notify all

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reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland as set out in the HR Handbook (see policy 3.01 Leave and Attendance) . Officers must report any accident/incident, which occurs while working at home, to their line manager in the first instance. Normal departmental accident reporting procedures must be followed.

7 The Employee's Responsibilities

7.1 Officers are reminded that they must also take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do. (In the case of staff who work at home, the other people who may be affected could include other family members, neighbours, visitors). Officers must also cooperate with their department on health and safety matters to enable the Department to fulfil its legal obligations. For example, they must use work items correctly and must not interfere or misuse any health and safety equipment provided.

7.2 Officers have a responsibility to ensure that their proposed working area at home meets the Health and Safety standards set out below.

Occasional Working at Home

7.3 An officer who works at home on an occasional basis may require little more than a laptop and somewhere comfortable to sit and operate the equipment. However, they must be aware of the following –

- Trailing cables are a trip hazard and adequate precautions must be taken to protect other members of the household.
- Inappropriate seating/positioning can lead to aches, pains and strains - adequate consideration must be given by the officer to user comfort.
- Users must be aware of the time spent at their laptops – regular breaks should be taken to alleviate physical discomfort.

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7.4 Although a formal risk assessment is not considered necessary when working at home on an occasional basis, any officer who requests to do so will be required to confirm that they are aware of the potential health and safety risks of working at home and that they will take all reasonable steps to minimise these.

Working at Home on a Regular Basis

7.5 Where an officer is working at home on a regular basis the following are considered the minimum standards necessary to comply with Health and Safety legislation.

- The officer must be equipped with a full PC package that includes having keyboard and screen separate from each other; lap top computers are not appropriate for prolonged use **UNLESS** used in conjunction with a docking station.
- The working area must be capable of being separated from all other household activities whilst the officer is working on NICS business; this does not rule out the return of the room to its usual domestic function when the officer has stopped working.
- The computer must be located on a desk of adequate size to accommodate the equipment, provide sufficient space to allow support for the wrists in front of the keyboard and accommodate paperwork and documents etc. The work surface should be of low reflectance and approximately 730mm above floor level.
- The position of the computer should minimise the effects of reflections and shadows on the screen and allow adequate lighting so that the officer is able to work in comfort. The use of an anti-reflective screen and localised task lighting may be appropriate.
- Seating must conform to the current regulations – five-star mobile base, seat adjustable in height with an adjustable backrest.
- There must be adequate space to accommodate any necessary peripheral equipment, eg footrest, wrist rest, document holder etc.

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- A convenient and reliable 13 Amp 240 Volt earthed power supply must be provided by the officer from which (by means of a multi-gang extension if required) to run the various items of equipment provided. It is the officer's responsibility to ensure that electrical sockets and all other parts of their domestic electrical system are suitable and safe.
- The work area must be capable of being heated and ventilated.

7.6 The officer must also ensure that they have basic first aid supplies at home.

8 Further Information

8.1 Detailed information on Health and Safety roles and responsibilities is contained in departmental Health and Safety Policy Statements, while advice on health and safety matters can be obtained from departmental Health and Safety Advisers. Additional guidance is also available in the following booklets, which are published by the Health and Safety Executive:

- "Homeworking – Guidance for employers and employees on health and safety" (INDG226)
- "Working with VDUs" (INDG36)
- "Working alone in safety" (INDG73(rev))
- Basic advice on first-aid at work (INDG347)

8.2 Copies of these documents can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk

ANNEX 7

SAMPLE LETTERS

To the Home Insurance Company

Your reference: Insurance Policy Number

Dear Sirs

Subject: Working at Home

I am writing to inform you that I will be entering into a flexible working arrangement with my employer, with effect from *[insert proposed starting date].* Under this arrangement, I will have the choice to work from home, for up to *[insert no of days]* a week for the foreseeable future.

Please note that my primary place of work remains my employer's premises, and there are no changes to my primary terms and conditions of employment.

The work I will be doing at home will be of an individual nature and I will not be holding meetings with colleagues or the public as part of this work. It is, however, a condition of this arrangement that, if required, I will allow access to my home workspace to appropriate personnel (eg IT support staff, Health and Safety Officers).

As part of this arrangement my employer will supply, install, and maintain the following IT hardware and furniture *[amend as applicable]*:

- Desktop PC (including monitor, keyboard and mouse)
- Desk telephone
- Printer
- Desk
- Task chair
- Desk height filing cabinet

I am advised that my employer's property listed above, whilst in my home, is insured (my employer has indemnified me against loss, theft and damage) I would be grateful if you would update your records to reflect this change, and inform me if my home contents insurance policy will be affected by this change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

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To the Mortgage Provider

Your reference number: Mortgage Reference Number

Dear Sirs

Subject: Working at Home

I am writing to inform you that I will be entering into a flexible working arrangement with my employer, with effect from *[insert proposed starting date].* Under this arrangement, I will have the choice to work from home, for up to *[insert no of days]* a week for the foreseeable future.

Please note that my primary place of work remains my employer's premises, and there are no changes to my primary terms and conditions of employment.

The work I will be doing at home will be of an individual nature and I will not be holding meetings with colleagues or the public as part of this work. It is, however, a condition of this arrangement that, if required, I will allow access to my home workspace to appropriate personnel (eg IT support staff, Health and Safety Officers).

I would be grateful if you would confirm that my mortgage policy will not be affected by this change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours faithfully

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To the Landlord

Your reference: Address/Rent reference

Dear Sirs

Subject: Working at Home

I am writing to inform you that I will be entering into a flexible working arrangement with my employer, with effect from *[insert proposed starting date].* Under this arrangement, I will have the choice to work from home, for up to *[insert no of days]* a week for the foreseeable future.

Please note that my primary place of work remains my employer's premises, and there are no changes to my primary terms and conditions of employment.

The work will be carried out in [*insert the space for example the spare room*] which will also retain its original function as [*insert function, for example, the study*]. The work I will be doing at home will be of an individual nature and I will not be holding meetings with colleagues or the public as part of this work It is, however, a condition of this arrangement that, if required, I will allow access to my home workspace to appropriate personnel (eg IT support staff, Health and Safety Officers).

I would be grateful for confirmation that my rent arrangements will not be affected by this change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours faithfully

ANNEX 7

To the Tax Office/Revenue and Customs

Your reference: Tax Reference Number

Dears Sirs

Subject: Working at Home

I am writing to inform you that, as a Crown Employee working in the *[insert Department],* I will be entering into a flexible working arrangement with effect from *[insert proposed starting date].* Under this arrangement, I will have the choice to work from home, for up to *[insert no of days]* a week for the foreseeable future.

Please note that my primary place of work remains my employer's premises, and there are no changes to my primary terms and conditions.

The work will be carried out in *[insert the space for example the spare room]* which will also retain its original function as *[insert the space for example the study].* The work I will be doing at home will be of an individual nature and I will not be holding meetings with colleagues or the public as part of this work. It is, however, a condition of this arrangement that, if required, I will allow access to my home workspace to appropriate personnel (eg IT support staff, Health and Safety Officers).

As part of this arrangement my employer will supply, install, and maintain the following IT hardware and furniture to enable me to perform my duties *[amend as applicable]*:

- Desktop PC (including monitor, keyboard and mouse)
- Desk telephone
- Printer
- Desk
- Task chair
- Desk height filing cabinet

*[**NOTE:** The officer must include information here on the likely extent of their personal use (if any) of the above equipment].*

I would be grateful if you would confirm that my income tax liability will not be affected by this change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours faithfully

ANNEX 8

SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned in Section 1, when working at home, as when working in the office, an officer must adhere to the all departmental security requirements. Therefore, any officer who is considering applying to work at home must ensure that they make themselves aware of these requirements and that their proposed home workspace will allow them to fully meet the requirements.

This Annex complements the requirements mentioned in Section 1 and covers information and instructions that are specific to working at home.

The general principles for an officer who works at home, whether on a regular or occasional basis, are:

- Secret and Top Secret material must not be taken home.
- An officer must seek clearance from their manager before taking Restricted and/ or Confidential material home.
- An officer must ensure that any material, marked of a Restricted or Confidential nature, that is used at home regularly is stored in an approved secure holding.
- An officer should think first before communicating any information by e-mail, fax, post, in person or over the phone from home.
- Normal departmental policy on the transmission of documents bearing a protective marking via email applies.

Areas to consider

Working at home can offer many potential benefits to the officer but, unfortunately, it also increases the risk of theft, loss, interference or damage to equipment and documents. An officer must, therefore, consider how the following considerations might affect their particular situation:

ANNEX 8

Area	Considerations
General Security	Personal and official matters should be kept separate. Where possible, when carrying out official work at home an officer should use a designated area, preferably a separate room with a lockable door. If the officer does not have a lockable room, they should exercise a clear desk policy and log off the computer, both at the end of the day and if they leave the room for any length of time.
Confidentiality	Official information must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to anyone who is not authorised to receive it.
Theft	An officer who is working at home must ensure that his/her computer or any sensitive material is not visible through a window, and that their windows and doors have good quality locks fitted. Particular care must be taken when travelling with a laptop or briefcase containing important documents.
'False Friends'	When working at home, an officer may have fewer opportunities to discuss work or problems with their colleagues. Staff are advised not to 'advertise' that they work on official documents at home as this may put them, their documents and/or computer equipment at risk. Meetings must always be held on official premises.
Eavesdropping and overlooking.	It is highly unlikely that anyone will place listening devices in their home but staff must be aware that other people in their household or visitors may accidentally overhear or listen to their conversations. Telephones are not secure and the officer must, therefore, exercise discretion when discussing sensitive matters.
IT threats	An officer must comply with the requirements of the NICS Internet and E-mail Usage policy, and all other relevant departmental/agency policies.

ANNEX 8

Area	Considerations
	An officer must not use discs or other media, which have not been cleared by departmental ISU and have not been virus checked. Laptops supplied by the department must be returned to the office if the home is to be vacant for more than five days.
Protectively marked material	Secret and Top Secret material must not be taken home, nor should it be generated at home.
Destruction of waste	An officer must return any documents or papers to the office for disposal.
Telephone calls	An officer must not discuss sensitive information on the telephone; where a call is essential they must identify the recipient of the call before passing information.
Sending a fax	An officer should not send sensitive information in a fax. If sending a fax is essential, the officer should always verify that the recipient is able to receive the message before sending it.

Further Advice

If you require further information on security matters please contact:

IT Security	[this should be completed by the department]
General Security	[Assistant Departmental Security Officer]

ANNEX 9

MANAGING STAFF WHO WORK AT HOME

1.1 Managing staff who work at home differs from managing staff who are working in the same location as the manager, mainly because the manager is unable to physically observe their staff's productivity and approach to work on a daily basis.

1.2 Line managers will therefore need to consider the following:

Communication Ground Rules

1.2.1 Communication channels need to be established at the outset so that the officer who works at home continues to feel part of the organisation and in touch with developments. Effective communication between the officer who works at home and their line manager is essential if the arrangement is to be a success. The line manager and the officer need to agree what, how and when information that is communicated to or from office-based employees is to be provided to or gathered from the officer who is working at home. This will require making effective full use of telephone and e-mail communication and occasions when the officer is in the office.

1.2.2 Strategies that the line manager can adopt to enhance communication include the following:

- informing all relevant staff about the working at home arrangement and communication ground rules;
- scheduling team meetings at common times;
- reviewing the working at home arrangement regularly;
- using electronic communication tools;
- sharing information about work assignments;
- including all staff at appropriate social gatherings.

ANNEX 9

By addressing the need for effective communication from the outset, potential problems can be minimised.

Training and Development

1.2.3 Line managers must ensure that officers who work at home have the same access to training and development opportunities as comparable workers in the office. Although the officer will remain responsible for their own development and must consult with their manager on training and development needs for their role and the environment in which they work, line managers must ensure that an officer who is working at home has equal access to all training and development material as available to office-based staff.

Depression and isolation

1.2.4 The challenges facing staff who work at home vary according to the amount of time they spend away from the office. Line managers must ensure that measures are put in place to reduce the risk of officers who work at home from feeling isolated, eg by, ensuring access to all office communications eg Team Briefs, staff notices etc.

Performance management

1.2.5 The workload and performance standards expected of staff working at home should be the same as those of comparable office-based staff. Managing staff who are not in the same building need not be a problem if the emphasis is on management by results. This involves setting agreed, achievable and measurable objectives, which the officer is responsible for meeting while working at home, and is in line with the key elements of the NICS Performance Management Framework. Feedback on performance is important and mechanisms for the delivery of feedback must be clearly defined at the outset of any working at home arrangement.

ANNEX 9

Hours of work

1.2.6 It should not be expected that an officer who is working at home is contactable outside of the agreed times set out in their Working at Home Agreement. Line managers must bear in mind that the officer's place of work is also their home, and their privacy must be respected. Contact outside of the agreed hours must be kept to a minimum, but where necessary, line managers must ensure that this contact is within the provisions of the Hours and Attendance Chapter of the NICS Staff Handbook.

1.2.7 Staff working at home may be tempted to work longer hours than normal because of the convenience factor. Therefore, as part of the ongoing monitoring process, line managers must ensure that officers working at home are not undertaking excessively long working hours.

Relationships

1.2.8 Staff and managers working remotely from each other require a high degree of trust on both sides. Their relationship will be different because the officer will not normally be involved in the day-to-day conversations of a team of colleagues. Support from the line manager needs to be available and consistent.

Absence management

1.2.9 Line managers must ensure that sick absence continues to be managed in accordance with the current absence management policy.

ANNEX 10

MANAGERS WORKING AT HOME

1. Your responsibilities as a manager are not affected by your working arrangements. Make sure that you continue to give leadership and guidance to the staff who you manage and remain in contact.

2. Regularly check how successful your working at home arrangement is in practice.

3. Ask your colleagues whether they have noticed any additional work coming their way when you are working at home. If they have, this is a problem that needs to be addressed quickly.

4. Ask your line manager and the staff who you manage whether there are any issues emerging from their perspective. If there are, they need to be addressed.

ANNEX 11

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR STAFF WORKING AT HOME

1 Before you go home

- Take home everything that you will need when working at home, for example, telephone numbers, reference papers and make sure that they can be carried home safely.

- Make sure that people trying to contact you can do so. In particular, ensure that you have provided your colleagues with your contact telephone number.

- Make sure arrangements are in place to deal with your post (and emails, if applicable) for the day you are not in the office.

2 When you are working at home

- Structure your working day to ensure you have proper breaks. Remember that, under the Working Time Regulations, a worker is entitled to a rest period of 11 consecutive hours between each working day; an uninterrupted break of not less than 24 hours in each 7-day period; and an uninterrupted break of at least 20 minutes when daily working time is more than 6 hours (NICS terms and conditions provide most staff with a minimum 30 minute lunch break). Full details can be found in the Hours and Attendance Chapter of the NICS Staff Handbook.

- Keep work distinct from your “home life”. The core hours when you have agreed to be contactable by telephone will have been set out in your Working at Home Agreement. Let your colleagues know what times you are likely to start and end work, and don’t feel obliged to deal with queries outside these times.

ANNEX 11

- On a 'working from home day', you must be able to produce at least the same amount and quality of work as you would when working in the office.

3 Terms and Conditions

- Your conditioned hours of work will continue to be the same as if you were working at the office.
- If you are unfit to work on a day when you are due to be working at home, you must report your sickness absence in the usual way.

- You must apply for annual leave, flexi leave or special leave in the usual way.

ANNEX 12

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The officer is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance.

- Carrying out an initial assessment of the suitability of their post, their potential to work effectively at home, and the suitability of their proposed home workspace.

- Considering what type of working at home arrangement best suits their individual circumstances.

- Informing their mortgage provider/landlord, home insurance company and HM Revenue and Customs of their intention to work at home.

- Completing the relevant sections of the application form for working at home.

- Participating in the Health and Safety risk assessment process by providing information which will enable a risk assessment of their home workspace to be carried out.

- Discussing their completed application form with their line manager.

- Co-operating with the line manager in implementing any action as recommended by the risk assessor.

- In the case of regular working at home, signing the Working at Home Agreement.

ANNEX 12

- Ensuring that they are contactable during the periods outlined in the Working at Home Agreement.

- Informing their line manager of any changes to their individual circumstances that may impact on the Working at Home Agreement.

- Providing input to the ongoing monitoring and formal review as required by the line manager.

- Ensuring that they follow existing policies on:

    - annual/flexi leave applications,
    - special leave applications,
    - sickness absence,
    - internet and e-mail usage,
    - security, and
    - health and safety
    - bullying and harassment.

- Co-operating with the line manager in arranging for the delivery, set-up and collection of any equipment and/or furniture provided under the working at home arrangement.

- Allowing access to their home to appropriate personnel, if required.

- Attending the office, or other location, as required by their line manager.

- Consulting with their line manager prior to incurring any additional cost associated with carrying out their duties at home eg postage.

- Applying, in writing, to their Head of Branch if they wish to amend, suspend or end the home working arrangement.

ANNEX 12

The line manager (at or above Staff Officer or analogous) is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance.
- Considering all working at home applications fairly.
- Ensuring that, if the applicant has any line manager(s) below SO level, these managers are fully informed of, and where necessary involved in, the entire process.
- Arranging a meeting with the applicant to discuss the application.
- Forwarding the information provided by the applicant to a trained risk assessor for consideration.
- Completing the relevant sections of the application form in consultation with the officer to ensure all relevant issues are taken into account.
- Making a recommendation to Head of Branch on whether working at home is considered feasible.
- Ensuring that, if an application cannot be supported, there are defensible grounds for turning it down.
- Drawing up the Working at Home Agreement for all parties to sign.
- Ensuring that the necessary equipment, as outlined in the working at home agreement, is delivered, set-up and collected as appropriate.
- Developing, and agreeing with the officer, objectives for the officer working at home.

ANNEX 12

- Giving the officer working at home appropriate notice of any official who is required to visit their home workspace.

- Continually monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangement and formally reviewing the Working at Home Agreement with the officer as appropriate and, where necessary, recommending to the Head of Branch that the arrangement is amended, suspended or terminated.

- Ensuring that the officer has equal access to all information issued to staff eg trawl notices etc.

- Ensuring that other staff, where appropriate, are aware of the arrangements for contacting the officer working at home.

The Head of Branch is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance.

- Ensuring that applications are dealt with fairly.

- Forwarding the application to the Establishment Officer for a decision on the provision of the necessary furniture and/or equipment by the department, where working at home may be viable.

- Ensuring that the initial risk assessment is reviewed after any necessary equipment has been set up and that, where the Risk Assessor has identified the need for any control/preventative measures, the necessary action has been taken before working at home begins.

- Making the final decision on whether to approve or reject an application and communicating this decision to the officer as appropriate.

ANNEX 12

- Ensuring that if an application is rejected, the reasons are appropriate and consistent with other applications that have been accepted/rejected in the Division.

- Ensuring that a copy of the Working at Home Agreement is copied to Personnel/Establishment Branch for inclusion in the officer's Personal File.

- Continually monitoring the impact of working at home arrangements on the ability of the branch to meet its business objectives.

- Informing the officer, in writing, if the arrangement is to be amended, suspended or terminated.

Personnel/Establishment Branch is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and providing advice to staff on, the NICS Homeworking Policy and Guidance.

- Seeking a medical opinion where an application to work at home is submitted (or a working at home arrangement currently exists) for an officer who has been put on a trial period under the inefficiency due to sickness absence procedures.

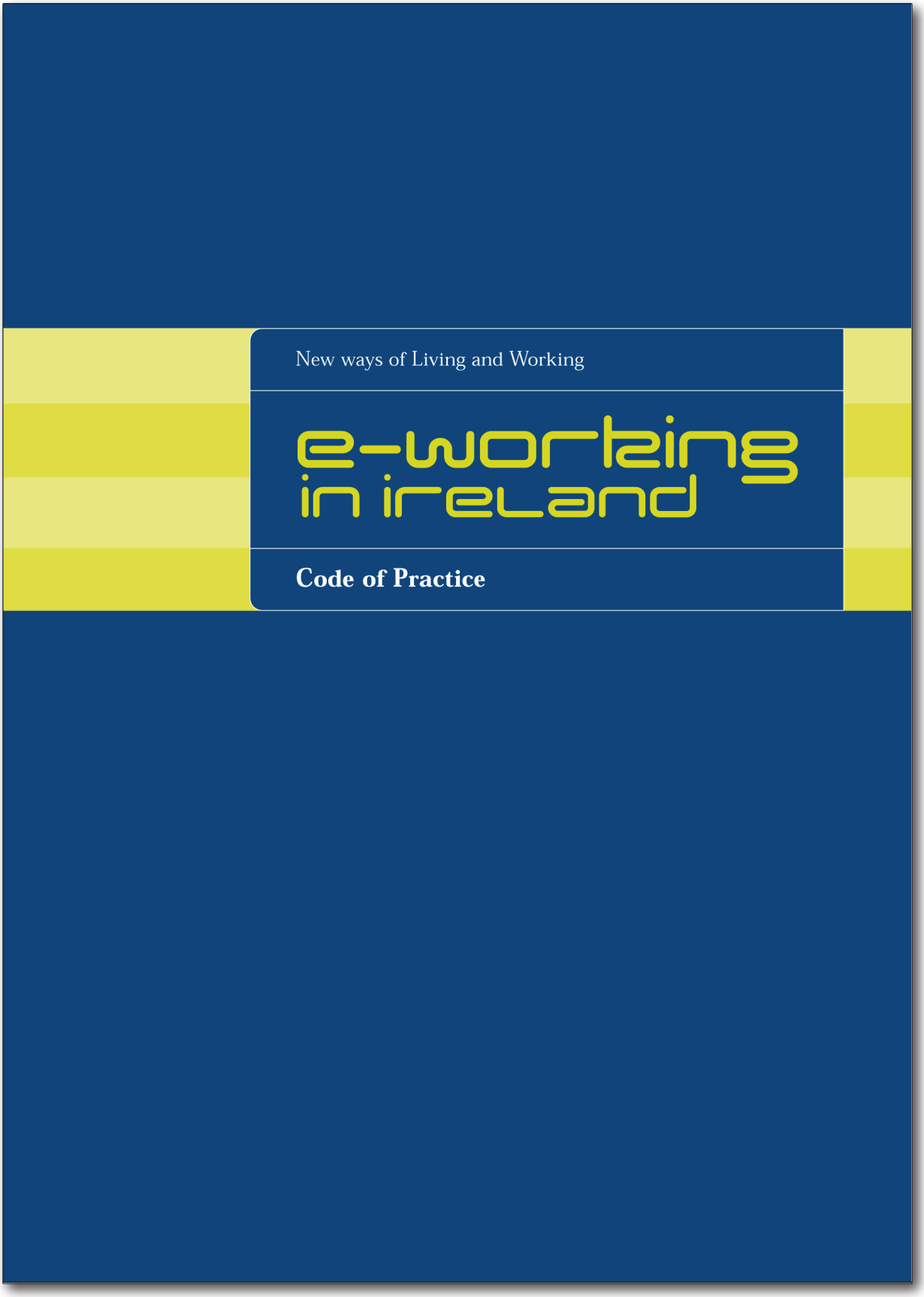
- Making a decision on whether the department will provide any necessary furniture and/or equipment, where the Head of Branch considers that working at home is viable.

- Ensuring that a copy of the Working at Home Agreement and any amendments to it, including written notification of suspension or termination, are held on the officer's Personal File.

ANNEX 12

- Monitoring the reasons given for approval/refusal of applications to work at home in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the NICS Homeworking Policy is implemented fairly and consistently across the department.

New Ways of Working



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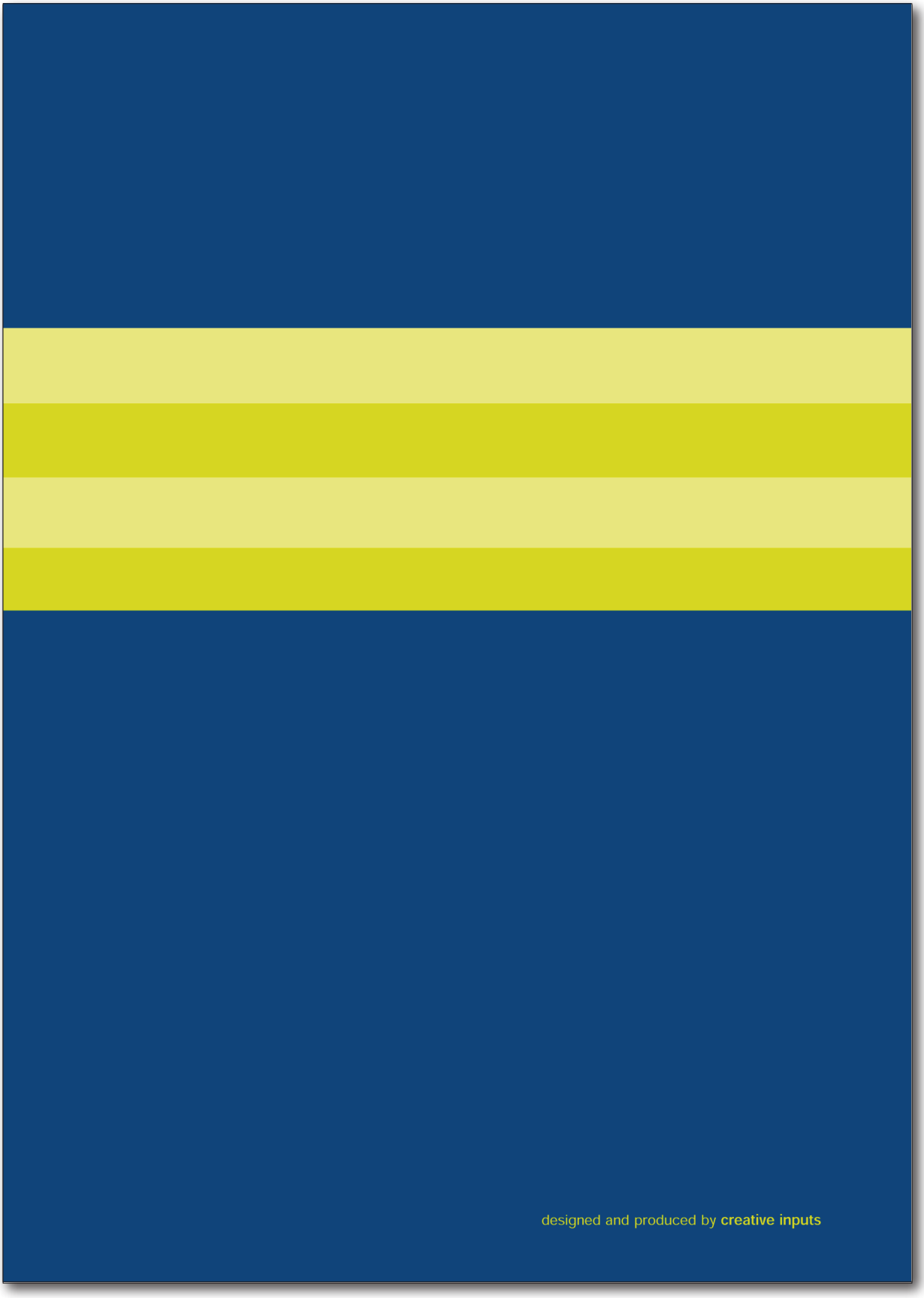
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forewords

code of practice on e-working

Foreword by Noel Treacy, T.D.,
Minister for Science, Technology and Commerce

Modern information and communication technologies have opened up new methods of work organisation. e-Work is one such facet of the electronic age. e-Work is a powerful tool which can be exploited, not just to improve business competitiveness, but also to increase employment opportunities, skills availability, ease pressure on infrastructure and facilitate regional development. However, if the opportunities presented by this exciting phenomenon are to be maximised, it is essential that those employers that wish to introduce e-working in their firms and those interested in e-working are aware of what is involved in terms of obligations and entitlements.

This Code provides valuable information and will be of great assistance in identifying and clarifying key issues that need to be addressed in introducing an e-working policy in firms and organisations. If the potential of e-work is to be exploited fully, for the mutual benefit of workers and employers, it is vital that clear ground rules are established which inspire confidence in both parties.

The Government welcomes and endorses this Code, which is the product of a fruitful collaboration involving IBEC and ICTU. There is no doubt that e-Work has the potential to be an engine of economic growth while simultaneously providing employees with greater choice and balance in the organisation of their work and home lives.

code of practice on e-working

Foreword by John Dunne, Director General,
Irish Business and Employers Confederation

The structure of industry in Ireland has changed dramatically as we enter the new millennium, with advances in telecommunication radically transforming many aspects of Irish business. These advances have led to the emergence of a whole new type of business and way of working.

Today business, in all sectors of the Irish economy, is becoming more dependant on developments in information and communication technologies to service its market and remain competitive. Increase usage of mobile phones, laptop computers, the Internet and video conferencing has changed the way in which business is conducted.

e-Working or teleworking - the terms coined to describe a way of working with information technologies independent of any geographical location - can offer Irish business the potential to develop new business opportunities, improve productivity and maintain competitiveness. Employers concerned with staff retention issues are now investigating the introduction of e-working or teleworking as a flexible work option, particularly for employees with family responsibilities or those who spend long periods commuting. IBEC welcomes the work of the e-Work Action Forum in promoting e-work and developing Ireland as an 'e-work friendly location'. It is delighted to endorse the e-work Code of Practice, which aims to encourage best practice in Irish companies to the benefit of employers and employees.

code of practice on e-working

Foreword by Peter Cassells, General Secretary,
Irish Congress of Trade Unions

The awesome speed of technological change in very recent years continues to transform the workplace. More team-based organisational structures, greater variety of work contracts and a concentration on innovation and creativity are characteristic of key sectors of our economy. When we speak of e-working we imply the same radical change in how, where and with whom people work as the evolving ways of conducting business, government or running organisations. In some cases the changes have resulted in higher wages, better working conditions, in others, however, change has resulted in greater exploitation and poor conditions of employment.

In recognition of these trends Congress welcomed the opportunity to identify and set down responses to the key issues associated with e-working for ever increasing numbers of workers across a variety of sectors in our economy. The issues are wide-ranging encompassing many different aspects of work and access to work. The Code of Practice on e-Working encourages the introduction of a formal e-working policy in companies or organisations as a way of avoiding potential problems or difficulties which may arise with the introduction of this new form of work organisation.

Congress welcomes and endorses the Code of Practice on e-Working as an important strategy both to develop and safeguard the position of workers. With proper safeguards workers can engage with and benefit from the new ways of working and realise the possibilities associated with e-Working such as more control over their work including working hours, reductions in commuting time, and a better balance between working and family/home life.

part one

code of practice on e-working

This Code of Practice is designed to inform those who have an interest in e-working on a wide range of issues from the inception of the idea to the implications of e-working for the self-employed, employers and employees. It is envisaged that the Code would be regularly reviewed and up-dated, as appropriate.

definition

e-Work is a way of working using information and communication technologies in which work is carried out independent of location. e-Work is not a job but a method of working.

Ways of e-working include:

- e-Worker - at home full-time/part-time
- Telecommuter - part-time at home or part-time in office
- Mobile - on the move

introducing e-working in a company

e-Working may be introduced as a flexible work option in a company or it can develop over time on a more informal basis. This code of practice aims to encourage best practice in companies engaged in e-working arrangements, to the benefit of both employers and employees.

When introducing e-working employers are advised to draw up a written policy which specifies how the e-working arrangements will operate in that company. This should be done in consultation with employees and union/employee representatives, where appropriate. Where necessary this policy can then be varied by negotiation to take account of individual circumstances or working arrangements. The drafting of such a document can help avoid potential problems or difficulties that may arise with the introduction of e-working in an organization. A sample e-working policy setting out some key points to consider when e-working is included in this Code of Practice.

e-Working may be required as part of a person's initial job description or may be engaged in as a voluntary arrangement. Where e-working is entered into voluntarily the policy should set out provisions for suspending or terminating the

e-working arrangement and returning to conventional office working. Such terms should be agreed between the parties at the outset.

suitable jobs and e-worker selection

- Jobs suitable for e-working at a distance include those involving a high degree of information processing, clearly defined areas of individual work, and work where there are clear objectives, measurable outputs and minimal requirements for supervision. Some employees may have jobs where one part of the job description is suitable for home working while other parts need office resources or face to face interaction with other staff and thus may prefer to alternate e-working with conventional office working. Not all jobs will be suitable for e-working.

- Employees may opt to e-work or employers may specifically recruit e-workers.

- Depending on the nature of the work the following personal attributes and skills may be particularly relevant:

  - decision making and problem solving skills
  - time management skills
  - self discipline
  - communication skills
  - experience
  - ability to cope with reduced social contact

- Where an e-working arrangement is being proposed the suitability of the e-worker's line manager should also be considered, having regard to the need for skills in distance management.

- e-Working arrangements may offer a range of employment opportunities to people who may have been previously excluded from the Labour Market. Where e-working is introduced as part of a company disability policy, consideration should be given to appropriate support mechanisms that may be required by individual employees. Employers should also be aware of any

potential equality or industrial relations implications of excluding certain workers from e-working. In order to avoid such problems clear criteria in relation to the job/person suitability should be clarified at the outset.

- e-Working arrangements should include mechanisms to avoid unfair extra workload on those working at home or left back at the office.

home office

Specific arrangements should be clearly set out in any e-working policy with regard to the setting up of a home office. Apart from assessing general technical requirements, other issues to consider may include:

Space and Location:
- procedure for checking that a suitable home office space is available.
- availability of a separate room in the home.
- availability of other options including a VDU workstation and adjustable chair in compliance with the health and safety legislation.

Equipment and Furniture:
- provision and ownership
- maintenance and technical support,
- insurance,
- personal use
- provisions against misuse
- arrangements for returning the items if the e-worker changes employment or reverts back to office-based work.

Note:
Employers may supply e-workers with equipment or provide a budget and allow the employee to select suitable items within that budget. In other cases, employees may have to provide their own equipment.

Whatever the arrangement employers should undertake a health and safety risk assessment to ensure that the e-worker's workstation complies with all legislation. Arrangements should be agreed in advance to allow employers access to the e-worker's home to conduct risk assessments.

Childcare

- e-working should never be used as a substitute for childcare arrangements.

Privacy

- Any issues regarding the e-worker's privacy at home should be clarified at the outset. Details regarding home visits for health and safety inspections, or for computer maintenance, including details on prior notice for such visits should be agreed. Where necessary mechanisms for introducing telephone or mail redirection systems should also be provided.

Insurance provisions

- extension of employer's insurance policy to the home office or,
- where necessary, the acquisition of a home office policy by the e-worker, which may in some circumstances specify the area within the home which is covered by employer liability insurance (the "cordon" approach).,

Planning permission

- requirements under current legislation.

  Note:
  Permission is not normally required if changes due to homeworking are "ancillary" or temporary such as the installation of a desk and a computer in a spare bedroom, and where no change in the external appearance of the building or increase in traffic is involved. However, if any proposed changes fall outside these areas planning and business rates advice should be sought.

- implications, if any, in relation to existing mortgage agreements or tenancy leases.

communications policies

It is widely acknowledged that effective communication is vital to successful e-working. An e-working policy should establish ground rules and a range of procedures to replace the informal communications system of the workplace, particularly in relation to:

- use of fax, phone, email, collection of voicemail

- core contact times e.g. set times for contacting managers or on completion of projects, and keeping receptionists and secretaries informed of a remote employee's whereabouts.

- access to technical support for e-workers with equipment or software problems

- personal contact i.e. face to face meetings with managers and teambuilding with colleagues such as regular "in the office" days.

- delivery of internal communications such as memos and newsletters to the e-worker

- access to groupware technology such as computerised diaries and intranets where appropriate

- arrangements to monitor work performance. Performance appraisal procedures, where they exist, may need amendment in relation to the e-working arrangement. Where keystroke or call listening methods are used employees should be advised of this.

- procedures for reporting harassment via email or other misuse of company communication systems

Social isolation can pose a problem for many e-workers. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that e-workers have the same access to company information as their office-based colleagues. In supplying company information, companies should be aware that e-workers are often beyond the reach of the usual informal office chatter and informal learning and should make active efforts to remedy the resulting information gap, perhaps though the use of intranets and email.

training

Training requirements should be assessed for both the e-worker and his/her office-based manager. Appropriate training may include:

- computer/IT skills e.g. remote access/Internet
- self management skills such as time management, project management, effective telephone usage, priority setting etc.
- coping with isolation
- management training especially "management by results", goal setting, monitoring progress, giving appropriate feedback
- health and safety training e.g. covering the responsibility of the employer for the health and safety of employees, and the responsibility of employees to take reasonable care of their health and safety and in reporting defects in workplace equipment leading to risks.

A variety of training opportunities and techniques should be considered ensuring equal access to training opportunities with onsite workers, optimising the use of distance learning techniques and support through mentoring of new e-workers by experienced e-workers.

security

e-Working policies should review company security policies to see whether they are appropriate for e-workers and specify any variations required, considering issues such as:

- how to deal with secure document waste
- locking of the home office/computer
- procedures for computer virus checking and password changes
- data backups (it is advisable to require that one set of data backups be held at the central site where possible in case of fire damage or other problems affecting the home office).
- confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements

employee terms and conditions

An employee engaged in e-working has the same employment rights and is protected by employment legislation in the same way as all other employees. An overview of the minimum legal entitlements for employees under Irish employment legislation is set out in Part Two.

Under some e-working arrangements clarification may be needed on how certain terms and conditions may apply in a e-working situation and these should be clarified at the beginning of any e-working arrangement.

Where the introduction of e-working gives rise to any changes to normal work practices or to an employee's terms and conditions, these should be agreed between the parties at the outset. This is advisable to avoid any potential difficulties that may subsequently arise about working arrangements.

Working Hours

Working time arrangements should be agreed having regard to workplace agreements and hours of work legislation. The key issues should include:

- What core hours, if any, must be worked?
- What hours or days must be worked from the office rather than through e-working?
- What is the procedure for agreeing and monitoring working time or overtime, sickness and holiday arrangements?

Company Policies

Consideration should also be given to the operation of company policies that may be affected by the e-working arrangement. New arrangements may need to be put in place for the claiming or granting of sick leave or annual leave. Clarification may also be required on how certain pay and benefits may apply. These may include:

- Bonus: application of bonus systems
- Piecework: application of piecework systems
- Expenses: reimbursement of expenses (e.g. heat, light, cleaning home office, stationery, postage, telecommunications, travel)

- Benefit-in-kind: taxation implications of personal use of equipment (personal use can be considered a benefit in kind)
- Fringe Benefits: application of fringe benefits

Trade Unions

Where e-workers are members of a trade union recognised by the employer, the union should be consulted about the introduction of any e-working arrangements and with regard to any proposed changes to terms and conditions of employment, in line with normal practices. Employees working under e-working arrangements should have normal access to their trade unions, and vice versa.

monitoring and review

The e-working policy should include a procedure for regular monitoring and review. Where necessary the policy may need to be varied to take account of individual circumstances or working arrangements.

sample e-working agreement

The following sample e-working agreement sets out some key areas that should be agreed upon before embarking on an e-work arrangement. Details of e-working agreements will vary according to the nature of the work carried out and the degree to which the e-worker carries out the work away from the traditional workplace. This agreement can be varied by negotiation (see italics) to take account of individual circumstances or working arrangements.

The sample agreement could be used as a stand-alone document but is most effective in conjunction with an agreed and detailed company policy on e-working. (Some appropriate issues for inclusion are italicised)

- Name:
- Address at which the e-work/distance work will mostly be performed:
- Telephone number:
- Mobile telephone number:
- Details of Position/Nature of work:
- Hours of work
  (Office based days/hours, home based days/hours - include details where applicable on core hours, flexible hours; recording of working time, overtime arrangements , etc.)
- Communications structures
  (core contact times, team meetings, feedback, mentoring, etc.)
- Reporting in procedures

code of practice on e-working

- Home office arrangements
  - Technical requirements
  - Provision of equipment/furniture
  - Maintenance/Prevention of mis-use
  - Personal use of equipment
  - Health and Safety
  - Insurance

- Training
  (induction, technology training, self-management skills, remote management skills - where appropriate)

- Security/confidentiality arrangements

- Terms and conditions
  (application of company policies to terms of employment where they may differ as a result of e-working arrangements).

- Suspension/termination of e-working

- Monitoring and review process

- I have read and understood the company policy on e-working and agree to an e-working arrangement.

- I have agreed that a health and safety risk assessment will be required on the proposed workplace for e-working.

- I will operate in accordance with the company safety statement.

- I have informed my mortgage/insurance company that I intend to use my home for business purposes.

code of practice on e-working

- I understand that e-working is not a substitute for childcare.
- I understand that the e-working arrangement does not affect my status as an employee.
- I understand the arrangements for termination of the e-working agreement by myself or by the company.

Signed (employee)

Signed (company)

Date:

e-working for self employed e-workers

Self employed e-workers should always ensure there is a written document specifying the terms and conditions of the agreement between the e-worker and their client or customer. A clear written agreement can help to avoid disputes, unnecessary work stress and nonpayment of bills.

Written agreements between Self employed e-workers and the Clients should include the following key aspects:

- **Clear contacts:**
  Identity and contact addresses of purchaser and supplier (if either is a corporate body, the names of the individuals concerned).

- **Nature of work:**
  General description of the work to be carried out including the purpose and scope, the timetable for completion of the work, the delivery format and delivery date.

- **Payment terms:**
  Details of the payment for the work including a timetable for payment during or following the completion of the work, VAT liability.

- **Confidentiality:**
  Details of systems/procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of the work including responsibilities under Data Protection legislation

- **Ownership:**
  Clarity with respect to the ownership of any resulting copyright and intellectual property rights if appropriate.

- **Supply of equipment:**
  Arrangements for loan or supply of equipment, including insurance arrangements.

- **Illness cover/holidays:**
  Arrangements for cover in the event of illness, incapacity, holidays or other absences, and for any consequent subcontracting, if permitted.

- **Quality assurance:**
  Procedures for compliance with quality assurance system to be used, if any. If group working is involved, identify the individual responsible for quality within the group.

Note: Self-employed e-workers should be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act, 1988 and may wish to consider keeping a set of data backups at a secure location offsite.

Self-employed e-workers, because their situation differs from employees in areas such as eligibility for many social welfare benefits, should also consider:

- **Adequate insurance:**
  for business equipment e.g. through a home office insurance policy covering issues such as data loss, public liability, business interruption insurance and computer breakdown costs. Some e-workers may also need to consider taking out professional liability insurance where such insurance is not included in home office policies.

- **Planning permission:**
  whether a home office requires planning permission (see Part One home office section for further information).

- **Pension coverage:**
  contribution to a pension scheme where possible.

- **Health insurance:**
  provision of permanent health insurance cover to replace lost income if incapacitated by ill health.

- **Appropriate professional advice:**
  access to suitable professional advisors such as accountants and solicitors

- **Working hours:**
  protection from overwork. Self-employed e-workers are exempt from the Working Time Directive and so often work long hours to meet deadlines. They may suffer from periods of "feast or famine" in workload. EU research indicates that stress through overwork ("self-exploitation") is a major occupational health hazard for self-employed e-workers.

- **Stress factors:**
  the risk of stress resulting from isolation through working alone from home - details of e-work support organisations and Internet resources which can provide advice or alleviate isolation problems are given in Part Three - contact details.

- **Quality Control:**
  quality control measures to ensure customer satisfaction.

part two

overview of legislation

employee rights and employer obligations

This section provides a short overview of the relevant employment legislation which is not exhaustive. Further information is available through guides and explanatory leaflets provided by the Departments of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Health and Safety Authority. These are listed in the references section.

- *Written information on terms of employment* must be supplied within two months of the date of commencement of employment [Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994] including details of the name and address of the employer, the place of work, the job title/nature of the work, the date of commencement of employment, the nature of the contract (temporary or fixed term), pay and pay intervals, hours of work (including overtime and all paid leave), sick pay and pension schemes, notice entitlements and collective agreements. The Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994 does not apply to a person normally required to work for the employer for less than 8 hours a week, or who has been in the continuous service of the employer for less than one month.

- *Written pay statements:* a written statement every pay day of wages with every deduction itemised must be supplied [Payment of Wages Act, 1991].

- *Employment equality:* The Employment Equality Act, 1998 prohibits discrimination in respect of all aspects of employment i.e. access to employment, conditions of employment, training or experience for, or in relation to, employment, promotion or re-grading and classification of posts. It combines the protection of earlier Acts (the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974 and the Employment Equality Act, 1977) and extends the grounds for discrimination to nine grounds namely, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability race and membership of the traveller community.

  The Employment Equality Act, 1998 as it applies on the grounds of disability requires that an employer must make a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability, if that person would be capable of doing the job

effectively with the assistance of special treatment or facilities, unless the cost to the employer of the provision of such treatment or facilities is more than a nominal one.

- *Data Protection:* employees who, as part of their work, act as data controllers or data processors must be aware of their obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1988 to ensure data are kept up to date and for lawful purposes, and that sufficient security measures are taken so that data are not disclosed.

- *Working time provisions:* Under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 the maximum average working week is 48 hours but averaging may be balanced out over a 4,6 or 12 month period. Employees are entitled to 11 hours daily rest per 24 hour period, to one period of 24 hours rest per week preceded by a daily rest period of 11 hours and to rest breaks of 15 minutes per 4.5 hours and 30 minutes where 6 hours have been worked.

- *Holidays:* From 1, April 1999 under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 employees are entitled to four working weeks annual holidays for each leave year in addition to the nine public holidays. All employees, whether full-time, part-time or casual qualify for holidays based on hours worked.

- *Sunday premium:* employed e-workers who work on a Sunday are entitled to supplementary payment equivalent to the closest applicable collective agreement for the same or similar employment which provides for a Sunday premium. This premium can be in the form of added payment, paid time off in lieu, a portion of the shift premium or unsocial hours premium.

- *Zero hours:* where an employee is requested to be available for work and is not, on the day, asked to work, he/she is compensated for 25% of the time during which he/she is required to be available, or 15 hours in any week, whichever is the lesser.

- *Maternity protection and adoptive leave:* employees have a statutory right to (i) maternity leave of 14 weeks plus an option for an additional four weeks leave and the right to return to work after such leave and (ii) 10 weeks adoptive leave plus the option of an additional 4 weeks leave. Employees who satisfy

the contribution conditions are entitled to claim the Pay-Related Maternity Allowance from the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs for the entitlement periods of 14 weeks (maternity) or 10 weeks (adoptive).

- *Parental Leave:* employees who are parents have a statutory right to 14 weeks unpaid leave. This entitlement relates to children born or adopted after the 3rd June 1996. The leave must be taken before the child reaches 5 years of age.

- *Notice of Dismissal:* employees who are normally expected to work at least 8 hours a week are entitled to statutory periods of notice which vary according to their length of service [Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-91].

- *Unfair Dismissals:* employees with one year's service are protected against unfair dismissal under the Unfair Dismissal Acts. The requirement of the one year's continuous service does not apply where the dismissal results from the exercising of rights under the Maternity Protection and or Adoptive Leave legislation or for trade union membership or activities. Dismissals are deemed unfair where they result from trade union membership or activities, pregnancy, religious activities, race, colour or sexual orientation, legal proceedings against an employer where the employee is a witness, unfair selection for redundancy, the exercise of a right to maternity, or adoptive leave, age or membership of the travelling community. The Act provides that an employee, who has been dismissed must receive the reason for dismissal in writing within 14 days from their employer.

- *Redundancy payments:* where an employee's job ceases to exist and they normally work at least 8 hours per week and they have been employed for over 104 weeks of continuous service they are entitled to paid compensation according to schemes laid out in the Redundancy Payments Acts 1967-1991.

Provisions of the following Acts may also apply to employed e-workers:
- Protection of Employment Act 1977;
- European communities (Safeguarding of Employees' rights on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 1980;
- Protection of Employees (Employers' Insolvency) Acts 1984;
- Worker Participation (State Enterprises) Acts 1977-1993;

- Industrial Relations Act 1946, amended 1969, 1976, 1990;
- Transnational Information and Consultation Act 1997.

- *Safety, health and welfare at work:* All provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and the subsequent General Application Regulations 1993 apply to home offices and to work outside the conventional office. Both employer and employee have statutory duties based on common law duties of care and all persons must consider the impact their place of work or articles used at work have on the public or visitors to the premises.

  The employer has a legal duty to ensure so far as reasonably practical, the safety, health and welfare of their employees. Employees are similarly obligated to co-operate fully with the implementation of the Act and comply with all appropriate health and safety provisions in the workplace. Employees are required to report without delay, any accidents or defects in workplace equipment that may lead to a risk or danger. Every place of work including a home office must have a Safety Statement, which can form part of the overall company safety statement. Carrying out a risk assessment of the home work station is the responsibility of the employer and may involve, by prior agreement, a home visit. The e-worker must be involved in this risk assessment. Where necessary the results must be explained to and understood by the e-worker. As conditions change the risk assessment may have to be repeated.

  The risk assessment should cover:

  - furniture: e.g. adequate space for a workstation, office chairs and tables which must be adjustable in order to comply with VDU health and safety regulations.
  - electrical safety avoiding overloading of sockets, and safely stowing cables
  - fire safety e.g. provision of fire extinguishers
  - lighting levels
  - provision of heating and ventilation

- maintenance procedures
- carrying heavy equipment
- VDU requirements - information on ergonomic posture for prolonged use of computer workstations and use of portable computers and on importance of eye sight tests for all regular VDU users
- procedures for reporting of workplace accidents
- awareness of dangers of social isolation through prolonged exclusive homeworking

Note: some companies now instruct employees not to use mobile telephones whilst driving because of the risk of accidents due to driver distraction or inability to correctly control the vehicle when hands-free sets are not in use.

Where the employees have selected a safety representative the representative should be able to visit the e-workers they represent in their home offices if appropriate e.g. to carry out independent health and safety inspections. The inspections should only be carried out by prior permission and consent of the e-worker, in accordance with the work agreement.

employment agencies

Some e-workers are classified as agency workers. Agency workers are persons who register with employment agencies, who in turn make these temporary workers available to a third party. In the past such workers were neither employees of the agency or the third party and as such were not protected by employment legislation. In recent years legislation has been implemented that protects the rights of agency workers in the same way as direct employees of a company. Agency workers now have the protection of the following pieces of employment legislation:

- Payment of Wages Act, 1991
- The Unfair Dismissals Acts. 1977 - 1993

- The Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994
- The Maternity Protection Act, 1994
- The Adoptive Leave Act, 1994
- The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997
- Parental Leave Act, 1998
- Employment Equality Act, 1998

The 'employer' in such cases is deemed to be the party who is liable to pay the agency worker. In most cases this is the agency. For the purpose of unfair dismissal the employer is deemed to be the user of the agency worker, i.e. the client company. Employment agencies must be licensed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Legislation affecting self-employed e-workers

The legislative requirements which apply to the self-employed e-worker are the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989* and *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993, the Data Protection Act 1988, and the Registration of Business Names Act 1963.* However, like all self-employed people, self-employed e-workers must also consider issues such as the form of trading they will select, and liability for taxes such as VAT. Self employed e-workers are strongly recommended to seek advice from professionals such as accountants and solicitors in relation to these matters, and to use the Enterprise Link helpline service provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 1850 353333.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and the General Application Regulations 1993

The provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and subsequent General Application Regulations 1993 apply to any place of work including those used by the self employed. Thus a self employed person has a duty under the Act to assess their own workplace for risks and prepare a safety statement, even if it is a home office and they are working alone. The Act puts a duty on the self employed to ensure that they do not put other persons who are not their employees at risk, such as other family members where homeworking is involved.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 self -employed e-workers are obliged to:

- identify hazards that may cause harm however small (such as electrical equipment which might cause an electric shock).
- decide who might be harmed and how (e.g. the homeworker, members of the household, visitors)
- assess the risks of injury (e.g. electrocution)
- take appropriate action to eliminate or reduce the identified risks

code of practice on e-working

- record the findings e.g. steps taken to reduce or eliminate risks in their safety statement

- check the risks regularly and take appropriate steps, especially if there is a change in working procedures.

The main relevant health and safety law for e-workers is the *1993 General Applications Regulations. Part VII* gives the main requirements for working with VDUs which are :

- a clear and stable screen, bright and free from glare, which should swivel and tilt easily

- adequate arrangement of keyboard characters, adjustable keyboard with sufficient space to support the hands and arms of the user

- sufficient user space to change positions and vary movements. Work desk sufficiently large, document holder adjustable and stable
- satisfactory lighting conditions

- minimised glare and reflection at the workstation, and minimisation of radiation levels

- work chair adjustable in height including the back rest

- a foot rest available if required

- environmental factors should be minimised including effects of reflection/glare, noise, heat and humidity

Part IV of the 1993 *General Application Regulation* on the use of work equipment also applies, which states that when selecting work equipment account should be taken of specific working conditions, characteristics and hazards in the place of work and that equipment must be without risk to health and safety, or that steps are taken to minimise any such risk. Work equipment must also be kept adequately maintained throughout its working life. The 1989 Act and the 1993 General Application Regulations also state that workers should be adequately

trained so that they can use their work equipment in a safe and correct manner.

Data Protection Act, 1988
Self-employed e-workers, who as part of their work, act as data controllers or data processors must be aware of their obligations

- to register under the Act,
- to ensure data are kept up to date and for lawful purposes, and
- to ensure that sufficient security measures are taken so that data are not disclosed.

Although only those involved, as the main part of their business, in processing or holding financial or personal data are required to register, all data users have a duty to safeguard data regardless of whether they are registered or not and to abide by the data protection principles set out below. Personal data is any information relating to living, identifiable individuals processed by computer.

Data Protection Principles

- Obtain and process information fairly and lawfully
- Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes
- Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
- Keep it safe and secure from unauthorised or accidental disclosure or loss
- Keep it accurate and up to date
- Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Retain it no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
- Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual on request.

Registration of Business Names Act 1963
Self-employed people or sole traders should register their business name if trading under a name other than their own under the provisions of the Registration of Business Names Act 1963. This is done by completing a simple form and paying a small fee. (See Part Three for contact details).

Forms of Trading
Persons intending to combine e-working with starting up a business need to consider the legal form of the proposed business. The options are:

- *Sole trader:* the simplest option is to become a sole trader and the only initial

formalities are to obtain an RSI number from the Revenue Commissioners should you not already have one, and to complete tax returns as appropriate.

- *Partnership:* this format is used to extend sole trader status to more than one person and normally involves the additional preparation of a written partnership agreement.

- *Limited company:* in this format the business is a separate entity from the individual, and is owned by shareholders in proportion to the number of shares held. The shareholders must meet at least once a year and appoint at least two directors to run the business. Limited companies must be registered with the Registrar of Companies and must also file an annual return including the accounts of the company with the Registrar of Companies in accordance with the Companies Acts.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Any self-employed person can become liable to VAT if their turnover exceeds £20,000 per annum for the supply of services or £40,000 per year for the supply of goods. It is also possible to opt to be registered for VAT before turnover reaches these limits which can be advantageous for some businesses. In either case a VAT registration must be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners, and VAT accounts submitted subsequently, usually on a bi-monthly basis

part three

references

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- EU Diplomat project guidelines
- EU Green Paper "Partnership for a New Organisation of Work" Telework COM(97)128
- Guides for Small Business: The Revenue Commissioners, 1996 01 878 0000
- Guide to Labour Law: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment 1999
- Guide to the Insolvency Payments Scheme: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Guide to Self Assessment System for the Self Employed IT10: The Revenue Commissioners, 1995.
- Introduction to Teleworking: Communications Workers Union 1997
- Living and Working in the Information Society: People First: European Commission Green Paper COM(97)142, April 1997.
- New Information and Communications Technologies, TUC, 1997
- Personnel policies and procedures guideline 19: Teleworking/Telecommuting, IBEC, 1998
- Starting Your Own Business: Ron Immink and Brian O'Kane, Department of Enterprise and Employment/Oaktree Press, 1997.
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- TeleFutures: Imogen Bertin and Gerard O'Neill, 1996
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- Teleworking Manuals: Telecom Eireann, 1998
- Teleworking/Telecommuting report: IBEC, 1998
- Telnet Teleworkers Code of Conduct 1994: Devon & Cornwall TEC/Cornix Teleworking Consultancy
- The Health and Safety Issues for Teleworkers in the European Union: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (WP/97/29/EN)
- The Legal and Contractual Situation of Teleworkers in the European Union: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (WP/97/28/EN)
- The Social Implications of Teleworking: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 1997 ISBN 92-828-0592-1
- The Social Security Position of Teleworkers in the European Union: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (WP/97/27/EN)
- The Teleworking Handbook (2nd Edition): Imogen Bertin and Alan Denbigh, TCA, 1998
- Trade Unions and Telework: FIET report by Andrew Bibby 1997
- Health and Safety Authority Newsletter No.94
- Newsletter March 1994. The Health and Safety of Teleworkers
- Health and Safety Authority Guidelines on:
  - Preparing your safety statement
  - Health and safety of office workers
  - Safety Consultation and Safety Representatives

contact details

- Communication Workers Union virtual branch (telework advice and support) Tel: 021 887300
- Data Protection Registrar Block 4 Irish Life Centre Dublin 1. Tel: 01 874 8544
- Employment Rights Information Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Davitt House 65A Adelaide Road, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 631 2121 and 1890 20222
- Enterprise Ireland info@e-work.ie
- Enterprise Ireland e-work helpline 1850 572000
- Enterprise Link helpline 1850 353333
- Equality Authority, Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 417 3333
- European Telework Development Project in Ireland, Cork Teleworking, Reagrove, Minane Bridge, Co. Cork. Tel: 1800 225070
- e-Work Action Forum, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Kildare St, Dublin 2. Tel: 631 2226
- Registrar of Business Names, Parnell House, 14 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 804 5200
- Rights Commissioner Service, Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01 631 6700
- Telecom Eireann Freefone 1800 666444
- Telework Ireland Association (telework advice and support) Freefone 1800 421426
- IBEC, Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2. Email erinfo@ibec.ie
- ICTU, Congress House, 19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4. Email raglan@ictu.iol.ie

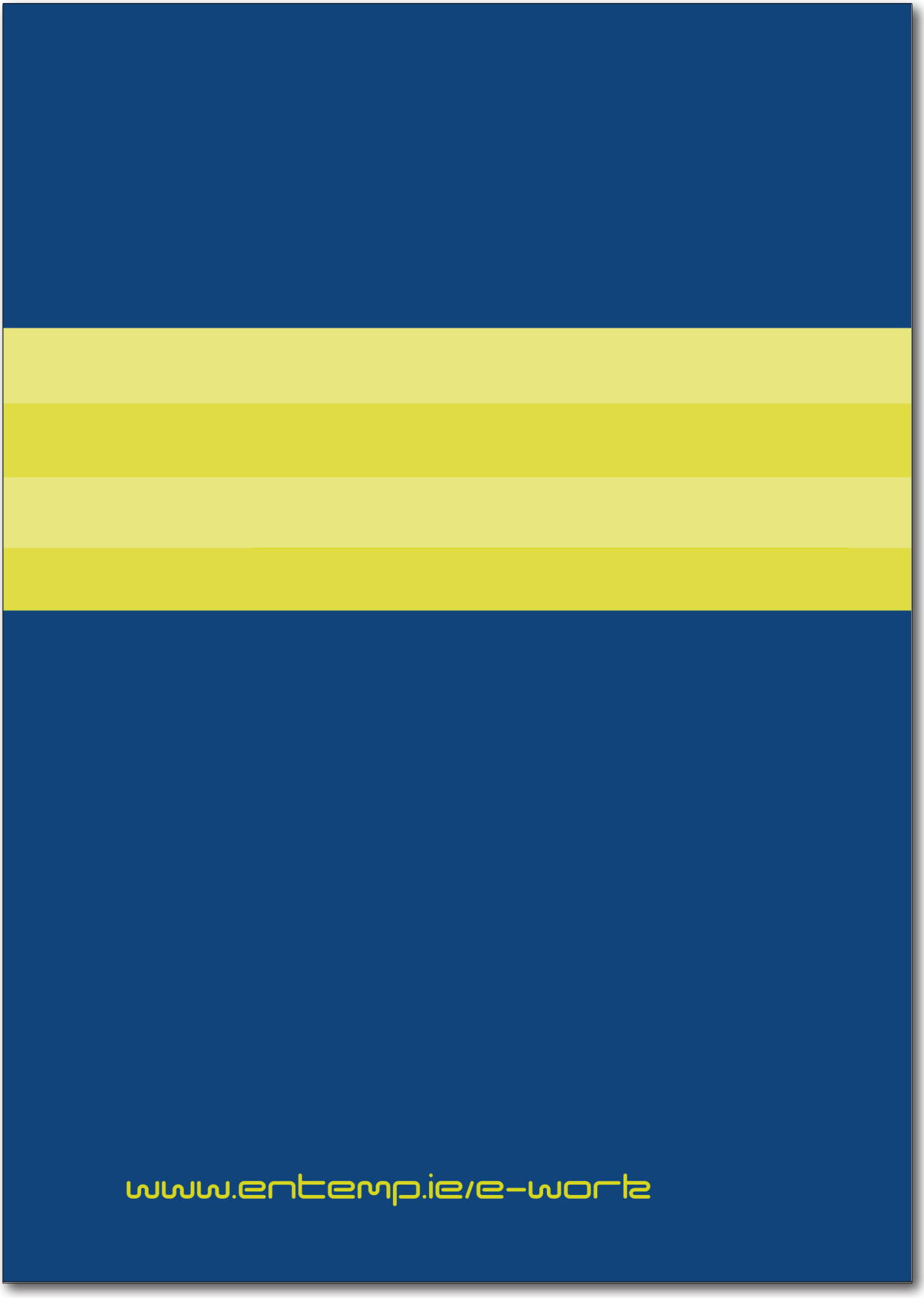
useful websites

- Andrew Bibby - telework articles <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/pens/bibby/telework.html>
- British Telecom telework reports <http://www.labs.bt.com/innovate/telework.index.htm>
- Communications Workers Union (Ireland) <http://www.cwu.ie/>
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment <http://www.entemp.ie/e-work>
- Enterprise Ireland <http://www.e-work.ie>
- European Telework Online <http://www.eto.org.uk/>
- Gil Gordon - telecommuting (USA) <http://www.gilgordon.com/>
- Herriott Watt University information and bibliography (Britain) <http://www.midnet.com/midnet/telework.htm>
- Irish Government <http://www.irlgov.ie>
- Italian teleworking information <http://www.societaitalianatelelavoro.it/>
- Labour Telematics Centre (Britain) <http://www.poptel.org.uk/>
- MIRTI European project on labour law and telework <http://www.telework-mirti.org/>
- Netherlands Telework forum <http://www.ntforum.nl/>
- Swedish distance working association <http://www.telestugan.se/sve/>
- Telecommute America! (USA) <http://www.att.com/Telecommute_America>
- Telecommuting Advisory Council (USA) <http://www.telecommute.org/>
- Telework Ireland <http://www.telework.ie/>
- The Telework, Telecottage and Telecentre Association (Britain) <http://www.tca.org.uk/>

appendix
membership of the working group

The membership of the working party on this Code of Practice was as follows:

- Paula Carey, Research Officer, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Katie Connolly, Industrial Relations Executive, IBEC
- Chris Hudson, Industrial Officer, Communications Workers Union and national coordinator for Ireland of the European Telework Development Project
- Tony Moriarty, Research Officer, Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union
- Aileen Canning, Business Development Manager with responsibility for Teleworking, Telecom Eireann
- Imogen Bertin, Manager, Cork Teleworking, co-author of the TeleFutures report and the Teleworking Handbook


www.entemp.ie/e-work

Northern Ireland Civil Service People Strategy 2013-16

Introduction by Dr Malcolm McKibbin, Head of the Civil Service

The role of the NICS is to serve the Government of the day, deliver the Executive's Programme for Government and ensure it is fit to serve future Governments efficiently and effectively.

To meet those challenging objectives we need to:

- adhere to civil service values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity;
- demonstrate strong and effective leadership;
- engage positively with Ministers and support them in the delivery of their Executive and departmental priorities;
- be politically aware and capable of working well in a devolved administration ;
- work constructively in a complex and dynamic environment;
- be professional, adaptable and innovative;
- work collaboratively across and beyond Government boundaries; and
- be committed to the delivery of customer focused and value for money services.

To deliver excellent public services we need excellent public servants. Our new People Strategy will help us deliver excellence in all we do. I commend it to you all.

MALCOLM McKIBBIN

Foreword by Colin Lewis, NICS HR Director

In my travels around departments I have personally learned from you of your tremendous work and achievements. Throughout my career, both in the private and public sectors, I have seen the Northern Ireland Civil Service consistently achieve a great deal, as you have gone about your business of serving Ministers and the public. This is due to the efforts of each and every one of you. You have much to be proud of.

As we face new challenges in delivering the Executive's priorities and improving our raft of public services, I am pleased to present this latest People Strategy. This strategy seeks to chart our route to improved business performance through developing an enhanced working experience from being a civil servant. In both these respects I see this Strategy as an important tool. Amongst its stated commitments is to achieve an empowered workforce focussed on delivering improved business results.

Simon Hamilton MLA, the Finance Minister, recently spoke of the value and the contribution we as civil servants make to the Executive. He believes we all should feel empowered to bring new ideas and better ways of working to how we do our jobs.

People Strategy 2013-2016 is the product of a rigorous self-assessment of our approach to and relationship with our people: you. It will be supported by an Annual People Plan for each of the next three years. Also it takes on board the results of the 2011 Staff Attitude survey and reflects the priorities and opinions of Permanent Secretaries, HR Directors, and Business Partners. We will consult with the Trade Unions on its delivery.

You are the key to all our future business success and it must be said that there are benefits for you also. The Strategy seeks to create the environment where we each recognise and celebrate our strengths and successes, and in which we learn and are determined to improve ourselves. Historically the Service has a strong track record in generating ideas, delivering operational services and providing value for money. So I have high hopes that this Strategy will further enable you to focus on where we can achieve improved delivery of our services today and into the future.

This is an ambitious and challenging Strategy, designed to apply to and be embraced by, everyone in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. It is also direct and to the point, focussing on our ultimate goal of improved business delivery. However I am confident that with your support and engagement as part of an empowered workforce, it will deliver all of its stated commitments.

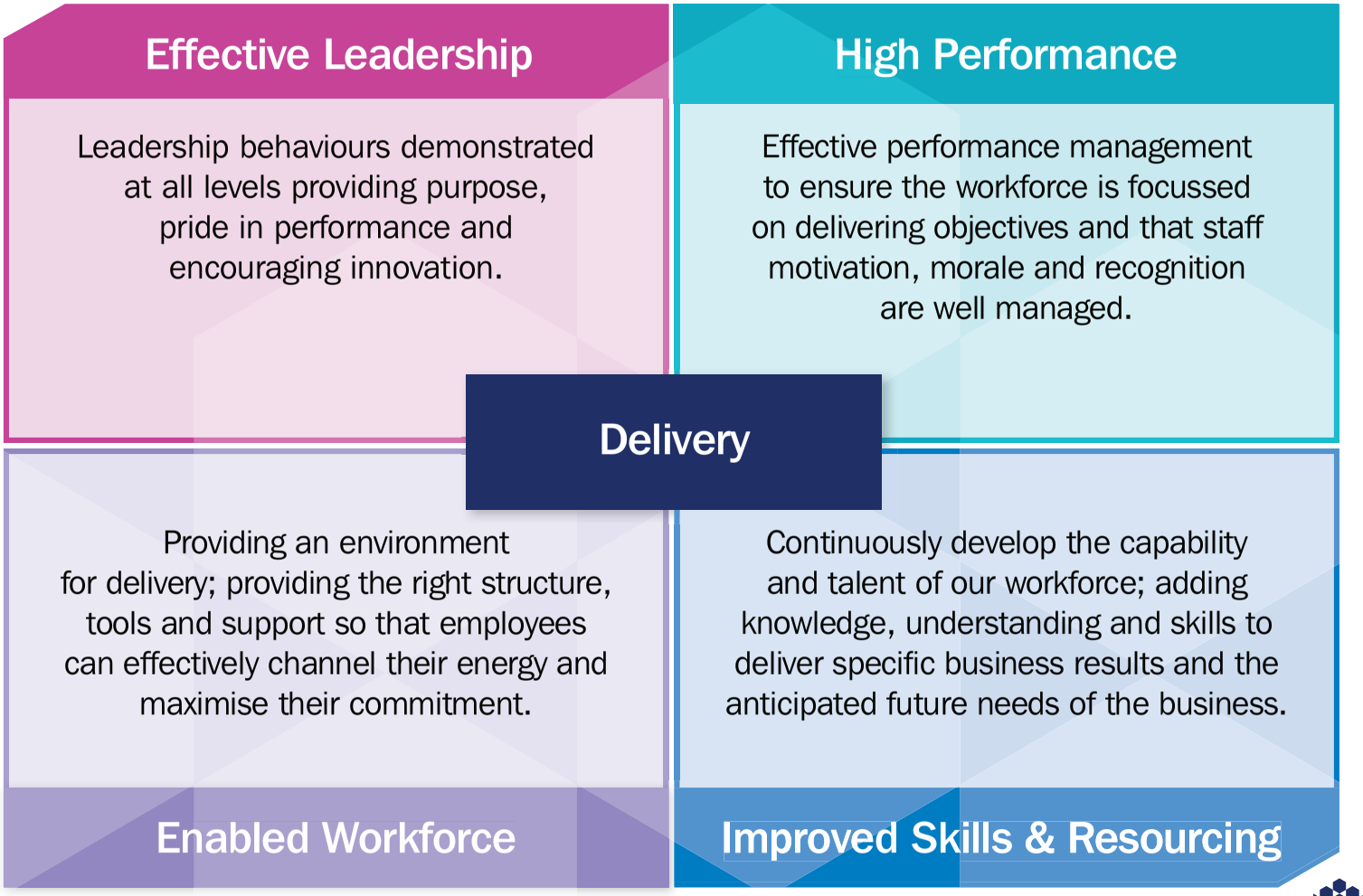
People are the heart of this organisation. Together we have the potential to deliver even better quality services to the public in Northern Ireland.

COLIN LEWIS
NICS HR Director

A strategy that:

- helps the NICS deliver better services to the public and be a more effective place to work;
- is confident of delivering its stated commitments;
- makes sense and is to the point;
- is ambitious and challenging;
- is seen to be more than an HR strategy; and,
- applies to and is embraced by everyone in the NICS.

NICS PEOPLE STRATEGY | 2013-16
High Performance
Improved Skills & Resourcing
Delivering the NI Executive's priorities through a motivated, committed and skilled workforce
Effective Leadership
Enabled Workforce
5


Effective Leadership
Leadership behaviours demonstrated at all levels providing purpose, pride in performance and encouraging innovation.
High Performance
Effective performance management to ensure the workforce is focussed on delivering objectives and that staff motivation, morale and recognition are well managed.
Delivery
Providing an environment for delivery; providing the right structure, tools and support so that employees can effectively channel their energy and maximise their commitment.
Enabled Workforce
Continuously develop the capability and talent of our workforce; adding knowledge, understanding and skills to deliver specific business results and the anticipated future needs of the business.
Improved Skills & Resourcing

Effective Leadership

For our people to be effective in their roles, we need positive leadership behaviours demonstrated at all levels. Leaders will provide a sense of purpose, commitment to delivery and pride in performance. The NICS will develop and value leaders that embody the principles of public service and are seen as role models, setting clear actions and objectives for their staff, being visible to staff across their part of the Department, taking a personal interest in developing others and maintaining the personal standards they expect of others.

Commitments	**We will:**
Direction & Purpose	1. Ensure all staff have clear output-focussed objectives linked to departmental/ divisional/branch business plans. 2. Create a plan on a page that all staff can understand. 3. Commit to share with all staff reports on progress against business plans.
Growth	1. Define and publish new behavioural competences for leaders. 2. Establish innovative approaches to leadership development including: (i) mentoring and coaching programmes; (ii) structured programmes tailored to grade and career stages; (iii) refresh and build upon the Heads of Profession network ensuring professional communities support a workforce skilled for 2016 and beyond.
Engaging with Staff	1. Ensure a personal connection between leaders and their teams through ongoing programmes to include road shows, job shadowing sessions, webcasts and online forums. 2. Lead and sponsor programmes that celebrate and value success.

High Performance

The most effective performance management is fundamental to ensuring that the workforce is focussed on delivering the NI Executive's priorities. It provides the basis for managers to agree and assess performance against clear objectives as well as providing a positive mechanism for channelling staff motivation, driving talent management, assessing and raising morale and valuing excellent work. It is critical that we are able to identify poor performance and ensure that mechanisms are in place to deal effectively with this in a timely way.

Commitments	**We will:**
Talent Development	1. Introduce mechanisms for identifying and nurturing talent, including staff movement to facilitate and support career development.
Performance Management	1. Start to change the culture around performance reviews, supporting managers in a range of relevant activities in recognising good and poor performance as well as specific training around providing feedback and handling difficult conversations. 2. Introduce a narrative-based 2 Box system for assessing performance. 3. Incentivise timely completion. 4. Introduce a more streamlined approach and process to the management of poor performance.
Recognition & Reward	1. Introduce methods of reward and recognition for high achievers and those staff that go the extra mile. 2. Devise and implement pay awards for 2014 and 2015.

Improved Skills and Resourcing

In developing the workforce for the future there is a need to manage changes in workforce roles and skills. This requires a commitment to continuously develop the capability of our people; their knowledge, understanding and skills to deliver specific business results and prepare for the anticipated future needs of the business. It also requires us to respond to the staffing related concerns of the business - not only in terms of the filling of posts with the right people with the right skill at the right time, but also the process by which staff are deployed to and released from posts as the needs of the business change over time.

Commitments	**We will:**
Knowledge & Skills	1. Support effective resourcing and focussed personal development planning by introducing a new Core Competence Framework that represents the competences, knowledge and behaviours required of the workforce. 2. Conduct a targeted skills audit across the business, exploring skills that underpin existing and known future business needs. 3. Develop solutions to close gaps which are highlighted in the skills audit. 4. Ensure divisional business plans set out people development requirements.
Internal & External Resourcing	1. Introduce new ideas to add greater pace into the recruitment, promotion and transfer processes. 2. Review entry standards for new recruits. 3. Create a model redeployment scheme to manage large scale movements of staff. 4. Identify and introduce working flexibilities that better meet future departmental business needs, cognisant of employment terms and conditions.
Innovation in Delivery	1. Augment existing capability (staff knowledge, experience and skills) through partnerships, secondments and interchanges. 2. Explore use of technology to support an agile, flexible and mobile workforce.

Enabled Workforce

To meet the demands of the NI Executive's priorities and the expectations of the public, the NICS needs to ensure that staff can make the most telling contributions. We should therefore provide a work environment which enables employees to 'go the extra mile'. An enabled workforce is one which has the right structure, tools and support so that employees can channel their energy, avoid frustrations, support each other and maximise their commitment.

Commitments	**We will:**
Engagement	1. Undertake a benchmarking activity to understand engagement techniques within other organisations. 2. Establish a forum between departments and involving staff groups to exchange ideas relating to employee engagement, including wider use of existing staff support networks.
Wellbeing	1. Encourage staff to take an active interest in their health and wellbeing and continue to promote the NICS WELL programme. 2. Look to provide a range of employer funded interventions. 3. Introduce new methods for reducing sickness absence.
Workplace	1. Create a plan to ensure staff are working in environments that are conducive to high performance. 2. Set out a 3 year plan to make the most effective use of enabling technology.

Commitments Delivery Overview (1)

	YEARS		
	2013/14	**2014/15**	**2015/16**
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP			
Direction & Purpose	Ensure all staff have clear output-focussed objectives linked to departmental/divisional/branch business plans. Create a plan on a page that all staff can understand. Commit to share with all staff reports on progress against business plans.		
Growth	Define and publish new behavioural competences for leaders. Commence work to establish innovative approaches to leadership development including: - mentoring and coaching programmes; and - structured programmes tailored to grade and career stages.	Finish work to establish innovative approaches to leadership development including: - mentoring and coaching programmes; and - structured programmes tailored to grade and career stages.	Refresh and build upon Heads of Profession network ensuring professional communities support a workforce skilled for 2016 and beyond.
Engaging with Staff	Ensure a personal connection between leaders and their teams through ongoing programmes to include road shows, job shadowing sessions, webcasts and online forums.	Lead and sponsor programmes that celebrate and value success.	

Commitments Delivery Overview (2)

	YEARS		
	2013/14	**2014/15**	**2015/16**
HIGH PERFORMANCE			
Talent Development		Introduce mechanisms for identifying and nurturing talent, including staff movement programmes.	
Performance Management	Start to change the culture around performance reviews, supporting managers in a range of relevant activities in recognising good and poor performance as well as specific training around providing feedback and handling difficult conversations. Introduce a narrative based 2 box system for assessing performance. Incentivise timely completion.	Build on the change in culture around performance reviews and introduce a more streamlined approach and process to the management of poor performance.	
Recognition & Reward	Begin to devise a pay award for 2014.	Implement a pay award for 2014. Devise a pay award for 2015. Introduce methods of reward and recognition for high achievers and those staff that go the extra mile.	Implement a pay award for 2015

Commitments Delivery Overview (3)

	YEARS		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
IMPROVED SKILLS AND RESOURCING			
Skills	Support effective resourcing and focussed personal development planning by introducing a new Core Competence Framework that represents the competences, knowledge and behaviours required of the workforce. Ensure divisional business plans set out people development requirements.	Conduct a targeted skills audit across the business, exploring skills that underpin existing and known future needs.	Develop solutions to close gaps which are highlighted in the skills audit.
Internal & External Resourcing	Introduce new ideas to add greater pace into the recruitment, promotion and transfer processes. Identify and introduce working flexibilities that better meet future departmental business needs, cognisant of employment terms and conditions.	Review entry standards for new recruits. Create a model redeployment scheme to manage large scale movements of staff. Build on and embed working flexibilities that better meet future departmental business needs, cognisant of employment terms and conditions.	
Innovation in Delivery	Augment existing capability (staff knowledge, experience and skills) through partnerships, secondments and interchanges.	Explore use of technology to support an agile, flexible and mobile workforce.	

Commitments Delivery Overview (4)

	YEARS		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
ENABLED WORKFORCE			
Engagement	Undertake a benchmarking activity to understand engagement techniques within other organisations.	Establish a forum between departments and involving staff groups to exchange ideas relating to employee engagement including wider use of existing staff support networks.	
Wellbeing	Encourage staff to take an active interest in their health and wellbeing and continue to promote the NICS WELL programme. Identify and start to introduce new methods for reducing sickness absence.	Look to provide a range of employer funded interventions. Further develop and embed new methods for reducing sickness absence.	
Workplace	Set out a 3 year plan to make the most effective use of enabling technology.	Create a plan to ensure staff are working in environments that are conducive to high performance.	

Strategy Outcomes

	OVERALL CONTRIBUTION The People Strategy will contribute to delivery of the NI Executive's priorities through focussing on developing a high performing workforce.
1.	**Measures will be established for each delivery project**
2.	**HIGH LEVEL INDICATORS** **Effective Leadership** • Confidence in line management increased. • Increase staff satisfaction with senior management. **High Performance** • 95% of Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and Personal Performance Agreements (PPAs) and End of Year Reviews completed on time. **Enabled Workforce** • Staff satisfaction score increased. • Sickness absence reduced in line with Ministerial Targets, 8.5 days by March 2015. • Employee engagement index improved. **Improved Skills & Resourcing** • Staff satisfaction with learning and development increased. • Line Management satisfaction with learning and development increased. The People Strategy will seek to ensure a 10% improvement in baseline scores for each indicator from the 2011 Staff Survey by March 2016.

Glossary

This glossary provides a description of some of the terms used in the NICS People Strategy.

Annual People Plan - the document setting out in detail how we will deliver over the current business planning year on the commitments and actions identified under the NICS People Strategy.

Benchmarking - the process of gathering information about other organisations to compare against your own organisation and use that information to identify improvements in performance.

Core Competence Framework - the framework that sets out the core competences and personal behaviours expected of staff in grades from Administrative Assistant to Grade 6 (and analogous). It is designed to provide a foundation on which to build key corporate and Departmental HR processes such as recruitment, training & development, performance management and promotion.

Enabling technology - technology that allows someone to perform a task or to improve his or her overall performance.

Engagement techniques - ways of establishing meaningful contact or connection with others.

Heads of Profession network - a network made up of people appointed to the role of Head of Profession for one of the 24 professional groupings recognised within the NICS. The purpose of the network is to build capacity and capability across the NICS by providing a forum for Heads of Profession to engage with one another and also a mechanism for Corporate HR (DFP) and departmental HR Directors to engage with professions on common issues.

NICS WELL - the multi-level health and wellbeing programme for the NICS.

Redeployment - in the NICS, redeployment means the movement of staff in a surplus situation to other suitable posts within the same, or in some cases another, department.

Resourcing - in the NICS, resourcing means ensuring we have the right numbers of staff with the right skills and abilities to achieve our business objectives.

Skills audit - a process used to identify the skill gaps in an organisation. The outcome informs a training needs analysis that identifies where development and training is needed.

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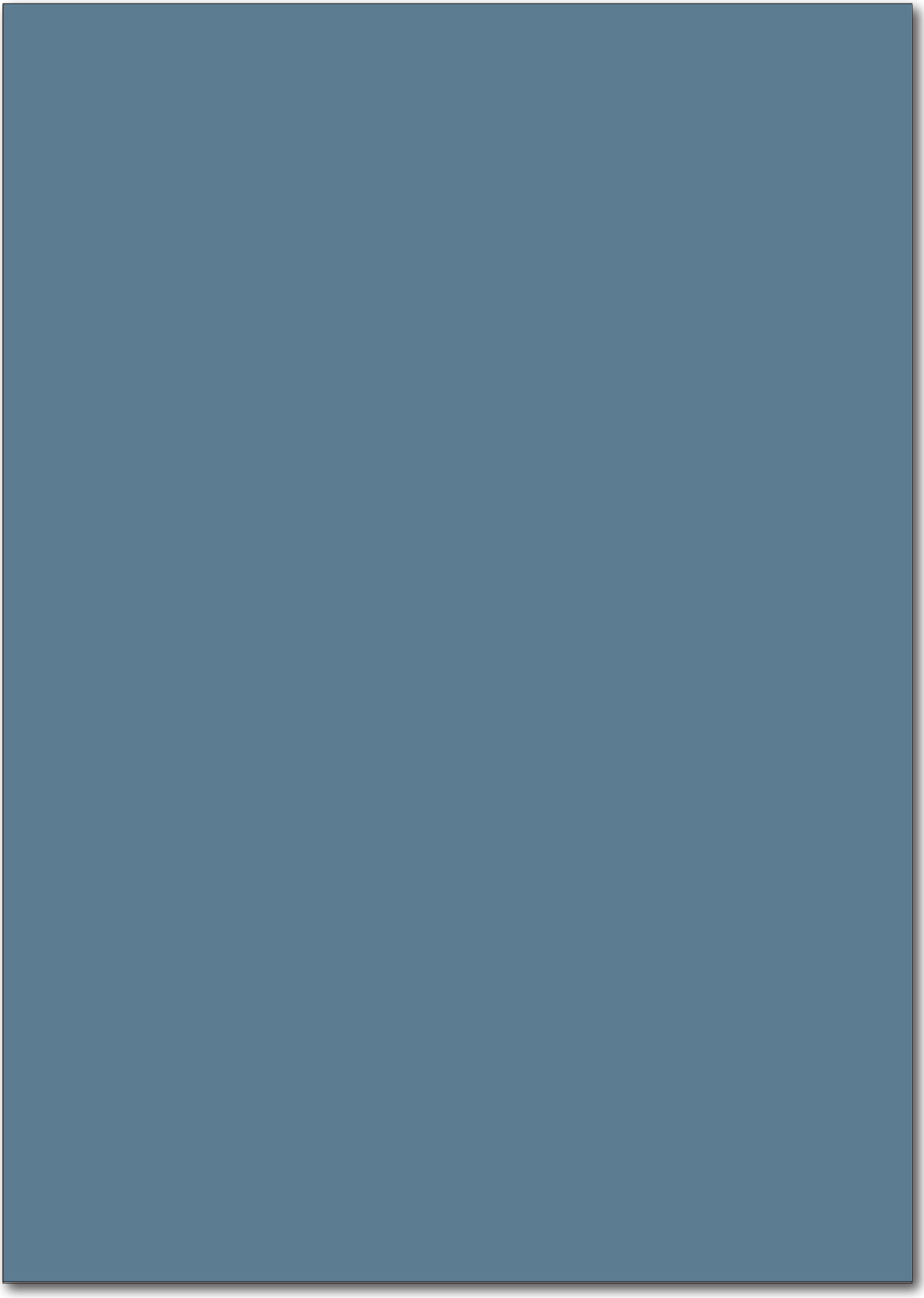
Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL
23 April 2013



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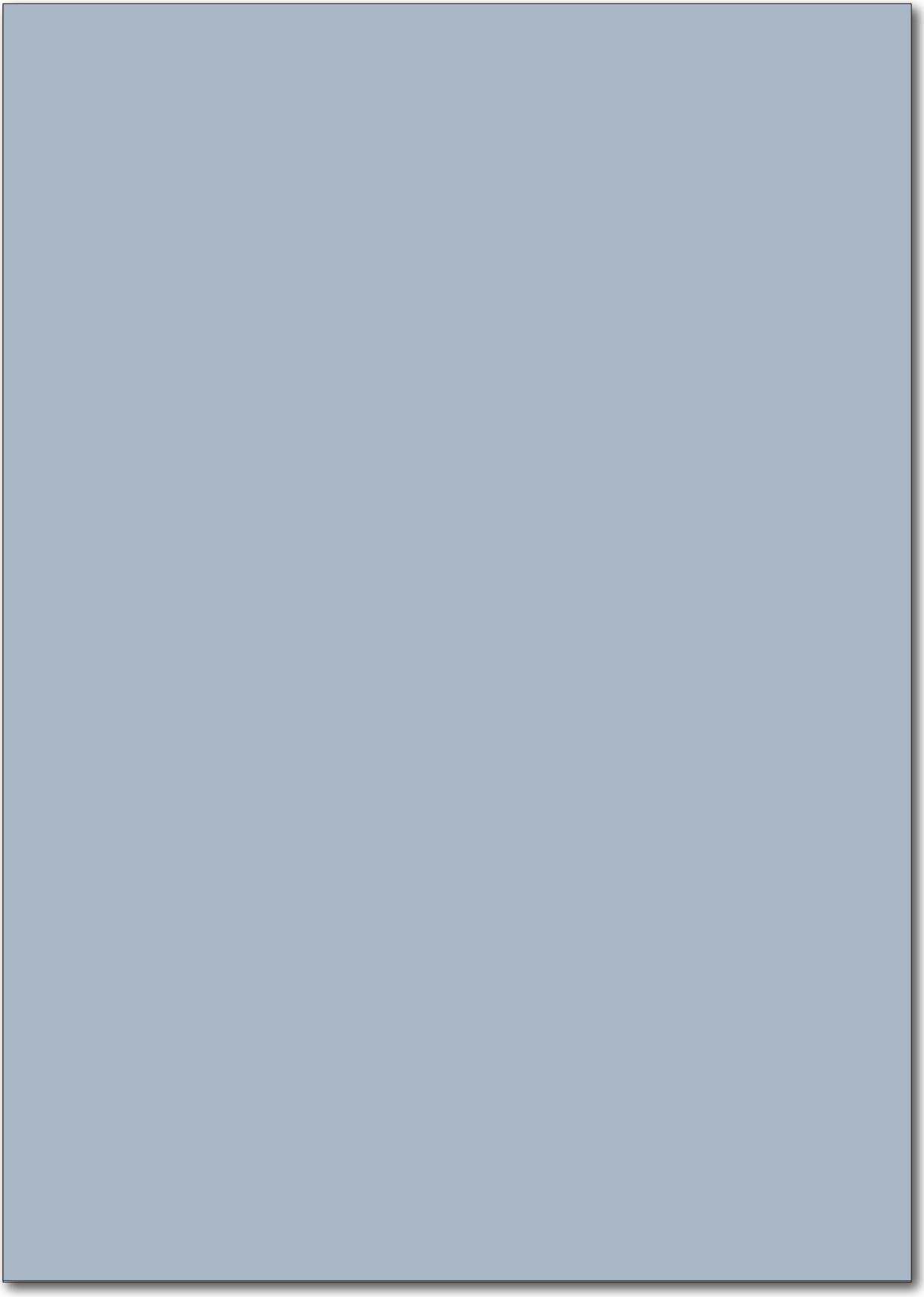
Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector

Published 23 April 2013



This report has been prepared under Article 8 of the Audit (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 for presentation to the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with Article 11 of that Order.

K J Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office
23 April 2013

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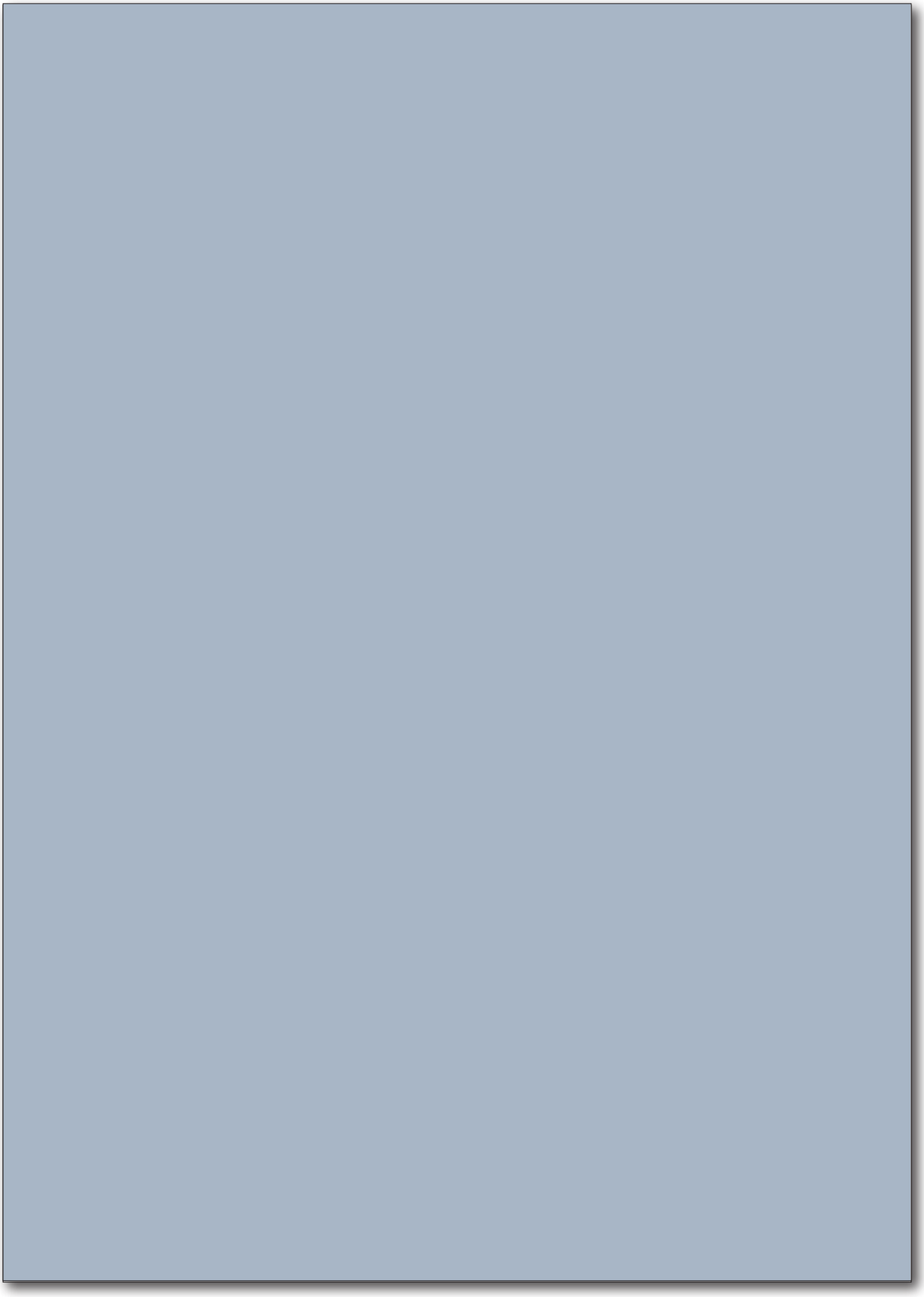

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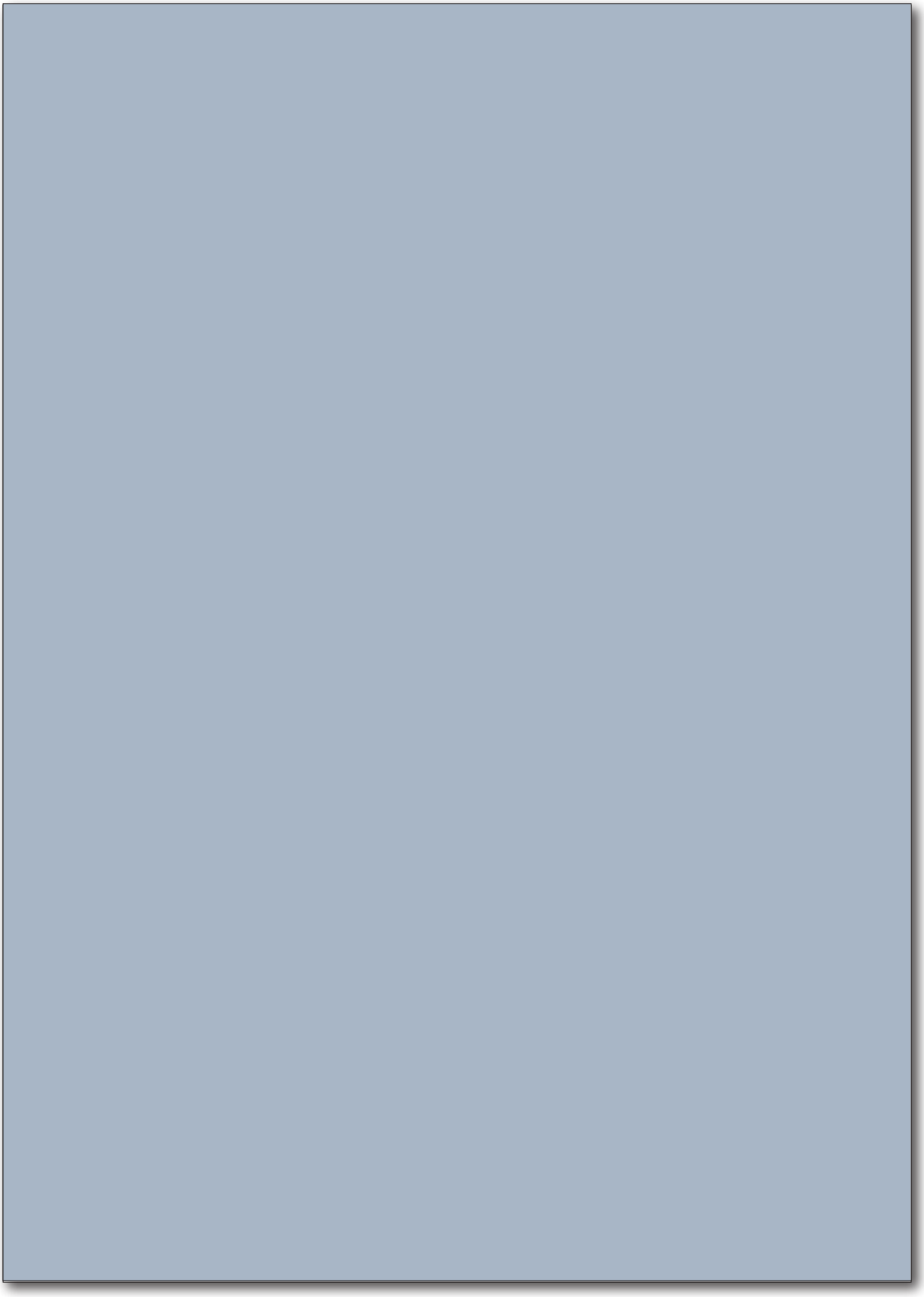
Abbreviations

BELB	Belfast Education and Library Board
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DOE	Department of the Environment
DOJ	Department of Justice
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
ELB	Education and Library Board
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated
HR	Human Resource
HRMS	Human Resource Management System
NEELB	North Eastern Education and Library Board
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
SEELB	South Eastern Education and Library Board
SELB	Southern Education and Library Board
WELB	Western Education and Library Board



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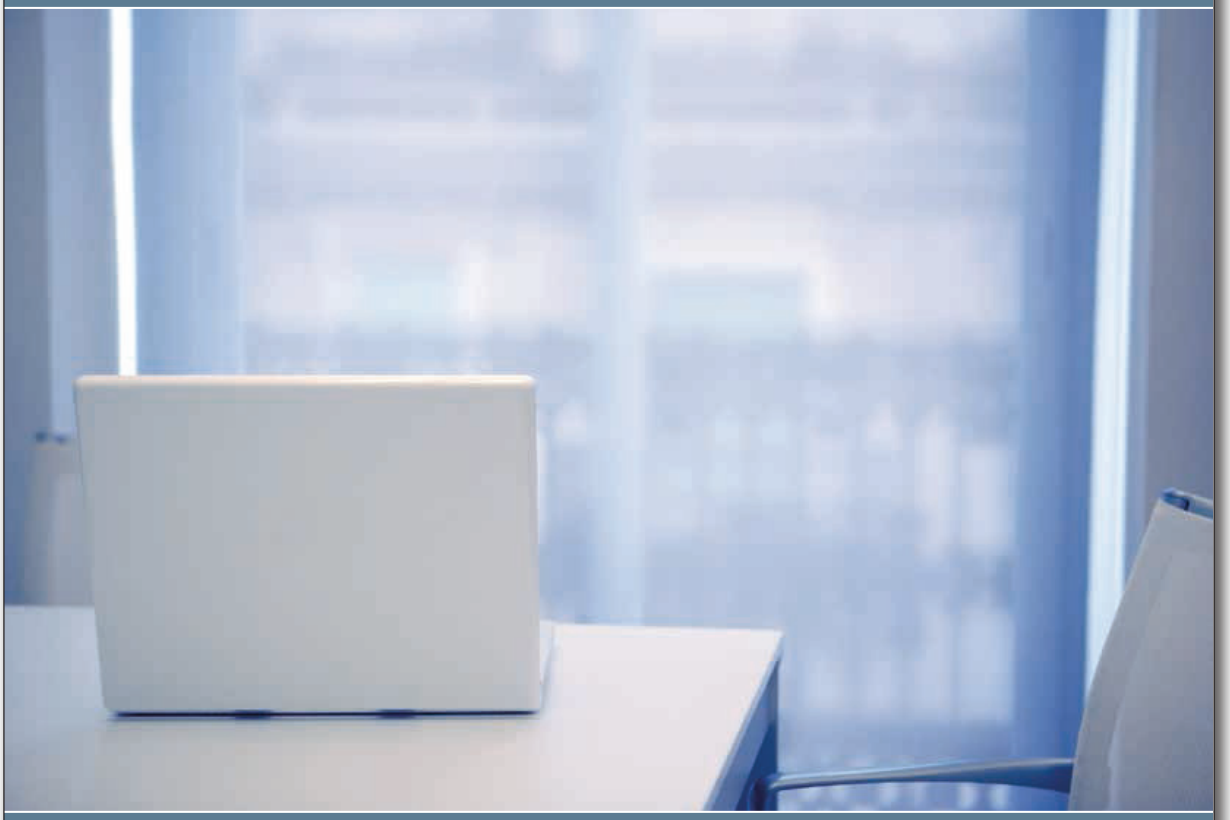
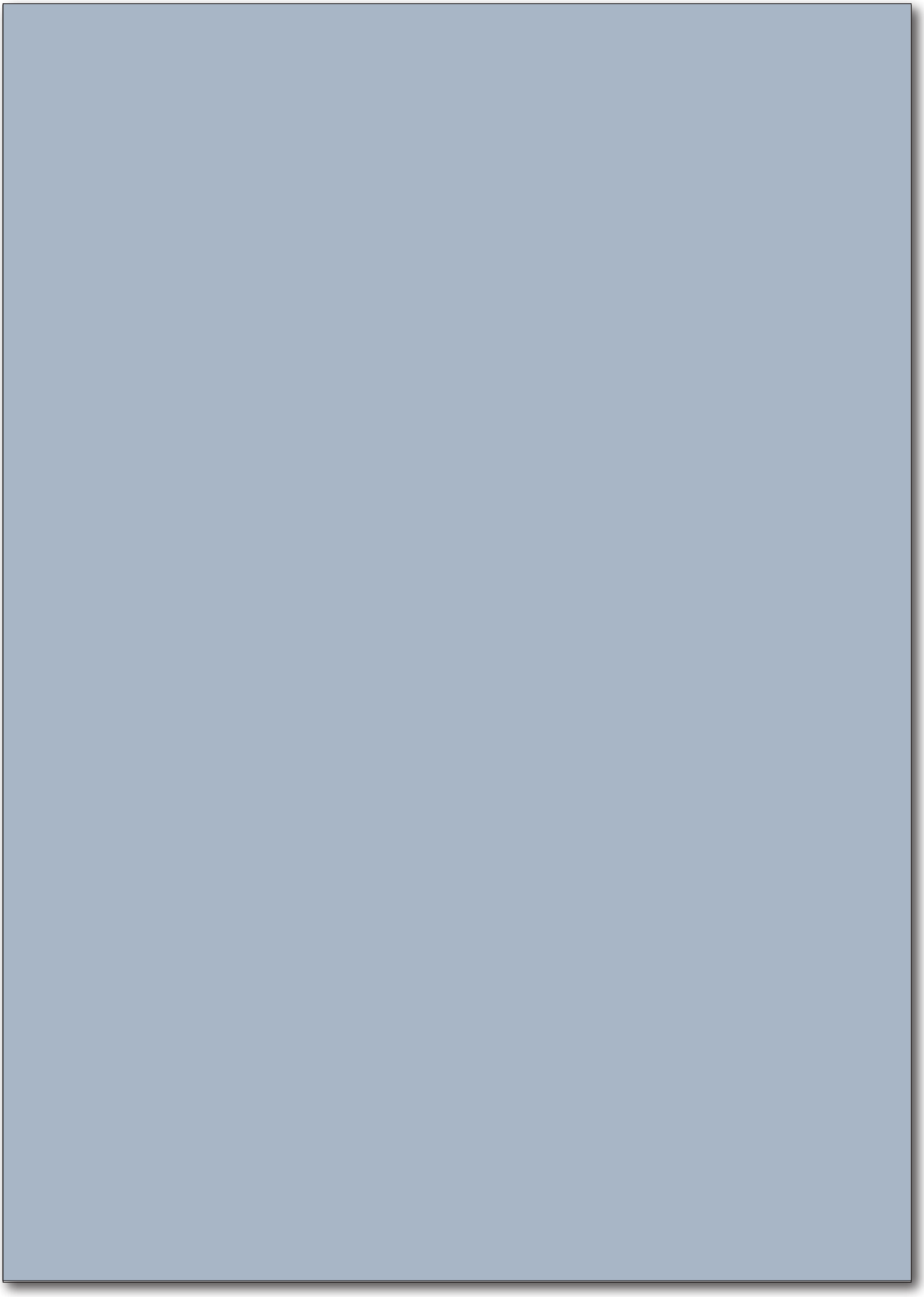




Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland public sector employs over 200,000 people, representing around 30 per cent of the total labour force. The health and wellbeing of the workforce is crucial to the effective delivery of public services. Staff sickness absence reduces productivity, affects service delivery, and has a considerable financial cost.

2. The environment in which public sector bodies currently operate is characterised by increasing pressure on limited resources. There is considerable pressure to achieve efficiencies in order to maximise the effectiveness of available resources. Given the impact of sickness absence on service delivery, it is essential that absence levels across the public sector are properly managed and monitored.

NIAO and PAC have reported previously on absence management

3. In 2008, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) reported on the management of sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)[1]. This identified the level of, and key trends in, sickness absence associated with non-industrial staff across the NICS and within the then 11 government departments.

4. Our report noted that the level of sickness absence in the NICS at 2006-07 (13.7 days per staff year) was significantly higher than that experienced in Great Britain (9.3 days). With the cost of sickness absence for 2006-07 estimated at £25.6 million, the report identified considerable scope for savings should absence levels be reduced towards levels in Great Britain. Some of these savings would be in the form of efficiency and productivity gains and not all would necessarily be cash-releasing.

5. Our 2010 report on the management of substitution cover for teachers[2] identified average sickness levels for 2008-09 of 7.8 days, with associated costs of £15.8 million and additional substitution cover costs of £11 million. Sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland schools were similar to those in Scotland and Wales, but substantially higher than those in England. If teacher sickness absence in Northern Ireland was reduced to the level in England, the report estimated that savings of around £5.7 million in teacher pay costs and an additional £4 million in the cost of teacher substitution could be achieved.

6. Both reports found that good data systems are an essential component in the successful management of sickness absence. Such data systems allow managers to identify patterns of absences in order to understand and respond to the factors influencing them.

1 Management of Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NIA 132/07-08), 22 May 2008; and Managing Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (Report 38/07/08R), 26 June 2008

2 The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report, 26 May 2010

Executive Summary

7. We have also previously reported on sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland Councils with the most recent report for the year 2009-10[3].

Scope of the report

8. This report provides an overview of sickness absence levels across the three main areas of the Northern Ireland public sector - that is NICS, health and education sectors. In doing so it provides an update to our 2008 report and extends coverage to health and education, thereby covering approximately 75 per cent of all public sector employees. It presents available statistics and an understanding of what information bodies in the three sectors monitor.

- **Part One** provides an update on the sickness absence position in the NICS;
- **Part Two** provides an overview of sickness absence across Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland; and
- **Part Three** provides an overview of sickness absence in education authorities in Northern Ireland.

9. We did not assess the appropriateness of the policies established by the various bodies, nor review the effectiveness of the support arrangements or interventions applied by those bodies in managing sickness absence.

10. The study involved the collection and analysis of sickness absence data on the NICS, the six Health and Social Care Trusts (Trusts) and the six education authorities (five Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools). It also involved discussions with the Departments with overall responsibility for the three sectors, and interviews with staff responsible for the monitoring and management of sickness absence in Departments, Trusts and education authorities.

Main findings

11. The trend in sickness absence across the three areas is generally downwards. Analysis of data identifies varying levels of sickness absence between and within the sectors. High level, direct comparison between sectors is not always appropriate because of the different composition of the workforces, different measures applied within each of the sectors and the difference in the nature of work undertaken in each sector and the patterns of work (for example, shift work is more prevalent in the health sector). Care should therefore be taken in making such comparisons (**Figure 1**).

3 Absenteeism in Northern Ireland Councils 2009-10, November 2010

Figure 1: Sickness absence rates in the NICS, Trusts and education authorities (2010-11)

	Teachers in Education Authorities[1]	Non-teaching staff in Education Authorities[2]	NICS[3]	Health Trusts[4]
Sickness absence (number of days per permanent teacher)	7.27 days			
Sickness absence (number of days per staff year)		Not available	10.7 days	
Sickness absence (days lost as a percentage of working days available)		Not available	4.9%	5.5%

Source: Department of Education (for teachers), Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (for NICS) and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (for Trusts)

Notes:

1. Teachers - the measure applied in relation to teachers is the number of days lost per permanent teacher (based on a headcount at October of the relevant financial year). The figure has been adjusted to take account of the different number of days worked by teachers each year compared with staff in the NICS.
2. Non-teachers - overall absence rates for the sector are not available for non-teaching staff employed by education authorities.
3. NICS - the measure applied across the NICS is average days lost per staff year. NICS also produces an alternative measure in terms of the percentage of available working days lost.
4. Health - the measure used in the health sector is the percentage of available working days lost.

12. Sickness levels among teachers in Northern Ireland are lower than those for NICS staff and levels of absence in Trusts are higher than in the NICS. In all areas where comparison was possible, sickness absence levels are higher than those elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The difference between absence levels for civil servants in Northern Ireland and those in Great Britain has reduced since 2006-07. Similarly, the gap between teachers' sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland and those in England is also reducing.

13. The levels of absence in the Northern Ireland public sector represent a significant overall cost. We estimate the cost of absence in the three areas covered in this report at over £148 million in 2010-11 (**Figure 2**). Consequently, there is considerable scope for efficiency savings through further reduction in absence levels, particularly if the levels fell to those in Great Britain.

Executive Summary

Figure 2: Estimated cost of sickness absence in the NICS, Trusts and education authorities (2010-11)

	NICS	Health Trusts	Education Authorities		Total
			Teachers	Non-teachers	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Sickness absence	30.0	72.9	16.0	17.8	**136.7**
Additional teacher substitution			11.9		**11.9**
Total	**30.0**	**72.9**	**27.9**	**17.8**	**148.6**

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (for NICS), Department of Education (for teachers) and NIAO (for Trusts and non-teachers)

14. Long-term sickness accounts for the majority of overall sickness absence in all sectors. There has been insufficient progress within NICS to meet targets for reducing the levels of long-term sickness absence. Long-term sickness is also identified as a significant problem within Trusts and as a material factor for teaching and non-teaching staff within education authorities.

15. Mental health issues are recognised as the main cause of sickness absence across all the sectors and its long-term nature also has a significant impact on overall sickness absence levels. Musculo-skeletal problems are also a particular issue within Trusts.

16. Absence reduction targets have been set in all sectors. In the NICS, targets reflect both overall and specific aspects, such as long-term absence, and are set at a sector and departmental level. However, within Trusts, targets are limited to the overall level. In education authorities, targets have been set only for teachers. No targets are in place for non-teaching staff or the workforce overall.

17. Performance against targets has been variable:

- NICS did not achieve its 5-year target to reduce overall absence to 9.5 days by 2009-10, nor its related targets in relation to long-term sickness absence. In 2009-10:
  - overall absence had fallen to 11.0 days; and
  - for long-term absence, the frequency rate (average number of long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage) was 10.9 per cent against a target of 9.8 per cent and the average duration 62.8 days against a target of 42.2 days.

- two of the five Trusts which had targets (5.2 per cent of working days lost) failed to meet these for 2010-11; the ambulance service has not achieved its target of 6.85 per cent of working days lost for 2011-12; and

- education authorities failed to meet the teacher sickness absence target of 6 days for 2010-11 and 2011-12.

18. The NICS reports on a comprehensive range of sickness absence data. However, there are limitations in the information systems for management and reporting of sickness absence in the education and health sectors. In both sectors, there is a need to improve the standard of information on sickness absence which will enable managers to identify patterns of absence in order to understand and respond to the factors that influence them. This is particularly relevant to non-teaching staff within the education sector. However, in both sectors there are opportunities to improve the quality and analysis of sickness absence data with the introduction of new systems. For example, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) told us that one of the key objectives of a new regional Human Resource (HR) system is the improvement of management of sickness absence through better information being available to frontline managers in real time.

Summary of key recommendations

The report makes a number of recommendations:

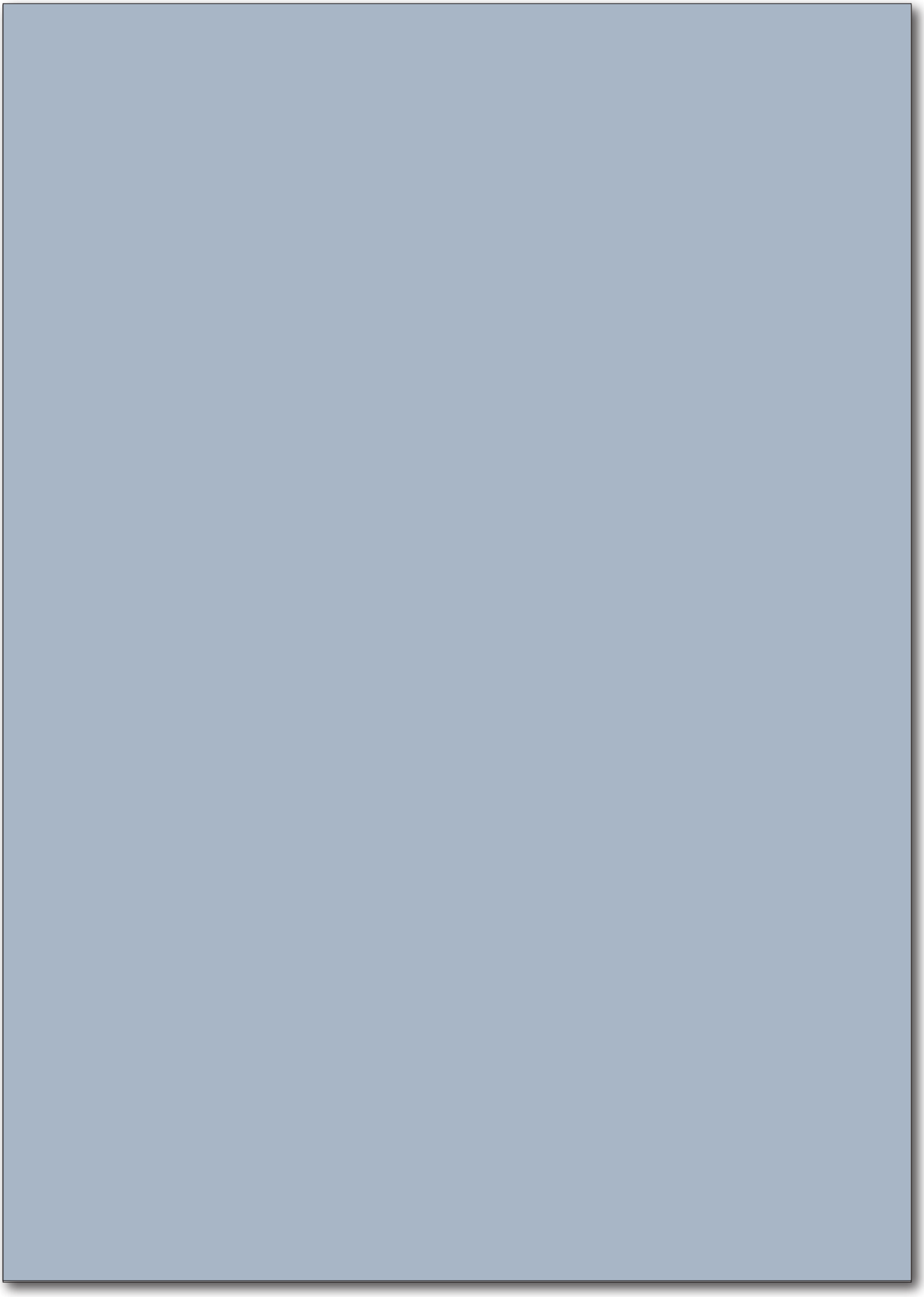
- Particular attention needs to be focused on reducing long-term sickness absence levels, as a result of its significant impact on overall sickness absence levels (**paragraphs 1.37 and 2.24**);

- Targets for sickness absence should be reintroduced in Trusts, and include specific targets for long-term sickness absence levels (**paragraph 2.32**);

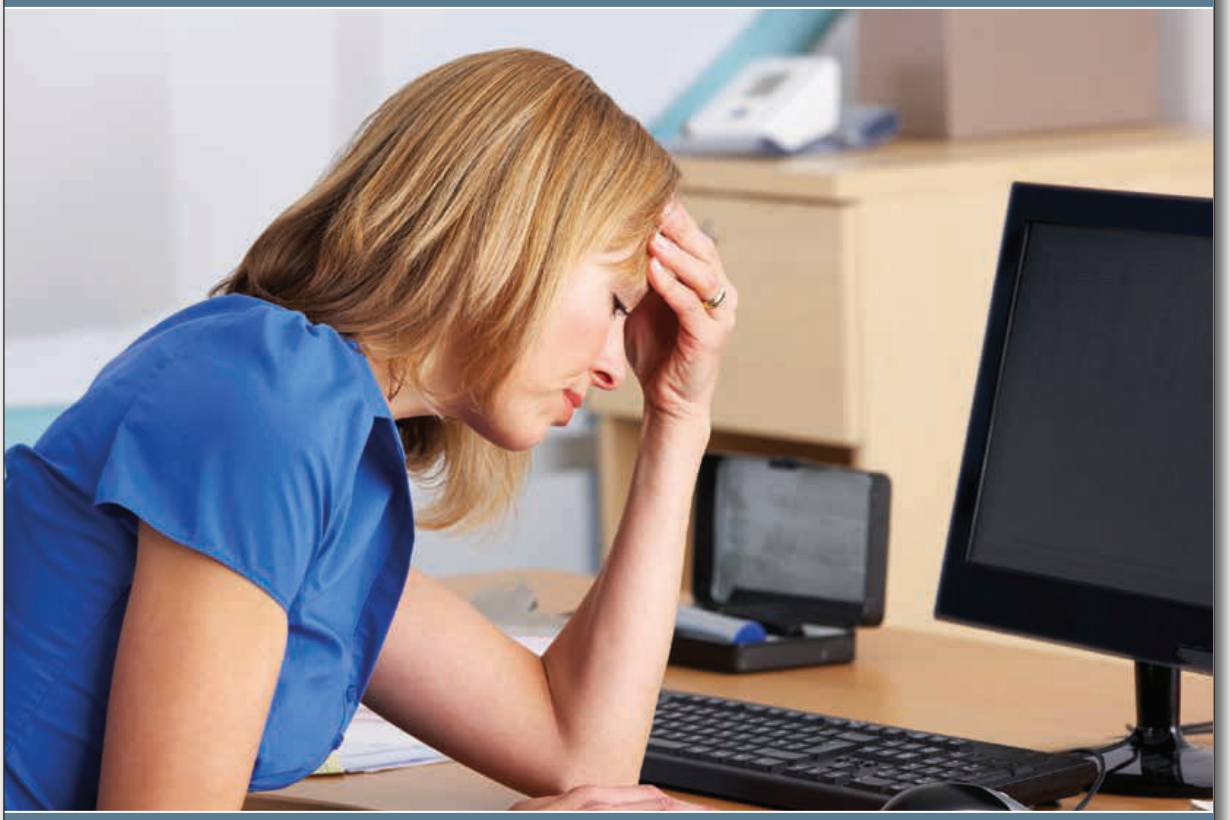
- Targets within the education sector should be extended to include overall sickness absence levels, sickness levels for non-teaching staff and long-term sickness levels (**paragraphs 3.9 and 3.31**);

- The information systems for measuring and reporting on sickness absence performance must be sound and fit for purpose. In order to address limitations in management information in the health and education sectors, we recommend that statisticians and other relevant specialists are involved in the development and specification of targets, setting up systems which capture and analyse relevant data and ensuring high quality management information is produced (**paragraphs 2.5 and 3.31**); and

- In the health and education sectors, there is scope to improve information to help the management of sickness absence. Sickness absence data should be analysed to provide information on the level of long-term sickness, the main causes of absence and their duration, and the gender, age and grade profile of sickness absence (**paragraphs 2.5 and 3.9**).



Part One:
Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service



Part One:
Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Sickness absence is costly and impacts on service delivery

1.1 The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) employs around 27,000 staff (equivalent to 25,000 full-time employees), and has associated staff costs of approximately £850 million per year.

1.2 In May 2008, we reported on the management of sickness absence in the NICS[4], examining absence levels and the effectiveness of action taken to reduce them. Our main findings included:

- in 2006-07, average absence was 13.7 days per staff year, significantly higher than for the civil service in Great Britain (9.3 days);
- the estimated cost of NICS absence in 2006-07 was £25.6 million; this included direct salary costs alone and did not take account of additional costs such as overtime, replacement staff, the cost of managing absence and lost productivity;
- absence levels varied across the 11 NICS departments – from 9.2 days in the Department for Regional Development to 18.7 days in the Department for Social Development;
- long-term absence[5] accounted for almost 70 per cent of the total working days lost in 2006-07;
- psychiatric/psychological illness was the main cause of absence in the NICS, with 29 per cent of total working days lost attributed to this; and
- absence levels for female staff in the NICS (17.7 days in 2006-07) were considerably higher than for male staff (9.8 days) and for female civil servants in Great Britain (10.7 days).

The average level of sickness absence has been reducing in recent years

1.3 The NICS produces a comprehensive range of sickness absence data. Data is obtained from HR Connect, which is the primary human resource system in the NICS, and human resource systems in the Department of Justice (DOJ). The data from the systems is combined and analysed independently by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Absence reports and analyses are provided monthly to individual departments and the Department of Finance and Personnel's Corporate HR in its overarching NICS-wide role. NISRA publishes a detailed annual report of official statistics on absenteeism in the NICS; the report is submitted to all Departmental Ministers and the Public Accounts Committee.

4 Management of Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NIA 132/07-08), 22 May 2008
5 Long-term absence in the NICS is defined as an absence which lasts for longer than 20 consecutive working days

1.4 Reported data shows that the trend in sickness absence in the NICS is generally downward. In recent years, overall levels have reduced from the 2006-07 average level of 13.7 days to 10.7 days in 2010-11 and 10.1 days in 2011-12, representing 4.9 per cent and 4.6 per cent of available working days in 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively (**Figure 3**).

1.5 Whilst this reduction is welcome, it is also important to note that:

- it was not sufficient to achieve the 5-year target to reduce overall average absence to 9.5 days by 2009-10 (**paragraph 1.26**); and
- the NICS average absence level of 10.1 days in 2011-12 remains higher than the Great Britain civil service level of 7.6 days [6], which represented the lowest level recorded since 1999 (**paragraph 1.25**).

1.6 The reduction in sickness absence rate in 2008-09 coincided with the introduction of HR Connect, the new NICS human resources management system. NISRA has identified evidence that the move to the new system was associated with some under-recording of sickness absences, characterised in particular by a marked increase in the proportion of staff with no recorded spells of absence. However, NISRA reported that its quality assurance checks on absence data revealed that while there was some evidence of under-recording associated with the move to the new pay and absence management system, there was, nevertheless, a real and substantial decrease in absence levels.

1.7 In 2010-11, data for industrial staff were incorporated for the first time in the absence statistics. While the average sickness absence levels for these staff lie at the upper end of the spectrum (11.8 and 12 days per staff year in 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively), the number of such staff is relatively small and the inclusion of the data does not impact materially on overall levels.

6 www.civilservice.gov.uk

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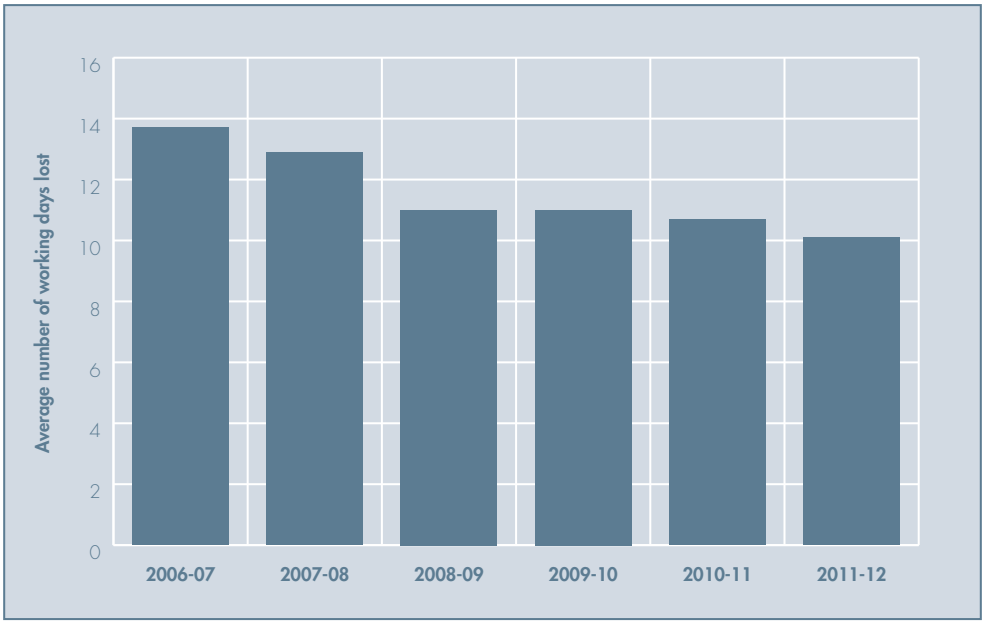
Figure 3: NICS average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per staff year 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: NISRA

Sickness absence in the NICS costs over £25 million per year

1.8 The estimated cost of sickness absence in the NICS for 2006-07 was £25.6 million (**paragraph 1.2**). The estimated cost reduced in 2007-08 but, despite falling levels of absence, has increased to £28.6 million in 2011-12. Between 2007-08 and 2011-12 overall costs amounted to £127 million (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: Annual cost of NICS sickness absence 2007-08 to 2011-12

Year	Cost of sickness absence (salary costs) (£ million)
2007-08	24.5
2008-09	21.0
2009-10	22.9
2010-11	30.0
2011-12	28.6
Total	**127.0**

Source: NISRA

1.9 The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has commented that the increase in costs since 2009-10 resulted from two specific factors:

- an equal pay settlement within the NICS in 2009-10, which resulted in substantial pay increases for junior clerical staff who traditionally have higher levels of sickness absence[7],and
- the inclusion of the DOJ (including prison grade staff) and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), together with the incorporation of industrial staff within the data for 2010-11[7]. If the costs of these additional staff are excluded, estimated costs for 2010-11 would have been £21.9 million.

1.10 The estimates of NICS sickness absence costs are based on direct salary costs alone and do not take account of associated costs including overtime and replacement staff (**paragraph 1.2**). In 1998, the Cabinet Office[9] estimated that the true cost of absence could be closer to twice the direct salary cost. However, this research is now somewhat dated. DFP told us that it had not carried out any research more recently to measure the full cost of NICS sickness absence.

There are variances in the levels and causes of sickness absence across the NICS

1.11 Our 2008 report highlighted a number of issues which impacted on overall NICS sickness absence levels:

- a significant variation in absence levels across the 11 NICS departments;
- long-term absence, which accounted for almost 70 per cent of total working days lost in 2006-07;
- psychiatric/psychological illness, with 29 per cent of total days lost in 2006-07, was the main cause of absence;
- NICS female absence levels were almost twice that of both NICS males and females in the civil service in Great Britain; and
- high absence levels amongst junior grades, most significantly Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant and Executive Officer II.

Absence within individual NICS departments

1.12 In 2006-07, the Department for Social Development (DSD) had the highest average number of days absence (18.7 days), whilst the Department for Regional Development (DRD) had the lowest (9.2 days). The high level of absence in

7 NISRA has stated that the median pay for Administrative Assistant and Administrative Officer grade staff increased by 11.6 per cent in 2009-10

8 DFP has stated that this represented the inclusion of an additional 5,500 staff years to the total NICS staff years in 2010-11

9 Working Well Together: Managing Attendance in the Public Sector, Cabinet Office, June 1998

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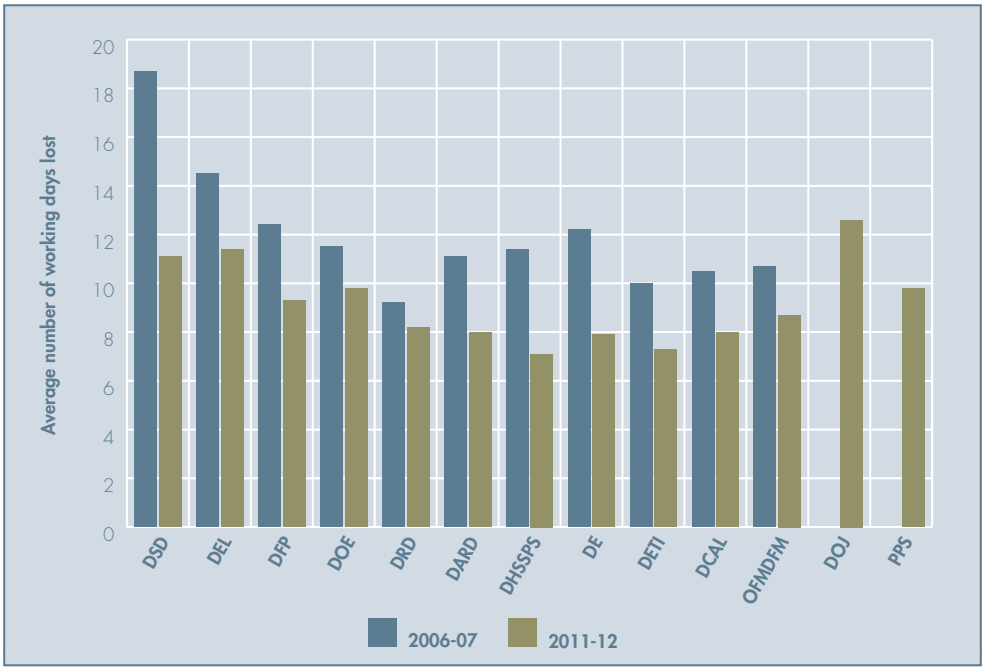
DSD, together with its large workforce of around 9,000 staff - almost one-third of total NICS staff - meant that it accounted for over 40 per cent of all working days lost. Indeed, four departments (DSD, DFP, Department of the Environment (DOE) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)) accounted for almost 75 per cent of sickness absences.

1.13 Absence levels have improved in all 11 NICS departments since 2006-07. Comparative data is not available for DOJ and the PPS; however, absence levels for these Departments for 2011-12 lie at the upper end of the departmental spectrum at 12.6 and 9.8 days respectively (**Figure 5**).

1.14 The level of improvement has not been uniform across departments, ranging from an 11 per cent reduction in the absence rate in DRD to a 41 per cent reduction in DSD. Despite the improvements, there remains a significant, though reducing, variation in departmental sickness absence rates. DSD has achieved a reduction from 18.7 days to 11.1 days and is no longer the poorest performing department with DOJ now having the highest level of absence. NISRA has indicated that the reductions achieved in the largest departments (DSD, DFP, DOE and DARD) have driven the downward trend in overall NICS levels.

Figure 5: Average days lost due to sickness absence per staff year by NICS department 2006-07 and 2011-12



Source: NISRA

1.15 NISRA has identified the staffing profiles of individual departments as a contributory factor to their differing levels of absence. This is particularly relevant to DSD which has high numbers of female staff and clerical grades, both of which have traditionally had high absence levels (**paragraphs 1.20 and 1.23**). NISRA has adjusted the data for these factors and calculated departmental absence rates which are standardised against the staffing profile of the NICS as a whole - a calculation of what each department's absence rate would be if it had the same age, gender and grade make-up as the NICS as a whole. With these adjustments, the poorest performing department in 2011-12 was DFP, with a standardised average sickness absence level of 10.0 days per staff year. The gap between it and the department with the lowest standardised sickness absence rate (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)) is 3.9 days (**Figure 6**). Staffing profile, however, explains only part of the overall variance in sickness absence rates across departments.

Figure 6: Actual and standardised sickness absence levels by NICS department 2011-12

Department	Actual average days lost 2011-12	Standardised days lost 2011-12
DFP	9.3	10.0
DOE	9.8	9.7
DE	7.9	9.5
DOJ	12.6	9.0
DEL	11.4	9.0
DSD	11.1	8.9
OFMDFM	8.7	8.1
DRD	8.2	7.8
DARD	8.0	7.7
PPS	9.8	7.5
DETI	7.3	7.3
DHSSPS	7.1	6.8
DCAL	8.0	6.1

Source: NISRA

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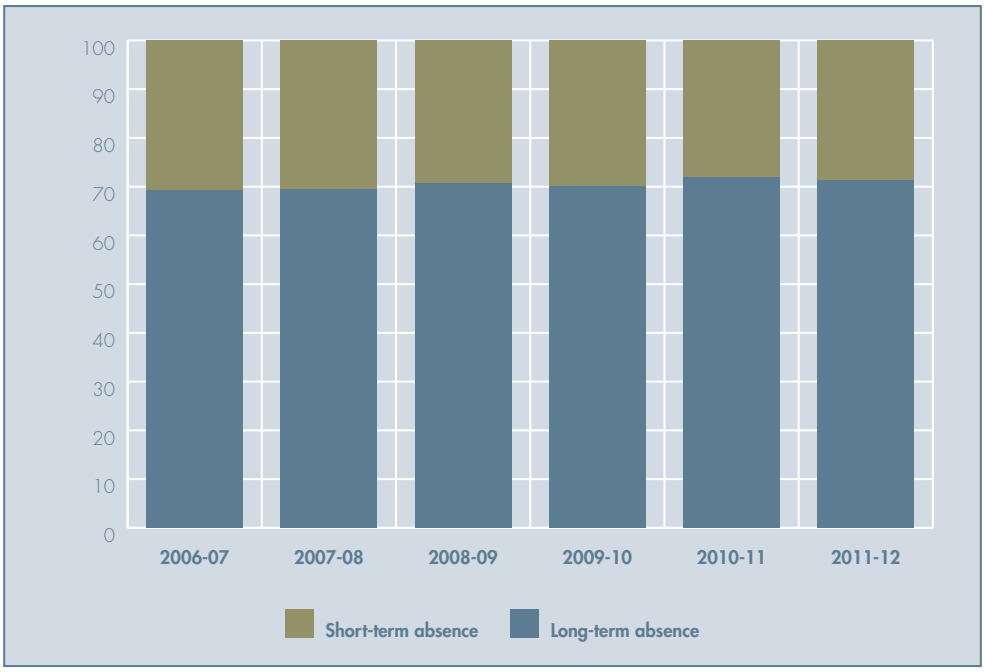
Long-term absence

1.16 Long-term absence in the NICS is defined as being an absence of more than 20 consecutive working days. In 2006-07 this accounted for just under 70 per cent of the total working days lost. Our 2008 report noted that whilst civil servants in Northern Ireland did not appear to take sickness absence more frequently than in Great Britain, they tended to be off much longer for the same or similar illnesses.

1.17 Since 2006-07, the total number of days lost to long-term sickness absence has reduced as overall sickness levels have fallen. However, the proportion of sickness absence associated with long-term absence has remained broadly unchanged at 71 per cent in 2011-12 (**Figure 7**). Targets related to reducing the percentage of NICS staff on long-term sickness absence and its duration have not been achieved (**paragraph 1.30**). Indeed, the average duration of long-term absence of 58.6 days in 2011-12 was only marginally lower than the level of 60.6 days in 2003-04.

Figure 7: Analysis of long-term and short-term sickness absences in NICS departments 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: NISRA

1.18 The lack of sufficient progress in addressing long-term sickness constitutes the biggest factor behind the failure to achieve the 2009-10 target (**paragraph 1.26**). It is also a significant risk to the achievement of revised targets to 2014-15.

Principal cause of absence – psychiatric/psychological illness

1.19 In 2006-07 psychiatric/psychological illness was recorded as the principal cause of sickness absence within the NICS, accounting for 29 per cent of working days lost. This remains the principal cause of absence in 2011-12, with the percentage still at 29 per cent. These absences tend to be long-term in nature (amounting to an average of 35.7 days in 2011-12, which is a slight decrease from the 2006-07 level of 37.8 days) and therefore have an obvious impact on overall NICS absence levels.

Female absence

1.20 Studies of sickness absence in the UK[10] have found that grade, gender and age are strongly associated with absence. Possible reasons suggested for women taking more absence than men have included their implicit societal role as carers and their lower average grade profile. In 2006-07, average sickness absence amongst NICS females (17.7 days) was almost twice that of NICS males (9.8 days) and of females in the civil service in Great Britain (10.7 days). Even when the figures were adjusted to take account of pregnancy-related illnesses, absence amongst females remained higher (14.9 days).

1.21 Despite a reduction of some 33 per cent since 2006-07, the sickness absence rate for females in the NICS for 2011-12, at 11.9 days, remains 40 percent higher than that for males. However, the gap between male and female absence levels has narrowed over time, from around 8 days in 2006-07 to 3.5 days in 2011-12 (**Figure 8**). The difference is further reduced to approximately 2 days when adjusted for pregnancy-related absences.

10 Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector, Cabinet Office, November 2004; and Current Thinking on Managing Attendance – a short guide for HR professionals, NAO, December 2004

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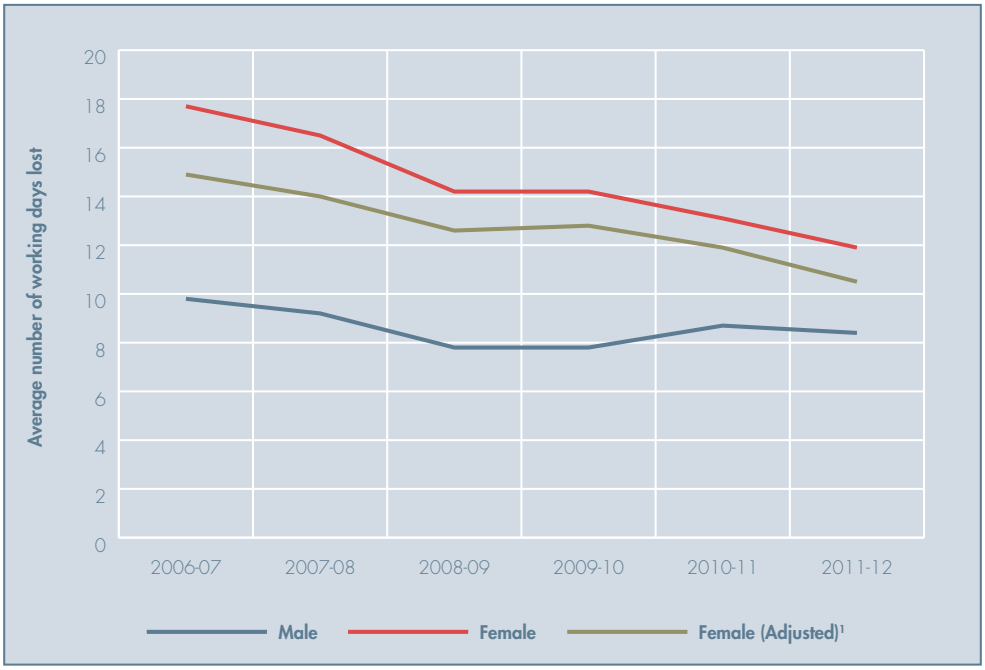
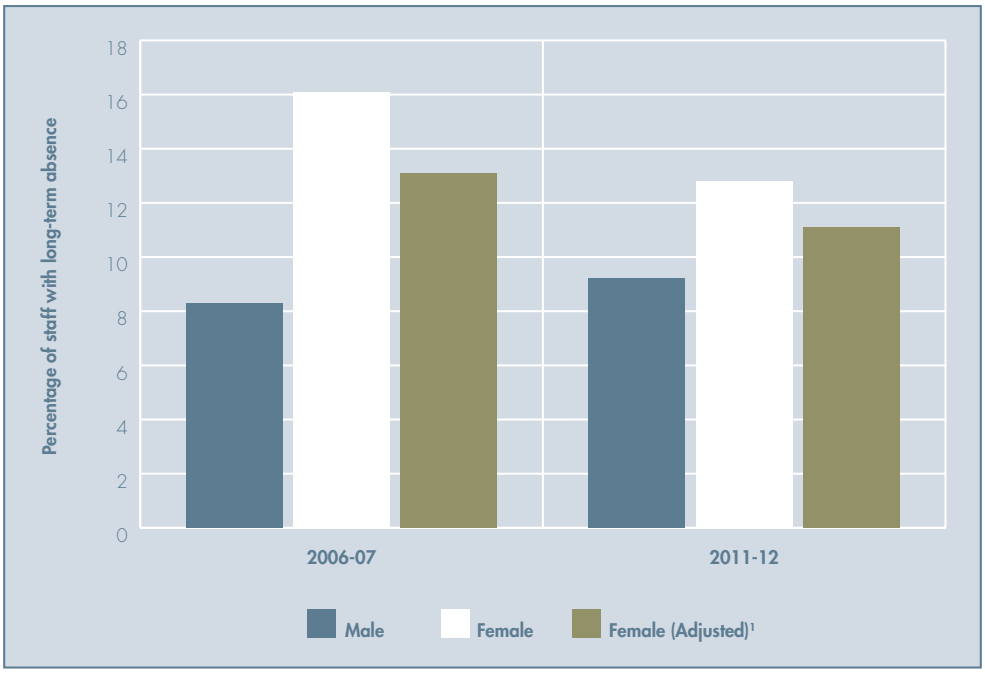
Figure 8: Gender analysis of NICS sickness absence 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: NISRA
Note: 1. Figure adjusted for pregnancy-related illnesses

1.22 Long-term sickness absence is particularly prevalent amongst females. Whilst the percentage of females with one or more long-term absence has reduced between 2006-07 and 2011-12, it remains significantly greater than that for males, although the gap has narrowed (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9: Percentage of NICS male and female staff with one or more long-term sickness absences 2006-07 and 2011-12



Source: NISRA

Note: 1. Figure adjusted for pregnancy-related illnesses

Sickness absence amongst junior grades

1.23 Sickness absence in the NICS has traditionally been highest amongst junior clerical grades. Although the average number of days absence between 2006-07 and 2011-12 has reduced for almost all grades, the levels remain high in the Administrative Assistant, Administrative Officer and Executive Officer II grades (**Figure 10**). These grades have also seen the largest reductions since 2006-07. Data included since 2010-11 also shows that sickness absence levels are highest for prison grade staff and the levels for industrial staff are similar to those for junior clerical grades.

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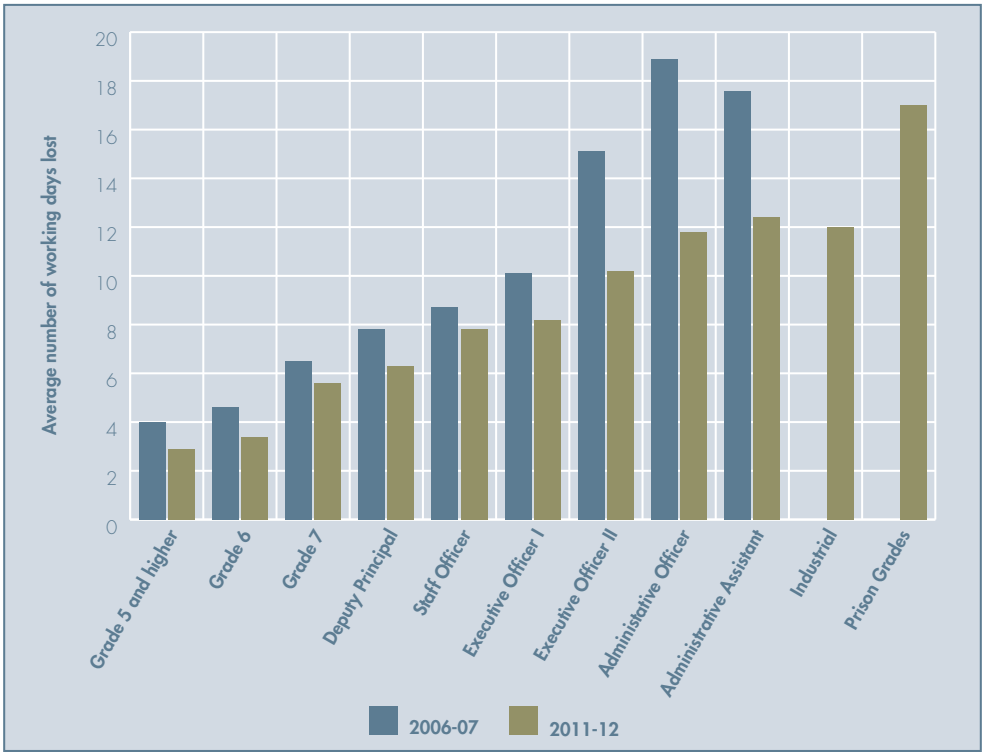
Figure 10: Average number of sickness days lost per staff year by NICS grade 2006-07 and 2011-12



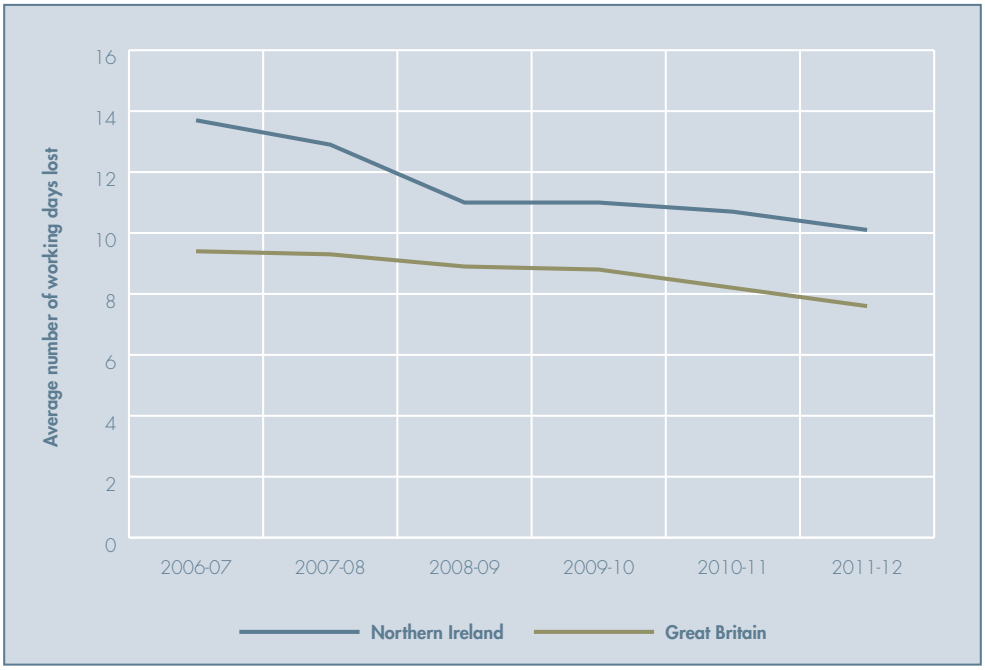
Source: NISRA

1.24 The incidence of long-term sickness absence is also greatest for prison and lower grades. For instance, in 2011-12, 21.8 per cent of staff in prison grades and 12.5 per cent of staff at Administrative Officer level had one or more spells of long-term absence compared with 5.8 per cent and 3.4 per cent for Grade 7 and Grade 6 respectively. However, the incidence of long-term sickness absence in NICS administrative grades has decreased from levels experienced in 2006-07 (17.3 per cent at Administrative Officer grade).

NICS absence levels remain higher than those in Great Britain

1.25 In 2006-07, average sickness absence in the NICS was 13.7 days per staff year, significantly higher than for civil service departments in Great Britain (9.3 days). Over time, the gap between the Northern Ireland rate and that in Great Britain has reduced but has remained broadly constant since 2008-09 (**Figure 11**). By 2011-12, the difference between the two rates was 2.5 days, 10.1 days in Northern Ireland and 7.6 days in Great Britain.

Figure 11: Comparison of Northern Ireland and Great Britain sickness absence rates 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: NISRA (Northern Ireland) and Cabinet Office (Great Britain)

Absence reduction targets have not been achieved

1.26 In 2005 DFP, in consultation with other departments, set an overall target to reduce the average level of NICS absence from 15.5 days (the 2003-04 baseline) to 9.5 days by March 2010. The main focus was on reducing the frequency and duration of long-term absence and, to a lesser extent, the frequency of short-term absence. To achieve the main target, departments had to meet three sub-targets:

- frequency of long-term absence – annual 7 per cent reduction;
- duration of long-term absence – annual 7 per cent reduction; and
- frequency of short-term absence – annual 5 per cent reduction.

Achieving the main target would have resulted in an additional 144,000 days being worked each year, equivalent to £10 million in annual productivity or 640 additional full-time staff being available for work.

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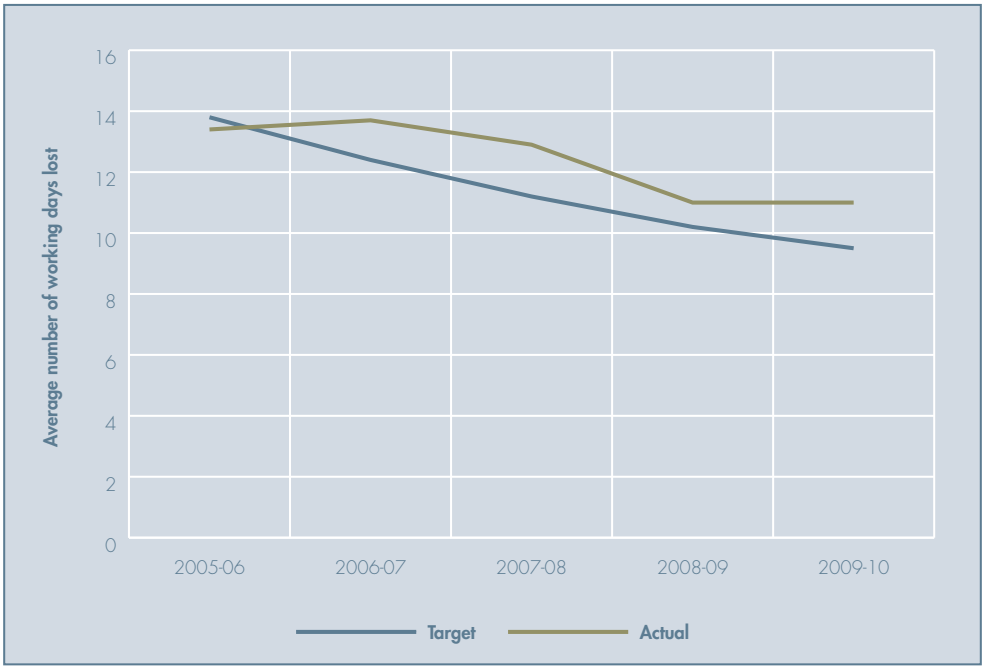
1.27 Initial progress against the main target was encouraging and in 2005-06, an average of 13.4 days was lost against the target of 13.8 days. However, this momentum was not sustained. By 2006-07 only 2 of the 11 departments had met their targets and overall absence levels (13.7 days) had crept above that year's target (12.4 days). DFP acknowledged this performance to be disappointing in light of the initial reductions and considered that it highlighted the need for robust application of policies and procedures within departments.

1.28 Ultimately, the main target was not achieved. At 2009-10, sickness absence stood at 11 days against a target of 9.5 days. Indeed, apart from in 2005-06, the target levels were never attained (**Figure 12**). At 2009-10, only 4 of the 11 departments met their individual targets (**Figure 13**).

Figure 12: Progress against the main NICS absence reduction target 2005-06 to 2009-10



Source: NISRA

Figure 13: Departmental performance against the main NICS absence reduction target

Department	2009-10 Target (average days lost)	2009-10 Actual (average days lost)	Target achieved
DSD	11.2	14.4	**No**
DEL	10.4	10.7	**No**
DCAL	9.6	6.9	**Yes**
DFP	8.5	10.3	**No**
DOE	8.5	9.9	**No**
OFMDFM	8.5	7.6	**Yes**
DARD	8.5	8.6	**No**
DHSSPS	8.5	9.4	**No**
DETI	8.5	8.3	**Yes**
DE	8.5	10.5	**No**
DRD	8.5	6.7	**Yes**
Overall	**9.5**	**11.0**	**No**

Source: NISRA

1.29 Performance achieved against the three sub-targets is summarised in **Figure 14**.

Figure 14: Performance against the NICS absence reduction sub-targets

Target	Base year (2003-04)	Target level (2009-10)	Actual outturn (2009-10)	Target achieved
Short-term average spells per person per year	1.41	1.09	0.75	**Yes**
Long-term frequency rate (percentage of employees)	14.1	9.8	10.9	**No**
Long-term average duration	60.6	42.2	62.8	**No**

Source: NISRA

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1.30 The short-term frequency target of 1.09 absence spells per staff year was achieved comfortably, with actual outturn of 0.75. This is welcome, and confirms that notable progress has been made in addressing this area. However, neither sub-target relating to long-term absence was achieved.

1.31 The target for long-term duration was missed comprehensively. The position at 2009-10 (average duration 62.8 days) was actually a deterioration on the 2003-04 base year (60.6 days). The lack of progress in this area was the predominant reason for the failure to achieve the 2009-10 headline target, and for the prevailing high overall NICS absence levels. Long-term absences can be attributed principally to:

- the high proportion of absences related to psychiatric/psychological illnesses **(paragraph 1.19)**;
- the extent of female absence (**paragraph 1.22**); and
- the levels of absence among junior clerical grades (**paragraph 1.24**).

1.32 Recognising the need to set a target for absence reduction beyond 2009-10, and as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee[11], DFP began consulting with NICS departments on the matter during 2010. Because the introduction of the new human resources management system for NICS (HR Connect) in 2008-09 meant that reliable information for industrial staff was available for the first time, it was decided that a combined target would be set for both industrial and non-industrial staff. Whilst the average absence level for NICS non-industrial staff in 2009-10 amounted to 11 days, it was significantly higher for industrial staff (13.4 days). However, the relatively small number of industrial staff (around 1,100 compared with 22,400 non-industrial staff) had a minimal effect, and the baseline for the new target was calculated as 11.2 days.

1.33 In setting the revised target, account was also taken of the DOJ (created in April 2010), and the PPS (for which powers were also devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010). The target seeks to reduce average absence from the 2009-10 baseline of 11.2 days to an average of 8.5 days by 2014-15.

1.34 Linked targets for individual departments have also been set, together with phased sub-targets in relation to the frequency and average duration of long-term sickness absence. Ultimately, targets aim to reduce the frequency of long-term absence from the 2009-10 baseline[12] of 11.4 per cent to 9.5 per cent by 2014-15 and the average duration from 62.5 days to 48.5 days over the same period. No targets have been set in relation to short-term absences in view of past achievement in this area and the importance of focusing on long-term absence problems. Details of current targets are set out at **Appendix 1**.

11 Public Accounts Committee: Report on Managing Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (Report 38/07/08R, June 2008)

12 The 2009-10 baseline figure was adjusted to take account of the inclusion, from 2010-11, of industrial staff and staff in the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service

1.35 The targets set for overall sickness absence levels in 2010-11 and 2011-12 were 10.5 days and 10.0 days. With actual levels of 10.7 and 10.1 days, the targets were not achieved (**paragraph 1.4**). Most departments (8 of 13) achieved their individual targets for overall absence levels in 2010-11 but fewer departments (5) achieved the targets for 2011-12 (**Figure 15**). Sub-targets for long-term absences have not been achieved (**Figure 16**).

Figure 15: Outturn against departmental sickness absence targets 2010-11 and 2011-12

	Average days lost per staff year						
	2009-10	2010-11			2011-12		
	Base year	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
DSD	14.4	13.6	13.4	Yes	12.8	11.1	Yes
DEL	10.7	10.1	10.6	No	9.5	11.4	No
DFP	10.3	9.7	9.5	Yes	9.1	9.3	No
DOE	10.1	9.5	9.2	Yes	9.0	9.8	No
DRD	8.2	8.0	8.5	No	7.9	8.2	No
DARD	9.3	8.9	8.5	Yes	8.5	8.0	Yes
DHSSPS	9.4	9.0	8.5	Yes	8.6	7.1	Yes
DE	10.5	9.9	8.3	Yes	9.4	7.9	Yes
DETI	8.3	8.1	8.1	Yes	7.9	7.3	Yes
DCAL	6.5	6.5	7.5	No	6.5	8.0	No
OFMDFM	8.4	8.2	5.4	Yes	8.0	8.7	No
PPS	9.0	8.7	10.2	No	8.4	9.8	No
DOJ	12.3	11.6	12.9	No	11.0	12.6	No

Source: NISRA

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Figure 16: Outturn against sub-targets for long-term sickness absence 2010-11 and 2011-12

	2009-10	2010-11			2011-12		
	Base year	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
Frequency rate (percentage of employees)	11.4	10.7	11.3	No	10.4	11.0	No
Average duration (days)	62.5	59.5	61.2	No	56.5	58.6	No

Source: NISRA

1.36 Overall, in recent years, there has been general improvement in NICS's position with regard to sickness absence levels:

- the trend in overall sickness absence levels is downward, with the gap between NICS levels and those in Great Britain narrowing;
- levels in all departments are reducing and, while there remains variation between departments, improvements by the largest departments have been of particular importance in driving down overall sickness absence levels;
- the gap between the sickness absence levels for female staff and male staff is narrowing; and
- there has been a reduction in sickness absence levels at most grades, with the largest reductions in those grades which traditionally have experienced the highest levels of sickness absence.

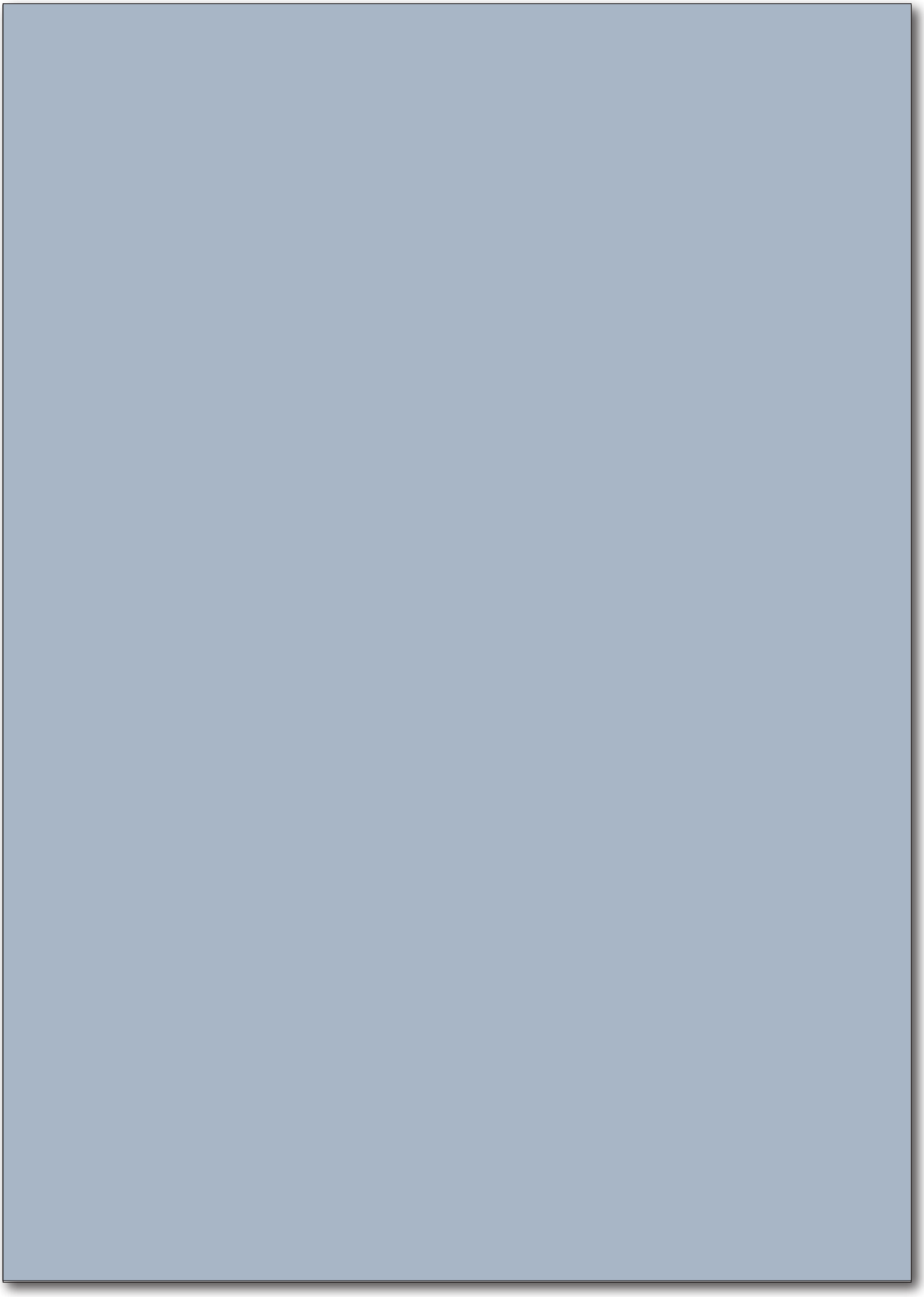
1.37 Two areas of particular concern, however, persist:

- the proportion of long-term sickness absence has remained broadly unchanged since 2006-07. The lack of progress in this area constitutes a major factor in the failure to achieve overall targets for 2009-10 and represents a significant risk to the achievement of current objectives; and

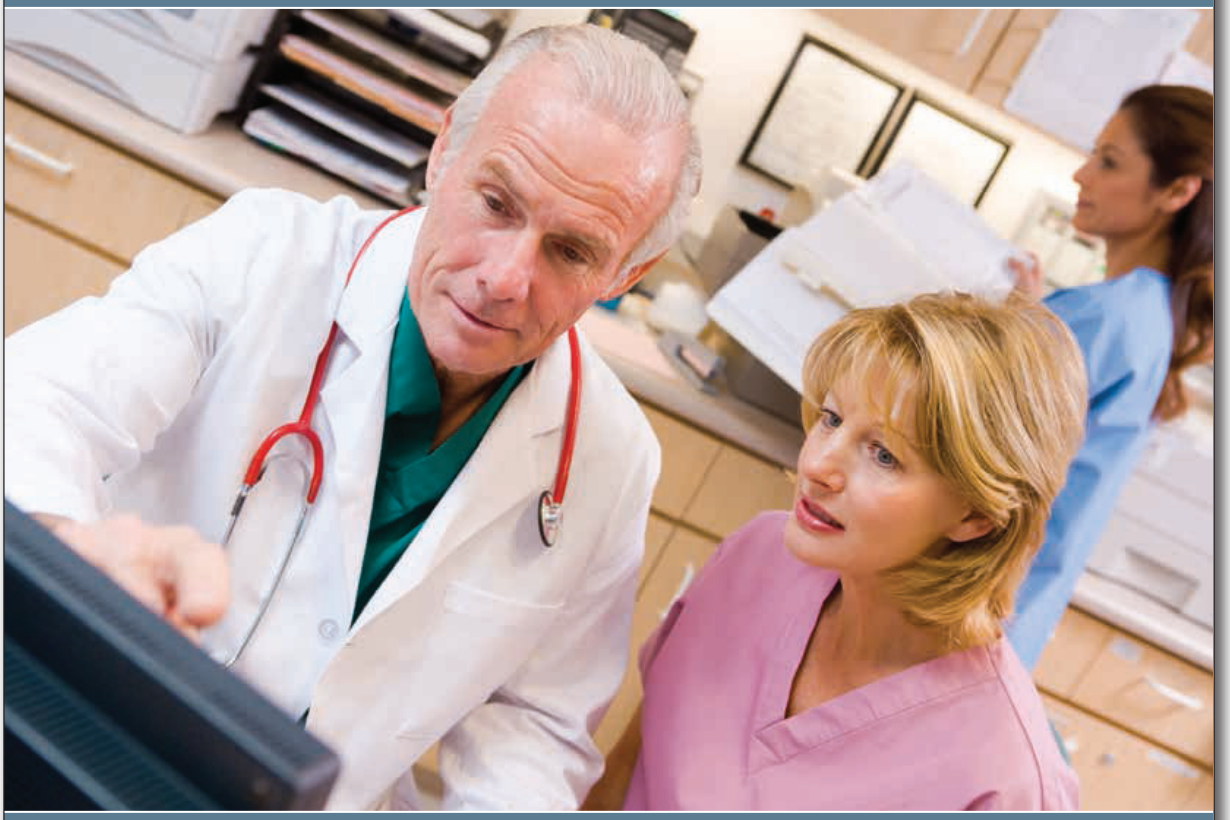
- the principal cause of sickness absence within the NICS remains psychiatric/psychological illness, with the proportion of days lost for this reason remaining at a similar level since 2006-07.

Recommendation

In order to sustain improvements in sickness absence towards the 2014-15 targets, it is important that attention remains focused on reductions in long-term sickness and absences where the cause is mental health related.



Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts



Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

Information on absence levels is provided by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Health Trusts

2.1 There are six Health and Social Care Trusts (Trusts) in Northern Ireland. The Trusts employ around 70,000 staff in total and represent the single largest area in terms of employees within the Northern Ireland public sector, almost three times the size of the NICS.

2.2 Sickness absence data within the Trusts is derived from the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) operated by each Trust. High level information on absence levels is shared with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and reported in DHSSPS's six-monthly Monitoring of Human Resource Activity publication[13]. Our analysis of absences within the health sector is based on the information provided by DHSSPS and contained within these six-monthly reports, supplemented by additional data provided by individual Trusts.

2.3 DHSSPS told us that it has monitored sickness absence levels at Trusts since 2001 and used reports to benchmark Trusts across the region. However, its more recent interest stems from concerns raised in the 2005 Appleby Review[14] with regard to the relative productivity of the Northern Ireland health sector. This led to the inclusion of specific targets for improvements in sickness absence within DHSSPS's published Priorities for Action planning framework over the period 2007-08 to 2010-11. DHSSPS's role in relation to sickness absence, however, has largely been limited to monitoring performance against these targets and the production of six-monthly reports (**paragraph 2.2**). The management and monitoring of sickness absence is, in its view, a matter for the Trusts.

2.4 DHSSPS does not hold information beyond the summary level identified in its six-monthly report. It is therefore unaware of underlying issues, for example the extent of long-term sickness absence, the main causes of sickness absence or any relationships that may exist between sickness absence levels and age, gender or grade. While this information is available within HRMS, Trusts indicate that this system does not easily facilitate the extraction of information in relation to gender, age or staff grade. Trusts can, however, extract information in relation to the causes of sickness absence, although this does not form part of routine monitoring procedures in all Trusts.

2.5 The limitations of the information system were highlighted in a 2008 review commissioned by DHSSPS[15]. However, a new human resource system is to be introduced across the Trusts; a benefit of the new system will be improvement of the management of sickness absence through better and more timely information for managers. DHSSPS aims to implement the system on a phased basis from December 2012.

13 DHSSPS: Monitoring of Human Resource Activity, prepared by the Department's Workforce Planning Unit
14 Independent Review of Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland (August 2005)
15 DHSSPS: VFM Audit of staff absence and turnover (November 2008)

Recommendations

The development of the new human resource management system, together with plans for the centralisation of human resource activities across all Trusts, provides an opportunity to improve and expand sickness absence analysis and monitoring. The system should provide management information on areas such as the levels of long-term and short-term absence; the main causes of absences and their respective durations; and the gender, age, and grade profile of sickness absences.

It is essential that the information systems for measuring sickness absence are fit for purpose and the data required for analysis and reporting purposes is robust. Statisticians and other relevant specialists should be involved in the development and specification of targets, setting up systems which capture and analyse relevant data and ensuring high quality management information is produced.

Absence in the health sector amounts to over 5 per cent of total working days

2.6 The main sickness absence measure used by DHSSPS and the Trusts is the percentage of working days lost. This differs from the main NICS measure (average days lost per staff year). However, the NICS annual report on sickness absence also provides sickness absence levels in terms of percentage of working days lost which has allowed comparisons to be drawn between the two sectors.

2.7 Data provided by DHSSPS identifies the overall regional average sickness absence level at 5.5 per cent of working days lost in the year to March 2011. This is greater than the 4.9 per cent reported for the NICS (**paragraph 1.4**). However, it should be noted that the two sectors differ in terms of staff structure and the nature and pattern of work. In particular, DHSSPS and the Trusts told us that the risk of spread of infection to patients, the physical nature of the work undertaken by staff in Trusts and the demands of shift working are factors in explaining higher levels of sickness absence among health and social care staff.

2.8 The regional average for sickness absence among health sector staff was first published for the six-month period October 2009 to March 2010. Prior to this, information reported to and collected by DHSSPS was not detailed enough to allow the calculation of overall regional absence levels. While

Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

no long-run data series is available for the regional level of sickness absence, based on sickness absence rates at individual Trusts, the overall trend appears to be generally downward (**paragraph 2.13**).

The cost of sickness absence in the health sector is substantial

2.9 DHSSPS was unable to provide figures on the cost of sickness absence. We also established that Trusts do not routinely produce information on, or monitor the cost of, sickness absence.

2.10 However, the cost of sickness absence across the Trusts is substantial. The 2010 McKinsey report[16] noted that significant savings in terms of productivity and efficiency could be made through reductions in sickness absence levels in the health sector. Using data for the six months to March 2010, it suggested that £32.1million, equivalent to 842 full-time employees, could be saved if sickness absence levels were reduced to the same levels experienced in England. DHSSPS told us that, in its view, these potential savings were overstated because absence levels in the period October 2009 to March 2010 were higher than normal. Also, the McKinsey estimate did not take account of the acknowledged differences in methodology between the respective calculations of days lost in England and in Northern Ireland. Using data for the 2009-10 year and similar assumptions to those applied in the McKinsey report, DHSSPS estimates the potential savings at £20 million, or 520 full-time employees. On the basis of this latter estimate, the overall cost of sickness absence in 2010-11 in the health sector could be in the region of £73 million (**Appendix 2**). An estimate based on 2011-12 data produced a figure of £71 million.

A number of issues impact on sickness absence in the health sector

2.11 Analysis of data obtained from both DHSSPS and the six Trusts identifies a number of issues that impact on overall sickness absence levels:

- sickness absence rates across Trusts vary, with the Ambulance Service experiencing significantly higher levels than other Trusts;
- occupational groups within the health workforce have differing levels of sickness absence;
- long-term sickness absence is a material factor in sickness levels; and
- mental health and musculo-skeletal problems are the two largest identified causes of absence.

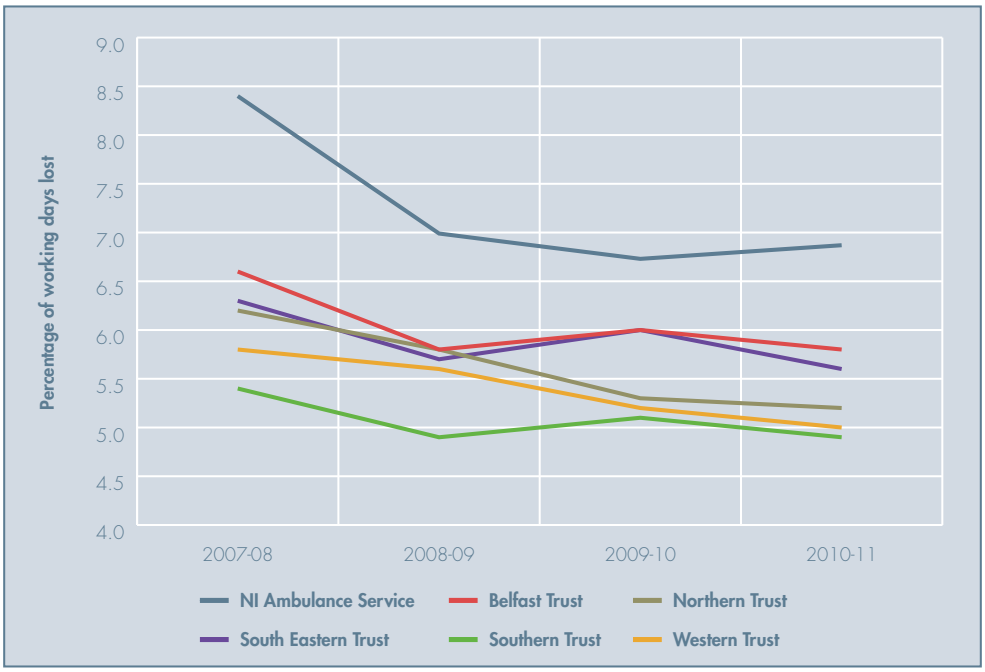
Sickness absence levels vary across the Trusts

2.12 For the year to March 2011, sickness absences ranged from 4.9 per cent of working days lost at the Southern Trust, to 6.9 per cent at the Ambulance Service, with a regional average for the same period of 5.5 per cent (**paragraph 2.7**).

16 DHSS/HSC (September 2010), Reshaping the System: Transforming Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Services, particularly Appendix - part 2

2.13 The general trend in sickness absence levels across all Trusts is downward (**Figure 17**). Except for the Ambulance Service, Trusts have broadly similar absence levels within a range of approximately 1 per cent. Over the period 2007-08 to 2010-11, the Belfast Trust has experienced higher levels than the other Trusts and the Southern Trust has had the lowest levels of absence.

Figure 17: Trust absence rates 2007-08 to 2010-11



Source: DHSSPS

2.14 The Ambulance Service, while still on a generally downward trend, has experienced much higher levels of sickness absence than other Trusts. Sickness absence during 2010-11, at almost 7 per cent of available working days, was 18 per cent higher than the Belfast Trust, the next highest of the other Trusts. The higher level of sickness absence within the Ambulance Service appears to reflect the nature of work involved and staffing structure (**paragraph 2.17 and 2.18**). DHSSPS told us that the Ambulance Service benchmarks absence levels by occupational groups with other Trusts and that this indicates that, for comparable groups, absence levels within the Ambulance Service are similar to the Health and Social Care average.

Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

Sickness absence rates across the workforce vary considerably

2.15 Data published by DHSSPS in its six-monthly report provides an analysis of sickness absence levels across different staff occupational categories which make up the health service workforce. This analysis identifies variability in sickness rates between the different elements of the workforce (**Figure 18**).

2.16 Medical and dental staff have the lowest level of absence (at around 1 per cent) while ambulance staff and support staff have the highest levels of absence (at between 7 and 8 per cent). Other staff categories experience sickness absence levels as follows:

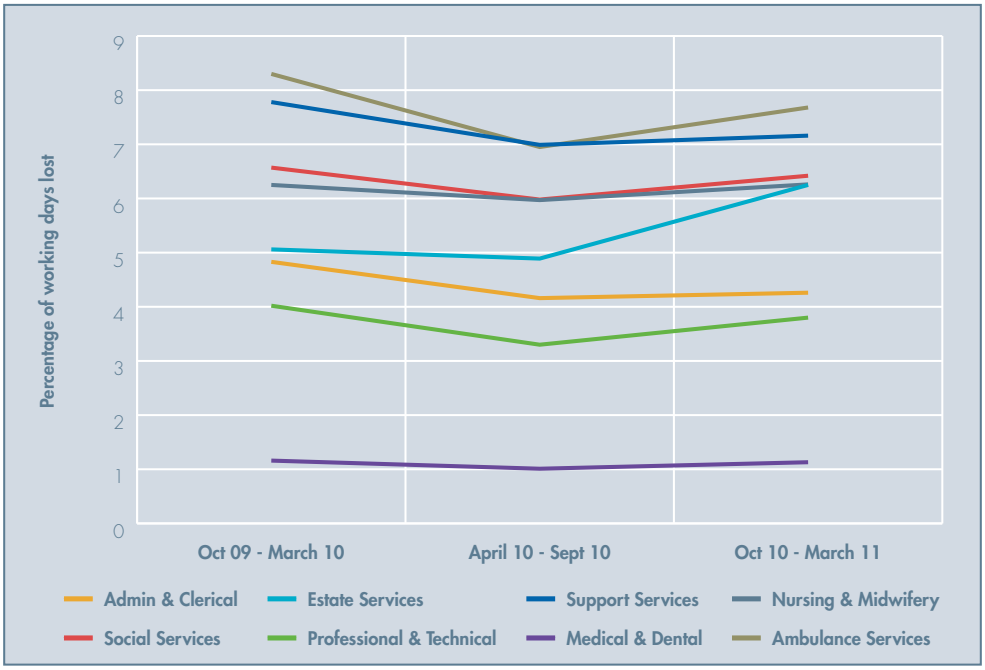
- professional and technical staff and administrative and clerical staff – between 3 and 5 per cent;
- estates staff – between 5 and 6 per cent; and
- nursing and widwifery and social services staff – between 6 and 7 per cent.

DHSSPS told us that the higher sickness absence levels for ambulance, nursing and midwifery and social services staff may be explained in part by factors such as the physical and emotional demands of the work and the need to avoid the spread of infection to patients and clients. It also notes that absence levels for administrative and clerical staff, ranging between 4.8 per cent of working days lost in the six months to 31 March 2010 and 4.3 per cent in the six months to 31 March 2011, are similar to levels in the NICS (4.9 per cent for the year 2010-11).

2.17 No research or analysis has been undertaken by DHSSPS or the Trusts to identify reasons behind the differences in sickness absence rates between occupational categories. However, the impact of these differences and the structure of the workforce in individual Trusts may explain the variability in absence rates across the region. For example, the Ambulance Service's workforce is largely front line ambulance staff. This category of staff exhibits higher rates of sickness absence compared with other categories and this is reflected in the higher overall absence level for the Ambulance Service. In contrast with other Trusts, the Ambulance Service does not employ significant numbers of staff in those occupational groups which historically have exhibited low sickness absence levels. Similarly, the Belfast Trust has significantly more staff in occupational areas with higher sickness absence rates - nursing and midwifery and support staff.

2.18 Workforce structure clearly plays some part in the variance in overall Trust absence rates. However, as no standardised rate similar to that calculated for NICS departments (**paragraph 1.15**) is available, it is unclear to what degree the differences in Trusts' absence rates are explained by differences in staff structure alone.

Figure 18: Analysis of sickness absence levels across occupational categories, October 2009 to March 2011



Source: DHSSPS

2.19 Analysis of absence rates within occupational categories at the individual Trusts also suggests that some Trusts experience problems within particular occupational groups:

- the Belfast Trust experiences the highest absence rates across all Trusts for nursing and midwifery and administrative and clerical staff, and the second highest level of absence among support services staff;
- the Northern Trust exhibits the second highest rate of absence among nursing and midwifery staff;
- the South Eastern Trust has the highest absence rates in the support services and social services areas, and also experiences the second highest level of absence among administrative and clerical staff;
- the Southern Trust has the second highest rate of sickness absence among support services staff; and
- the Western Trust has the highest rate of absence among the Trusts for professional and technical staff.

Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

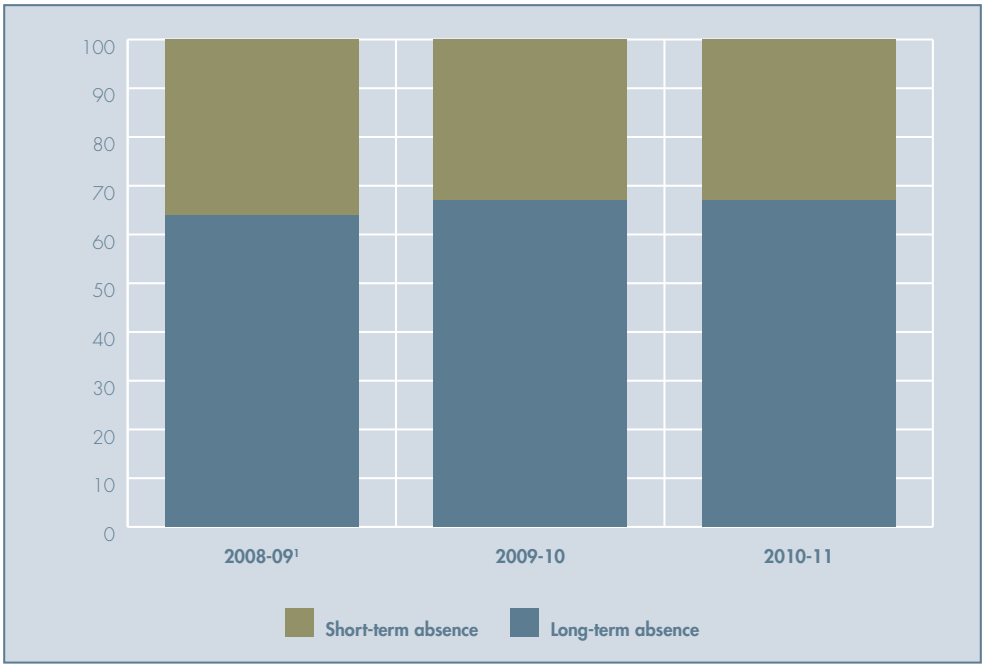
2.20 Although higher levels of absence in particular occupational groups may to some extent explain the variations in overall rates across Trusts, it remains unclear to what degree they impact on overall rates.

Long-term sickness absence accounts for two-thirds of days lost

2.21 Long-term sickness absence is defined as being an absence of 20 consecutive working days or more. Data provided by the Trusts indicates that the proportion of long-term sickness absence is significant, at around two-thirds of all days lost (**Figure 19**). In addition, the proportion of long-term sickness has remained generally consistent over the three years 2008-09 to 2010-11.

2.22 The proportion of overall absences attributable to long-term sickness varies across the six Trusts, although most follow a similar pattern with the vast majority of sickness absence related to long-term sickness. However, the Northern Trust

Figure 19: Proportion of long-term absence among Trusts 2008-09 to 2010-11



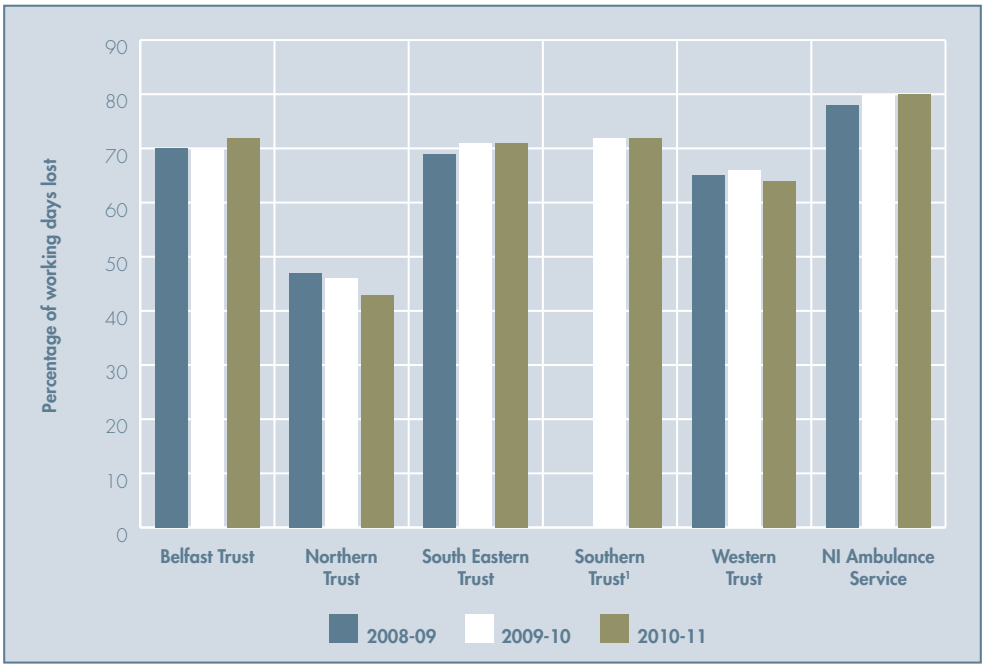
Source: HSC Trusts
Note: 1. 2008-09 data covers five Trusts only as no analysis was available for the Southern Trust

appears to have a significantly different absence profile to that of the other Trusts, displaying more short-term than long-term absences. Its level of long-term absence is almost half the level experienced among the other Trusts (**Figure 20**). The Northern Trust was unable to provide an explanation as to why this is the case but told us that the implementation of the new HR system will provide better analysis and reporting of information including analysis of short-term and long-term absence.

Mental health and musculo-skeletal problems are the largest causes of absence

2.23 The data indicates two main causes of sickness absence common across all Trusts - musculo-skeletal problems and mental health issues, both of which are increasing. Trusts told us that they are giving particular priority to addressing these causes. There is also a significant level of sickness absence for which the cause of illness is unknown; this has been running at an average of 12 per cent over the period 2008 to 2011, although it reduced to just under 10 per

Figure 20: Proportion of long-term absence among Trusts 2008-09 to 2010-11



Source: HSC Trusts
Note: 1. No analysis was provided by the Southern Trust for 2008-09

Part Two:
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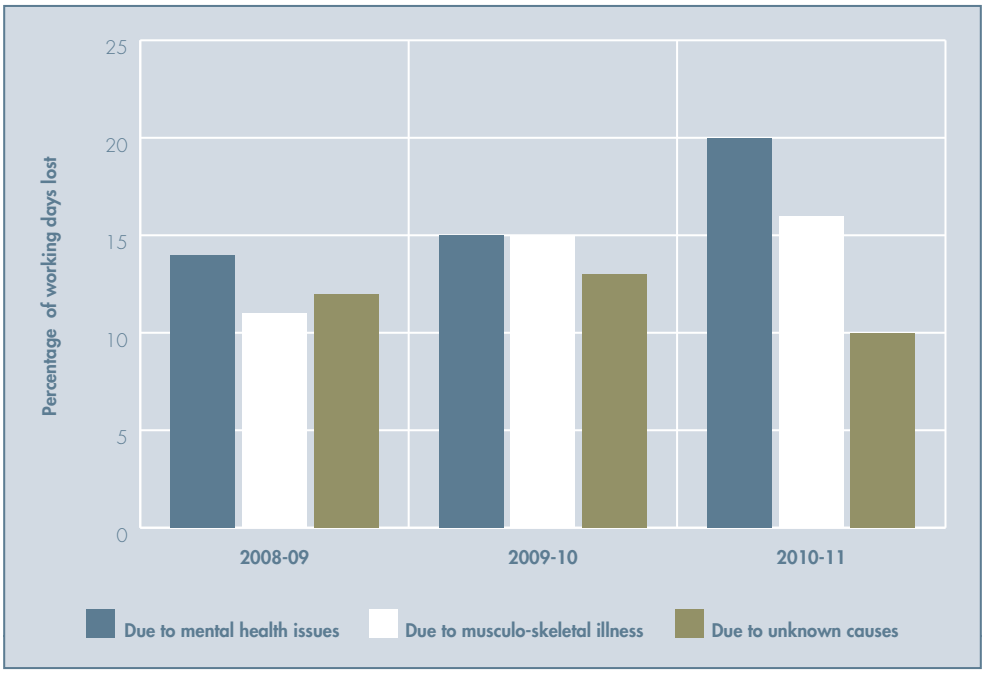
cent in 2010-11 (**Figure 21**). While there may be a number of reasons for the cause of illness not being recorded, Trusts have highlighted that typically this may relate to short-term absences of one to three days where, under absence protocols, individuals are not required to self-certify or produce medical certification.

2.24 Trusts were able to produce data in relation to the causes of sickness absences at our request. However, not all Trusts generate such data routinely for monitoring purposes. Data on the duration of absence analysed by cause was generally unavailable.

Recommendation

There are significant persistent levels of long-term sickness absence in Trusts and the levels of mental illness and musculo-skeletal illness - the main causes of absence - are increasing. It is important, therefore, that DHSSPS and Trusts continue to focus particular attention towards addressing long-term sickness and absences caused by mental health issues and musculo-skeletal illness. These areas should form an element of the Department's and Trusts' routine monitoring activities.

Figure 21: Proportion of sickness absence among Trusts due to musculo-skeletal, mental health issues, and unknown absences 2008-09 to 2010-11



Source: HSC Trusts

Absence levels are higher in Northern Ireland than in Great Britain

2.25 The regional rate of sickness absence across the six Trusts in Northern Ireland was 5.5 per cent of available working days in 2010-11 (**paragraph 2.7**). This overall level of absence is greater than that reported in the health sector in England, Scotland and Wales for 2010-11 (**Figure 22**). There are, however, certain differences in the structures in the health sector across Great Britain and care should to be taken in making direct comparisons with Northern Ireland. For example, NHS Trusts in England do not employ social care staff, which is an element of the workforce within which absence levels are relatively high in Northern Ireland. DHSSPS also told us that there is a different basis for the sickness absence rate used in England which results in an under-count of sickness absence in England when compared to that in Northern Ireland. It estimates that the percentage of working days lost in England, calculated on a similar basis to Northern Ireland, would be 5 per cent.

Figure 22: Comparison of sickness absence rates in the NHS across GB and NI in 2010-11

Percentage of working days lost			
NI	**England**	**Wales[17]**	**Scotland[18]**
5.3[19]	5.0[20]	5.07	4.74

Source: DHSSPS and NIAO

2.26 Over the period 2007-08 to 2010-11, DHSSPS undertook benchmarking of Northern Ireland's regional performance against sickness rates in England published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre. This benchmarking formed one element of its wider monitoring of relative productivity measures subsequent to the 2005 Appleby Review (**paragraph 2.3**). However, it was discontinued after 2010-11, in line with changes in overall strategic focus.

17 Data taken from 'Sickness Absence in the NHS', a Welsh Government Statistical Release, using data for the quarters ending June 2010, Sept 2010, Dec 2010, March 2011 (DHSSPS considers that this may not be on a comparable basis to the NI analysis)

18 Data taken from 'NHS Scotland Workforce', produced by NHS Scotland's Information Services Division, using data as at 31 March 2011, published 28 June 2011 (DHSSPS considers that this may not be on a comparable basis to the NI analysis)

19 DHSSPS estimate, excluding social care staff in order to ensure a more meaningful comparison with the health service data from Great Britain. The sickness absence rate for Northern Ireland including social care staff is 5.5 per cent

20 DHSSPS estimate, calculated on a similar basis to Northern Ireland. The NHS Information Centre quarterly publications 'Sickness Absence Rates in the NHS' for 2010-11 show an annual sickness absence rate of 4.15 per cent

Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

2.27 Departmental benchmarking also compared rates across occupational areas. Not all areas could be compared because of some differences in categorisation between England and Northern Ireland data and differences in services provided – for example, social services in England are a local government function. Nevertheless, certain broad comparisons are possible (**Figure 23**).

2.28 Trusts told us that they routinely benchmark sickness absence levels against other Northern Ireland Trusts. The Ambulance Service told us that it benchmarks its absence levels with other NHS Ambulance Trusts, Health and Social Care Trusts and related professional groups. Other Trusts compare their performance against Trusts outside Northern Ireland although this is not done as a matter of course by all Trusts.

Figure 23: Comparison of sickness absence rates in England (estimated) and Northern Ireland by occupational areas, excluding social services, for 2010-11

	Percentage of working days lost	
Occupational group	**England**	**Northern Ireland**
Admin & Clerical, Estates, Support Services	4.42	5.72
Nursing, Midwifery & Health Visiting	6.05	6.27
Professional & Technical	4.08	3.69
Medical & Dental	1.40	1.10
Ambulance	7.22	7.32
Overall	**5.00**	**5.30**

Source: DHSSPS

Trusts have had mixed performance against targets set by DHSSPS

2.29 DHSSPS set a target to reduce the overall sickness absence levels across the Trusts to 5.2 per cent of available working days by March 2011. This target was also set for each individual Trust with the exception of the Ambulance Service, recognising that its sickness levels differed materially in comparison with the other Trusts. Based on sickness levels in 2007-08 (the baseline year) the target represented varying levels of challenge for the Trusts (**Figure 24**). No underlying targets were set, for example for the level of long-term absence.

Figure 24: Performance against the sickness absence target

	Percentage of working days lost			
Trust	**2007-08 (Baseline)**	**2010-11 Target**	**2010-11 Actual**	**Target achieved**
Southern Trust	5.4	5.2	4.9	**Yes**
Western Trust	5.8	5.2	5.0	**Yes**
Northern Trust	6.2	5.2	5.2	**Yes**
South Eastern Trust	6.3	5.2	5.6	**No**
Belfast Trust	6.6	5.2	5.8	**No**
Overall[1]	**6.2**	**5.2**	**5.4**	**No**

Source: DHSSPS
Note: 1. Overall targets and performance exclude the Ambulance Service

Part Two:
Sickness Absence in Health and Social Care Trusts

2.30 While sickness rates reduced at all of the Trusts, the overall target was not achieved. Only three of the five Trusts achieved the target individually. No targets have been set for periods after 2010-11. The Department told us that levels of absence will continue to be monitored and, depending on performance by Trusts, targets may be introduced for 2013-14.

2.31 No separate target was set by the Department for the Ambulance Service. The Ambulance Service set its own target for 2011-12 which aimed to reduce absence to 6.85 per cent. The Ambulance Service considered that this was both challenging and achievable. However, it has not achieved the target, with actual sickness levels of 7.18 per cent for 2011-12.

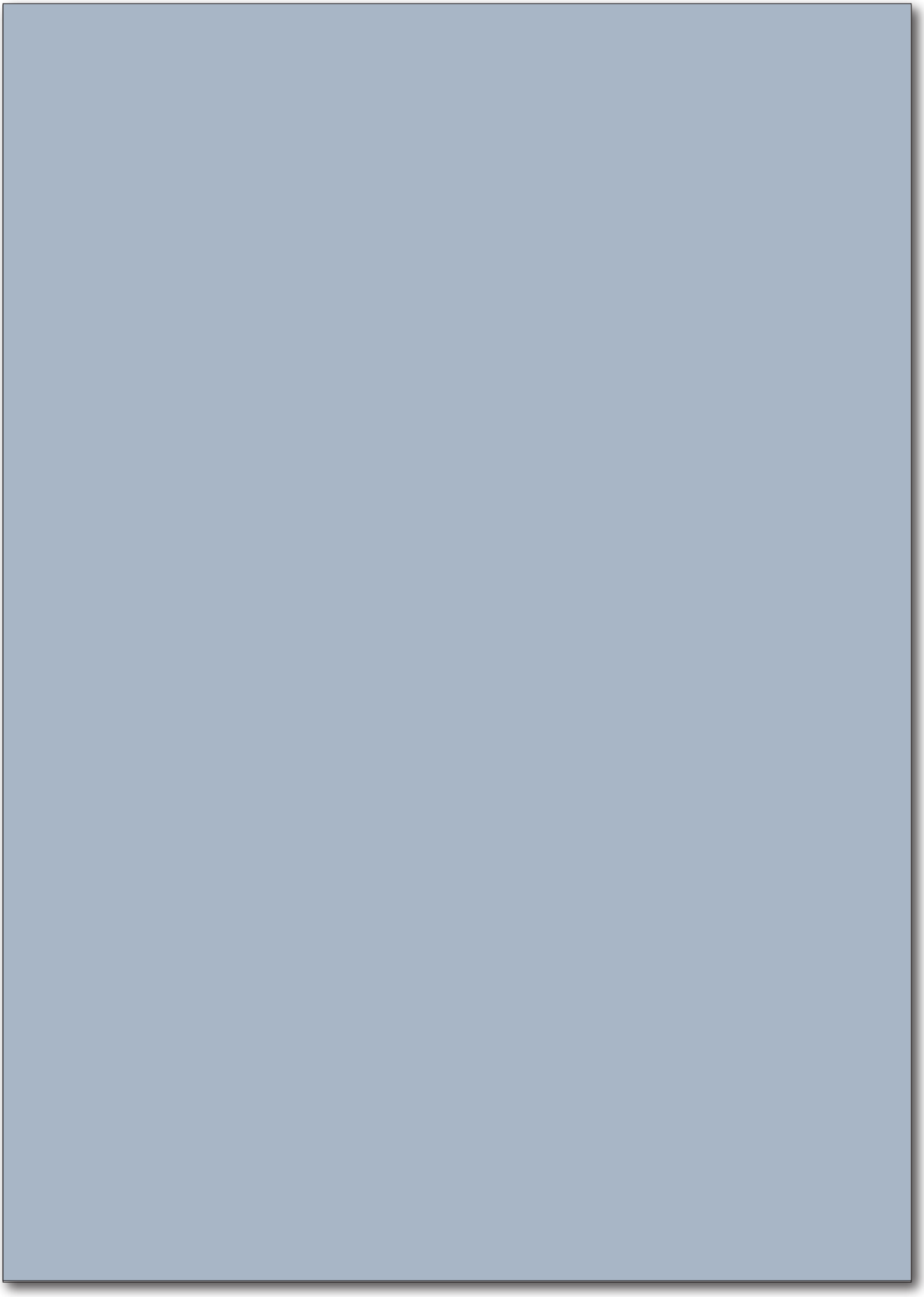
2.32 In December 2012, DHSSPS informed each of its arm's length bodies, including Trusts, that they would be required to take steps to minimize sickness absence during 2013-14, by:

- establishing a realistic sickness absence target for the organisation to be achieved during 2013-14;
- identifying the key steps and actions to be taken during 2013-14 to reduce or where appropriate maintain current sickness absence levels; and
- undertaking a review and report to the body's Board and DHSSPS by September 2013 of the key reasons behind staff absence and patterns in long-term and short-term absence.

Targets, which as a minimum will involve sustaining the body's previous performance level, are to be agreed by DHSSPS.

Recommendation

Given the impact of sickness absence on service delivery, it is essential that levels are monitored and properly managed. In order to maintain the downward pressure on sickness absence levels within health Trusts, DHSSPS should set targets at both the regional and Trust level, covering all Trusts including the Ambulance Service. Consideration should also be given to the introduction of specific targets in relation to long-term sickness absence similar to those set in the NICS. The recent step by DHSSPS to introduce targets for 2013-14 is welcome. However, it is important that progress in tackling sickness absence is sustained.



Part Three:
Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

Part Three: Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

The Department of Education and six employing authorities are responsible for absence management

3.1 There are six employing authorities within the Northern Ireland education sector – five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). Together these bodies are responsible for around 1,150 primary and secondary level schools and employ approximately 65,000 teaching and non-teaching staff.

NIAO has previously reported on teacher absence

3.2 Our report on The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers (May 2010) identified a number of issues with regard to teacher sickness absence:

- a gradually reducing trend in overall levels of teacher sickness absence from 9.52 days per year in 2005-06 to 7.81 days per year by 2008-09, although this was higher than levels in England (5 days in 2008);
- variation in teacher sickness absence levels across the employing authorities and within school sectors – Maintained schools experienced higher levels of absence compared to Controlled schools (8.5 days in 2008-09) and teachers in Special schools had particularly high levels of sickness absence (9.7 days in 2008-09);
- the failure to achieve targets for the reduction of teacher sickness absence levels towards those in England; the target was set at 6 days per teacher per year by 2008, and the same target was re-instated for 2010-11; and
- the estimated cost of teacher sickness absence across employing authorities at £15.8 million in 2008-09, with associated substitution cover costs of £11 million. Savings of around £5.7 million in teacher pay costs and £4 million in substitution cover costs could be achieved if teacher sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland were reduced to those in England.

3.3 Our report noted that, despite previous criticism by the Westminster Public Accounts Committee[21], a sound data system to assist the Department of Education (DE), employing authorities and schools in managing teacher attendance had yet to be fully established. At that time, DE indicated that the establishment of the planned new Education and Skills Authority (ESA)[22] for Northern Ireland should provide an appropriate opportunity for the development of more effective management information and reporting systems. In its subsequent report, the

21 The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers, Committee of Public Accounts, 27th Report, Session 2002-03, HC 473

22 The Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will take on the functions of the five Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, together with those functions performed by a number of other bodies within the education sector e.g. the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Youth Council for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

Public Accounts Committee[23] highlighted the need for more effective analysis and benchmarking of teacher absence data (**Appendix 3**).

Information systems for absence management are limited

3.4 Data on sickness absence in the six employing authorities is derived from two similar but separate payroll/human resource systems - one for non-teaching staff (implemented in 2008) and one for teaching staff (implemented in 2009). This separation reflects traditional responsibilities within the sector, in that teachers are employed by the ELBs and CCMS but are paid centrally by DE.

3.5 DE operates the payroll/human resource systems for teachers, with the employing authorities afforded enquiry access. Non-teaching staff, support staff based in schools and ELB Headquarters staff, are employed and paid by the ELBs[24]. Boards therefore operate the payroll/human resource systems in relation to non-teachers. While each ELB operates a 'stand alone' system for its own non-teaching staff, the system used is common across all Boards. However, DE does not have access to data from the non-teacher systems and does not actively monitor absence levels among non-teaching staff, which it states is a matter for the employing authorities.

3.6 At the strategic level, data is somewhat limited with only summary level information available. We requested further data from DE in respect of teaching staff and from the employing authorities for teaching and non-teaching staff. However, this was not readily available, either because of difficulties in data extraction from the payroll/human resource systems or because it was not routinely extracted from those systems for standard reports. Employing authorities told us that information systems are not sufficiently sophisticated to take account of complex aspects of non-teaching contracts, such as part-time workers and those who have multiple jobs. Data routinely extracted by DE and the employing authorities is focused at the school and operational case management level rather than at a more strategic level. Areas for which data was not readily available, both in relation to teaching and non-teaching staff, included:

- the long-term and short-term profile of sickness absence levels;
- gender, age and grade/length of service analysis of sickness absence levels; and
- analysis of the main causes of sickness absence and the duration of absences associated with particular causes.

23 The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report, Public Accounts Committee, NIA 20/10/11R, November 2010

24 CCMS does not employ non-teaching staff, instead these are employed by the ELBs responsible for the area in which the respective schools are based

Part Three:
Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

3.7 The absence of such data inhibits effective management of sickness absence within the sector. DE recognises the limitations of current data and, in relation to teachers, has recently expanded the analysis available and, in June 2012, published its first yearly digest of workforce statistics[25]. DE has also indicated that it is now able to analyse teacher absence in terms of long-term and short-term absence, gender, age and grade. Work is also on-going to develop reporting on the main causes of sickness absence.

3.8 DE's central role as paying authority for teachers enables the aggregation of teacher sickness data. However, it has no similar role in relation to non-teaching staff and, combined with the limited data available for these staff, it was not possible to generate aggregated non-teacher sickness absence figures.

3.9 The new ESA, which at the time of our previous report (**paragraph 3.3**) was expected to be established by January 2011, has not yet been set up. It is now expected to be established during 2013.

Recommendations

The recent improvements in teacher sickness absence monitoring and reporting are welcome. However, there remains an immediate need to improve and expand the level of strategic information available for the management of sickness absence. Routine data analysis and reporting in relation to both teaching and non-teaching staff should include the level of long-term sickness absence, the main causes of absences and their respective durations and the gender, age and grade profile of absence.

In addition to the separate analyses of sickness absence for teaching and non-teaching staff, DE and employing authorities should also consider the introduction of a combined measure identifying overall sickness absence levels. This will facilitate the identification of sickness absence levels across the education sector as a whole.

In our view, DE should take a more strategic role with regard to promoting and monitoring sickness absence management across the sector. The creation of the ESA will provide an opportunity for the development of more comprehensive management information systems and facilitate a more regional approach to sickness absence management.

25 Teacher Workforce Statistics in Grant Aided Schools in Northern Ireland 2011-12 (28 June 2012)

Teaching staff absences are falling but non-teaching staff absences are increasing

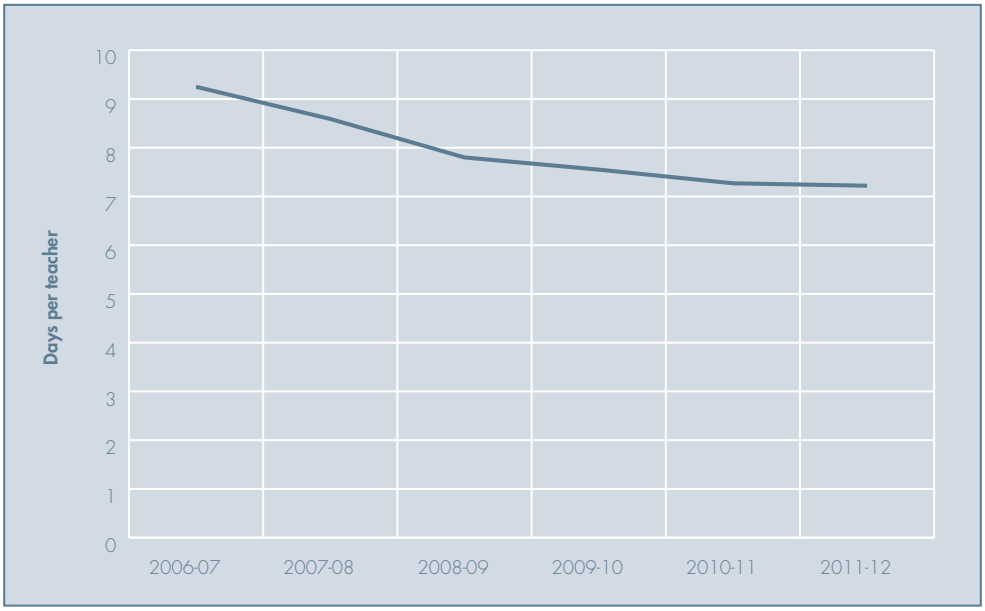
3.10 The trend in overall teachers' sickness absence levels is downward, having decreased by over 20 per cent since 2006-07. Improvements have slowed since 2008-09 and current sickness absence levels, at 7.27 and 7.22 days per teacher per year for 2010-11 and 2011-12[26] respectively, reflect a small improvement on 2008-09 levels of 7.81 days (**Figure 25**). DE and the employing authorities, suggest that improvements have resulted from the focus placed on the management of sickness levels, including the application of attendance policies and changes in the balance between substitution costs met by the employing authorities and by schools from their delegated budgets.

3.11 Sickness absence levels among non-teaching staff in 2010-11 are higher than for teaching staff, ranging from a low of 8.11 days per employee per year in the Western ELB to a high of 13.64 days in CCMS (**Figure 26**). In the period 2008-09 to 2010-11, absence levels at four of the six employing authorities have increased. This suggests that the general trend in non-teaching staff sickness absence levels is upwards. While the reasons for this are not clear, in our view the lack of strategic monitoring of non-teacher sickness absence levels and any related targets are contributing factors. DE suggests that the increasing sickness absence levels among non-teaching staff also reflect the effect of the changing environment within which staff have been operating, including uncertainty over the introduction of the ESA.

26 Teacher absence figures cover all Controlled schools, Maintained schools (those under CCMS and Irish Medium schools) and Grant Maintained Integrated schools, but exclude Voluntary Grammar schools

Part Three:
Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

Figure 25: Overall teacher absences (days per teacher) 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: Department of Education

Figure 26: Non-teaching staff numbers and sickness absences 2008-09 to 2010-11

	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11	
Employing Authority	**Staff Numbers (Full-time Equivalents)**	**Sickness Absence (days per employee)**	**Staff Numbers (Full-time Equivalents)**	**Sickness Absence (days per employee)**	**Staff Numbers (Full-time Equivalents)**	**Sickness Absence (days per employee)**
Belfast ELB	3,130	9.0	3,117	8.7	3,188	9.1
Western ELB	3,892	8.96	3,856	8.8	3,834	8.11
North Eastern ELB	4,714	7.65	4,554	8.04	4,433	8.17
South Eastern ELB	3,251	9.24	3,222	10.06	3,250	12.2
Southern ELB	4,102	10.45	4,136	10.52	4,078	10.05
CCMS[1,2]	91	8.6	86	10.9	84	13.64

Source: Employing authorities' annual reports and accounts

Notes: 1. CCMS staff includes Headquarters staff only; non-teaching staff in Catholic Maintained schools are employed by the other ELBs

2. Sickness absence levels at CCMS, given relatively low overall staff numbers, have been adversely affected by several long-term absences in recent years

3.12 Teacher sickness absence figures appear to compare well with those in the NICS, where the average number of days lost per staff year was 10.7 in 2010-11 and 10.1 in 2011-12. While there is no overall non-teacher absence level for comparison with other sectors, the rates across employing authorities appear to be similar to that in the NICS.

3.13 There is a difference between the two sectors in terms of the number of days attended in any given year. In the NICS, the staff year is approximately 221 days while teachers typically attend for only 195 days per year[27]. When adjusted to take account of this difference, teacher absence levels move closer to those in the NICS (**Figure 27**).

Figure 27: Comparison of adjusted teacher sickness absence rate with NICS 2011-12

Teacher Absence Levels	Adjusted Teacher Absence Levels	NICS Absence Levels
7.22 days	8.2 days	10.1 days

Source: NIAO

3.14 The comparison of the teacher sickness absence figure to that in the NICS is also affected by the fact that it is calculated on the basis of a headcount of permanent teachers in post, rather than a full-time equivalent measure. The use of headcount would tend to reduce the calculated average sickness level, although to what degree is unclear.

The cost of sickness absence in the education sector is substantial

3.15 Data provided by DE indicates that the total pay bill for permanent teachers in post during 2010-11 was in the region of £606 million[28]. DE has also stated that the cost of sickness absence in 2010-11 was £16 million, with associated teacher substitution costs of a further £11.9 million[29]. These costs remain broadly unchanged since 2008-09 (£15.8 million sickness absence pay bill and £11 million substitution costs).

3.16 Neither DE nor the employing authorities were able to provide information on the cost of non-teacher sickness absence. Non-teaching staff costs recorded in annual accounts are around £414 million. On the basis of an average non-teaching staff year of 221 days and absence levels as identified at **Figure 26**, we estimate the cost of non-teacher sickness absence in 2010-11 at some £17.8 million[30] (**Appendix 4**).

27 Details of staff years confirmed by DE and NISRA
28 Total pay bill figures reflect gross salary costs (i.e. excluding employer costs for national insurance and superannuation) for Controlled and Maintained and Grant Maintained Integrated schools (i.e. excluding Voluntary Grammar schools)
29 Sick pay costs cover Controlled, Maintained and Grant Maintained Integrated schools
30 Non-teacher costs contained in annual accounts include both gross salary and employer costs, but cover only Controlled and Maintained schools (i.e. exclude Grant Maintained Integrated and Voluntary Grammar schools)

Part Three: Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

There are variances in the levels of sickness absence across employing authorities and school sectors

3.17 Analysis of data from DE and the six employing authorities identifies a number of issues that impact on the overall teacher and non-teacher sickness absence levels:

- variability in sickness absence rates across employing authorities, for both teachers and non-teachers; and
- differing levels of teacher sickness absence associated with the various school sectors.

3.18 DE and the employing authorities suggest that long-term sickness absence is a material factor in sickness absence levels. Data for 2011-12 indicates that, while teacher sickness absences lasting more than 20 days represented only 7 per cent of all incidences, long-term sickness absence represented around 60 per cent of total days lost. In England, only 2 per cent of sickness absences lasted for more than 20 days. Employing authorities also identified the increasing importance of stress as a key cause of sickness absence. However, these views are anecdotal as no specific supporting data was available.

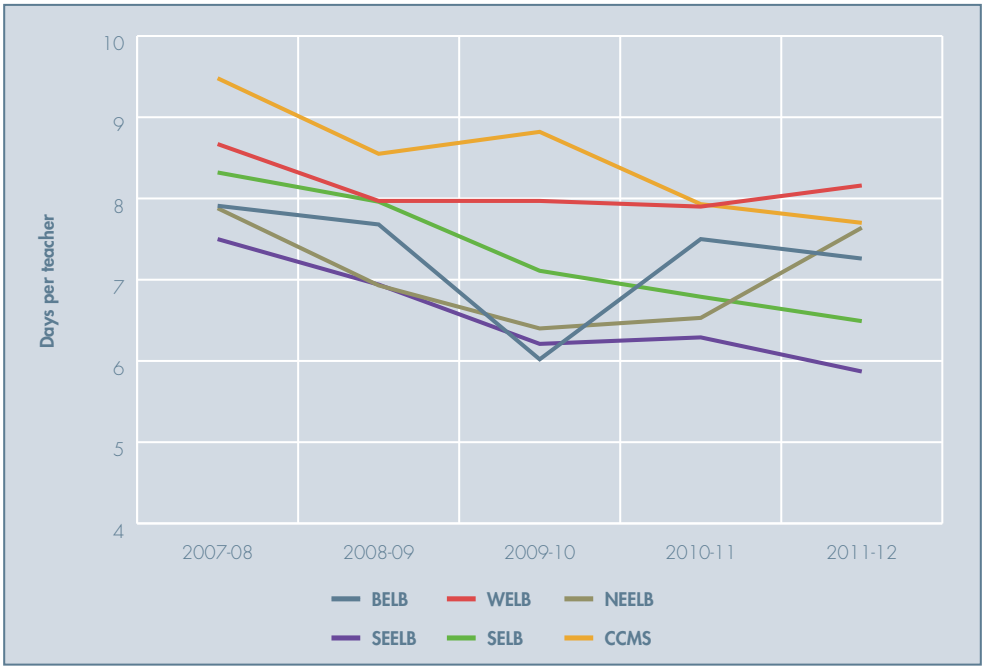
There is variability in sickness rates across employing authorities

3.19 There is variation in performance across employing authorities (**Figure 28**). In 2011-12, teacher sickness absence levels ranged from a low of 5.87 days per teacher at the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) to a high of 8.16 days per teacher at the Western Education and Library Board (WELB).

3.20 CCMS has traditionally experienced higher levels of teacher sickness absence compared with other employing authorities. This may reflect the fact that until 2010, it was not linked into the teacher data systems. Nonetheless, sickness absence levels at CCMS have improved by around 19 per cent since 2007-08.

3.21 The Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) and the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) have not improved as much as other authorities over the period since 2007-08. BELB told us that it suffered a particular spike in sickness levels in 2010-11 as a result of an upsurge in the number of cases of serious illnesses. Two other employing authorities, SEELB and NEELB, also experienced increases in teacher sickness levels in 2010-11, with NEELB seeing a further increase in 2011-12. DE has indicated that the planned introduction of a regional strategy for the management and promotion of teacher attendance should assist in addressing variances in teacher sickness absence.

Figure 28: Teacher sickness absence (days per teacher) across employing authorities 2007-08 to 2011-12



Source: Department of Education

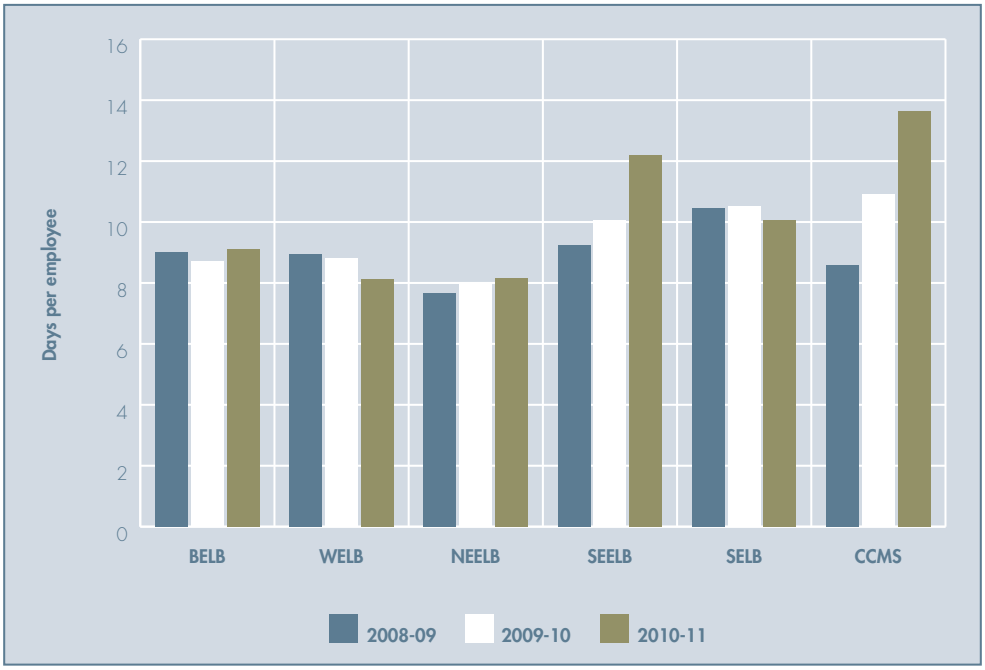
Note: the details above reflect only Controlled and Maintained schools

3.22 In terms of non-teaching absence, over the three years to 2010-11 there has been little consistency in trends across the six employing authorities (**Figure 29**):

- two authorities (SEELB and CCMS) have experienced significant increases in absence rates (totalling 3 and 5 days respectively);
- one authority (NEELB) has experienced a small year-on-year increase in absence levels (of around 0.5 days overall);
- one authority (WELB) has seen continuous improvement, of around 10 per cent (or nearly 1 day), in its absence rate; and
- two authorities have experienced changeable rates, with one (SELB) experiencing a small decrease overall (0.4 days) and one (BELB) showing a slight increase (0.1 days).

Part Three:
Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

Figure 29: Non-teaching staff sickness absence across employing authorities 2008-09 to 2010-11



Source: Employing authorities' annual reports

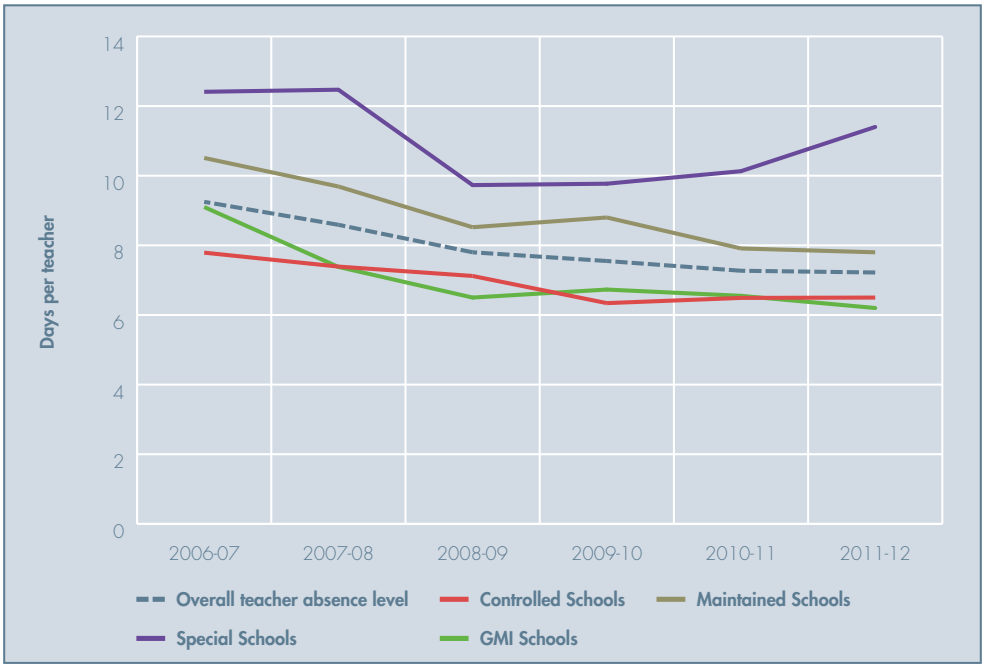
Teacher sickness absence varies across the different school sectors

3.23 Data also highlights variations in absence levels associated with different school types and sectors, although in all sectors the broad trend over time is downwards. This data does not cover the Voluntary Grammar schools. DE does not collect sickness absence data from these schools, each of which runs its own teachers' payroll.

3.24 Controlled and Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools experience the lowest levels of teacher sickness absence, with an average of 6.5 and 6.2 days sickness absence per permanent teacher respectively at 2011-12. Special schools and Maintained schools, particularly those under CCMS control, experience the highest levels of sickness at 11.4 and 7.8 days per permanent teacher respectively at 2011-12. Over the period from 2006-07, the Special and Maintained school sectors have improved sickness levels by 8 and 26 per cent respectively (**Figure 30**).

3.25 DE and employing authorities suggest that higher teacher sickness absence levels at Special schools reflect the demanding nature of the work, including a need to avoid the transmission of illnesses to vulnerable children. DE also suggests that the planned introduction of a regional strategy for the management and promotion of teacher attendance should help address variability in sickness absence levels between sectors.

Figure 30: Teacher sickness absence levels (days per teacher) by school type 2006-07 to 2011-12



Source: Department of Education

Teacher sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland are higher than those in England

3.26 Our 2010 report on the Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers (**paragraph 3.2**) identified that teacher sickness absence levels in Northern Ireland, at 8.6 days in 2007-08, were broadly similar to those experienced in Scottish (8.3 days) and Welsh (9 days) schools. The Northern Ireland level was significantly higher than that in English schools (5.4 days).

Part Three:
Sickness Absence in the Education Sector

3.27 More recent data suggests that this remains the case (**Figure 31**). While there may be differences in the methodology for calculation of sickness absence rates, including measurement over different time periods, the Northern Ireland teacher sickness absence level is slightly lower than that for Welsh schools but significantly higher than that for English schools. However, the data suggests that the gap with England is decreasing. DE and employing authorities do not routinely benchmark teacher sickness levels against levels outside Northern Ireland, although employing authorities are aware of their relative performance against other authorities within Northern Ireland. DE told us that regional teacher sickness absence figures for England are no longer readily available to enable comparison as the Department for Education in England no longer publishes this information.

Figure 31: Teacher sickness absence comparison with England and Wales (days per teacher)

	Sickness Absence (days per teacher)
Northern Ireland (financial year 2010-11)	7.27
Wales (calendar year 2010)[31]	8
England (academic year September 2010 to August 2011)[32]	4.6

Source: Department of Education, Welsh Assembly Government and Department for Education (England)

3.28 Monitoring of non-teacher absence is limited to levels within the individual employing authorities because separate non-teacher information systems are operated by each employing authority. No information on non-teaching staff absence is shared between employing authorities or with DE.

Targets for teacher sickness absence have been set by DE but not for non-teacher sickness absence

3.29 DE has set targets in relation to teacher sickness absence. These apply equally to overall sickness absence levels and to the levels at individual employing authorities. Performance against targets forms part of the regular governance and accountability meetings held between DE and the employing authorities. However, no targets have been set for non-teacher sickness levels.

3.30 DE re-instated its target that teacher sickness absence levels should reduce to 6 days per teacher by 2010-11 (**paragraph 3.2**). With overall teacher sickness absence levels at 7.27 days per teacher in 2010-11, this target was not achieved. None of the employing authorities achieved the target rate of 6 days, although three did reduce their sickness levels below 7 days, with SEELB closest to the target rate at 6.29 days per teacher. Similarly, the target for 2011-12 was not achieved although four authorities had lower sickness absence rates than in 2010-11 (**Figure 32**).

31 Welsh Assembly Government Statistical Release (June 2011)
32 Department for Education, School workforce in England Statistical First Release (April 2012)

Figure 32: Performance against teacher sickness absence targets 2010-11 and 2011-12

	2010-11			2011-12		
	Target (days per teacher)	Actual (days per teacher)	Target achieved	Target (days per teacher)	Actual (days per teacher)	Target achieved
Overall absence level	6.0	7.27	No	5.75	7.22	No
BELB	6.0	7.50	No	5.75	7.26	No
WELB	6.0	7.90	No	5.75	8.16	No
NEELB	6.0	6.53	No	5.75	7.64	No
SEELB	6.0	6.29	No	5.75	5.87	No
SELB	6.0	6.79	No	5.75	6.49	No
CCMS	6.0	7.93	No	5.75	7.7	No

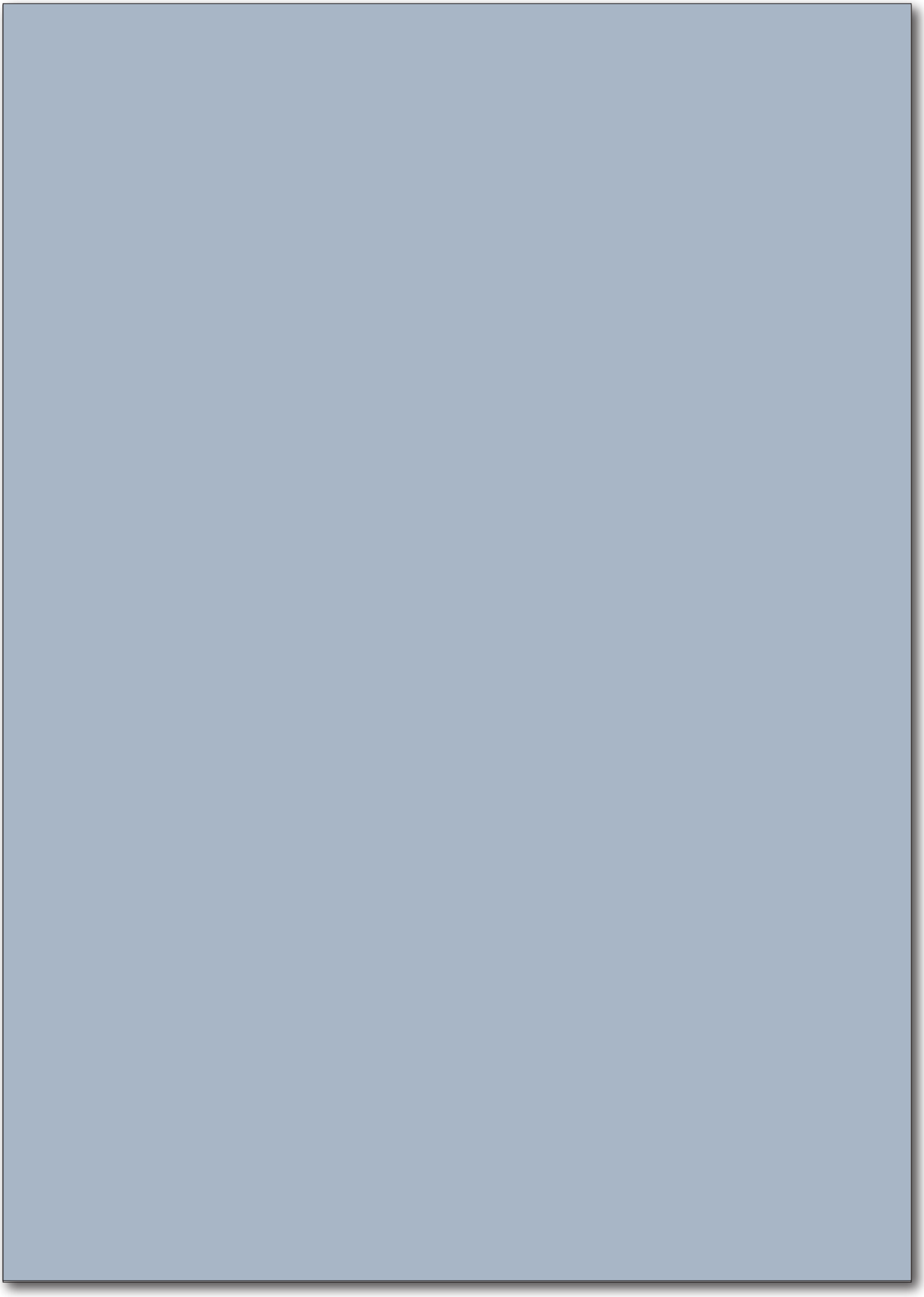
Source: Department of Education

3.31 Following on from the 2010-11 target of 6 days, progressive teacher sickness absence targets have been set by DE at 5.75 days for 2011-12, 5.5 days by 2012-13 5,25 days by 2013-14 and and 5 days by 2014-15. However, DE told us that in its view the achievability of a target to reduce teacher absence to the same levels as England is questionable.

Recommendations

The setting of further teacher sickness absence targets should assist in the overall management of sickness absence. However, targets should also be set for levels of sickness absence for non-teaching staff. There has been an apparent increase in sickness absence amongst these staff and targets should help to bring about reductions in absence levels.

We recommend that DE and the employing authorities make use of statisticians and other relevant specialists to obtain advice and guidance on the specification of targets, the fitness for purpose of data systems and to ensure the use of appropriate methodology and quality control procedures for sickness absence management information.



Appendices:

Appendix 1:
(paragraph 1.34)

NICS Sickness Absence Targets (2010-11 to 2014-15)

Overall Targets

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Overall Target – Average days lost per staff year	10.5	10.0	9.5	9.0	8.5
Long-term – Frequency rate (percentage)	10.7	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.5
Long-term – Average duration (working days)	59.5	56.5	53.7	51.0	48.5

Departmental Targets

Days lost (per staff year)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
DSD	13.6	12.8	12.1	11.4	10.7
DEL	10.1	9.5	8.9	8.4	7.9
DFP	9.7	9.1	8.6	8.1	7.6
DOE	9.5	9.0	8.5	8.0	7.5
DRD	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.5
DARD	8.9	8.5	8.2	7.8	7.5
DHSSPS	9.0	8.6	8.2	7.8	7.5
DE	9.9	9.4	8.8	8.3	7.8
DETI	8.1	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.5
DCAL	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
OFMDFM	8.2	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.5
PPS	8.7	8.4	8.1	7.8	7.5
DOJ	11.6	11.0	10.3	9.7	9.2

Long-term frequency (percentage of employees with one or more spell of long-term sickness absence)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
DSD	13.9	13.5	13.1	12.7	12.3
DEL	10.0	9.7	9.4	9.1	8.9
DFP	9.7	9.4	9.1	8.8	8.6
DOE	9.0	8.7	8.5	8.2	8.0
DRD	8.2	7.9	7.7	7.4	7.2
DARD	9.0	8.8	8.5	8.2	8.0
DHSSPS	9.1	8.9	8.6	8.3	8.1
DE	10.4	10.0	9.7	9.4	9.2
DETI	8.6	8.3	8.1	7.8	7.6
DCAL	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.2	6.0
OFMDFM	7.4	7.2	7.0	6.8	6.6
PPS	8.6	8.3	8.1	7.8	7.6
DOJ	13.9	13.5	13.1	12.7	12.3

Long-term duration (days)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
DSD	58.5	55.6	52.8	50.1	47.6
DEL	59.6	56.6	53.8	51.1	48.5
DFP	58.8	55.8	53.0	50.4	47.9
DOE	69.4	65.9	62.6	59.5	56.5
DRD	60.7	57.7	54.8	52.1	49.5
DARD	65.1	61.8	58.7	55.8	53.0
DHSSPS	59.8	56.8	54.0	51.3	48.7
DE	61.5	58.4	55.5	52.7	50.1
DETI	54.3	51.6	49.0	46.6	44.2
DCAL	45.1	42.8	40.7	38.7	36.7
OFMDFM	68.9	65.5	62.2	59.1	56.1
PPS	56.5	53.7	51.0	48.4	46.0
DOJ	54.3	51.6	49.0	46.6	44.2

Appendix 2:
(paragraph 2.10)

Calculation of the cost of sickness absence in Health and Social Care Trusts (2010-11)

The McKinsey report (September 2010), using data at March 2010, estimated that a reduction in sickness absence levels across the Trusts, towards those in Great Britain would generate savings of £32.1 million.

At March 2010 the respective absence levels in Northern Ireland and Great Britain were 6.0 per cent and 4.5 per cent of working days lost i.e. a 1.5 per cent reduction in sickness levels represents a cost of £32.1 million.

Based on this data, with regional absence levels in 2010-11 of 5.47 per cent of working days lost, the cost of overall sickness absence is estimated as:

£32.1 million x 5.47/1.5 = £117.1 million.

The Department has stated that the savings identified by the McKinsey report are overstated and that the savings, based on data for 2009-10, would be of the order of £20 million.

Based on this data, the cost of sickness absence is estimated as:

£20 million x 5.47/1.5 = £73 million.

Appendix 3: (paragraph 3.3)

PAC recommendations – Teacher sickness absence

In November 2010, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Northern Ireland Assembly published a follow-up report on the management of substitution cover for teachers, an area previously covered by the Public Accounts Committee in Westminster in 2003.

In its report, PAC included recommendations relating to sickness absence among teachers. These are outlined below.

No.	Recommendation
1	Drawing on good practice examples from other sectors, it is imperative that the system for coding teacher absence is streamlined. The Committee recommends that the Department should develop and implement, by April 2011, a standard, easy-to-use system for recording the reasons for teacher absence and substitution cover.
2	Given the greater confidence expressed by the Department about the new management information system, the Committee recommends that the Department should ensure that the system starts to produce regular benchmarking reports for employing authorities and schools showing, as a minimum, the headline rates of absence, associated substitution cover costs and the predominant reasons for absence.
3	The Committee also recommends that, to keep these issues in the spotlight, the Department should report annually to the Assembly on the trends and patterns of substitution cover and the level of teacher absence.
6	The Committee recommends that the Department and teacher employing authorities need to explore variations in sickness absence and benchmark the levels against each individual employing authority and local authorities in England to test whether there is any best practice, either locally or further afield, that can be drawn on to drive forward further improvements and consistency of approach.
7	The Department and employing authorities need to hold schools to account for compliance with the new sickness absence procedures. Towards this end, the Committee recommends that the internal audit functions in employing authorities should provide assurance, on an annual basis, that sickness absence policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively in schools.

Appendix 4: (paragraph 3.16)

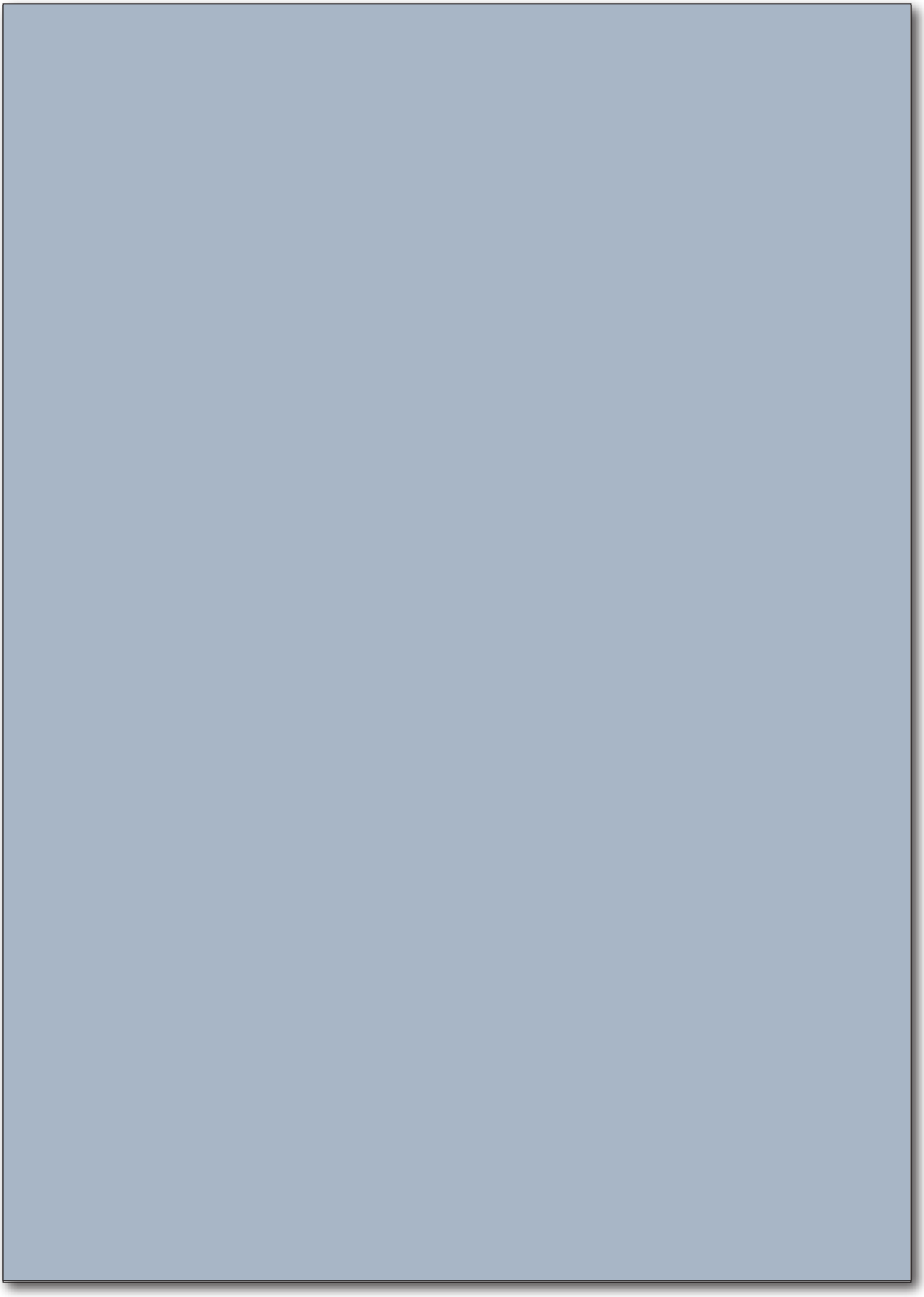
Calculation of the Cost of Non-teacher sickness absences (2010-11)

Employing Authority	Non-Teaching Staff Costs[1]	Average Sick Days	Estimated Cost
BELB	70,621,000	9.1	2,907,923
WELB	88,846,000	8.11	3,260,367
NEELB	82,906,000	8.17	3,064,896
SEELB	74,472,000	12.2	4,111,124
SELB	95,346,000	10.05	4,335,870
CCMS	1,538,005	13.64	94,925
Total	413,729,005		17,775,105

Note: 1. Figures sourced from employing authorities' annual report and accounts

NIAO Reports 2012-13

Title Date	Published
2012	
Continuous Improvement Arrangements in the Northern Ireland Policing Board	20 March 2012
Invest NI: A Performance Review	27 March 2012
The National Fraud Initiative: Northern Ireland	26 June 2012
NIHE Management of Reponse Maintenance Contracts	4 September 2012
Department of Finance and Personnel - Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand	25 September 2012
The Police Service of Northern Ireland: Use of Agency Staff	3 October 2012
The Safety of Services Provided by Health and Social Care Trusts	23 October 2012
Financial Auditing & Reporting 2012	6 November 2012
Property Asset Management in Central Government	13 November 2012
Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme	11 December 2012
The exercise by local government auditors of their functions in the year to 31 March 2012	19 December 2012
2013	
Department for Regional Development: Review of an Investigation of a Whistleblower Complaint	12 February 2013
Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools	19 February 2013
General Report on the Health and Social Care Sector by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland	5 March 2013
Northern Ireland Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud	12 March 2013
Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure: Management of Major Capital Projects	22 March 2013



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COFMDFM - Programme for Government 2011-15 Progress Reports

Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER
Room 285
Parliament Buildings
Tel: 028 90521903
Email: committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk

FROM: Kathy O'Hanlon Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

DATE: 18 September 2014

TO: All Statutory Committees

SUBJECT: Programme for Government Progress Reports

At the Committee meeting of 17 September 2014, this Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM providing a report on progress against Programme for Government Commitments for all Departments. The Committee agreed to forward this to all Statutory Committees.

I would be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of your Committee.

Regards

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee

Office of the
First Minister and
Deputy First Minister
www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk

Kathy O'Hanlon
Assembly Clerk
Committee for OFMDFM
Room 285
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

09 September 2014

Dear Kathy,

Programme for Government 2011-15: Progress Reports

Please find attached, in advance of internet publication, a strategic online report on progress against Programme for Government Commitments.

This will be publicly available from Monday 15 September 2014 at:

http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/work-of-the-executive/pfg.htm

Strategic delivery plans for Programme for Government Commitments were recently published on the Executive's website and are available at the same location.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely

Signed Colette Kerr

Colette Kerr
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Programme for Government 2011-15

QOS Report

Quarter Four - 2013/14

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk

Priority 1

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
01. DETI	Contribute to rising levels of employment by supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs	Promote 13,300 jobs	Promote 19,500 jobs (cumulative)	Promote 25,000 jobs (cumulative)
Invest NI delivered its most successful year in 2013/14 in terms of job promotion. This has allowed Invest NI to exceed its three year PfG milestone with 23,783 jobs delivered against the 19,500 job milestone. Although challenges remain, Invest NI will continue to work with businesses and stakeholders to maintain the progress being made with job promotion and the agency remains confident that the four year PfG target will be exceeded.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
02. DFP	Press for the devolution of Corporation Tax and reduce its level	Press for a UK government decision, through participation in Joint Ministerial Working Group	Work to ensure that required Westminster and Assembly legislation is in place to give effect to any Executive decisions	Executive announcement of rate of corporation tax for Northern Ireland
As set out in the Building a Prosperous and United Community (Economic Pact) document, published on 14 June 2013, the Government will make a final decision on the devolution of corporation tax powers to the NI Assembly no later than the Autumn Statement 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
03. DETI	Achieve £1 billion of investment in Northern Ireland economy (This includes £375 million as a result of Foreign Direct Investment; £400 million from indigenous businesses supported by Invest NI and £225 million as a result of the Jobs Fund)	Secure total investment of £550.0m* *2012/13 milestone includes 2011/12 figures	Secure total investment of £320.5m	To have secured total investment of at least £1 billion
PfG Target Achieved.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
04. DETI	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 20%	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 6 percentage points	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 7 percentage points	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 7 percentage points

Due to the time-lagged nature of HMRC data, manufacturing exports data for the financial year ending 31st March 2014 will not be available until the 5th June 2014. The latest manufacturing export data from HMRC relates to the 12 month rolling period ending 31st December 2013.

For this period, NI Manufacturing Exports totalled £6.0bn which equates to 6.1% growth on the baseline year, (2010/11 financial year) when manufacturing exports totalled £5.6bn. This is encouraging after an extremely disappointing 2012/13 when exports declined by 5% when compared to 2011/12 and by -0.5% against the baseline. However, manufacturing exports progress is circa 12 months behind the anticipated PfG profile as a result of 2012/13 performance.

Therefore, although Invest NI continues to offer extensive support to drive forward export growth, it is recognised that the overall objective of a 20% increase in manufacturing exports is only possible over an extended time period.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
05. DETI	Support £300 million investment by businesses in R&D, with at least 20% coming from Small and Medium sized Enterprises	Support £150m investment in R&D* *2012/13 milestone includes 2011/12 figures	Support £75m investment in R&D	Support £75m investment in R&D

PfG Target Achieved.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
06. DETI	Increase visitor numbers to 4.2 million and tourist revenue to £676 million by December 2014	Increase tourism revenue to £591m and tourism visitor numbers to 3.47m	Increase tourism revenue to £625m and tourism visitor numbers to 3.6m	Increase tourism revenue to £676m and tourism visitor numbers to 4.2m

On track to meet visitor number and tourism revenue milestones for 2013.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
07. DETI	Aid Liquidity of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) through a £50 million loan fund (£28 million in the three years covered by the Programme for Government)	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £8m	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £10m	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £10m

A delay in the Fund launch meant it was not possible to meet the 2012-13 milestone target. However, good progress has been made during 2013/14 which has retrieved the 2012/13 shortfall with £20.1m of loans offered at 31st March 2014 against the PfG Milestone of £18m. Although the volume of loans is likely to be behind the level initially anticipated, Invest NI remains confident that the £28m PfG target will be delivered.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
08. DOE	Ensure 90% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months and applications with job creation potential are given additional weight (This commitment is made subject to external factors such as Judicial Review which could impact on performance)	60% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months	75% of large scale planning decisions are made within 6 months	90% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months
The Department will continue to focus its efforts to ensure that this increased revised target of 90% large scale investment decisions are processed within 6 months. This represents a significant increase in the overall percentage of applications meeting the 6 month target. The uplift from 75% to 90% for this business year will be challenging. As such, the Department will continue to prioritise and carefully manage these applications throughout the business year.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
09. DFP	Introduce extension of Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to 2015	Ensure legislative and operational changes will be effective		Review operation of scheme
The Commitment is complete.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
10. DFP	Hold the Regional Rate increases to the rate of inflation	Secure approval to Rates Order	Secure approval to Rates Order	Secure approval to Rates Order
The regional rate for 2013/14 was set at 2.7%.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
11. DFP	Eliminate Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights	Agree policy, administrative and financial arrangements with UK Government and EU (as appropriate) Work to ensure that required Westminister and Assembly legislation is in place to devolve power to Assembly to set Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights	Work to ensure progress of Assembly Bill in order to reduce the Northern Ireland rate of APD on direct long haul flights to zero	
The Commitment is complete.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
12. DSD	Invest in social enterprise growth to increase sustainability in the broad community sector	Develop and implement policy framework on Community Asset Transfer with support from DFP Provide opportunities to support social enterprise growth	Baseline existing social enterprise activity with the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland, identifying opportunities for growth and communicating these across Government and the sector through such channels as the Joint Voluntary and Community Sector Forum	Commence implementation of Community Asset Transfer policy and opportunities identified
A draft policy framework for Community Asset Transfer has been completed and submitted to the Executive for approval.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
13. DETI	Encourage achievement of 20% of electricity consumption from renewable sources and 4% renewable heat by 2015	12% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approved by NIAUR 2% renewable heat	15% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approves by NIAUR 3% renewable heat	20% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approved by NIAUR 4% renewable heat
The seasonally adjusted average figure for renewable generation to end February 2014 is 19%. The main means of achieving the renewable heat target is through the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Renewable Heat Premium Payemnt Scheme (RHPPS). The RHPPS was introduced in May 2012 and the RHI in November 2012. To date, 134 applications have been received under the RHI representing a heat capacity of 16.2MW. Under the RHPP, DETI has received 1645 applications and has offered support of over £2.24 million. The heat capacity of these installations is 13.5MW.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
14. DCAL	Support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund	100 projects overall	150 projects overall	200 projects overall

The Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) has met its target of supporting 150 projects by March 2014. A further round for CIIF applications opened in January 2014 for projects being delivered by March 2015. 90 applications have been received and therefore it is expected that the overall PfG target of 200 projects by March 2015 will be met. Social Clauses were introduced into project awards during 2013/14 which required recipients of CIIF awards to participate as STEM/STEAM Ambassadors (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths) in a schools engagement programme run by W5 – the science discovery centre in Belfast. This social clause has continued into 2014/15 and has been extended to offer the alternative of companies participating in a youth work experience and training scheme run by Creative & Cultural Skills.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
15. OFMDFM	Develop Maze/Long Kesh as a regeneration site of regional significance	(1)Launch of Development Plan for Maze/Long Kesh	(2) "Balmoral Show" at Maze/Long Kesh (3)Commencement of site infrastructure works at Maze/Long Kesh	(4)Private sector development partner appointed by Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation. (5)Peace building and Conflict Resolution Centre complete

There is no current agreement on Maze/Long Kesh issues. Ministers continue to discuss a way forward. The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society will be holding their Balmoral Agricultural Show at the site in May 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
16. OFMDFM	Develop the 'One Plan' for regeneration of Derry/Londonderry, incorporating the key sites at Fort George and Ebrington	1175 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors. Development framework completed, and outline planning approval for Ebrington and Fort George secured. Opportunities for development at Ebrington opened to the market.	1670 jobs promote through the public, community and private sectors. Decontamination programme at Fort George complete. Regeneration of key buildings and places at Ebrington completed.	1200 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors. £23m infrastructure investment programme at Ebrington complete

Jobs promotion continues to be a priority. Capital project developments at Fort George and Ebrington are continuing. The One Plan inter-departmental co-ordinating group continues to monitor and facilitate responses across NI Departments and programme delivery in a number of areas and catalyst programmes have progressed. Work continues on mitigating actions to address risks and include pro active promotion of Ebrington, financial support to attract economic conferences and promotion of the digital/creative economy

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
17. OFMDFM	Provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013	Creative industries hub in place at Ebrington	Visitor numbers to the City and visitor spend doubled	City of Culture programme supported and delivered

The City of Culture Programme was successfully delivered with very positive media coverage surrounding delivery of 2013 programme and initial Legacy events. The monitoring/evaluation work is on-going with Ilex undertaking the Monitoring Study to provide data for the evaluation of the year. The initial report on the City of Culture impact is due to be completed by 30 June 2014. DCC and DCAL are working on Legacy projects. DCC legacy plans launched on 16th December with celebration event and Music City 2014 launch held on 17th January. Derry City Council has announced a Big Lottery Legacy Fund of £400k for specific cultural activities. Ebrington buildings used in 2013 have been returned to Ilex to go to market.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
18. DETI	Provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Our Time Our Place Initiative in 2012 including marking the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage	Support the 2012 events including: Titanic Festival to mark the opening of the new visitor attraction and the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage; Clipper Maritime Festival; Opening of the new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre; The 2012 Irish Open and; The 50th Belfast Festival at Queen's	Acheive legacy benefits from Our Time Our Place including change in perception/ image both internally and externally and contribute to PfG targets of increasing the visitor number to 3.6m and tourist revenue to £625 million. Deliver at least one significant tourism event.	Acheive legacy benefits from Our Time Our Place including change in perception/image both internally and externally and contribute to PfG targets of increasing the visitor number to 4.2m and tourist revenue to £676 million. Deliver at least one significant tourism event.

The ni 2012 Our Time Our Place initiative was a great success and tourism momentum has been maintained with major events held in 2013 such as the UK City of Culture 2013 in Derry~Londonderry, the hosting of the G8 Summit of world leaders in Fermanagh, and the World Police and Fire Games 2013 held in Belfast.

The Big Start of the Giro d'Italia will take place in Northern Ireland in May 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
19. DRD	Progress the upgrade of key road projects and improve the overall road network to ensure that by March 2015 journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5%- against the 2003 baseline	Improve the strategic road network by achieving 85% of our major works milestones	Improve the strategic road network by achieving 85% of our major milestones	2.5% reduction in journey times

This PfG period will see the fruition of a commitment to reduce journey times on the Strategic Road Network which reflects the implementation of the Strategic Road Improvement Programme (SRIP) over a 12 year period. While journey times initially increased, investment in recent years has contributed to a reduction in comparison to 2003. Further improvements are anticipated as more schemes from the SRIP are implemented. Good progress is being made on the construction of the A8 Belfast – Larne dual carriageway and the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland schemes.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
20. DEL	Increase uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) places	233 additional places	467 additional places	700 additional places

The funding for the additional places has been put in place and the Higher Education providers notified of this in advance of the 2013/14 academic year. It is anticipated that the 467 additional places will be delivered and the outcome for the 2012/13 year would indicate that this is achievable

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
21. DE	Increase the overall proportion of young people who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English by the time they leave school. Including: Increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English	61% 42%	63% 45%	66% 49%

The latest data (published in May 2013) show that the proportion of school leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents) including GCSE English and GCSE maths has increased from 59.5% in 2010/11 to 62.0% in 2011/12. The proportion of school leavers entitled to free school meal achieving this measure has increased from 31.7% in 2010/11 to 34.1% in 2011/12.

School Leaver results for 2012/13 will be available in May 2014.
The Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect the additional actions and activity that are being undertaken to support improvement. The Minister for Education announced an additional £3m to be targeted at raising educational standards in 2013/14 and 2014/15:- an additional £1million in each year to deliver a CPD project for KS2 and KS3 literacy and numeracy teachers focused on the delivery of high quality teaching and learning, and a further £2m in each year to develop community education initiatives that are intended to support the delivery of improved educational outcomes in areas of deprivation, including specifically areas of educational deprivation. The Delivering Social Change project is progressing well. Recruitment has progressed well since the first tranche of teaching posts were advertised in June 2013. As at 31 March 2014, 255.3 of the 270.2 FTE appointments being made under the OFMdFM and DE expansion programmes have been completed (an additional 2.4 FTE posts self-funded by schools have also been filled). Recruitment to the remaining unfilled posts will commence in June for a September appointment. Schools have been advised to use sub cover in the interim.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
22. DHSSPS	Allocate an increasing percentage of the overall health budget to public health (This should contribute to society and the economy by tackling disadvantage)	Strengthen the cross-sectoral/cross-departmental drive on improving health and mental wellbeing and reducing health inequalities by setting new policy direction and associated outcomes based on the most recent bodies of evidence available	The HSC wil have in place, all the arrangements necessary to extend bowel cancer screening to everyone aged 60/74 from 1st April 2014	Invest an additional £10m in public health (increase based on 2011/12 spend)
Work on the extension of bowel cancer screening to everyone aged 60-74 from 1st April 2014 is in place. Development work on the new Strategic Framework for Public Health has been finalised and is due to be published shortly, subject to Executive approval. Progress on investment in key areas continued in 2013/14. These included:- promoting social inclusion activities for older people;developing specialist support services to meet the needs of vulnerable groups;additional support for screening services including AAA screening and Breast screening for High Risk women;working with local councils on accident prevention initiatives and;expansion of hospital based smoking cessation services. In addition, a number of new vaccination and immunisation programmes are well underway.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
23. DARD	Eradicate brucellosis in cattle by March 2014	0.03% (confirmed annual herd incidence expressed as a percentage)	0.00%	0.00%
Excellent progress is being made towards the eradication of Brucellosis as a result of DARD and Industry efforts. The annual confirmed herd incidence reached zero (0.00%) on 28 February 2013, this important milestone being met more than one year ahead of target. The last case of confirmed infection was in February 2012. Continued vigilance by those keeping cattle is essential and in particular the immediate reporting to DARD of any bovine abortion so that Brucellosis can be ruled out.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
24. DARD, DETI	Develop a strategic plan for the Agri-food sector	New Food Strategy Board in place and operational; strategic vision completed and agreed; funding options explored and identified	Strategic vision implemented via the Food Strategy Board and performance against targets reviewed	Strategic vision implemented via the Food Strategy Board and performance against targets reviewed
The AFSB published its strategic plan for the agri-food sector, "Going for Growth" in May 2013. The plan has been				

assessed by relevant Departments and a proposed Response has been circulated to Ministers for comment. Executive consideration of the proposed Response to "Going for Growth" and an associated action plan is expected in the near future. Progress continues to be made by Government and industry in implementing some agreed actions.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
25. DEL	Upskill the working age population by delivering over 200,000 qualifications	105,000* qualifications	53,000 qualifications	53,000 qualifications
In year 1 (2012/13) of this commitment, there were almost 140,000 Level 2 and above full qualifications gained across mainstream Further Education (FE), Essential Skills, funded Departmental Training Programmes, and Higher Education (HE), including HE in FE. The 2012/13 milestone covers two years of provision relating to academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12 added together. The latest data indicate that, in year 2 (2013/14), there were 78,556 Level 2 and above full qualifications gained, equating to 217,000 qualifications gained to date. The overall PfG target has been achieved and based on current performance and an assessment of enrolments and retention rates across these areas of provision, it is expected that the Year 3 (2014/15) milestone will be achieved.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
26. OFMDFM	Facilitate delivery of the Executive's 20% target for increased drawdown of competitive EU funds	Establish baseline figure for annual drawdown of funds	Effective drawdown of competitive EU funds	To have achieved 20% over the period
Competitive EU funds drawdown data are published annually in arrears. Drawdown was £23.0m in Year 1 (2011/12) and £18.3m for Year 2 (2012/13).				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
27. DEL, DETI	Develop and implement a Strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation	Develop a Strategy	Implement key actions from the Strategy	Further implementation of key actions from the Strategy
A public consultation was launched on 23 January and will end on 17 April. Following the conclusion of the consultation period, a final draft strategy will be developed for Executive approval, prior to commencing the implementation phase in the latter half of 2014.				

Priority 2

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
28. DSD	Deliver 8,000 social and affordable homes	1,325 social and 500 affordable homes delivered	1,275 social and 500 affordable homes delivered	2,000 social and 500 affordable homes delivered
Progress against the PfG target is on track for achievement and at the mid point been exceeded.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
29. DSD	Introduce and support a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fuel poverty across Northern Ireland including preventative interventions	9,000 homes improved	9,000 homes improved	9,000 homes improved
The target to assist 9000 homes with energy efficiency measures has been met.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
30. DSD	Improve thermal efficiency of Housing Executive stock and ensure full double glazing in its properties (To have the Housing Executive bring forward a strategy by March 2012 to improve the thermal efficiency of their housing stock including a programme aimed at providing full double glazing by 2014/15)	Implement Programme from 1 April 2012	50% completed by March 2014	Full completion by March 2015
The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Low Rise Double Glazing Framework was awarded in December 2013, following resolution of a number of contractual issues. Given that the three contractors have now started work on a reduced Double Glazing Programme it is anticapated that the 9,800 target should be achievable by 2015.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
31. OFMDFM	Provide £40 million to address dereliction and promote investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas through the Social Investment Fund	Produce Strategic Action Plans identifying and prioritising needs in 8 regions of disadvantage and poverty. Establish a monitoring framework and baseline targets to promote physical regeneration of the identified areas.	To have met all key milestones for physical regeneration.	To have achieved agreed milestones and completed an evaluation of expenditure.To have achieved £40 million of programme expenditure.To have evaluated the impact of expenditure.
Good progress continues with securing approvals to Business Cases. Lead Partners have been identified, have received draft Letters of Offer and are in the process of working up plans. Steering Groups have continued to meet to oversee the delivery of the Programme. Work is ongoing on the delivery of projects as well as ensuring Economic Appraisals continue through the approval process.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
32. OFMDFM	Invest £40 million to improve pathways to employment, tackle systemic issues linked to deprivation and increase community services through the Social Investment Fund	Produce Strategic Action Plans identifying and prioritising needs in 8 regions of disadvantage and poverty. Establish a monitoring framework and baseline targets which support identification of demonstrable improvements in levels of education, health and employment in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation.	To have demonstrated improvements on all short term or lead measures	To have demonstrated positive trends on lead measures relating to levels of education, health and employment in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation. To have achieved £40 million of programme expenditure. To have evaluated the impact of expenditure.
Good progress continues with securing approvals to Business Cases. Lead Partners have been identified, have received draft Letters of Offer and are in the process of working up plans. Steering Groups have continued to meet to oversee the delivery of the Programme. Work is ongoing on the delivery of projects as well as ensuring Economic Appraisals continue through the approval process.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
33. OFMDFM	Publish and implement a Childcare Strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare	Develop and begin to implement strategy. Design programme to achieve £12 million of additional expenditure on improving childcare provision over the Comprehensive Spending Review period	Achieve at least £3 million of expenditure and the key milestones in the Strategy	Achieve remaining expenditure and the key milestones in the Strategy. Evaluate the Strategy
The first phase of the Bright Start Childcare Strategy was launched in September 2013 and included 15 Key First Actions to address the main needs and priorities identified during consultation and research (December 2012 to March 2013). All of the Key First Actions were underway by the end of March 2014 including the Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme whcih was launched on 27 March 2014. The Grant Scheme will take forward Key First Actions 1, 2 and 5 whcih aim to create or sustain up to 7,000 school age childcare places by making available up to £15 million in grants over the period 2014 to 2017. The deadlines for applications are: 9 May 2014 for applications from existing childcare providers and 30 September 2014 for new providers. It is expected that the first letters of offer will issue in autumn 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
34. OFMDFM	Deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion through the Delivering Social Change delivery framework. (By co-ordinating actions between Departments, this framework aims to achieve a sustained long term reduction in child poverty and an improvement in children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities. The framework will include key actions to develop an integrated policy framework to tackle multi-generational poverty, a new Victims and Survivors Service, a review of Historical Institutional Abuse and actions to ensure compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; measures to promote the rights of people from an ethnic minority background.)	Establish and begin to implement the Delivering Social Change framework which will include projects to deliver: an integrated policy framework and supporting research to tackle multi-generational poverty and social exclusion; the £80 million Social Investment Fund; the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund; a new Victims and Survivors Service; compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a review of Historical Institutional Abuse; a range of measures in support of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration to improve community relations; and a Childcare Strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare.	Implement key milestones across all of the projects and monitor performance through lead indicators. Ensure that these results feed into OFMDFM budget plans, including the Area Plans being developed for the £80 million Social Investment Fund, the £12 million Childcare Fund and the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund	Evaluate performance of the Delivering Social Change projects in terms of early indicators and assess the likely impact on longer term trends
The Programme Board had met on twelve occasions and the Executive Ministerial Sub-Committee on eight. Literacy and Numeracy - 223.4 full time equivalent teachers have been appointed to provide additional teaching support to those children and young people who are most at risk of underachieving in English and Maths at critical stages of their education. Nurture Units - 20 new Nurture Units are now fully operational and 480 children and families will benefit from this Programme. Family Support Hubs -Three new Family Support Hubs are operational				

and five additional Hubs will be established by April 2014 and the remaining two to follow by summer 2014. 6,000 families will benefit from these Hubs which provide assistance in a friendly local enviroment and helps families overcome challenges which could otherwise be overwhelming and unmanagable. Parenting Support Programmes - Good progress continues to be made on the delivery of four of the five parenting support programmes. 1,200 families will benefit from the provision of additional, high quality intervention support to both new and existing parents. Community Family Support - An up-scaled pilot intervention, supporting parents and helping young people who are not in education, employment or training, was launched on 4 November 2013 and is being rolled out to 720 families. Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs - The tendering process for delivery agents has now been completed and eleven Hubs will be operational by the end of April 2014. The Hubs will tackle the lack of employment opportunities within local communities and encourage business set-up.

To ensure compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) the Disability Strategy “A strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities 2012 – 2015” has been completed. To monitor compliance across the Executive we intend to commission work on mapping indicators associated with the UNCRPD.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
35. OFMDFM	Use the Social Protection Fund to help individuals and families facing hardship due to the current economic downturn	Develop proposals which can meet immediate needs for individuals and families. Ensure that some longer term programmes are developed which can have a lasting impact as well as meeting immediate needs	Implement longer term programmes with the Fund as well as addressing immediate problems	Implement longer term programmes with the Fund as well as addressing immediate problems

In line with the ethos of Delivering Social Change the Social Protection Fund has now been subsumed into one consolidated and integrated 'Delivering Social Change Central Fund' which will take forward Childcare, the Social Investment Fund and both current and future Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework. The Delivering Social Change Fund affords Ministers the opportunity to quickly respond in a flexible manner to urgent social needs as they arise. Updates on the implementation of Delivering Social Change and the signature programmes are provided under Commitment 34, on childcare under Commitment 33, and on the Social Investment Fund under Commitments 31 and 32

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
36. DEL	Support people (with an emphasis on young people) in to employment by providing skills and training *includes 2011/12 figures	65,000*	89,000 cumulative	114,000 cumulative

In the period April to January 2014 we helped 32,713 people find work – 66% above target for the period (19,729). Of these, 10,513 (32%) were aged 18 – 24.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
37. OFMDFM	Fulfil our commitments under the Child Poverty Act to reduce child poverty	Develop an action plan to address child poverty in the context of an integrated policy framework to tackle multi-generational poverty and social exclusion. Design actions on the basis of a Poverty Outcomes Model to show which interventions will have the most significant effect in tackling child poverty. Ensure that the action plan is consistent with commitments under the Child Poverty Act	Implement key milestones and monitor performance through lead indicators. Ensure that this feeds into the Area Plans being developed for the £80 million Social Investment Fund and the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund as well as the £3 million per annum Childcare Fund	Evaluate performance in terms of early indicators and likely impact on longer term trends
A review of the Child Poverty Strategy 2011-14 was completed and informed the development of a new draft Strategy. A consultation document, Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People, providing an integrated policy framework encompassing policy on children and young people, including child poverty and children's rights, was published in January for public consultation. During the public consultation period (20 January – 31 March) six public consultation events and numerous other events were held to engage with parents, children and young people and other stakeholders to seek views on the proposals. Following 31 March, the comments and responses from stakeholders will be used to inform the development of a new strategy.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
38. OFMDFM	Extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services	Develop and consult on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation on the provision of goods, facilities and services	Progress legislation through the Assembly	Complete legislation
No decision has been taken on the scope of the proposed legislation.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
39. DRD	For households, ensure no additional water charges during this Programme for Government	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW
Annual customer subsidy paid to Northern Ireland Water.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
40. DEL	Ensure there are no increases in student fees beyond the rate of inflation for Northern Ireland students studying here	Apply policy	Apply policy	Apply policy
Commitment met				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
41. OFMDFM	Establish an advisory group to assist Ministers in alleviating hardship including any implications of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Programme	Establish advisory group and provide report		
The Commitment is complete.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
42. DE	Improve literacy and numeracy levels among all school leavers, with additional support targeted at underachieving pupils	Develop proposals to significantly improve literacy levels and thereby contribute to addressing multi-generational disadvantage	Implement and monitor programme	Implement and monitor programme

The Minister has in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. The department's literacy and numeracy strategy –Count read: succeed - supports teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. The strategy is supported by a range of additional measures to improve literacy and numeracy.

The most recently published data shows that the proportion of school leavers achieving GCSE A*-C in English has increased from 68.5% in 2009/10 to 70.5% in 2011/12. The proportion achieving GCSE A*- C in maths has increased from 64.9% to 68.5% during this period.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
43. DE	Ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it	Identify reasons why parents do not avail of places. Commence implementation of the Review of Pre-school Admissions	Based on findings, implement changes to encourage parents to take up places.Continue to implement Review of Pre-school Admissions.	Review progress and take further actions as necessary
Progress on the commitment in 2013/14 shows that 99.8% of children obtained a funded pre-school place (whose parents engaged with the process to the end).				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
44. DHSSPS	Enrol people who have a long-term (chronic) condition, and who want to be enrolled, in a dedicated chronic condition management programme	Identify and evaluate the current baseline of patient education and self management support programmes that are currently in place in each Trust area	Health and Social Care Board / Public Health Agency should work with key stakeholders to develop and secure a range of quality assured education, information and support programmes to help people manage their long term conditions effectively, alongside full application of the Remote Telemonitoring contract	People with a long term condition will be offered access to appropriate education, information and support programmes relevant to their needs, including innovative application of connected health
Milestone 2 has been achieved with regular arrangements for monitoring patient education/self management programmes now in place. In 2011/12 a total of 625 programmes were delivered across Northern Ireland with 10,189 attendees. Information on programmes provided and attendees during 2012/13 is currently being finalised. Work has also progressed to identify and cost potential demand for patient education/self management programmes as part of an Action Plan to support implementation of the Long Term Conditions Policy Framework. This will inform future prioritisation and commissioning of programmes.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
45. DHSSPS	Invest £7.2 million in programmes to tackle obesity	Invest £2 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.4 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.8 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework
On track for delivery. A cross-Departmental Obesity Prevention Steering Group oversees and monitors Departmental actions committed to within the obesity prevention strategy. The Public Health Agency (PHA) leads a multi-agency implementation group to take forward non-Departmental actions. The PHA ensured that £2.4m was spent on tackling obesity in 2013/14.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
46. DARD	Bring forward a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation in the next three years	Finalisation of programme to tackle poverty and isolation. Completion of necessary financial work and agreement with other Departments as necessary. Implementation of various programmes Spend of £4 million	Implementation of programmes. Spend of £4 million	Implementation of programmes. Spend of £5 million
100% of the expenditure milestone for 2013/14 has been achieved representing a real benefit to rural communities through funding a broad range of tackling poverty and social isolation initiatives.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
47. DARD	Advance the relocation of the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to a rural area by 2015	Carry out the necessary appraisal processes to decide on the most suitable accommodation for the DARD HQ in the future	Implement a programme for securing the appropriate accommodation for the future DARD HQ	Continue to implement a programme for securing required accommodation for the future DARD HQ
Work completed on accommodation options, surveys and EQIAs. Business case completion and TUS / staff consultation is ongoing. Next steps include implementation of HR Strategy and building design briefs.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
48. DETI	Develop and implement a Financial Capability Strategy for consumers	Develop Strategy	Implement key actions from Strategy	Further implement key actions. Assess and report on impacts of Strategy implementation .

Draft Strategy and Action Plans noted and cleared by the ETI Committee on 20 February 2014, and submitted to the Executive.

Priority 3

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
49. DOE	Implement a levy on single use carrier bags by 2013 and extend this to reusable bags from April 1 2014	Operational arrangements in place by 31 January 2013. Subordinate legislation made under the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended for Northern Ireland) in place by 31 January 2013 to allow the levy on single use carrier bags to be introduced by April 2013	Primary legislation and amended subordinate legislation made in time to enable full charging for single use and reusable carrier bags to commence by April 2014	Implement levy

The Carrier Bag Levy launched on 8 April 2013 and has been broadly welcomed by both the public and retailers. Data from retailers suggest a large reduction in single use bag numbers. Figures from several major supermarkets point towards a possible annual reduction of well in excess of 80% in those stores. The position will become clearer in August 2014 when a full year of validated data is available.

To date the levy has generated over £3m. The proceeds will be returned to the community; the Minister has already allocated £2.3 million to 251 projects through the Environmental Challenge Fund for 2014. This Fund provides vital money for communities and organisations to develop local environmental projects across Northern Ireland

The Carrier Bags Bill was passed by the Assembly on 10 March 2014 and will extend the levy to reusable carrier bags priced at under 20 pence – the change will take effect from 19 January 2015. This should encourage shoppers to reuse these bags to their maximum potential – rather than discard them prematurely.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
50. DOE	Continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse

		gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline	gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline	gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline

The latest estimate is for a 27.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 against the target of 35%. The Department of the Environment continues to work on improvements to calculate historic and project future emissions and to coordinate and take account of actions across government that will reduce (or have the potential to reduce) emissions.
There are areas that will enhance prosperity and realise the full potential for reducing emissions. These include further deployment of and support for renewables, energy efficiency, sustainable urban drainage/water provision, supporting the sustainable intensification of the agri-food sector and transport initiatives to support more sustainable travel.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
51. DOE	Work towards halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020	Declare 15 additional Areas of Special Scientific Interest. Complete and publish a statutory management scheme for Rathlin Island marine N2K site. Publish an Invasive Species Strategy. Make an interim set of amending Conservation Regulations by 30 April 2012, and a further set of revised Regulations by 31 March 2013 that meet the EU requirements of Birds and Habitats Directives .	Designate a further 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest. Publish a revised Biodiversity Strategy. Consolidate Conservation Regulations.	Designate an additional 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest

15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest were designated by the 31st March 2014.

Following publication of the consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy in 2013/14, an Action Plan for the Biodiversity Strategy will be developed during 2014/15 in partnership with stakeholders.

Consolidation of Conservation Regulations to be undertaken in 2014/15 as further infraction action unlikely. A list of potential areas for consideration is being drawn up and it is intended to canvass widely to ensure all amendments and additional requirements are included in the consolidated regulations.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
52. DOE	Achieve a household waste recycling or composting rate of 45% by end of March 2015	Recycling rates of 41% for household waste	Recycling rates of 43% for household waste	Recycling rates of 45% for household waste
Quarter 2 figures for 2013/14 (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/municipal_data_reporting.htm) show a continuing increase in household waste recycling rates from Quarter 1; an increase of 1.7 percentage points compared with the same period in 2012/13. However larger increases are required in Quarters 3 and 4 to meet the 43% milestone.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
53. DOJ	Substantially complete the construction of the new Police, Prison and Fire Training College	Award construction contract	At least 25% of the Programme Capital Budget will be utilised	At least 70% of the Programme Capital Budget will be utilised
Despite extensive engagement, the Preferred Bidder was unfortunately unable to demonstrate that they could offer an affordable and compliant bid. The Programme Board, therefore, discontinued the preferred bidder process to build the new college. While this development is very disappointing, it is not the end of the process. Over the next 8 weeks, a detailed review will be undertaken to review the design, quantify funding requirements, identify opportunities to de-risk the project and refine the business case with a view to going back out to short-listed companies by September 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
54. DOJ	Reduce the level of serious crime	Publish final cross-departmental Strategic Framework on Reducing Offending. Deliver against Protection and Justice elements of 12/13 domestic and sexual violence action plan and contribute to development of new domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and action plan.	Implement 90% of agreed Youth Justice Review recommendations. Finalise, and deliver against Protection and Justice elements of new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy	Deliver joined up oversight, evaluation and publication of reducing offending interventions.Deliver against Protection and Justice elements of new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy. Develop and action a desistance strategy for offenders to cover custodial and non-custodial settings.
The joint DHSSPS and DoJ Strategy for Domestic and Sexual Violence launched for a 12 week public consultation on 11 January 2014. During the consultation process representatives from both Departments have met with individuals and interested groups to discuss the content of the Strategy.				

DOJ has established an evaluation and monitoring group to develop a system that will evaluate the impact of the Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending across the Justice System, and provide ongoing measurement. Baseline figures on reoffending rates for 2010/11 and 2011/12 will be pulished in May 2014, and baseline figures on the number of people entering the justice system for the first time will be available in June 2014.

In December 2013, DOJ agreed how it will deliver its strategic approach to desistance across the justice system. Short research studies have been undertaken in March 2014 and the outcomes will be used to inform the development of an action plan to further advance the desistance strategy.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
55. DOJ	Tackle crime against older and vulnerable people by more effective and appropriate sentences and other measures	Consult Lord Chief Justice on inclusion of older and vulnerable people in sentencing guidelines initiative	Any necessary legislative changes taken forward as part of DOJ legislative programme. Develop programme of measures to reduce fear and increase confidence in older and vulnerable people.	Implement programme of measures
The age and vulnerability of the victim are included as aggravating factors in the principles underlying sentencing. Measures for transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice were announced by the Minister of Justice in June 2012. As part of these measures, two lay members, one of whom is representative of the views of victims, are being recruited to the Sentencing Group, established by the Lord Chief Justice to enhance the guidance available to the judiciary. It is anticipated that an announcement will be made shortly. The action plan tackling crime against older and vulnerable people is being implemented. Performance indicators have also been agreed and performance is being monitored. A progress report was submitted to the Justice Committee in February 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
56. DOJ	Improve community safety by tackling anti-social behaviour *Statistically significant change	Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) fully operational.Establish baseline for percentage of people affected by Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Monitor quarterly and publish annually NI Crime Survey findings in respect of:Percentage who agree that police and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in their local area;Percentage who perceive the level of	Increase the percentage* of people who agree that police and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in their area; A reduction in the percentage* of people who perceive the level of ASB in their area to be high and;An improvement in

			ASB in their area to be high;Percentage whose quality of life is affected by ASB	the percentage* of people whose quality of life is affected by their experience of ASB

Progress continues to be made against the actions in the Anti – social Behaviour Action Plan. An annual progress report on this Action Plan, and the Action Plans for the other key strands of the Community Safety Strategy, were considered by the Justice Committee on 20 February 2014. A copy of this report is available in the publication section of the Department of Justice website.

The report highlights work that has been taken forward to tackle ASB including the providing information to the public, on NI Direct and through local PCSPs, to clarify who can help you, or your local community, if you are experiencing ASB.

The latest PSNI figures for recorded ASB incidents, published on the 27 March 2014, show that the number of ASB incidents recorded during the latest twelve months to February 2014 (60,927) is 4,430 incidents lower than the level recorded during 2012/13 (65,357) a decrease of 8.2%.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
57. DOJ	Improve access to Justice	Publish Departmental response to Access to Justice Review and associated Departmental Action Plan	Introduce legislation to give effect to reforms requiring primary legislation	Implementation of reforms

The Milestone for Year 2013/14 "introduce legislation to give effect to reforms requiring primary legislation" has been achieved. The Legal Aid and Coroners' Courts Bill was introduced on 31 March 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
58. DRD	Upgrade the Coleraine to Derry/Londonderry railway line		Complete Phase 1 - re-lay end sections at Coleraine and Derry and complete essential bridge works (subject to no legal challenge to procurement exercise)	Phase 2 – new signalling and passing loop – substantially complete (subject to no legal challenge to procurement exercise)

Phase 1 of the upgrade was completed in March 2013.

Owing to the delay in the procurement process, the planned completion date of Phase 2 of late 2015 will not be achieved. Work is progressing to identify all opportunities to regain any of the lost time on this important project to ensure it will be completed by mid to late 2016. Work on the Phase 2 project is expected to be progressing by the end of 2014-15.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
59. DRD	Invest over £500m to promote sustainable modes of travel	£298 million invested	£389.5 million invested	Over £500 million invested
£390.75 million has been invested by the end of the 2013/14 year. DRD plans to continue its investment during 2014/15 which will see the Department invest over £500 million over the full four year PfG period.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
60. DRD	By 2015 create the conditions to facilitate at least 36% of primary school pupils and 22% of secondary school pupils to walk or cycle to school as their main mode of transport	33% (Primary School) 21% (Secondary School)	34% (Primary School) 21% (Secondary School)	36% (Primary School) 22% (Secondary School)
180 Schools are participating in a three year Active Schools Travel programme. Year one of the programme is nearing completion with 60 schools involved. A further 60 schools are undergoing selection for year two and the final 60 schools will be selected during 2015 to complete the three year programme.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
61. DHSSPS	Introduce a package of measures aimed at improving Safeguarding Outcomes for Children and Vulnerable Adults	Develop a Strategic Plan for Adult Safeguarding in Northern Ireland and produce a joint Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy	Open new Sexual Assault Referral Centre at Antrim Area Hospital	Develop an updated inter-departmental Child Safeguarding Policy Framework
We remain on track to achieve PfG Commitment 61 in full. Nine key actions are now completed and progress continues to be made against each remaining key action. Key achievements in the last quarter are set out below. The Strategic Plan (2013 - 2018) for Adult Safeguarding was published by the HSC Board on 14 October 2013 The joint Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy was issued for consultation on 15 January 2014; the final strategy will be published and launched later in 2014. Regulations to introduce and enforce compulsory registration with the NISCC for specified groups of social care workers came into operation in October 2013.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
62. DRD	Maintain a high quality of drinking water and improve compliance with waste water standards by investing £668m in water and sewerage infrastructure.	Compliance with regulatory targets: 99.7% water 96.5% Wastewater	Compliance with regulatory targets for water and Wastewater	Compliance with regulatory targets for water and Wastewater
By the end of 2013-14, £515.2 million has been invested on water and sewerage infrastructure, and the targets for drinking water quality and waste water treatment have been surpassed.				

Priority 4

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
63. DCAL	Develop sports stadiums as agreed with the IFA, GAA and Ulster Rugby	Develop and agree programme of developments and specific project plans	Implement key milestones and initiate development programme	Implement key milestones

UBIRFU - Ravenhill is progressing very well with construction of the Aquinas Stand, Memorial Stand and main Grandstand now complete. Completion of the remaining phases of construction work is planned for September 2014. IFA - The successful Tenderer was identified, other Tenderers informed and no procurement challenges arose. The Funding Agreement was completed and the contractor was appointed by 20th December 2013. Completion of the construction works is planned for autumn 2015. UCGAA - The successful Tenderer was identified, other Tenderers informed and no procurement challenges arose. The Funding Agreement was completed and the contractor appointed by 20th December 2013. Completion of the construction works is planned for early 2016.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
64. DCAL	Host the World Police and Fire Games in 2013	Develop plans and project arrangements	Host the Games	

The Commitment is complete.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
65. DETI	Support the successful hosting of the 2012 Irish Open and build on that success to secure a further international golf event	Successfully host the 2012 Irish Open Golf Championship at Royal Portrush	Secure the Irish Open for Northern Ireland in 2015	Develop plans and project arrangements to host the Irish Open in 2015

Following the hosting of a very successful Irish Open in 2012 at Royal Portrush, the European Tour announced on 3 April 2014 that the Irish Open will return to Northern Ireland in 2015 and 2017.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
66. DSD	Deliver at least 30 Schemes to improve landscapes in public areas to promote private sector investment in towns and cities across Northern Ireland	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered

DSD continues to deliver public realm schemes across Northern Ireland. Urban Regeneration strives to make cities attractive places to live, work and invest in order to grow our economy, create opportunities and tackle disadvantage. DSD makes use of a number of regeneration measures to achieve this purpose. One of the most important of these measures is public realm improvement schemes, which deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits. URCDG continues to build on the achievements last year, with 26 new schemes completed in the 2013/14 financial year.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
67. OFMDFM	Publish the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy to build a united community and improve community relations	Finalise strategy and agree early actions. Develop a change management plan for organisations with a specific interest in this area of work	Achieve early milestones in the plan and monitor performance on early or lead indicators	Achieve milestones and review performance against the Strategy
Progress has been made on all of the seven headline actions identified in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. The Senior Responsible Owners have developed detailed project plans – including key milestones and budget profiles. The following key actions have been progressed: - announcement on two of the four Urban Villages: Lower Newtownards Road and Colin - a pilot to test elements of the United Youth Programme was launched and funded under the Central Good Relations Fund - a comprehensive review of the structure, delivery and impact of existing funding delivery mechanisms has been commissioned, Phase one of the review was completed on 31 March, Phase 2 is planned for completion by end of June 2014. - work is underway to establish the new Equality and Good Relations Commission including the drafting of primary legislation which will augment the powers of the current Equality Commission. - the consultation exercise on new Good Relations Indicators has been completed and responses are now being evaluated. - proposal to deliver summer school/camp pilots in 2014 has been agreed by Ministers. - proposals for a programme of early progress in 2014/15 on interface removal is under consideration by Ministers - work is also progressing on establishing the range of thematic subgroups that will support delivery of the strategy's objectives.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
68. DOJ	Actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of 'peace walls'	Establish inter-agency collaborative approach to addressing interface structures. Review existing arrangements for engagement with communities. Identify funding gaps and seek partnership funding opportunities. Develop action plans for individual areas involving stakeholders	Implementation of action plans. Reduction in the number of interface structures	Implementation of action plans. Reduction in the number of interface structures. Ongoing monitoring of community tension and residents' concerns. Review of progress to identify further opportunities for change and lessons learned.

On interfaces good progress has been achieved in ensuring that there is an appropriate level of support and engagement within relevant government departments, within key statutory agencies, and in the police and other agencies responsible for safety and security. In addition engagement through partnership programmes, such as IFI and Belfast City Council, has ensured that local approaches are being developed involving community representatives and local residents. Through the year, however, local tensions in some areas have impacted on some projects. The overall number of DoJ structures has been reduced from 59 to 53. Engagement has been initiated on 40 of the DoJ's 53 structures. IFI approved funding for 8 specific community engagement projects, covering a number of the structures. Specific action plans have been developed covering 24 structures. While committed to the PfG work the Department is working with OFMdFM on the wider proposals in TBUC, including seeking assurances on commitment and on resources.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
69. DOJ	Reform and modernise the Prison Service	To have a new Operating Model in place and ready to launch. To have a new Training and Development Package for all operational staff in place and ready to launch. To have completed the selection of new Custody Officers to replace Prison Officers	To have new certificates and licenses for professionalising the Service	Implement 90% of the recommendations contained in the Prison Review Action Plan within the agreed timescales

As part of the ongoing process of prison reform, NIPS has recruited a number of Custody Prison Officers. As part of our programme of support for these newly appointed Officers, they are required to work towards an accredited Certificate of Competence. Academic accreditation for the Certificate of Competence has been secured via the University of Ulster and portfolios will progress through internal and external validation before successful candidates are issued with certificates in June 2014.

To further NIPS commitment to the training and development of existing operational staff, rollout of accredited development programmes began in December 2013, beginning with Main Grade Officers. The application to the Institute of Leadership and Management for accreditation of the Senior Officer programme has been approved and delivery of training will dovetail with placement of staff following the Senior Officer promotion competition.

A series of master-classes have been arranged aimed at increasing the skills-set of NIPS Governor and senior management grades. The master-class series has covered the following themes: incident management; managing attendance; investigations; political context; performance management; and financial accountability.

Across the reform programme, to date, 19 of the 40 PRT recommendations have been signed off by the Prison Review Oversight Group (recommendations 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 32, 34, 38 & 39).

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
70. DE	Significantly progress work on the plan for the Lisanelly Shared Education campus as a key regeneration project.	Develop a business case and plan for the new campus.	Secure funding and initiatiate the development programme.	Complete procurement process and initiate first phase of construction.

Approval of the business case for Phase 1 of this major investment has been received. The Minister has committed more than £14million of funding over the next three years to deliver the first stage of a project. This will involve site clearance work which commenced in October 2013 with the construction of the new Arvalee School and Resource Centre due to commence by the end of 2014.

In tandem the Outline Business Case 2 incorporating Phase 2 of the project has now been approved and the procurement process for appointment of an Integrated Design Team will commence in the near future.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
71. DE	Establish a Ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education.	Establish group and produce report with recommendations.		

Complete

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
72. DE	Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015.	Define the objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes.	Put in place measures to achieve objectives.	Achieve overall commitment objective.

Progress remains on target to meet the milestone targets.

High level objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes and children sharing school facilities have been defined and will be further refined as work progresses.

Baseline statistics have been established from the 2013 school omnibus survey and published in January 2014. The Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 22 October accepting their recommendation in principle, but reserving judgement on some pending further work. Actions are in progress to implement the recommendations.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
73. DE	Substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.	Define the objectives in terms of children sharing school facilities.	Put in place measures to achieve objectives.	Achieve overall commitment objective.
Progress remains on target to meet the milestone targets. High level objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes and children sharing school facilities have been defined and will be further refined as work progresses. Baseline statistics have been established from the 2013 school omnibus survey and published in January 2014. The Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 22 October accepting their recommendation in principle, but reserving judgement on some pending further work. Actions are in progress to implement the recommendations.				

Priority 5

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
74. DFP	Include Social Clauses in public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction.	Develop a Procurement Guidance Note on social clauses. Modify the Procurement Board Strategic Plan to incorporate targets for the implementation of social clauses by Departments.	Monitor implementation	Monitor implementation
Nine departments responded to the request to set targets for 2013/14. Progress against the first 6 months of the period has been reported by ten departments. Requests have been issued to Permanent Secretaries to set departmental targets for delivery in 2014 – 2015. The position on both will be reported to the Procurement Board at its next meeting on 11 June 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
75. DOE	Establish the new 11 Council model for Local Government by 2015	Progress legislation (to include Local Government Reorganisation Act) and a programme structure necessary to manage change.	Arrangements in place for the shadow councils. Deliver Year 2 of implementation programme.	Arrangements in place for the transfer of powers to councils.
The Local Government Bill was introduced into the Assembly on 23 September 2013 and completed its Assembly stages on 8 April 2014. The Department has continued to issue guidance to support the Statutory Transition Committees to undertake their				

functions in regard to council costs during the shadow period planning decision-making structures, winding up arrangements of the existing 26 councils and STCs and election costs. The Minister has monitored the progress of the Committees through the Regional Transition Committee and also by undertaking a series of local visits to all the Statutory Transition Committees.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
76. DE	We will make the Education and Skills Authority operational in 2013	Bring forward for scrutiny and approval by the Assembly, the legislation necessary to establish a single education authority. Take forward the organisational, financial and other actions necessary to prepare for the establishment of the ESA, and for winding up the eight existing bodies it will replace	Take forward structural, financial and other actions required for establishing a new non-departmental public body and for winding up existing Non-Departmental Public Bodies	Single Education Authority established and fully functional
The legislation to establish ESA completed its “Committee stage” on 8 April. Progress was made on the implementation aspects of the programme. This target has however not been met due to failure of Executive to agree the required legislation.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
77. OFMDFM	Agree any changes to post-2015 structures of Government in 2012	Consider relevant reports from the Efficiency Review Panel and Assembly and Executive Review Committee. Engage with UK Government on any necessary amendments to Westminster legislation	Introduce any necessary Assembly legislation to implement agreed changes	Complete administrative and legal preparations for post-2015 structural changes
The Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act completed all legislative stages at Westminster and received Royal Assent on 13 March. This legislation has now extended the term of the current Assembly to May 2016. It will also enable the Assembly, with Secretary of State consent, to reduce its size to 90 seats under current constituency arrangements.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
78. DFP	Improve online access to government services	Develop plans and specific targets to significantly increase the use of online services. Identify services which will transfer during the course of the Programme for Government.	Monitor early progress to ensure key milestones in the plans are being met. Monitor the planned tranche of services to be delivered online and consider if others can be added.	Review level of access of online services. Monitor the planned tranche of services to be delivered online and consider if others can be added.
The PSG agreed exemplar projects proof of concept (POC) pilots delivered by the 31st March 2014 with some minor adjustments to follow in April. Work is ongoing to transfer the POC modules into live services. Transactional services to go live over the last quarter include GRO Genealogy NI and DSD Landlord Registration. Cameo2 has been slightly delayed to April 2014.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
79. DHSSPS	Improve patient and client outcomes and access to new treatments and services	Enhance access to life-enhancing drugs for conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriasis and increase to 10% the proportion of patients with confirmed ischaemic stroke who receive thrombolysis	Improve long-term outcomes relating to health, wellbeing, education and employment for the children of teenage mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds by rolling out the Family Nurse Partnership Programme beyond the first test phase to one further test site	Expand cardiac catheterisation capacity to improve access to diagnostic intervention and treatment and further develop a new primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) service model to reduce mortality and morbidity arising from myocardial infarction (heart attack)
This milestone continues to remain well ahead of schedule for achievement. Since the establishment of the first site in Northern Ireland within the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency have now identified and established two further sites for the Family Nurse Partnership Programme within Northern Ireland. These are within the Belfast and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
80. DHSSPS	Reconfigure, reform and modernise the delivery of Health and Social Care services to improve the quality of patient care	Development of a clear implementation and Population plan to ensure delivery of the new model of care as set out in the Transforming Your Care report	As part of a shift in the delivery of services to primary and community settings reduce by 2013/14 the number of days patients stay in acute hospitals unnecessarily (excess bed days) by 10% compared with 2011/12	Secure a shift from hospital based services to community based services together with an appropriate shift in the share of funding in line with the recommendations of Transforming Your Care

The Minister made a Statement to the NI Assembly on the 19th March 2013 on the outcome of the Transforming Your Care consultation exercise and the way forward. He made a further statement on 25th June 2013 entitled "Taking Forward Transformation", reporting on the overall transformation process including the implementation of TYC.

The Department has reported on the oversight of the implementation of TYC to both the NI Assembly and the Health Committee, most recently in an Oral Statement to the NI Assembly on 11 March 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
81. DSD	By the end of 2014/15, to have implemented new structures to support the improved delivery of housing services to the citizens of Northern Ireland	To develop and consult on service delivery structures and develop implementation programme	Deliver Year 1 of implementation programme	Implement new structures

Tranche 1 of the Programme to explore the Minister's proposals is now complete. Emerging proposals have been shared with SDC and the NI Executive and Tranche 2 commences from April 2014, to develop and appraise options to progress Social Housing Reform making recommendations on the preferred options by March 2015.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
82. DFP	Further reduce the levels of sickness absence across the NICS	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 9.5 days	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 9.0 days	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 8.5 days

NISRA reported that the NICS sickness absence levels for 2012/13 was 10.6 days (average days lost per staff year), up from 10.1 days in the previous year and short of the annual target of 9.5 days. Based on the targets and estimates figures produced by NISRA (February 2014) it is anticipated that the 2013/14 target of 9.0 days lost per staff year will also not be met, 10.0 days is anticipated. As part of the 2013/14 work programme the NICS is currently considering a number of further areas for action to address the progress towards targets.

Work Family Balance Policies Briefing Paper

Work-Family Balance Policies

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Note

This paper has been issued without formal editing.

The views expressed in the present publication are those of the authors and do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, particularly concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The assignment of countries or areas to specific groupings is for analytical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories by the United Nations. The designations “developed” and “developing” are intended for statistical and analytical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

Introduction

Even though the global economy has undergone a major financial and economic crisis, with another weakening in GDP growth since late 2010, work-family balance remains a central issue for employed parents and employers alike (World of Work Report 2011). Pressures from an increasingly competitive work environment are leading to conflicting priorities for employers and governments creating considerable stresses for employees trying to "juggle" work with family responsibilities. In some European countries, financial strains have led to cuts in existing policies or postponement and cancellations to previously announced changes (International Network on Leave Policies and Research Report, 2011). Whereas in other less economically stressed regions of the world, paid parental leave policies are being introduced for the first time.

Despite the global economic downturn, work-family balance continues to be of great importance for societies because in more and more countries women's labour force participation has increased. Finding and retaining enough employment to economically provide, as well as having time to properly care for the young, old and vulnerable members of family groups is a key challenge for contemporary parents- "the squeezed middle generation" in many families. This pressure is intensified for parents raising children alone after separation or widowhood, a growing family form in developing and developed countries (Mokomane, 2011; OECD, 2011). For those in employment, work intensity has increased, due to a combination of new information technologies and the associated quickening pace of communication and production methods (ILO, 2006). Heightened work-load and worries about job security can lead to stress and health problems with emotional "spill-over" to home (Byron, 2005). In developing countries there is disquiet about jobs creating "a care deficit" for children where employees are less available to care for very young children who may be left alone for many hours due to the absence of nurseries or alternative care (Heymann, 2006).

Since the 1970s governments have tried to respond to work-care challenges, with varying success, by introducing specific policies/strategies and new benefits. The private sector has also made adjustments and in some cases provided a testing ground for small-scale innovations (Maitland & Thompson, 2011). Similarly intergovernmental bodies such as the ILO have formulated significant protective frameworks including two major conventions relating to work-family balance. The ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Recommendation No. 165 in 1985 stipulate that the full exercise of the right to work implies that family responsibilities cannot constitute cause for discrimination or restrict access to jobs (ILO, 2011). The instruments recommend that States implement policies ensuring more equal distribution of care responsibilities. However, many workers in the informal sector are not protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks and a number of countries have eased regulations to lower the costs to employers of hiring and firing and/or introducing new work arrangements (ILO, 2006) leading some commentators to call for "raising the global floor" (Heymann & Earle, 2010). Other NGOs and grass roots activists are promoting a fundamental re-think and societal resetting in the balance of work and family life, for example a transition to a 21 hour week for all (New Economics Foundation, 2011). Whatever their position an increasing number of

stakeholders are recognizing the importance of finding more effective solutions to managing the distribution of paid work and family care time.

The purpose of this paper is firstly, to provide evidence on the key challenges faced by families today as members attempt to manage work and care and secondly, to critically examine policy solutions and initiatives, offered by governments, employers and civil society actors to ensure work-family balance.

I. Parents-Working Patterns

The work-family debate of the 1990s, in developed countries in particular, was dominated by discussion about the impact on family well-being of long weekly working hours – "*the long work hours culture"* (Burke & Cooper, 2008). Despite the slowdown in economic activity in many regions of the world, the working life of parents, particularly fathers and increasingly also mothers, can make sustaining a meaningful family life hard to manage. This section presents recent international comparative data available on parental employment patterns.

Women's increased participation in paid work

As shown in Table 1 women are increasingly participating in paid work, mirroring advances in women's education and aspirations (OECD, 2011). The timing of the resultant increase in female employment has varied across countries. For example, the rise in female employment began in the early 1960s in Australia, New Zealand, the Nordic countries, and the United States, whereas the main gains in Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain were recorded over the past two decades. However, female participation in paid work remains low in the Middle East and North Africa. A recent gender analysis for the World Economic Forum showed that North America held the top place on female economic participation followed by Europe and Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Middle East and North Africa (Global Gender Gap Report, 2011). Several Middle East countries are generally closing health and education gaps but show low levels of female participation in the paid labour force.

However, since 2009 it is notable that across OECD countries female participation in paid work rate dropped in almost every country (Table 1). The global recession and retrenchment in public sector occupations, typically a female domain, in part account for this trend but also gender discrimination practices may have contributed. Some of the countries with the largest differences in female and male earnings are also those where the growth in female employment has been the fastest, such as Chile, China, Republic of Korea and Singapore (ILO, 2006). For instance while Chinese women's labour force participation, at 74 per cent, is high, men's wages are growing faster than women's wages (Global Gender Gap Report, 2011). Women have made significant progress in the workplace, but still tend to have lower pay and far fewer high status occupations than comparable men (The Economist, 2011). Similarly in poorer regions of the world women are more likely to be in "vulnerable" unsalaried employment (contributing family workers or own-account workers). At a global level, women made up 52.7 per cent of the vulnerable employment sector in 2007, compared to 49.1 per cent for men (ILO, 2009).

The prevalence of the male breadwinner family model has diminished in those countries which experienced the expansion of female participation in the labour market. For example, it accounted for only 27 per cent of households across the 12 EU (Lewis et al., 2008) and over 40 per cent in Mexico and Turkey (OECD, 2010). Comparative direct family based measures of parents' employment status are not readily available for non-OECD countries but UN country reports suggest that solo male earner families are only significant in prevalence in Gulf countries (e.g. El-Haddad, 2003) and amongst the richer families within developing countries (e.g. Jelin & Diaz-Munoz, 2003). Elsewhere the global increases in women's employment have resulted in families where most young children are raised by parents, if both present, employed in some form of paid work.

> *The global movement of women into the labor force without equally large reductions in men's labor has led to a substantial increase in the number of children in households where all adults are in the workforce. A conservative estimate is that 340 million of the world's children under six live in households in which all adults work for pay.* (Heymann, 2006: 7)

In other developing regions with major public health issues or conflict settings, for instance in Africa, the male breadwinner household structure is not applicable, as many households are maintained by women (Mokomane, 2011).

Variation by family type and life course

Most mothers are in paid work, especially when children go to school (Table 2) and indeed just over half of mothers (51.9 per cent) across the OECD 26 countries are in work before their child reaches 3 years of age. An even earlier return to employment after childbirth is becoming more common in certain industrialized countries. For example, in the United States, 50 per cent of mothers have returned to employment by the time their child was 3 months old (Hofferth & Curtin, 2006). In this context, supporting the transition to parenthood and the reconciliation of work and care for very young children is becoming a crucial family policy goal as the economic well-being of families with children is increasingly reliant on maternal as well as paternal employment.

At later stages in the life course, men and women face challenges in confronting earning and care responsibilities on multiple fronts- for elders and young adult family members (Kröger & Sipila, 2005). Increased longevity and lower mortality rates in many countries have extended reproductive, caring and employment trajectories. Ageing effects will increase the potential for more generations to co-exist for longer periods (Bengston, 2001). As the later life course becomes more extended, varied and complex, men and women may begin to have overlapping multiple opportunities and obligations to family and work. There is a need for more sensitivity to elder care oriented work family packages to support adults workers who wish to contribute towards informal family oriented care of their parents or elder kin group. Also in many developed societies young people leave their family of origin at an older age than previous youth generations, in many EU-countries even beyond the age of 28–30 (Eurostat 2009). Employed parents are at risk of experiencing escalating multiple family responsibilities to several generations at the same time.

Working hours

The countries found by the ILO's global report on work time (Lee et al, 2007) to have the highest prevalence of long working hours (i.e. more than 48 hours per week) included Peru (50.9 per cent of workers), South Korea (49.5 per cent), Thailand (46.7 per cent) and Pakistan (44.4 per cent).This compares, for example, with 18.1 per cent of employees working more than 48 hours per week in the US and 25.7 per cent in the UK. In developing countries long full-time weekly hours are particularly common in agriculture, self-employment, management and some professional occupations (ILO, 2006). In Bangladesh, under the Factories Act, the law stipulates that a standard working week is 48 hours but can be extended to 60 hours if overtime allowances are paid. Overtime allowances, which double the normal wage, are a great incentive to workers to increase hours (Human Rights and Business Dilemmas Forum, 2012). In lower-income activities, such as agriculture, long hours are not a barrier to women's entry; rather they are an economic necessity for both sexes. Although legal protective frameworks against excessive work time are emerging, without enforcement compliance can be low and global thresholds culturally unacceptable (e.g. implementation of the 40-hour limit in the Forty-Hour Week ILO Convention, 1935 (No. 47)). In many developing countries it is customary to normally work beyond standard hours. For example in South Korea, although *"maternity leave has become normalized, it is somewhat common to be asked to resume work before the 90 days of entitled leave or for workers to hesitate to request the mandated leave* (Chin et al, 2011*)*. Similarly part-time or reduced hours work can bring social stigma as well as loss of earning, as reported for many Indian women (Desai et al, 2011).

OECD analysis has also charted wide variation in working hours for parents, leaving little time for family commitments in some countries (Adema & Whiteford, 2007). In many couple families with children, paternal hours in paid work are much longer than for mothers (OECD, 2011). For example, while a considerable proportion (nearly a third) of fathers in couple families work more than 45 hours per week (especially in Turkey and the UK), the proportion of mothers working long hours is relatively small (around 9 per cent), except in Greece (19 per cent) and Turkey (38 per cent). South Korea, USA and Japan make up the top three countries (in order) where the overwhelming majority of both male and female employees usually work 40 hours or more per week. An exception to the gender pattern is the Philippines, where employed women are two to three times more likely than men to work exceptionally long hours in paid work, sometimes more than 64 hours a week (ILO, 2009).

In terms of other emerging economies, there are differing profiles. For example, in the mid-decade period average weekly working hours grew in China and declined in Brazil: China (urban areas) 44.9 hours in 2001- 45.5 hours 2004; Brazil 41.5 hours in 2001 - 40.6 hours in 2001 (Demetriades & Pedersini, 2008). In general, in developed countries the incidence of long weekly working hours seems to be plateauing or declining (European Foundation for the Improvement in Living and Working Conditions, 2007) whereas in developing countries working hours remain high, especially in Asia and China. Also it is important to note that national averages in work time disguise regional and local variation and refer only to the formal labour market sectors. The likelihood of even higher weekly working hours is strong in informal and unregulated labour markets, which, amongst the G20 economies, are most prevalent in India, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa (ILO/OECD, 2011).

Anti-social working hours

What constitutes "anti-social" working hours varies across cultures. Typically night working, regular working away from home and regular employment on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays depending on region fall into this generic category. These working-time practices vary from the traditional reference point of 'standard hours' (full-time, daytime and weekday) and offer both risk and opportunity for work-family balance measures. European data show that non-standard "atypical working" is becoming more common for both fathers and mothers (Fagan, 2007). For instance, in the UK, about a quarter of parents (27 per cent of fathers and 22 per cent of mothers) normally work on Saturdays and 16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively on Sundays (La Valle et al, 2002). These data only cover workplace employment, not "bringing work home" and so may underestimate the volume of non-standard working by parents.

Weekend work is also common in emerging economies where data are available- an ILO survey showed that 25 per cent of respondents worked at weekends in three urban areas of China, in particular for the wholesale and retail trade (Demetriades & Pedersini, 2008). Night-time working is also not uncommon for parents as the global economy moves to operate on a 24-hour timeframe. In some developing countries new legislation has opened up opportunities for women to "work the night shift" especially in transnational call and global communication centres. For instance in India before a legislation change in 2005, women were not allowed to work between the hours of 7pm and 6am (Patel, 2010). The night time shift can be extended for female workers as typically lengthy social shuttle transportation is often arranged to protect women during their commute. While shift work can enable both parents to be in paid work, and be economically liberating for some women, the resultant "tag parenting" can be stressful reducing shared family time (e.g. La Valle, et. al, 2002). In addition, since most time use studies suggest that employed mothers continue to take more responsibility for domestic housework, despite an increase in fathers' participation in the care of children, long weekly work hours can be hard for families, particularly mothers, to manage without extra support.

National and local labour markets provide an important context to work-life balance with regard to working hours. In a study of working time preferences among men and women in 22 countries, Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2003) found that preferences were linked to a country's economic vitality. The wish for longer working hours was more common in countries with low rates of economic growth, high rates of inequality and inflation. In countries with higher levels of economic development, individuals were more likely to prefer time reductions in paid work. A broader macro-economic context influences individuals' aspirations and decision-making about working hours.

2. Impact of Work pressures on Family Life

During the 1990s a vocabulary developed to describe the time pressures many contemporary families lived by - 'the time squeeze', the 'second shift', the 'time crunch', 'the time famine', and 'juggling work and family' have become common currency (Hochschild, 1989; Daly, 1996). These pressures remain despite the economic downturn and are increasingly approached as a life course issue and for men as well as women. Across developing countries and emergent economies, the

reconciliation of work and family responsibilities is increasingly becoming an important phenomenon with high policy relevance for instance in Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO-UNDP, 2009), Asia (Caparas, 2011), China (ILO, 2009a) and in many sub-Saharan Africa countries (Makomane, 2011). With the growth of dual earner families there is increased awareness of the limitations of a policy approach which concentrates solely on mothers. Higher levels of maternal employment can mean that wives and partners are not as available to look after the male worker despite cultural norms assuming "business as usual". As reported in an analysis of work-family challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, '*The cultural problem is not solely about men. How society works in general, with its unwritten rules, institutions and schedules tends to assume that someone is still working fulltime on familycare*' (ILO-UNDP, 2009: 41).

There is a strong body of academic literature on the relationship between work and family life, with an historic preoccupation on *conflict* (Biggart, 2010; Lu et al, 2011). Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985:77) psychological definition of work-family conflict as '*a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects'* has been widely adopted. At a policy level, the goal has been to reduce work-family conflict for individuals through *work-family reconciliation* measures in order to achieve harmonization and work-family *balance*.

> *Striking the right balance between the commitments of work and those of private life is central to people's well-being. Too little work can prevent people from earning enough to attain desired standards of living. But too much work can also have a negative impact on well-being if people's health or personal lives suffer as a consequence, or if they cannot perform other important activities, such as looking after their children and other relatives, having time for themselves, etc. The way people allocate their time is determined by both necessity and personal circumstances, which in turn are shaped by individuals' preferences and by the cultural, social and policy contexts in which people live.*
>
> (OECD, 2011:22)

The cultural context is a significant factor in shaping the relationship between work and home. In countries with more collectivistic orientations, sacrificing family time for work may be viewed as a self-sacrifice for the benefit of the family, unlike in more individualist cultures where intensive investment in work time can be perceived as being less family oriented (Yang et al, 2000). However, what constitutes a normative working hour pattern is primarily influenced by economic necessity. For instance, in many Asian countries Caparas (2011:3) notes that *'work taken to the extreme of putting in long hours, often merely to make ends meet, is most pronounced'*. Despite these diverse orientations, most international surveys show strong endorsement of the importance of work-family balance, particularly from parents (Burchill, Fagan et al 2007). For example, a UK study found that 80 per cent of fathers and 85 per cent of mothers agreed or strongly agreed that 'everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want' (O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003). Employers also supported work-life balance but at a lower level than parents- 62 per cent suggesting a 'commitment in principal' amongst employers with regard to facilitating work-life balance.

Quantity and Quality of work impacts: adults and children

There is growing evidence, mainly from developed countries, that the *quantity* of work (hours and lack of fit with personal preferences) has a negative impact on workers' well-being but that the *quality* of work (demands of the job, personal autonomy) is also highly important (Marmot & Brunner, 2005; Auer & Elton, 2010).

A recent Australian national survey (Pocock et al 2010) found that the majority of women (60 per cent) felt consistently time pressured, particularly women in full-time work and working mothers and nearly half of men also reported these high levels of pressure. Over a quarter of those in full-time employment worked 48 hours or more a week. Poor work–life outcomes are associated with poorer health, more use of prescription medications, more stress, and more dissatisfaction with close personal relationships. Many recommendations are made in the report including the importance of taking vacations that some workers did not take because of workload pressures.

> *"The economic slow-down in Australia has not been associated with less work-life interference despite a seven per cent fall in aggregate hours worked between 2008 and 2009. Instead work-life interference has stayed fairly steady. Unfortunately, negative work-life interference appears to be recession-proof." (Pocock et al, 2010:1)*

Also of note is the body of scholarship linking long hours of work with higher absenteeism and lower productivity (Holden et al, 2010). Research on Japanese men has shown that high weekly working hours are related to progressively increased risk of acute myocardial infarction particularly when weekly working hours exceeds 61 hours (Spurgeon, 2003). Long hours of work tend to lead to increasingly high rates of absence and sickness, which have a serious impact on workers' productivity and on production scheduling. This is related to poor occupational safety and health conditions.

Excessive working hours also reduces the time parents spend with their children. Yeung *et al* (2001:11) have been able to estimate that:

> "*for every hour a father is at work, there is an associated one-minute decrease in time a child spent with him on weekdays (mostly in play companionship activities)*".

As well as time pressures, the quality of parents' work can impact on family life. Crouter, Bumpus, Head and McHale (2001) examined the separate influences of long work hours (overwork) and role overload (feelings of being overwhelmed by multiple work commitments) on fathers' relationships with both their children and their wives. This American study included working and middle class families with adolescent children. Overwork had a greater impact on fathers' relationships with their children than on their marriages. Long working hours and less time together appeared not to effect wives' evaluation of their marriage but when the ingredient of role overload was added, wives tended to report partners being less loving and couple relationships as being more conflictual. By contrast, for children role overload emerged as a more significant influence on father-child relationships, even when fathers worked shorter hours. As the authors reflect:

> "*Indeed, when fathers worked long hours but (miraculously) reported low overload, relationships with sons and daughters were as positive as those of fathers who worked fewer hours*." (Crouter *et al*. 2001:13).

During the adolescent years when children spend less time with their parents anyway, the amount of time a father is away from his child might be less important than his capacity to be emotionally available when he is *present* in the home. The authors suggest that feelings of workload may be associated with fatigue, stress and a 'turning inwards'.

Other research has found that atypical working may have a more deleterious impact on couple relationships and their stability particularly when both partners are frequently affected by unsociable schedules (Presser, 2000; Han, 2008). Lavelle et al (2002) found that 41 per cent of those in couples where *both* partners frequently worked atypical hours were dissatisfied with the amount of time spent together as a couple, compared with 17 per cent of those couples where neither regularly worked at atypical times. The distribution of parental work schedules across the day matters in families as lack of overlap or fit means that there is limited time to spend together to engage in even basic, but emotionally, salient activities such as eating.

Studies of high-stress occupations have indicated a negative impact on family interaction. For instance, Repetti's (1994) study of air-traffic controllers has shown them to be more emotionally and behaviourally withdrawn from interactions with children and partners after difficult shifts. However, this transfer process or 'spill over effect' can also be beneficial, for instance when parents have high levels of job satisfaction. Parke's (2002) review of studies exploring the impact of paternal occupation on father-child relationships found strong evidence for more emotional responsive and intellectually supportive parenting styles when fathers had stimulating and challenging occupations. Job attributes and work cultures create 'emotional climates' which clearly parents do not leave at the workplace.

There is less research on the impact of parental work schedules on child-well-being in developing countries but the growing evidence on poor families and low income countries suggests a major care deficit, particularly when extended family kin groups are unavailable to cover for hard pressed parents (e.g. Heymann, 2006) In comparative fieldwork in five regions (Botswana, Mexico, Russia, USA and Vietnam) researchers found that the risk of preschool children being left alone when parents worked was highest in poorer families- 56 per cent vs 45 per cent in Botswana; 40 per cent vs 31 per cent in Mexico. (Heymann, 2006: 191).

> *No parents want to leave their preschool child home alone. Parents take the course of action when they have no other choice. Some children are locked in one-room shacks or apartments for their own "safety" – or at least to lower their risk of injury compared to wandering outside alone – while others are brought to unsafe workplaces. Others are left with very young brothers and sisters*. (Heymann, 2006: 190)

When these preschool children are left alone they in turn are at risk of injury, or accident: reported by 53 per of Botswanian, 47 per cent of Mexican and 38 per cent of Vietnamese parents in this study. Formal and affordable child care provision was

rarely present in these communities and Heymann found that parents were not always confidant in the level of supervision afforded to their children by informal community carers, in the absence of kin. The impact of these experiences on the children was not investigated although studies in richer countries have shown deleterious effects of poor quality and non-standard jobs on children's emotional and behavioural outcomes (Strazdins et al; 2004, 2010). Evidence shows that when parents held poor quality jobs (defined as without control, security of flexibility and any leave option) preschool children reported more emotional and behavioural difficulties - for both mothers' and fathers' jobs (Strazdins et al. 2010). In more developed countries the negative impact of poor job quality is most striking for children in low income households and also in lone mother households where women often have the least choice over their work schedules and lower resources available for finding quality child care (Han, 2008).

3. Work-Family Balance policies and programmes for families

This section presents an overview of the main work-family polices adopted to reconcile work-family pressure. There is international variation in the amount of financial investment governments are willing or able to invest in family benefits and in how the investments are implemented (OECD, 2011). For example the OECD average percentage of investment in family benefits is 2.19 per cent of GDP with a range between 0.57 per cent (South Korea) and 3.68 per cent (France).

ILO Work-family measures are policy solutions intended to facilitate all workers' access to decent work by explicitly and systematically addressing and supporting their unpaid family responsibilities. ILO Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 156) and its accompanying Recommendation No. 165 provide considerable policy guidance and represent a flexible tool to support the formulation of policies that enable men and women workers with family responsibilities to exercise their right to engage, participate and advance in employment without discrimination.

ILO Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities - Article 22
(1) Either parent should have the possibility, within a period immediately following maternity leave, of obtaining leave of absence (parental leave), without relinquishing employment and with rights resulting from employment being safeguarded.
(2) The length of the period following maternity leave and the duration and conditions of the leave of absence referred to in subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph should be determined in each country by one of the means referred to in Paragraph 3 of this Recommendation.
(3) The leave of absence referred to in subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph may be introduced gradually.

Source: ILO Database on Conditions of Work and Employment Laws. ILO, Geneva. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail

3.1 Parental Leave Policies

Parental leave policies have continuously evolved and their implementation is responsive to local political and cultural agendas and more global processes such as work intensification, flexible labour markets and emerging child well-being norms (Kamerman & Moss, 2009). The societal challenge is to reach a settlement on the relative contribution of public and private (family) resources to create a sustainable framework for employment and care of young children. The tensions between

ensuring a high quality of child care, respecting parental preference, and supporting gender equality, are higher in the first few years of children's life than at any other period because of the dependency needs of young children.

This section describes the diverse set of parental leave schemes which are evolving across the world. Maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave are increasingly used interchangeably (Moss, 2011) although they have distinct origins related to women and men's biological and cultural roles in pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care. Each national or regional jurisdiction has its own formal definition and entitlements, however, in general:

Maternity leave is normally defined as a break from employment (usually a statutory entitlement) during pregnancy and /or after childbirth related to maternal and infant health and welfare; for this reason it is available only to women and is usually limited to the period just before and after birth.

Paternity leave is normally defined as a break from employment (usually a statutory entitlement) just after a child is born to enable a father to be at home to support and care for his partner and child.

Parental leave is normally defined as a break from employment (usually a statutory entitlement) after early maternity and paternity leave to care for the child.

However, parental leave in a number of countries includes a period of time that only fathers can take (sometimes referred to as a 'father's quota'). The distinction between paternity leave and father-only parental leave is blurred.

Each type of leave can be paid or unpaid and varies considerably in duration. World patterns are difficult to chart as policies change rapidly and national level summaries mask local variations (see Tables 3, 4 and 5 in the Annex).

Maternity Leave

According to an ILO (2011) review of maternity legislation, many countries worldwide provide insufficient benefits for pregnant women. In Africa, only 39 per cent of countries reviewed provided benefits in accordance with ILO standards, while in Asia, only two of the 23 countries reviewed met the same requirements. Some countries, including Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, and the United States, provided no paid maternity leave. Among the developed economies, including the European Union, 78 per cent of countries met ILO standards (ILO, 2011) which is more extensive but not yet comprehensive. The ILO argues that it is vital that maternity leave benefits are provided to ensure that women can maintain an adequate standard of living and health for themselves and their children in the early years, according to the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). This provision acts to ensure that they are not being structurally disadvantaged in the labour market as a consequence of pregnancy.

New legal provisions continue to be introduced. For example, Australia introduced its first universal paid maternity leave in 2010 (not captured in published tables yet) and committed to introduce paid paternity leave in 2013 (Alexander, Whitehouse & Brennan, 2011). Similarly over recent years, significant company and governmental

family support is being offered to Chinese employed parents in urban areas. In November 2011, the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council announced plans to prolong maternity leave from 90 days to 98 days (14 weeks) (China Daily, 2011). Private and public sector organizations sometimes "top-up" with extra maternity leave provision and flexible work arrangements after mothers return to employment. Across the world employee organizations and governments are responding to the co-earner family role of modern women but coverage and income replacement levels remain patchy, especially for women in insecure labour markets who do not reach local eligibility criteria.

Most OECD countries have ratified the ILO recommendation of 14 weeks paid maternity leave and the average duration is 19 weeks (OECD, 2011) although there is wide variation globally (Table 5). Maternal labour market attachment is greater with shorter leave periods but what constitutes "short" varies across countries. In Sweden an absence of 16 months from employment has been found to create a negative impact on women's careers, in a country with a generous leave policy for both mothers and fathers to enable infants to be cared for at home in the first year of life (Eversston & Duvander, 2011).

Ford Motor Company UK offers generous support and benefits including assigning each woman a specific HR associate for the duration of her pregnancy and leave. They currently offer 52 weeks maternity leave for all employees and 100 per cent maternity pay for the entire 52 week period (providing employees have 26 weeks service after the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth). Ford's rationale was to attract more female employees, in recognition that 70 per cent of car purchasing decisions are influenced by women, and that women's skills are under used in the labour market. The outcome has been high satisfaction levels among staff and a 98 per cent rate of return of women from maternity leave.

Source: Working families http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/

Maternity benefits in Jordan

In 2007, the ILO conducted a feasibility study on the implementation of a maternity cash benefits scheme for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The full cost of maternity leave, which was being borne by employers, had given rise to discrimination against women workers, because of the perception that they cost more than men. The study pointed to a fair and affordable maternity protection scheme for Jordan that would benefit women workers, labour markets and society as a whole. The findings showed that the introduction of a maternity cash benefits scheme in Jordan appeared to be feasible and financially sustainable. A proposal for its adoption has been presented to the Jordanian Parliament in 2008 and is to be implemented.

Source: ILO, 2009

Paternity Leave

Since the 1990s policies to support fathers manage their home and employment responsibilities after the birth of children and, while children are young, have been developed by employer organizations and governments. In one study fathers were found to have a paid entitlement to paternity leave or paid parental leave in 66 of 173 nations examined (Heymann et al, 2007). European countries have led innovation and experimentation in strategies to enhance the visibility of fathers' entitlements and uptake of paternity and parental leave including: incentives, compulsion and non-transferable daddy months (O'Brien & Moss, 2010). Father-sensitive leave policies

from employment are less extensive in developing countries although emergent economies are beginning to innovate. In several Latin American countries fathers are given between two to five days paternity leave but unpaid (see Table 5). Amongst African countries, three have *paid* paternity leave days Mauritius (5), Tanzania (5) and Uganda (4) (Mokomane, 2011). As with maternity leave, some private and public sector organizations "top-up" local national paternity leave benefits, such as allowing prospective fathers to attend antenatal scans without loss of pay.

Paternity leave innovations in the UK private sector

Lloyds Banking Group introduced a "Leave for Partners" policy in 2002 which allowed partners to take up to 52 weeks' leave to care for their birth or adopted child after the mother/primary carer had returned to work.

Nationwide Bank offers full pay for two weeks to fathers on paternity leave (without a service requirement) and paid leave to support partners at antenatal appointments. Their rationale is to retain skilled staff, and they use their family friendly employer status as a recruitment and retention tool.

British Petroleum offers enhanced paternity leave of two weeks paid and two weeks unpaid as well as encouraging new fathers to take advantage of flexible working options. They argue that helping their people to be the parents they want to be ensures that their employees go the extra mile to deliver a good service and create a better business.

Source: Working families: http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/

Longer parental leave and incentives for fathers agreed by EU ministers

Parents will have the right to longer parental leave, under the Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU) adopted on 8 March 2010 by EU ministers for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities. The revised Directive on Parental Leave will give each working parent the right to at least four months leave after the birth or adoption of a child (up from three months now). At least one of the four months cannot be transferred to the other parent – meaning it will be lost if not taken – offering incentives to fathers to take the leave. The new Directive also provides for better protection against discrimination and a smoother return to work. It puts into effect an agreement between European employers and trade union organisations. All matters regarding the income of workers during parental leave are left for Member States and/or national social partners to determine. The Framework Agreement on parental leave, on which the Directive is based, was signed by the European social partners (BUSINESSEUROPE, ETUC, CEEP and UEAPME) on 18 June 2009. It revises an earlier agreement from 1995. The new Directive will replace Directive 96/34/EC, which put into effect the 1995 social partner agreement and established for the first time minimum standards on parental leave at EU level.

Source:Eurofound/www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2009/07/articles/eu0907029i.htm

Best practice- effective design features to increase uptake of parental leave by fathers

Fathers can be wary or reluctant to take leave if not supported by cultural or workplace norms and practices. In addition, economic costs are a major constraint particularly for low income men. The research evidence highlights the importance of a country's policy framework, particularly financial incentives and father targeting, in shaping men's propensity to take paternity and parental leave. Fathers, and some mothers, tend not to use unpaid leave and their use of leave is heightened when reimbursed at least over 50 per cent or two thirds of regular earnings. For example, in Slovenia, 0.75 per cent of eligible fathers used unpaid parental leave in 1995 rising to 66 per cent a decade later in 2005 after introduction of enhanced father targeted provision (Stropnik, 2007). Similarly Erler (2009) reports that since the introduction of a new German Parental Leave system, incorporating paternal incentives, the proportion of fathers taking leave has more than tripled from 3.5 per cent in the last quarter of 2006 to 13.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2008.

Designated father targeted or reserved schemes enhance fathers' utilization rates. Blocks of time which are labelled 'daddy days' or 'father's quota' are attractive to men and their partners (Haas & Rostgaard, 2011). At this point in time fathers (and their partners) may need more explicit labelling to legitimise paternal access to the care of infants and children. Even when conditions are favourable, it takes time for utilization to become the dominant pattern: in Finland, 46 per cent of eligible fathers took paternity leave in 1993, rising to 63 per cent in 2000 and to 70 per cent in 2006 (Salmi, Lami-Taskula, & Takala, 2007). Fathers' use of statutory leave is greatest when high income replacement (50 per cent or more of earnings) is combined with extended duration (more than 14 days). Father targeted schemes heighten utilisation (O'Brien, 2009).

Even when there are statutory formal provisions, research in developed countries (Haas, Allard & Hwang, 2002; Tremblay & Genin, 2011) has found that work-place cultures can hinder utilization of family leave by men. Of great importance are supervisor and colleague informal support in creating positive family friendly environments which is inclusive of fathers as well as mothers taking leave.

ICELAND 3+3+3 month parental leave model

Within Nordic countries, one of the most innovative 'father-targeted' leave entitlements so far developed, in terms of combined time (three months) and economic compensation (80 per cent of prior salary) is to be found in Iceland (Einarsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2007). In 2000, the Icelandic government introduced a total of nine months paid post-birth leave (to be taken in the first 18 months) organized into three parts: three months for mothers (non-transferable), three months for fathers (non-transferable) and three months which could be transferred between parents as they choose. In addition there is 13 weeks unpaid parental leave available each year for each parent. The bill *Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave* was passed by the Icelandic government in 2000, following several years' deliberation about men's societal role and gender equality, including a government committee on the Gender Role of Men (Eydal & Gíslason, 2008).

The Iceland 3+3+3 month model has significantly altered male behaviour in a relatively short period of time. By 2006, over 90 per cent of Icelandic fathers take parental leave. Gíslason (2007: 15) notes: '*Probably, there have never been more Icelandic fathers active in caring for their children than there are today*.' Gender differences occur in the sequencing of leave-taking: generally Icelandic fathers tend to utilise some leave days to be with their infant and partner immediately after childbirth and then resume leave after six months when mothers' leave comes to an end. Icelandic mothers' post-birth leave tends to be taken in a continuous block without return to employment breaks.

Source: O'Brien & Moss, 2010

Diversity and Income in use of parental leave

- Country level eligibility criteria (e.g. length of continuous service) restrict access to parental leave for many fathers and mothers. Significant excluded groups include; those with insecure, temporary or unstable labour market histories prior to a child's birth (over-represented by low income and immigrant families). Requirements for the application of maternity protection by vulnerable workers may be too onerous.
- Lower take-up rates by fathers in less secure and poorly regulated occupations indicate the significance of financial loss as a disincentive.
- A socio-economic profiling of fathers' utilisation of leave indicates: higher rates are generally associated with high income occupations (self and partner), high levels of education (self and partner), and public sector occupations (self and partner).
- In countries where there is no statutory father-care sensitive parental leave taking time away from employment is more difficult for low-income fathers. Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel's (2007) community study shows that that the likelihood of taking the longer leave of two or more weeks was associated with fathers being U.S.-born, more educated, and in middle or high prestige jobs.
- In countries with high statutory income replacement, father-care policies may promote gender equality but reinforce income inequalities, as cash transfers are being made to families which are already well-paid. This risk of greater economic polarisation between '*parental leave rich* and *parental leave poor households'* can be offset by distributive tax policies (e.g. higher tax for wealthier households, a fiscal strategy only acceptable in some countries).

In the absence of a formal paid job protected leave, poorer and less economically secure parents may be less able to spend time with their infants and partners in the transition to parenthood. It is possible that, from the earliest period of life, infants in

poor households are experiencing less parental investment than infants in more affluent households.

Impact of parental leave on family life

Reduction in infant mortality and morbidity

Ruhm (2000) and Tanaka (2005) have conducted large scale secondary analyses of parental leave arrangements and child health outcomes for 16 European and 18 of 30 OECD countries respectively. In both programmes of work, where the subject of inquiry has been on maternal rather than paternal leave taking, infant mortality and morbidity gains have been associated with parental leave. Tanaka's analysis, which attempted to control for some confounding variables, in particular national investment in child welfare, found a positive independent effect for paid parental leave on specific child health outcomes, notably infant mortality. The strongest effect was on post neonatal infant mortality (28 days - 1year) when compared to neonatal mortality (under 28 days) suggesting that parental availability to care beyond the first month may be an important parenting practice to enhance child outcomes. Further positive gains were indicated for immunization. The particular features of parental leave provision which were most significant in promoting child-welfare were difficult to disentangle but the secondary analysis suggests that internationally, parental leave positive child effects are maximized when the leave is paid and provided in a job secure context.

Breast feeding

Secondary analyses of national data sets also show that job protected paid maternal leave is associated with higher rates of breast-feeding (e.g. Galtry, 2003; Ruhm, 2000). In a cross-national analysis Galtry traces onset and duration of breastfeeding patterns and finds that duration of breast feeding is sensitive to parental leave provision. For example in Sweden 73 per cent of mothers were still breast feeding at 6 months, in contrast to 29 per cent and 28 per cent of American and British mothers respectively.

Parental perceptions of benefits

In terms of fathers, the evidence to date (primarily Nordic) focuses on men's experiences of paternity leave, parental leave and flexible work schedules and does not always independently track child outcomes. For example, research has shown that Swedish fathers who use a higher proportion of leave than average (20 per cent or more of all potential leave days) at least, in the short term, appear to sustain more engaged family commitment, work fewer hours and are more involved in child-care tasks and household work (Haas & Hwang, 1999). Similarly Huttunen's (1996) survey of Finnish fathers who had taken parental leave found that the opportunity it gave to develop a closer relationship with infants was valued most by the fathers. Norwegian research suggests that fathers who take the 'daddy quota' in a 'home alone' manner become more aware of infant life and 'slow time' than those who take parental leave with their partner (Brandth & Kvande, 2001). Brandth and Kvande's (2002) research also highlights the importance of taking a couple perspective in understanding fathers' personal experiences of leave from employment. They found a complex process of couple negotiation and bargaining influenced by couple values and preferences as well workplace and economic factors. The couple relationship is a key one, setting the

scene against which parents negotiate and balance their family and employment roles and responsibilities.

Two father-focused studies build on this earlier body of work by conducting large scale secondary analyses of longitudinal nationally representative samples, enabling statistical control for some confounding variables such as paternal pre-birth commitment. Using the UK Millennium Cohort Study, covering a large birth cohort of children at age 8 to 12 months, Tanaka & Waldfogel (2007) find that taking leave and working shorter hours are related to fathers being more involved with the baby, and that policies affect both these aspects of fathers' employment behaviour. They examine fathers' involvement in four specific types of activities: being the main caregiver; changing nappies; feeding the baby; and getting up during the night. Analysis showed that fathers who took leave (any leave) after the birth were 25 per cent more likely to change nappies and 19 per cent more likely to feed and to get up at night when the child was age 8 to 12 months. In addition, higher working hours for fathers were associated with lower levels of father involvement. The authors conclude that policies which provide parental leave or shorter work hours could promote greater father involvement with infants, but caution against definitive causality claims.

Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel (2007) find a similar association between paternal leave taking and later higher levels of father involvement, but only for those fathers able to take two weeks leave or more. The positive relationship, between longer duration of leave taking and greater participation in caring for the child, was maintained after controls for a range of selectivity factors including indicators of paternal pre-birth commitment (attendance at antenatal classes and the birth itself).

The findings from these two studies suggest that paternal leave taking has the potential to boost fathers' practical and emotional investment in infant care. Further follow-ups and direct assessments of child well-being and the influence of maternal leave taking are required to reveal underlying mechanisms at play (e.g. Dex & Ward, 2007). Fathers' leave- taking cannot be seen in isolation or in purely quantitative terms as it is embedded in a complex web of parenting styles, parental work practices, infant behaviour and wider socio-economic factors.

Paid parental leave, in particular when parents are sure of employment on return to work, can create a more financially secure context for caring. As well as family benefits of parental leave, evidence shows significant economic and business benefits in particular on staff retention and loyalty, although more research is needed (OECD, 2011).

3. 2 Flexible working arrangements

Over the decade, there has been strong policy steer to increase flexible working options in the spirit creating "family friendly" work places or more broadly work environments that enable "work-life balance" for all. Although informal voluntary flexible working arrangements have been in place for many years in many countries, they are not always promoted or commonly available. Examples include: flexi-time around daily start and finish times; working from home; part-time work, and working time adjusted to school timetable, without loss of pay. These practices are normally

regulated by collective agreements, which may be formal or informal and in some developed countries there are well advanced schemes such as time credits or accounts (OECD, 2011). Belgium is an example of the latter with its 'Time Credit' or Sabbatical Leave 1985 Law allowing an employee up to one year's leave over their working life (Deven & Nuelant, 1999).

Evidence shows that flexible working arrangements are popular, with the right to work part-time, or reduce working hours being the most utilized flexible work provision and overwhelmingly chosen by women with children (OECD, 2011). There is some evidence that when men become fathers their need for flexible work practice is heightened. In a UK study, 31 per cent of new fathers used flexi-time and 29 per cent occasionally worked from home, both substantial increases from levels among new fathers from an earlier survey (Smeaton and Marsh, 2006). Very few other forms of flexible working were adopted by fathers; only 6 per cent used a compressed working week, 4 per cent worked part-time, 8 per cent reduced hours for a limited period all lower than comparable mothers. Higher earner fathers were the most able to take advantage of reduced hours whether occasional or on a part-time basis.

Generally, employers report less availability of flexible working options in smaller organisations and male dominated sectors. Lack of cultural acceptability and a 'macho' work ethic can act as barriers for parents, fathers in particular, to work flexibly. In countries with more collectivist embedded values, for example South Korea, fathers "do not dare to request" the Reduced Work Schedule introduced for parents in 2008. In South Korea only 2 per cent of all claimants were fathers by 2010 (Chin et al, 2011).

Private sector examples of flexible working arrangements in India

Sapient India – offers the option of reduced hours considering that Indian women often take a career break to concentrate on the family. Women employees, including many managers, have taken this option to work for half a day without affecting their careers.

IBM India – has a compressed/flexible work week, which entails that the full, regular work week is compressed into less than five days; individualized work schedule, where employees have flexible timings; part-time reduced work schedule; and a work-from-home option. An equal number of men and women avail themselves of flexi-timings IBM India has 43,000 employees, 26 per cent are women.

Tata Group – provides a second career internship program for women professionals, consisting of live business projects to be done in 500 hours in 5-6 months on a flexi-time basis. This is a move to tap women professionals who have discontinued work for various reasons. The program portal received 5,500 hits and nearly 500 resumes were posted on the first day of the launch in March 2008.

Source, Caparas, 2010

Private sector examples of flexible working arrangements in Malaysia

Under the banner of diversity and inclusion, ***Shell Malaysia*** has implemented tele-working and flexible hours to enable all employees "to achieve a work-life balance in fulfilling family duties without sacrificing performance or career advancement". ***Microsoft Malaysia*** is moving towards developing a more comprehensive work-from-home policy to boost employee morale and increase productivity.

Source, Caparas, 2010

The ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 165), provide considerable guidance in the formulation of policies that enable men and women workers with family responsibilities to engage and advance in employment without discrimination. Such policies include more flexible arrangements as regards working schedules. The revised Law for Child and Family Care Leave 2010 in Japan, for example, allows employers to shorten a worker's working hours upon request, if the worker is responsible for the care of a child below 3 years of age but does not take childcare leave.

In some developing countries informal codes of good practice have emerged (see South Africa Box below) but a legal right to request flexible arrangements is rare. While supporting the new informal agreement entitlement in South Africa, scholars argue that the agreement is not sufficient, particularly in light of the increased care giving needs associated with major public health problems such as HIV/AIDS (Dancaster, Cohen & Baird, 2011).

South Africa - Codes of Good Practice in employment

- No general statutory entitlement.
- Codes of Good Practice are guidelines for employers and do not have the status of legislation. The Code of Good Practice on the Protection of Employees during Pregnancy and After the Birth of a Child provides that employers must consider granting rest periods to employees who experience tiredness associated with pregnancy and should also consider that tiredness associated with pregnancy may affect an employee's ability to work overtime. It also states that arrangements should be made for pregnant and breastfeeding women to be able to attend ante-natal and post-natal clinics during pregnancy and after the birth of the child and recommends that arrangements be made for employees who are breastfeeding to have breaks of 30 minutes twice a day to breast feed or express milk for the first six months of a child's life. It further recommends that employers identify and assess workplace hazards to the pregnant mother and/or to the foetus and consider appropriate action. The Code of Good Practice on the Integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Policies and Practices adds that an employer should provide reasonable accommodation for pregnant women and parents with young children, including health and safety adjustments and ante-natal care leave.
- The Code of Good Practice on the Integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Policies and Practices requires employers to endeavour to provide "an accessible, supportive and flexible environment for employees with family responsibilities". This is specified to include "considering flexible working hours and granting sufficient family responsibility leave for both parents". In addition, the Code of Good Practice on Arrangement of Working Time states that the design of shift rosters must be sensitive to the impact of these rosters on employees and their families and should take into consideration the childcare needs of the employees. It adds that arrangements should be considered to accommodate the special needs of workers such as pregnant and breast-feeding workers and workers with family responsibilities.

Souce: Dancaster, Cohen & Baird (2011)

Across the OECD countries a formal statutory right to request flexible working hours or part-time work for family reasons is available in eight of 35 countries reviewed, although informal arrangements are present in a majority with varying ease of access (OECD, 2011). Data on access and use of flexible work practices, excluding part-time work, are limited even in countries with robust administrative systems. However, flextime preferences about daily start and finish times are the most comprehensively available and used by most employees, irrespective of family status and commitments.

Benefits of flexible work arrangements

Assessing the benefits of flexible work arrangements or specific programmes is complex as few organizations or governments systematically measure innovations before and after their implementation or utilize comparison groups. In addition companies may have confidentiality issues about public data share. However, some methodological controls have been used in a small number of studies and a series of reviews exist, mostly covering developed countries (e.g. Dex & Smith, 2002; Glass & Finlay, 2002; Hegewisch 2009 OECD, 2011).The evidence suggests a range of multi-level positive or neutral effects both at the company and the individual level.

Company benefits At the company level gains linked with different flexibility schemes have been associated with employee productivity, organizational commitment, retention, morale, job satisfaction and reductions in absenteeism (Glass & Finlay, 2002). Managers predominantly report positive or neutral impacts of flexible working on performance and productivity, with only a small minority reporting negative consequences (Hegewisch 2009) although some employers are concerned about implementation costs.

For example, analysis of a nationally representative survey of British workplaces found flexible working arrangements were associated with improved business performance (Dex & Smith, 2002). Mangers were asked to assess their workplace's financial performance, labour productivity and quality of service. After statistically controlling for a wide range of structural and human resources practices, flexible working arrangements were associated with small, but significant, amounts of improvement in the *private sector*:

Above average financial performance was associated with: paternity leave, job share; *Above average labour productivity performance* was associated with: parental leave, paternity leave, the ability to change from full-to part-time hours, having a higher number of family friendly policies in place; *Improvements in quality performance* were associated with; school term-time only working, the ability to change from full-to part-time hours; offering help with childcare; having a higher number of family friendly policies in place; *Reduced labour turnover* were associated with job share; flexi-time; offering help with childcare; working at or from home.

As reported in most studies, Dex and Smith (2002) found that, flexible working arrangements were more common where there were:

- larger organisations
- lower degrees of competition
- recognised trade unions
- public sector
- human resource and personnel capacity
- high commitment management practices
- more involvement of employees in decision making
- stronger equal opportunities polices
- larger proportion of women in the workforce
- a highly educated workforce

Small company case study of flexible working
Clock is a small digital agency employing 32 people, most of them men. The award winning firm designs and builds intranets and extranets, develops brands and creates online marketing campaigns. The firm makes flexible working, and other work-life balance benefits, available to its employees, allowing them to design work around their lives, interests, needs and desires. Clock knows some competitors pay a bit more. However, by offering people a better work-life balance, it says it can attract and retain highly skilled employees. With only five leavers in 11 years, Clock has saved money on recruitment and managed to retain valuable knowledge. Another benefit of implementing flexible working is the low sickness absence rate. Individuals have autonomy over how they work. Rob Arnold, a web designer, was able to work remotely while studying for a university degree. He says the flexible approach is a big draw for jobseekers. 'The remote working gave me just the flexibility I needed, I was treated like a person and given responsibility which gave me the opportunity to shine.' He has progressed with the company and is now a studio manager.
'If you really trust people and give them space, freedom and guidance, you will be repaid with dedication and enterprise,' says Syd Nadim, Chief Executive.

Nadim's tips on making flexible working a success include:
• Let staff know about the benefits and what it means to them financially (for example, a mobile phone is a great tax-free benefit and at £50 per month or more can be worth nearly £1,000 as gross salary).
• Be results-driven so that staff know what's expected and by when. It's two-way and openness is appreciated. Be fair and be firm.

Source: Source: Working Better, 2010

Companies with flexible working programmes tend to be the more profitable but it may well be that the more high performing companies are the most likely to innovate flexibility (selectivity into flexibility) (Hegewisch 2009). More rigorous research is needed to unravel pathways of influence but case studies point to flexible working arrangements enabling cost savings in specific material tangibles for instance office space, utilities and services (especially through home working schemes). But of course home working is only appropriate for some occupations and the absence of co-workers can reduce sociability and informal skills development (Maitland & Thompson, 2011).

Some governments, for instance in the United Kingdom, have conducted cost benefit estimates of specific flexitime innovations, such as extending a statutory 'Right to Request' flexible work to care for parents of older children, in addition to existing provisions for parents for children under 16 years. Estimates suggested that benefits would outweigh costs: at £21 million resulting from reduced recruitment costs, £6 million in reduced absence costs, and £64 million in enhanced profitability, compared with estimated implementation costs to employers of £69 million (BERR, 2008).

Benefits to individuals and families
Individual level effects of working in companies operating flexible work arrangements include decreases in somatic complaints and improvements in mental and physical health (Glass & Finlay, 2002). Flexible scheduling has been associated with a significant reduction in worker stress and role strain, perhaps linked to feelings of enhanced personal control over time schedules. Research shows that utilization of flexible work provisions offers time to care for children through breast feeding breaks; at the beginning or end of work days, and during school holidays (OECD, 2011).

A systematic review of ten high quality studies covering more than 16,000 people found that “self-scheduling of shifts” led to statistically significant improvements in either primary outcomes (including systolic blood pressure and heart rate; tiredness; mental health, sleep duration, sleep quality and alertness; self-rated health status) or secondary health outcomes (co-workers social support and sense of community (Joyce et al., 2010). No ill health effects have been reported. In one study reviewed, for example, police officers who were able to change their shift start times showed significant improvements in psychological well-being compared to police officers who started work at a fixed hour. A key driver for flexibility is the desire of individuals for greater autonomy in choosing the times and locations of their work. This provision of course has to be balanced and aligned with workplace needs.

More recent evidence has also demonstrated a link between flexible work arrangements and the care of dependent adults (e.g. elderly, disabled and sick kin), For instance, Bryan (2011) has found an association between access to flexible working and the amount of care provided to dependent adults. Out of a range of flexible working practices his results suggests that two of them – flexitime and access to reduced working hours – are each associated with about 10 per cent increase in more hours of informal care to adult dependents. This tendency was most pronounced for fulltime workers, possibly because part-time workers had already increased their care time through major reduction in working hours.

If employees have access to a part-time work option and, if such shorter working hours can be financially accommodated by family units, the provision can offer another form of family-friendly flexible work. This mode of working is more culturally normative for mothers in some developed countries, particularly in Europe; in OECD countries 1 in 10 men and 1 in 4 women work part-time (OECD, 2011). In developed countries, part-time work can reflect workers’ genuine needs and preferences, whereas in developing countries, many part-time jobs fall into the category of “time-related underemployment” consisting of individuals who would like to work more but cannot find sufficient work (ILO, 2006).

Maternal part-time employment is more prevalent in pre-school periods and where affordable child-care of good quality is in low supply but there is increasing evidence on the career penalties linked to this work-balance strategy. Although part-time workers have some advantages in stress reduction and time autonomy, the penalties are typically lower lifetime earnings and job security. These penalties are moderated to some extent for those who take short breaks from full-time employment and are able to return to the same high quality occupation as is the case in a minority of countries, such as the Netherlands (Connolly & Gregory, 2008). Long spells of part-time employment can be financially deleterious, especially if a transfer from full-time employment has involved a downgrade in occupational status.

Mechanisms to promote the awareness and benefits of flexible work

In the workplace, the attitudes of individual line managers and the work-place cultural support of flexible working, particularly from senior staff (‘leading from the top’), are critical in facilitating utilization of formal schemes although as statutory frameworks become more widespread, individual discretion by employers to go against the norm may become less socially acceptable (Hegewisch, 2009). The presence of systematic communication strategies to disseminate information to employees about the practices

available (including circulars to staff, staff magazines, e-mail and notice boards) are important as are, informal 'word of mouth' streams. Management research suggests that rewarding and praising agreed outputs with employees can be effective in creating more flexible and creative workplace cultures and so moderate tendencies towards "presentism" (Maitland & Thompson, 2011).

At the country level, celebration of 'family-friendly' workplaces and community practices can help raise awareness and expected standards. For instance in the UK, the NGO *Working Families* has yearly innovation awards (through private sector sponsorship) and CEO mentors or Champions who model good practice (see Box below). In Germany the Federal Government has initiated a 'Family Atlas', which publicly scores cities and communities on Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, which includes work family reconciliation; housing and urban space; schools, further education and training and leisure activities for children and youth. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ILO working with the UNDP is promoting the concept of civic *social co-responsibility* as a new form of work-family reconciliation.

Work and Family: Towards new forms of reconciliation with social co-responsibility

Policies to reconcile work and family life can follow traditional formats, in which the family's welfare is considered the domain of women, or can rise to the challenge of encompassing the reality of today's Latin American and Caribbean families, favouring a more seamless interface between work, family and domestic activities.

It is important, therefore, to push for more equity and democratization of tasks, when designing and implementing measures to reconcile work and family. Societies must guarantee both men's and women's right to paid employment without having to sacrifice their family life. An agenda in this sense, which seeks *to achieve reconciliation with social co-responsibility*, must also ensure that men and women have more freedom to choose how their will combine work and family life.

Reconciling work, family and personal life by sharing responsibility for caregiving among men and women, and between *States, markets and society*, should mainstream government policies and social programs.

Source: ILO-UNDP (2009)

Further research is needed on the extent to which these innovations can be effective in developing countries where the incentives for employers to positively respond to family friendly flexible arrangements are less strong. With abundant supplies of workers in these regions, particularly to supply low-skill labour-intensive sectors, a global formal statutory employment legal protection is vital. Global surveillance of illegal employment practices is forming to help mitigate and protect against any so-called "race to the bottom" (Human Rights and Business Dilemmas Forum, 2012).

The Deutsche Bank Best for Innovation and Engagement Award

American Express is focussing on developing its leadership into visible 'champions' of flexibility for the whole business and has put in place a programme to develop its top people into effective leaders of a flexible culture. The programme is designed to make sure that the business leaders fully understand and embody a flexible working culture: what it really means, understanding the business case at a fundamental level and how it can benefit the whole organisation and its people. This will, in turn, bring a competitive advantage as flexibility embeds throughout the organisation and managing flexibility becomes a core skill of all senior leaders.

Ashurst has taken a holistic approach to work/life fit. In addition to focussing on individual requirements as they arise, the firm decided to review the way the organisation works as a whole. The senior partner leads a committee which has reviewed work practices and the work/life fit of employees, taking on board the responses of a number of focus groups from around the global network. Being driven by the most senior levels of the organisation ensures that the initiative has the necessary weight and credibility. This has resulted in practical outcomes which support a 'high performance, high support' culture, and avoid a 'one size fits all' approach across the organisation. The firm acknowledges that cultural change requires a long term commitment and takes time.

Driven by a desire to improve retention, especially of women, ***Deloitte*** have developed a suite of benefits for parents, which includes: mini fridges by your desk for storing breast milk, discounts to family attractions and educational events for parents. These benefits, which complement a comprehensive policy, are designed to make Deloitte a family friendly place to work. In particular, their maternity transition coaching programme helps women who are having a baby transition off and back into work, using a team of coaches. This coaching is currently being made available to all mothers and fathers either through 1:1 coaching or via a webinar system.

Mayer Brown set about developing a number of initiatives which would create greater engagement for their employees. For the first time they rolled out an employee survey and introduced a carers network, while also piloting a mentoring scheme. They have also implemented a backup dependant and child care scheme. The firm aims to be a sector leader in family friendly working, and aligning policies with business goals will determine the way forward for the next few years.

Source, Working Families, 2011 http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/

Additional flexible leave entitlements

Additional leave entitlements, covering a wider range of family members than young children and/or situations of serious illness. For example, most provinces and territories in Canada have compassionate care leave provisions which allow employees to take time off to care for or arrange care for a family member who 'is at significant risk of death' within a 26-week period. The length of leave is eight weeks unpaid within a 26-week period, but benefits of up to six weeks can be claimed through Employment Insurance for this leave (Moss 2011).

The EU Parental leave directive 1996 gave all workers an entitlement to 'time off from work on grounds of *force majeure* for urgent family reasons in cases of sickness or accident, making their immediate presence indispensable', without specifying minimum requirements for length of time or payment.

New Zealand employees have five days sick leave for themselves or their dependents; South African workers are entitled to three days 'family responsibility leave' per year, but this covers a range of circumstances, not only caring for a sick child; while in Australia, all employees have an industrial right to use up to five days of personal or sick leave per year to care for a sick family member (Moss, 2011).

Flexible work-care innovations are needed to support employees with care responsibilities across the adult life course especially those who care for older or disabled adults. Many workplace and care provisions are still primarily designed for working parents of young children and rarely address other family responsibilities. A unique private sector innovation attempting to initiate a more holistic approach is the *passport* scheme offered by BT which has been endorsed by both management and trade unions (see Box below)

The BT* passport

Operating in more than 170 countries, BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions and services. Their main activities include networked IT services; local, national and international telecommunications services; and higher value broadband and internet products and services.

The BT Passport Scheme

The BT Passport is a scheme to document the requirements of employees who have special needs that can sometimes impact on their working life.

Currently within BT there are the following Passports available;

• BT Disability Passport – available to employees with health conditions that the employee believes are covered by the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act).

• BT Health & Well being Passport – available to employees with mental health conditions.

• BT Carers Passport – available to employees who have specific caring responsibilities for someone else.

Benefits

It is a voluntary scheme that allows employees to ensure that any special needs that can impact on them in the workplace, either now or in the future, are documented. It ensures that any reasonable adjustments that are required are documented, so that if the line manager or job role changes in the future, the information is readily available. It therefore guarantees continuity of any arrangements that are required for the employee in the workplace. It allows the employee to explain in their own words their circumstances, the difficulties they experience in the workplace and discuss the help they require in the workplace. Hence, management are made aware and can implement the correct BT support/process, in line with the manager's duty of care.

Access

The contents of the BT Passport are strictly confidential and treated accordingly. The line manager holds a copy, which is kept in the employee's personal file. The employee is provided with a copy, which ensures they have a copy of any reasonable adjustments/support that is agreed. Nobody else has access to the contents. In fact, nobody else within BT is aware who has a BT Passport.

The BT carer's passport can be completed by any BT employee with caring responsibilities that they believe could impact on their ability to work, currently or in the future. The BT carer's passport describes the nature of the caring responsibilities and adjustments that the individual might need to make. It also outlines action to take if they need to leave work suddenly, together with agreed communication between them and BT if they are unable to attend work

* BT – former British Telecom

Source:
http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/workingcaring/cases/uk003.htm
and trade Information for CWU members. http://www.cwu-eastmidlands.org.uk/equality.htm

3. 3 Working Time Innovations

Imaginative ways to reconfigure work-time have developed at many levels in societies - within companies, at national levels and as civil society initiatives. In the 1990s, time struggles often crystallised around campaigns for tackling 'the long hours culture'. More recently, in the context of the global recession and a need to 'downsize', there are challenges to cut hours rather than cut jobs. One example is the German work-sharing scheme (Crimmann et al, 2010).

The German work-sharing scheme

The scheme is a labour market instrument based on the reduction of working time, which is intended to spread a reduced volume of work over the same (or a similar) number of workers in order to avoid layoffs or, alternatively, as a measure intended to create new employment. Work sharing and partial unemployment benefits are policy responses suggested by the *Global Jobs Pact*, adopted by the ILO's tripartite constituents in June 2009, to limit or avoid job losses and to support enterprises in retaining their workforces. The German Federal work-sharing programme, called *Kurzarbeit*, is by far the largest work-sharing programme in the world. The programme reached a maximum participation of approximately 64,000 establishments and 1.5 million employees at the height of the crisis in mid-2009.

'*If the course of the economic crisis is V-shaped (i.e. a deep, but short cut), work sharing has a fair chance to save jobs. But if the crisis is L-shaped (i.e. deep, but also long-lasting), work sharing would end up in unavoidable unemployment anyway and could even hamper necessary structural changes. …In the long run, one also has to bear in mind that work sharing is not cheap*' (Crimmann et all (2010), p. 36).

Crimmann et al (2010) The German work-sharing scheme

Others have promoted a wholesale reduction in work time *"In the 21st century, moving towards much shorter hours of paid employment could be a critical factor in heading off environmental, social and economic catastrophe. In the developed world, most of us are consuming well beyond our economic means, well beyond the limits of the natural world and in ways that ultimately fail to satisfy us." (Coote,* co- author of 21 Hours, National Economic Foundation, 2011).

21 hours as the new 'norm'
The vision
Moving towards much shorter hours of paid work offers a new route out of the multiple crises we face today. Many of us are consuming well beyond our economic means and well beyond the limits of the natural environment, yet in ways that fail to improve our well-being – and meanwhile many others suffer poverty and hunger. Continuing economic growth in high-income countries will make it impossible to achieve urgent carbon reduction targets. Widening inequalities, a failing global economy, critically depleted natural resources and accelerating climate change pose grave threats to the future of human civilisation.

A 'normal' working week of 21 hours could help to address a range of urgent, interlinked problems: overwork, unemployment, over-consumption, high carbon emissions, low well-being, entrenched inequalities, and the lack of time to live sustainably, to care for each other, and simply to enjoy life.

Source: National Economic Foundation (2011)

At a company level, CEOs are beginning to initiate cultural change in excessive working practices. Legislation can help shape norms of appropriate working hours and indirectly influence the working patterns of those who work excessive hours. Global legislation is particularly important in developing countries. However, employers and some employees also stress the importance of an individual's 'right to choose' their own working hours. Employer organization often point out that formal regulation or monitoring cannot totally protect against informal practices, for instance, 'presentism' or variation in personal preferences. Research suggests that cultural change in work practices itself take time and needs to be led by line managers and CEOs (e.g. Hwang, Haas and Russell, 2001). For instance, the Australian programme to reduce excessive hours took several years to implement.

Reducing excessive working in a construction company: Probuild

Probuild is a major national Australian contractor with construction and civil engineering operations. The industry is highly competitive, with contracted deadlines and has had a long standing tradition that people work long hours, including most Saturdays.
Probuild's Work-life Balance Program has three key aspects:
• the basic framework which includes a statement of commitment from leaders, program strategy, responsibilities, policy, guiding principles for implementation and a 'Saturday and Excessive Hours Guide';
• a supportive culture necessary to ensure that strategy and policy are effectively implemented and are not just rhetorical;
• appropriate workplace practices are to be determined through consultation with staff.
The 'Saturday and Excessive Hours Guide' identifies that there is no formal requirement to work on Saturdays (except in defined special circumstances) for head office staff, site secretarial staff, administrators and graduates. For staff on award wages, Saturday work occurs to meet project targets, having respect for any particular individual requests not to work. Foremen are expected to be available to work three out of four Saturdays, if the project requires Saturday work, having regard to their leave benefits and any particular requests regarding rosters. For Project and Site Managers, apart from periods of peak activity, working more than two out of every four Saturdays is considered excessive.

The five guiding principles are: 'there must be mutual benefit'; 'it is a team effort'; 'one size won't fit everyone'; 'hard work can be done flexibly'; and 'good communication is fundamental to success'.
Benefits to Employees and Employer:
For employees on Probuild construction sites, informal flexibility is the most prevalent form of flexibility available. Early leaving times are standard across all sites to accommodate personal appointments, sport, family, and social functions. All sites have a foremen roster, so foremen can self roster weekend work. Labourers have the option to work on weekends and a process exists to enable assistance from other sites to be called in to cover labour shortages if required. project and construction managers rotate weekend work.

In the early years of its work-life balance initiatives commencing in 2005/06, Probuild experienced reductions in staff turnover, reduced talent shortage, increased attraction of employees and reduced recruitment costs, reduced burnout, benefits to the company's reputation and improved communication with its employees. During the global financial crisis, the company sought to retain its workforce and limited separations to voluntary redundancies.

Source: McMahon & Pocock, 2011

Avoidance of chronic long weekly working hours can help promote active parental involvement with children and participation in personal and family life more generally. Children benefit from both parental attention and the emotional and practical support which derives from 'at home' parenting. 'Being there' and emotionally available to children can also be rewarding for parents but difficult to combine with work which entails long hours away from home or anti-social hours (Skinner, 2003).

3.6 Early childhood education and care

Places of care for children before they reach the age of compulsory education are another form of support for parents of young children to help them engage in paid work. Typically called nurseries or kindergartens, these centres of childhood education and care (ECEC) are funded through a range of sources including public spending through taxation, employer subsidy or private family resource. With the growth of female aspirations and the necessity to work in paid employment, formal child care policies and provisions have developed across the world. In addition, pre-primary education has expanded. Gross enrolment rates have increased particularly in North America and Europe at 81 per cent, Latin America, 64 per cent and East Asia reaching 44 per cent of eligible children by 2008 (UNESCO, 2011). Rates are much lower and variable in other parts of the world where data are available. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa participation in pre-primary education ranges from nil in Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho and Zimbabwe to over 80 per cent in Liberia, Mauritius and the Seychelles (Mokomane, 2011). In terms of child care enrolment, it is estimated that in OECD countries about one third of children under 3 years participate in some form of formal child care provision (less than 10 per cent in Latin American countries to over 50 per cent in Nordic countries) (OECD, 2011).

Across the world there is lack of coordination between the sequencing of parental leave and children access to ECEC (Moss, 2011). In most countries there is a gap between the end of well-paid leave and the start of an ECEC entitlement. In Moss' analysis of thirty countries the gap ranged from 18 to 67 months emphasising the extensive lack of coordination between these two policy areas.

In some countries concern about labour supply, particularly of mothers, has been a driver behind the development of child care and early year's education but other policy objectives such as the promotion of child well-being, fertility and gender equity are also significant. Usually, a multiple set of objectives are in play. For instance, in South Korea a family focused policy, including public investment in child care provision and an approach which places obligations on employers as well as citizens are in place (Lee, 2009). Employer mandates to provide childcare facilities dependent on the number of female employees exist in the Middle East and North African countries (e.g. for Libya and Tunisia, mandatory when a threshold of 50 female employees is reached). Publically funded or social insurance based preschool child care subsidies are also in existence across many Latin American countries to expand the provision of childcare services (Hein & Cassirer, 2010).

The ILO Report *Workplace solutions for childcare* (Hein & Cassirer, 2010) showcase interesting innovations in workplaces across urbanised communities in developing countries. The child care centres have taken shape in larger countries with a relatively high proportion of their populations in urban areas and a significant number of workers

in formal employment – Brazil and Chile from Latin America, India and Thailand from Asia and Kenya and South Africa from Africa. Many of the developments have been funded from mixed partnerships involving employer organisations, workers, and local government bodies. As yet quality assurance of the centres is patchy, although some are audited by local early child care specialists.

Kenyan workplace nursery in coffee industry for export

Workplace: Nine coffee plantations in Ruiru (around 54,000 inhabitants), 35 km northeast of Nairobi.
Workers: 1,450 permanent agricultural workers, of which around 45 per cent are women. During the peak harvest season, workers can total up to 10,000 people, including casual workers.
Working hours: from 7.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., 46 hours per week, over a period of 6 days.
Childcare solution: Childcare centre on each plantation, including a crèche for children between 3 months and 3 years; nursery school for children between 4 and 6.5 years.
Partners: Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union (KPAWU); Ministry of Education, District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECEs); National Occupational Safety and Health Environment Programme (OSHEP).

Source: Hein & Cassirer (2010) *Workplace solutions for childcare*

Philippines

Multinationals such as **Intel** and **Johnson & Johnson** provide daycare centers for their employee's children. Intel has a vacation bank program, an option to substitute maternity leave for paternity leave for extraordinary reasons, an employee discount program, onsite gymnasium, and benchmarking of child care solutions across Asia. Johnson & Johnson organizes summer programs for kids that relieve working parents of the effort to keep their children busy during school vacations.

Source: Caparas, 2010

The importance of the quality of early childhood education and care services has been underlined in several international strategy documents (e.g. Bennett, 2008) including those focusing on work-family reconciliation (European Council, 2011). Some bodies are attempting to initiate negotiation about quality benchmarks on staff training, ratios of children to staff and so on, such as the Korean National Child Care Accreditation programme (see Box below on Quality benchmarks of the Innocenti). High staff-to-child ratios of appropriately trained care workers enhance the likelihood that young children will experience a more stimulating and engaged environment. Others have suggested going beyond child care and educational administrative targets to focus on the personalised needs and well-being of children as individual actors (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2010a; Dahlberg, Moss et al., 1999). Key issues here are parental and child involvement as well as strengthening the provision of high quality childcare and education which is accessible and affordable. From the care provider's perspective, high quality care environments require greater levels of investment with higher wage costs per child and infrastructural expenditure. Evidence indicates that the 'return' on high quality ECEC, in terms of children's intellectual and social development, particularly for socially disadvantaged children, can be significant (OECD, 2009; 2011).

Child care centre helps informal sector workers in Guatemala

The Guatemala municipal government supports a childcare and early childhood program serving vulnerable families from marginalized urban areas in the city. Created after studies found child care was a major need among the city's working mothers, the five municipal centres in this program care for over 1,000 children under six years old.

The city's Santa Clara childcare centre, started in 1990, is for children of workers in the informal economy who collect, classify and sell recycled material from the municipal rubbish dump in zone 3 of Guatemala City. Most of these impoverished families, some of them extremely poor, live in precarious conditions, often in highly unsanitary accommodations in the dump itself. Many are single-parent families headed up by women.

The centre looks after over 300 children, providing nutritious foods, care, early stimulation, pre-school education, regular health checks and vaccinations, hygiene and psychological help. It also offers support and training to both parents.

Parents contribute 15 quetzals (about US$2.20) monthly for this service. The municipality finances, manages, supervises and hires personnel through its social assistance office (*Secretaría de Asuntos Sociales*). Funds come from other sources too, particularly voluntary donations from local employers, and co-operation agreements with other State institutions, local health centres, national and international non-governmental organizations.

Prior to the centre's creation, parents had to take their small children with them to work in the dump. Today, the centre has helped to prevent child labour, since children no longer work with their parents, and improved their social and physical development. Women can work longer hours for remuneration and have fewer problems resolving conflicts between their children's care and work. Big sisters no longer have to care for younger siblings and mothers have noted that the centre's proximity to their workplace is an important advantage.

Source: (ILO-UNDP, 2009, using Cassirer and Addati 2007)

Research suggests that securing parents' trust in the quality of child care is critical as; in its absence the provisions will not be used. Lack of use is even more likely in countries where reliance on kin care is normative. For instance, in South Korea despite incentives, through the Infant Care Act of 1991, by 2005 only 29 per cent of employed mothers with infants used child care facilities while 62 per cent relied on kin-based child care (Chin et al., 2011). Caparas (2011:8) reports that the effectiveness of child care centres *'is highly dependent on the quality of the caretakers, the equipment and facility, sanitation and food*.' In several Asian countries she reviewed, the re-occurrence of accidents and mistreatment of children had discouraged working parents from using centres for their children.

High cost acts as a disincentive too, especially to the poor and those working in the informal sector. In developing countries Heymann (2006) found that those parents on "high" daily pay rates working in the informal economy, had greater access to centre-based child care than those with lower rates (61 per cent of workers who earned at or above $10 PPP-adjusted per day had access, versus 11 per cent of those earning less than $10 PPP-adjusted per day). The differences were less dramatic for those in the formal sector (51 per cent of those earning at or above $10 PPP-adjusted per day had access to center-based childcare, compared to 41 percent of those earning less than the $10 PPP-adjusted per day).

The quality benchmarks of the Innocenti Report Card 8

A - Policy Framework

Benchmark 1. A minimum entitlement to paid parental leave

The minimum proposed standard is that, on the birth of a child, one parent be entitled to at least a year's leave (to include prenatal leave) at 50 per cent of their salary (subject to upper and lower limits). For parents who are unemployed or self-employed, the income entitlement should not be less than the minimum wage or the level of social assistance. At least two weeks of parental leave should be specifically reserved for fathers.

Benchmark 2. A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children

All countries taking part in the childcare transition should have undertaken extensive research and evolved a coherent national strategy to ensure that the benefits of early childhood education and care are fully available, especially for disadvantaged children.

B - (Quantitative) access to early childhood education and care services

Benchmark 3. A minimum level of childcare provision for under-threes

The minimum proposed is that subsidized and regulated childcare services should currently be available for at least 25 per cent of children under the age of three.

Benchmark 4. A minimum level of access for four-year-olds

The minimum proposed is that at least 80 per cent of four-year-olds participate in publicly subsidized and qualified early education services for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

C - Quality of early childhood education and care services

Benchmark 5. A minimum level of training for all staff

The minimum proposed is that at least 80 per cent of staff having significant contact with young children, including neighbourhood and home-based child caregivers, should have relevant training. As a minimum, all staff should complete an induction course. A move towards pay and working conditions in line with the wider teaching or social care professions should also be envisaged.

Benchmark 6. A minimum proportion of staff with higher level education and training

The minimum proposed is that at least 50 per cent of staff in early education centres supported and accredited by governmental agencies should have a minimum of three years tertiary education with a recognized qualification in early childhood studies or related fields.

Benchmark 7. A minimum staff-to-child ratio

The minimum proposed is that the ratio of preschool children age four to five to trained staff (educators and assistants) should not be greater than 15 to 1, and that group size should not exceed 24 children.

Benchmark 8. A minimum level of public funding

The suggested minimum for the level of public spending on early childhood education and care (for children aged 0 to 6 years) should not be less than 1 per cent of the GDP). This first set of eight benchmarks is supplemented by two further indicators designed to acknowledge and reflect wider social and economic factors critical for the efficiency of early childhood services.

D - Low child poverty and universal outreach of social services

Benchmark 9. A low level of child poverty

Child poverty rate of less than 10 per cent (using less than 50 per cent of median OECD income threshold)

Benchmark 10. Universal outreach of social services6

The benchmark of 'universal outreach' is considered to have been met if a country has fulfilled at least two of the following three requirements: a) the rate of infant mortality is less than 4 per 1000 live births b) the proportion of babies born with low birth weight (below 2500 grams) is less than 6 per cent and c) the immunisation rate for 12 to 23 month-olds (averaged over measles, polio and DPT3 vaccination) is more than 95 per cent.

Source: Early Childhood Education and Care Services in the European Union Countries Proceedings of the ChildONEurope Seminar 2010 www.childoneurope.org using Bennett (2008) *Benchmarks for Early Childhood Services in OECD Countries*, Innocenti Working Paper

There is significant controversy about the impact of out-of-home-care, particularly for infants, with most studies conducted in the developed world where parents have more options to take longer periods away from the labour market. The OECD (2009) Report *Doing Better for Children* highlights research evidence showing the importance of stable parental care for infants, and recommends that optimally young children should not experience long hours in poor quality non-parental care environments. Greater consensus is found on the benefits of early year's education, with the most positive impact for children from less advantaged backgrounds.

The evaluation evidence on the justification for adopting work-based child care policies and provision are less focused on child outcomes and more on organisational benefits and are mainly conducted in developed countries (e.g. Glass &Findlay, 2002). For developing countries, most of the evaluation evidence concentrates on the process of implementation with rich descriptions of the policy innovation, goals and challenges involved in delivering services (see Box on Mexico, OECD, 2011). For developed countries, the data point to a mix of outcomes with most studies showing positive or neutral effects for both employer supported child care provisions (e.g. vouchers, subsidies) and explicit workplace policy documentation. Gains include: reduced turn-over; reductions in absenteeism; and willingness to accept over-time and promotions. Co-location of nurseries with the workplace was not found to be a necessary condition for positive outcomes; presence of an accessible high quality provision was more important to participants in the reviewed studies.

Developing formal childcare in Mexico

In January 2007, the Mexican government launched a national child day-care programme – *Programa de Estancias Infantiles para Madres Trabajadoras* (PEIMT) – which aims to provide parents in paid work and/or study with access to child day-care services. In 2009, public spending on childcare amounted to 0.04 per cent of GDP, of which 20 per cent was allocated to PEIMT. Parents are eligible for support if they have a child between 1 and 4 years old (or up to 6 yearsold if the child has some disability) and their household income is less than 6 times the minimum wage (about USD 770), which is equivalent to the mean income of couples with two children. PEIMT has grown rapidly, and by December 2009, the programme included 8,923 day care centres covering 261 728 children and 243 535 parents. However, this is only 6 per cent of all children between 1 and 4 years old in Mexico, of whom 26 per cent grow up in poverty. Day-care centres are open for a minimum of eight hours per day, five days a week (Monday to Friday). The programme supports supply and demand of formal child day-care services in thefollowing way: *Supply*: PEIMT provides a financial support to those who wish to operate a child day-care centre and who meet a series of requirements, including qualifications (having finished secondary school) a psychological test and having the facilities needed for offering services to at least ten children. In 2010, the amount was USD 4,200 for creating a new facility and USD 2,600 for adapting a private residence or retail space into a day care centre. Providers set fees, but they have to admit those children selected by the PEIMT authorities as eligible.

Demand: monthly subsidies to eligible families to partially cover the childcare fees. This monthly subsidy or "voucher" (up to about USD 53) is directly transferred to the centre on behalf of the child, conditional on the child attending services for more than 11 days per month. Parents have to pay a small fee (up to around 23 USD) to the childcare provider, except in very poor areas. This fee represents less than 10 per cent of household's income. Parents who cannot pay this fee may pay in-kind (fruit, tortillas, eggs) or may do some voluntary work *(e.g.,* cleaning day-care centres, sewing uniforms) as agreed with the childcare provider.)

Source OECD (2011) *Doing Better for Families*

Another policy model for the care for young children, only found in a small number of richer nations, is to provide income directly to the main carer – a form of *cash for care* approach. In Moss' (2011) thirty country analysis he found that six countries offered this form of *Childcare leave* which can usually be taken immediately after parental leave, creating a continuous period of leave, even if the conditions (such as benefit paid) may not be the same. In most cases childcare leave was unpaid, in contrast to a paid parental leave: until a child is 3 years in Croatia; two weeks per year per parent until a child is 14 in Estonia; three months per year per parent in Iceland until a child is eight years; two year in Norway (see Box below); and two to three years in Portugal. Parents with three or more children in Hungary can take leave until their youngest child is eight years old, with a flat-rate benefit. Finland was noted by Moss (2011) as exceptional in that its 'home care' leave is both available to all parents and paid, albeit with a relatively low flat-rate allowance. There is debate about the extent to which this policy instrument can disadvantage the occupational career of the parent who selects, or by circumstance is constrained, to take the benefit, which in most cases are mothers.

Norway 'cash-for-care' scheme
Parents with a child aged 12-36 months are entitled to receive a cash benefit ('cash-for-care' scheme) *on condition they do not use publicly funded ECEC service.*
The full benefit is NOK3, 303 (€420) per child per month. Children who use ECEC on a part-time basis receive a reduced benefit (e.g. if parents use no place, they receive 100 per cent of the benefit; if they use a place for 17-24 hours a week they receive 40 per cent of the full benefit).
The main criterion for eligibility, therefore, is not parental employment status, but parents not using a particular service.

Source: Brandth & Kvande, 2011

A key challenge for societies remains to provide affordable locally based care environments for children of working parents which are sensitive to their developmental needs at different stages in the life course.

Care of older children
Once children enter primary school there are still care and supervision needs, especially at the beginning and end of the day when parents may have to travel to work or search for employment. Across the world a number of *out-of-school hours* (OSH) care programmes have developed to support children and their parents including: breakfast clubs, after-school homework programmes, extended schools. These services are particularly important for children in lone parent families and who have parents who are required to work in nonstandard and inflexible jobs. They can provide adult-supervised care for the periods before and after school when it is not possible for parents to be there.

Typically out-of-school hours care centres are based in school, neighbourhood or leisure centres. Research evidence on their implementation and impact is not extensive and has mainly been conducted in developed countries, although some facilities such as breakfast clubs have been in existence for some time. The concept of a breakfast club originated in the USA and clubs have become widespread there since 1966, when the School Breakfast Program (US Department of Agriculture,1999) was established to provide federal funding to assist schools serving breakfast to

nutritionally needy children in poor areas (Shaw 1988). By 1997, the number of participant schools exceeded 68,000 with clubs attracting six million children each day. In spite of very low running costs some childcare schemes struggle to survive, especially in low-income areas.

OECD analysis indicates that OSH services are mostly used by the 6-9 year old group and provision is variable - ranging from a 40 per cent participation rate in Denmark, Australia, Sweden and Hungary to below 10 per cent in South Korea, Poland and several Southern European countries (OECD, 2009). These data do not include children's participation in formal out-of-school sporting activities which is extensive and can involve parental participation.

For those developing countries with high levels of child labour, OSH has less immediate priority, but can still contribute to the goal of universal primary and secondary education, through promoting the concept of educational and activities throughout the day (e.g. UNICEF's The Global Out-of-School Children Initiative launched in 2010).

Although robust evaluation evidence is patchy, most research indicates social and academic benefits of OSH with socially disadvantaged children benefiting the most. For example, using a cluster randomized controlled trial (comparing schools with and without breakfast clubs), Shemilt et al (2004) found that at 1 year follow-up, a higher proportion of primary-aged breakfast club participants attended school and also reported eating fruit for breakfast in comparison to non-participants. Interviews with parents indicated that breakfast clubs help ease the strain and pressures of family morning routines, particularly amongst families with several school aged children and lone parents (Shemilt *et al.*, 2003). The school based breakfast clubs were an additional form of support for parents who were working, studying or seeking employment and were perceived as safe, secure and settled environments. Similar academic and social gains from OSH have been reported from American studies of participating young children and youth (Bissell et al, 2002). Activities for children and youth in low-income households may have a larger impact because the alternative home and neighborhood environments are typically less enriching and more dangerous than for middle-income children and youth.

Informal Care and Grandparents

Informal care of children by kin, friends, neighbours and unregulated local child childminders is common across developing countries (Heymann, 2006) and many developed countries (e.g. Plantenga & Remery, 2009). Cross-national European survey research showed that 34 per cent of grandmothers provided childcare almost weekly or more in the last year (Hank and Buber 2009). In some urban areas of China, it is commonplace for grandparents to provide childcare on a full-time basis (Goh, 2009). Grandparent care is most common in areas where co-residence rates are high and grandmothers generally provide more care than grandfathers to grandchildren. A shortage of childcare facilities for infants and, in some countries such as China, a general mistrust of domestic helpers, means that women's labour market participation can be strongly reliant on grandmothers. In China traditional cultural ideals such as *chuan zhong jie dai* (to ensure the passing down of the family lineage) foster grandparental care but new models of autonomous and independent lives for elder people are also developing, which may reduce grandparental 'care supply'. Similarly,

as employees extend their working lives older family members may be less available to support grandchildren's care needs.

Inclusion of grandparents in work-family provisions is becoming more common, especially in Europe for instance in terms of allowing access to parental leave and in 2005 Australia introduced one of the first benefits focused on grandparents- *Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB).*

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) Australia
To assist grandparents with the costs of child care, Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) is available to eligible grandparents caring for their grandchild and who are in receipt of an Income Support Payment. GCCB covers the full cost of child care for up to 50 hours for each child in approved care each week. In certain circumstances you may be able to get GCCB for more than 50 hours per week.
To be eligible for GCCB, a grandparent must:
-meet the eligibility requirements outlined for the waiver of the work, training and study test;
-and be in receipt of an Income Support Payment

Source:http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/SupportFamilyCCS/Pages/GrandparentCCB.aspx

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has taken a family-focused perspective on work-care challenges and solutions. It has shown the close interconnections between the 'two worlds' of paid work and family life. As the labour market participation of women has increased, governments and employers in many parts of the world, have 'stepped forward' to find ways to support work-family balance at key family transition points such as childbirth, having young children, or caring for sick and elderly kin. Similarly enlightened employers have become aware of the benefits of a flexible and humane response when employees have family crises such as illness, stress or bereavement. Many of the basic provisions reviewed, such as maternity, paternity and parental leave and early childhood education and care have emerged in richer nations, but not exclusively so. In other countries very little progress has been made on work-family balance or family-friendly initiatives with negative consequences for employee health and well-being, gender equality and child well-being.

There is now a critical mass of research evidence showing the benefits of work-family reconciliation measures. The paper has charted the negative impact of poor quality job conditions on individual workers and their families. It has reviewed evidence indicating that long working hours put workers' health and relationships at risk; in particular for vulnerable groups of employees, and for those without kin help for the essential daily care of dependents and domestic responsibilities.

Profound demographic changes are taking place in family life as family units have become more diversified and the life course less predictable. In many countries across the world, family trends towards smaller households will necessitate more support for families as extended kin may not be available to care for young and old. A new tension in many contemporary societies is how employed parents manage to accommodate 24/7 infant care within a 24/7 globalised working environment. Dilemmas are negotiated against a background of changing cultural norms concerning

the appropriate time for employed mothers to return to paid work after childbirth. In these times of cultural flux parents deploy diverse parenting and employment strategies contingent on their available external resources and internal capacities. The trade-off between time, money and care involves intense personal negotiations within the family and in the workplace. Family-friendly initiatives from employers and governments can and do have a constructive role to play in supporting parents raise the next generation of children. The presence of work-life balance policies in an organization can show positive and harmonious labour relations, and demonstrate a corporation's sense of social responsibility.

Concerns about the welfare of children, and care of older family members needing care, cannot be developed in isolation from gender equity goals. Absence from the labour market carries substantial financial penalties and occupational risk, traditionally mostly borne by mothers. Developing societal policies to ensure work-family policies therefore requires sensitive meshing with gender equity policies (Lewis & Plomien, 2009; Gornick & Meyers, 2009). Central to this ambition is a more father or male-kin inclusive approach to work-family reconciliation. As this report, and other evidence has shown, governments, regional bodies and employers are developing support for working fathers' caring responsibilities and obligations (United Nations, 2011). Expanding national policies and programmes to promote a stronger engagement of men in family care activities through the life course will help modernize work-family policies to catch up with the changing role of women. In the twentieth century many post-war public polices created systems and services which assumed a full-time home female carer, supporting a full-time male breadwinner, a work-family model which no longer fits the circumstances of twenty-first century families.

In order for citizens to have a meaningful work and family balance, the challenge for all societies is to find work-care solutions which are personally, culturally and economically affordable. Taking the long view, it is clear that a range of effective provisions have emerged to help families cope with care of dependent family members and participate in the labour market. However, access to these support systems is mainly in the formal and regulated labour markets of the world, with many workers still experiencing profoundly 'family-unfriendly', harsh and dangerous work environments. In these cases it is essential that global employment protection is implemented and enforced. Starting points differ but a meaningful rather than just bearable work-family balance is an important aspiration for all.

Recommendations

1. A Family-focused Work-Life Vision

- Adopt a family-focused perspective in the pursuit of work-care reconciliation challenges and policy development. This approach integrates *family, work and child policies with an awareness of life course transitions.*

2. Global Compliance with a basic legal framework for work-family balance

- Responsible national entities to endorse and work towards implementing the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (no 183) and the ILO Workers with Family responsibilities Convention (no 156).

- National entities to increase global awareness, especially by employers, of the ILO decent jobs initiative and its links with human rights legislation.

3. Family Leave

- Phased introduction of leave policies which support optimal child well-being (particularly in infancy) and gender equality incentives, using design features from “best practice” Nordic models.

- National entities should explore systems to recognise and support caring activities by fathers in families, in particular, consider statutory leave provision for fathers at the time of a child’s birth (paternity leave) or later, in the early years of a child’s life (ring-fenced “daddy months” in the parental leave period). A phased approach is recommended.

- Stage Stage 1- Expand Eligibility, improve levels of payment, introduce access to fathers. Stage 2: Introduce dedicated, non-transferable periods of leave for mothers / fathers. Stage 3: Extend periods of paid parental leave for mothers / fathers and introduce a general carer’s leave.

- Engage employers in publicity campaigns drives to raise awareness of the importance of family leave for male and female workers who have infants and young children.

4. Flexible Work Arrangements and Work-Time Innovation

- Introduce a formal right for all employees to request work flexibility to be negotiated subject to workplace/ business needs.

- Invest in training managers to introduce flexibility and manage a flexible workforce (employers and Governments).

- Target campaigns at sectors and workplaces with little flexibility, to open up opportunities.

- Support the development of high quality part-time jobs and short hour working days.

- Consider flexible working as a means to navigate the recession (e.g. reduction in hours not jobs).

5. Early Child care and Education and Youth Care

- Develop higher quality standards, flexible and affordable child care and education spaces in the community and in the workplace to support different working patterns for parents and business' need to deploy workforce beyond standard hours.

6. Mixed partnerships a multi-stakeholder approach

- Encourage wide-ranging consultation and partnerships between, employers, trade unions and employees (at different stages in the life course) to promote a better understanding and celebration of work-family reconciliation.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Female Participation in paid work OECD, 1985 to 2009 as a percentage of the working population (15-64 years)

		YEAR																									
		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Australia	AUS	49.6	51.8	52.7	54.2	56.4	57.4	56.0	55.6	55.5	56.9	59.0	58.9	58.9	59.6	60.0	61.4	61.7	62.1	62.9	63.1	64.7	65.5	66.1	66.7	66.2
Austria	AUT										58.8	58.9	58.2	58.4	58.5	59.3	59.4	59.8	61.0	61.5	60.7	62.0	63.5	64.4	65.8	66.4
Belgium	BEL	37.0	37.6	37.5	38.4	39.7	40.8	43.0	44.6	44.9	44.8	45.4	45.6	46.7	47.5	50.2	51.9	50.7	51.1	51.4	53.0	54.1	54.0	55.3	56.2	56.0
Canada	CAN	56.2	57.9	59.4	61.2	62.4	62.8	61.9	61.0	60.5	61.1	61.6	61.5	62.1	63.5	64.6	65.6	65.9	67.0	67.9	68.4	68.3	69.0	70.1	70.1	69.1
Czech Republic	CZE									60.4	61.0	61.0	60.6	59.9	58.7	57.4	56.9	57.0	57.1	56.3	56.0	56.3	56.8	57.3	57.6	56.7
Denmark	DNK	67.4	70.1	71.0	70.9	69.5	70.6	70.1	70.4	68.7	67.1	67.0	67.4	69.4	70.3	71.6	72.1	71.4	72.6	70.5	72.0	70.8	73.4	73.2	74.3	73.1
Finland	FIN	69.8	69.5	69.2	69.6	71.4	71.5	68.4	63.8	59.7	58.7	59.0	59.5	60.4	61.3	63.6	64.5	65.4	66.1	65.7	65.5	66.5	67.3	68.5	69.0	67.9
France	FRA	48.5	49.4	48.8	49.2	49.7	50.3	50.8	50.8	51.1	50.8	51.6	51.8	51.7	52.4	53.0	54.3	55.2	55.8	56.4	56.7	56.9	58.2	59.4	60.1	60.0
Germany	DEU	47.7	48.5	49.1	49.9	50.8	52.2	56.3	55.7	55.1	54.7	55.3	55.5	55.3	56.3	57.4	58.1	58.7	58.8	58.7	59.2	59.6	61.4	63.2	64.3	65.2
Greece	GRC	36.1	36.1	36.3	37.2	37.6	37.5	34.9	36.2	36.4	37.1	38.0	38.5	39.1	40.3	40.7	41.3	41.2	43.1	44.5	45.5	46.2	47.4	47.9	48.7	48.9
Hungary	HUN								52.3	49.3	47.8	45.9	45.5	45.5	47.3	49.0	49.6	49.8	49.8	50.9	50.7	51.0	51.2	50.9	50.6	49.9
Iceland	ISL							74.5	74.0	74.0	74.6	76.8	76.5	75.6	78.3	80.2	81.0	81.1	79.8	81.2	79.4	81.2	81.6	81.7	80.3	77.2
Ireland	IRL	32.4	32.4	34.1	33.7	34.5	36.6	36.3	37.1	38.2	38.9	41.5	43.3	44.7	48.2	51.3	53.3	54.0	55.2	55.4	55.8	58.0	59.1	60.7	60.5	57.8
Italy	ITA	33.4	34.0	34.5	34.9	35.2	36.2	36.5	36.5	35.8	35.4	35.4	36.0	36.4	37.3	38.3	39.6	41.1	42.0	42.7	45.2	45.3	46.3	46.6	47.2	46.4
Japan	JPN	53.0	53.1	53.3	53.8	54.8	55.8	56.6	56.9	56.6	56.5	56.4	56.8	57.6	57.2	56.7	56.7	57.0	56.5	56.8	57.4	58.1	58.8	59.5	59.7	59.8
Korea	KOR (1)	44.1	45.3	47.2	47.4	48.5	49.0	48.8	48.7	48.8	49.8	50.5	51.1	51.6	47.3	48.1	50.0	50.9	52.0	51.1	52.2	52.5	53.1	53.2	53.2	52.2
Luxembourg	LUX	39.7	40.7	41.9	40.6	41.3	41.4	43.6	46.2	44.8	44.9	42.2	43.6	45.4	45.6	48.5	50.0	50.8	51.5	52.0	51.9	53.7	54.6	56.1	55.1	57.0
Mexico	MEX							34.2	35.1	36.0	36.2	37.0	37.4	39.9	40.1	39.8	40.1	39.4	39.9	39.4	41.3	41.5	42.9	43.6	44.1	43.0
Netherlands	NLD	35.5	36.1	42.3	44.3	45.2	47.5	49.3	51.0	52.0	52.6	53.9	55.2	57.6	59.4	61.6	63.0	63.7	64.0	64.2	64.3	64.8	66.4	68.5	70.2	70.6
New Zealand	NZL		60.2	61.1	59.6	57.6	58.6	57.5	57.5	58.0	59.9	61.7	63.4	62.8	62.1	63.0	63.5	64.8	65.3	65.7	66.5	68.0	68.2	68.7	68.7	67.4
Norway	NOR	65.6	69.7	70.7	69.8	67.5	67.2	67.0	66.7	66.6	67.5	68.8	70.4	72.2	73.6	73.8	74.0	73.8	73.9	72.7	72.7	72.0	72.3	74.0	75.4	74.4
Poland	POL								53.1	52.1	51.9	51.8	51.8	51.8	52.2	51.6	48.9	47.8	46.4	46.2	46.4	47.0	48.2	50.6	52.4	52.8
Portugal	PRT	49.4	48.9	51.2	53.1	53.9	55.4	57.6	56.1	55.3	55.0	54.8	55.6	57.2	58.3	59.5	60.5	61.0	60.8	60.6	61.7	61.7	62.0	61.9	62.5	61.6
Slovak Republic	SVK										52.6	53.0	54.6	54.0	53.5	52.1	51.5	51.8	51.4	52.2	50.9	50.9	51.9	53.0	54.6	52.8
Spain	ESP	25.8	26.2	28.1	29.4	30.6	31.8	32.5	32.5	31.5	31.5	32.5	33.8	35.2	36.5	39.1	42.0	43.8	44.9	46.8	49.0	51.9	54.0	55.5	55.7	53.5
Sweden	SWE	76.8	77.8	79.2	80.1	80.7	81.0	79.3	76.2	72.1	70.7	70.9	69.9	68.9	69.4	70.9	72.2	73.5	73.4	72.8	71.8	71.8	72.1	73.2	73.2	70.2
Switzerland	CHE							66.5	66.6	66.1	64.9	65.6	67.1	67.8	68.8	69.6	69.4	70.7	71.5	70.7	70.3	70.4	71.1	71.6	73.5	73.8
Turkey	TUR				32.1	34.3	32.9	33.7	31.9	25.8	30.4	30.2	30.3	28.0	28.5	28.9	26.2	26.3	26.6	25.2	24.3	23.7	22.7	22.8	23.5	24.2
United Kingdom	GBR	55.6	56.8	57.7	59.8	62.2	62.8	62.2	61.9	61.8	62.1	62.5	63.3	64.0	64.2	65.0	65.6	66.0	66.3	66.4	66.6	66.8	66.8	66.3	66.9	65.6
United States	USA	59.3	60.5	61.9	63.0	64.1	64.0	63.3	63.5	64.0	65.2	65.8	66.3	67.1	67.4	67.6	67.8	67.1	66.1	65.7	65.4	65.6	66.1	65.9	65.5	63.4
OECD	OECD	50.8	51.7	52.7	52.4	53.5	53.9	52.8	52.7	52.4	52.9	53.3	53.7	54.2	54.5	54.9	55.3	55.4	55.3	55.3	55.7	56.1	56.7	57.2	57.6	56.7
Russian Federation	RUS															56.6			61.4	60.2	61.3	62.4	63.5	64.9	64.5	64.9

Source: OECD (2011), Doing Better for Families, OECD using OECD Database on Labour Force Statistics 2010].
For Korea data refers to ages 15-59 prior to 1989. Data missing for OECD countries Chile, Estonia, Israel and Slovenia.

Table 2 Maternal Employment by age of youngest child and number of children under 15 years. 2007

	Maternal employment rates, women age 15-64						
	by age of youngest child *				by number of children under 15		
Country	0-16	<3	3-5	6-16	1 child	2 children	3+ children
Hungary	45.7%	13.9%	49.9%	58.3%	53.7%	48.3%	24.6%
Poland	46.4%	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	42.7%	35.6%	28.5%
Italy	48.1%	47.3%	50.6%	47.5%	48.3%	41.0%	27.4%
Slovak Republic	48.4%	23.1%	46.6%	60.4%	56.4%	49.4%	31.5%
Greece	50.9%	49.5%	53.6%	50.4%	48.4%	44.4%	37.4%
Spain	52.0%	52.6%	54.2%	50.9%	51.1%	44.7%	38.5%
Japan	52.4%	28.5%	47.8%	68.1%	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Czech Republic	52.8%	19.9%	50.9%	67.6%	57.4%	52.5%	34.4%
Germany	54.9%	36.1%	54.8%	62.7%	58.4%	51.8%	36.0%
Luxembourg	55.4%	58.3%	58.7%	52.7%	56.0%	49.8%	33.8%
Ireland	57.5%	55.0%	#N/A	59.9%	55.4%	52.5%	42.3%
Belgium	59.9%	63.8%	63.3%	56.9%	58.3%	58.5%	39.4%
France	59.9%	53.7%	63.8%	61.7%	62.2%	57.6%	38.1%
OECD 26-average	**61.6%**	**51.9%**	**61.3%**	**66.3%**	**61.9%**	**58.2%**	**44.0%**
United Kingdom	61.7%	52.6%	58.3%	67.7%	67.1%	62.4%	42.3%
Australia	63.1%	48.3%	#N/A	70.5%	63.3%	58.1%	#N/A
New Zealand	64.6%	45.1%	60.6%	75.3%	64.1%	64.5%	56.7%
Austria	64.7%	60.5%	62.4%	67.5%	67.7%	60.1%	46.5%
United States	66.7%	54.2%	62.8%	73.2%	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Portugal	67.8%	69.1%	71.8%	65.4%	63.5%	59.2%	46.1%
Netherlands	69.2%	69.4%	68.3%	69.4%	70.1%	70.6%	59.9%
Switzerland	69.7%	58.3%	61.7%	77.0%	69.5%	65.4%	58.0%
Canada	74.3%	65.1%	72.6%	79.4%	70.1%	73.2%	66.3%
Finland	76.0%	52.1%	80.7%	84.2%	71.2%	70.9%	60.1%
Denmark	76.5%	71.4%	77.8%	77.5%	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Sweden	82.5%	71.9%	81.3%	76.1%	80.6%	84.7%	75.6%
Iceland	84.8%	83.6%	#N/A	86.5%	88.5%	82.3%	#N/A

* By age of youngest child table: For Australia, Iceland and Ireland children aged <2 and 3-5 are grouped together as children aged under 6. Panel B: For Australia and Iceland the "two children" group represents "2+ children". 1999 for Denmark; 2001 for Belgium, Canada and Japan; 2002 for Finland, Iceland and Italy; 2003 for Sweden; 2005 for Australia; 2006 for Switzerland. Data missing for Chile, Estonia, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Slovenia and Turkey.

Source: OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families* using Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005); Statistics Canada (2001 data), Statistics Denmark (1999 data), Statistics Finland (2002 data), Statistics Iceland (2002 data for women age 25-54), Japanese authorities (2001 data), Swiss LFS (2006 2nd quarter data), UK Office of National Statistics (2005 data), and the US Current Population Survey (2005 data); all other EU countries, European Labour Force Survey (2005 data, except for Italy which concerns 2003).

Table 3 Maternity and Parental leave provision compared in OECD countries 2008

Panel A
Length in weeks of maternity leave[1] and full-rate equivalent[2] for the average worker, 2008

	Total length of maternity leave	Number of paid weeks	Average wage (national currency)	Full-rate equivalent
United Kingdom	52	39	29633	13
Greece	43	43	21693	25
Ireland	42	26	47522	7
Czech Republic	28	28	292461	17
Slovak Republic	28	28	9773	15
Israel	26	14	8075	14
Hungary	24	24	2693557	17
Italy	20	20	27099	16
Estonia	20	20	157030	20
Russian Federation	20	20	207481.2	20
Denmark	18	18	362674	9
Finland	18	18	34828	12
Poland	18	16	35495	18
Chile	18	18		18
Canada	17	15	48812	8
Portugal	17	17	16001	17
Austria	16	16	35260	16
France	16	16	33802	16
Luxembourg	16	16	49260	16
Netherlands	16	16	38936	16
Spain	16	16	24818	16
Turkey	16	16		11
Belgium	15	15	38506	12
Slovenia	15	15		15
Germany	14	14	32047	14
Japan	14	14	4302880	8
New Zealand	14	14		10
Switzerland	14	14	82248	11
Iceland	13	13		10
Korea	13	13	28493329	13
Mexico	12	12		12
United States	12	0	50888	
Norway	9	9	407349	7
Sweden	9	9	329481	7
Australia	6	0	67287	0
OECD-35	**19**	**17**	**1309594**	**13**

Panel B
Length in weeks of parental leave[3] and full-rate[2] equivalent for the average worker, 2008

Country	Total length of parental leave	Number of paid weeks	Full-rate equivalent
Poland	156	156	21
Germany	148	61	41
France	146	146	28
Spain	144	0	0
Finland	144	144	24
Russian Fed.	132	58	46
Hungary	136	136	59
Slovak Republic	136	136	31
Estonia	136	136	65
Czech Republic	134	156	47
Austria	104	156	19
Norway	91	91	32
Australia	52	0	0
Sweden	51	51	31
Denmark	46	32	23
Korea	46	46	10
Japan	44	44	31
New Zealand	38	0	0
Slovenia	37	37	37
Canada	35	35	19
Greece	30	0	0
Luxembourg	26	26	12
Iceland	26	13	10
Italy	26	26	8
Turkey	26	0	0
Netherlands	26	tax reduction	5
Ireland	14	0	0

1. Total length of maternity leave refers to the sum of paid and unpaid entitled weeks: the numbers above the bars refer to the total length of employment-protected maternity/parental leave in 2008.
2. Full-rate equivalent (FRE) = Duration of (maternity/parental) leave in weeks' payment as a percentage of AW earnings received by the claimant over this period.
3. Information refers to parental leave and subsequent prolonged periods of paid and unpaid leave women can take after maternity leave to care for young children (sometimes under a different name as for example, “childcare leave” or “home-care leave”, or the "Complément de libre choix d’activité" in France).

In all, prolonged periods of home-care leave can be taken in Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland and Spain (Annex 4.A1) and since 2008 in Sweden. Values for parental leave refer to the number of weeks women can take after maternity leave, and thus can be added to the weeks of maternity leave. Weeks of maternity leave to be taken after childbirth are deducted from the length of parental leave in countries where entitlements are set up to an age limit of the child. Parental leave is unpaid in the Netherlands, but there is a tax advantage to stimulate take-up, which is reflected in this chart. For Canada, the 17 weeks in Panel A refer to the situation in most provinces and territories, but, for example, the provinces of Québec and Saskatchewan provide 18 weeks. In Panel B, the federal Employment Insurance programme provides for 35 weeks of paid parental leave; unpaid leave periods can be longer. For example, the province of Québec provides up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave, during which period eligible clients can claim benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan.

Source: OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families* using Moss and Korintus (2008); Missoc tables: Social Protection in EU Member States; and information provided by national authorities in non-EU countries.
Information on data for Israel: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602

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Table 4 Maternity Leave Benefits in Selected Asian Countries

Source: Caparas, 2011 using http://data.un.org

Length of Maternity Leave		% of Wages Paid in Covered Period	Provider of Maternity Coverage
Afghanistan	90 days	100	Employer
Bangladesh	16 weeks	100	Employer
China, People's Republic of	90 days	100	Social Insurance (urban areas, state-owned enterprises regardless of location)
India	12 weeks	100	Social Insurance or employer (for non-covered women)
Indonesia	3 months	100	Employer
Korea, Republic of	90 days	100	Employment Insurance Fund
Malaysia	60 days	100	Employer
Myanmar	12 weeks	67	Social Security
Nepal	52 days	100	Employer
Pakistan	12 weeks	100	Social Insurance
Philippines	60 days	100	Social Security
Sri Lanka	12 weeks	86,100	Employer (86% of wages for workers paid at a time-rate or piece-rate)
Thailand	90 days	100, 50	Employer (45 days at 100%) and Social Insurance (remaining 45 days at 50%)
Viet Nam	4-6 months	100	Social Insurance (duration depends on working conditions, nature of work, disability)

Table 5 Family Leave- a global snapshot

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
Argentina	100%	90 days	100%	2 days	-	-	100%	1-10 days*	Employer/Family Allowance Fund	*Leave for bereavement, marriage and other events; amount of leave depends on event.
Australia	-	-	-	-	Fixed amount*	18 weeks**	-	-	General taxation	*Paid at the level of the national minimum wage. **If the primary caregiver returns to work before the expiry of this period they can transfer the unused paid leave to their partner.
Austria	100%	16 weeks	-	-	Variable*	2 years	-	-	Statutory health insurance/ general taxation/employer contributions	*Parents can choose between flat rate options or an income-related option.
Bangladesh	100%	16 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Belgium	75%*	15 weeks	100%**	10 days	Fixed amount***	12 weeks****	Fixed amount*****	1 year (time credit system)	Federal health insurance, general taxation, and employee and employer contributions	*82% for first 30 days, then 75%. ** 100% for 3 days then 82%. ***Approx EUR 653 (US $892) per month net of taxes. ****To be extended to 4 months by end 2011. *****Approx EUR 592 (US $809)

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										per month.
Brazil	100%	17 weeks*	100%	5 days	-	-	-	-	Social security and employer**	*Employer can extend for another 12 weeks. **Employer is reimbursed, except for the extended weeks, which are tax deductable. Employer pays for paternity leave.
Canada	55%	15-18 weeks*	-	-	55%	37 weeks	100%	3 days**	Employer and federal and state employment insurance programme	*Varies by province. **Leave for bereavement.
Chile	100%	18 weeks	100%	5 days	-	-	100%	3-7 days*	Social security	*Leave for bereavement.
China	100%	13 weeks	-	-	-	-	100%	1-3 days*	Social security	*Leave for marriage or bereavement.
Colombia	100%	12 weeks	100%	4-8 days	-	-	-	-	Social security	
Czech Republic	60%	28 weeks	-	-	Varia ble*	3 years	-	-	Social security/health insurance/general taxation	*Fixed amount that vary according to length of leave.
Denmark	100%	18 weeks	100%	2 weeks	100%	32 weeks*	-	-	Sickness benefit scheme/employers and municipalities through pooled	*The leave period may be extended if the worker returns to work part-time, and the payment is then spread over the longer

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
									leave funds	period. In certain sectors, fathers are entitled to additional non-transferable leave.
Egypt	100%	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Social security/employer	
Estonia	100%	20 weeks	-	-	Variable*	3 years	80%	14 days**	Social security/general taxation	*Flat rate for 3 years or 100% of earnings for 62 weeks. **Leave for care of sick children.
Ethiopia	100%	13 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Finland	Variable*	21 weeks	70%	3-6 weeks	Variable**	158 working days	Variable***	3 years****	Health insurance/ municipal taxes	*90% for first 56 days, then 70%. **75% for first 30 days, then 30%. ***Depends on number of children. ****Home care leave.
France	100%	16 weeks	100%	2 weeks	Variable*	3 years	Variable**	3 years	Social security/health insurance/family allowance fund	*Entitled to leave or to work part-time until the child is 3 year old. Varying flat-rate payments depending on size of family and leave circumstances. **Leave to care for seriously ill or disabled family member. Amount of pay depends on length of employment and family

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										circumstances.
Germany	100%	14 weeks	-	-	67%*	12-14 months**	80%	10 days***	General taxation/statutory health insurance/employer****	*If spread over 28 months, half of this amount is paid per month. **A mother or father can receive parental leave pay for up to 12 months. An additional two months of pay is available if the other partner takes leave. May be taken over longer period with lesser pay. ***Leave for care of an ill child. ****Depends on the amount to be paid while on leave and whether the worker is eligible to receive statutory health insurance.
Greece	100%	17 weeks*	100%	2 days	-	-	100%	3.75 months**	Social security and other government sources/employer funding of paternity leave	*An additional 6 months of paid leave is available with minimum wage pay after maternity leave. Public sector maternity leave is longer. **Through flexible working scheme. Longer leave available in public sector.
Hungary	70%	24 weeks	100%	5 days	Variable*	2-3 years**	70%	Variable***	Health insurance/general taxation	*Flat rate for uninsured parents, 70% of earnings for insurance parents. **Depends on whether parents

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										are insured. ***Leave length depends of age of child.
Iceland	80%	3 months	80%	3 months	80%	3 months	-	-	Social insurance fund with employee and employer contributions	
India	100%	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Indonesia	100%	13 weeks	100%	2 days	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Ireland	80%/ fixed amount*	26 weeks	-	-	-	-	100%	3 days**	Social insurance fund	*Whichever is greater. **Leave for family illness or injury.
Israel	100%	14 weeks	100%	8 weeks*	-	-	-	-	Social security	*If mother returns to work before 14 weeks, partner can take up her maternity leave entitlement after 6 weeks of maternity leave.
Italy	80%*	20 weeks	-	-	30%**	6 months	-	-	Social security	*100% for public sector workers and for workers covered by some collective bargaining agreements **100% for public sector workers for first 30 days.

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
Japan	60%	14 weeks	-	-	30%*	1 year	40%	3 months	National health insurance/employment insurance	*Returning job allowance also given upon return to work after parental leave.
Luxembourg	100%	16 weeks	100%	2 days	Fixed amount*	6 months	100%	2-4 days**	National heath fund, through general taxation/employer for paternity leave	*1,778 EUR (US $2,431)/month full-time or less for part-time leave. **Leave to care for ill or disabled child. Can be extended to 52 weeks for exceptional illness.
Malaysia	100%	60 days	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Mexico	100%	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Social security/employer	
The Netherlands	100%	16 weeks	100%	2 days	-	-	70%/ variable*	10 days**	Unemployment fund/employer	*Workers taking parental leave are entitled to a tax deduction of about half the minimum wage per hour. **Leave to care for a sick close relative. Additional parental leave available, with length based on number of working hours.
New Zealand	100%	14 weeks	100%*	1-2 weeks	-	-	100%	5 days**	General taxation	*Paid if the partner transfers the statutory entitlement after taking less than 14 weeks of maternity leave. **Leave to care for ill dependant.

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
Nigeria	50%	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Norway	80%/100%	9 weeks	80%/100%	10 weeks	80%/100%	27-37 weeks for either parent	Fixed amount**	10 days***	General taxation/employer	*Depends on length of leave. **Paid at rate of sickness benefit. ***Leave to care for an ill child.
Pakistan	100%	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	
Poland	100%	22 weeks	100%	1 week	Fixed amount	3 years	80%	14 days*	Social insurance fund/employer	*Depends on duration of employment.
Portugal	80%/100%*	120-150 days	100%	20 days	25%	3 months**	65%	30 days***	Social security/general taxation	*Depends on leave length. **Per parent, non-transferable. ***Leave to care for an ill child.
Russia	100%	140 days	-	-	40%	18 months	Variable*	60 days	Social insurance fund/employer	*Depends on duration of employment.
Saudi Arabia	50%/100%*	10 weeks	-	1 day	-	-	-	-	Employer	*Depends on duration of employment.
Slovak Republic	55%	28 weeks	55%	22 weeks*	Fixed amount	128 weeks	-	-	Social insurance/general taxation	*For the period the mother does not take maternity leave due to illness, death or waiving her

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										rights.
Slovenia	100%	15 weeks	100%/fixed amount*	13 weeks	100%	37 weeks	80%	15 days**	Social security/general taxation	*100% of wages for the first two weeks, then social security benefits. **Leave to care of an ill dependant.
South Africa	Variable*	4 months	-	-	-	-	100%	3 days**	Unemployment insurance fund/employer	*31% to 59% of earnings, depending on duration of employment and level of earnings. Available for 17 weeks. Longer for public sector workers. **Family responsibility leave. Available for bereavement of illness of family member, as well as for fathers at time of childbirth or adoption. Paid by employer.
South Korea	100%	13 weeks	-	-	Fixed amount	1 year	-	-	Employment insurance fund/employer	
Spain	100%	16 weeks	100%	15 days	-	-	100%	2-5 days**	Social security/employer	*Depends on the amount contributed to the social security scheme. **Leave for bereavement, serious

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										illness or marriage.
Sri Lanka	86%/100%*	12 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	*Employees covered by the Shop and Offices Employees Act receive 100% paid maternity leave.
Sweden	80%	50 days	80%	10 days	80%	480 days*	80%	120 days**	Social insurance	*60 days for mother, 60 days for father and rest is a family entitlement. **Leave to care for an ill child.
Switzerland	80%	14 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Social insurance	
Turkey	66.6%	16 weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Social security	
United Arab Emirates	50%/ 100% *	45 days	-	-	-	-	-	-	Employer	*100% after one year of continuous employment.
United Kingdom	90%/ Fixed amount*	52 weeks	Variable**	2/26 weeks***	-	-	-	-	Employer****	*90% for 6 weeks and then 124.88 GBP/week or 90% of weekly earnings, whichever is less. **Two weeks paid at a rate adjusted according to weekly earnings. Father receives 124.88 GBP (US $197)/week or 90% of weekly earnings, whichever is less, if caring for the child during

	Maternity Leave		Paternity Leave		Parental Leave		Additional Family Leave		Funding Sources	Comments
	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration	Pay	Duration		
										maternity leave not taken by mother. ***Up to 26 weeks to care for the child if the mother returns to work within the first year without using all of her maternity leave. ****Employer is reimbursed 92% of statutory paternity pay.

Source: Human Rights Watch (2011) *Failing its Families Lack of Paid Leave and Work-Family Supports in the US (Annexe).* Report available at http://www.hrw.org, using:
•the International Labour Organization Database of Conditions of Work and Employment Laws (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.home) (with many entries last updated in 2009);
• the International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2010 (Peter Moss, ed.) (http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/employment-matters/docs/i/10-1157-international-review-leave-policies.pdf);
• a March 2010 OECD Gender Brief (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/31/44720649.pdf); and
• government websites

Work-family balance practices in action - Professor O Brien

Work-family balance practices in action: innovation and barriers in the private sector

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This focus of this paper is on work-family balance practices in action with a particular emphasis on private sector employment contexts. Using research evidence and organisational case examples, I explore factors that facilitate and challenge the implementation of work-family balance practices. Despite variation in underpinning cultural, demographic and labour market environments across the world, employers are being called upon to create more humane and family-friendly workplaces. Much of the evidence on work-family balance good practice originates from developed countries, particularly from their time of economic boom, when arguably more resources were available to deploy on these measures.

A main tension for private sector employers is balancing corporate or government driven family-friendly ambitions with administrative burden (often described as too much regulation or "red tape"). However, there is a growing correlational evidence base for "business benefits" of work-family practices, particularly in productivity, retention and lower absenteeism (Yasbek, 2004; Dex & Scheibl, 1999). Notwithstanding this evidence, international comparisons show that many companies disregard or assume no responsibility for employees' private lives conducting their business with an assumption of an autonomous worker (Chinchilla, Las Heras & Masuda, 2010). Companies that are insensitive to family issues, with no formal policies to support employees' family obligations, are described by Chinchilla et al (2010) as contaminating companies. These organisations are contrasted with "family-responsible" enterprises, argued to enrich the business and social environment of their communities. While companies do vary in how they respond to observations such as these, it is noticeable that consideration of the wider family context of workers' lives is becoming more common place, as well as a key component in modern corporate responsibility approaches.

1. **Business dialogue with Governments and other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of county level work-family problems**

The development of a shared understanding of country level work-family problems (e.g. demographic changes in family structures, fertility and population renewal, shortages in female labour market supply, employee retention) can be facilitated when the business community engages in dialogue with government and other key organisations**.** Informal meetings between government ministers, civil servants and CEOs or leaders of employer organisations are important lobbying opportunities for private sector employers for instance on employment legislation. However, typically informal and formal meetings with a broader set of interest groups/stakeholders, including employee and family organisations, promotes greater dialogue, awareness and knowledge of potentially conflicting needs and shared solutions. In countries with developed work-family policies and practices *formal* as well *informal* channels of communication between business employers and governments exist. Examples include:

Public-Private Summit for Promotion of Work-life Balance- Japan

On the occasion of a Government change, a special Public-Private Summit for the Promotion of Work-life was held in June 2010. It was led by the Prime Minister, other ministers and the representatives from Nippon Keidanren, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and

Japanese Trade Union Confederation. Immediate triggers were the declining birth rate (low point of 1.26 in 2005), the problems women have managing to continue working after the arrival of children, a long hours corporate work style (Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare, 2011). In this meeting and subsequently companies have contributed to developing a *Work-Life Balance Charter and Action Policy*, containing a set of new societal principles embedded in revisions of the Child care and Family Care Leave Law. A *shared vision* was articulated in Work-Life Balance *Charter,*

"A society where each citizen works with a sense of satisfaction, finding his/ her job rewarding, executes work-related responsibilities, and at the same time, chooses and lives a variety of lifestyles in different stages of life (e.g. during childrearing, middle and old ages) as a member of a family and a community." (Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare, 2011)

The summit and charter are contributing to gradual cultural change across Japanese society and so raising the principle of workers having obligations to their "personal family" as well as to their "corporate family".

The Productivity Commission Inquiry -Australia

On 29 June 2010, the Australian Parliament passed the Paid Parental Leave Act 2010, which introduced universal paid Parental leave for the first time in Australia. The Act paid Parental leave to eligible primary carers who have or adopt a child from 1 January 2011. http://www.pc.gov.au/

The implementation of this scheme followed an earlier public inquiry into the social costs and benefits of providing paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental leave in Australia, conducted by the Productivity Commission. Private sector engagement was strong in the Productivity Commission Inquiry driven by a national concern with talent shortages, long working hours, underutilization of female skills. With a mixed culture of collective bargaining and management discretion at company levels, employers were able to leverage strong help and guidance from government. In addition to publicly provided information on the workings of a statutory paid parental leave scheme, the Australian Government agreed to provide specific supports, for instance: a web-based calculator that shows which employees would be eligible and the net benefits they would receive, and that sets out any obligations by employers**.**

'Employers for Work-Life Balance'- UK

In March 2000, the British Government outlined its plans for encouraging the growth of work-life balance within the UK in the discussion document *' Work-Life Balance: Changing Patterns in a Changing World*'. The document announced the launch of the Work-Life Balance Campaign. One aspect of this campaign was the setting up of an employer-led alliance: 'Employers for Work-Life Balance', with the aim of promoting the benefits of work-life balance to employers in the UK by demonstrating its success within their own organisations. Firms such as Lloyds TSB, HSBC and BT were among the first to sign up. In the discussion document the Government, in partnership with Employers for Work-Life Balance, drew up a six-point checklist outlining the key considerations for employers if they are committed to work-life balance. It states:

An organisation that is committed to work-life balance:

• Recognises that effective practices to promote work-life balance will benefit the organisation and its employees.

• Acknowledges that individuals at all stages of their lives work best when they are able to achieve an appropriate balance between work and all other aspects of their lives.

• Highlights the employer's and employees' joint responsibility to discuss workable solutions and encourages a partnership between individuals and their line managers.

• Develops appropriate policies and practical responses that meet the specific needs of the organisation and its employees, having regard to:- Fairness and consistency; Valuing employees for their contribution to the business, not their working pattern; Monitoring and evaluation;

•Communicates its commitment to work-life strategies to its employees.

• Demonstrates leadership from the top of the organisation and encourages managers to lead by example'.

Source: ' *Work-Life Balance: Changing Patterns in a Changing World* (March 2000: 4) http://www.dfee.gov.uk/work-lifebalance

The discussion document also announced a new Ministerial Advisory Committee on Work-Life Balance that was set up to advise ministers on ways to promote work-life balance in employment practices in the UK. Three years later an Employment Act introducing a range of work-family legislation was passed – including requiring employers to commence a legal 'duty to consider' requests for flexible working time arrangements from employees who are parents with responsibility for children aged under six (or under 18 in the case of disabled children) .

European Social Partners dialogue

Prior to any EU wide legislative change in employment, a series of consultative meetings takes place between European social partners (BUSINESSEUROPE, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP) and The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises- UEAPME). A consensus must be agreed. For instance, in the most recent dialogue on a revision of the new Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU) adopted on 8 March 2010 by EU ministers for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, BUSINESSEUROPE and UEAPME supported an extra fourth month but resisted any change in payments to employers.

The revised Directive on Parental Leave gives each working parent the right to at least four months leave after the birth or adoption of a child (up from three months). At least one of the four months cannot be transferred to the other parent – meaning it will be lost if not taken – offering incentives to fathers to take the leave. The new Directive also provides for better protection against discrimination and a smoother return to work. It put into effect an agreement between European employers and trade union organisations, resulting in a decision that matters regarding the income of workers during parental leave were left for Member States and/or national social partners to determine.

BUSINESSEUROPE is the main horizontal business organisation at EU level. Through its 41 member federations, BUSINESSEUROPE represents 20 million companies from 35 countries. Its main task is to ensure that companies' interests are represented and defended vis-à-vis the European institutions with the principal aim of preserving and strengthening corporate competitiveness. BUSINESSEUROPE is active in the European social dialogue to promote the smooth functioning of labour markets. http://www.businesseurope.eu/

UEAPME is the European SME umbrella organization and incorporates 83 member organizations consisting of national cross-sectorial SME federations, European branch federations and other associate members. Across the whole of Europe, UEAPME represents over 12 million enterprises with nearly 55 million employees. http://www.ueapme.com/

2. Government support and incentives to companies developing work-family practices and policies

For companies in the early stages of developing work-family practices and policies "start-up" support from Governments is important. Through targeted funding Governments can create incentives and firm based training opportunities. Such support may be particularly helpful for small or medium size private sector enterprises with less reserve capacity on which to draw.

The *Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund* (WLB-CF), initiated by the Department of Trade and Industry in Britain in 2000 at the start of national effort towards promoting work-life balance practices, is good example of this approach. Over 400 organisations were supported by advice from specialist consultancy firms for a time-limited period of one year. These firms assisted employers in carrying out tailored projects to develop work-life balance policies and practices.

Consultancies carried out audits and research included benchmarking activities with similar organisations using staff surveys, focus groups, interviews and workshops. The most common practice was supporting organisational change around flexible working hours and practices (remote and home-working, part-time working, Job sharing, health awareness materials, information packs or toolkits).

An evaluation showed that support from *Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund* increased work-life balance awareness in the funded organisations and the majority developed flexible working practices (Nelson, 2004). As this innovation occurred before the formal introduction of flexible working practice legislation in Britain in 2003, it was a useful pilot. The project also indicated that, the private sector, sometimes seen as a laggard on work-life issues, can be a fertile place to pilot new working practises to help establish foundations for further developments.

3. Leading workplace cultural change

Most research points to the critical role of leadership in initiating and sustaining workplace cultural change around work-family practices. Simple implementation of a family-friendly policy, such as flexible work options, will not necessarily lead to better work-life balance outcomes without appropriate organisational support (Behson, 2005; Lewis, 2001). CEO's and senior managers have a significant influence in communicating expected organisational behaviour, including time to arrive and leave work, amounts of "over-time", formal holidays, leave or flexible work entitlements

individuals should take. Senior management 'buy-in' is both a success factor in promoting work-family practices if present and a barrier if absent. One problem is that although senior executives often have much more individual flexibility about when they personally work, they have little scope to reduce hours. Research and case study evidence suggests that symbolic actions, such as taking parental leave by CEOs, particularly when they are successful males contesting local norms, can be important in shifting organisational barriers (Russell &Hwang, 2004).

Case Study – BT Global Partners

Chris Ainslie is a father of three and managing director of BT Global Partners, a business with sales of more than £500 million a year. From Monday to Thursday, he works 10-hour days. Then he switches off his laptop and mobile and devotes Friday and the weekend to family and outside interests. Ainslie, 40, made his four-day week a condition of accepting a senior job with the telecommunications company when he was headhunted in 2005. He does it in 40 hours by 'ruthless prioritisation', self-discipline and delegation. 'I make decisions far more quickly. I've never been more efficient than I am now.' In his three years in the job, his directorate's revenues have doubled internationally and grown 14 per cent in the UK, while profit margins have risen from 18 per cent to 23 per cent. The key business benefits are the creation of a group of seven experienced deputies, who take it in turn to run the business when Ainslie is away and increased employee satisfaction levels in his division. *Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission Working Better 'Meeting the changing needs of families, workers and employers in the 21st century' (2009)*

In the same organisation in parallel to this individual CEO case, an informal code of work-family practice titled The BT Passport Scheme was initiated, to enable employees to confidentially inform supervisors about specific family responsibilities, personal or health conditions. Once stored these allow managers to support employees under a "duty of care" approach. Research on private sector companies shows that employee perception that the work place has a caring ethos is a significant predictor of take up of parental leave by fathers (Haas & Hwang *).

Leaders of governments can also act as social norm changers as reflected when two European prime ministers, in the UK and Finland, became fathers around the same time in 2000. Cherie gives Blair paternity leave hint": Cherie Booth dropped a broad hint last night that she would like her husband, Tony Blair, to take a break from running the country and spend some time with her and the baby after it is born in May. …"Our children need their male role models as well as their female ones if they are to grow up into well-rounded, well-balanced individuals." She drew comparisons with the Finnish Prime Minister, who had taken advantage of his right to paternity leave. (The Guardian Newspaper, March 21, 2000).

Competition between countries and companies in terms if their relative positions on the range of "family-friendly" league tables also has a place in changing attitudes towards work-family policies and practices.

4. Formal work-family practices in the workplace and private sector flexibilities

Most evidence, using representative surveys rather than case studies showcasing exceptional generosity, indicates that that, on aggregate, employees who work in large private and public sector organisations, and in unionised workplaces, experience an optimum system of work-family support

(in terms of higher income replacement flexible work practices and family leave) (Adema & Whiteford, 2007; Hegewisch, 2009; EuroFund, 2010). Larger organisations are more able to provide a human resource infrastructure. However, private sector companies have greater discretion to "top- up" basic provisions and develop personalised conditions and benefits for highly valued employees. For instance, some multi-nationals companies report examples of innovative work-family schemes to retain high skilled female staff when they have babies. *Maternity coaching* starts before the child is born and is offered to women and if relevant their managers.

Deutsche Bank

Having introduced a maternity coaching programme in 2008, Deutsche Bank has seen this benefit grow in popularity year on year. The coaching is not only offered to pregnant women, but also to all managers of women going on maternity leave. For women, the coaching program is designed to support a successful transition from and back into work. For line managers the program highlights and reinforces the benefits of good communication and planning. The workshops also provide a support community for mothers, as well as access to information and materials. The coaching programme also offers a 12-24 month session to some women, as this has been identified as the point when women tend to question their career. There is an ante-natal healthcare programme for expectant mothers, and ante and post natal yoga classes. Expectant mothers can also use the on-site medical centre; having these facilities on site/ within close vicinity has resulted in less disruption for expectant mothers to their working routine. A wider benefit of the maternity provisions is that Deutsche Bank has seen an increased retention rate of women returning from maternity leave.
Source: Top Employers for Working Families Awards www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Deutsche Bank's maternity programme dovetails with statutory "Keeping in Touch" provision available in Australia and Britain to all eligible parents, while on parental leave, whether employed in the private or public sector. Subject to employer and employee consent, the Australian Government's statutory paid parental leave scheme allows the employee to work up to 10 days while on paid parental leave, where that work strengthens the connection to their workplace. There is also scope for eligible self-employed parents to maintain some oversight of their businesses while on leave.

Private Sector Time Credit system - Belgium

In some countries private sector work-family balance practices have evolved out of public sector schemes as in Belgium (Merla & Deven, 2011; Vandeweyer & Glorieux, 2009). Legislation enabling citizens to have entitlements to time-out breaks from employment with job protection and part income replacement was introduced by the Belgian government in 1985. Initially, the legislation was aimed at achieving a redistribution of labour to counter rising unemployment. Each person taking a career break was to be replaced by an unemployed person, and would only be paid their allowance if this condition was fulfilled. In 2002, the system was given a radical overhaul, decoupling from conditionality with unemployed replacement.

By 2011 Merla & Deven (2011) report that the Time Credit system (*Tijdskrediet / Crédit temps*) applied to employees in the private sector (and a similar scheme – 'career breaks' – applying in the public sector). According to both schemes all eligible workers have a basic right to one paid year of this type of leave. This period can be extended up to five years by collective agreement negotiated at the sectoral or company level.

For each company, there is a 5 per cent threshold of employees who can use the time credit system at any one time; priorities are settled within the company according to certain rules (e.g. priority in the case of care for a severely ill family member). From March 2010 on, employees need two years

(instead of one) of previous work with the same employer to be granted his payment. There is a guarantee in principle to return to the workplace following a career break or time credit period. Payments to time credit users are funded by the Federal social security system, which is financed by contributions from employers and employees (Merla & Deven, 2011).

As Vandeweyer & Glorieux (2009) suggest career break schemes, such as the Belgium example, are not only intended for parents but represent a societal recognition of personal needs for a break from employment at any age for a range of reasons from switching careers, having a rest from high work intensity, caring for grand-children, pursuing a hobby or to take care of elders.

Challenges for Small and Medium Size Businesses (SMEs)

Although the size of small and medium sized businesses can mean they have greater flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, this low staff critical mass can also create problems in staff substitution and cover, particularly in relation to extended parental leave periods. Some governments and regions give SMEs exemptions in relation to compliance with national work time directives. For example in the Netherlands, SMEs are not required to comply with the working hours adjustment flexibilities available to all other work places.

The Working Hours Adjustment Act- The Netherlands

Under the Working Hours Adjustment Act (WAA), all employees who have completed one year's continuous employment with their present employer have the right to increase or decrease their working hours. The right to adjustment of working hours is, however, conditional: the employer can refuse to grant the request if the interests of the business or service might be seriously harmed; *and the law does not apply to employers with less than ten employees* (Groenendijk & Keuzenkamp, 2011).

5. Implementing fathers use of parental leave: Private sector Sweden

Sweden was the first nation to grant employed fathers and mothers equal access to paid family leave, in 1974. However, the implementation gap between availability and support for use has been evident even Sweden and illuminated by the research of Haas & Hwang (2009). Tracking trends from 1993 to 2006, they find a dramatic increase in the volume of formal corporate support for fathers taking leave in large Swedish companies, but from a very low base. For instance, in 2006, 41 per cent of companies reported a formal decision to encourage paternal leave taking in contrast to just 2 per cent in 1993 (see Table 1). However, by 2006 less than half of companies in their survey reported formal policies and programmes and informal support from co-workers and supervisors. Where companies provided little formal and informal support, fathers took less leave. Resistance to fathers taking parental leave was most common in more male-dominated companies, typically blue-collar companies (Haas & Hwang, 2009).

Organizational culture at an informal level, for instance through the impact of senior managers taking parental leave, can creating a more enabling atmosphere for junior colleagues in the workplace (Haas et al, 2002). By 2006, 88 per cent of Haas & Hwang's (2009) top Swedish management had taken parental leave in contrast to 32 per cent in 1993. Fathers' participation in parental leave has risen steadily since the beginning of the programme.

Table 1: Extent of Corporate Support for Fathers taking Leave in Sweden

Percentage of companies reporting	**1993 survey** (N=200)	**2006 survey** (N=244)
Formal support for Parental leave:		
Policy decision to support fathers' leave taking	2	41
Record keeping on leave taking	19	40
Formal programme to encourage blue-collar fathers to take leave	1	34
Formal programme to encourage white-collar fathers to take leave	4	48
Group/person designated to encourage fathers to take leave	2	7
Leave taking by men in top management	32	88
Reported five or more of the six types of formal support	Nil	14
Informal support for Parental Leave:		
Positive reaction by managers when blue-collar men want to take leave	10	30
Positive reaction by managers when white-collar men want to take leave	10	37
Positive reaction by co-workers when blue-collar men want to take leave	18	39
Positive reaction by co-workers when white-collar men want to take leave	26	46
All four types of informal support	5	26
Fathers' use of Parental leave:		
No fathers took leave	2	Nil
1-20 per cent of fathers took leave	70	42
21-40 per cent of fathers took leave	16	33
41-60 per cent of fathers took leave	9	9

61 per cent or more of fathers took leave	2	15

Source: Haas & Hwang, 2009

This research aligns with other studies highlighting the importance of work-family legislation being backed up by managerial support, support from supervisors and co-workers through formal policies and programmes (Lewis, 2001; Tremblay & Genin, 2010). Managers responsible for arranging leave and flexible workers require training in how to handle alternative working patterns in their teams. Perceptions about supervisors' support or lack of support are critical in whether employees ask for leave, flexible working and how they cope on return after leave. In the economic downturn the intensity of work, cost cuts, and tough performance targets may limit managers' ability to focus on work-family balance. Professional associations, such as human resource bodies, can provide managers with useful networking and support to compare effective policies and processes.

Conclusion

The need for work-life balance practices is becoming more accepted by employers in the private as well as the public sector, although company executives are still uncertain about the remit of their responsibilities. A range of factors have served to increase the salience of work-family policies. Even in these difficult economic times leading companies still compete fiercely for talent and need to create attractive work packages for an increasingly diverse set of workers and their 21st century families (The Economist, 2011). The growth of Family-Friendly and Working Mother awards and league tables mean that organizational reputation and compliance with legislation is more visible to business rivals and the wider community.

However, employers need further encouragement, training and incentives to develop organisational policies which embrace the diverse ways contemporary employees have to balance their work and family life throughout the life course. Responsiveness on the part of employers is important. Employers attitudes to work-family balance are affected by a range of factors notably local legislation and regulations, the social and cultural context, and also personal experiences (for instance, when Chief Executives become grandparents and observe the daily struggles of their own children attempting to manage being a good worker and parent). As the Swedish case has shown, movement towards a family- friendly environment takes time and requires a combination of national legislation, cultural change and local support policies.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Private sector companies consider more proactive ways to engage with Governments and other stakeholders about county level work-family problems in order to develop a shared understanding and contribute shared solutions.

Private sector companies gather information on their own employees' family needs to build up a profile and assess priority areas for support, in a phased manner.

Governments create incentives and “start-up” opportunities for companies to pilot, monitor and evaluate specific work-family practices.

Company executives, particularly male leaders, should consider imaginative and symbolic ways to lead and model workplace cultural change towards better work-family balance.

Private sector companies formulate creative methods to communicate written formal and informal work-family practices and policies, including podcasts, blogs, tweets as well as traditional manual and notice-board methods.

Private sector companies to invest in team skills training of managers involved in work-family implementation.

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Working Families Job Advertising in the Civil Service

We need to talk about … hours

Job Advertising in the Civil Service: An Analysis by Working Families

By Laura Dewar (Trustee)

Summary

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Please contact Working Families on 020 7253 7243
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Published January 2009

Summary

Background

Part-time work "plays a significant part in women's lifetime patterns of employment."[1] In 2004, 42% of women in employment worked part-time. [2] However, research has identified that the lack of good quality part-time work is a barrier to women working to their potential and is a contributor to the gender pay gap.

Opportunities to seek new or more responsible jobs, or to build up experience across a range of organisations, are much more limited than full-time workers. The lack of good quality part-time roles is frustrating for the individual and a personal financial cost. It is also not using the full potential of the workforce and represents an under use of experience and skills for the economy.

Gender Equality Duty in the Civil Service

Since April 2007 the Government has given the Public Sector, including the Civil Service, a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women, including in its recruitment policies.[3] Working Families wanted to know whether this duty was translating into practical measures to encourage part-time work in the Civil Service.

Methodology and Key Findings

We decided to undertake a "secret shopper" exercise to see what it is was like for an individual wanting to apply for work on a part-time basis either three days a week or as a job-share in the Civil Service. In the middle of September 2008 Working Families looked at the 70 jobs advertised over a five day period on the Civil Service Gateway.

- 50 of the jobs were advertised as full-time only;
- 18 of the jobs were advertised as being available either to full-time workers or on a part-time or job-share basis; and
- 2 jobs were advertised as part-time only.

Working Families then undertook an analysis of the 50 jobs that were advertised full-time (without any mention of the possibility of being available for part-time

[1] Jane Miller, Tess Ridge and Fran Bennett (May 2006). Part-time work and Social Security: Increasing the Options. Research Report Number 351 Carried out by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy University of Bath on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.
[2] Office for National Statistics (Spring 2005) Labour Force Survey.
[3] See Appendices A.

workers) to see whether the employer would in fact consider employing someone looking for part-time hours.

We also contacted the smaller group of departments that had advertised their jobs as being available to full-time workers but also as being suitable for job-sharing. We wanted to see whether we could identify good practice in this area that would be useful to disseminate to other potential employers in the public and private sectors.

In response to our enquiries we discovered that of the 50 jobs advertised as full-time, 12 (24%) could also be available for a part-time applicant. In these cases the departments responding to our enquiries were able to tell us how a part-time application would work in practice and were prepared to accept responsibility for filling the remaining part of the vacancy. 33 posts (66%) were still only available to those willing to work full-time. Mostly this was stated explicitly, sometimes it was a clear consequence of the potential employer not being able to provide a basic assurance that they would be able to take forward a part-time or job-share for an individual application. For example, saying that an individual would need to apply as an established job-share before an application would be considered. For a further five posts no response to our enquiries was given before the application deadline.

Conclusions from Key Findings

- The first impression was that the Civil Service has a predominantly full-time hour's culture for new recruits (71% of the jobs were advertised on the Gateway as full-time). Of interest here is the range of jobs that fell into this category. While there may be reasons for some types of jobs being restricted to full-time hours, the jobs that we looked at ranged widely from administrative to managerial roles.

- There was little evidence that the departments had looked at the business needs for posts before advertising and seeking full-time employees for the role. This might suggest that the 'comfort zone' for most departments was to seek full-time applications for full-time posts without asking themselves whether it would be possible in practical terms for someone to do the job part-time.

- The fact that some of the 'full-time' jobs were on further enquiry available to part-time workers might be positive news. However, potential candidates with the right skills and experience may have been dissuaded from applying because of the way that the jobs were initially advertised. This will also have represented a disappointing outcome for the employer, who in effect was turning away part-time talent that when questioned they professed to be willing to employ.

- We did identify some good practice albeit in a minority of departments. 18 jobs were advertised as being open to full-time as well as either part-time or a job-share (although 10 of these jobs were from a single department). Two jobs were advertised as for part-time applicants only.

- The second part of our analysis was to look at those departments that offered job-shares, our aim here was to see if we could identify good practice. However, even in this group where the job-share option was explicitly offered, we found a limited understanding of job-sharing or how it would work for an individual applicant.

- The statutory Gender Equality Duty has not translated into consistent recruitment practice for individuals applying for part-time or job-share roles in the Civil Service. Current practices do not always encourage employees who want to work part-time to apply and thus may reduce women's chances of employment, as well as failing to maximise the employers' chances of finding the best person for the job.

- The difficulty faced by perspective new employees to seek a part-time role when they have no right to request flexibility in hours until they have worked for an organisation for 26 weeks.

Recommendations

- Clear and consistent job advertising that reflects departmental equality aims.

- More external civil service jobs should be available part-time.

- A more imaginative approach to job design with clear business needs and outputs thought through before a post is advertised.

- A greater understanding and encouragement of job-sharing.

- Departments that advertise a range of posts on a part-time basis should be rewarded and their good practice should be shared.

- Greater scrutiny of the Gender Equality Duty in relation to promoting part-time work.

- The Civil Service considers extending the right to request flexible working to their new employees as well as those who are already established with twenty six weeks service.

- Protection of the Gender Equality Duty when the Public Sector Duties are combined in the new Equalities Bill.

Conclusion

Working Families undertook the analysis to better understand the experience of someone seeking to work part-time in the Civil Service and to look at the effectiveness of the Gender Equality Public Sector Duty. These issues are inextricably linked. The Gender Equality Duty is there to prevent discrimination from happening in the first place. Increasing the availability of good quality jobs on a part-time basis is a vital step towards encouraging more women, particularly those with parental or caring responsibilities to apply. For an individual seeking a part-time role the good will or good practice of some departments, whilst encouraging, will only be of real value if it can be adopted on a wholly different scale across the Civil Service.

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Workplace design and productivity: are they inextricably linked?

July 2008

Brian Thompson, Drivers Jonas

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Property in the Economy

Preface

This report was commissioned by RICS as part of its ongoing commitment to providing members and other property professionals with impartial, transparent and authoritative information and data in the field of corporate real estate, both in the private and public sectors.

This report forms part of a suite of corporate real estate research and information with the data and statistics report *Property in the Economy: A digest and review of key data and statistics* (RICS, 2008) forming the backbone.

Future reports include, agile working, ICT in the workplace and sustainability.

This report has been produced for RICS by Brian Thompson of Drivers Jonas, with support from Sarah Kay at Woods Bagot.

Selected references can be found at the end of the report, but it must be noted that not all references within the report have been cited.

The findings do not necessarily represent the views of RICS. For further information about this report contact Rosemary Elder, relder@rics.org, 0207 695 1597 or visit www.rics.org.

Chartered surveyors advise on all aspects of the UK property industry and its business premises. For details of firms call RICS on +44 (0)870 333 1600, or visit www.ricsfirms.com

Chapter 1: Introduction

The concept of productivity in the workplace is attracting great interest and quite rightly so. No longer is it solely in the domain of the academics, HR function or the architects and workplace strategists – we now find experts in real estate, facilities management, furniture supply, air conditioning systems and many more taking an active interest in what has become a major issue for business.

It is predicted that the concept is here to stay, certainly so in the minds of business managers. Consequently, those with a stake in the property sector must rise to the challenge and develop methodologies that inform the business manager and perhaps also provide support to business cases involving an investment in real estate.

This report aims to further raise the profile of productivity in the workplace with a particular focus on the office setting.

There is a seemingly endless drive for improved efficiency in the workplace, and a tendency for the performance of property and those managing property to be measured on efficiency grounds alone. It is not surprising, therefore, that effectiveness of the workplace receives relatively few column inches of coverage and may even be compromised in a blind drive for efficiency. The fact that effectiveness and productivity are ill-defined concepts in the context of the workplace does not help matters.

Evidence indicates that, while the physical attributes of the workplace such as air quality and lighting can have an impact on the productivity of occupiers, it has been known for some time that what might be termed the psychosocial aspects of the working environment can also be significant contributors (or inhibitors) towards greater productivity. These aspects may relate to the ability to interact with colleagues, the degree of social equity and community in the workplace and the provision of a stimulating visual environment.

The effective design of the workplace is a fundamental, non-negotiable aspect of good business practice. But, attention to workplace design alone means missing some vital ingredients in the recipe for productivity enhancement. Looking purely at the physical attributes of the working environment, research points towards some quite staggering productivity improvements in store if various attributes are tackled in tandem.

An attempt is made in this report to quantify the potential productivity benefits that can arise and set those against property-related costs. It is shown that a modest improvement in productivity can deliver economic benefits that overshadow the savings that can be achieved through economies in areas such as rent, FM costs and utilities. The complexity of the working environment and the stage of evolution of productivity measurement mean that, at this moment in time, it is difficult to state categorically that productivity savings are 'bankable'.

An outcome of the research includes a series of conclusions and recommendations targeted at the property industry in general or the organisation planning a change in its workplace. The conclusions and recommendations, to be found in detail in Chapter 12 are reflected in the questions in the table opposite aimed at 'testing' an organisation's state of readiness to embrace using the workplace to enhance productivity.

These conclusions will hopefully assist in aligning the two greatest assets of most organisations – its people and its real estate.

How does your organisation deal with productivity in the workplace?

Where does your organisation's workplace fit on the spectrum? The table on the next page seeks 'black and white' answers although the reality for many organisations might be a 'shade of grey'. In fact, the responses from various senior managers within the same organisation could well be inconsistent! But it is no bad thing if, as a result, productivity and the role of the workplace is properly debated within the board room.

Factor	If 'yes', you score	Your score
Do you conduct regular satisfaction surveys of your employees?	5	
Do those satisfaction surveys explore views of the workplace?	10	
Do you measure the productivity of employees (other than through use of timesheets and annual appraisals)?	5	
Do you take steps to improve productivity by involving the staff when proactively reviewing the workplace, and reviewing the results?	10	
Do you involve your workforce when deciding how work is to be carried out?	10	
Do you involve your workforce when deciding how the office environment is configured and fitted out?	10	
Is the facilities management regime, whether conducted by a landlord, third party, in-house, or some combination of suppliers, truly customer-focused?	5	
Is the performance of property or facilities management support related to occupier productivity to any extent?	10	
Do you know those aspects of your working environment that inhibit or support productivity?	10	
Do you consider the impact on workforce output when implementing efficiency plans in the office?	10	
Do you genuinely believe the design and operation of the office can positively impact on productivity?	15	

In very simplistic terms, if you...

SCORED 0-30: your processes for managing the office and its occupiers are in need of an urgent health check, but the potential benefits are very significant.

SCORED 31-50: there is evidence of a clear understanding of the benefits to your organisation by better understanding the workplace, but there isn't a consistent or thorough approach.

SCORED 51-80: your business model is towards the forefront of current thinking and your organisation is therefore likely to be receptive to further ideas to measure and enhance productivity in the workplace.

SCORED 81-100: your approach is a model for others and should be encapsulated in a case study.

Chapter 2: Productivity and workplace design

If the number of journal articles, research papers conferences and other public events is a proxy for innovation, public interest, and popularity, there is no doubt whatsoever that the inter-linked subjects of productivity and workplace design are becoming highly analysed and widely discussed subjects.

Well, perhaps only in relative terms. Even as recently as ten years ago, commentary on the subjects was confined largely to specialist industry periodicals reporting on the latest research findings. Today, it has achieved more common currency to the extent that many property market players, and internal HR departments, are talking relatively freely about creating a truly productive working environment.

Sustainability, as a subject rather than an objective, has also been through a similar evolution. A decade or two ago, it might have been seen as rather quaint to conceive of embedding long term sustainability into the design, procurement and operation of buildings. To do otherwise now is simply short-sighted and lacking in customer focus.

And there is at last a harmonising of views about what sustainability means in practice. Furthermore, building a business case around the costs and long term benefits of a sustainable building is now a more transparent exercise.

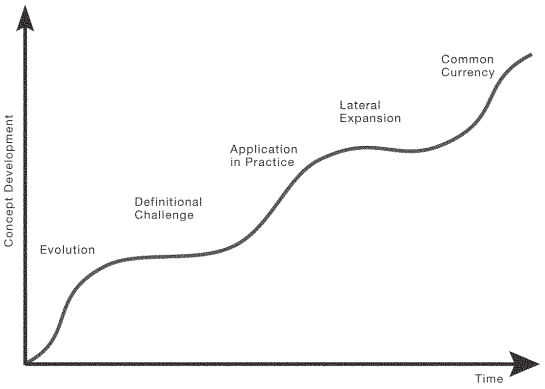
Maybe in another decade, productivity will have achieved the same accolades. For the moment, it is a concept shrouded in some mystery for several reasons. How does one measure productivity in the workplace? Even if it can be measured, how legitimate is it to attribute characteristics of the workplace to changes in productivity levels? In the final analysis, how robust is a business case that purports to deliver quantifiable benefits arising out of enhanced productivity?

The diagram opposite portrays the evolution of concepts into practice. The stages are:

- evolution – a concept is born because of economic necessity, regulatory enforcement or some other driver;
- definitional challenge – the market seeks to define the concept in clear, concise terms;
- application in practice – the market puts into practice the concept;
- lateral expansion – attempts are sought to broaden the application of the concept and/or link it to other concepts; and
- common currency – credibility has been achieved and the market has acclimatised itself to applying the concept almost as common practice.

Consider a few concepts. In simplistic terms, it might be said that the language of health and safety is now common currency, sustainability is being applied in practice and being applied outside its pure technical 'home' while productivity is lagging behind as we strive to get comfortable with the concept. True, some organisations have been measuring it and even enhancing it for some time but there are no common ground rules as yet.

Evolution of concepts



This report recognises that, for many organisations today, measuring productivity is a real challenge. It also recognises that increased productivity is a very real goal of all organisations whether their business is providing public services or enhancing shareholder value, or sits somewhere in the expansive spectrum between these extremes.

The purpose of this report is to help raise the profile of organisational and individual productivity among those whose business is providing and maintaining the built environment. More specifically, research has focused on occupiers of office accommodation. It is fair to say that the science of understanding productivity in, say, retail or licensed premises is rather more advanced than in the office environment. It is also fair to say that the dynamics are very different. The ingredients of interior design that enable a retailer or licensee to sell more of their products have very limited application to the manager seeking increased productivity from office-based employees.

The report also attempts to identify some challenges for the property market in embracing a goal of supporting business to enhance workforce productivity. To counter these challenges, some opportunities are also defined.

It is important to emphasise with equal clarity what this does not set out to achieve. Therefore, this report does not comprise:

- a comprehensive literature review of the expanding body of relevant research;
- a practical step-by-step guide to ensuring enhanced productivity through workplace design; or
- the findings of empirical research conducted by a research team.

Productivity and workplace design

Research

At this point, it is worth raising a few comments on research conducted to date.

Contrary to the views of some, there is an expansive body of research in existence although it must be admitted that some 'new' research is a revisiting of well-established research to explore linkages, contradictions and trends. This still has immense value if it helps validate previous findings and brings together disparate findings from different countries or even continents.

Some research, which has acquired high status and is often cited, is built on less than firm foundations by reason of the research methodology – small number of occupiers surveyed, single buildings surveyed or little or no account taken of extraneous factors that might have impacted on the survey results.

It might also be suggested that some research is less than totally objective. Is the research that identifies a very strong and direct link between lighting, workstation design or noise and the productivity of occupiers, sponsored by a commercial company operating in the field or an industry body that exists to promote a cadre of commercial companies? The research should not be discounted immediately if it comes up with these findings – but it is always worthwhile understanding the motives of the researcher or its sponsor.

Academic research papers commonly describe in detail the further research that needs to be undertaken to explore the hypothesis put forward, or to further validate the findings in the initial paper. Once again, this may be entirely appropriate and necessary to prevent organisations adopting courses of action that may be founded on speculation or, at best, limited field work. But it also leads one to conclude that the 'right' answer will never be uncovered because, so long as this is the case, research will continue to be required!

Allied to this, many researchers share the view that knowledge and understanding of productivity and workplace design is in its infancy. Beyond that, there are widely held views that more scientific evaluation and studies of organisational change over time are required before one can pronounce on the way forward. For example:

- "The study has outlined the effects of workplace innovation, but many gaps in necessary knowledge still exist. Many measurement problems still have to be resolved too." (van der Voordt, 2003)

- "The 'new office' and 'new ways of working' movements have suggested themselves as a solution though the true benefits have been the scope of little independent research. Much of the literature on both topics could be considered thinly veiled advocacy which ignores issues of workplace psychology and especially sociology." (Price, 2001)

- "Case studies provide a valuable insight into productivity but organisational change tends to accompany physical improvement, thus confounding the results." (CIBSE, 1999)

Despite the above critical observations and the potential limitations of some research, there still exists a significant volume of consistent, robust research findings that may provide useful pointers to the professional practitioner, employer, employee or other stakeholder.

What is particularly interesting about the body of research that exists is the commonality of findings irrespective of the starting point of the research project or the academic discipline involved.

Context

To help set the scene and provide context for the examination of approaches to measuring productivity in the workplace, the evolution of the office and management thinking is mapped out. What were the drivers in the evolutionary process? What were the defining characteristics of the office as it evolved?

Many parties are interested and involved in decisions regarding real estate and its occupation. The performance and financial rewards of some are even directly related to the performance of real estate. However, is this consistent with achieving optimum productivity from the workforce? Are all forces pulling in the same direction or against each other?

It is frequently stated that people are an organisation's greatest asset, followed by real estate. If this is so, why are we more accustomed to measuring the performance of real estate? Of course, the simple answer is that it is so much easier to do. On comparing the relative cost and, by implication, value of real estate with the cost and value of occupiers of real estate, it seems extraordinary that management science and operational processes have not developed so as to permit effective management of both asset classes simultaneously and in harmony.

So...

...despite so many apparent challenges to effective research, and the likely absence of a single 'right' answer, it must surely be a good thing to understand as far as we can the complex linkages between workplace design and productivity.

Chapter 3: The evolution of the office and **management thinking**

Larkin Building. Reproduced with the kind permission of www.buffaloah.com

The perfect alignment of the design of an office with the needs of the occupiers can be traced back over 100 years. The true application of science to the operation of business was, not surprisingly, entitled scientific management. A renowned proponent of this art was Frederick Winslow Taylor, famed for his time and motion studies that sought to identify the most efficient use of resources and the perfection of work processes.

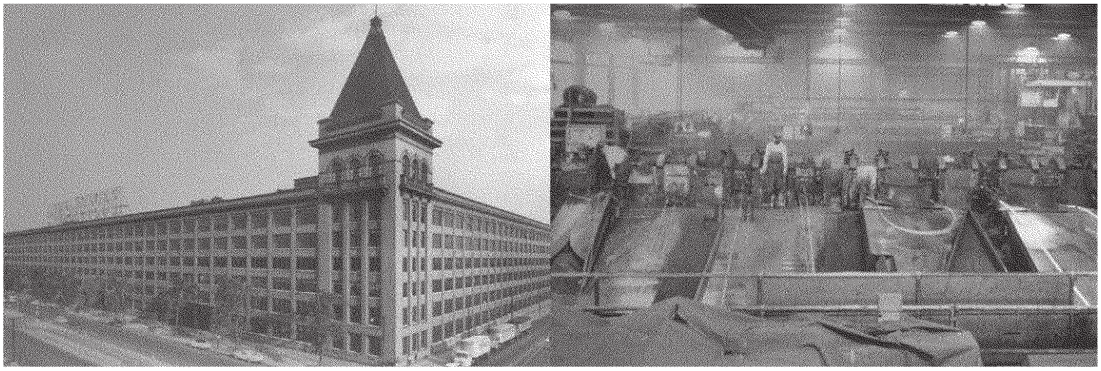
Time and motion studies involved, among other things, identifying the optimum way of performing a given task, and replicating that task as far and wide as necessary within the organisation. It was implicit in his approach that the worker was a factor of production, nothing more and nothing less. The less freedom and initiative granted the better, otherwise room for error would creep in.

In 1904, the Larkin Building was opened – it was to be a prestigious headquarters building for the Larkin Company in Buffalo, New York. Designed on scientific management principles, the building was laid out internally to allow the processing of documentation most efficiently and, as it happened, productively.

To be fair to Taylor, he acknowledged that his recommendations for process engineering would not necessarily translate well into the office environment or indeed anywhere one might find intelligent employees who would not be satisfied with routine tasks.

Although the application of scientific management to the factory floor was typically accompanied by significant increases in the quantity of output, it was notable that the quality of output occasionally erred in the other direction. Poor industrial relations ensued in some factories and productivity dropped with strike action. Efficiency may have appeared in the short term but effectiveness in the long term became an unexpected victim. The lessons of scientific management are worth remembering by those who seek short term efficiency gains through property 'rationalisation' and ignore the quality of the output!

The evolution of the office and management thinking



Hawthorne Building. Reproduced with the kind permission of www.vintagetubeservices.com

The Hawthorne Experiments

The view that people could be treated as machines in the factory or office was dismissed by researchers whose early work led to the evolution of 'humanistic management'.

The infamous "Hawthorne Experiments" of the 1930s represented a breakthrough on many fronts and gave new insights into the motivation of individuals. Having started out as one of the foremost experts in the scientific management school of Henry Ford and Frederick Winslow Taylor, Elton Mayo wanted to investigate the effect of lighting conditions on workers' productivity at Western Electric's Hawthorne plant. He turned up the lights and, perhaps unsurprisingly, productivity increased. Curiously, though, when he turned the lights back down again, productivity increased once again.

Given a free choice, no doubt, employees would not choose to work in drab poorly-lit conditions, so how did productivity remain high even when the lights went down again? Mayo investigated this phenomenon further and eventually came to the conclusion that productivity remained high because the workers were aware that someone was paying them some attention. It didn't matter that the aim was simply to achieve the optimum lighting to productivity ratio so as to increase production without unnecessarily high electricity bills - the mere fact of paying attention to employees turns out to be motivating. Mayo eventually came to challenge much of the scientific management belief system.

Mayo's investigations also uncovered some other very interesting behaviours that have been corroborated by other research half a century later. For example, while productivity was noted as increasing when a rest period was provided and decreasing when a rest period was taken away, the research team noted that workers who were given freedom to select the time of their rest break demonstrated a further productivity increase. This could be interpreted as aligning productivity with control over one's environment and degrees of responsibility.

Another experiment at the Hawthorne Works involved giving a group of factory workers increased rest periods, free meals and more freedom to determine the way work was carried out. Productivity increased by a remarkable 80% and absenteeism decreased. It was suggested that a causal factor for the increase in productivity was the existence of a closely knit grouping comprising individuals who enjoyed each other's company. Cynics have attributed the productivity increases to extraneous factors such as the economic depression.

On balance, it is accepted that the work of Mayo and the experiments at the Hawthorne Works highlighted the positive impact on productivity arising out of management interest, group cohesion, controllability of one's working environment and methods of working and peer pressure.

It has been claimed that the overwhelming belief that employees should not be experimented with in terms of environmental conditions resulted in a relative dearth of research for several decades into the linkages between indoor environmental conditions and productivity.

So...

...although it became clear in the 1930s that productivity was a factor not simply of a building's environmental conditions, we see a great deal of research to this day aimed at deriving a direct link between an environmental attribute (temperature, air quality and so on) and productivity. The manner by which changing attributes are planned, implemented and managed would seem to be of at least equal significance.

The evolution of the office and management thinking

Recent Evolutionary Change

The concept of efficiency above all else was, and has largely remained, an overarching driver in office design and construction. Efficient construction techniques, efficient layout of space, efficient heating systems and presumably efficient business as a result for the occupier?

Going back half a century to the 1950s, the predominant office configuration comprised a warren of cells – long corridors with only artificial lighting giving access from a spine to arms of cellular offices on either side. Informal communication between occupants of discreet cells was constrained to chance corridor acquaintances and chats in the canteen. And with only a small handful of colleagues in each cell, social interaction was limited.

The open plan office came to prominence during the 1960s when knowledge work was clearly overtaking manual work as the dominant economic force – but the concept was resisted by many at the time and for decades thereafter. Robert Propst, the designer and inventor, saw that the growing complexity of office work, accompanied by growing numbers of office workers, was awakening interest and concern about office productivity.

How, he asked, could information workers become more adaptable in a world of change? How could they become more efficient and effective simultaneously? And how could the workplace itself become more responsive to knowledge workers and their work? His solution was the first 'open plan' office system, introduced in 1968 by Herman Miller adopting the 'Action Office' brand.

The early open plan offices also offered the prospect of space (and therefore cash) savings in addition to support for organisational flexibility.

The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by office buildings that supported linear processes and hierarchical organisations. In 1973, the economic crisis caused a rethink among some leading to a rejection of the deep expanses of artificially lit, air-conditioned space. Sustainability started to enter the language of the office designer and occupier. Resistance was also apparent in some quarters to a full embrace of open plan.

In general, however, if something could be standardised, it would be – the work of the individual, the workstation and office finishes. At the same time, greater attention was being paid to the ergonomics of the workplace and the emerging opportunities afforded by IT. New office accommodation was typically designed to fit the norm – open plan with flexible partitioning used to delineate meeting rooms and the rare dedicated office. And it was still common to find open plan space filled with banks of identical desks and occasional interior design gestures towards team or group identity.

Open plan office - 1970s

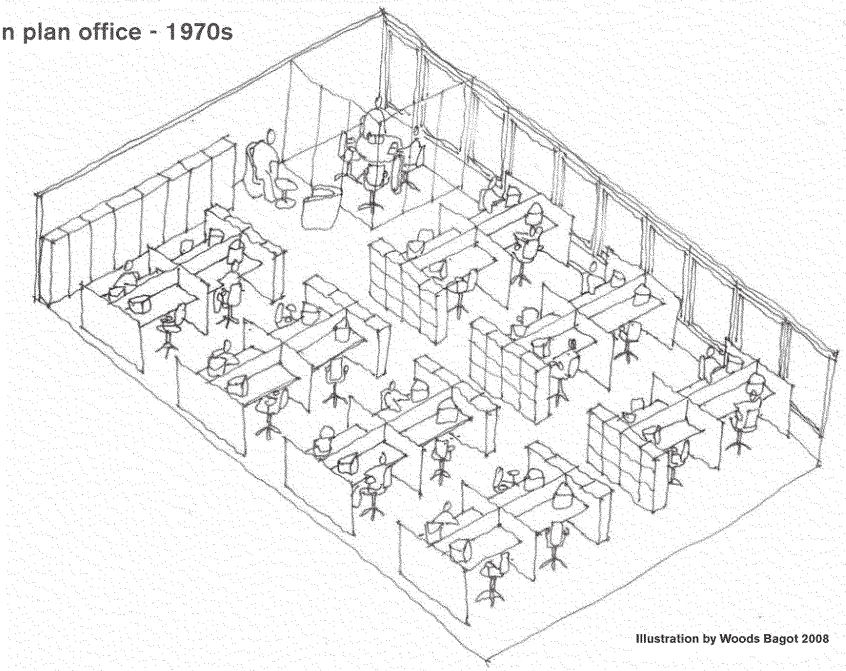


Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

The evolution of the office and management thinking

In the 1990s, work processes remained paramount but were facilitated by faster, cheaper and more flexible technology solutions in the workplace. The IT revolution enabled organisations to change rapidly but some resolutely remained trapped in the clothes of the former decades – organisational inertia was blamed on the inflexibility of the lease or some other innocent victim. Nevertheless, many organisations did embrace other characteristics of the decade, namely, flexibility and the abandonment of hierarchy. Space standards that granted the recipient an allowance according to grade (and perhaps a coat stand and higher quality carpet) were being dropped as fast as the allocations of space to the individual were declining. Valuable knowledge workers were being offered a range of supportive amenities in and around the workplace – crèche, gym, subsidised restaurant, and private health care.

Open plan was found to be a panacea for some but not all – one consequence was the development of the 'combi office', invented by Swedish practice Tengbom. It emerged as a concept designed to obtain the advantages of both open plan and cellular layouts while mitigating their disadvantages.

In its simplest form, cellular offices are placed on the outside with communal space set in the heart of the office floor. The same concept can be applied several times over at team or group level within an office floor.

Today, process and technology remain but are augmented by an additional dimension – people. The workplace is now being designed, indeed also located and operated, with people in mind to a greater extent than ever before. There is more thought being given to facilitating interaction, supporting the culture of the organisation and providing the right space to help recruit and retain the right people.

But how much do we understand or can we understand about the needs of occupiers in reality?

Combi office

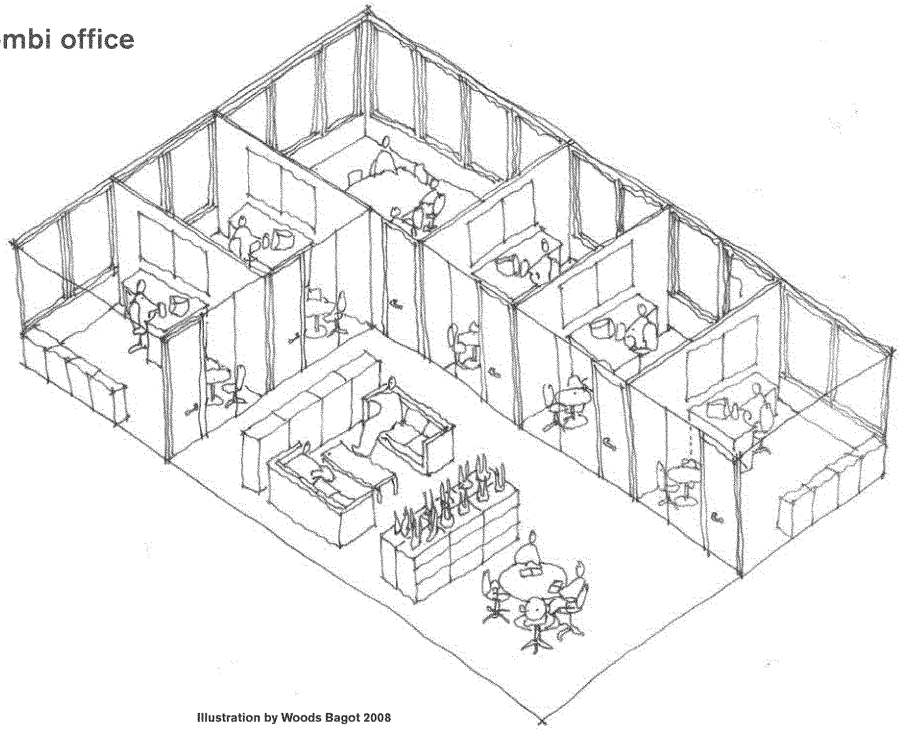


Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

The evolution of the office and management thinking

Hierarchy of needs

Given what Mayo and others distilled from research into the human needs of the individual, it would certainly seem misguided to investigate the effect of the physical environment in isolation and without a proper understanding of the organisational environment and the characteristics of the employees jobs.

But what about the characteristics of the individual? It is timely to consider another fundamental management philosophy; that of the hierarchy of needs.

In 1954, Maslow classified human needs into five broad categories:

- physiological needs;
- safety needs;
- social needs;
- esteem needs; and
- self-actualisation needs.

The scientific management philosophers clearly focused on the physiological and safety needs of the individual. Mayo expanded their horizons to include, as a minimum, the social and esteem needs of the individual worker.

Despite this, many surveys into occupiers' satisfaction with their working environment have focused on the physiological needs through the use of questionnaires and interviews exploring satisfaction with the indoor climate, controls, the furniture layout and other primal needs.

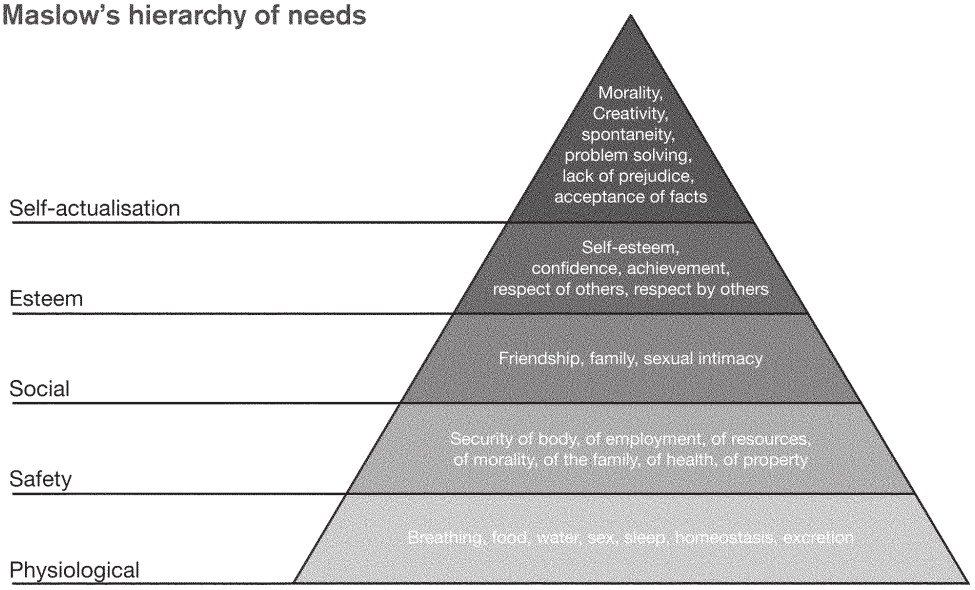
Maslow proposed that individuals seek to satisfy their primary (physiological and safety) needs before moving on to satisfy their 'higher' needs. Accommodation is a fundamental need providing shelter and comfort. As soon as a basis level of accommodation is provided, so the theory goes, individuals will look for the working environment to provide for other needs such as social contact and self-actualisation.

To the extent that those providing and maintaining the working environment consider needs, is there still excessive attention on the ability of the working environment to meet the lower level needs of the individual? The evolution of the office form into the 1990s and beyond was not consistent with this direction of attention towards the base of the hierarchy. The reality is that too few organisations get beyond the first two of three levels of the hierarchy. To do otherwise management must regard its prime asset, the workforce, as a collection of individuals with a unique set of needs and motivations.

So...

...is it necessary to understand the needs and motivations of individuals if we are to truly align an organisation's two most significant assets – people and real estate?
The answer must be 'Yes, to a degree'.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs



The evolution of the office and management thinking

What is the workplace?

If we are to consider productivity and the design of the workplace, we need to have a common understanding of the workplace. To some, it is where you are at any point in time given the advent of mobile computing and telephony. This perspective isn't however terribly helpful if we want to establish the recipes for success for the office environment that is here to remain for many more decades.

As described previously, this report limits its scope of 'investigation' to the office environment – the workplace is the physical embodiment of the office despite the trend towards mobile, home and other forms of flexible working.

So far as people spend some or all of the working time in the office, it seems entirely logical to identify how the resources deployed in the workplace can be done so to maximise productivity. If one can also maximise efficiency at the same time, double bonus points are earned!

Currently, the workplace is in rapid change; the number of people choosing to work outside the bounds of the office is growing exponentially (Felstead 2004). However, this doesn't mean the office is any less critical. Rather, and some have argued this quite persuasively, it is becoming even more important. Myerson and Ross (2003) argue that the office in its various forms now holds the organisation together in ways it never did before.

The 'ideal' range of spaces within the office is both large and impossible to define. Nonetheless, as a general trend, the office is becoming more focused on increasing the quantity and quality of interaction that takes place within it.

This raises an interesting point about the office and the relationship to productivity. Much of the existing work on productivity in the office focused almost exclusively on the capacity for individuals to complete tasks quickly and accurately. The focus on performance explains why much of this research focused on the human comfort factors of temperature, ventilation, light and other environmental attributes. However, if the office is a vehicle for interaction, because solitary work is performed elsewhere, there are several implications.

First, the comfort benchmarks derived to date almost always presume a relatively inactive individual, which is someone sitting at a desk for much of the day.

For people who are moving about the office, experiencing different 'micro-climates' within the office, the required human comfort conditions can change during the course of the day. Further, the work on visual and acoustic privacy, while important for concentrated solitary work, becomes less applicable if the reason people are in the office is to connect with others. In that case, overhearing or seeing someone can be beneficial.

This is not to say the earlier work is no longer applicable. Within any office there remains the need for spaces that support concentrated work. But these spaces are perhaps now less dominant. The earlier research is directly applicable to these spaces and the existing benchmarks remain important guides for this kind of space.

So...

...it seems necessary to understand the true purpose of the office, which is not a constant among organisations, before we set about designing for an organisation, and iterating that design over time.

Chapter 4: The language barrier

Within business or the public sector, we find measurements being taken of virtually anything that can be measured, even concepts such as ethos and culture and of course satisfaction.

The diagram below indicates however that the metrics of measurement and the concepts are diverse, depending on the perspective one is conditioned to taking. And that perspective is controlled as much by role and position in an organisation as any other factor.

The potential methods of measurement scheduled alongside various professional disciplines are not prioritised in any manner.

So, what constituents a productive workforce will depend to an extent on one's functional position.

For example:

- the Head of HR may regard the workforce as productive if absenteeism levels are low (in comparison to levels in a peer group). A high satisfaction rating with 'work' might also be associated with a productive organisation;
- the Head of Operations may regard low employment costs as indicative of a productive organisation;
- the Head of Finance may regard higher profitability as equivalent to a productive workforce and organisation and
- the Head of Property/Facilities may conclude that a higher density of occupation is necessarily more productive.

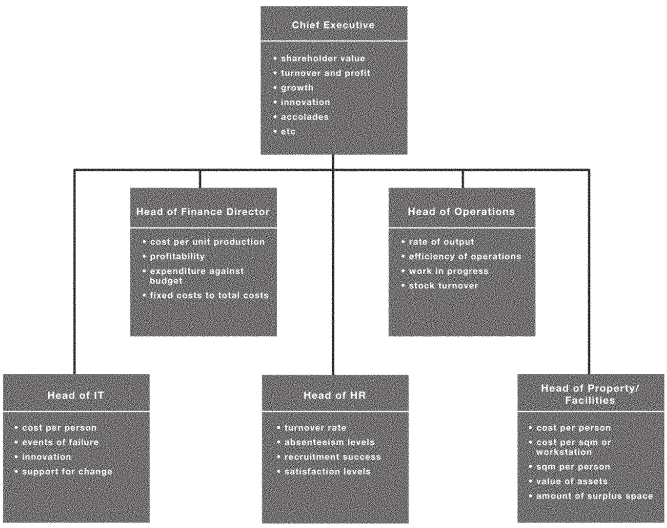
Whether or not these assertions are correct, there is no doubt that the internal drivers, motivations and performance measures within functional 'divisions' are often inconsistent.

Will keeping employment costs down and making do with 'cheap' accommodation and facilities management really lead to optimum productivity of human resources? Will the constant reallocation of budgets away from property maintenance towards unexpected but 'necessary' IT projects sustain an appropriate working environment?

A British Council for Offices (BCO) report that explored linkages between office design and business performance also noted the organisational 'divisions' in the truest sense of the word, and motivational conflicts that arise in practice. It concluded that "...contemporary corporate real estate and facilities management are often cut off from the wider and more important strategic business considerations...and they are rewarded primarily, and sometimes exclusively, for cost cutting." (1998)

It is difficult to advocate a single view of productivity across an entire organisation. However, what is defensible is the need to better understand the different dimensions of productivity so far as they affect the workforce and can be impacted on by the working environment. By implication, it is also necessary to better understand the spin-off costs and benefits that might accrue if action is taken to 'improve' productivity along one dimension – in particular, is there collateral damage?

How are people measured?



So...

...there does not appear to be a universal understanding within business about the term productivity and this deficiency is duplicated in the arena of the office, particularly where the business is far removed from a data processing factory but trades in knowledge – the policy division, the marketing team, the business development unit or the innovation squad.

Chapter 5: The economic argument

To further set the scene, it is useful to understand the importance of office accommodation and their occupiers – importance in terms of quantum, in terms of cost and in terms of the opportunities to be grasped. This section considers occupiers as an economic factor of production.

Economic value

Consider the following:

- inefficient buildings cost British business £135bn per annum and a better designed workplace could improve productivity by 19% (Gensler, 2005);
- the economic loss to the US of poor indoor environmental quality was worth approximately $60bn in 1989 and the average productivity loss for all workers in the US due to poor internal working environments equates to approximately 3% for all white collar workers (US Environmental Protection Agency, 1989);
- the self-reported productivity loss for UK workers in a survey of office workers was, on average, 3% (Raw et al, 1999);
- US studies suggest that a 1% improvement in productivity has a larger economic return than a 100% saving in energy costs (CIBSE, 1999); and
- productivity improvement of a fraction of 1% would be sufficient to cover the cost of necessary infrastructure improvements to enhance the indoor working environment (Clements-Croome, 2003).

The office market in the UK is also large in any sense of the term. Research by the RICS, Property in the Economy: a digest and review of key data and statistics (2008) confirms that:

- commercial, industrial and other buildings are valued at approximately £740bn;
- at present, there is almost six times the number of employees in the service sector as in the manufacturing sector;
- the total commercial floorspace in England, Wales and Scotland in 2007 was 608bn sqm. with offices alone accounting for 100bn sqm.; and
- between 2000 and 2007, the total office floorspace increased by approximately 7 bn sqm.

The above findings suggest that management effort should be directed towards enhancing the productivity of its workforce since greater economic gains may be realisable in this arena than in some other arenas. That is not to say real estate should be ignored in relative terms.

In fact, precisely the opposite is the case. Because the working environment can have such a significantly debilitating impact on productivity, or be enormously supportive, the management of real estate and human resources should be much more closely aligned.

The economic argument

Example

The basic cost of a middle manager earning £45,000 per annum could readily inflate to a total cost in the order of £95,000 when one takes into account the following:

- Bonus, say 15%;
- Employer's NI on earnings and benefits at 12.8%;
- Pension at 15%;
- Car at £8,000;
- Training at £2,000; and
- Other benefits at, say, £2,000.

Overheads for payroll, IT, management and other support costs might be 20%.

If there are 253 potential working days per annum, this could easily reduce to 198 by reason of the following deductions:

- 25 days holiday;
- 8 days sick leave;
- 10 days training; and
- half a day per week on general administration.

The above figures don't take account of the increasing maternity, paternity and compassionate leave being granted.

On the basis of 198 actual days in the office and potentially available to contribute to the business of the organisation, it may be reasonable to reduce this by a factor of, say, 20% to allow for 'down time' between projects, travel and other time spent that is not customer facing whether in the public or private sectors.

The net number of productive days is therefore in the order of 160 and the real cost to the organisation for each productive day is £600. Simplistically, this might be regarded as the additional value to the organisation by securing an additional day's productivity from the individual. A 1.0% increase in productivity would represent 1.6 additional days with a 'value' of £960.

This figure is broadly comparable to the conclusions of William Fisk at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in the US – in 2006, he estimated that a 1% improvement in productivity of a worker with a gross cost of employment of $100,000 has an economic benefit worth in the order of $1,000.

Now imagine a building extending to 2,500 sqm with 200 occupiers earning average salaries of £45,000. The 'value' of each productive day is calculated as above. The table opposite is an output from a model created by Drivers Jonas that attempts to 'measure' the value of increased productivity and set it alongside 'traditional' property and FM costs:

Factor	Office London Docklands
Occupiers	200
Average salary	£45k
Total salary bill	£9,000k
Total cost of employment	£19,000k
'Value' of productive day	£120k
'Value' of 1% increase in productivity	£192k
Rent per sqm per annum	£260
Total rent per annum	£650k
Rent – saving if reduced by 20% by relocation	£130k
Rent – saving if reduced by 10% through desk sharing	£65k
FM costs per annum	£240
Total FM costs per annum	£600k
FM – saving if costs cut by 15%	£90k

What high level conclusions can be drawn from the above?

1. the benefit to the business of achieving a 20% reduction in rent by relocating or perhaps sub-letting surplus space is dwarfed by the increased 'value' arising out of a 1% increase in productivity;
2. a 3% improvement in productivity would virtually wipe out the rental cost of the property;
3. if FM costs were to be reduced by 30%, the saving would still be less than the added 'value' from a 1% increase in productivity; and
4. property and facilities managers need to understand more fully the possible impact of their actions, either positively or negatively, on productivity, and should focus their efforts where the impact on business performance overall is greatest.

Note: in the scenario above, a reduction in floorspace brought about by desk sharing or a reduction in FM costs through a downgrading of standards might have an adverse impact on productivity thereby wiping out any immediately visible savings.

The economic argument

An alternative presentation of the relative weightings of property and people costs was portrayed in the BCO's examination of office design and business performance published in 2006. The quite dramatic figures presented in the report, reflecting the 25-year expenditure profile of an office built for owner occupation, are tabulated below:

Cost	Percentage of total
Salaries	85
Construction costs	6.5
M&E services – operation and maintenance	4
Furnishings – capital cost	1.25
Building maintenance	1
Cleaning and security	1
M&E services – depreciation	0.75
Furnishings – maintenance and depreciation	0.5

Whichever perspective one takes on property and people costs, the inevitable conclusion to be reached is clear: practitioners and business managers need to comprehend and then manipulate the interplay between the two factors of production – real estate and human resources – to help secure optimum performance from both.

So...

...if the UK can benefit by some £135bn through improved productivity in the workplace, as projected by workspace consultants Gensler, all companies and public bodies should have an action plan in place today to secure their share of the lost but latent productivity gains.

Unfortunately, the workplace is a complex system of actions and consequences and the science of productivity measurement is not yet sufficiently well developed to enable productivity savings that may arise from a proposed capital investment in real estate to be 'banked'.

And here is a challenge for industry – to develop a robust methodology that allows potential productivity benefits to be factored into business cases for capital investment projects.

Successful and productive companies

A comprehensive collection of academic research is cited and considered more fully elsewhere in this report. The exploration above of the financial dimension of productivity is, however, a relevant springboard to examine the workplace practices of successful companies – successful in the context of achieving "Best Companies to Work For" status.

In the United States, Fortune Magazine has been identifying and publishing league tables of the 100 Best Companies to Work For since 1998 with the assistance of the Great Places to Work Institute in San Francisco.

In 2006, Kahler Slater published a review of the physical characteristics of Best Place to Work award winners, the hypothesis being that companies acquiring the status would share common workplace attributes. At the outset, the review was at pains to point out that a well designed office will mean different things to different organisations depending on their business, culture and methods of working. One company may have a need for distraction-free work for the majority of its workforce for the majority of the working day whereas another might thrive on collaboration, teamwork and knowledge sharing. This simple but powerful message is crucial – the notion of a well-designed office environment is highly subjective and relative to the organisation it is housing.

Prior to analysing the findings from questionnaires completed by occupiers employed by the 'great' companies, the researchers reviewed literature regarding workplace design, productivity and employee morale. The review process enabled the researchers to compile a list of attributes of the workplace that were considered to enhance productivity. Completed questionnaires were then assessed against the pre-determined attributes which, as can be seen from the table on the next page, reflect a blend of physical, social and cultural aspects of the work environment.

The economic argument

The findings of the research include the following:

Attribute	Best places to work typically
Distraction-free work	**allow individuals to perform such work through use of privacy partition panels, non-assigned private spaces and ample meeting rooms**
Collaboration and interaction	**provide ample congregating spaces, cafes, coffee stations, conference rooms, huddle spaces and side chairs at workstations**
Undistracted teamwork and meetings	**provide various types and sizes of open and informal gathering spaces, conference rooms, dedicated team or project rooms and mobile furnishings**
Accommodation of personal workstyles and workstation personalisation	**demonstrate this characteristic through use of mobile furnishings and adjustable desks**
Attention to thermal comfort	**enable individual devices to augment environmental controls and incorporate small heating and cooling zones with accessible thermostats**
Access to daylight	**provide direct visual access to natural light for the majority of employees**
Workplaces allocated by function	**continued to allocate size and type of workstation based on hierarchy or title[1]**
Adjacencies that support work flow	**adopt highly efficient and functional planning where most adjacencies are met**
Accommodation of changing technology	**provide full access to power and data, wireless technology and cable management allowing rapid changes of requirements**
Expression of culture	**supported and expressed the culture well**

Notes

1. The tendency to allocate workplace by title or hierarchy rather than function is significantly less common in the UK than the US.

Evident from the above characteristics is the blend of attributes that, on the one hand, point towards physical solutions to physical problems. Other attributes suggest a true alignment between the specific workplace solution and:

- the objectives of the individual;
- the objectives of the or team; and
- the purpose of the business.

The research did not purport to be founded on scientific algorithms and statistical wizardry – it simply reflected that most 'successful' companies share common characteristics concerning the way the workspace is designed, managed and used.

So...

...it would seem useful to explore the extent to which the UK's Best Companies to Work For exhibit similar common characteristics and, if so, promote those throughout the business sector and beyond.

Chapter 6: Health and well-being

"Put the key of despair into the lock of apathy. Turn the knob of mediocrity slowly and open the gates of despondency – welcome to a day in the average office." David Brent, The Office

As a manager, should I be concerned about the health of my workforce? According to the Chartered Management Institute, it has been estimated that the cost to UK employers of illness in the workplace is over £12bn a year (2007). And matters are getting worse – according to the Quality of Working Life Survey 2007, almost half of the managers consulted felt that sickness rates had increased over the last year.

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, there is also an emerging trend of employees 'suffering for the cause' - while this may not translate directly into official absenteeism levels, it appears to affect motivation levels. One might therefore conclude that productivity at work is suffering as a consequence.

In the public sector alone, the average number of sickness absence days is approximately 9 in comparison to over 6 in the private sector. While the figures across Whitehall Departments range from 4 to 12, a recent survey of local authorities in Northern Ireland undertaken by the Chief Local Government Auditor identified one council with an average annual absenteeism rate or more than 20 days.

And don't think it stops there: do you believe that employees with high absenteeism rates operate at full effectiveness when at work? More likely, there is a deep-seated malaise that needs to be tackled.

"Health issues should be driven by an understanding that improved health and well-being can generate significant employee productivity benefits..."
Chartered Management Institute, 2007

Absenteeism cannot be traced back entirely to the effects of the workplace. In many instances, the direct cause will be illness arising outside the work environment over which the organisation has virtually no control. A surprisingly large number of employees did however attribute a direct causal link in a Chartered Management Institute survey undertaken in 2007.

Nearly 50% of the 1,000 employees surveyed admitted to an absenteeism rate of 6 more sick days than the UK average because of poor office surroundings. Moreover, 84% of respondents agreed that their surroundings have a significant impact on their happiness and motivation – and perhaps also their productivity by implication.

So what can be done?

A holistic approach is recommended by the Chartered Management Institute that integrates job design, management styles and the working environment. The concept of job design relates to the extent of control one has over the way one works – in some senses, control over the working environment. There is a strong parallel between this view of job design and the rather more technical perspective of control over the working environment as a causal factor of occupier satisfaction.

The Chartered Management Institute also draws a conclusion that a well managed working environment contributes to productivity through good ventilation, appropriate control of noise, temperature and light and good quality air and water.

So...

...there appears to be incontrovertible evidence that the working environment directly impacts the health and well-being of occupiers, and exhibits a direct causal link to sickness and absenteeism rates. An implication is that real estate professionals and building designers should work closely with HR professionals to help ensure buildings are designed, and continue to be operated, as occupier-friendly facilities.

Chapter 7: Measurement of productivity

What is productivity in the context of the office environment? And how is it related to efficiency and the performance of the individual or organisation? But isn't the concept of effectiveness more aligned to that of productivity?

All these terms are used too loosely and often with the same intended meaning – but they are different.

Using fewer inputs may result in increased efficiency but won't necessarily deliver improved productivity – less space per person is more efficient but may lead to less perceived or actual privacy and more distraction. Using one person to deliver an output (say, a report) may appear more efficient but it could be less productive because the output is less rounded and considered as a result where securing views of different people is an important factor?

The property and facilities industries have become relatively obsessed with efficiency – it is easy to understand as a concept and easy to calculate as a metric and therefore can readily support the other Holy Grail of the professions, namely benchmarking.

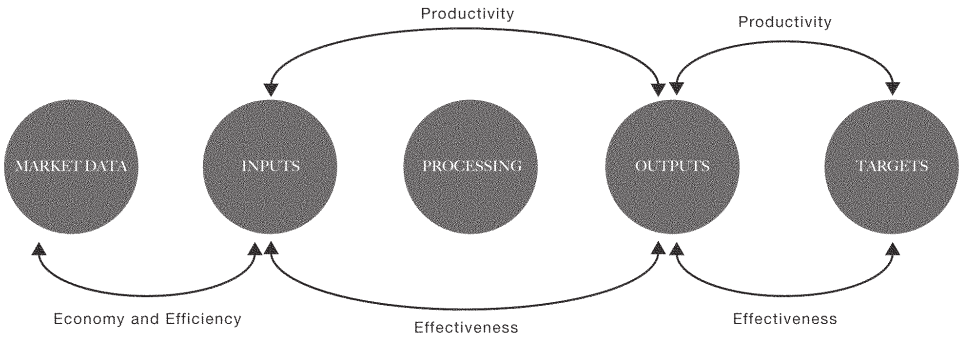
To be fair though, customers of space (occupiers) also talk about and demand greater efficiency at length – witness the government's various efficiency drives and agendas at central and local level. As this report was being finalised in July 2008, the government announced yet another review of the property assets held by the public sector under a wide ranging Operational Efficiency Programme. The Carter Review, an element of the overall programme will consider "…how efficiently public sector organisations are using their property, particularly office space."

At a corporate level, businesses have always sought efficiency – it is now being blended with other requirements such as effectiveness but efficiency will always remain on the corporate agenda.

Interestingly, the origins of the term Facility Management are worth recalling as it appears the facilities management industry has been subject to an evolution of sorts in terms of its focus, direction and language. In the 1970s, Facility Management was first used to describe a field of study that embraced "…the design and management of workplaces and their impact on the business conducted by the organisations that occupied them" (Price, 2007). But the common perception and perhaps reality now is that interior designers consider the design of the workplace, facilities managers manage the support costs of the workplace, financial or operating managers concentrate on the 'business end' and no-one forges the links envisaged forty years ago.

Measurement of productivity

Performance measures (in the office environment)



In an attempt to bring some clarity and consistency to the range and categorisation of performance measures that are adopted in the office environment, the process-oriented diagram above proposes the best fit for a number of performance measures.

From left to right, the first performance measure identified is ECONOMY – this relates the actual cost to a business of procuring the necessary inputs to the benchmark or market rates.

The relationship between two inputs, people and space for example, can be thought of as a measure of EFFICIENCY.

The PROCESSING work stream involves the office occupier in thinking, analysing, reading, writing, talking or perhaps creating.

The OUTPUTS of an organisation can be reports, creative ideas, or perhaps just the spoken word.

Typically, the performance measure entitled EFFICIENCY is seen as the relationship between INPUTS and OUTPUTS – getting more output from the same input is an increase in efficiency.

A third performance measure, that of PRODUCTIVITY, is also shown as a relationship between INPUTS and OUTPUTS – the difference now is that the dimension of quality must be added in. Becoming more efficient but with a drop in quality cannot be described as increased productivity. Similarly, productivity can be enhanced if the same resources are used to deliver a higher quality output, even if the same 'number' of outputs are produced – in other words, efficiency doesn't change.

The outputs of a business, its TARGETS or OBJECTIVES, can be quantifiable or less tangible depending on the nature of the business.

The final performance measure depicted connects OUTPUTS and PRODUCTIVITY and is EFFECTIVENESS – how successful we are in achieving our goals.

These concepts and performance measures are often used liberally and inconsistently when assessing businesses.

What distinguishes the performance measures of PRODUCTIVITY and EFFECTIVENESS from the other measures is the notion that we know where we are going, we know what the organisation has to achieve and we can measure the success of the organisation in achieving these targets. However, we are moving rapidly into a business environment comprised almost solely of knowledge workers and little else if some commentators are to be believed. If this is so, we will face commensurate challenges to define with clarity the output of an increasing proportion of the workforce.

Even today, many organisations are associated with policy making, regulatory enforcement, the provision of consultancy services and other activities that may not have an evident beginning, middle and end.

So...

...if the organisation as a whole is unclear about its flight path and destination, it is not inconceivable that individual members of the organisation find it a challenge translating corporate objectives into personal goals. This state of affairs is not helpful if we wish to assess individual productivity.

Measurement of productivity

Measures of productivity

So, what are the commonly used approaches to measuring productivity in the office? Research suggests that there are five common approaches:

- self-assessment of productivity – this typically involves asking respondents to note on a scale the extent to which an environment or an environmental condition supports their productivity. Arguments exist among researchers about the robustness of self-assessments. On balance, it is felt that they offer a sufficiently robust means of indirectly assessing productivity;
- measurement of actual output – this may suit certain office based organisations, such as those processing claims or dealing with other routine processes, but is unlikely to suit the majority of businesses;
- amount of time spent – this approach considers the amount of time gained through efficient filing systems for example, and the amount of time lost by continually having to clear desks or log onto computers and phone systems;
- absenteeism due to illness; and
- indirect indicators – these include the extent to which one can concentrate properly or how quickly one can solve a problem.

Self assessment of productivity

It is commonly considered that self assessment of productivity is a reliable indictor of actual productivity. If you feel you are productive, you probably are. If you feel a change of physical circumstances has made you less productive, once again you probably are. Matters totally or only loosely related to the working environment might, however, come into play. For example, it is not unknown for amendments to terms and conditions of employment, or an unsatisfactory pay increase, to be reflected back as apparent dissatisfaction with the working environment and reduced self-assessment of productivity.

When asked about the impact of aspects of the workplace on productivity, there is much correlation between the findings. The variables agreed as having a positive impact on (self-assessed) productivity include:

- access to informal meeting spaces;
- space for team projects;
- common areas to permit informal interaction;
- comfortable temperature and humidity;
- controllable temperature and ventilation;
- tidy and visually appealing;
- conversational and visual privacy;
- amount of storage and workspace; and
- a place to work free from distraction.

It is acknowledged that many factors, including the working environment, influence an employee's perception of their productivity. In a study of occupiers in central and local government and private corporations in the UK, between 75-80% of respondents stated that their workplace was either an important or very important influence on their productivity.

In a survey by Gensler, managers were asked to assess how employee productivity would be increased if the workplace was improved. Across a range of professions such as legal services, media and publishing, the average reported increase was 19%. The top three factors that are believed by managers to improve employee productivity are:

- better light/daylight;
- more breakout/meeting space; and
- more personal space/better use of space

It is interesting to speculate about what employees might have regarded as the top three actions to be taken by management to increase productivity overall.

Interaction between employees (at a time when they want it) is universally regarded as the largest positive contributor to productivity while distraction is the most significant detractor.

However, it is not just about the design itself. Where new workplaces have received favourable ratings for interaction and neutral or positive ratings for distraction, it has been found that:

- all staff have been involved;
- there have been processes of consultation and user engagement in the change processes; and
- working protocols have been established for the use of space.

So...

...workplace design must not be regarded as a discreet activity but a link in an integrated process that starts with understanding what people need of their workplace to do business, and ends with an understanding of how the design has worked in practice – there must also be a feedback loop to re-engineer aspects of the design to fit the changing needs of people and the business over time.

Measurement of productivity

Productivity and satisfaction

The assessment of productivity and its link to the workplace is evidently not a straightforward task. As a means of circumvention, some researchers have opted for the measurement of occupier satisfaction with the working environment as a proxy. The theory is as follows – a satisfied employee will, through the mechanism of being motivated to act, be more productive. Similarly, a dissatisfied employee will, by reason of being demotivated, display lower productivity.

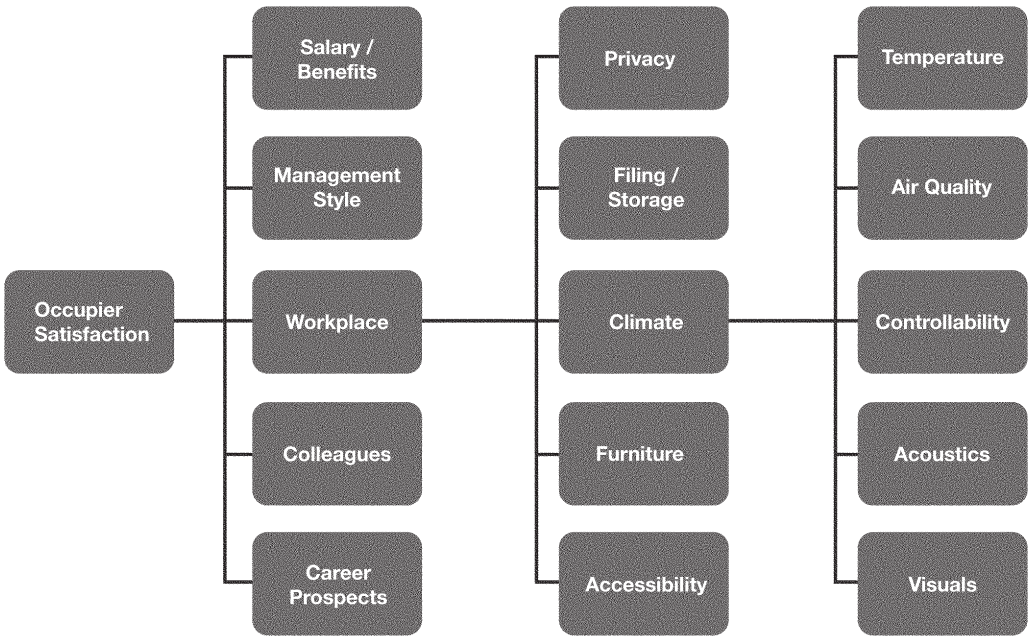
Although this philosophy runs counter to the conclusions reached by Herzberg and Maslow – that 'low level' needs associated with the working environment are unlikely to motivate but can create dissatisfaction – there is a degree of acceptance that it holds good in practice.

Following a rigorous review of literature by van der Voordt (2003), it was concluded that "…there are clear links between motivation and productivity, absenteeism due to illness, involvement in the organisation and employee satisfaction."

As indicated below, there are multiple influences on an employee's level of satisfaction. And there are many drivers behind an employee's satisfaction with the working environment. Caution is therefore required in the interpretation of research findings that appear, at first glance, to establish a clear and direct cause and effect relationship between a variable and overall levels of satisfaction or simply satisfaction with the working environment.

So…

…if we believe that a link does exist between the level of satisfaction with the working environment and levels of productivity, the real challenge is to establish a series of consistent and clear questions, coupled with a statistically robust sampling and data analysis methodology, and apply this over time and across a spread of office users in both steady state environments and periods of change.



Adapted from Van der Voodt, 2003

Chapter 8: Management of change

Intuitively, it seems prudent to engage with employees, or employee representatives, prior to overhauling a real estate portfolio through relocation, rationalisation or even refurbishment – unless one sides with the scientific management theorists of today. However, intuition alone is not a sufficient reason to invest time and money in the process of engagement. And does the extent and nature of engagement have any impact on the productivity of those affected by the overhaul?

There has been relatively little research into the importance of effective engagement and how this may impact on productivity in the event of a real estate portfolio overhaul. With so much organisational churn throughout the economy, and little prospect of the rate of change declining, one wonders how many opportunities are being missed through the mishandling of change.

In 2002, Denise Laframboise and her colleagues at Public Works and Government Services Canada wrote of their combined experiences in support of an office portfolio housing over 180,000 civil servants. At the time of reporting their experiences, the government was undergoing significant change – an initiative entitled 'Workplace of Choice' deployed to modernise facilities was well under way along with supporting accommodation policies and working processes. Its aspirations are common to many workplace change strategies being implemented today and include:

- space to be allocated by grade not function;
- employees to have access to a range of work settings such as team areas, 'lounges' and private study areas;
- individuals to have a degree of control over their immediate environment through the use of task lighting, temperature control and adjustable furniture; and
- opportunities to be made available to work from home or in satellite offices enabled by investment in infrastructure.

While the initiative was designed to support employees and enhance their working environment, it was met with resistance in some quarters. What the government agency failed to appreciate at the outset was that the flight path is as important if not more so than the end destination. The end destination – a more attractive and supportive place of work – was, to use Herzberg's terminology, a hygiene factor whereas the proponents of the change believed it to be a motivator.

Management of change

Some scenarios cited in the research by Laframboise et al are summarised below, the focus being on change projects that did not quite meet the intended objectives:

Scenario 1 a relocation from an old building characterised by cellular offices and with cheap and plentiful parking and available day-care facilities. The destination was an open office environment with limited and relatively expensive parking facilities and no readily available day care facilities. An intensive communication strategy was implemented but, as revealed in the post occupancy evaluation questionnaire, it failed to involve employees directly in the design of their new workplace based on the jobs to be performed. Lower levels of satisfaction with the new workplace were encountered compared with expectations. Many employees cited productivity as being negatively affected with resistance being shown one year after the change occurred. Unfortunately, this project had been selected as a pilot project for the roll out of a wider change programme!

Scenario 2 a well-executed communication programme appeared initially to tackle resistance to a major internal change programme through the use of a cohesive project team and an ability to demonstrate the expected benefits of change. Such was the enthusiasm for change that the team volunteered to be 'guinea pigs' to test out the new working environment. However, the absence of a clear vision at the outset enabled new management to redirect the project prior to roll-out. Resistance evolved rapidly to the point of halting the project – employee morale dropped significantly (and productivity also is assumed to have suffered) and there is no doubt that future change projects would become more difficult to 'sell'.

The authors emphasised the roles of management in facilitating change and breaking down resistance at two levels – senior management and middle managers. As long as resistance exists, it is fair to conclude that productivity will not be optimised.

Senior management must be clear about the corporate culture of the organisation and how receptive it is to change – perhaps not an easy task for managers who have grown up and been nurtured by the organisation for decades. In addition, senior management must understand if recent events might affect people's perception of change and how others see the ability of management to implement change. Finally, through leading by example, resistance to change can be stemmed.

Middle managers are often those who 'lose' most out of accommodation change projects by giving up their private offices. Apart from not signing up to the strategic worth of the project, they may even discourage others from supporting change. The communication strategy must therefore ensure that middle managers are clear of the benefits of change, and are granted certain leadership opportunities throughout the change project to the point where they are personally motivated to bring about a successful project.

If resistance to change and productivity are negatively correlated, the effective management of change must become an integral part of strategic accommodation projects involving relocation, rationalisation and refurbishment of space whereby a new working environment is created. At the operational level, the working environment is often subject to relatively minor changes in its configuration and design in between the seismic shifts described above. Those with responsibility for designing, managing and implementing the rather more regular organisational churn projects would do well to remember that pockets of resistance (and dampened productivity?) can become an equally regular, if less visible, feature of corporate life.

The recently published case studies by BCO, in support of the 'sister' research by BCO-CABE, amply demonstrate the practical business benefits of user engagement in the thinking behind workplace design, and the implementation of the change programmes (2006). Disappointingly, however, it is reported in one case study that "…in reality the extent of the impact which staff can have on any project is normally limited to issues such as colour and orientation." It is to be hoped that constructive and meaningful engagement is more commonplace.

Chapter 9: Drivers of increased productivity

Earlier in this report, passing reference has been made to a number of research projects in relation to, for example, the 'value' of office-based employees, the fact that employees are social animals with a range of needs and the harnessing of productivity by tackling resistance to change.

At this point, some research findings that attempt to forge a direct link between variables in the office environment and levels of productivity.

What is clear, and perhaps comforting, is the degree of consistency between survey findings over time despite some research projects being founded on what might be best described as shaky foundations.

Various physical aspects of the internal environment are now considered in turn followed by a tabular summary of findings from a range of research studies undertaken in the UK and elsewhere.

Temperature

It should not be too surprising to learn that performance levels of workers, whether in the office or factory environment, drop off when it gets too hot or too cold – yet that is the finding of many research projects conducted over extended periods of time. In other words, there is an optimum temperature or band of temperatures to maximise performance. This is true particularly when considering the effects of temperature on physical performance although the link is less evident when considering effects on mental performance. To put it another way, the band of temperature that secures optimum mental performance is wider. Despite this finding, building management systems are typically operated to achieve a narrow spread of 'acceptable' temperatures in the office environment.

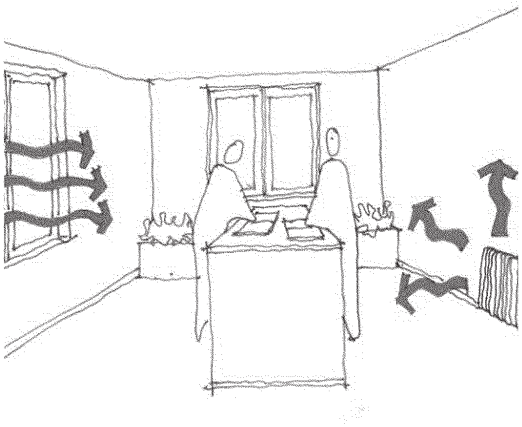
Wyon (1974) found that typewriting speeds were approximately 40-50% slower when temperatures rose from 20°C to 24°C. In a later study, Wyon et al (1979) concluded that certain office-based tasks can be improved by temperatures up to 26°C. Interestingly, when other tests were performed (assessing creativity, spelling, vocabulary and manual dexterity), the researchers found no material difference in performance as the temperature levels changed within a broad range.

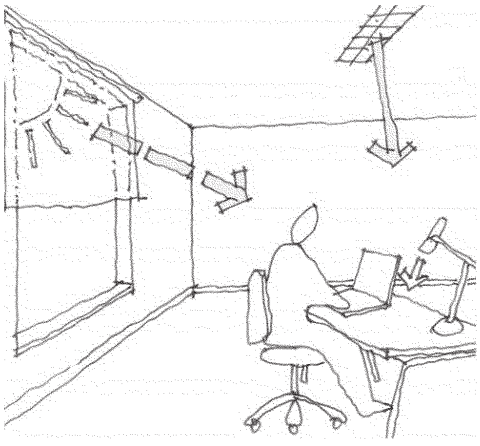
What the above research shows, if anything, is that the 'ideal' temperature for a specific office-based activity may not be 'ideal' for another activity – or, occupiers are more resilient than is imagined and can cope adequately with a range of temperatures

Lighting

There are many lighting variables that are considered to have an impact on productivity – illuminance, glare, reflection, task contrast, size and complexity of visual stimuli.

Slater (1984) found that task lighting had the greatest impact on performance compared with down lighting and side lighting. In terms of the relationship between lighting levels and performance, Saunders (1969) found that performance levels increase until a saturation point is reached whereby further increases in the lighting levels have no discernable impact on performance. During a study of insurance company employees conducting relatively complex paper-based tasks, Barnaby found that increasing illuminance from 550 lux to 1100 lux increased





Illustrations by Woods Bagot 2008

Drivers of increased productivity

performance by almost 3%. A further increase to 1600 lux increased performance by more than an additional 8%. Users rated the higher levels of illuminance as less stressful, more motivating and more productive. In the same office where reading was not such a high priority, users considered that the office was over-illuminated.

Nor surprisingly, therefore, research has confirmed that there is no single optimum level of lighting even for office workers in an open plan environment where one might conclude, rather simplistically but conveniently, that open plan must equate to standardisation.

The Institute for Research in Construction, with support from Public Works and Government Services Canada, conducted research into lighting levels in the office environment and concluded that there is no generic, ideal illuminance level – lighting levels should be capable of refinement to match the task demands and individual employee preferences. Furthermore, it was found that any particular lighting level is only likely to satisfy approximately one half of all occupants at most.

The tendency, therefore, is for professional and regulatory bodies to recommend ranges of acceptable levels of illuminance. Equally prominent in the body of research into office lighting is the recommendation that background lighting be supplemented by task lighting. Personal lighting control can improve environmental satisfaction and self-assessed task performance, and allow users to tailor their own lighting conditions to their needs without encroaching on the needs of others.

It would also appear that the mere presence of individual task lighting control is sufficient to induce higher performance (Cakir, 1991). Employees being provided with desk lamps, irrespective of their quality, was found to be enough to create a favourable impression of the work environment. This finding was confirmed by Raw et al (1993) who found that high perceived control over lighting was related to increased perceived productivity.

A combination of automatic and self-actuated controls in the office environment achieved quite dramatic results in a survey reported by Ure and Denham at a CIBSE conference (1997). The lighting system was upgraded in part of an office building to provide occupancy detection, automated dimming linked to outside lighting levels, constant illuminance control and the ability to set lighting levels at specific levels at pre-determined times during the day. Over a period of one year, the occupants maintained a diary of the incidence of headaches and eyestrain. The incidence of symptoms was found to have decreased by 25% in the part of the building subject to the lighting controls, compared with the remainder of the building.

Too much choice might however be a bad thing. Researchers have found that too many controls, or complicated controls, can induce stress as focus is removed from the primary task of work with too much time being spent learning about environmental controls (Wineman, 1982).

Noise

Following a comprehensive review of the available literature at the time, Kryter concluded that noise can have a positive, negative or zero effect on performance. (1985) Loud noises have been found by others to stimulate and briefly enhance productivity as a result – until the effect is mitigated as one becomes accustomed to the noise level. But stimulation in itself in the office environment is not

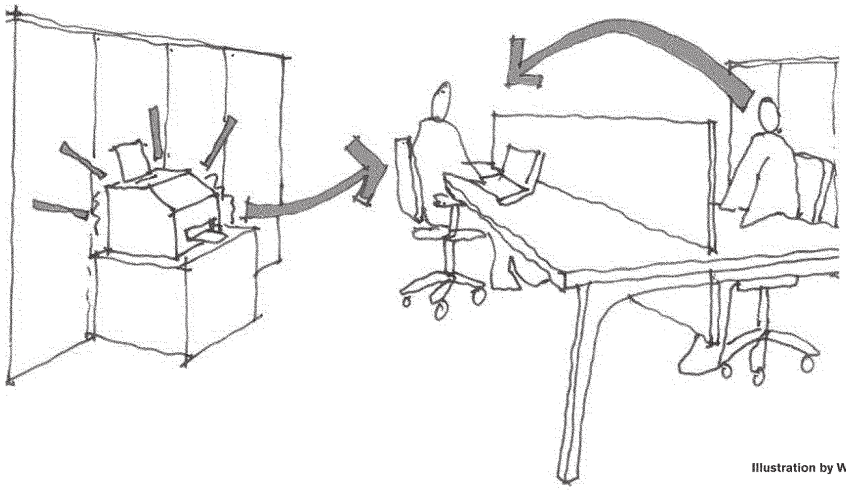


Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

Drivers of increased productivity

necessarily a good thing – unpredictable noise has been found to increase arousal levels but such noises also require more attention and cause distraction. Telephones ringing, doors banging, mobile phones ringing and co-workers shouting across the room could all be termed unpredictable noise, unless they occur with such frequency as to become the norm.

Studies of typists in 'calculating operators' in an insurance company revealed a significant increase in productivity levels after sound absorbing material was introduced reducing the noise levels from 41 dB to 35 dB. (Wilson, 1952) However, these findings have been questioned since the replacement of sound absorbing material with wallpaper a year later, with an associated increase in noise levels to the former basis, met with sustained performance at the same (increased) level after an initial dip. The unintended consequence may of course simply be due to the Hawthorne effect, the phenomenon whereby productivity was found to increase because workers felt they were being paid attention to.

Despite the above unsatisfactory research carried out many decades ago, noise in the office environment has now become more of a science – the so-called Privacy Index quantifies the level of speech in the office taking into account the geometry of the room, layout of furniture and the material used for ceilings, walls and floor coverings.

Within an office, the cause of distraction is not noise as such but the ability to understand sentences to the point of becoming absorbed in the discussions of others.

Consistently, speech distraction is the most commonly reported problem associated with open plan working – and the problem is getting worse with higher workstation densities, quieter HVAC systems and the wider use of mobile phones within the office.

The ability to support distraction-free 'quality' time is generally regarded as a prerequisite for a productive working environment

Air quality

The indoor air quality is determined, to a large extent, by the building's ventilation system and the contents of the building. The term 'contents' includes occupants, equipment and other materials that can create contamination. With the increasing trend towards open plan offices comes the increased likelihood of contamination concentrations due to higher densities of occupants, equipment and furnishings.

In practical terms, poor air quality can make it harder to concentrate and work effectively leading to symptoms such as headaches, drowsiness or eye, nose or throat irritation.

Researchers have recorded that approximately one third of all employee sick leave is due to symptoms caused by poor air quality (Mendell et al, 1999). The table on the next page summarises the relative prevalence of various symptoms experienced by those in buildings with poor air quality.

A single source of contamination, in the form of a contaminated carpet, was found to have a marked impact on the typing speed and error rate of occupants in an office building

Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

Drivers of increased productivity

(Wargocki et al, 2002). In addition, the occupants of the office experienced more headaches, nose dryness and throat irritation than the control group. These findings could not be attributed to the Hawthorne effect!

Similarly, Kemp and Dingle (1994) found high levels of formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds in an office in Australia. To counter these findings, the fresh air intake into the air conditioning system was increased to 100%. The resultant increase in productivity was approximately 3% and the number of times that workers left their desks reduced significantly.

Reporting on various studies into local government departments in the UK, USA and Denmark, Abdou and Lorsch (1994) noted large numbers of health complaints that were felt to have an impact on productivity. The authors concluded that "...both ventilation/air movement and humidity can have a profound effect on productivity in the workplace: however they cannot be singled out by themselves."

While one might find the research methodology somewhat suspect, the findings of research carried out by the Building Owners and Managers Association in 1988 are quite striking. No less than 4,000 space planning executives were surveyed and asked:

- what is the worst management, operation and design problem; and
- what would be the productivity improvement if that problem was solved.

HVAC problems were noted as worst by the most respondents – and they estimated that resolving the problem would result in, on average, a productivity increase of 18%. Having reviewed evidence from various surveys and research projects, Woods concluded independently that "...we could increase the productivity of 20% of our workforce simply by improving the air quality of most of our offices" (1989). A significant correlation was found between the percentage of occupants dissatisfied with air quality and the numbers of occupants who felt it affected their productivity.

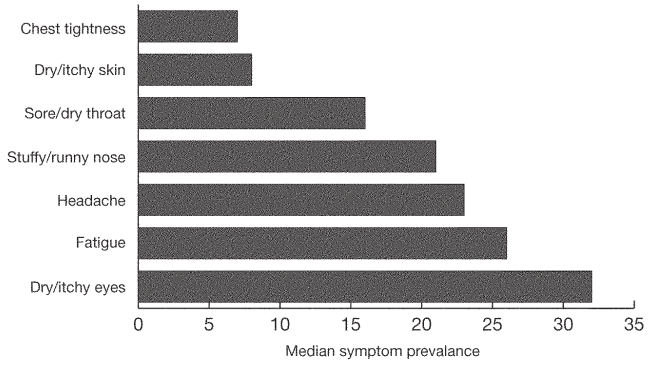
As with many other aspects of the working environment, such as temperature, noise and lighting, those with responsibility for managing the building and its facilities have the potential to influence the extent to which the office environment quite literally creates a climate for improved performance or sickness, demotivation and, as a result, reduced productivity.

Controllability

Arguably the most widely-reported research project that highlighted the importance of controllability of the internal environment was that reported by Leaman and Bordass (2000).

The objectives of the authors were to identify the most effective building systems design and management strategies to achieve improved productivity at work. Drawing on research available at the time, Leaman and Bordass concluded that "...losses (or gains) of up to 15% of turnover in a typical office organisation might be attributable to the design, management and use of the indoor environment." Knowing that there is a vast range of variables that impact on occupier productivity, which are the most important? The 'killer' variables were found to fall into four clusters, one of which was entitled "personal control".

Symptoms experienced in buildings with poor air quality



Source: NIOSH, 1999

Drivers of increased productivity

Since the 1980s, research has drawn a link between tolerance of building conditions and the extent to which the occupier has control over these conditions, and that the perception of control over one's environment affects one's comfort and satisfaction. Leaman and Bordass built on these earlier findings and carried out field research at a range of office buildings in the UK during 1996-97 – it was found that self-assessed productivity was significantly related to perceptions of self-control over the internal environment of the office. They concluded that, "…in study after study, people say that lack of environmental control is their single most important concern, followed by lack of control over noise."

If the relative importance of the variables has shifted over time, or will shift in the future, it matters little as the overarching message is clear – people aspire to have control over their working environment, just as control over the work we do and the way we work are the norm for many office workers. Indeed, these characteristics are positively encouraged by some enlightened employers.

Workstation design

A desk is a desk surely? Bearing in mind that office-based employees spend 30% or more of their waking hours each year in their offices, it is entirely proper that workstation design has become not just an art but also a science.

In a survey of occupants of nearly 800 workstations in public and private sector organisations across Canada and the US designed to explore views about the physical conditions of the office, respondents ranked air quality and ventilation as being of prime importance (Veitch et al, 2003). However, privacy and noise levels were ranked second and third respectively in importance – clearly, the design of the workstation is critical in influencing these latter two aspects of the office environment.

So, having few barriers in an open plan environment might prevent employees from achieving the degree of privacy required to perform knowledge based work – in some working environments, the 'study booth' has become a place of refuge from the crowd at the risk of contravening corporate policy on the use of these shared spaces.

The COPE (Cost-effective Open Plan Environments) series of research studies concluded, among other things, that acoustic privacy is deemed to be achievable if desk partitions are at least 1.6m in height (Veitch et al, 2003). Pre-dating these studies, BOSTI (Buffalo Organisation for Social and Technological Innovation) found that increased enclosure was associated with higher self-assessed job performance (1984). More particularly, the organisation concluded that the single most important factor impacting on individual performance, group performance and job satisfaction is an individual's ability to work in a setting that is free from distractions.

Turning to office furniture, a study by Springer (1986, cited in Brill) into the office systems used by a major insurance company determined that the best ergonomic furniture improved performance by 10-15% over normal conditions.

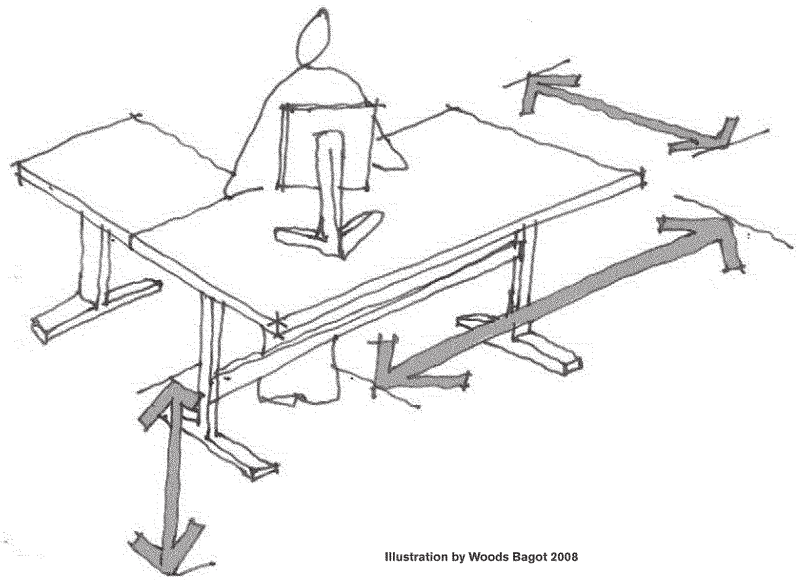


Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

Drivers of increased productivity

Brill cites another example of an insurance company that upgraded its furniture while renovating its building (1992). It was found that productivity increased by a massive 53%, absenteeism dropped 14% and job satisfaction increased substantially.

Poorly considered or, more typically, arbitrarily determined workstation designs have the ability to communicate perceptions held by management of employees – instead of showing respect to the needs of employees, it is all too easy to reflect an apparent disinterest and disrespect by assuming the employee will fit his or her tasks to the workstation provided rather than providing a fit for purpose design.

A study by DeMarco and Lister (1985) into the accommodation needs of software developers found that the most influential factor affecting job performance was the degree to which the physical environment suited the particular task in hand. The above comments suggest that office environments should be designed from 'inside out' starting with the work or tasks performed, the needs of the individual and the needs of the work group.

Configuration

The open plan vs. cellular office debate has been aired for many decades. An open plan environment can:

- foster communication and interaction;
- enable changes in configuration to occur more quickly and cost effectively;
- allow more workstations to be provided per sqm. of office space; and
- signal greater 'equity' within the office environment.

However, the level of distraction brought about by a high 'density' of communication, noise and interaction may inhibit productive work where productivity is dependent upon periods of contemplation and clear thinking, or where confidentiality is an essential element of the job.

There is no right answer – the configuration must fit the business need. As more and more business activity is contingent upon group working and the social aspects of work become more fully recognised, what can be said without fear of contradiction is that we will not regress to the days of long dark corridors flanked on both sides by cellular spaces for individuals.

Physical factors – summary of evidence

It is apparent that a range of physical factors in the workplace can impact on productivity, and some to a very significant degree. The productivity benefits cited in some of the studies mentioned are summarised along with evidence from other studies. It is not clear how productivity was defined and measured in all of the studies. What is clear, however, is that a variety of research methodologies were adopted including the use of laboratory simulations along with more robust 'real life' testing of hypotheses in an office environment.

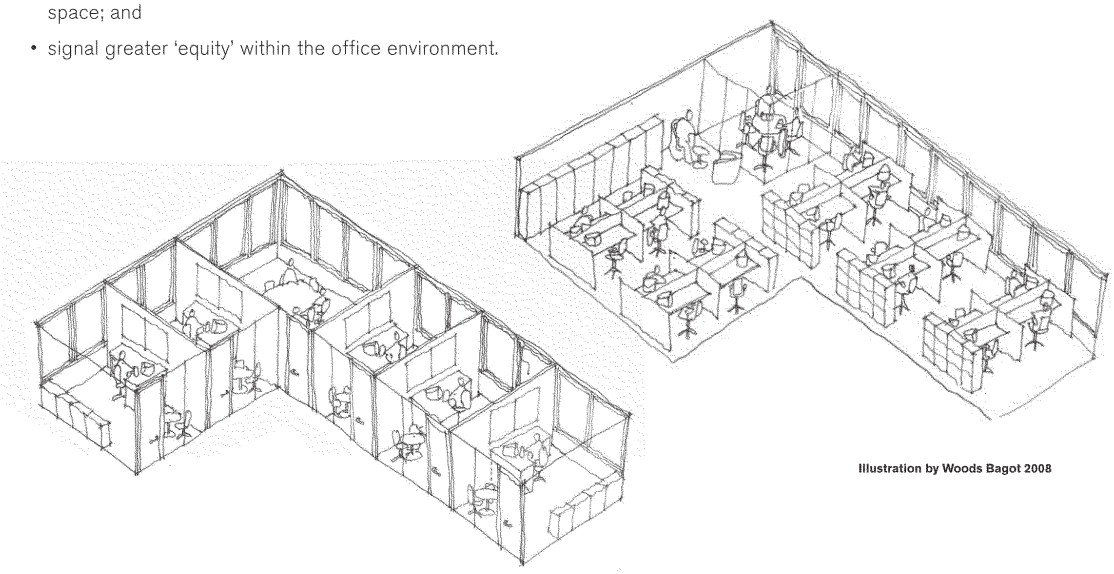


Illustration by Woods Bagot 2008

Drivers of increased productivity

Productivity Issue	Source	Impact on productivity
Increased illuminance for paper-based work	Barnaby, 1980	+2.8%
Introduction of uplighting for VDU work	Hedge et al, 1995	+3.0%
Lighting upgrade in drawing office	Romm & Browning, 1994	+13.0%
Sound absorbing material in typing pool	Wilson, 1952	+29.0%
Uncomfortable conditions in typing pool	Wyon, 1974	-40.0%
Increased fresh air intake to dilute pollutants	Kemp & Dingle, 1994	+3.0%
Move from natural ventilation to air conditioning	Sterling & Sterling, 1983	-6.0%
Comparison of natural ventilation to a/c offices	Oseland, 1995	+3.0%
Control over environmental conditions	Drake et al, 1991	+9.0%
Control over environmental conditions	Kroner et al, 1994	+2.8%
Refurbishment of office	Kroner et al, 1997	+12.9%
Bank refurbishment	Romm & Browning, 1994	+15.0%
New furniture	Sullivan, 1990	+15.0%
Properly designed workstation	Springer, 1982	+10.0%
General improvement in office environment	Wyon, 1993	+15.0%
General improvement in office environment	Brill et al, 1984	+15.0%

Some studies undertaken with the intention of linking tangible variables, such as air quality, temperature or lighting levels, with productivity or the performance of employees have landed upon adjacent and associated fertile ground for research almost by accident. The complexity of the working environment is stressed by many commentators as if by way of a cautious health warning. This fact was of course known to those who have studied the psychology of the workplace.

For some decades now, the facilities management profession in particular has been alive to the social and psychosocial attributes of the workplace. A wider awakening is called for among all professionals and players in the vast industry that is property procurement, design and operation.

The report now considers sustainability but from a perspective that expands on its usual meaning – a new meaning that helps form the glue between the design of the workplace and the output of its occupants.

So...

...despite some weaknesses in research studies, the body of evidence is substantial – a casual link between physical factors in the workplace and the productivity of employees exists ignoring, for the moment, the subtleties surrounding definitions and measurement techniques.

Chapter 10: Sustainability

The sustainable workforce

At this point, it is worth revisiting the core purpose behind the creation of buildings, namely, to accommodate a business or other organisation and enable it to meet its core purpose.

For various reasons, those involved in the design, development, disposal, procurement and management of buildings are not totally aligned in their focus on the needs of the occupier – while that ideal will never be achieved, the industry can at least work towards a greater alignment of interests of all parties.

If that precious resource, the occupier, is to be truly valued and nurtured, we must identify ways to capture and sustain the commitment, enthusiasm and 'corpus of knowledge' of occupiers for their own personal benefit, the benefit of the groupings within which they work and the benefit of the employer – in other words, create a sustainable workforce.

The design of the workplace is a factor in translating ideas and other inputs into productive outputs but it seems clear that it is only part of a chain or web of inter-related 'productivity influencers'.

The sustainable workforce can only become a reality if the following pre-conditions exist as a minimum:

- the business needs of the organisation are understood and translated clearly into a need for various work settings over time;
- the occupiers physical, social and psychosocial needs are met in the workplace;
- the workplace is managed as a social setting and not just a technical challenge; and
- effective systems are in place to identify the changing needs and perceptions of occupiers – and react to those as appropriate.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Can a sustainable workforce be supported in the face of consistent and increasingly robust drives for efficiency?

Efficient government, for example, is more than a praiseworthy objective – it also happens to be the title of a Scottish Government initiative designed to realise enormous savings to the public sector, and property asset management is one of the initiative's key themes.

At a UK level, the recently published NAO report entitled "Improving the Efficiency of Central Government's Office Property" (2007) stresses the financial benefits that could arise through the more efficient use of office accommodation. And this was followed up in March 2008 by a letter to all government departments from the Chief Executive of the OGC setting out space targets for new and refurbished office accommodation. To be fair, the letter added that "…it is vital that the effect on sustainability, productivity and other aspects of effectiveness are not compromised."

In parallel, much of the private sector continues to consider simple property cost metrics and efficiency measures to a greater of lesser degree.

What is clear is that a workplace solution that achieves efficiency and effectiveness (or productivity) objectives in parallel and without compromise to either is not just a desirable outcome of property asset management planning, it is a must.

The danger is that drives for efficiency will throw up what appear to be and indeed are in reality very tangible short term occupancy cost savings – but at a very high cost to the sustainability of the workforce.

Efficiency and effectiveness are not necessarily inconsistent objectives. Planning for one must, however, be done with full regard to potential unintended consequences such that all consequences become planned and intended and of course desirable.

So…

…can a pragmatic route map for a sustainable workforce be developed that allows both 'E's' to be achieved in parallel? Those with a responsibility for promoting efficiency have a parallel obligation to promote openly the challenges and their solutions that ensure workplace productivity is also enhanced as an essential by-product of the process.

Chapter 11: Design for occupancy

The workplace is a complex system that brings together people, building technology and infrastructure and a blend of hidden and visible people, processes and activities that sustain the working environment – that blend is the facilities management function.

Facilities management and productivity

In 2007, the Property Industry Alliance (a group comprising the RICS, British Property Federation, Investment Property Forum, British Council for Offices and CoreNet Global) commissioned a survey of occupiers that resulted in the production of an Occupier Satisfaction Index.

The research report revealed a sufficiently worrying gap between the activities and needs of landlords and their advisors and the needs of occupiers.

It is not clear if this mismatch between supply and demand has any impact on the productivity of occupiers but it is reasonable to assume that there is some connectivity.

At another level, there appears to be very little research into the impact of facilities management practices on the productivity of occupiers. This is somewhat surprising given that facilities management, in the form of day to day service delivery of property support services and the management of those services, necessarily involves or requires a direct interface between those engaged in facilities management and occupiers.

Research by Campbell and Finch (2004) concludes that "...it is clear that achieving high levels of customer satisfaction [in relation to facilities management service delivery] is contingent not only upon delivery of end products and services, but also upon the management processes that support these."

The management processes referred to include effective two-way communication with 'customers' and the adoption of a 'customer's representative' role if improved customer satisfaction is to be achieved.

So...

...a move within the facilities management industry to treat occupiers as customers could lead to increased customer satisfaction with the working environment – to be followed by an increase in the productivity level of those customers.

Post Occupancy Evaluations (POE)

The design and facilities management world is quite correctly enthused by the potential value of a POE – it can validate assumptions, track benefits, identify deficiencies with a new environment that may be rectified prior to a wider roll-out and it can provide an excellent opportunity to engage meaningfully with occupants.

Unfortunately, there is no standard methodology making comparison between POE findings a real challenge in practice. And without a pre-occupancy evaluation – or stock-take of an existing situation – a 'before and after' assessment and therefore a more accurate assessment of benefits arising out of the change is difficult to measure.

In relation to productivity, the above characteristics of the process mean that alleged improvements must be treated with some caution. What were the precise questions? What baseline of productivity were occupiers using for comparison purposes? And of course, what other changes took place in the transformation from old to new working environment that could have impacted on self-perceived or measured changes in productivity?

So...

...the POE as a measurement and management tool has great potential subject to greater consistency in its application and more emphasis on 'before and after' evaluations.

Chapter 12: Conclusions

Whether we like it or not, the office as we know it today is going to be with us for many decades. What we do in the office will evolve but the fundamentals of the office will remain – it will be a place to interact, to process information, to think and to create outputs in the form of words, numbers and ideas.

Design of buildings, both internally and externally, will become more efficient and the ICT infrastructure forming the backbone of a building will similarly support greater efficiency.

We have a duty in parallel to expand our capabilities and extend the way we measure performance of buildings and their occupants. Traditional performance measures must embrace concepts of effectiveness and productivity.

But the subject of workplace design and productivity is difficult to grasp for several reasons

- the term workplace will become less easily defined;
- there is no consistent understanding of the term productivity and how it can be measured, putting aside the difficulties in measuring it within some organisations and
- there is a recognition that the workplace is part of a wider organisational system that includes its people, purpose, processes and culture.

These challenges must be met head on in the face of:

- very powerful economic arguments about the 'worth' of a productive workforce;
- a vast body of evidence linking attributes of the workplace to enhanced satisfaction or productivity; and
- an expectation that knowledge work will come to dominate the office landscape.

The Holy Grail that comprises the perfect working environment leading to optimum productivity in all instances just does not exist – what is perfect for Organisation A might be entirely unsuited to Organisation B as their business needs and work processes are quite distinct. The implication of the above statement is that attention to the workplace alone and its design is insufficient to maximise the productivity of the workforce.

The research carried out to prepare this has, however, allowed a number of simple but significant conclusions to be drawn.

Conclusions

The conclusions are grouped in line with the broad structure of the full report.

Chapter 2: Productivity and workplace design

- productivity in the workplace is becoming quite common currency as a concept, at least a means of exchange that is accepted by many.
- to date, there isn't a formula to ensure the particular workplace design that guarantees optimum productivity – and quite rightly so. The age of determinism has passed. We must now ask ourselves what occupiers need for their business, rather than expecting organisations to fit into the text book model of space.

Chapter 3: The evolution of the office and management thinking

- early proponents of efficient design failed to consider fully the impact of their actions on the effectiveness of occupiers – this lack of insight can be visible today.
- paying attention to the needs of the occupier, and giving people and teams a degree of control over their means of organising work are factors that appear to be positively correlated to the output and attitude of occupiers.
- office design, in common with the design of other commodities, has been a victim of fashion – yet, organisational psychology has always taught us that we should cater for the inner needs of the individual.

Chapter 4: The language barrier

- the property industry is fascinated by quantifiable targets, objectives, performance measures and benchmarks – and this fascination has parallels with operational and financial business managers. Indeed, this fascination with quantifiable data is often driven by the finance community. Is the perennial pruning of costs a natural and reasonable reaction to calls for improvement in performance? Perhaps so in the absence of a robust and consistent understanding of organisational and personal productivity in the workplace. The real estate industry in its widest sense, working with the business community, must help promote a systematic and consistent approach to assessing productivity in the workplace, and develop then promote a defensible approach to quantifying the benefits of enhanced productivity.

Conclusions

Chapter 5: The economic argument

- the economic case to enhance productivity in the workplace is easily made – however, there is no standardised methodology to measure productivity and feed the inputs into business cases to support investment in new and improved working environments. On the other hand, an economic case to reduce property-related costs without due regard to the human and, therefore, business consequences may be fundamentally flawed.

Chapter 6: Health and well-being

- sickness in the workplace and its resultant absenteeism represents a huge cost to the economy, and the working environment is a significant contributory factor in the make-up of the obscene cost of low productivity. Communities with a stake in business improvement need to work more closely – these include HR, property, FM and interior design. More communities must also be measured by the impact they have on, or the contribution they make towards, the business objectives of the occupier or other relevant organisational objectives.

Chapter 7: Measurement of productivity

- self assessment of satisfaction with one's working environment is often regarded as an adequate reflection of one's productivity. It is also necessary to appreciate the myriad of drivers that can bring about enhanced productivity, and understand those drivers that inhibit productivity if allowed to. For example, there is an increased likelihood of the workplace impacting positively on the productivity of its occupiers if it displays the following characteristics or key success factors (listed in no particular order):
- controllability of immediate environment;
- maximum daylight;
- few visual distractions (when distraction-free working is required):
- lighting appropriate to the task;
- blend of work settings that reflect business needs;
- flexibility of design and infrastructure to accommodate change;
- good internal air quality;
- spaces for social interaction, relaxation and 'psychological restoration';
- opportunities for learning and information sharing;
- creation of a sense of place and social equity; and
- managed by a customer-focused facilities management function.

Chapter 8: Management of change

- the effective management of change must become integral to the implementation of strategic property projects involving relocation, rationalisation of even the refurbishment of space where a new working environment is created.

Chapter 9: Drivers of increased productivity

- research has shown that many aspects of the office environment have an impact, positive or negative, on the productivity of occupiers. These go beyond the purely physical dimension of the workplace thereby reinforcing the findings of Mayo and other organisational psychologists 80 years ago.

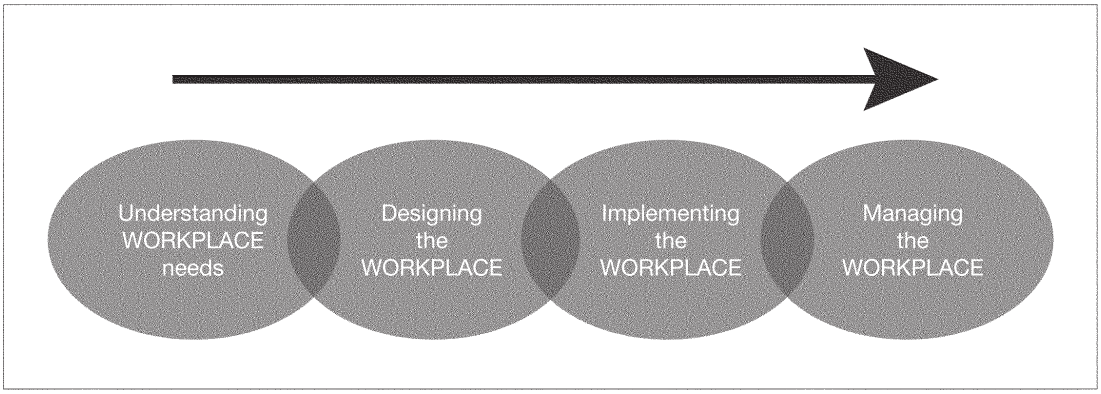
Chapter 10: Sustainability

- the concept of the Sustainable Workforce is introduced as a holistic concept that sees the design of the workplace as but one of the links in a chain of necessarily interconnected events. The report also challenges those pursuing efficiency to do so with an eye to effectiveness in the search for the Sustainable Workforce.

Conclusions

Chapter 11: Design for occupancy

- workplace design should not be divorced from the subsequent management of the workplace. A high quality design may be let down by ineffective facilities management, and the designers are blamed for creating the 'wrong' working environment. A mediocre or poor design may, on the other hand, be counter-balanced by a highly effective, customer-focused facilities management regime. The argument for integrated thinking among the professions is easy to make but how often are the designers, property advisors and facilities managers on the 'same page'? To promote integrated thinking, a consistent methodology for assessing the impact of workplace change, through Post Occupancy Evaluations for example, is overdue.
- the design and provision of the workplace should be viewed as links in a chain of events that can, in concert, act together to impact positively on productivity. The occupiers have a role to play and views to express throughout all the links – and the same is true whether a bespoke building is being provided or an 'off the shelf' existing building is to be adapted and fitted out. Occupiers also need to be 'trained' in how to use their building effectively.
- greater use should be made of long term studies to track organisations going through relevant change (relocation, rationalisation or the upgrade of accommodation) to monitor the impact over time of the new working environment on productivity. Through the use of such long term studies, there is a greater opportunity to identify and 'factor out' those other aspects of work that impact on productivity but which are unrelated to the working environment – such as management policies, remuneration or the nature of the work itself.



Some of the ideas raised in this research report should now be taken forward with the hope of raising productivity onto the agenda of all businesses, and recognising that the office environment is there to help or hinder organisations in achieving their objectives.

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Where to go for **further information**

Property in the Economy: workplace design and productivity – are they inextricably linked? by Brian Thompson is available for downloading from **www.rics.org**. For further information contact Rosemary Elder, Professional Practice Manager, RICS Faculties and Forums, **+44 (0) 207 695 1597**, **relder@rics.org**

The small print

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Appendix 6

Research Papers

Northern Ireland Assembly

Research and Information Service
Research Paper

28 May 2012

Aine Gallagher

Flexible Working

NIAR 121-12

This paper provides a range of current case studies on flexible working practices in the private and public sectors, to inform the Committee for Finance and Personnel's Inquiry into Flexible Working.

Research and Information Service briefings are compiled for the benefit of MLAs and their support staff. Authors are available to discuss the contents of these papers with Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public. We do, however, welcome written evidence that relate to our papers and these should be sent to the Research and Information Service, Northern Ireland Assembly, Room 139, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX or e-mailed to RLS@niassembly.gov.uk

Executive Summary

Following the decision of the Committee for Finance and Personnel to undertake an inquiry on flexible working, this briefing paper provides a range of current case studies concerning flexible working practices in the public and private sectors. The purpose is to inform the work of the Committee on this issue. The paper provides some background flexible working and information on current flexible working arrangements in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), though it acknowledges that the NICS does not currently have a formal strategy on flexible working. Finally, the paper considers some potential lessons for Northern Ireland arising from these case studies.

Flexible working is primarily about:

> *'…being able to work in different places, at and for different times…and about being able to work in different ways, using technology and the different skills that people have'.*[1]

Legislation in the United Kingdom provides the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern to some employees with parental or caring responsibilities. Employers must seriously consider applications for flexible working and can reject requests only on legitimate business grounds.[2]

Flexible working is used widely in the UK, though the research suggests that it has not been implemented in a systematic way in either the private or public sector. The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) does not have a formal policy on flexible working. However, there are a significant amount of flexible working arrangements available within the NICS, particularly with regard to flexibility of hours and attendance.[3]

The Northern Ireland Executive has not formally considered the recommendations of the Bain Review for implementing flexible working practices in Northern Ireland. However, there have been a number of developments in technology and premises which have facilitated flexible working in the NICS, including IP telephony, telepresence and web conferencing.[4] These technological developments also enable a certain amount of flexibility with regard to location. For example, the introduction of a common secure access service allows staff to gain access to departmental IT services from non-NICS locations.[5]

Flexible working arrangements have been introduced in the Irish Civil Service, including flexible working hours, worksharing and 'e-working'. There are also examples of how flexible working has been used successfully by local councils in the UK, for the purpose of both efficiency savings and improving the work-life balance of staff. In the private sector, flexible working has been used primarily as a cost-saving mechanism. However, there are also examples of the use of flexible working as a means of attracting to senior positions more qualified women, who are sometimes 'hidden' from the traditional job market.[6]

The case studies presented in this paper highlight potential lessons for Northern Ireland about the benefits and challenges of implementing flexible working practices in the public sector. For example, many case studies demonstrate the importance of senior executives showing willingness to work flexibly and suggest that operational pressures may be the

1 Jones et al in Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 19. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 23 March 2012].

2 The Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, Part IXA: N.I.Flexible Working. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2002/2836 [Accessed 23 April 2012].

3 http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/3.11-hours-and-attendance.pdf [Accessed 23 April 2012].

4 Correspondence from Departmental of Finance and Personnel to Committee, 9 March 2012.

5 Ibid.

6 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 52. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

greatest barrier to flexible working. The research also found that a lack of proactivity in the implementation of flexible working practices may prevent organisations from maximising the potential benefits of this form of working.

It has been suggested that this reluctance to promote flexible working practices proactively also has an effect on the ability to use flexible working to address gender inequality in employment. This has both social and economic impacts on the UK where an estimated one in five individuals in the working population works below their potential, at a cost to the economy of up to £23 billion.[7]

7 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 20. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

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Introduction

This paper provides a sample of current flexible working practices within the public and private sector in the United Kingdom in order to inform the work of the Committee on this issue.

In an evidence session with the Committee on the issue of flexible working, Professor Sir George Bain was asked to comment on a potential Committee inquiry on flexible working. He remarked that:[8]

> *It is hard for me to see the disadvantages of flexible working…flexibility in general is desirable. To some extent…it is more a question of how one should do this rather than whether one should do it.*
>
> *It seems to me that, if the Committee were minded to inquire further, its inquiry…would be one where there was probably not a great conflict over the concept of flexible working. You would be trying to draw on the expertise of people who had done it, who knew how to go about it and who knew where the pitfalls were.*

With this in mind, this paper aims to provide the Committee with a selection of case studies concerning flexible working practices, which demonstrate key challenges and benefits arising from this form of working.

Case studies of flexible working within the private sector include KPMG, BT and recruitment company Women Like Us. Within the public sector, flexible working within a number of local councils is highlighted. The paper also includes information on current flexible working practices within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

A number of key issues are raised through the examination of these case studies, including the importance of input and involvement at senior levels, possible barriers to the successful implementation of flexible working and the potential for flexible working to address gender equality employment issues.

1 Definition of flexible working

This section outlines the context of flexible working, including legislation in the UK and Northern Ireland which requires employers to consider requests for flexible working arrangements. It also sets out a definition of flexible working and highlights different types of flexible working practices.

According to Jones et al, flexible working:[9]

> *…is about being able to work in different places, at and for different times (shift systems, longer and shorter hours) and about being able to work in different ways, using technology and the different skills that people have. It is also about moving flexibility away from a singular perspective towards a notion of 'shared' flexibility.*
>
> *Rather than restrict ideas about flexibility to a small number of policies, we argue that flexibility is about being able to achieve desired outcomes in a range of ways, being flexible about how, when and where people work.*

8 Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report, Flexible Working, 1 February 2012, p. 5. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/february-2012/flexible-working/ [Accessed 23 April 2012].

9 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 19. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

Legislation in the UK provides the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern to some employees with parental or caring responsibilities.[10] There are some restrictions to this right: the employee must have worked for the employer for 26 weeks continuously before applying and they must not have made another application for flexible working during the past 12 months. Employers must seriously consider applications for flexible working and can reject a request only if there is a good business reason for doing so.[11] It is also possible for employees to challenge their employer in court, should the latter refuse such a request.[12] Other European countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany France and Finland have introduced statutes that provide the right to request flexible working arrangements to all employees – irrespective of their reasons for seeking a change.

Flexible working is used widely in the UK. Research carried out last year by think-tank Demos[13] found that currently 90% of employers offer at least one form of flexible working arrangement to their employees; almost 60% of employees stated they currently used a form of flexible working and 83% of requests for flexible working are approved.[14] The report claimed that flexible working is:[15]

> *'…particularly important in a sluggish economic climate where employment legislation has been cast as a potential barrier to job creation and growth.'*

A report published by the Westminster Sustainable Business Forum[16] has found that 'the public sector could increase the productivity of its workforce by £8bn a year by using its buildings differently.'[17] Collectively improving workplace conditions, introducing flexible working and reinvesting money saved by rationalising property portfolios could help to increase productivity by between 5% and 15%; a 5% increase would equate to £8bn worth of staff time. The report makes reference to flexible working, claiming that it could lower space requirements, and thereby reduce property costs and carbon emissions.[18]

Types of Flexible Working

In practice, flexible working arrangements encompass a range of options, including:[19]

Part-time working: frequently defined as working for less than 30 hours a week, or for less than the typical working week of a comparable job.

Job-sharing: part-time working when two or more people share responsibility for a job between them.

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10 The Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations 2002. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/3207/contents/made

11 NI Direct, 'Flexible working and work-life balance' http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/employment/employment-terms-and-conditions/flexible-working/flexible-working-and-work-life-balance.htm [Accessed 20 April 2012].

12 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 36. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

13 Demos is a UK think-tank 'focused on power and politics'. http://www.demos.co.uk/ [Accessed 1 May 2012].

14 Ibid, p. 12.

15 Ibid, p. 11.

16 Westminster Sustainable Business forum is a 'coalition of leading businesses, parliamentarians and organisations informing better policy making on sustainability issues.' http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/wsbf [Accessed 1 May 2012].

17 'Changing building use "could raise productivity by £8bn"', Nick Mann, Public Finance, 7 November 2011. http://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2011/11/changing-working-practices-could-raise-public-sector-productivity-by-8bn/ [Accessed 23 April 2012].

18 Leaner and Greener II: Putting Buildings to Work, Westminster Sustainable Business Forum, 2011, p. 56.

19 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 20. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

Flexible hours (or flexitime): when employees can choose how to allocate their hours of work across a period of time.

Compressed hours: the reallocation of time into fewer and longer blocks during the week or fortnight.

Term-time working: when employees are on a permanent contract, but can take paid or unpaid leave during school holidays.

Hot-desking: when more than one employee can use a single workstation and desk space as required; used to increase flexibility, efficiency and employee mobility.

Mobile or teleworking/working from home: permits employees to work all or part of the working week at a location remote from their employer's official workplace.

Local software company Consilium's Chief Executive Colin Reid has argued that maximising the benefits of mobile technology can make organisations more productive and help citizens hold government to account. He claims that Northern Ireland can take the lead in developing mobile technologies and generate new jobs for graduates. Consilium's clients typically make 20-40 per cent savings through mobile working.[20]

Mobile working has generated efficiency savings for other organisations, such as Aberdeen City Council, which is saving £1.5 million per year through mobile working, and has a mobile workforce of 225 staff.[21]

2 Flexible Working in Northern Ireland

This section outlines current flexible working practices available in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Assembly. It also outlines recommendations arising from the 2008 Bain Review, an independent review of policy on the location of public sector jobs chaired by Professor Sir George Bain.

In 2001 the Central Personnel Group within the Department of Finance and Personnel produced a booklet on 'Work-Life Balance in the Northern Ireland Civil Service', outlining policies and working practices which have the potential to:[22]

> *…help to develop a modern and forward thinking civil service where a motivated, confident and flexible workforce provide the high quality service which our community has a right to expect in the provision of its public services.*

This booklet suggested that all jobs within the NICS should be considered for an alternative work pattern.[23]

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) does not have a formal policy on flexible working. However, the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Policies include provisions on flexible working under the 'Hours and Attendance' guidelines. The policy states that:[24]

> *There is a considerable amount of flexibility in the way Departments may arrange the conditioned hours of the working week. A Department may, with the agreement of their Departmental Trade Union Side, introduce a Flexible Working Time facility (FWT).*

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20 'Consilium Going Mobile', AgendaNI Magazine, 1 March 2012. http://www.agendani.com/consiliumgoing-mobile [Accessed 20 March 2012].

21 Ibid.

22 Central Personnel Group, Department of Finance and Personnel, 'Work-Life Balance in the Northern Ireland Civil Service', p. 1. http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/worklife.pdf [Accessed 1 May 2012].

23 Ibid, p. 6.

24 Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources Policy (Staff Handbook), Section 3.11: Hours and Attendance, p. 9. http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/3.11-hours-and-attendance.pdf [Accessed 23 April 2012].

A Flexible Working Time facility offers considerable scope to vary times of arrival and departure from work, to vary the length and timing of lunch breaks and to take time off by working extra hours. A Code of Practice on Flexible Working Time has been agreed between the Management and Trade Union Sides of the Central Whitley Council and forms part of the NICS HR Policy.

The Code of Practice offers guidance on Flexible Working Time (FWT) in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, which is now a 'well-established part of many Civil Servants' working lives'. According to the HR Policy:[25]

> *Both sides of the Central Whitley Council would like FWT Schemes…to be extended to as many Civil Servants and work places as possible.*

The HR Policy also states that:[26]

> *Ideally, all staff in one office/location should be covered by the same FWT arrangements.*

Like all employers in Northern Ireland, the NICS is also required to consider requests for flexible working arrangements under The Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.[27]

The Code of Practice on Flexible Working Time also relates to Secretariat staff at the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA). There is a 'considerable amount of flexibility' in the way the NIA may arrange conditioned hours of the working week and the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission recognises that:[28]

> *'…flexible working arrangements can assist with the retention of skilled staff and reduce costs; to raise staff morale and reduce absenteeism; and to react to changing business needs more effectively. For staff, the opportunity to work flexibly can greatly improve their ability to balance home and work responsibilities.'*

Guidance on flexible working arrangements for employees and employers has been produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland[29], the Department for Employment and Learning[30] and the public service trade union Unison[31]

Bain Review

In 2007 the Department of Finance and Personnel commissioned an independent review of policy on the location of public sector jobs. The Review was chaired by Professor Sir George Bain and the Report was published in 2008, setting out a number of 'practical

25 Ibid, p. 23.

26 Ibid, p. 31.

27 NI Direct, 'Flexible working and work-life balance'. http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/employment/employment-terms-and-conditions/flexible-working/flexible-working-and-work-life-balance.htm [Accessed 20 April 2012].
The Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2002/2836/contents [Accessed 20 April 2012].

28 Northern Ireland Assembly Staff Handbook, Section 3.10: Hours and Attendance. http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/services/hr/sep_project/assembly_handbook/section_3/hours_attendance.htm#flexible

29 http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/flexible_working_employer_guideF_sept10.pdf [Accessed 1 May 2012].

30 http://www.delni.gov.uk/flexible_working_-_a_guide_for_employers_and_employees_er_36.pdf [Accessed 1 May 2012].

31 http://www.unison.org.uk/worklifebalance/thingstoknow.asp#four

recommendations for the longer-term approach to the location of public sector jobs.'[32] The Report contained a section on flexible working, which recommended that:[33]

> *All public sector bodies should consider implementing flexible working approaches and include these within their business plans.*

Neither the Department of Finance and Personnel nor the Executive have formally considered the recommendations of the Bain Review. However, the Department has noted that:[34]

> *There have been a number of developments in the areas of use of technology and premises, and others are planned, which are relevant to the recommendations and which support, either directly or indirectly, flexible working as envisaged by the Bain Review.*

The Department of Finance and Personnel has used the application of new technology as a means of facilitating flexible working. Relevant technology initiatives adopted by the Department include the successful roll out across all NICS sites of Network NI (as anticipated in the Bain Review), and the creation of the IT Assist (the NICS shared service for the provision of IT services). This system, allows staff to connect their laptop to the NICS network, and to work remotely online at virtually any NICS site. The introduction of a common secure access service also allows staff with the right equipment to gain access to departmental IT services from non-NICS locations, such as home.[35]

In correspondence to the Committee, the Department highlighted the NICS Unified Communications Initiative, which is a key enabler for flexible working and includes the use of:

- IP Telephony (IPT)
- Instant Messaging and Presence
- Telepresence
- A Web Conferencing pilot

Telepresence, for example, is in effect high quality video conferencing. The NICS has been using video conferencing for many years, though there has not been a cohesive NICS strategy or approach to this issue. As part of the NICS Unified Communications Initiative, there is investment in infrastructure to bring together existing and future video conferencing units into an integrated telepresence network, which also will link to desktop and phone-based video users. This solution is due to be tested in the next few months, and the Department anticipates it will enter full service by Autumn 2012.[36]

Video conferencing has the potential to deliver efficiency savings in travel and subsistence costs, and to reduce the environmental impact of travel through reduced emissions. In 2010 a report by the Sustainable Development Commission recommended that the Department for Transport, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport "work together to investigate the potential to reduce the need to travel through the creation of a UK network of high quality video-conferencing facilities." The report recommended the formation of a cross-departmental team to work with business in developing opportunities for ICT-enabled mobility. It stated that public sector bodies should

32 Independent Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs, 2008, p. 3. http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/publications-how-we-make-decisions-major_policy-proposals-review-of-policy-on-location-of-public-sector-jobs [Accessed 1 May 2012].

33 Independent Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs, 2008, p. 114. http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/publications-how-we-make-decisions-major_policy-proposals-review-of-policy-on-location-of-public-sector-jobs [Accessed 1 May 2012].

34 Correspondence from Departmental of Finance and Personnel to Committee, 9 March 2012.

35 Ibid.

36 Correspondence from Departmental of Finance and Personnel to Committee, 9 March 2012.

establish a network of videoconferencing facilities, and organisations should be required to report the videoconferencing utilisation rates.[37]

In evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee, technology provider Cisco claimed that:[38]

> *Evidence from the private sector suggests travel spend can be reduced by as much as 30% through better use of communications-based alternatives to travel like video conferencing. This means there may be potential for the public sector to save as much as £900 million a year, as well as to significantly reduce carbon emissions.*

The Department also has facilitated mobile working through the creation of satellite offices for 'touch-down' working. In May 2011, the Department installed a pilot regional satellite office in Marlborough House in Craigavon, which provides 20 workstations, 6 of which have networked computers attached. The remainder offer network points where staff can connect their laptop to the NICS network.

The business zone scheme also allows those registered to access other flexible working zones in Clare House (Harbour Estate, Belfast), Causeway Exchange (Belfast City Centre) and Castle Buildings (Stormont Estate). Currently around 230 staff are registered in the scheme, with the majority from the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Department of the Environment and the Department for Employment and Learning. A small zone similar to that in Marlborough House has also been set up in the main reception area of Castle Buildings on the Stormont Estate, to support officials whose headquarters location is outside the estate, but who may have to visit Stormont, for example, to support Ministers or appear at Assembly Committees.[39]

Although this scheme is certainly an example of flexible working in practice, it is currently targeted at workers whose role requires them to be away from their normal place of work on a regular basis, and has not been offered as an option for office-based staff wishing to reduce their commuting time, except in exceptional circumstances. The Department acknowledges that this type of flexible working is 'more opportunistic working than explicit strategy.' According to the Department, it is not anticipated that this policy will change without detailed consideration of the management and business issues that could arise if the concept was broadened.[40]

3 Flexible Working in the Irish Civil Service

In April 2009, flexible working arrangements were included in the Irish Supplementary Budget. Policies such as Special Incentive Career Break Scheme for Civil Servants and a Shorter Working Year Scheme for Civil Servants were introduced.[41]

Shorter Working Year Scheme for Civil Servants: This scheme is an extension of the term time scheme, which allows for parents of school-going children up to 18 years of age to take a continuous block of 8, 10 or 13 weeks unpaid leave during the summer holidays. The new

37 Smarter Moves: How Information Communications Technology can promote Sustainable Mobility, Sustainable Development Commission. http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1050 [Accessed 20 April 2012].

38 'Government video-conferencing usage revealed in sustainability evidence', Public Sector Travel, 9 November 2010. http://www.publicsectortravel.org.uk/2010/11/09/government-video-conferencing-usage-revealed-in-sustainability-evidence/ [Accessed 15 April 2012].

39 Ibid.

40 Official Report, Flexible Working: Departmental Briefing, 14 March 2012. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/march-2012/flexible-working--departmental-briefing/ [Accessed 28 March 2012].

41 Circular 412003: Pilot schemes to promote e-working in the Civil Service http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/finance/2003/04.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2012].

scheme allows any civil servant an opportunity to take up to 3 continuous blocks of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 or 13 weeks (to a maximum of 13 weeks in total) unpaid leave for any reason at any time during the year.

Career Breaks: This scheme provides that staff may be granted special leave without pay for a period of not less than six months and not more than five years subject to meeting eligibility criteria.

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme for Civil Servants: The Special Civil Service Incentive Career Break Scheme was introduced as a once-off measure that was included in the Supplementary Budget on 7 April 2009. Following implementation on 30 April the measure was extended to staff in the different areas of the public service, including the local government sector.

Hours of Attendance & Flexible Working Hours (FWH): Most Government Departments/ Offices operate a system of Flexible Working Hours (FWH). Under this system, civil servants must work their full quota of hours, but they are given much more flexibility in doing so. Staff may, within certain limits, vary their arrival times, departure times, and lunch breaks and are allowed to work up additional time which may subsequently be taken as time off (flexi-leave).

Worksharing: Worksharing means that staff may choose a daily/weekly work pattern which is different from the standard working day/week. All civil servants may apply to workshare. Staff who opt for worksharing are required to do so for a minimum of twelve months. In general, worksharers enjoy pro-rate arrangements with their full-time colleagues in relation to pay and other conditions of employment.

E – Working: In April 2000, the Government approved a Code of Practice on teleworking, or e-working. The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) committed the Irish Government to introduce teleworking options into mainstream public service employment by 2002.[42] The PPF committed the Government to develop a teleworking policy for all publicly-funded organisations to be implemented by 2002.[43]

4 Flexible Working in the UK Private Sector

This section outlines a number of case studies highlighting the use of flexible working practices in UK private sector organisations. The case studies demonstrate the potential of flexible working to lead to economic efficiencies within organisations, for example through increased staff retention, lower levels of absenteeism and a reduction in accommodation costs. The case studies also highlight key success factors in flexible working practices, such as leadership and cultural change.

4.1 KPMG

In January 2009, KPMG announced a ground-breaking programme called “Flexible Futures”, which involved an appeal to all KPMG’s 11,000 partners and staff in the UK, to volunteer to change their terms and conditions of employment for a temporary period of 18 months. During this period, the new terms allowed the firm, as and when it required, to ask volunteers to:

- Reduce their working week by one day, unpaid, or;
- Take between 4 and 12 weeks leave at 30% pay.

42 Circular 412003: Pilot schemes to promote e-working in the Civil Service http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/finance/2003/04.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2012].

43 rogramme for Prosperity and Fairness http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/ProgrammeForProsperityAndFairness.pdf [Accessed 15 April 2012].

Staff could volunteer for either or both of these. The maximum salary loss in any calendar year was capped at 20%, and full benefits would continue to be provided. By the end of the period, 85% of staff had signed up for one or both of the options.[44]

The objective of Flexible Futures was to 'manage the firm's people costs in line with fluctuating and unpredictable business demands whilst retaining talent.'[45] The programme was designed and delivered quickly, between December 2008 and early January 2009, in response to a rapidly worsening economic climate. The development of the programme was led by a cross-functional central team that came together for a fixed period, with a clear objective of designing and delivering a scheme in a short time scale:[46]

> *From the start flexibility and agility were championed from the top of the organisation as crucial to the success of the business at a challenging time.*

The scheme was rolled out in the first instance to its most senior people via a two way conference call hosted by the chief operating officer and the UK head of people. Following the call over 90% of its most senior people volunteered to sign up to the programme, prior to launching to the rest of the firm. Over the subsequent eight months around 500 people across the business were asked to take leave in line with the options for which they volunteered. The scheme saved the organisation over £4 million.[47] This case study highlights the use of flexible working as an economic down-turn measure to reduce costs and prevent redundancies in periods of economic difficulty.

4.2 BT

According to a report by Demos, BT is:[48]

> *...a good example of a large corporation that has successfully embedded aspects of the flexible working agenda in a way that was enabled by technology, but ultimately embedded through leadership and cultural change.*

70,000 BT employees are now involved in the BT Workstyle Project, which is one of the largest flexible working projects in Europe. The company has introduced measures to allow 15,000 employees to work from home and equipping 64,000 to work flexibly. BT found that establishing flexible working practices had a major positive effect on retaining staff and cutting costs. By 2005, BT was saving €725 million-plus per annum through reductions in its office estate, and BT's 11,600 home workers save the company €104 million a year in accommodation costs, and are on average 20 per cent more productive than their office-based colleagues.

According to the organisation:[49]

> *Flexible working should be seen as a philosophy of business organisation, rather than a technological issue, comprising every aspect of the company, from its headquarters and international facilities office employees and remote employees, to its physical and intellectual assets, suppliers, partners, and of course, customer.*

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44 'Flexible Futures – KPMG's hedging strategy for talent', Rachel Campbell, Partner - Head of People, KPMG Europe. 10 March 2009. http://www.csr360gpn.org/magazine/feature/flexible-futures-a-hedging-strategy-for-talent/ [Accessed 15 April 2012].

45 Business in the Community 2010 awards, Opportunity Now 2010 Awards Case Studies: 'Agile Organisation Award'. http://www.bitcdiversity.org.uk/awards/on_awards_2010/case_studies/agile_workplace/kpmg_flexible.html [Accessed 15 April 2012].

46 Ibid.

47 Business in the Community 2010 awards.. http://www.bitcdiversity.org.uk/awards/on_awards_2010/case_studies/agile_workplace/kpmg_flexible.html [Accessed 15 April 2012].

48 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 27.

49 Ibid.

The starting point for the BT Workstyle Project was the recognition that 'in a digital, networked economy, competitive advantage relies on the ability to anticipate and react quickly to change.' According to the company, consumer expectations have been one of the key drivers of BT's embrace of flexibility as an organisational principle:[50]

> *We have to satisfy demands for our products and services around-the-clock. There is no room for a traditional nine-to-five working day because that just can't meet the demands placed upon us as a business.*

Key practices and enablers

In addition to the use of remote technology platforms, the enabling factors for the BT Workstyle Project included clear policies and careful measurement, leadership from the top, cultural and behavioural change, and development of the right equipment and workspaces for people's jobs. A phased approach was taken, with focused projects followed by a broader roll out.

The Project incorporated the following key elements:[51]

A robust, scalable and flexible technology platform (BT's Workstyle Technology Architecture)

Creation of a flexible estate and accommodation rationalisation: the company established a number of carefully designed buildings for BT employees around the world, equipped with hot desks and touchdown areas.

Leadership and culture change: senior executives were strongly encouraged to be early adopters to demonstrate management commitment. Mechanisms and processes were put in place to ensure that the data necessary to monitor and prove the flexible working business case was collected. The focus shifted from rewarding people's attendance to rewarding their contribution to the business and its customers.

Policies were established to enable people to work flexibly in a sustainable way, and significant time and resources were allocated to training.

Impact of flexible working

BT's integration of flexibility as an organisational wider practice has produced 'tangible and substantial results in terms of cost savings, productivity, employee retention and carbon reduction.'[52]

The proportion of female BT employees in the UK who return to work after taking maternity leave is around 96–99 per cent more than double the national average. This is estimated to save the company €7.4 million a year in recruitment and induction costs.

Each home worker is reported to save the company £6,000 a year, a total of around £70 million per year.[53] Home working call centre operators also handle up to 20 per cent more calls than their office-based colleagues.

The absentee rate among flexible workers is down 63 per cent and is now 20 per cent below the UK average.

Cost savings of over €725 million a year through reduced office estate and €104 million a year through reduction in accommodation.

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50 Caroline Waters, BT Group Director of People and Policy.

51 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, pp. 28-30. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

52 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 30. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

53 Isles N, The Good Work Guide: How to make organisations fairer and more effective, London: Earthscan, 2010.

Teleconferencing has eliminated the annual need for over 300,000 face-to-face meetings, leading to savings of over €38.6 million a year.

Avoiding the purchase of approximately 12 million litres of fuel per year, resulting in 54,000 tonnes less CO2 being generated in the UK.

4.3 Women Like Us

Women Like Us is a recruitment consultancy and social enterprise that helps employers match their needs with women who need flexibility. It has a highly flexible workforce: 25 out of its 29 members of staff work part-time and all work flexibly, for example, working from home.[54]

Women Like Us sources talented, experienced candidates and matches them to flexible and part time recruitment opportunities. They helped a number of organisations to introduce flexible working arrangements, including the following companies:

ConnectED

ConnectED represents, markets and sells a set of products to the education sector. The company was able to access highly experienced candidates for a reduced cost by working with Women Like Us to design roles that were all recruited on a part time and flexible basis:[55]

> *Like a growing number of small businesses throughout London, ConnectED discovered that by being flexible, they were also able to attract the attention of talented candidates who are 'hidden' from the traditional job market, and gain experience, reliability and commitment in return.*

PrimeTimers

South London based **PrimeTimers** helps charities, voluntary and community groups to grow by handpicking talented and experienced professionals from the private sector to cross over to non-profit organisations. In late 2008, PrimeTimers won a huge contract, which meant that it could double its output. At the time it had three members of staff, which meant it needed to hire new personnel who could take on various aspects of the business, but with very different skills and on differing projects. With the help and support of Women Like Us Prime Timers hired two candidates for 2.5 days a week, with an overlap to occur on one. Brent Thomas, CEO of PrimeTimers, comments:[56]

> *We believe you can unlock a tremendous amount of talent – in both the corporate and third sector worlds – by hiring women returners and other staff on a job share basis. Job shares work so well for small organisations.*

5 Flexible Working in Local Government

This section outlines the use of flexible working arrangements in a number of local councils. These case studies demonstrate the potential for flexible working practices to be used in local government as a means of reducing accommodation and facilities costs, improving corporate image, and increasing productivity levels.

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54 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 52. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

55 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 29. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

56 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 41. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Council has been named by campaigning charity Working Families as one of the best family-friendly employers of the past three decades. This is in recognition of the leadership it has shown in its flexible working and family-friendly initiatives.[57]

Hertfordshire County Council offers flexible working to all its employees and the default position is one of acceding to requests wherever possible. Some 82% of the Council's workforce is female, and 31% are carers. The Council recognised that:[58]

> *...with more carers in its workforce, it needed to support these staff, and offering flexible working was a way of demonstrating the value it placed on them.*

In 2009 Hertfordshire County Council's three year programme, "The Way We Work", was completed. This programme involved reducing office accommodation from 51 offices to three main bases in key towns across the county, directly affecting 4,500 Hertfordshire County Council staff. "The Way We Work" was a self-funded programme, which 'improved motivation and morale, enhanced knowledge and information sharing, increased retention of staff and improved the skills of their staff.'[59] According to the organisation:[60]

> *The Way We Work programme means that staff now enjoy a higher standard of accommodation and it allows the organisation to spend more money on front-line services. [It] set out to ensure that the property we currently own best serves the needs of our services, and by extension, the people of Hertfordshire. It is helping us achieve our aim of making Hertfordshire an even better place to live and work.*

The objectives of "The Way We Work" were to maximise space and desk occupancy, improve document management, achieve coherent standards of ICT, solve maintenance back-log on offices, realise capital receipts and reduce revenue cost. These objectives were achieved by:[61]

- Reducing the county council's building portfolio from 51 sites which were old, cramped and expensive to run, down to three main bases which are modern and easily maintained;
- Providing appropriate workspace, facilities and working conditions to enable staff to work more flexibly and provide a more responsive service;
- Providing quality support and training for staff to take full advantage of the new technology and new ways of working; and,
- Reviewing the council's working practices.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) does not adopt a highly prescriptive centralised process, but instead 'encourages managers and their teams to adopt solutions that work for their part of the business.'[62] The programme is expected to realise significant cost savings of £3.8 million each year by:[63]

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57 K. Goodwin, 'Hertfordshire County Council: flexible work – an activity, not a place', Equal Opportunities Review, Issue 193, 01 October 2009. http://www.eortrial.co.uk/default.aspx?id=1118422 [Accessed 23 March 2012].

58 K. Goodwin, 'Hertfordshire County Council: flexible work – an activity, not a place', Equal Opportunities Review, Issue 193, 01/10/2009. http://www.eortrial.co.uk/default.aspx?id=1118422 [Accessed 23 March 2012].

59 MJ Award Entry 2009 People and Workforce Achievement of the Year. http://admin.localgov.co.uk/his_localgov/view/images/uploaded/Image/peopleHertfordshire.PDF [Accessed 23 March 2012].

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 K. Goodwin, 'Hertfordshire County Council: flexible work – an activity, not a place', Equal Opportunities Review, Issue 193, 01/10/2009. http://www.eortrial.co.uk/default.aspx?id=1118422 [Accessed 23 March 2012].

63 Ibid.

...securing efficiency in working practices and services delivery, removing duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy and making effective use of new technology.

Several results of the changes made in the Council are outlined below:[64]

- In the three new HCC sites, there is an open plan working environment with no individual offices for managers;
- The new sites have longer opening hours, which allow staff to come in earlier or leave later and enables them to adjust their working pattern to fit around their caring responsibilities, lifestyle or simply avoid traffic; and,
- IT has been key in facilitating flexible working at HCC. New technology allows staff to transfer their telephone number to any phone and access emails and documents from any HCC site or from home. Currently, there is an average of 5,000 remote log-ins to the council's IT systems each week and the reduction in paper use since the office rationalisation reportedly equates to 32 Eiffel Towers stacked on top of each other.

Impact of flexible working

Hertfordshire County Council's approach to flexible working has led to:[65]

- Improved retention and reduced recruitment costs - from March 2004 to March 2009 there was a reduction in turnover by just over 3% across all grades;
- Reduction in absenteeism - sickness absence has fallen to 7.1 days per employee annually, which is below the nine-day national average for local government;
- Improved morale - 72% of employees report that their manager is sensitive to work-life balance issues;
- High take-up of flexible working - 94% of flexible working requests are granted compared with a national average of 77%, and the council estimates that around 75% of its workforce is engaged in some form of flexible working pattern, including staff at director level;
- Improved corporate image - the winning of employer awards in competition with the private sector has brought the organisation external recognition and HCC has received many invitations to speak about its flexible working programme. It has also raised its profile as an employer of choice - resulting in an increased level of applications to work at the local authority; and,
- Estimated cost saving of several million over a six year period, which can be redirected into front line services.[66]

5.2 Salford City Council

Salford City Council developed the concept of home working as a way to contribute to its drive to modernise service delivery, explore a range of environmental issues, compete in terms of staff recruitment and retention, support and benefit from the Council's evolving accommodation strategy and further develop its flexible working agenda.[67]

A small pilot scheme for was set up for staff working in the Housing and Council Tax Benefits area of Salford Direct. The pilot home working project was judged a success by staff and managers and was quickly adopted by fifty more staff. It was subsequently decided to extend

64 Ibid.

65 Goodwin, 'Hertfordshire County Council: flexible work – an activity, not a place', Equal Opportunities Review, Issue 193, 01/10/2009. http://www.eortrial.co.uk/default.aspx?id=1118422 [Accessed 23 March 2012].

66 Project Nomad, Flexible Working: Summary Report for Project Nomad, 2006. p. 4. http://www.wisework.co.uk/sites/default/files/resources/NomadFlexibleWorkingGuide.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2012].

67 Ibid.

home working to other service areas across the Council including telephony staff in the Customer Contact Centre. Home working is now one of a number of flexible working options made available to staff, subject to the approval of a business case.

Performance benefits for the Council have included:[68]

- Council Tax and Benefits processing productivity improvements of 15% to 20% with no adverse effects on performance;
- 48% increase in Benefits and Tax Overpayments productivity levels; and,
- After 12 months, among the initial pilot group of home-based staff, sickness absence levels were reduced by 75%.

5.3 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Stockport Metropolitan Borough developed a range of flexible working options to deliver four strategic objectives:[69]

- Increasing participation in flexible working to become an employer of choice;
- Reducing 33% of floor space through the use of new ways of working with innovative IT technology and office design;
- Allowing employees to take more control of their work life balance as it has a positive effect on service delivery; and
- Reducing the environmental footprint in line with the Council's priorities.

From 2005 to 2008 the Council carried out its Work Life Balance Improvement Programme. The uptake of flexible working occurred across all Directorates, in a wide variety of teams 'where the patterns of flexible working demonstrate the theme of "not one size fits all"'. The most common options adopted were working from home one to two days a week; working from home all contracted hours; extended flexi-time scheme (which sees the reduction or removal of core hours) and compressed hours. Other flexible working patterns at a team level also have been adopted.[70]

Impact of flexible working

The closure of Council buildings and the implementation of flexible working patterns across all five Directorates has led to accommodation reductions of 5,097m2. This programme has seen 600 employees working from home either full time or one to two days a week, across a civic employee population of approximately 1,600. In year four (2009), the project provided a net benefit of £744,000 to the organisation.

Two of the biggest benefits have been the reduction in sickness absence (in particular short term), and reduced employee turnover in hard to recruit for posts. Flexible working also has benefited the environmental policies within the organisation, with 37% fewer journeys in peak travel time, reducing congestions, and home workers on average reducing their mileage by approximately 30% a week.[71]

68 Project Nomad, Flexible Working Summary Report for Project Nomad, 2006, p. 4. http://www.wisework.co.uk/sites/default/files/resources/NomadFlexibleWorkingGuide.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2012].

69 Leaner and Greener II: Putting Buildings to Work, Westminster Sustainable Business Forum, 2011, p. 59. http://local-government.interserve.com/media/Microsites/local-government/PDF/wsbf_report_2011_leaner_and_greener_ii_putting_buildngs_to_work.pdf [Accessed 23 April 2012].

70 Ibid.

71 Leaner and Greener II: Putting Buildings to Work, Westminster Sustainable Business Forum, 2011, p. 60. http://local-government.interserve.com/media/Microsites/local-government/PDF/wsbf_report_2011_leaner_and_greener_ii_putting_buildngs_to_work.pdf [Accessed 23 April 2012].

6 Lessons for Northern Ireland

There are key features arising from these case studies, which are worth considering in the implementation of flexible working practices in Northern Ireland. This section outlines the importance of senior involvement for successful implementation of flexible working practices, barriers to flexible working and the potential of flexible working to address issues of gender equality within the workplace.

Importance of senior executives showing willingness to work flexibly

Sir George Bain highlighted the importance of senior leadership in implementing flexible working practices in his evidence session with the Finance Committee:[72]

> *...an example must be shown by senior leadership, and unless the very top management levels are prepared to work in that way and set the example, it will not work.*

KPGM's flexible working scheme was rolled out to its most senior people first, before launching the scheme to the rest of the firm:[73]

> *From the start flexibility and agility were championed from the top of the organisation as crucial to the success of the business at a challenging time.*

BT emphasised the importance of leadership from the top: 'senior executives were strongly encouraged to be early adopters to demonstrate management commitment.'[74]

Barriers to Flexible Working

According to Demos, despite the widespread use of flexible working and the rewards that have been gained by organisations adopting flexible working arrangements, there remain 'real barriers preventing organisations from successfully implementing such arrangements.'[75]

The CIPD's survey of human resources professionals found that operational pressures were the most commonly reported barriers to flexible working: more than two-thirds of respondents identified this as the most important constraint. A survey of small businesses described by Peacock found that smaller employers find costs to be a significant barrier to adopting flexible and remote working. Of some 5,000 small businesses, 29 per cent felt that the technology required to roll out such programmes effectively was too expensive. Organisational culture can also pose a significant challenge: according to the Demos report there is a tendency to offer flexible working reactively, rather than proactively, when designing and developing a job.[76]

The case studies in this paper appear to suggest that flexible working is often adopted reactively, for example, as a means of reducing office accommodation, as in the case of Hertfordshire County Council, or as a response to external economic considerations, as in the case of KPGM. The lack of proactivity in the implementation of flexible working practices may prevent organisations from maximising the potential benefits of this form of working and may also have an effect on the ability to use flexible working to address gender inequality in employment, as discussed below.

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72 Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report, Flexible Working, 1 February 2012, p. 4. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/february-2012/flexible-working/ [Accessed 23 April 2012].

73 See page 9.

74 See page 10.

75 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 41.

76 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 42. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

Gender Equality

In the Committee for Finance and Personnel's evidence session on flexible working, the issue of gender equality and equal opportunity in employment was raised as a possible area on which the Committee could develop its thinking about a potential inquiry into flexible working.[77]

Research from Demos suggests that flexible working has not yet been able to address many gender-based inequalities.[78] Although women are far more likely to request and take up a flexible working arrangement than men, research by the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce suggests that many women and men who work part time appear to be working below their potential; an estimated one in five of the working population. The impact of people working below their potential has implications for the economy because of lost productivity and is particularly important given the current economic downturn. It is estimated that this waste of talent costs the economy up to £23 billion.[79]

According to the Family Friendly Working Hours, there are fewer part-time jobs available in higher-level occupations, meaning that women wishing to work on a part-time basis are competing for lower-level jobs. Among women who work full time, the proportion employed in high-level occupations has risen threefold over 20 years, while for part time workers the figures have barely changed.[80]

This problem is compounded by the fact that in the UK there appears to be 'a cultural tendency to solely design and advertise jobs on the basis of hours worked', rather than a consideration of whether or how the role could accommodate flexible working arrangements, while still achieving the necessary outcomes or outputs.[81]

Recruitment firm Women Like Us has demonstrated that using flexible working proactively to design and advertise roles can allow talented female candidates to fill high-level roles, which match their potential. These roles can attract those who are 'hidden' from the traditional job market on the basis of flexible working arrangements.[82] In order to do this, the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce argues, a 'cultural shift' is necessary to move employers away from thinking of full-time, fixed hours and location as the norm.'[83]

7 Concluding Remarks

This paper has presented a range of case studies highlighting the potential benefits and challenges of adopting and implementing flexible working arrangements. It has covered a range of sectors and job-types to indicate the wide variety of flexible working practices that have been adopted in both the private and public sectors.

The Committee may be particularly interested in the implementation of flexible working in local councils. Flexible working practices have been implemented successfully, and have led

77 Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report, Flexible Working, 1 February 2012, p. 8. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/february-2012/flexible-working/ [Accessed 23 April 2012].

78 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 76. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

79 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 20. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

80 Ibid.

81 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 24. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

82 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 29. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

83 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 24. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

to reductions in office accommodation, improved retention and reduced recruitment costs, reduced absenteeism and reduced revenue cost, with savings being redirected into front line services.

Research suggests that the most significant barrier to flexible working is a lack of proactivity in implementation, which may prevent organisations from maximising the potential benefits of this form of working.[84] While flexible working has been adopted by many organisations in both the private and public sectors, this is often a reactive step as a means of reducing costs or in response to external economic considerations. In order to maximise the potential benefits of flexible working practices, it is necessary to look at strategic and widespread implementation.[85]

This lack of proactivity in the implementation of flexible working practices may also have an effect on the ability to use flexible working to address gender inequality in employment. The issue of gender equality was raised in the Committee for Finance and Personnel's evidence session on flexible working. However, research suggests that flexible working has not yet been able to address many gender-based inequalities because of the reluctance to consider flexible working practices in the design and advertisement of jobs.[86] This is a significant issue given that the absence of flexible working arrangements in higher-level occupations can lead to those who work on a part-time basis working below this potential. It is estimated that this waste of talent costs the economy up to £23 billion.[87]

Flexible working has been defined as working in different places, at and for different times and being able to work in different ways. The NICS has adopted a range of policies in regards to flexible working practices, part-time working, job sharing and flexible working hours, which suggests that the temporal aspect of flexible working is operating effectively within the NICS.[88] Therefore, the Committee may wish to focus its inquiry on the location/technological aspects of flexible working, for example mobile working, homeworking and remote working. The Department has suggested that there have been a number of developments in these areas which have the potential to support flexible working practices.

In its evidence session with the Committee, the Department suggested that 'an inquiry by the Committee might be very helpful…in crystallising thinking' on a policy or a formal strategy in flexible working.[89] A Departmental Official stated that:[90]

> *…a coherent central policy [on flexible working] would at least provide a framework, an encouragement, and, if you like, an à la carte menu from which business areas could choose to encourage them or at least to provide them with the tool kit to consider it.*

This may provide a starting point for the Committee's inquiry into flexible working.

84 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 42. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

85 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 42. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

86 Demos, 'Reinventing the Workplace', 2011, p. 76. http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/reinventingtheworkplace [Accessed 10 April 2012].

87 Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, 'Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Taskforce', 2009, p. 20. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/family-friendly-task-force-report.pdf [Accessed 23 March 2012].

88 See pages 9-10 above.

89 Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report, Flexible Working, 14 March 2012, p. 4. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/march-2012/flexible-working--departmental-briefing/ [Accessed 23 March 2012].

90 Ibid.

Research and Information Service
Briefing Paper

Paper 000/00 12 March 2013 NIAR 151-13

Colin Pidgeon

Flexible working: further evidence

NIAR 121-12

This Briefing Paper is to support the Committee for Finance and Personnel's inquiry into flexible working in the Northern Ireland public sector. It updates RaISe paper 95/12[1] by providing a review of recent evidence. An in-depth case study of the United States' federal agencies' telework programme is also presented.

1 RaISe (2012) 'Flexible Working' available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2012/finance_personnel/9512.pdf

Key points

- The Flexible Work Commission recently recommended that governments should shift the focus of the flexible working debate away from "family-friendly" work practices; and that the public sector has scope to "dramatically expand" the use of flexible working (section 2.1.);
- The Flexible Work Commission also argued for a role for public procurement in securing flexible working (section 2.1.);
- The United Kingdom Government has recently stated an aim for the Home Civil Service to be an "exemplar" in flexible working practices (section 2.2.);
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development data shows that in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland flexibility is "often limited to variance in working hours." (section 2.4.1.) This finding is borne out by the Department of Finance and Personnel's initial evidence to the Committee for Finance and Personnel's inquiry which lists the flexible working options available as: flexible hours or flexitime; compressed hours; part-time working which includes job sharing and term-time working options; partial retirement; and personalised hours;[2]
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development data also shows that the United Kingdom is above average in the number of males working from home. But there is a significant gender imbalance: a much lower proportion of females work from home (section 2.4.1.);
- A recent International Labour Office literature review points to a number of areas where the Committee for Finance and Personnel could usefully seek to expand the evidence base through its inquiry – in relation to the baseline data available to Department of Finance and Personnel, for example (section 2.4.2.); and,
- Case study evidence from United States federal government agencies provides an interesting example of a country-wide, strategic attempt to capture benefits from flexible working practices. It also provides a number of lessons learnt from which the Committee for Finance and Personnel can draw in shaping the course of its inquiry (section 3.2.4.).

2 DFP presentation to CFP, 1 February 2013

Introduction

For the purposes of this paper, flexible working is defined as:

> *…the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks.*[3]

The Committee for Finance and Personnel's (CFP) inquiry[4] into flexible working in the Northern Ireland public sector aims:

> *…to investigate how flexible working practices – including arrangements for how, when and where public servants undertake their work – could be implemented successfully and used strategically for maximum benefit and efficiency in the public sector in Northern Ireland.*

The inquiry Terms of Reference (ToR) state that, amongst other things, CFP will:

> *…identify lessons from international case studies on how flexible working arrangements have been implemented effectively elsewhere to achieve benefits for employers, employees and potentially for the wider economy and society, including: increased productivity; improved staff morale and commitment; reduced staff turnover and absenteeism; wider recruitment talent pools; reduced levels of economic inactivity; reduced premises costs; promotion of gender equality in employment; and environmental benefits;*

The purpose of this paper is to support the objectives of the inquiry by providing a review of recent case study and academic evidence. It is intended that this paper will assist CFP to identify further witnesses and data to help progress its investigation.

In addition, it was noted in RaISe paper 95/12 that the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) does not have a formal policy on flexible working. Having said that, there are a significant amount of flexible working arrangements available within the NICS, with regard to flexibility of hours and attendance.[5] Whilst this demonstrates there has been some consideration of flexible working at a policy level, it also suggests that the NICS is not proactively seizing the opportunities that flexible working can offer.

RaISe paper 95/12 also identified lessons for Northern Ireland from a review of the evidence.[6] These were:

- The importance of senior executives showing willingness to work flexibly;
- The importance of proactivity in implementing flexible working policies at the design and development stages of jobs; and,
- The lack of higher-level jobs that incorporate flexibility.

This paper offers examples of ways that those issues might be tackled.

The paper is structured as follows:

- A thematic framework for considering the benefits of flexible working is presented (section 1);
- Recent academic and survey evidence is highlighted in the light of the thematic framework (section 2); and,
- A detailed case study is evaluated – at federal level in the United States (section 3).

Throughout the paper a number of issues for consideration and are drawn to CFP's attention.

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3 Hill, E.J.; Grzywacz, J.G.; Allen, S.; Blanchard, V.L.; Matz-Costa, C.; Shulkin, S.; Pitt-Catsouphes, M. 2008. 'Defining and conceptualizing workplace flexibility', in Community, Work, and Family, Vol. 11, Issue 2, pp. 149-163.

4 Information on the inquiry is available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2011-2016/finance-and-personnel/inquiries/inquiry-into-flexible-working-hours/

5 http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/3.11-hours-and-attendance.pdf [Accessed 23 April 2012].

6 RaISe (2012) 'Flexible Working' available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2012/finance_personnel/9512.pdf (see section 6)

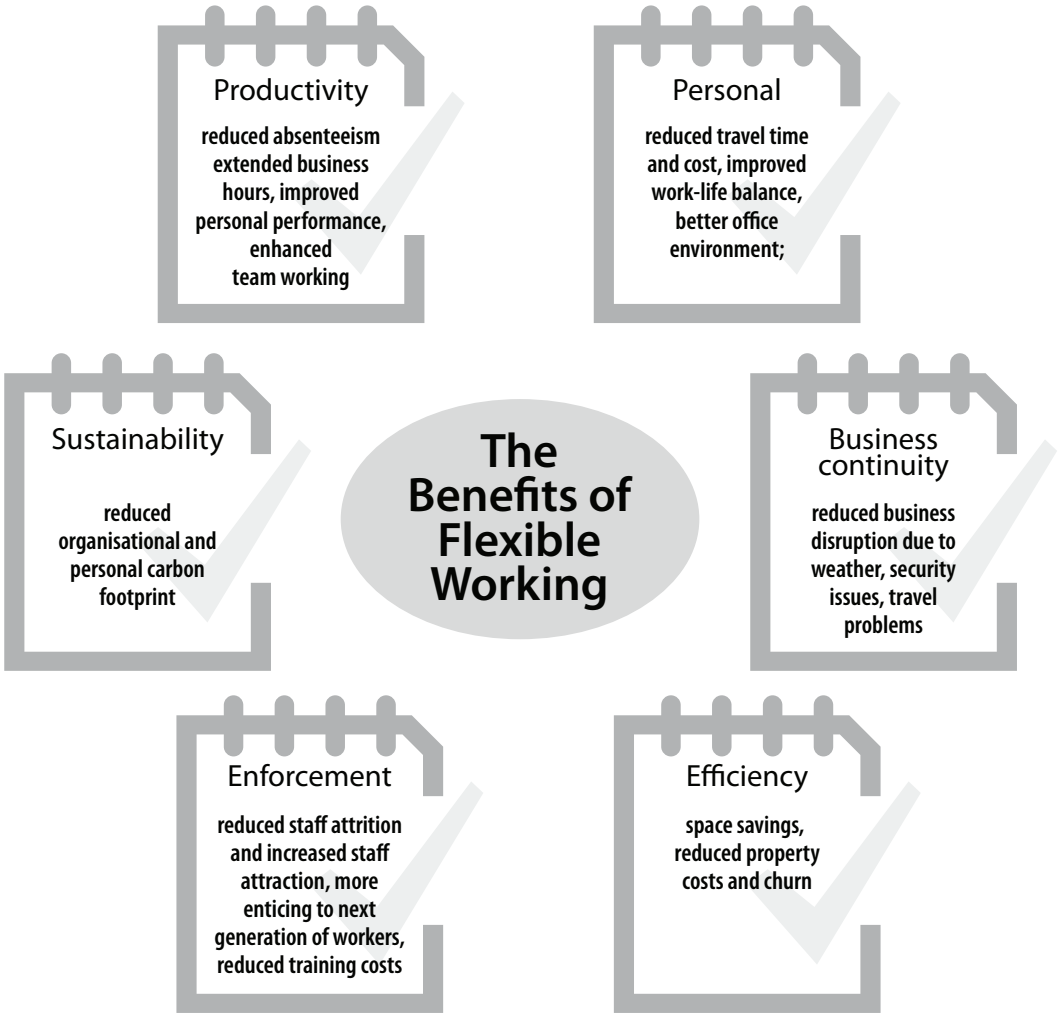
1. The benefits of flexible working: a thematic framework

In evidence to CFP, Sir George Bain stated that the benefits of flexible working were – in his view – well established:

> *It is hard for me to see the disadvantages of flexible working …[so]… it is more a question of how one should do this rather than whether one should do it.*[7]

On that basis, the ToR for CFP's inquiry focus more on the successful implementation of flexible working than the justification for such a policy. Figure 1 shows the grouping of the benefits of flexible working identified in a recent study. This grouping is used as a thematic framework for the evidence in this paper.

Figure 1: six benefits from flexible working[8]



2. A review of recent evidence

This section of the paper looks at some recently published evidence, with a view to updating the evidence provided in RaISe paper 95/12. Where appropriate, linkages to the thematic framework set out in Figure 1 are highlighted.

7 http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/february-2012/flexible-working/

8 After Oseland, N and Webber, C (2012) 'Flexible Working Benefits' available online at: http://www.workplaceunlimited.com/2012%20WPU-OP-01%20Flexible%20Working%20Benefits.pdf

2.1. The Flexible Work Commission

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) is the professional body for the recruitment industry.[9] At the beginning of 2012, the REC formed the Flexible Work Commission (FWC):

> *…with a view to bringing employers, recruiters, policy makers and labour market experts together to explore in detail the business case behind flexibility.*[10]

The FWC made a number of recommendations. These were addressed:

- to government;
- to business;
- to trade and professional associations; and,
- to recruiters.

Some of the recommendations are to the UK Government in relation to tax and welfare systems or collection of data by the Office of National Statistics. The prime recommendation likely to be of interest to CFP in relation to the inquiry is:

> *A wider understanding of flexible work should be adopted by government to help move the debate beyond the current focus on family-friendly working practices. The government should lead the way by demanding increased work flexibility through public procurement and the public sector supply chain.*[11]

This is likely to be particularly of interest to CFP because of the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) remit in relation to procurement policy. This means that DFP's influence in relation to flexible working may not be restricted only to working practices in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

In particular, the FWC argued that:

> *Much of the existing research and debate around flexible working centres on family-friendly working practices within permanent employment rather than the wider definition encompassing all forms of work flexibility. One aim of this report is to raise awareness of the sheer diversity of flexible options on offer to organisations in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector certainly, there is scope to dramatically expand the use of work flexibility, like the increasing trend of work 'projectisation' being seen in certain sectors of private industry. Far from cutting the use of temporary workers and implementing additional barriers to the use of freelancers and interim managers in the public sector, the government should be embracing these forms of work flexibility and the huge efficiency savings and increased access to in-demand skills they can bring to central and local government-funded projects.*[12]

It might be argued that CFP will be playing a part in such a process by focusing on how to implement flexibility in work practices in Northern Ireland. This FWC argument is that – in its view – there needs to be more emphasis from government on the five other benefits of flexible working beyond the 'personal' element shown in Figure 1.

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9 For more information see the REC website: http://www.rec.uk.com/aboutrec

10 REC (2012) 'Flexible Work Commission Report' available online at: http://www.rec.uk.com/_uploads/documents/rec-flexible-work-commission-report.pdf (accessed 5 March 2013) (see page 3)

11 REC (2012) 'Flexible Work Commission Report' available online at: http://www.rec.uk.com/_uploads/documents/rec-flexible-work-commission-report.pdf (accessed 5 March 2013) (see page 32)

12 REC (2012) 'Flexible Work Commission Report' available online at: http://www.rec.uk.com/_uploads/documents/rec-flexible-work-commission-report.pdf (accessed 5 March 2013) (see page 32)

It should also be noted that the FWC was formed by the REC, which appears likely to have a direct interest in influencing the public sector to increase the use of freelancers, for example, whom members of the REC may recruit.

2.2. UK Government

In November 2012 the United Kingdom (UK) Government published its response to a consultation which included questions on Flexible Parental Leave; Flexible Working; and, Working Time and Equal Pay. In particular, it looked at extending the rights of employees to request flexible working, and creating a code of practice for employers on how to deal with requests reasonably, and within a reasonable time.[13]

Of particular interest to CFP was the UK Government's commitment that:

> *…we also recognise that Government, as a large employer itself, needs to lead by example on flexible working. We are working towards achieving the Government's aspirations for the civil service to be an exemplar in flexible working practices.*[14]

The November 2012 publication focused specifically on the flexible working elements of the consultation. It stated that the UK Government would "*proceed with developing guidance on flexible working to further support line managers.*"[15]

Arguably, this might be read as indicating that work flexibility is only the responsibility of local line management; such an approach would seem to suggest the absence of a strategic civil service-wide policy. Later in the document, however, there is an indication that recruitment policy *does* support flexibility:

> *The recruitment process also supports the aspiration for the Civil Service to be an exemplar in flexible working. The current e-recruitment system (CS Jobs) for advertising Civil Service vacancies has a default setting that states: 'This job/these jobs are available for full-time, part-time or flexible working arrangements'.* ***Departments that wish to deviate from this have to complete a robust business case****.*[16] *[emphasis added]*

This shows that flexibility – at least in terms of working hours – is to be regarded as the norm, not the exception. This aligns with the 'enticement' element of the thematic framework.

Issue for consideration: CFP may wish to examine whether NICS recruitment practices support flexibility in this way.

Finally, the UK Government also provided a case study from the Department for International Development (DFID). DFID is identified as a source of best practice guidance. The case study is presented in Box 1.

13 http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/modern-workplaces (accessed 6 March 2013)

14 HM Government (2011) 'Modern Workplaces Consultation' http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/modern-workplaces (accessed 6 March 2013) (see page 44)

15 HM Government (2012) 'Modern Workplaces Consultation – Government Response on Flexible Working' https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34691/12-1269-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-working.pdf (accessed 6 March 2013) (see page 23)

16 HM Government (2012) 'Modern Workplaces Consultation – Government Response on Flexible Working' https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34691/12-1269-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-working.pdf (accessed 6 March 2013) (see page 24)

Box 1: Flexible working in DFID

'As someone who is trying to juggle home and work life myself, I know how hard it can be. I also know that with the right motivation from staff and the right kind of management it can be very productive for all concerned. In the team we try to be:

o Predictable and transparent in our working patterns. Everyone knows who is in the office when, and tries to plan work accordingly.

- Giving people a real job. Reduced hours workers have full areas of responsibility, this is far more efficient than giving them 'bits and pieces' because they cannot be at every meeting.
- Flexibility: there is an expectation that if something very important is going on then the relevant person will do their best to be there, even if it is not on a day that they usually work – this includes linking in by telephone and making this work.
- Availability: mobile phones and emails make it easy to stay in touch if something really urgent comes up out of normal working hours but allowing people to say 'I can't talk now' if it is just not possible.
- Openness: The aim is not that those working reduced hours should do a full time job in fewer days. Rather, we need to be clear from the start what is/is not reasonable to do in the time available, and to review that constantly.
- The team appreciate that during busy periods colleagues who work flexibly can help with peaks of work, which reduces pressure on everyone. Our clear work plans ensure everyone has a fair workload appropriate to the hours they work.
- My experience as a manager is that reduced hours colleagues appreciate the flexibility that they have been given, and use it well. Being organised around tasks, rather than about time, enables people to take responsibility for delivering their work in the best way. A win-win all round!'

The case study shows that flexibility can be adopted in the public sector in terms of working hours. The example aligns with the 'personal' element of the thematic framework. But it also suggests that the approach is focused on harnessing some - but not all - of the benefits identified in Figure 1.

2.3. Workplace unlimited

The request for this research sought a literature review of best practice in relation to flexible working practices. RaISe has identified a very helpful piece of work by *workplace unlimited* which draws together a large number of case studies. The thematic framework in Figure 1 is derived from this paper.[17] However, because CFP received oral evidence from one of the authors of this work on 13 March 2013, it is not repeated here.

2.4. International evidence

In the course of the research, RaISe has identified some relatively recent international evidence which is relevant to CFP's Inquiry.

2.4.1. OECD Family Database

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) maintains a family database, which contains data on family-friendly workplace practices.

A key finding of a survey in 2009 was that:

> *Austria, Denmark, Finland and Germany and Sweden, are the countries with the highest proportion of firms providing flexibility in working time arrangements. The percentage of companies providing flexi-time is also relatively large in Ireland or the United Kingdom, but in*

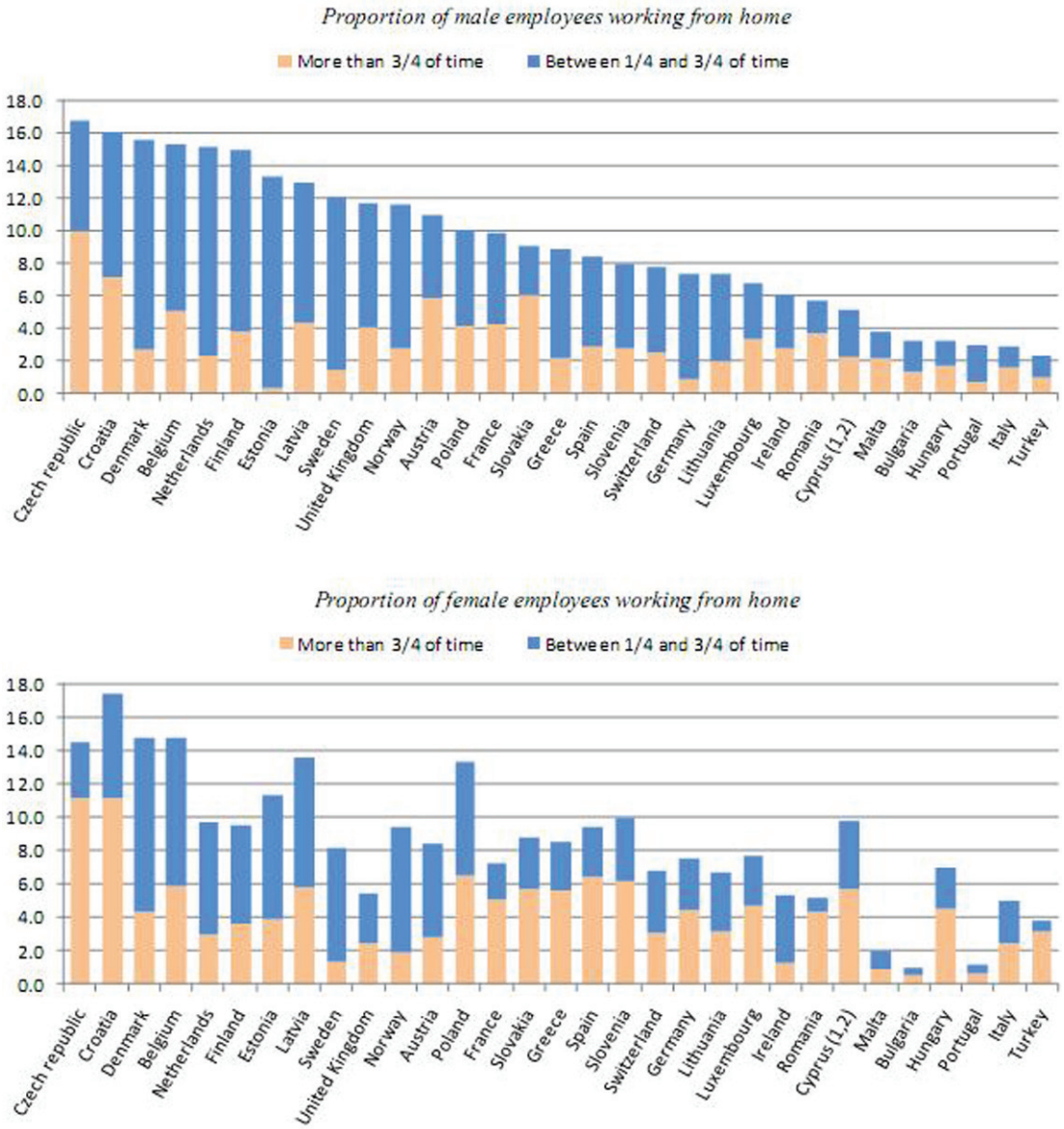
17 Oseland, N and Webber, C (2012) 'Flexible Working Benefits' available online at: http://www.workplaceunlimited.com/2012%20WPU-OP-01%20Flexible%20Working%20Benefits.pdf

these countries flexibility is often limited to variance in working hours without the possibility to convert accumulated hours in holidays.[18]

This part of the survey was in relation to hours in the workplace. The survey also collected data on working from home – a key pillar of flexible working practices. The results, broken down by gender, are shown in Figure 2.

The charts show that in the UK, working from home was twice as prevalent amongst males (just under 12%) than females (lower than 6%). The difference by gender in Ireland was much less marked. This is relevant because flexible working might be expected to help tackle gender-based inequalities; RaISe paper 95-12, however, noted that research has suggested that flexible working has not addressed this inequality.

Figure 2: employees working from home in Europe, by gender[19]



18 OECD (2010) 'LMF2.4 Family-Friendly Workplace Practices' available online at: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/43199600.pdf (accessed 6 March 2013) (see page 2)

19 OECD (2010) 'LMF2.4 Family-Friendly Workplace Practices' available online at: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/43199600.pdf (accessed 6 March 2013) (see page 5)

2.4.2. The International Labour Office

The International Labour Office (ILO) published comprehensive, detailed and extremely helpful research in 2012 called *The Effects of Working Time on Productivity and Firm Performance: a research synthesis paper.*[20] This sub-section of the paper draws out some issues in the literature surveyed by the ILO that are relevant to CFP's inquiry, and to the thematic framework presented in Figure 1.

In particular, the ILO paper seeks to identify the theoretical mechanisms that underlie the productivity-related and other reported benefits associated with workplace flexibility. This is important because the findings suggest that flexitime of itself (one of the key elements of flexibility allowed by the NICS at present) may not be an important driver of improved productivity.

Table 1 groups the findings of the ILO literature review against the benefits identified in the thematic framework. Linkages to issues that may be of interest to CFP's inquiry are identified. In addition, a number of recommendations in relation to baseline data and evidence are made. These may be of particular significance to the inquiry because of the difficulties recorded in the United States in relation to data and the measurement of benefits realisation as detailed in section 3 of this paper.

Table 1: Golden, L (2012) findings from literature review for ILO[21]

Benefit	Research finding	Relevance to CFP inquiry and recommendations
Productivity	It is more often the size of the gap between desired and actual work schedules as opposed to the number of hours per se that affects a worker's job performance (Krausz et al., 2000; Hill et al., 2006). For example, among Australian workers, the number of hours worked mattered less than the mismatch between hours and working time preferences (Drago and Warren, 2009).	DFP's 1 Feb paper significantly focuses on the ability of NICS staff to work flexible, part-time, term-time or compressed hours. CFP may wish to establish if NICS policy takes account of the relationship between working-time preferences and workers' performance.
Productivity	Time-based conflicts are generally thought to decrease overall work productivity (Netemeyer et al., 2005). Thus, the adverse symptoms generated by longer working hours tend to be exacerbated by a worker's lack of control over the volume and scheduling of working hours (Maume and Bellas, 2001; Spurgeon, 2003; Berg et al., 2004; Golden and Wiens-Tuers, 2006).	CFP may wish to establish if DFP has evidence on the level of time-based conflicts within the NICS and what measures might be taken to lessen them.
Productivity	When workers report having greater flexibility in the workplace, particularly regarding the timing of their work, this generally tends to be associated with less self-reported stress and strain, and better physical health (Grzywacz et al., 2007; Butler et al., 2009).	CFP may wish to establish whether DFP currently has evidence on NICS staff absences that are related time-based conflicts or working-time preferences.

20 Golden, L (2012) 'The Effects of Working Time on Productivity and Firm Performance' available online at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_protect/—protrav/—travail/documents/publication/wcms_187307.pdf (accessed 11 March 2013)

21 Golden, L (2012) 'The Effects of Working Time on Productivity and Firm Performance' available online at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_protect/—protrav/—travail/documents/publication/wcms_187307.pdf (accessed 11 March 2013)

Benefit	Research finding	Relevance to CFP inquiry and recommendations
Productivity	In perhaps the most precise estimate to date, an empirical analysis of Fortune 500 companies showed that productivity firm-wide was boosted by anywhere from 1 to 3 per cent by an increase in the family-friendliness index (Clifton and Shepard, 2004). This reinforces evidence for European Union organizations of statistically significant correlations between certain work/family practices and organizational performance measures (Stavrou, 2005).	CFP may wish to establish whether DFP currently has evidence on NICS staff productivity to inform understanding of the impact of current NICS practices so that any change may be monitored.
Productivity	Even slightly higher performance suggests flexible work practices are at least not detrimental to productivity. This supports other research demonstrating that flexible work schedules help employees better coordinate their daily work and life responsibilities and boost their on-the-job performance (White et al., 2003; Berg et al., 2004; MacDermid and Tang, 2009), thus increasing average labour productivity along the "intensive margin". Similarly, flexible schedules may lead to greater efforts being made along the "extensive margin", leading workers to work longer hours, reduce unscheduled absences or breaks, curb tardiness and limit the use of sick time (Drago and Hyatt, 2003; Altman and Golden, 2004; Berg et al., 2004; Holzer, 2005; Drago et al., 2009; Kelliher and Andersen, 2010).	CFP may wish to establish whether DFP currently has evidence on NICS staff productivity to inform understanding of the impact of current NICS practices so that any change may be monitored.
Productivity / Personal	Rigid daily work schedules may be a contributing factor that is independent of the length of working hours, in that they have indirect effects on worker productivity via health, injury, and fatigue (Ng and Feldman, 2008). By their nature, flexible working hours may minimize the interference of family obligations with work productivity (Cousins and Tang, 2004).	DFP's 1 Feb paper states that the NICS regards itself as an employer that recognises the importance of having terms and conditions that support staff to balance their work commitments. CFP may wish to establish if DFP has evidence on the relationship between NICS staff satisfaction and work-life balance.
Personal	Among those who are not permitted to adapt their working hours to their preferred schedules, 45 per cent feel overworked (Galinsky et al., 2001). Lack of control over the scheduling of working hours may reinforce, compound or exacerbate the effects of long hours on workers (Fenwick and Tausig, 2001; Berg et al., 2004). Greater variation in workers' hours tends to reduce their well-being when the variation does not reflect their choice (Heisz and LaRochelle-Côté, 2006). The unpredictability of working hours (Askenazy, 2004), in particular for those with lower incomes (Lambert, 2000), can have a corrosive effect on worker job satisfaction levels. Reduced variability of hours has almost as much influence as higher flexibility on work/life satisfaction (Costa et al., 2006)	DFP's 1 Feb paper highlights the flexibilities available to NICS staff but does not specifically provide information on staff control over variations in their work schedules. CFP may wish to establish if DFP has evidence on whether NICS staff have an appropriate degree of control over their working schedules.

Benefit	Research finding	Relevance to CFP inquiry and recommendations
Personal	In France, "flexibility" that is considered to be wholly employer-centred is associated with increased mental strain on workers, largely because it gives them the feeling they are under time pressure and unable to do their job properly (Askenazy and Caroli, 2010). Interestingly, variable scheduling over days of work provokes more strain than variable scheduling of hours over the course of the day.	CFP may wish to consider whether the current NICS flexible working arrangements are employer- or employee-centred.
Productivity /Personal	The importance attached by workers to flexible work options is not too surprising, given that time-based conflict has been known to result in many negative job-related outcomes, such as lateness and absenteeism (Hammer et al., 2003). A comprehensive review of over 150 peer-reviewed studies from a number of disciplines supports this (Kelly et al., 2008). In a rare investigation using longitudinal data, the positive effects of human resource practices designed to promote better work/family balance actually produced sustained reductions in absenteeism, more than any sustained improvements in productivity or financial performance (Giardini and Kabst, 2008).	CFP may wish to consider the potential impact of changes in practice on sickness absence rates in the NICS.
Business continuity	Generally, worker and also managerial capacities to withstand intensive and uncertain working conditions are buttressed by greater flexibility in the nature of the work (MacEachen et al., 2007).	CFP may wish to ask witnesses for evidence whether the current NICS arrangements could further enhance public sector resilience in Northern Ireland. For example, DFP has conducted an assessment of the recent disruption to public service delivery as a consequence of severe weather events – such as the snow and flooding in 2012.*
Efficiency/ Sustain-ability	In a sample of city government employees, productivity gains [from compressed workweeks] were sustained and employers reaped other savings, such as lower energy costs (Facer and Wadsworth, 2010)	CFP may wish to establish whether DFP can provide baseline data on energy usage across the public estate to allow patterns following policy changes to be tracked.
Enticement	The literature suggests that organizations can derive two types of benefits from flexible work schedules. The first is the aforementioned extra effort, motivation, commitment, engagement, job satisfaction and subsequent productivity increase. The second main employer benefit is the savings obtained from an enhanced ability to attract and retain such a motivated work force.	CFP, may wish to seek evidence from DFP about the issue of recruitment, retention and training costs in the NICS. Is there a difficulty with 'hard-to-fill vacancies, for example, which might be lessened by adopting greater workplace flexibility.

Benefit	Research finding	Relevance to CFP inquiry and recommendations
Enticement	A recent, in-depth case study investigated the turnover effects of an organizational innovation (ROWE—Results Only Work Environment) aimed at moving away from standard time practices to focus on results rather than time spent at work (Moen et al., 2011).	CFP may wish to explore with witnesses the performance-management/retention implications of moving to output-based rather than hours-based work.
Enticement	In US case studies, unmet needs for workplace flexibility were found to be a prominent driver of turnover. The firm Deloitte calculated that it had saved over US$ 41 million in one year by providing more flexible work arrangements for professionals who otherwise were destined to leave the company (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2011).	CFP may wish to seek evidence from DFP about the issue of recruitment, retention and training costs in the NICS. Is there a difficulty with 'hard-to-fill vacancies, for example, which might be lessened by adopting greater workplace flexibility.

* DFP letter to CFP, 6 March 2013 (ref CFP207/11-15)

3. Case study: the United States Federal Government

On 9 December 2010, President Obama signed the *Telework Enhancement Act of 2010* (the Act).[22] This section of the paper explores the requirements of the Act, and examines the evaluation published in 2012 of its impact.

3.1. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010

The Act was passed to require the head of each executive agency in the US federal government to "*establish and implement a policy under which employees shall be authorized to telework*."[23] The legislation defined teleworking as:

> *…a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.*[24]

Subject to some limitations, the Act gave the head of each agency 180 days to:

- establish a policy under which eligible employees of the agency may be authorized to telework;
- determine the eligibility for all employees of the agency to participate in telework; and,
- notify all employees of the agency of their eligibility to telework.[25]

Amongst other provisions, the Act required the head of each agency to provide telework training to workers and managers; ensure that teleworking did not impact on operations; and, treat teleworkers and non-teleworkers equally.

22 Legislation available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 15 February 2013) (cited text from preamble)

23 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 15 February 2013) (cited text from preamble)

24 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 15 February 2013) (see s.6501)

25 Legislation available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 15 February 2013) (s.6502)

3.1.1. Eligibility for teleworking

The Act set criteria for determining whether an employee is eligible to telework:

An employee is eligible to participate in telework if all of the following parameters are true:

- The employee has not been officially disciplined for being absent without permission for more than five days in any calendar year;
- The employee has not been officially disciplined for violations of subpart G of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch for viewing, downloading, or exchanging pornography, including child pornography, on a Federal Government computer or while performing official Federal Government duties;
- Teleworking does not diminish the employee's performance or agency operations;
- For employees participating in the telework program, participation and performance complies with the requirements and expectations of his or her telework agreement;
- The employee's official duties do not require on a FULL daily basis (ALL DAY, every work day): direct handling of secure materials determined to be inappropriate for telework by the agency head; or on-site activity that cannot be handled remotely or at an alternate worksite; and,
- The employee and/or the employee's position are not disqualified based on additional criteria established by the organization.[26]

3.1.2. Implementing the Act

The Act additionally required the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to provide guidance to agencies and assist with the establishment of qualitative and quantitative measures of outputs. The guidance also specified security considerations for the protection of data and plans for the continuity of operations in unforeseen circumstances or emergencies.

3.1.3. Reporting on the implementation of the Act

Finally, the Act required the OPM to report annually on the teleworking programme. The report has to include data on the number of employees teleworking; the number of days they telework; and explanations for any changes in levels of teleworking or goals for increasing participation in future.[27]

Part of the reporting duty placed on the OPM is to assess the impact of flexible working on federal agencies' goals in relation to:

- emergency readiness;
- energy use;
- recruitment and retention;
- productivity; and,
- employee attitudes and opinions regarding telework.[28]

26 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 26)

27 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 15 February 2013) (see s.6506)

28 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see s.6506 (b)(2)(F)

These reporting duties align closely with the thematic framework identified in Figure 1. This suggests the US federal administration introduced the Act with a view to realising the benefits identified in that framework.

The findings of the first report by the US OPM under the Act are considered in the following sub-section.

3.2. The 2012 report by the US Office of Personnel Management

The OPM published its first report under the Act in July 2012. It is a detailed piece of work that analyses the responses made by US federal agencies to a questionnaire in 2011. The report also analyses the evidence from focus groups and draws on relevant data from Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys.

This part of the paper presents some of the headline findings in the report and highlights links with other evidence and the thematic framework. The purpose is to indicate where Northern Ireland might be able to draw useful lessons from the US experience.

3.2.1. Reliability of the data

At the outset, it is important to note that the OPM identifies some difficulties with the data-collection process. For example, it is noted in the report that:

> *Agency data are quite informative and provide a detailed picture of current Federal telework activities. Program descriptions are particularly valuable and will provide opportunities for interagency sharing of best practices. However, caution should be exercised when participation and frequency findings are reviewed. In the absence of a standardized Government-wide data collection system or trained data collection staff in all agencies, the final combined telework participation estimates are unlikely to be reliable.*[29]

This means that there is a risk of some over- or under-reporting in the data presented in the following sections. For the purposes of CFP however, RalSe believes the data are sufficiently reliable for drawing some tentative conclusions about the lessons to be learned from the process of strategically mandating telework across a range of agencies. These possible lessons are highlighted in section 3.2.4 of this paper.

3.2.2. Participation in teleworking in the US federal administration

Table 2 shows the headline numbers of employees in federal agencies reported as teleworking in September and October 2011 – a few months after the deadline for meeting the requirements of the Act.

Table 2: headline findings of the OPM report[30]

	Total Number of Employees	Employees Deemed Eligible to Telework	Employees with Telework Agreements	Employees Teleworking in Sept 2011
Number of employees in each category	**2,165,390**	**684,589**	**144,851**	**168,558**
Number of agency respondents	86	82	82	87

29 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 7)

30 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 8)

Figure 3 shows the proportion of total employees deemed eligible for teleworking (31.6% of 2,165,390) under the Act.

Figure 3: percentage of federal employees eligible for teleworking

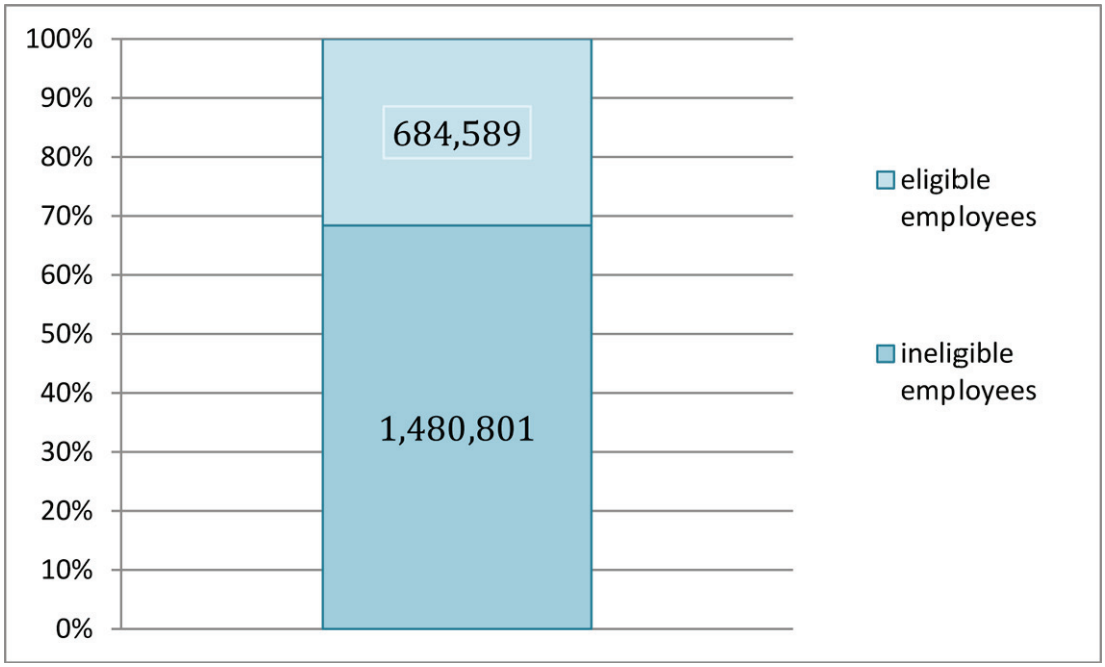
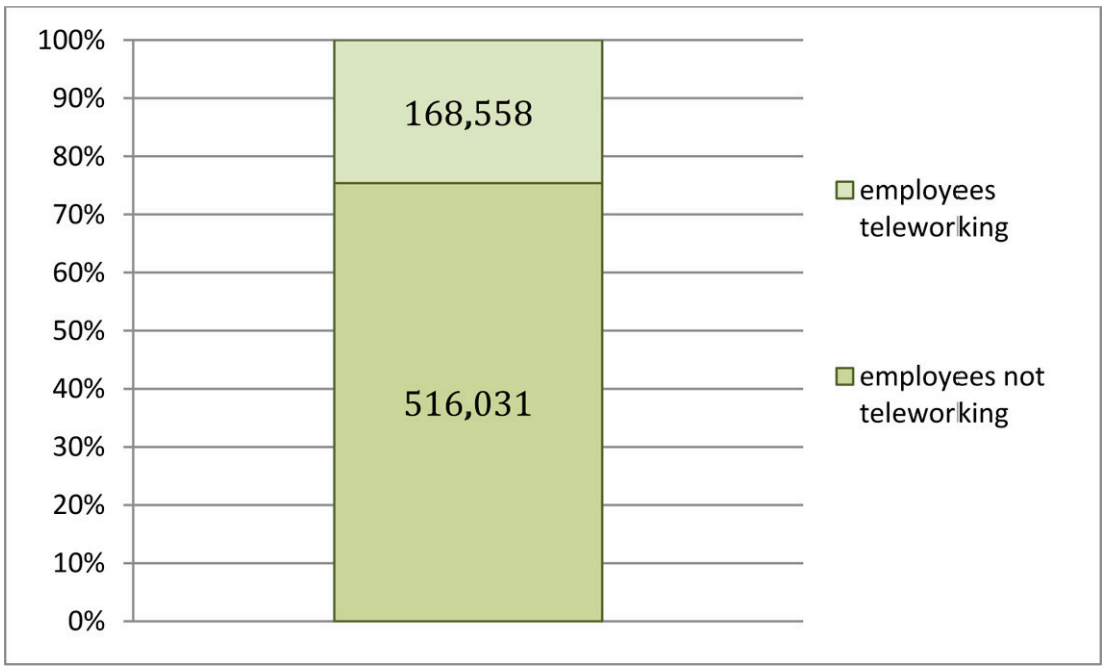


Figure 4 shows the proportion of employees deemed eligible for teleworking who were actually teleworking in September 2011 (24.6% of 684,589).

Figure 4: percentage of eligible employees actually teleworking in September 2011



In September 2011, **7.8% of the total workforce of US federal agencies was teleworking to some degree.**

3.2.3. Frequency of teleworking

Table 3 shows a breakdown of those employees who were teleworking in September 2011, by how often they telework. Note that due to a number of issues with how data was recorded or

reported by US federal agencies the total number of workers in Table 3 is lower than reported as teleworking in Table 2 above.

Table 3: frequency of participation in teleworking

	3 or more days teleworking per week	2 days teleworking per week	1 day teleworking per week	Once a month per week
Number of employees in each frequency category	46,023	47,675	41,727	5,637
Percentage of all reported teleworking employees by frequency category	27%	28%	25%	3%
Number of agency respondents to item	84	85	81	39

Figure 5 illustrates the frequency data in chart form.

Figure 5: frequency of participation in teleworking

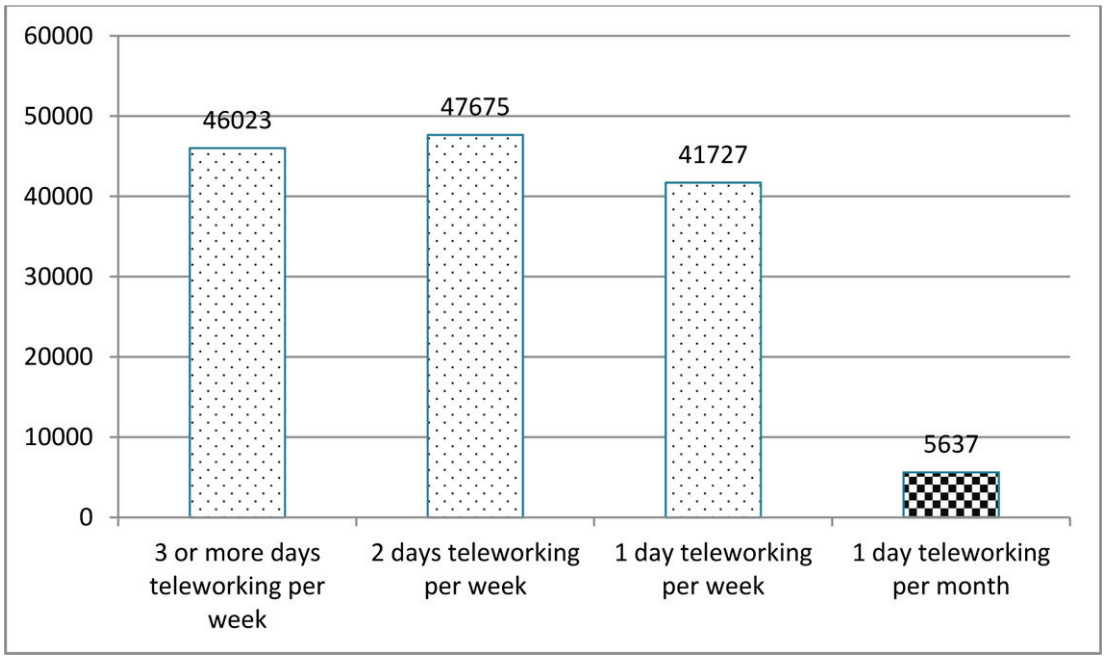


Figure 5 clearly illustrates that **the overwhelming majority of those employees who are recorded as teleworking do so for at least one day per week (96% - shown in dotted columns).** Only 4% (shown in checks) teleworked much less frequently.

3.2.4. What learning might be drawn for Northern Ireland from the OPM report?

This subsection highlights some possible lessons for the public sector in Northern Ireland based on the findings of the OPM report.

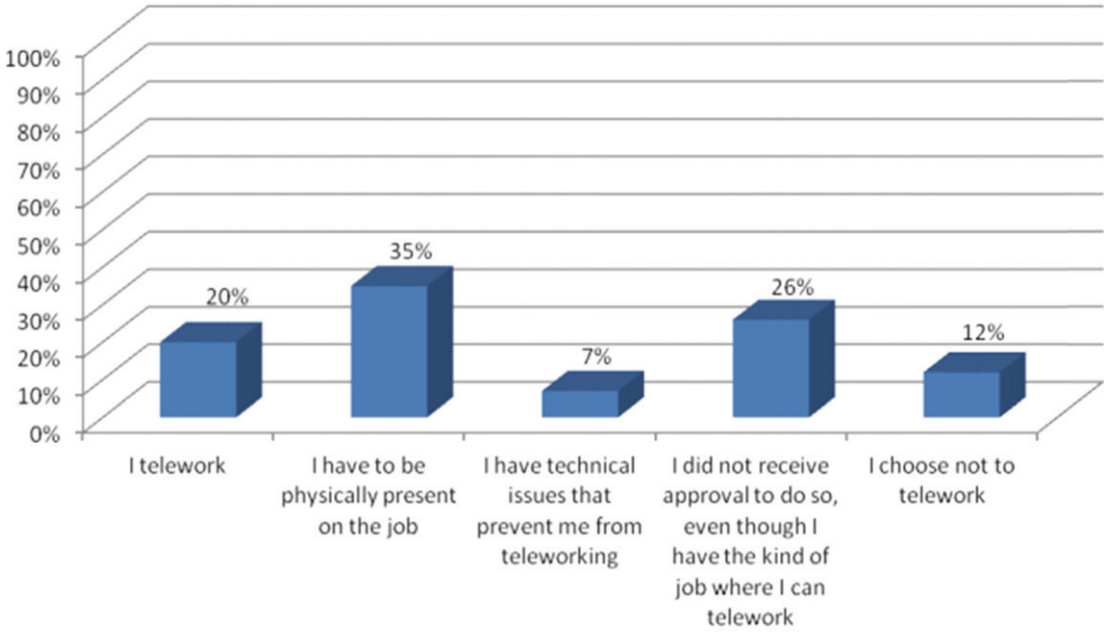
Suitability of type of work to flexibility

By their nature, not all posts are suitable for a teleworking arrangement. Figure 3 above shows that **68.4% of the US federal workforce was deemed ineligible for telework.**

The OPM report provides data on reasons for non-participation in telework (shown here as Figure 6). **Note: these data are extracted from a survey in 2011 prior to the implementation**

of the Act. The data therefore may serve as a baseline, but do not reveal anything about workplace patterns post-implementation of the Act.

Figure 6: reasons for non-participation in telework[31]



The following observations may be made about Figure 6:

- just over a third (35%) of federal employees indicated that a physical presence was required for their job;
- approximately a quarter (26%) of federal employees indicated that they had not received telework approval despite the suitability of their role. (Note: this was an employee survey, so there may be some degree of misalignment between jobholders' and managers' beliefs about the types of jobs that are suitable for telework);
- marginally over a tenth (12%) of federal employees indicated that they had chosen not to telework.

These observations point to some considerations for CFP's inquiry. For example, how would the NICS manage the impact on employee relations between staff whose jobs were suitable for flexible arrangements and those whose jobs were not? Further, it seems possible that employee relations might be damaged by the perception that certain roles are suitable for flexible arrangements but management has deemed them unsuitable.

These data may have implications that cut across a number of the benefits outlined in the thematic framework in Figure 1. For example, under 'productivity', there are claims for the benefits of enhanced team-working that might potentially be undermined by these issues of employee relations.

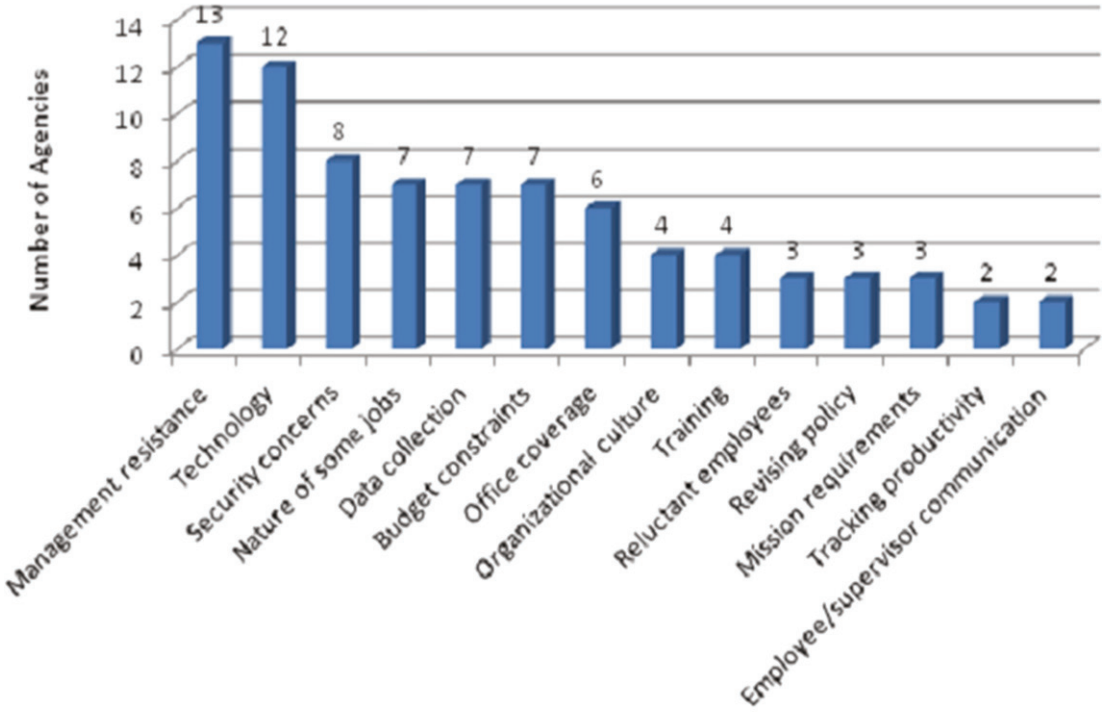
Issue for consideration: CFP may wish to explore with witnesses the extent to which eligibility for flexible working impacts on employee relations, and the scope for managing those impacts.

31 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 40)

Barriers to telework

The OPM report identifies a number of barriers to the implementation of teleworking that were cited by federal agencies. These are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Barriers to telework implementation in US federal agencies[32]



The OPM report acknowledges that the uncovering of barriers is "typical of change interventions."[33]

The most frequently reported barriers were 'management resistance' and 'technology'. CFP has received evidence from DFP about the scope of *Unified Communications* technology that is available. Examples include: Instant Messaging; Telepresence; Audio Conferencing; Video calling; Online meetings; and, Application integration.[34]

This suggests that – at least in theory – the 'technology' barrier is not insurmountable. It is likely that appropriate use of technology is at least part of the means of delivering the 'efficiency' benefit identified in the thematic framework in Figure 1.

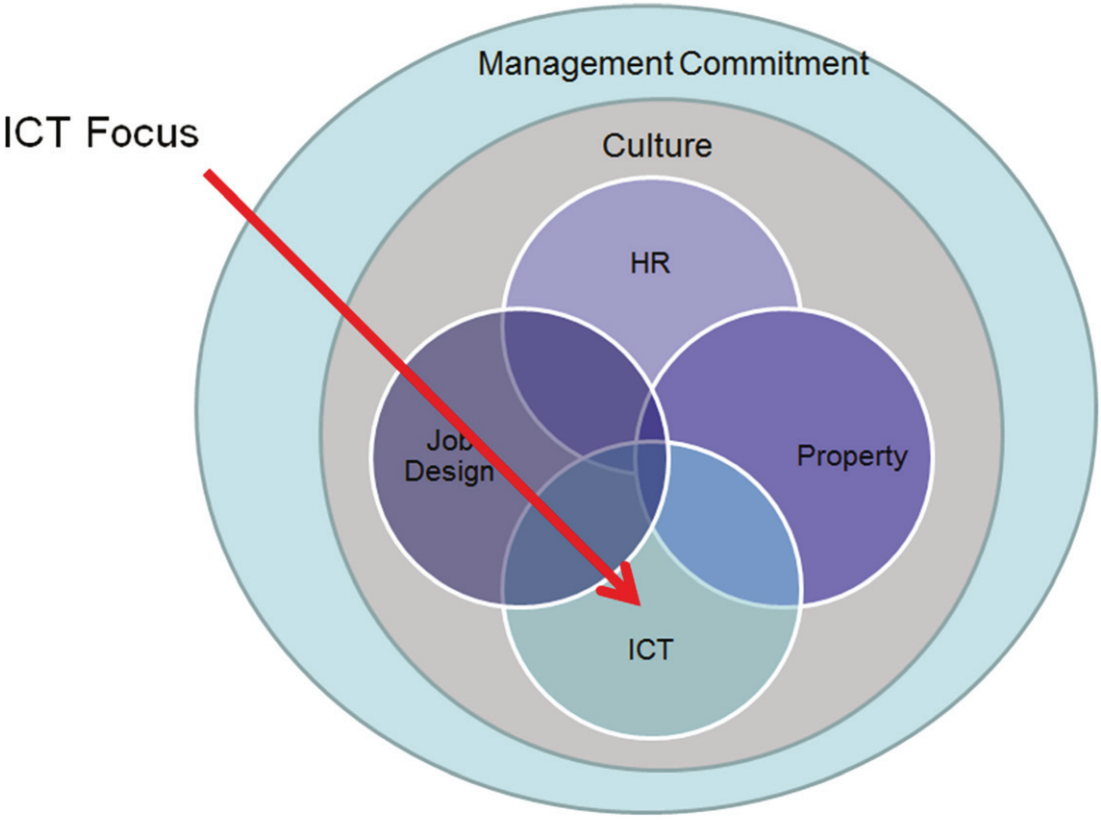
Figure 8 from the DFP briefing also suggests that the Department is conscious of the 'management resistance' barrier, by acknowledging that 'management commitment' overlays (or perhaps underpins) a number of other factors, such as culture or ICT.

32 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 38)

33 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 38)

34 DFP presentation to CFP, 13 February 2013

Figure 8: representation of elements of 'agile working'[35]



Issue for consideration: CFP may wish to explore with witnesses how the barriers identified in the OPM survey might be overcome.

Establishing baselines and measuring impact

The OPM report highlights the importance of agencies collecting and reporting reliable data; data is required for effective programme development as this relies on: "*continuous evaluation and feedback… agency practices and data collection methods vary too widely to provide reliable data.*"[36]

An example is given by the OPM in a section of the report about 'avoided real estate costs'. The report states:

> *Several agencies described eliminating some office space as a result of telework, but few were able to translate this into dollar figures or square-footage of space saved. Several had established working groups to study real estate cost measurement.*[37]

Further examples of inadequate data highlighted by the OPM included data for reduced energy costs and reduced commuter miles. In other aspects, however, more robust data was

35 DFP presentation to CFP, 13 February 2013

36 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 62)

37 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 59)

available – such as in relation to employee retention – but measurement was not systematic. The report states:

> *Agencies reported using exit surveys, internal satisfaction surveys, internal focus groups, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, and anecdotal evidence to measure retention.*[38]

That federal agencies were not able to provide figures for costs or space saved suggests that baselines had not been properly established prior to implementation of the requirements of the Act. This is a familiar issue for CFP, because it echoes issues highlighted by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) in its report *Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme* in Northern Ireland.

For example, the NIAO found that:

> *It is important that all planned efficiency savings are capable of being measured. Although there is extensive guidance on best practice in measuring efficiency savings this has not been followed in most of the projects the Audit Office examined.*
>
> *14 of the 42 projects reviewed did not have the **basic financial and performance information** necessary for the Audit Office to make an informed judgment on whether efficiency savings had been achieved.*[39] *[emphasis added]*

None of the benefits outlined in the thematic framework in Figure 1 are capable of being measured unless adequate baseline data are available, and if anticipated benefits are not tracked. In the absence of data, the public sector in Northern Ireland would be unable to judge whether any flexible working policy had been effective or efficient. **In other words, the mistakes of the past might be repeated.**

Issue for consideration: CFP may wish to explore the issues of baseline information and benefits realisation with witnesses.

Effectiveness of flexible working programmes

Building on the issues about data collection to inform understanding about the impact of the Act, the OPM report also makes what appears to be an important observation at the outset:

> *Some outcomes can be expected to occur rather quickly with the implementation of a program (e.g., telework participation). Other outcomes, particularly broad community changes (e.g., reduced traffic congestion and pollution), are only recognized once a critical mass in participation and telework frequency has been achieved. Early adopters of innovative interventions like telework usually participate in numbers too small to achieve large-scale community or environmental outcomes.*[40]

This observation has implications for the benefits set out in the thematic framework in Figure 1. Whilst some benefits may be realised fairly quickly, others (such as those relating to sustainability, for example) may take considerably longer.

In turn, this suggests that if there is to be a roll-out of flexible working in the Northern Ireland public sector, a realistic assessment of benefits and their realisation is likely to be essential.

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38 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 57)

39 http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/index/publications/report_archive_home/2012/review_of_the_efficiency_delivery_programme.htm (accessed 11 March 2013)

40 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 18)

The OPM's 'logic model' (which underpins the policy behind the Act) is provided for reference as Appendix 1.

Issue for consideration: CFP may wish to explore the timeframes for the realisation of potential benefits from flexible working with witnesses.

Performance management

The thematic framework in Figure 1 identifies 'improved personal performance' under the heading of 'productivity'. The OPM report notes that:

> *Increasingly, the success of telework programs is recognized as being highly dependent upon appropriate performance management practices.*[41]

Performance management was also highlighted as an issue in Table 1 above.

Issues for consideration: CFP may wish to explore with witnesses the forms of performance management that underpin effective flexible working practices. Secondly, CFP may wish to engage with DFP on the appropriateness of the current NICS performance management system for supporting flexible working.

The OPM's own identification of lessons learned is presented in the next sub-section.

3.2.5. Lessons learned by the OPM[42]

The OPM report presents the following observations based upon findings from focus groups in relation to the implementation of the Act – see Box 2.

Box 2: OPM's lessons learned

Gain Leadership Buy-In

Several participants agreed that gaining buy-in from leadership members at all levels is key to a successful telework program. Comments indicate that gaining leadership support can truly be the catalyst for effective implementation, and buy-in occurs when managers try it for themselves.

Involve Critical Functions

The importance of partnering early and often with union representatives and IT experts within agencies was mentioned as particularly instrumental to the success of telework programs. Involvement of all critical parties and functions will limit the number of unexpected surprises and is important for ensuring the effective collaborations necessary for long-term success.

41 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 46)

42 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 63-64)

Institute Reliable Data Collection

Participants also commented that instituting a reliable data collection or tracking procedure is critical to demonstrating telework success and as a tool for long-range planning and managing for program effectiveness. One participant commented, "As a whole, we need to have a better system for tracking telework. Providing data for the OPM Data Call is difficult for many who have to manually track telework participation. Government-wide, we need to make it easier to collect and report data." Other participants noted that online application systems need to be comprehensive before going live to ensure seamless application. This is another area where partnership with IT and security experts is crucial.

Standardize Eligibility and Participation Criteria

Participants described the importance of standardizing eligibility decisions and notification. Some agencies notify their employees via mass email and/or during new employee orientation, while others prefer managers to send individual emails. Participants agreed that part of increasing trust in the telework process is to make sure that communications and notifications are handled fairly and according to established standards across an agency.

Measure Performance Accurately

Agencies reported facing challenges of performance management in advancing their telework program. Participants stressed the need for performance management systems to measure the outcome of completed tasks and goals. They agreed "managers want to know exactly what teleworkers are working on when out of the office". It is critical for performance management systems to directly link to agency-wide performance plans.

Be Patient

Lastly, several participants emphasized the importance of remaining aware that change takes time and progress with telework requires patience. One participant suggested that one way to address this is to make sure that telework goals and objectives are clear and shared across an agency and that information about progress toward those goals is also shared on an ongoing basis.

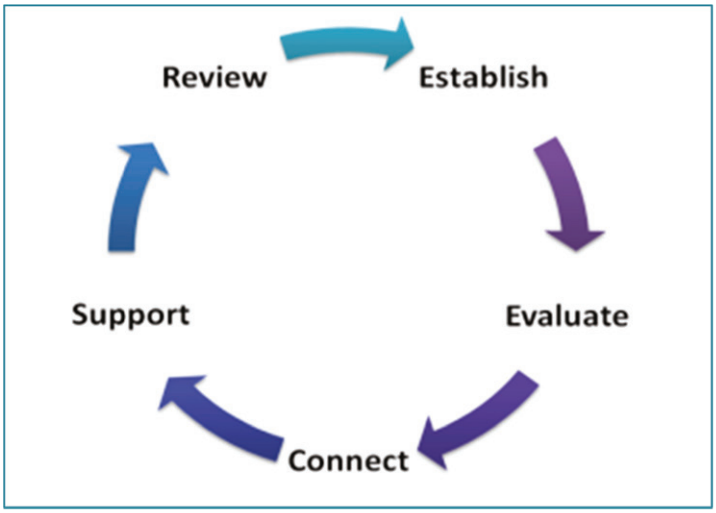
4. Concluding remarks

The research presented in this paper demonstrates again the possibilities that flexible working has to offer both employees and employers.

The US case study also raises some cautionary notes about how to go about a state-wide programme. A number of the lessons learned echo the findings of RaISe paper 95/12, such as the need for leadership buy in; others, such as the need for accurate measurement and data collection, echo the findings of reports by the NIAO in Northern Ireland.

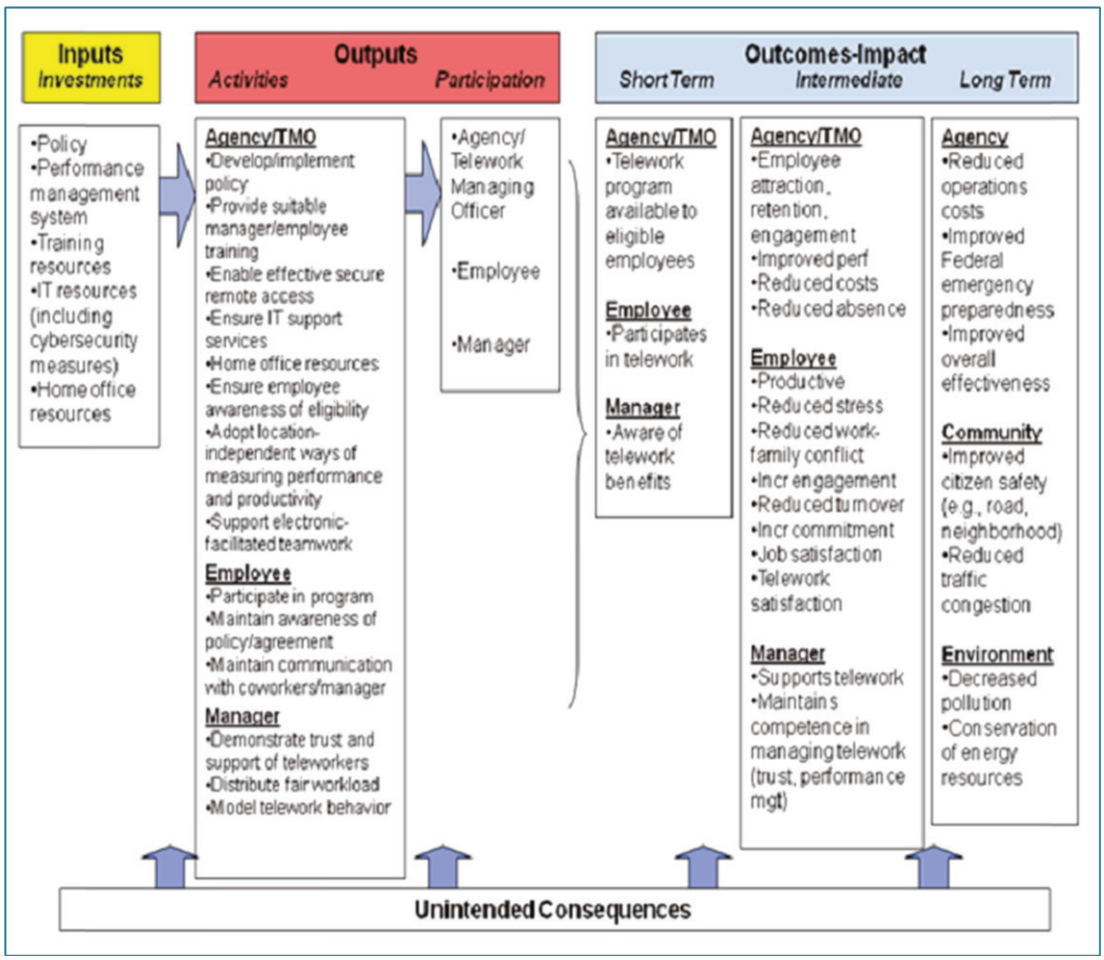
This paper has raised a number of issues for CFP's consideration, and has made a number of recommendations for data or evidence that would usefully support the current inquiry.

Appendix 1: the OPM federal telework logic model[43]



- Establish: Goals for advancing telework are outlined in the Act and established by individual agencies. W/L/W supports efforts to establish telework goals through workshops, feedback on research results and individual consultations.
- Evaluate: W/L/W conducts ongoing data collection through various research programs to assess agency telework program implementation, processes and outcomes, and assist agencies in similar data collection. Data are collected through custom instruments (e.g., periodic Data Call, focus groups, survey of Federal employees), and other existing sources (e.g., agency surveys, FEVS, payroll and Human Resources data).
- Connect: We share results and useful lessons learned through evaluation with the Federal telework community, including agencies and other stakeholders.
- Support: W/L/W helps agencies develop and implement programs through training (e.g., in telework, action planning, evaluation) and policy guidance. We provide consultative services as needed for building robust individual agency programs (e.g., program implementation, policy analysis).
- Review: We analyze research findings, evaluation findings and lessons learned on a continuing basis to assess Governmentwide progress in advancing telework.

43 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 18)


Inputs
Investments
Outputs
Activities
Participation
Outcomes-Impact
Short Term
Intermediate
Long Term
•Policy
•Performance management system
•Training resources
•IT resources (including cybersecurity measures)
•Home office resources
Agency/TMO
•Develop/implement policy
•Provide suitable manager/employee training
•Enable effective secure remote access
•Ensure IT support services
•Home office resources
•Ensure employee awareness of eligibility
•Adopt location-independent ways of measuring performance and productivity
•Support electronic-facilitated teamwork
Employee
•Participate in program
•Maintain awareness of policy/agreement
•Maintain communication with coworkers/manager
Manager
•Demonstrate trust and support of teleworkers
•Distribute fair workload
•Model telework behavior
•Agency/ Telework Managing Officer
•Employee
•Manager
Agency/TMO
•Telework program available to eligible employees
Employee
•Participates in telework
Manager
•Aware of telework benefits
Agency/TMO
•Employee attraction, retention, engagement
•Improved perf
•Reduced costs
•Reduced absence
Employee
•Productive
•Reduced stress
•Reduced work-family conflict
•Incr engagement
•Reduced turnover
•Incr commitment
•Job satisfaction
•Telework satisfaction
Manager
•Supports telework
•Maintains competence in managing telework (trust, performance mgt)
Agency
•Reduced operations costs
•Improved Federal emergency preparedness
•Improved overall effectiveness
Community
•Improved citizen safety (e.g., road, neighborhood)
•Reduced traffic congestion
Environment
•Decreased pollution
•Conservation of energy resources
Unintended Consequences

Research and Information Service
Briefing Paper

Paper 000/00 30 September 2013 NIAR 341-13

Colin Pidgeon

Telework in the US Federal Government

This briefing paper provides further information and evidence to the Committee for Finance and Personnel in relation to the implementation in the United States of the *Telework Enhancement Act 2010.*

Key points

- Whilst American federal agencies are required to have a teleworking policy in place, they retain discretion to determine their own criteria for eligibility and participation (to the extent that they must comply with the statutory requirements) in accordance with business needs (section 1.2.);
- The federal Office of Personnel Management has provided guidance, consultancy support and training to support implementation of the *Telework Enhancement Act 2010* (sections 1 and 2);
- The Office of Personnel Management's reporting has been criticised by the Government Accountability Office. It is likely to be 2015 at the earliest before the Office of Personnel Management can report on implementation in a way that will fully meet its statutory obligations (section 3.1.);
- The Government Accountability Office found that both large and small federal agencies have faced similar barriers (such as 'management resistance') to implementation of the *Telework Enhancement Act 2010* (section 3.2.); and,
- Five federal agencies have responded to a RaISe request for information and have provided helpful initial information to support Committee for Finance and Personnel's Inquiry.

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Introduction

This Briefing Paper follows RaISe paper NIAR151-13 *Flexible working: further evidence.*[1] The Committee for Finance and Personnel (CFP) requested additional evidence in relation to the implementation of *The Telework Enhancement Act 2010* (the Act) in US federal agencies. In particular, CFP requested further detail on take-up of teleworking within federal agencies. In addition, CFP requested more detail on which of those federal agencies which may have equivalents within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). This was requested to help CFP determine whether federal agencies' experiences may be applicable to Northern Ireland.

The primary purpose of this paper is therefore to identify appropriate agencies from which CFP could directly obtain further evidence.

A secondary purpose of this paper is to present further details on the teleworking implementation process in the US. This information is presented first (in sections 1 to 3) to provide CFP with a more detailed understanding of the central support provided to federal agencies to assist their implementation of the Act.

The paper is structured as follows:

- Section 1 details of the guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to federal agencies on implementation of the Act;
- Section 2 provides information in relation to the training that the OPM has developed for employees and managers;
- Section 3 examines the evidence from a review into the OPM's reporting to Congress under the requirements of the Act;
- Section 4 presents the responses received from the federal agencies that replied to RaISe's request for information; and,
- Section 5 provides some concluding remarks.

Where appropriate, some recommendations have been drawn to CFP's attention.

1 RaISe (2013) 'Flexible working: further evidence' available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2013/finance_personnel/9413.pdf

1. OPM Guidance on telework policy

The OPM has published a *Guide to Telework in the Federal Government* which is designed to outline practical information to assist federal agencies, managers, supervisors, Telework Managing Officers, and other staff. The Act requires the OPM to:

> *…provide policy and policy guidance for telework in the areas of pay and leave, agency closure, performance management, official worksite, recruitment and retention, and accommodations for employees with disabilities;*[2]

This section of the paper draws on that guidance, to provide further clarity on some issues in relation to interpretation, and implementation, of the Act.

In addition to the publication of guidance, the OPM also operates a consultancy service. These consultants:

> *…can help agencies meet these mandates and establish effective Telework Programs. OPM Consultants partner with agency Telework program managers to address the individual and organizational performance issues necessary to create and sustain a productive and effective telework environment.*[3]

OPM also provides interactive training and workshops tailored to agency specific telework program requirements (such as training supervisors on managing remote employees) and consultants can "*evaluate agency telework policies to ensure a strong foundation for the agency program, and perform position and organizational analyses to determine telework-compatible jobs*."[4] For more on training provision, see section 3 of this paper.

1.1. Definition

The Act defines 'telework' or 'telework' as:

> *…a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.*[5]

In its guidance, the OPM provides the following supplementary explanation:

> *In practice, "telework" is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform work, during any part of regular, paid hours, at an approved alternative worksite (e.g., home, telework center). This definition of telework includes what is generally referred to as remote work but does not include any part of work done while on official travel or mobile work.*[6]

'Mobile work' (which is specifically **excluded** from the definition of telework in the Act) is defined as:

> *Work which is characterized by routine and regular travel to conduct work in customer or other worksites as opposed to a single authorized alternative worksite. Examples of mobile work include site audits, site inspections, investigations, property management, and work performed while commuting, traveling between worksites, or on Temporary Duty.*[7]

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2 S.6504(b)(1) http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf

3 http://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/telework-management/

4 http://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/telework-management/

5 s.6501(3) http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf

6 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 4)

7 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 4)

The exclusion of mobile work from the definition of telework helps to demonstrate that routine on-the-job travelling to other work sites does not constitute teleworking. This is relevant to Northern Ireland because it means that the work travel of professional and technical officers, such as architects or engineers for example, to site meetings would probably be seen as mobile work rather than telework.

1.2. Eligibility

The Act does not make teleworking an employee right. The OPM guidance makes clear that the Act requires federal agencies to establish telework programmes, but **does not give individual employees a legal right to telework.** Instead the Act intends that agencies should allow teleworking to "*the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance.*"[8]

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs also stated that:

> *The goal of this legislation is to ensure that Federal agencies more effectively integrate telework into their management plans and agency cultures.*[9]

Secondly, the OPM guidance reminds agencies that employee participation in telework is voluntary; the Act "*does not mandate telework or promote telework for its own sake.*"[10] Instead, the OPM states the intention of the Act is to promote maintenance of continuity of operations and reduce management costs, at the same time as improving employees' work-life balance. Ultimately, the guidance states that "*telework is primarily an arrangement established to facilitate the accomplishment of work.*"[11]

To this end, the guidance specifies that "*agencies retain both the discretion and the obligation to determine employee eligibility for telework subject to business-related, operational needs and the limitations described in the Act.*"[12]

This means that each of the federal agencies has discretion to make its own eligibility determinations for employees subject to operational needs. The OPM guidance states that it is the **agencies themselves** that are in the best position to define how implementation of the Act will not diminish employee performance or agency operations. On this basis, the guidance states that it would be "*impractical and inadvisable*" for OPM to suggest a government-wide standard or one-size-fits-all approach to eligibility decisions.[13]

Consequently, the OPM advises that federal agencies should specifically describe the eligibility and participation criteria in their policies.[14]

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8 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 6)

9 Congressional Research Service (2011) PL. 111-292, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010: Summary of Provisions and Possible Issues for Oversight' available online at: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41818.pdf (accessed 28 August 2013) (see page 1)

10 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 6)

11 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 6)

12 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 6)

13 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 14)

14 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 14)

1.2.1. 'Eligibility' vs 'participation'

The OPM guidance provides some additional interpretation of the 'eligibility' and 'participation' terms for the purposes of implementing the Act. This is discussed here because there is a distinction between a post being deemed 'eligible' and the individual employee being permitted to 'participate.' This may be important because it appears to mean that even though employees may hold an eligible post, their conduct and performance must still be acceptable before their employer must allow them to participate in teleworking.

The Act only specifies two relatively specific categories of employee who may not be deemed eligible:

- an employee who "has been officially disciplined for being absent without permission for more than 5 days in any calendar year"; and,
- an employee who "has been officially disciplined for violations of subpart G of the Standards of Ethical Conduct of Employees of the Executive Branch for reviewing, downloading, or exchanging pornography, including child pornography, on a Federal Government computer or while performing official Federal Government duties [Public Law 111-292, 6502(a)(2)(A)(B)]."[15]

The guidance provides advice on how the term 'officially disciplined' should be interpreted (essentially if a written note is placed on an employee's personnel file). It also provides some guidance on when an *eligible* employee may not be permitted to participate in telework. For example, the Act states that agencies' policies must provide that:

> *…an employee may not be authorized to telework if the performance of that employee does not comply with the terms of the written agreement between the agency manager and that employee.*[16]

This provision means that agencies retain the ability to withhold authorisation for telework if employees do not meet the required standards. Further, the Act requires that policies "*ensure that telework does not diminish employee performance or agency operations.*"[17] In other words, an employee whose performance when teleworking is not up to scratch may have authorisation withdrawn.

The following section sets out more detail on the requirements for agencies' teleworking policies.

1.3. Requirements of policies

The Act requires each agency to establish a telework policy under which eligible employees of the agency may be authorised to telework.[18] This requirement was not, however, a revolutionary duty for some federal agencies:

> *Section 359 of Public Law 106-346 (October 23, 2000), stated that "[e]ach executive agency shall establish a policy under which eligible employees of the agency may participate in telecommuting to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance." Therefore, the law required executive agencies to have a telework policy in place long before the passage of the Act (Public Law 111-292). However, the Act expanded upon and strengthened the Federal Government's commitment to the telework program. Accordingly,*

15 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 14)

16 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6502(b)(3))

17 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6502(b)(1))

18 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 9)

> *each agency was required to carefully review and revise its existing telework policy by June 7, 2011, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act.*[19]

The Act therefore built upon laws that had been in place for more than a decade for some agencies.

The OPM guidance makes clear that there is no requirement in the Act for agencies to submit their telework policies to OPM for review. But the Act does require agencies to "*consult with the Office of Personnel Management in developing telework policies.*"[20] The Act also requires the OPM to provide policy guidance in relation to pay and leave, agency closure, performance management, official worksite, recruitment and retention, and accommodations for employees with disabilities. Further, OPM is required to assist federal agencies in establishing appropriate measures and teleworking goals.[21]

The guidance specifies that a well-written telework policy is the foundation for a good telework programme, and it provides two main objectives to be met:

- The policy should be written in such a way that it can be clearly understood and easily used; and,
- The policy should incorporate content fundamental to the development and support of an effective telework program.[22]

The guidance also provides details on what the telework policy should contain with regard to implementation of the programme.[23]

1.4. Telework agreements

The Act requires participants to have written agreements before they can telework. The OPM guidance states that a written agreement is:

> *…entered into between an agency manager and an employee authorized to telework… outlines the specific work arrangement that is agreed to; and is mandatory in order for any employee to participate in telework.[…] It is important to remember that the Act requires that an employee successfully complete telework training before being allowed to enter into a written agreement and telework.*[24]

The guidance highlights the importance for agencies of ensuring that all appropriate employees receive the necessary training and have agreements in place; without agreements employees cannot undertake 'unscheduled telework' when it is offered because of the status of the Federal Government's operations. For example, if a dismissal notice is issued because of extreme weather and federal agencies are closed, those without telework agreements would be required to take paid leave. (An example of an OPM dismissal notice is provided as Appendix 2.)

Information about the OPM's telework training provision is provided in section 2 of this paper.

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19 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 9)

20 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 10)

21 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6504 (b)(2))

22 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 10)

23 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 11)

24 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 17)

The guidance provides best-practice tips for the drafting of telework agreements. These are shown in Box 1.

Box 1: OPM best-practice tips for telework agreements[25]

- Term of the agreement: consider a one-year renewable agreement, or even a six-month agreement in telework situations that may need to be revised more frequently;
- Type of telework specified by the agreement: describe if the agreement is for regular, recurring telework, or situational/ad-hoc/episodic telework;
- Schedule: specify days of the week and the hours to be worked during telework days;
- Requirements: outline any additional requirements (e.g., technology) beyond the prerequisites to telework outlined in the Act (e.g., training, written agreement);
- Expectations: clarify any assumptions, for example, regarding work location (e.g., if expected to work only from home) and frequency and modes of communication (e.g., email vs. telephone, core hours for contact, speed for returning calls);
- Equipment and other expenses: determine and specify equipment and/or expenses that will be covered by the agency, employee, or shared;
- Expectations for emergency telework, i.e., be clear on whether or not an employee is expected to work in the case of a continuity event such as a National or local emergency; during an emergency event involving inclement weather; or another situation that may result in a disruption to normal office operations. With regard to Continuity of Operations, note that Emergency Relocation Group (ERG) members must be prepared to telework at any time;
- Information security: provide a summary for data security procedures in the agreement;
- Safety: provide a self-certification safety checklist to telework employees as a guide when preparing the alternative work location for telework; and,
- Termination/modification: ensure that employees know the agreement can be terminated or modified, and outline the conditions for termination/modification.

1.5. Designation of Telework Managing Officers

Section 6505 of the Act requires formal designation of a senior official as a Telework Managing Officer (TMO). The Act requires that the TMO must have "*direct access to the head of the agency*."[26] In addition, the OPM's guidance states that the TMO is meant to be a strategic thinker/planner, who will help the agency to incorporate telework "*in a way that makes good business sense.*"[27]

The TMO is directly accountable for the telework programme in their agency. In addition, the TMO:

- is responsible for policy development and implementation related to agency telework programs;
- serves as an advisor for agency leadership, including the Chief Human Capital Officer (equivalent to head of HR);
- serves as a resource for managers and employees on telework matters; and,
- is the primary point of contact with OPM on telework matters (including reporting on implementation of the Act).[28]

25 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see pages 17-18)

26 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6505(c))

27 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 18)

28 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 18-19)

The OPM guidance states that:

> *In addition to making telework an integral way of doing business in the agency, the TMO is responsible to help with the development of goals and metrics in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. In designating a TMO, agencies should look for the same leadership competencies and high standards that they would consider in selecting for any leadership position.*[29]

1.6. Guidance for managers

The OPM guidance provides recommendations for managers to make teleworking an effective practice. Recommendations include: leading by example; understanding the needs of the group or team; and, using good performance management practices. As the guidance is rather lengthy, it is included as Appendix 3 to this paper.

1.7. Performance management

It was noted in RaISe paper NIAR151-13 that the success of telework programs is recognised as being highly dependent upon appropriate performance management practices. It was also noted above that agencies' retain the power to withhold authorisation for eligible employees to telework if their performance is not at the required standard.

It follows that for a teleworking programme to be successful, agencies, managers and employees need to follow good performance management practice. The OPM website explains that it can provide consultants to review agencies' appraisal systems, to develop and/or evaluate appraisal systems, and to support development plans.[30]

This central consultancy role may provide two useful functions: firstly, it means that agencies can receive support in ensuring performance management regimes are sufficiently robust to manage teleworking; secondly, at federal level there is a mechanism for central oversight and assurance.

Beyond this role, the OPM also provides telework training as detailed in the next section.

29 OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see page 18)

30 http://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/performance-management/ (accessed 22 August 2013)

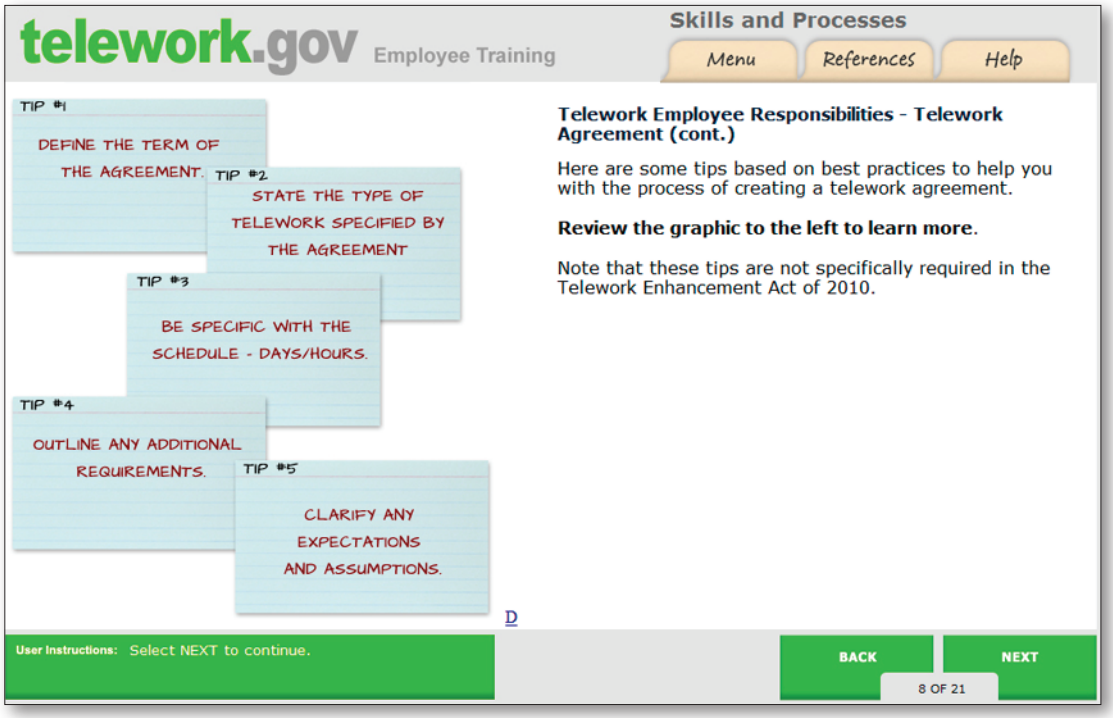
2. OPM telework training provision

The Act requires that:

> *…an employee has successfully completed the interactive telework training program before that employee enters into a written agreement to telework*[31]

Section 6503 of the Act requires the heads of federal agencies to provide a telework training programme. To support federal agencies, the OPM provides web-based training for both employees and managers. It does not appear to be a requirement of the Act that agencies must necessarily make use of the OPM's training – they may have other sources of training provision.

2.1. Training for employees

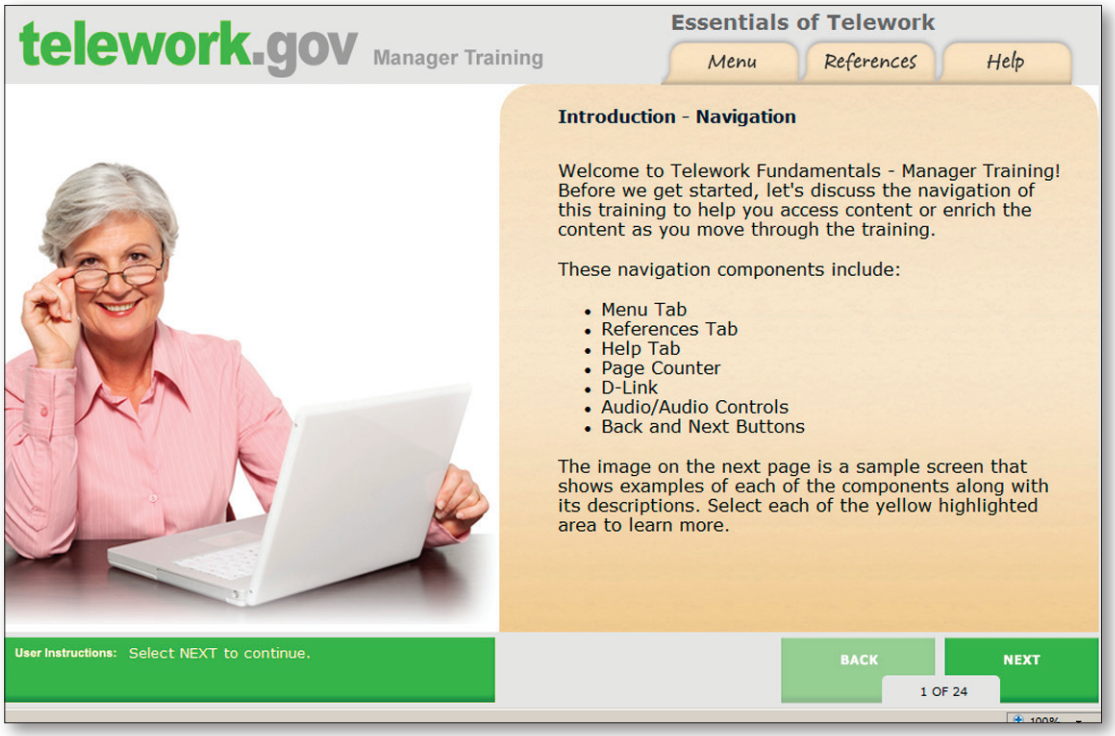


Topics covered in the training include:

- the potential benefits of telework;
- telework principles and procedures;
- the identification of personal strengths and weaknesses as a teleworker;
- setting up a place to telework at home; and,
- the necessary tools to successfully telework.

31 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6503(a)(2))

2.2. Training for managers



Topics covered in the training include:

- the potential benefits of telework;
- telework principles and procedures;
- the identification of employee work habits and job tasks that are suitable for telework; and,
- the necessary tools for effective management of teleworkers.

The following section of this paper goes on to address the effectiveness of the OPM in delivering its functions under the Act.

3. The US Government Accountability Office Reports

Much of the material in this paper has been drawn directly from the OPM's publications about the Act. RaISe has also sought to identify any evaluations of the OPM's effectiveness in relation to the implementation of the Act.

In addition to the requirement for the OPM to provide guidance to the federal agencies, the Act places reporting duties on the OPM. The Act specifies that reports must be provided in the proscribed form to: Congress; the Comptroller General; and, the Office of Management and Budget.[32]

In June 2013, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) presented the findings of its review into the OPM's *2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government: Report to Congress.* The GAO is headed by the Comptroller General and performs a broadly similar role to the Northern Ireland Audit Office: it investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars.[33]

The GAO's review assessed the extent to which the OPM's report discharged its duties under the Act. In addition, the GAO gathered information regarding the challenges that 'smaller agencies' may have encountered in implementation of telework programmes.[34]

The GAO review therefore in two ways represents a potentially valuable further source of evidence for CFP's Inquiry.

3.1. The GAO assessment of the OPM report

In 2012, the GAO issued an earlier review called *Federal Telework: Program Measurement Continues to Confront Data Reliability Issues.* At that time, the GAO found that there were likely to be difficulties in measuring the implementation of the Act for a number of reasons, including:

- inability for the OPM to compare participation and frequency data with prior years because of the various collection methods employed by different federal agencies;
- changes by the OPM to the data call instrument (such as changes in terminology, for example) leading to a risk to data quality; and,
- uncertainty about whether all necessary staff had attended OPM training for federal agencies on reporting and whether that training had been consistently delivered.[35]

In its report the following year – after the first formal report by the OPM on the implementation of the Act – the GAO's headline finding was that OPM had only "*partially reported on 2 of the Act's 7 reporting requirements.*"[36] In other words, **the GAO found that the OPM's reporting showed considerable room for improvement.**

The GAO identified a number of issues:

- whilst the OPM partially reported on two of the Act's seven reporting requirements, it did not report agency information for the five remaining requirements. This was because

32 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (section 6506(b)(1)(B))

33 http://www.gao.gov/about/index.html

34 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013)

35 GAO-12-519 (2012) 'Federal Telework: Program Measurement Continues to Confront Data Reliability Issues' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/590219.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013)

36 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 14)

"*insufficient time had elapsed*" for all the requirements of the Act to be fully implemented and because agencies "*faced challenges in measuring outcomes for some nonparticipation goals*";[37] and,

- the OPM recognised "*weaknesses*" in agency data sources, but had "*not taken adequate steps*" to establish a date by which agencies would produce reliable data;[38]

The GAO report acknowledged some of the difficulties faced by the OPM. For example, in relation to the non-reporting of whether agencies' had met their participation goals, the GAO noted:

> *OPM did not report whether each agency met its participation goals because these goals had not yet been established. This report set a baseline for future reporting of whether agencies had met its goals.*[39] *[emphasis added]*

This suggests that, before recommending a homeworking policy for Northern Ireland, CFP could consider how the Northern Ireland Civil Service might seek to ensure timely establishment of relevant goals by departments. DFP's views might also be sought.

The GAO also found instances of difficulties in the US federal service which might not be so prohibitive in Northern Ireland. One of the challenges faced by OPM was an absence of standardised, government-wide data from payroll providers because the systems in place did not have the capacity to collect data on participation and frequency.[40]

In the Northern Ireland Civil Service, all departments use a single payroll provider in HR Connect. This might make it more straightforward for standardised data to be collected across all departments, if a similar policy to the US federal government were to be pursued.

CFP may wish to ask DFP if HR Connect is capable of incorporate teleworking participation data in its reporting of management information.

The GAO report notes that the OPM has stated that "*ideally data collected through [a new] automated system would be used for the 2015 report to Congress.*"[41] This is quite a long timescale for accurate reporting following the passing into law of the Act in 2010.

3.2. Challenges for smaller agencies

Generally speaking, the US federal agencies are on a much larger scale than Northern Ireland departments and associated public bodies – for obvious reasons of the size of the American population. The GAO's findings in relation to smaller agencies may therefore be of interest

37 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 10)

38 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 10)

39 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 16)

40 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 18)

41 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 22)

to CFP as these may be – in organisational terms – more broadly comparable with Northern Ireland departments.

As part of its review, the GAO compared the views of large and small federal agencies in regard to the challenges of implementing teleworking. CFP should note that the GAO defined a 'small' agency as one with fewer than 1,700 employees. Clearly, in the Northern Ireland context, an agency with 1,600 employees would be rather large.

The GAO's comparison found that **both large and small agencies identified similar challenges**:

> *Eighty percent of the agencies (16 agencies) in OPM's focus groups had more than 1,700 employees. Challenges reported by OPM in its focus groups included:*
>
> - *manager resistance;*
> - *technology related challenges;*
> - *equity with which telework has been made available to employees;*
> - *performance management; and*
> - *access to senior leadership.*
>
> *Eighty percent of the agencies (8 agencies) in our discussion group had fewer than 1,700 employees. Challenges reported by discussion group participants included:*
>
> - *management resistance;*
> - *technology related challenges;*
> - *office coverage; and*
> - *budget and funding.*[42]

This evidence suggests that size of agency has not been a determinative factor in the difficulties faced in implementing the Act. In turn, this may suggest that Northern Ireland departments could potentially face similar issues.

3.3. Update re 2013 OPM report

After making its first report to Congress in 2012, the OPM is required by the Act to make further reports annually. At the time of writing, no report for 2013 was available via the OPM's Telework website.[43]

42 GAO-13-298 (2013) 'Federal Telework: Office of Personnel Management's 2012 Telework Report Shows Opportunities for Improvement' available online at: http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655635.pdf (accessed 5 August 2013) (see page 23)

43 www.telework.gov checked 30 September 2013.

4. Case studies – returns from US Federal Agencies

CFP asked RaISe to identify appropriate agencies from which further evidence could be requested.

RaISe applied filtering criteria to narrow the number of agencies selected. For detail on the criteria used to select case studies, refer to Appendix 1.

This section of the paper outlines the responses received from the agencies contacted by RaISe, which should assist CFP in selecting appropriate case studies to follow up.

RaISe submitted the following questions to each of the selected agencies, based on some of the issues identified in the earlier RaISe paper:

1. Employees whose roles were deemed eligible for flexible working. Is there a breakdown available of the nature of those roles – for example, are they administrative or specialist/ technical in nature?
2. Has your agency produced any specific policy guidance for the implementation teleworking?
3. Has your agency formally evaluated the process of implementing the Act? Are there any lessons you have learned from which Northern Ireland could learn? For example – were there any particular barriers to implementation and how did you seek to overcome them?
4. Are there any particular workforce management issues arising from the fact that some roles are determined to be eligible and others – no doubt for very good reasons – are not? Does this create workplace tensions/resentments and how are they managed?
5. How are the performance and productivity of teleworkers managed and measured to ensure that workers are completing the required hours of work and delivering the required outputs?

Responses have been received from:

- The US Department of Education;
- The US Department of Labor;
- The Office of Personnel Management;
- The National Labor Relations Board; and,
- The Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Table 1: responses from US Federal Agencies

Agency	Response to Q1	Response to Q2	Response to Q3	Response to Q4	Response to Q5
Department of Education	96% of the Department of Education's positions were deemed as telework eligible. The only positions that were not eligible at the Department of Education (ED) were as follows: Drivers, Congressional Liaisons, Personal Assistants (in the nature of providing daily assistance to disabled employees), and certain clerical positions that require constant front desk support. Ineligible positions were adequately justified and reported to the Department's union representatives.	Our new policy, under draft, will address implementation guidance. This new policy will not be available for distribution until it has been negotiation with our union and cleared by our Office of General Counsel.	We work closely with our Office liaisons to identify and eliminate barriers. We promote telework in the individual offices, hopefully increasing the number of telework agreements on file. Historically, the Department had found there being resistance among levels of management regarding the implementation and usage of telework. Our Human Capital Office works with all levels of management and the union to adopt and promote greater use of telework. ED's Human Capital Officer has met with ED's senior leadership to emphasize the Department's dedication to expanding our telework program. Human Capital has also hosted management training sessions as well as conference calls to help first and second level supervisors understand the importance of telework. We have also worked with offices to provide them with assistance in effectively managing telework, ensuring that arrangements are successful. We also work with our union officials to identify employee concerns about telework, and address those concerns collaboratively. Additionally, ED heavily promoted telework week. Another major change for FY2012 was the introduction of a new web-based time and attendance system, which allowed employees to more clearly indicate their telework status. This new system more accurately reflects employees' telework status.	Because most of our workforce is telework eligible. There is not much of an issue here and issues are typically addressed through ED's union. There are reports on inconsistency about the frequency and flexibility of current agreements. And this is an issue that the Department is analyzing for further actions.	Teleworkers performance is treated the same as workers in the office. We use our Information Systems to make telework as seamless as possible so that teleworks can engage in meetings and complete relevant assignments on time and as expected.

Agency	Response to Q1	Response to Q2	Response to Q3	Response to Q4	Response to Q5
Department of Labor	Both administrative and technical positions are eligible provided the duties and tasks are results-oriented, quantifiable and achievable away from the main worksite. These duties and tasks typically include, but are not limited to: document preparation; policy development; data compilation; data entry; and research.	Yes Note: a copy of the policy was supplied to RaISe and can be made available upon request.	We've identified one barrier to telework implementation as the need for additional manager education and training on how to utilize telework to increase management effectiveness. DOL continues to provide counsel to managers through individual consultations and training sessions. In addition, DOL initially experienced fiscal challenges with obtaining updated government furnished computer equipment necessary to support employees in a telework environment. Subsequent budget planning included the purchasing of technologies and services to enable and promote the continued adoption of telework.	DOL clearly and consistently communicates with employees and managers that position telework eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis by individual position suitability. DOL policy requires a written business reason be provided to employees when position duties are found to be incompatible with telework. This promotes certain transparency for employees and ensures participation decisions are business based, thus limiting workplace tensions and resentments amongst employees.	As done with all employees, managers can measure what an employee produces by examining the product or results of the employee's efforts. It is also helpful to use project schedules, key milestones, regular status reports, and team reviews. Supervisors may call employees who are working at home. Performance for all DOL employees is measured by whether the work is being completed on time and if it meets or exceeds the required standards and goals set forth by the manager – regardless of whether the work is done at the traditional worksite or the telework site.

Agency	Response to Q1	Response to Q2	Response to Q3	Response to Q4	Response to Q5
Office of Personnel Management	We do not have a formal breakdown. It is based on their position, office coverage, etc. While people in administrative (receptionist) type positions are not generally able to telework on a regular basis, we do encourage supervisors to be creative in allowing them some flexibility to telework on a situational basis (weather related, telework week, etc.). We encourage supervisors to look into creative options for them on those occasions such as ordering supplies, taking online training, etc.	No, not at this time.	We have not. One thing that has helped us in implementing the Act is developing a telework database which holds our Telework agreements and tracks information such as employee's telework eligibility determinations.	Generally, we have not seen any issues. Managers are asked to make the determinations based on the position (not the employee) so we have not had any major complaints or issues to overcome. OPM has always encouraged telework so it is not something that is new for our agency.	Our managers measure work for teleworkers the same way they measure it for an employee in the office. The transition should be seamless. While an employee may be physically in the office at his/her desk, that does not necessarily mean he or she is working. The same goes for teleworkers. You have to measure their performance based on their deliverables or productivity.

Agency	Response to Q1	Response to Q2	Response to Q3	Response to Q4	Response to Q5
National Labor Relations Board	The ability to telework is not limited to specific positions. The determining factor is whether the employee's duties are "portable" – the type of work that can be performed from home. The types of positions that qualify for telework are, for the most part, higher-paid professional in nature. Support positions generally do not have sufficient portable work to fill an entire workday. Also, the duties of the lower-paid support positions most often require a presence in the office.	Yes. In addition, many of our employees are unionized and are covered by collective-bargaining agreements. Those agreements include additional provisions that govern telework rights. Note: a copy of the policy was supplied to RaISe and can be made available upon request.	There is some reservation on the part of supervisors and upper management with respect to expanding telework. A number of people believe that teleworking diminishes good public service since some of our employees deal directly with members of the public. In those situations, office coverage becomes an issue since the supervisor may end up handling an employee's duties because he/she is teleworking. Managers also feel that there is a loss of synergy in the office – that people don't have informal conversations with one another in which they share information. Also, teleworkers are not able to participate in spontaneous meetings, except by telephone, which many managers believe is a less effective method of communication. It is difficult to overcome these barriers, but as telework is slowly expanded, managers usually become more accustomed to it. They are more comfortable calling people at home. Also, we anticipate that our telecommunication system will soon be improved, which will allow people to have one-on-one conversations by using the cameras in their laptop computers.	Not really. Most people who are not able to telework recognize that they don't have sufficient portable work.	Teleworkers are held to performance standards that are applied whether they telework or not. The same level of performance is required. If an employee's performance deteriorates below a certain level, management may remove the employee's telework privileges. In many instances, especially with professional employees, management looks at the employees final work product without a great deal of concern as to where it was produced.

Agency	Response to Q1	Response to Q2	Response to Q3	Response to Q4	Response to Q5
The Federal Housing Finance Agency	Essentially, all FHFA employees are eligible provided that their work, either ongoing or on a project basis, is appropriate, their work habits demonstrate an ability to telework effectively, and that it benefits the agency. While some jobs are routinely suited to telework and may be afforded recurring scheduled telework, other positions only occasionally lend themselves to telework.	Yes. Note: a copy of the policy was supplied to RaISe and can be made available upon request.	While I don't know that any formal evaluation of the implementation of telework here at FHFA has occurred, I will answer based on personal and anecdotal information. The first thought is that supervisors and managers need to be convinced of the value of telework in terms of productivity, retention, and other management concerns. They also need to understand that, if they allow an individual to telework and it isn't a good situation, they may discontinue it and take any action that might be necessary just as they would if the individual had failed to perform or abide by other rules at the worksite. Finally, managers and supervisors must understand that not every employee and not every task is appropriate for telework, so if one individual is approved, they need to assess other situations on their individual merits. One of the most effective arguments I have found is to remind supervisors that employees who are on business travel are, in effect, teleworking; and we are all comfortable with it as a routine part of business. Again, travel requires the appropriate task to be completed, employee characteristics such as independence and judgment, and a benefit to the agency. This does sometimes help with getting buy-in for telework.	There is an appeal procedure that allows for the reconsideration of requests. To the best of my knowledge, these appeals, if there are any at all, are infrequent.	Currently, we rely on supervisors and compliance with the policy to ensure that the work is being done, the time spent is reasonable, the quality acceptable, and the arrangement working.

5. Concluding remarks

The information presented in this briefing paper demonstrates that the OPM has provided a considerable degree of guidance and assistance to federal agencies on the implementation of the Act. It also shows that - despite the time that has passed since the enactment of the Act - it will still be some considerable time more before the OPM is itself able to comply with its reporting duties.

A number of federal agencies have provided some initial information to RaISe on their experiences of implementation, and this could form a platform for CFP to progress a more in-depth process of evidence-gathering directly from the agencies concerned.

It appears from the GAO's findings in relation to size of agency that the barriers faced by all federal agencies have been broadly similar.

CFP may wish to explore with federal agencies how barriers to the implementation of teleworking might be overcome in Northern Ireland.

Appendix 1: Case Study selection criteria

The OPM report gives eligibility/participation data for 87 federal agencies in total. In order to narrow these down to agencies with functions/remits likely to be similar to Northern Ireland departments, RaISe applied the following criteria:

- All agencies which (from their names) clearly would have no equivalent in Northern Ireland were excluded - NASA, the CIA, and the Securities and Exchange Commission are examples;
- All agencies with fewer than 100 employees were excluded – on the basis that CFP is likely to be more interested in applicability to larger organisations only (this is because the achievement of tangible benefits from teleworking are likely to be realised with greater impact if larger numbers of staff are involved);
- All agencies in which less than 50% of the total workforce was deemed eligible to telework were excluded – on the basis that CFP is likely to be more interested in those agencies where significant proportions of the workforce could participate (this is because there is likely to be a better depth of evidence available from those agencies with greater experience of managing teleworking);
- All agencies in which less than 20% of the eligible workforce was actually teleworking were excluded – on the basis that CFP is likely to be more interested in hearing about where teleworking is relatively widespread and happening in practice, rather than only smaller numbers taking part (this is because there is likely to be a better depth of evidence available from those agencies which have experienced greater participation from their workforces);

This brings the number of agencies from 87 to the list of 17 shown in Table 1. CFP may wish to note it would have been possible to alter the criteria to narrow the list down a bit more, or indeed to widen it.

Table 2: case study figures

Agency (note 1)	Total employees	Number of eligible employees	% eligible	Number of telework agreements	% of eligible with agreements	Number of. employees teleworking	% eligible teleworking	% total employees teleworking
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency	1236	1108	90	428	39	330	30	27
Department of Education	4629	4312	93	2858	66	1778	41	38
Department of Health and Human Services	90732	47904	53	20957	44	20310	42	22
Department of Labor	15947	14668	92	4289	29	3793	26	24
Environmental Protection Agency	17697	17559	99	0	0	3633	21	21
Farm Credit Administration	288	288	100	288	100	120	42	42
Federal Election Commission	350	333	95	173	52	173	52	49
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	1489	913	61	913	100	278	30	19
Federal Housing Finance Agency	519	470	91	93	20	159	34	31
General Services Administration	12752	11573	91		0	6779	59	53
National Labor Relations Board	1734	1000	58	219	22	219	22	13
National Transportation Safety Board	413	411	100	290	71	167	41	40
Office of Personnel Management	6377	3378	53	2644	78	1021	30	16
Overseas Private Investment Corporation	215	175	81	173	99	56	32	26
Selective Service System	130	101	78	81	80	37	37	28
Small Business Administration	2388	1950	82	450	23	450	23	19
U.S. International Trade Commission	361	361	100	279	77	138	38	38

Appendix 2: Sample OPM dismissal notice[44]

Snow & Dismissal Procedures

ARCHIVED STATUS

Washington, DC, Area

Applies to: **March 6, 2013**

STATUS: FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED - EMERGENCY AND TELEWORK-READY EMPLOYEES MUST FOLLOW THEIR AGENCY'S POLICIES

FEDERAL OFFICES in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED**. Emergency and telework-ready employees required to work must follow their agency's policies, including written telework agreements.

Share

Non-emergency employees (including employees on pre-approved paid leave) will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours they were scheduled to work unless they are:

- required to telework,
- on official travel outside of the Washington, DC, area,
- on leave without pay, or
- on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off.

Telework-Ready Employees who are scheduled to perform telework on the effective day of the announcement or who are required to perform telework on a day when Federal offices are closed must telework the entire workday or request leave, or a combination of both, in accordance with their agency's policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees are expected to report to their worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

44 Source: OPM (2013) http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/status-archives/13/3/6/Federal-Offices-are-Closed--Emergency-and-Telework-ready-Employees-Must-Follow-Their-Agencys-Policies_513/ (accessed 4 July 2013)

Appendix 3: How to Be an Effective Manager or Supervisor of Teleworkers[45]

Managerial and supervisory skill, participation and support can make telework an effective tool and asset for any organization. To effectively implement a telework program, managers should put the following guidelines, recommendations, and in some cases - laws, into practice.

Lead by Example - Managers and supervisors must be committed to using telework to the fullest extent possible if Federal telework programs are to succeed. Research in the work/life field bears out that supervisors, managers and senior executives who model the use of workplace flexibilities such as telework in any organization serve as key drivers in effecting positive cultural change in that organization. This is especially so if the organization's climate and culture have traditionally reflected a skeptical, or even hostile, view of telework. There is a tendency for employees to model the behavior of supervisors. Non-participation of supervisors may send a non-verbal message of disapproval. It might even suggest that getting ahead in the Federal workforce (e.g., being promoted) depends on the employee's physical presence at the main worksite. Managers and supervisors that telework will help to dispel this false notion and lead the way towards a telework-friendly culture in the agency.

Know Your Telework Managing Officer (TMO) - Each agency has designated a TMO who serves as the primary point of contact for policy and program questions. Managers should maintain frequent contact with their TMO, or the TMO's designee, to ensure the agency's policy and procedures are properly applied and to ensure they are aware of the full range of support and resources available to them.

Know Your Telework Policy and Procedures, Including Applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements - Managers should familiarize themselves and their employees with their agency's policy and applicable collective bargaining agreements to ensure they are in compliance with their requirements. Most agency policies and many collective bargaining agreements will include procedures for establishing telework agreements, obtaining equipment, and related matters. In addition, all agencies should have policies on information systems and technology security (see the section on *Safety* below), and managers/supervisors must ensure their equipment choices and telework agreements comply with these policies. Information security includes protection of sensitive "hard-copy" files and documents.

Participate in Training - As described above, OPM offers online interactive telework training for managers and employees at Telework.Gov. It can be accessed directly at the following link: www.telework.gov/tools_and_resources/training/index.aspx. Also, many agencies offer their own telework training and TMOs are available to consult with managers. Remember that employees who wish to telework must successfully complete telework training prior to entering into a written telework agreement, unless exempted by the head of the agency as provided in the law [P.L. 111-292, Section 6503(b)]. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to complete telework training. Information technology security training, administered at the agency level, is mandatory. Managers must ensure teleworkers complete this training and understand their responsibilities in safeguarding work-related information.

Determine Employee Eligibility - Agencies have discretion to determine telework eligibility criteria for their employees, subject to the requirements and limitations of the law. These criteria should be detailed in agency policy and may also be covered in applicable collective bargaining agreements. See the section on Eligibility and Participation above for guidelines on making these types of determinations based on the law and your agency's telework policy.

45 Source: OPM (2011) 'Guide to Telework in the Federal Government' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/telework_guide/telework_guide.pdf (accessed 5 July 2013) (see pages 21-25)

Understand and Assess the Needs of the Group - Telework is often implemented piecemeal, rather than strategically, as individuals request arrangements. This reactive approach carries the risk of raising fairness issues. To the extent possible, telework should be implemented strategically, taking into account the needs and work of the group. Agencies have made this easier by making broader determinations on employee eligibility and notifying employees. However, managers and supervisors may be making decisions with regard to situational telework and groups of newly-hired employees.

Create and Sign Written Telework Agreements - The teleworker and his or her manager/supervisor must enter into a written telework agreement for every type of telework, whether the employee teleworks regularly or on a situational basis. The parameters of this agreement are most often laid out by the agency policy and/or collective bargaining agreement, but should include certain key elements (reference the Act or the section above on Telework Agreements). Most importantly, the agreement should be signed and dated by the manager and employee. Managers and TMOs are encouraged to keep copies of all telework agreements on file.

Telework agreements are living documents and should be revisited by the manager and teleworker and re-signed regularly, preferably at regular intervals as defined by your agency's telework policy and applicable collective bargaining agreements. At a minimum, new telework agreements should be prepared and signed when a new employee/supervisory relationship is established.

OPM strongly recommends that agencies include specific language in the telework agreement for any employee who may potentially be asked to telework in case of emergency situations or continuity events. Continuity events would include a National or local emergency or pandemic health crisis that results in activation of continuity plans. Emergency events would include inclement weather or other situations that may disrupt normal operations and lead to an offering of "unscheduled telework." Remember that the law requires all teleworkers to have a written telework agreement in place. This means that an employee who wishes to opt for "unscheduled telework" during a weather emergency may not telework if a written agreement is not in place. Individuals that are potential situational teleworkers (including "unscheduled telework") should be encouraged to practice teleworking on a regular basis and as often as possible.

Base Denials on Business Reasons - Telework requests may be denied and telework agreements may be terminated. Telework is not an employee right, even if the employee is considered "telework-eligible."

Denial and termination decisions must be based on operational needs or performance in accordance with the description in the law, not personal reasons. For example, a manager may deny a telework arrangement if the duties of the position are not amenable to telework. If the employee's denial or termination was as a result of a performance issue, the denial or termination should include information about when the employee might reapply, and also if applicable, what actions the employee should take to improve his or her chance of approval. Denials should be provided in a timely manner. Managers should also review the agency's collective bargaining agreement(s) and telework policy to ensure they meet any applicable requirements.

Managers should provide employees (and keep copies of) signed written denials or terminations of telework agreements. These should include information about why the arrangement was denied or terminated. The TMO should also be alerted regarding denials or terminations and copies provided to him/her as well.

With respect to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement, appeals will be governed by the negotiated grievance procedure (unless this subject is specifically excluded from that procedure by the collective bargaining agreement, in which case the agency

grievance procedure would govern). For non-bargaining unit employees, the agency grievance procedure in force would cover appeals from a denial of a request to telework.

Use Good Performance Management Practices - It is important to note that performance standards for teleworking employees must be the same as performance standards for non-teleworking employees. Management expectations for performance should be clearly addressed in the employee's performance plan, and the performance plan should be reviewed to ensure the standards do not create inequities or inconsistencies between teleworking and non-teleworking employees. Like non-teleworking employees, teleworkers are held accountable for the results they produce. Good performance management techniques practiced by a manager will mean a smooth, easier transition to a telework environment. Resources for performance management are available from OPM at Performance Management.

Communicate Expectations - The telework agreement provides a framework for the discussion that needs to take place between the manager and the employee about expectations. For all types of telework, this discussion is important to ensure that managers and employees understand one another's expectations concerning basic issues such as the following:

- What technologies will be used to maintain contact?
- What equipment will the agency provide; what equipment will the teleworker provide; what will be shared?
- Who provides technical assistance in the event of equipment disruption?
- What will the weekly/monthly telework schedule be?
- How will the manager and co-workers be kept updated about the schedule?
- Do changes need to be pre-approved?
- What will the daily telework schedule be; will the hours be the same as in the main office, or will they be different?
- What are the physical attributes of the telework office and do they conform to basic safety standards? (agencies may wish to provide employees with a self-certifying safety checklist for guidance)
- What are the expectations for availability by phone, email, etc?
- What is the expectation regarding the amount of notice (if any) given for reporting to the official worksite, and how will such notice be provided?
- How is a telework agreement terminated by management or the employee?
- Who is expected to telework in an emergency?
- What is expected of a teleworker in the event of an emergency?

Facilitate Communication with All Members of the Work Group - Teleworking and non-teleworking employees must understand expectations regarding telework arrangements including coverage, communication and responsibilities. Although individual teleworkers must take responsibility for their own availability and information sharing, managers can help ensure that methods are in place to maintain open communication across the members of a work group. Employees and managers alike are encouraged to exercise professional courtesy in keeping one another informed about their availability throughout the work day.

Maintain Fairness in Assigning Work and Rewarding Performance - Managers should avoid distributing work based on "availability" as measured by physical presence, and avoid the pitfall of assuming someone who is present and looks busy is actually accomplishing more work than someone who is off-site. Good performance management practices are essential for telework to be effective and equitable.

Make Good Decisions About Equipment - GSA offers guidelines for the equipment and support an agency may provide to teleworkers, in Federal Management Regulation (FMR) Bulletin 2006-B3, Guidelines for Alternative Workplace Arrangements (see "GSA Telework Information" in the References section at the end of this document). Generally, decisions regarding the ways in which teleworkers should be equipped are made by the agency and individual manager consistent with the agency's telework policy and applicable collective bargaining agreements. Managers should familiarize themselves with these guidelines and also with their agency's policy on equipment. Within those constraints, the challenge for managers is in finding the right balance between budget, security and effectiveness. Factors to consider include technology needs based on the work of the employee, agency security requirements, and budget constraints. In addition, managers may also need to have conversations as appropriate to ensure the availability of equipment related to requests for reasonable accommodation.

Practice Telework - The success of an organization's telework program depends on regular, routine use. Experience is the only way to enable managers, employees, information technology (IT) support, and other stakeholders to work through any technology, equipment, communications, workflow, and associated issues that may inhibit the transparency of telework. Individuals expected or anticipated to telework in an emergency situation, including managers and supervisors, should be encouraged to telework with some frequency under non-emergency circumstances. Managers and supervisors should make it a point to regularly participate in telework in order to lead by example and be comfortable in dealing with the dynamics of managing in a telework environment.

Safety - Teleworkers must address issues of their own personal safety to be effective while teleworking from a home office or other alternative worksite. Government employees causing or suffering work-related injuries and/or damages at the alternative worksite are covered by the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, the Federal Tort Claims Act, or the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (workers' compensation), as appropriate.

Managers should review a safety checklist with teleworkers to ensure compliance and should immediately investigate any reports of accidents or injuries on the job.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Research and Information Service
Briefing Note

Paper 000/00 25 November 2013 NIAR 848-13

Colin Pidgeon

Technology for flexible working: sources of evidence

This Briefing Note provides possible sources of evidence regarding available technology to facilitate flexible working. It seeks to support of the Committee for Finance and Personnel's on-going Inquiry.

Introduction

This Briefing Note is to support the Committee for Finance and Personnel's (CFP) *Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland.* One of the Key Objectives of the Inquiry is:

> *To consider the range of options presented by new technology and workplace design to support flexible working practices, such as mobile working, teleworking, remote conferencing, hot-desking and satellite offices, and to examine approaches to monitoring and managing performance in such circumstances.1*

This Note presents CFP with a range of potential sources of evidence in relation to the technology which is available to support flexible, remote and home-working practices. Information is presented as follows:

- Section 1 lists a number of sources of general expertise on flexible working; and,
- Section 2 provides specific sources of evidence in relation to security and safety.

1 For full details on the Inquiry, see http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2011-2016/finance-and-personnel/inquiries/inquiry-into-flexible-working-hours/ (accessed 20 November 2013)

1. Sources of expertise

1.1. The Telework Association

The Telework Association was founded in 1992 to promote the benefits of telework and support individuals and organisations implementing this relatively new way of working. Since then the practice has grown slowly whilst the technology has changed dramatically. With broadband in the home, wireless hot-spots in public places and affordable 3G connections, it is now much easier to work remotely. Despite this, the incidence of teleworking is still low compared with the potential and the Association continues to promote it as good for individuals, employers, society, the economy and the environment. It does this by helping the media, government and other bodies to spread the word.2

Specific members of the Telework Association team may provide particular expertise in relation to technology. Pen portraits are provided below:

Peter Thomson, Director of Research

Peter has been associated with Telework for the past 30 years having pioneered working at home with Digital Equipment where he was Personnel Director for 18 years. Having recognised the potential for telework to contribute to business success, when he left Digital in 1991 he set up the Future Work Forum at Henley Management College. He was the director of this centre for 15 years during which time it gathered information on the latest trend in work practices and the impact on organisations and management. He was instrumental in setting up the UK Telework Platform in the early '90's and was vice chairman of the DTI Special Interest Group on telework. He also ran the Telework World series of conferences during that period. Peter is now a Director of Wisework Limited, the leading consultancy in the field of flexible working. He regularly speaks at conference on the future of work and the impact of flexible working on management.3

Brian Higton

Brian Higton is a strong advocate of 'flexible working' practices. He believes that when properly applied, policies which give personnel more choice as to their work location and working times can significantly reduce operating costs for businesses, improve employee satisfaction, benefit the environment and strengthen local communities. Brian is Business Development Director of Cygnet Solutions Ltd., an IT services company with considerable experience in helping organisations operate with a 'distributed workforce'. Brian is a frequent speaker on the commercial, technical, legal and human issues relating to the distributed workforce and a regular contributor to the business and technical press.4

1.2. Work Wise UK

Work Wise UK is a non-political, not-for-profit initiative, which aims to make the UK one of the most progressive economies in the world by encouraging Smarter Working practices to the benefit of business, employees and the country as a whole.

An increasingly complex world means that employers and employees have to strive to use their resources effectively. Employers wish to gain better productivity and employees wish to balance work-life pressures. Work Wise UK provides a central information service for the UK

2 http://www.tca.org.uk/content/about-telework-association

3 http://www.tca.org.uk/telework-association-team

4 http://www.tca.org.uk/telework-association-team

workforce, and champions the dissemination of key information and best practice throughout the programme.

The initiative brings together UK society, including the public and private sectors, professional bodies and trade unions to support the broader use of Smarter Working as a modern day approach to working life.

Working smarter is about the simple things that employers and employees can identify within their operation to reduce wasted time, wasted travel and wasted effort.5

1.3. Flexibility.co.uk

Flexibility aims to inform and stimulate debate about the changing world of work.

Flexibility brings together research and opinion about innovations in employment practice, organisational development, technological change and public policy.

Flexibility was first published in paper version in October 1993. Since then it has provided regular updates on the world of flexible work, with news, views, reviews, articles, links and other useful resources. It first went online in 1997, becoming one of the first online business journals.

The content of Flexibility is in large part based on knowledge gained through the implementation work and research projects carried out with other collaborators in the field of flexible work.

Flexibility.co.uk Ltd

In 2004, Flexibility was spun out as a separate venture, with the mission to extend the number of partners supporting its work, and helping to raise awareness of the impact and benefits of flexible working.

In 2011 assets were transferred to Flexibility.co.uk Ltd, a new company set up to take the mission forward and develop new ventures.6

2. Health and Safety

In the course of preparing this Briefing Note, RaISe has identified a number of publications relating to the health and safety of remote workers. This potentially very significant issue has not been covered in other RaISe briefings on the subject of flexible working, so a number of possible sources of expertise are identified here.

2.1. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. It has over 130,000 members internationally - working in HR, learning and development, people management and consulting across private businesses and organisations in the public and voluntary sectors.7

A CIPD publication *Helping managers support the health of remote and lone workers* reports that:

> *…two-thirds of remote workers report psychological distress and experience more general symptoms of ill health compared with other employers. Some of the risks identified include*

5 http://www.workwiseuk.org/about/

6 http://www.flexibility.co.uk/about/index.htm

7 http://www.cipd.co.uk/cipd-hr-profession/about-us/

> *longer working hours, fatigue and stress, lack of contact with fellow workers, sedentary working practices, poor diet, and also engagement issues.8*

CFP may therefore wish to seek evidence from CIPD in relation to the health impacts of remote working. In particular, this finding seems to go against the general thrust of other evidence which points to better employee job satisfaction and motivation when given flexibility.

2.2. Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure

> *The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) protects national security by providing protective security advice. Protective security is 'putting in place, or building into design, security measures or protocols such that threats may be deterred, detected, or the consequences of an attack minimised'. [CIPNI] provide advice on physical security, personnel security and cyber security/information assurance. Most importantly, [CIPNI] explains how these components combine together and reinforce each other - and their relationship to the threat. CPNI's protective security advice is built on a combination of things, including:*

- *what science tells us (our research and development programme)*
- *our understanding of the national security threat*
- *our experience and expertise*
- *effective relationships with private and public sector partners*
- *policy considerations.*9

Of particular interest to CFP may be the CPNI publication *Personnel Security in Remote Working: a Good practice Guide,* which provides guidance on good personnel security practice for remote working on a regular or permanent basis. The guidance is intended for employers (particularly managers, human resources and security departments) and employees in the national infrastructure.10

2.3. The British Security Industry Association

The BSIA's Lone Worker Forum consists of BSIA members who specialise in providing lone worker safety products and services to customers from a wide range of industry backgrounds.

According to the BSIA's website:

> *More than six million people in the UK work either in isolation or without direct supervision, often in places or circumstances that put them at potential risk. A wide variety of organisations and industry sectors employ people whose jobs require them to work or operate alone, either regularly or occasionally. Almost by definition, lone working can be both intimidating and at times dangerous, so the protection of lone workers involves a twofold approach; not only to provide safeguards but also to offer reassurance to the people involved.11*

The BSIA produces guidance for lone workers and for their employers. CFP may, therefore, be interested in seeking evidence in relation to issues affecting the Northern Ireland public sector.

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8 Resource summary available at: http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/axa/helping-managers-support-remote-lone-workers.aspx. Full text only available to CIPD members. (accessed 20 November 2013)

9 http://www.cpni.gov.uk/about/

10 http://www.cpni.gov.uk/documents/publications/2012/2012004-personnel_security_in_remote_working.pdf?epslanguage=en-gb (accessed 20 November 2013)

11 http://www.bsia.co.uk/lone-workers/about-bsia-lone-workers (accessed 20 November 2013)

Research and Information Service
Briefing Note

Paper 000/00 26 February 2014 NIAR 63-14

Colin Pidgeon

Telework in the United States Federal Government: 2013 Status Report

This Briefing Paper updates previous RaISe Papers in relation to telework programmes in the United States (US) federal government agencies. It provides analysis of the 2013 Report to Congress *Status of Telework in the Federal Government* which details progress on the implementation of telework programmes by US federal agencies.

Key Points

- The US federal government's Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reports that the *Telework Enhancement Act 2010* has led to a fundamental shift in how federal agencies view and implement telework programmes (section 1.2.);
- The OPM's most recent report to Congress on teleworking shows increases in both the numbers of teleworkers and the frequency of actual teleworking (as opposed to employees simply being deemed eligible to telework) (section 1.2.);
- Agencies have reported telework-related improvements in emergency preparedness; and also substantial financial savings, and environmental benefits (sections 2.1.3. and 2.1.4.);
- Survey results seem to suggest that it is not teleworking of itself that drives improved employee job satisfaction, but having the *choice* over whether to telework (section 2.1.1.); and,
- The OPM's report indicates that some of the most significant barriers (such as resistance by management) to telework identified in its previous report have not yet been overcome, although a number of agencies are taking steps to address them. (section 2.2.)

Introduction

This Briefing Paper provides an update to previous RaISe papers *Flexible working: further evidence*[1] and *Telework in the US Federal Government.*[2] It provides analysis of the US Office for Personnel Management's (OPM) most recent report to Congress on the status of telework in the US federal government.

The Paper seeks to support the Committee of Finance and Personnel (CFP) in its Inquiry into Flexible Working in preparation for the proposed video link evidence session with US federal officials on the implementation of the *Telework Enhancement Act 2010 ("the Act").*[3]

The paper is structured in the following way:

- Section 1 reports the headline findings of the OPM's latest research into implementation of telework programmes by US federal agencies; and,
- Section 2 focuses specifically on the issues that were drawn to CFP's attention in the previous RaISe papers, and draws out some of the OPM's conclusions.

1 RaISe (2013) 'Flexible working: further evidence' available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2013/finance_personnel/9413.pdf

2 RaISe (2013) 'Telework in the US Federal Government' available online at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2013/finance_personnel/14113.pdf

3 See http://www.telework.gov/telework_enhancement_act/ for further information.

1. The OPM's 2013 report

RaISe paper *Flexible working: further evidence* explained that the Act required the OPM to report annually to Congress on the teleworking programme in US federal agencies.

The annual report has to include data on: the number of employees teleworking; the number of days they telework; and, explanations for any changes in levels of teleworking or goals for increasing participation in future.[4]

The OPM is also required to assess the impact of flexible working on federal agencies' goals in relation to:

- emergency readiness;
- energy use;
- recruitment and retention;
- productivity; and,
- employee attitudes and opinions regarding telework.[5]

The data presented in this section of the Briefing Paper is drawn from the OPM's second annual report.

1.2. Headline findings

The OPM's first report under the requirements of the Act (in 2012) noted that the Act has resulted in a fundamental shift in how federal agencies viewed and implemented telework.[6] It is to be expected that any large scale change programme will take some time to 'bed down', and therefore the findings of this more recent report are likely to be of interest to CFP's Inquiry into Flexible Working; the report shows how the situation has developed a year further into the implementation of the mandated telework programme.

The OPM states in its 2013 report that:

> *…results clearly illustrate a growing Government-wide commitment to incorporating telework as a standard practice as agencies continue to diligently refine and improve the implementation of telework.*[7]

The report finds that in the year following the OPM's 2012 report:

- the number of federal employees deemed eligible to telework increased by 49%;
- the number of employees with formal telework agreements in place increased by 84%; and,
- the number of employees actually participating in teleworking on the day of the OPM survey increased by 24%.

4 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 20 February 2014) (see s.6506)

5 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr1722enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr1722enr.pdf (accessed 20 February 2014) (see s.6506 (b)(2)(F))

6 OPM (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 20 February 2014) (see page 6)

7 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 8)

These headline findings appear to show that the requirements of the Act for formalised telework agreements to be signed (in place of ad-hoc arrangements that may have existed before) have been more fully implemented than was the case in the OPM's 2012 report. In addition, the practice of teleworking (as opposed to the assessment of eligibility) has become more widespread.

2. Issues previously identified to CFP by RaISe

This section focuses on the findings of the OPM's 2013 report in relation to a number of issues that were highlighted in the previous RaISe papers about certain aspects of the US federal telework programme. This should enable CFP to track progress in areas of potential interest.

2.1. Establishing baselines and measuring impact

The OPM's 2012 report identified that federal agencies had found it difficult to report data in relation to the goals of the telework programme that were not directly related to the numbers of employees eligible or participating. For example, the OPM's 2012 report states:

> *Several agencies described eliminating some office space as a result of telework, but few were able to translate this into dollar figures or square-footage of space saved. Several had established working groups to study real estate cost measurement.*[8]

The OPM's 2013 report states:

> *…a growing number of agencies have demonstrated the capability to set and advance agency outcome goals for telework, including critical employee attitude, emergency preparedness, and cost goals.*[9]

The Table below shows the numbers of agencies with non-participation goals in both 2011 and 2012:[10]

Goal	2012	2011
Employee recruitment	62	53
Employee retention	59	52
Improved performance	43	34
Improved attitudes	66	58
Emergency preparedness	83	72
Reduced energy use	27	26
Reduced/avoided real estate costs	26	25
Reduced commuter miles	48	45

It can be seen that the number of agencies setting non-participation goals has increased in all cases. By far the most commonly applied goal is in relation to emergency preparedness (used by an additional 11 agencies in 2012); the second most commonly set goal is in relation to improved employee attitudes (used by an additional 8 agencies in 2012).

8 US Office of Personnel Management (2012) '2012 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2012teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 4 March 2013) (see page 59)

9 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 8)

10 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 76)

The following subsections present the evidence provided in relation to such 'non-participation' goals for the telework programme.

2.1.1. Employee attitude and performance

The OPM's 2013 report notes that a number of agencies use surveys to assess the impact of telework on employee attitudes. It is also stated that:

> *By making good performance an eligibility criterion for telework, some [agencies] argue that employees become incentivised to improve performance in order to telework or to maintain high performance to gain access to or keep a telework arrangement.*[11]

It also lists some responses from particular agencies in relation to employees performance.

For example, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation reported that:

> *Internal Telework Survey results indicate that 70 percent of our managers agree those teleworkers' productivity increases or remains the same, and 80 percent of employees believe teleworking increases their productivity.*[12]

Other agencies, such as the National Credit Union Administration, compare the performance appraisals of teleworking and non-teleworking staff to assess the impact of the programme. Others are putting in place initiatives to develop performance plans with clear telework-related measures.

In addition, the report notes that teleworking reduces commuting miles, and that agency survey responses:

> *Reflect the long-standing view of telework as an effective strategy to mitigate the daily drain on productivity that a commute to and from a workplace can impose.*[13]

Point for scrutiny: CFP may wish to seek further evidence from OPM about the overall impact of the telework programme on employee performance and productivity.

CFP may also wish to note, however, that the OPM's 2013 report observes a general decline in job satisfaction amongst federal employees – from 71% satisfied in 2011, to 68% satisfied in 2012.[14] Of itself, a three percentage point decline may not be that significant. However, there is one aspect of the job satisfaction responses that seems to warrant further investigation – detailed below.

11 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 80)

12 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 80)

13 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 90)

14 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 60)

The Figure below shows the job satisfaction results from 2011 and 2012 surveys.[15]

Goal	2012	2011
Employee recruitment	62	53
Employee retention	59	52
Improved performance	43	34
Improved attitudes	66	58
Emergency preparedness	83	72
Reduced energy use	27	26
Reduced/avoided real estate costs	26	25
Reduced commuter miles	48	45

It is perhaps not overly surprising that in both 2011 and 2012, those employees who do not telework *through choice* report higher job satisfaction than those who don't because of a barrier. However, it is interesting to note that those who do not telework through choice also report higher jobs satisfaction than those who *do* actually telework.

This finding seems somewhat paradoxical and may be difficult to understand. The OPM's 2013 report seems to acknowledge this in the following statement:

> *The high rates of satisfaction among those who choose not to telework but have the option to do so […] suggest that the existence of telework policies benefits the workforce in indirect, but positive ways.[16] [emphasis added]*

Point for scrutiny: CFP may wish to seek further clarification of this apparent paradox from the OPM i.e. can the OPM explain why those who chose not to telework report higher job satisfaction than those who do telework?

2.1.2. Emergency preparedness

Table 2 gives the results of the OPM survey in relation to the interaction of telework with agencies' emergency planning. Among other things, it shows that the proportion of agencies which offer specific training to teleworkers on what is expected of them in an emergency had grown from 34% to 46%.

15 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 60)

16 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 60)

Table 2: Agency efforts to incorporate telework into emergency planning[17]

	2012				2011
	Yes	No	Agency does not have plan	Other	Yes
The agency Continuity of Operations Plan specifically addresses telework.	77 (86%)	5 (6%)	5 (6%)	3 (3%)	75 (86%)
The agency Pandemic Influenza Plan specifically addresses telework.	64 (71%)	8 (9%)	13 (14%)	5 (6%)	66 (76%)
	Yes	No	Other	N/A	Yes
Our agency's telework policy includes information regarding *telework during emergencies* (e.g., who is supposed to telework, the use of telework as a tool in case of emergencies).	73 (81%)	8 (9%)	6 (7%)	3 (3%)	67 (77%)
Teleworkers in our agency are given specific training about what is expected of them in an emergency.	41 (46%)	29 (32%)	14 (16%)	6 (7%)	30 (34%)
Total Respondents	90	90	90	90	87

Point for scrutiny: CFP may wish to seek evidence from the OPM that demonstrates how effectively this emergency planning translates into better continuity of federal operations. For example, is there evidence that telework enabled federal agencies to cope more effectively with the recent extreme cold weather in the US?

2.1.3. Premises costs

One element of CFP's Inquiry is the extent to which flexible working practice can help reduce the premises costs of Northern Ireland departments.

The OPM's 2013 report states that:

> *Of the energy and environment-related goals, agencies seem to have the most success in achieving and measuring avoided building costs. Eight agencies reported closing buildings and offices through the use of telework.*[18]

Examples are presented in the Box below:[19]

1. The Department of Commerce avoided a number of potential building leases that resulted in millions of dollars in annual savings.
2. The Institute of Museum and Library Services reduced its office needs by two-thirds, partially through 'hoteling' (i.e. an arrangement similar to hot-desking, but where employees can reserve a particular workspace for days when they intend to be in a particular office building) and telework.
3. The Patent and Trademark Office estimated it has avoided securing US$19.8m in additional office space as a direct result of its hoteling programmes.

17 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 34)

18 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 88)

19 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 88-89)

2.1.4. Environmental and other costs

In addition to reducing agencies' needs for office accommodation, OPM's 2013 report notes that the telework programme was incentivising:

> *An increased collaboration in order to meet common goals of increasing telework and reducing commute miles and greenhouse gas emissions.*[20]

In addition, the report finds that seven federal agencies also reported financial savings, in some cases through reduction in their 'transit subsidy' (this is a tax relief for commuters to offset some of their transport costs).

Examples are presented in the Box below:[21]

1. The Department of Agriculture reported a saving of US$8m in transit subsidy.
2. The Patent and Trademark Office's 4,136 employees in the Washington metropolitan region are reported as saving about 46 million commuter miles, US$5.8m in fuel and 24,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions a year through teleworking.

Another interesting example cited in the OPM's 2013 report concerns the Department of State. To avoid complicated estimations of commuter miles avoided, employees are asked about journeys avoided at the time they are reviewing and renewing their telework agreements.[22]

This example shows how a simple administrative measure can be used to easily estimate and capture some of the environmental benefits of the telework programme.

The Table below shows the number of agencies reporting cost savings in relation to teleworking.[23]

	2012	2011
Rent, office space	13	6
Utilities	10	4
Human capital (e.g., recruitment, retention)	15	10
Training	5	0
Reduced employee absences	19	15
Planning is underway for assessing our cost savings	31	30
Other	22	23
Reduced transportation subsidy	4	4

20 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 90)

21 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 90-91)

22 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 90-91)

23 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 96)

OPM's 2013 report states that:

> *Establishing cost savings through telework will remain a work in progress over the next several years.*[24]

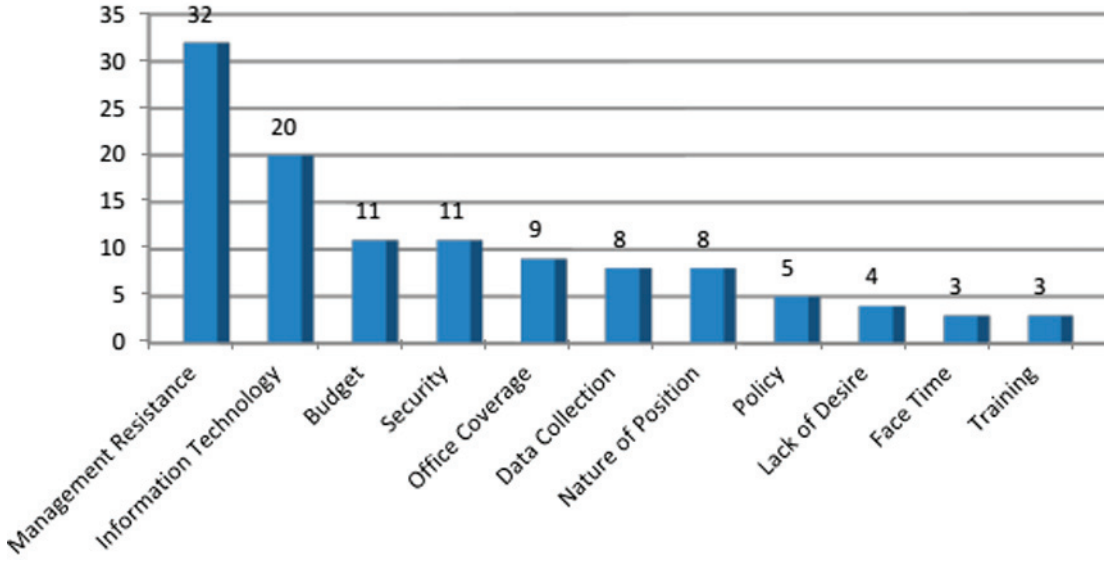
Even with this in mind, there does seem to be an opportunity for CFP to explore the scope for further savings.

Point for scrutiny: CFP may wish to ask OPM whether it has assessed options to increase further the savings that can be delivered and measured through the telework programme.

2.2. Barriers to teleworking

The previous RaISe papers have paid attention to barriers to teleworking and the approaches to overcoming those identified.

The Figure below shows the barriers to telework revealed in the OPM's 2013 report. The chart shows the number of agencies that recorded particular barriers.[25]



The most common barrier (and this reflects the same finding in the OPM's 2012 report) was 'management resistance'. The OPM states that:

> *In response to management and cultural resistance, agencies have focused on training and engagement of their management and leadership.*[26]

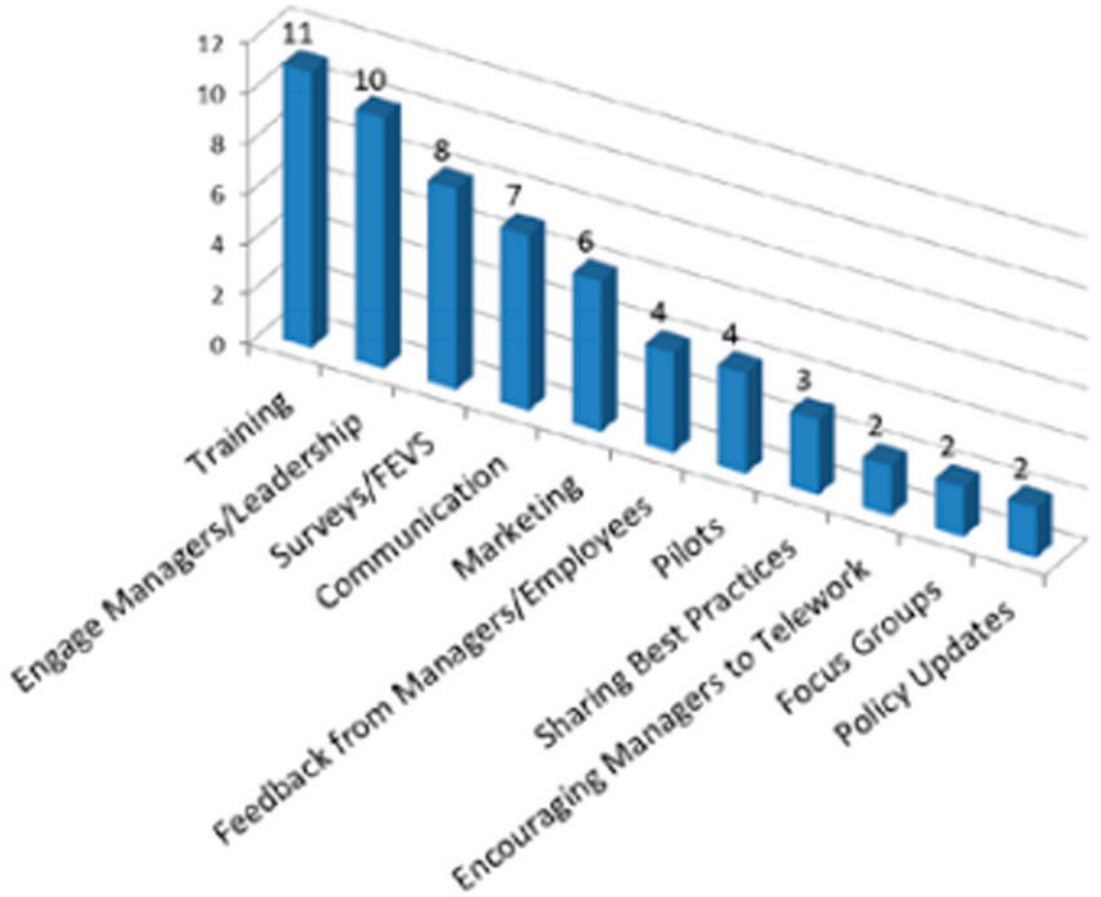
This is particularly important because the research reported in previous RaISe papers demonstrates that flexible working is more easily implemented when management 'leads by

24 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 96)

25 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 48)

26 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 48)

example'. The Figure overleaf shows the number of agencies that reported using a variety of techniques to overcome barriers to telework.[27]



Point for scrutiny: CFP may wish to ask OPM if it has evidence to demonstrate whether specific measures have been found to be particularly successful in overcoming barriers to telework.

2.3. Conclusions

The OPM's 2013 report concludes that:

> *There is evidence that telework influences outcomes critical to agency performance, including employee attraction, satisfaction and retention, and emergency preparedness.*[28]

In particular, it finds that:

> *More employees are participating in telework, and managers of telework programmes have begun to advance ever more sophisticated approaches to programme development.*[29]

27 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 49)

28 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 98)

29 OPM (2013) '2013 Status of Telework in the Federal Government - Report to the Congress' available online at: http://www.telework.gov/Reports_and_Studies/Annual_Reports/2013teleworkreport.pdf (accessed 24 February 2014)(see page 98)

This suggests that following the passing of the Act in 2010, it has taken some time for the telework programme to begin to realise its full potential in federal agencies. Given that some agencies are still in the process of developing reporting measures, it seems likely that the benefits (in terms of productivity, cost savings and other environmental benefits) could be underreported by the survey results. In turn, this implies that despite the progress already made in federal agencies, there is likely to be more progress reported in future years.

On the other hand, OPM's 2013 report identifies that similar barriers to the previous year are still faced by agencies in the implementation of telework programmes.

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