

**Family- friendly working policies
– should we change the way we work?**

Steve Daniels, Head of Human Resources, Ulster Bank

Work-life balance – what we'll look at:

- Social context for family-friendly work practices
- The case for proactive WLB
- Ulster Bank practices
- Challenges to implementation
- The way forward

The social context for family-friendly working practices

- Intensification of work patterns
- Economic pressures
- Increased participation of women in the labour force
- 'Always-on' communications

"I think it's to find time for everything that we would like to do on a personal basis and that we don't have time to do and the other thing is maybe to go home in the evening and not to have to worry about something at work, or not to have to take work home, in other words that your work doesn't eat into your personal time, which it does quite a lot.

Interviewee: 'Working to Life or Living to Work'

Employers cannot ignore these pressures:

- Corporate responsibility 'right thing to do'
- Business imperative – recruitment, retention and productivity

The case for family friendly work practices – a ‘win-win’ ?

Agile staff 20% more productive – BT finding

Homeworkers save accommodation and travel costs and have less sick leave

Higher commitment and lower ‘intention to quit’ amongst flexible workers

21% of UK fathers with children under 5 are solely responsible for childcare at some point during the working week

Business needs

- Meet the needs of the 24/7 marketplace
- Lower labour costs
- Increased productivity
- Maximum efficiency
- Attract and retain the best talent

Older workers ready to trade career progression for ‘quality time’ with family.

Autonomy highly valued – control over when, where and how I work

Flexible workers record higher levels of job satisfaction & lower stress than non-flexible workers

Work-life balance – Ulster Bank practices

Time Away from Work

- Adoption Leave
- Carer Leave
- Carer Leave
- Dependants Leave
- Buy/Sell Holidays
- Long/Short Term Employment Breaks
- Maternity leave
- Paternal Leave
- Special Leave

Time at Work

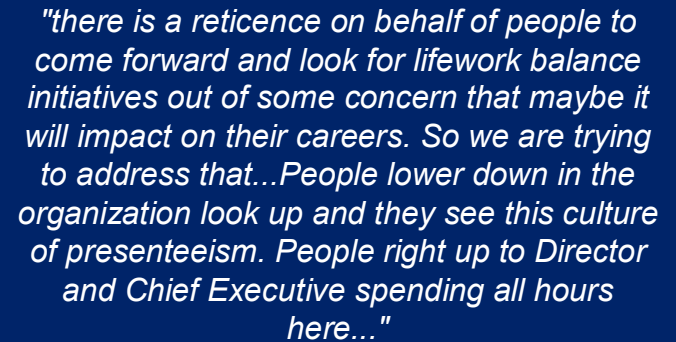
- Compressed hours
- Flexible working
- Job Sharing
- Home working
- Part-time working
- Term-time working
- Variable working hours
- Variable work hours
- Monday to Saturday (branch network)

In the Top 30 of UK employers for WLB – but ‘more work to do’

Challenges to implementation

Organisational 'culture' challenges

- Presenteeism
- Line manager discretion
- Gender stereotyping
- Few management role models
- Degree of proactive communications



"there is a reticence on behalf of people to come forward and look for lifework balance initiatives out of some concern that maybe it will impact on their careers. So we are trying to address that...People lower down in the organization look up and they see this culture of presenteeism. People right up to Director and Chief Executive spending all hours here..."

Individual and family challenges

- Financial pressures reduce real choice

The way forward - recommendations from social policy experts and organisational research.

How to create a social and organisational WLB culture

- Management training
- Focus on outcomes – measure performance results, productivity, employee engagement, retention, costs and benefits
- Proactively communicate
- Ensure men are engaged in the debate about social/family and quality of life considerations

Thank you