



**DEVELOPING GOOD
MANAGEMENT PRACTICE**

A HEFCE Initiative

Flexible Employment in Higher Education

Homeworking A report

The FEO Team:

Clare Ridgley – Project Leader
Jill Scott – Research Officer
Alison Hunt – Research Officer

The FEO Project is based at Staffordshire
University.

Telephone: 01782 295842

Email: c.m.ridgley@staffs.ac.uk

Website: www.staffs.ac.uk/feo

Contents

1. **Introduction**
 2. **History and Background**
 3. **The Business Case for Homeworking**
 4. **Homeworking in Higher Education**
 - 4.1. Analysis of the Availability of Homeworking within Higher Education
 - 4.2. Case studies
 5. **The Benefits of Formal Policies**
 6. **Making Homeworking Work**
 7. **Recommendations**
 8. **Conclusions**
- Appendix 1 – Bibliography
- Appendix 2 – Typical Homeworking Patterns
- Appendix 3 – Issues for Homeworking Employees

Foreword

The Flexible Employment Options (FEO) Project has over the last few years been investigating the impact of introducing flexible working arrangements in the higher education sector. This was achieved through piloting different ways of working at four higher education institutions (HEIs) - the University of Birmingham, Canterbury Christ Church University College, De Montfort University and Staffordshire University. Employees across a variety of departments were offered a range of flexible working options during 2002/3, and the effects were monitored and evaluated. A summary project report was distributed to all HEIs in England in December 2003, and the results were disseminated at a series of national events. Feedback from these events indicated that HR and other staff would like more information on how specific flexible options can be implemented effectively, case studies of current use and sample policies.

This report has been written to provide background information for managers within the HE sector who are considering introducing homeworking, formalizing informal homeworking arrangements, or improving existing schemes to incorporate new research. Accompanying this report is a guide to good practice.

Other reports available are:

Job share

Homeworking

For more information visit www.staffs.ac.uk/feo

Section 1: Introduction

Flexible workers are encouraged to manage their time and tasks in order to maximise the benefits to their employer, clients and customers, but taking into account their responsibilities and commitments towards others, including their family, friends, hobbies, voluntary work and domestic arrangements. Good work/life practices offer a win-win situation for all concerned, and increasingly employers are considering their applicability within all types of higher education institutions.

Homeworking is one of the options that many employees say they would like, but it is also one of the most difficult for employers to offer. The DTI undertook a comprehensive Work Life Balance Survey in 2000. This survey of 2500 workplaces indicated that amongst respondents, there was little evidence of extensive homeworking and what there was tended to be restricted to senior staff. Approximately 20% of employees were working from home at least occasionally, and this correlated with age, gender and job role (24% of men reported working from home, as compared with 16% of women, as did 35% of managers and professional workers). However, there appeared to be a high demand for this type of flexibility from staff as a whole – 33% of employees said that they would like to work from home, at least occasionally, although 87% of these believed that their employer would not permit this.

Higher education is a sector in which certain groups of staff, such as researchers and academics have always worked from home or from locations other than their base, due to the nature of their work. Notwithstanding this traditional acceptance of homeworking, the culture of most higher education institutions is less permissive in relation to other groups, in spite of the fact that informal homeworking is allowed in a large number of universities. Many employers, including higher education institutions have been discouraged from offering homeworking as a formal option, due to its perceived complexity and the many considerations that need to be addressed if it is to be successfully used. However, as it becomes increasingly popular and acceptable as an option for more groups of staff and individuals it is vital that HEIs consider introducing a formal scheme to clarify the expectations of all parties concerned and to ensure that the institution meets all its statutory obligations towards its employees.

Section 2: History and Background

One of the major outcomes of the Industrial Revolution was the segregation of domestic and working life. People working in factories needed to be close to each other as the move towards mass production meant that products were made by means of a variety of small tasks involving a number of people having to work in the same location. With the dramatic changes in modern technology, this process is being reversed on a large scale for the first time since the Industrial Revolution, and for the past 25 years, the numbers of people working at home making use of information technology (teleworking) has been steadily increasing. There is no formal definition of teleworking, because telework is not a job definition but a method of working. Teleworking is the generic term for work that can be done at a distance, usually via the use of information technology. Homeworking is a form of teleworking. Work (on a part or full time basis) is completed from home with the use of basic telecommunication links such as a personal computer, phone, fax and email.

The Labour Force Survey defines teleworkers as those who work at home for a significant amount of time. There are other kinds of telework or "e-work" besides the home-oriented varieties: telecentre-based, mobile (but not using home as a base), location-flexible telework (using for example, client sites to work from) - and so forth, but this report will focus on those covered by the first definition.

The UK Labour Force Survey 2003 indicated that teleworking had doubled in the six years since records had been maintained (from 1.01 million in 1997 to 2.113 million in 2003 (just over 7.5% of the workforce). The numbers of teleworkers has been steadily increasing at an average rate of 12-13% per year, in contrast with the average annual growth rate for all employees of 1.6%.

Jobs and sectors

The uptake of teleworking in the private and public sectors almost exactly reflects the split in the wider workforce between the sectors, with 74% of all teleworkers being located in the private sector and 26% in the public sector.

Initial uptake was almost exclusively in the private sector, with the self-employed particularly well represented. The self-employed still form a significant proportion of teleworkers (43%, as against 11% of the workforce as a whole), but in recent years the incidence of teleworking in the public sector has increased dramatically to its present level. Currently, private sector employees are under-

represented in the total numbers of teleworkers, suggesting that private sector is not necessarily as innovative in promoting new ways of working as is frequently supposed. On the other hand, it is likely that the majority of the self-employed teleworkers - freelancers and e-lancers - are working for private sector employers as contractors.

In terms of job roles, managers and professionals still predominate amongst teleworkers, making up almost two thirds of the total. This is particularly the case amongst occasional teleworkers, where 91% fall into the first 3 occupational groups - managers (37%), professionals (37%), and associate professional and technical occupations (17%). This finding is confirmed by the DTI Work Life Balance Survey (2000), which also found a preponderance of managers and professionals amongst homeworkers. Administrative and secretarial work is only relatively common amongst full-time homeworkers (24% of total) - most of whom are women. Skilled trades occupations amongst teleworkers are predominantly found amongst those who travel around using home as a base, making up 27% of this category.

The figures are also broken down by sector, but as the categories are so broad, they are not as helpful as they might be. The sector with the greatest uptake of teleworking is "real estate, renting and business activities" (24%) followed by construction (14%). However, it is worth noting that manufacturing and education are joint third with totals of 11% each.

Gender and Homeworking

Over two thirds (67%) of teleworkers in the official figures are men, whereas only 53% of the workforce as a whole is male. Much of the gender difference amongst teleworkers can be explained by the types of jobs that teleworkers currently do. Managers, professionals, associate professionals and technical staff are predominantly male. There was also a good deal of early adoption of teleworking in the IT and telecommunications sectors, which are also dominated by men. There are also more males amongst the self-employed than females and it was noted earlier that these workers include a greater proportion of teleworkers than of the workforce as a whole. The only category that women homeworkers dominate is in administrative and secretarial jobs. So the gender split in teleworking is largely a reflection of the gender split in the types of jobs undertaken through telework at the moment.

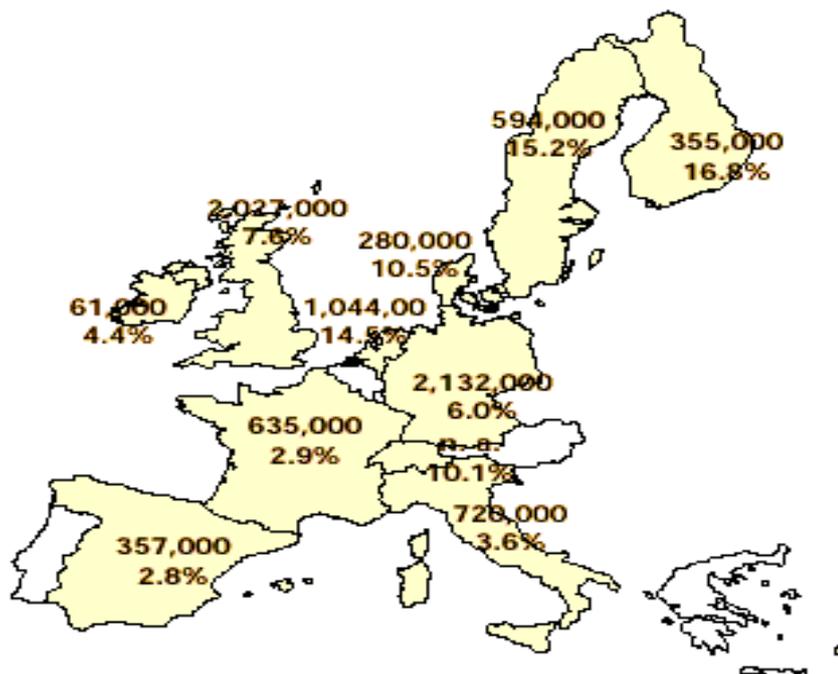
This may change, however, particularly as increasing numbers of women managers should begin to impact upon attitudes. Furthermore, the dominance

of women in sectors such as human resources and training, where there are currently major movements towards greater work-life balance, may begin to make a significant difference within the world of work as a whole in due course.

The European Dimension

The incidence of teleworking also continues to increase throughout Europe, roughly in line with predictions made in 1994 by the European Commission. The overall prediction was that by the year 2000, there would be 10 million teleworkers in Europe, and according to the ECaTT project, which monitors the growth of e-work and e-commerce, in 1999 the figure had reached 9 million. However, uptake within particular countries varied widely, ranging from nearly 17% in Finland to less than 3% of the workforce in France and Spain.

Numbers of teleworkers as % of workforce (Overall European average 6%)



These figures included a number of different categories of teleworker:

- home-based teleworkers - defined as working from home at least one full day per week using ICT (information and communication technologies)
- supplementary (or occasional) teleworkers - who work occasionally from home and/or telework at home beyond their regular working hours
- centre-based teleworkers
- mobile teleworkers - who work at least 10 hours per week away from home and main place of work, using ICT to do so
- self-employed teleworkers in SOHOs (small office/home offices)
- people who combine the above methods of telework

This definition is broader than the definitions used in some other surveys, which explains why the figures are somewhat high. But this inclusive approach does have the advantage of being representative of the reality of working life, rather than imposing arbitrary cut-offs (such as excluding those people who work less than 2 days per week at home).

One key distinction in the data from this survey is that made between "regular" and "supplementary" (or occasional) teleworkers. About a third of all teleworkers identified fall into the "supplementary" category. This distinction is important not only for determining the extent and limitations of current teleworking practice, but also for analysing trends. It seems that some 3 million Europeans are set up for teleworking, but they practice it on an occasional basis only.

This survey concluded that around two thirds of jobs have a significant degree of "teleworkability", and also reported high levels of interest in teleworking amongst employees. However, there appeared to be a continued reluctance within organisations to enthusiastically pursue these new working methods largely due to factors such as organisational culture, lack of knowledge, and inertia. The survey found that technological issues were less problematic for employers than previously reported, although concerns over data security remained.

Using the data from this survey, a model was developed to extrapolate a projection for the development of teleworking up to 2005. The findings indicated a continued increase in teleworking, with numbers of teleworkers in the European Union estimated to around 11% of the workforce.

Country	1999 (ACaTT)	2005 (estimate)
Denmark	10.5	19.4
Finland	16.8	29.4
France	2.9	4.8
Germany	6.0	12.6
Ireland	4.4	7.7
Italy	3.6	7.1
Netherlands	14.5	25.2
Spain	2.8	5.4
Sweden	15.2	24.3
UK	7.6	11.7
EU10	6.1	10.8

% of labour force teleworking (all teleworkers)

As these figures demonstrate, teleworking is a significant and growing practice, both within the UK and throughout Europe. It would therefore be wise for organisations to consider the introduction formal policies to cover homeworking, in order to ensure that both employers and employees are aware of all the implications of this working option. Firstly, however, this report will consider why homeworking has become a popular choice for an increasing number of employees and employers.

Section 3: The Business Case for Homeworking

There are many reasons why organisations decide to introduce more flexible working arrangements, but even amongst those who are proactive in introducing other methods, homeworking is frequently one of the last to be considered. As this is one of the methods which may have the highest initial cost outlay, this is not surprising. However it is also true that the benefits of homeworking can be wide-ranging and long-lasting, as well as providing short term solutions. Many prominent organisations have been actively promoting this approach for some time and have measured the benefits across a range of criteria over a significant time period.

Some of the benefits of homeworking include the following:

- **Improved recruitment and retention of staff**
 - Employers and employees alike identify flexible working as the most popular benefit for employee retention.
 - By offering the opportunity for employees to work from home, employers are more likely to appeal to staff (potential and existing) living further away from central office locations. As rising house prices and different lifestyle choices mean that many workers prefer to live in their chosen location, whilst undertaking more commuting to get to work, offering homeworking as an option could significantly increase the recruitment and retention power of an organisation.
 - Homeworking may also be particularly attractive to employees that are looking to balance family and work commitments. Introducing a homeworking scheme is one way to make work-life balance easier, particularly for those with caring responsibilities.
 - In the last few years the focus for homeworking has been on facilitating its combination with caring responsibilities, particularly since the Government introduced the right to request flexible working (The Employment Act, 2002).
 - Demographic forecasts show that the composition of the workforce has been changing for some time and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Current working arrangements, contracts and terms and conditions have been in place for many years and are no longer appropriate for some employees. Many people now have more complicated lifestyles than in the past with a range of responsibilities,

interests and cultural commitments that require a much more flexible approach to the way they work. Homeworking is one way in which an increasing number of employees could be enabled to participate more effectively in the workforce. For example, during the next 20 years, the dependent elderly will out-number the dependent young and an increasing number of employees will have eldercare as well as child-care responsibilities. In 1996, one adult in eight in Britain was looking after, or providing some regular service, for a sick or elderly person. This is not just an issue for women – nearly 3 million men in the United Kingdom have primary caring responsibilities. There are over one and a half million one-parent families in the UK today. The proportion of families with dependent children headed by a lone parent has increased over the last thirty years from less than 8% to approximately 20% in 1999.

- Employee expectations are changing – research by Roffey Park Management Centre (Glynn, 1999, *Enabling Balance: The Importance of Organisational Culture* and Glynn, 2000, *Work-Life Balance*), identified the importance of considering work-life balance for all employees, not simply those with family responsibilities, and suggested a new emphasis on the part of employees to achieve balance where possible across all areas of their life. The younger generation wanted not only a successful career, but also to enjoy time with friends, pursuing leisure activities and outside interests. Employers will need to recognise and meet these needs if they are to be successful in recruiting the best available staff from the total recruitment pool.

- **Reduced traffic congestion costs**

Greater mobility amongst the working population has led to substantial traffic growth and congestion in almost all areas of the UK. The costs of congestion to organisations and businesses include:

- employees arriving late
- the additional stress on staff (and the effect on productivity)
- the value of staff time spent en route to meetings
- the cost of missed or late meetings
- higher fuel and maintenance costs for company cars.

There are a range of measures that employers can take to reduce these congestion costs, including supporting car sharing, providing incentives for staff to cycle/walk to work or promoting public transport. However,

homeworking is possibly the most effective way to reduce costs, as it is the only one of these options that reduces the need to make journeys. A new report from Sun Microsystems and the Forum for the Future, *Encouraging Green Telework* noted "the environmental potential of teleworking is not being fully realised", and outlined the environmental benefits that could be delivered by teleworking.

"Telework on its own is not going to save the world - but it is an example of the sort of behaviour that the government should be encouraging. If companies are given the right incentives, if the government provides guidelines...above all if telework is made easy, then teleworking could make a significant contribution to sustainable development in the UK."

The report advocated that the Government should provide financial incentives for companies that promoted telework as part of corporate environmental policy, encourage green telework in the civil service and address environmental behaviour in the DTI's "Telework Guidance" document. In the meantime, employers were recommended to:

- take responsibility for the environmental impact of their employee's working patterns
- look to sustainable computing models to reduce duplication of equipment between home and work
- promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in the home.

Critics sometimes point to the environmental ill-effects of modern technologies, which have led Sun Microsystems to offer recommendations on minimising the adverse effects of technology. These include making effective use of materials from the manufacturing stage, extending product life and taking advantage of mobile devices which use less energy and material resources than desktop PCs.

Homeworking is also a way in which business travel can be reduced. In some organisations, mileage costs are substantial, but the use of initiatives such as videoconferencing could substantially reduce these costs. Organisations can calculate the potential benefits of this approach by calculating the cost of reducing business mileage by only 1,000 miles per employee per year. This will not only save a considerable amount of money in direct costs, but is also likely to have more indirect benefits, such as a reduction in the amount of time wasted on unnecessary meetings and less stressed, more productive employees.

- **Improved image**

Homeworking can be good for the image of an organisation. Many clients and customers identify with the positive messages (flexibility, innovation, desire to maximise workforce efficiency, etc) that introducing homeworking can send out. Additionally, homeworking may also be a means by which staff, particularly those working on a part-time basis, may be able to contribute more effectively to the organization, as they do not have to spend so much time commuting and attending meetings. Other organisations, particularly those from national and local government and other public sector bodies, are likely to value an organisation's commitment to more environmentally friendly travel arrangements, and this is also likely to prove to be a positive factor amongst the organisation's own staff. Evidence from our own Flexible Employment Options project indicated that even when people did not themselves wish to take advantage of flexible working, they had a more favourable opinion of those employers who put such arrangements in place.

- **More Effective Use of Office Space**

With office space increasingly at a premium, and with costs escalating, it makes very good commercial sense for employers to maximize the use of their office accommodation. Allowing staff to work from home, supported by practices such as hot desking or office sharing, should enable employers to fit more staff into the same space, or reduce costs by accommodating the same number of staff in less space. Once again, savings can be substantial, as the move towards homeworking at BT has shown (BT has 7,000 homeworkers, and saves £6,000 each per annum, which in this case adds up to a total saving of £42 million).

- **Car Parking Provision**

Employers and employees alike recognize the difficulties surrounding the issue of car parking and report that it is one of the problems most likely to raise extremely contentious and contradictory views. Homeworking can help to keep costs within manageable proportions by helping to ease pressure on existing parking facilities and controlling demand for new car parks.

- **Improved Productivity**

Evidence from a number of research studies, including the FEO project, indicated that more flexible working arrangements led to less time off from

work and higher productivity. Those studies which particularly focused upon homeworking tended to show the highest productivity gains:

For example:

- Amongst local authorities, a project involving Cambridgeshire County Council noted that 70% of those taking part in a homeworking scheme reported that they got more work done at home than in the office. Another initiative introduced by Merton Borough Council reported a 30% increase in productivity due to homeworking.
 - One UK private sector employer reported annual homework productivity savings of 20-30% (£4.2m per annum), whilst BT reported that the average number of visits made daily by its mobile professionals to clients rose by 33% through homeworking (Flexibility website, 'Implementing a flexible working project'.
 - The Motor Vehicle Administration Network in the USA reported a 27% increase in productivity from data processors as a result of homeworking, whilst American Express homeworkers produced 43% more business than office based workers (Maryland Department of Transportation, Commuter Connections, issue 4, volume 4, Autumn 2000).
- **Other Benefits**
 - Homeworking can provide a solution to one of the biggest problems identified by many employers – having uninterrupted thinking time, which can improve both quality of work and productivity.
 - Homeworking also tends to produce more satisfied workforces. In one large survey undertaken in the USA, 55% of homeworkers said they were more satisfied with their jobs after starting to work at home, compared with only 12% who said they were less happy, and 33% were as satisfied as before (1999 Telework America National Telework Survey).
 - Homeworking can also lead to staff taking less time off sick and less absenteeism. BT identified savings of £4 million per annum as a result of less sickness absence after the introduction of homeworking. For many staff, one of the biggest deciding factors about whether to take time off work at short notice is the difficulty of the journey to work. A particular example is where staff take time off for events such as family emergencies. Research undertaken in the USA has

indicated that, in most cases, whereas office workers tend to take a whole day off work even if the event has been resolved early in the day, home workers tend to go back to work.

Section 4: Homeworking in Higher Education Institutions

As has been previously noted, the use of homeworking as a flexible option is not as widespread as some other types of flexible working. However, within higher education, there is a long tradition of using homeworking as an informal method of working for particular staff such as academics and researchers. So are these the only groups of staff for which it is a potentially useful option or could it have a wider application for employees undertaking other roles?

There are various groups who can be defined as homeworkers, who can be broadly divided into the following groups:

- Workers who work almost exclusively from home (full time or part time)
- Workers who divide their work between home and the office
- Workers who are mobile or peripatetic, but primarily use their home as a base

The challenges faced by these workers vary according to the amount of time they spend away from the office. This means that there are different issues involved for workers based at home full-time than there are for those who work at home on an occasional basis, both for the workers and for their managers. However, for the purposes of this report, the general term of homeworking is used to denote work that staff within higher education can undertake at home rather than at their University base, and no distinction has been made according to which of these categories the member or staff may fit.

In 1997, the Commission on University Career Opportunity (CUCO) published guidelines on flexible working, including case studies and good practice examples. It is instructive that although there was a short section on homeworking and options allowing flexibility in location of work, there were no examples given, unlike for the majority of options. Then, as now, the take up of homeworking lags behind that of other types of flexible working, such as job share, flexitime, etc.

FEO Project Pilot Schemes, 2001-2003

The Flexible Employment Options project included the development of pilot schemes based at four higher education institutions where employees were

given the chance to apply for a range of flexible working options. These took place between October 2001 and April 2003 at the University of Birmingham, Canterbury Christ Church University College, De Montfort University and Staffordshire University.

At the beginning of the pilot, none of the HE institutions taking part in the scheme had a formal policy on homeworking, although there was some informal practice in a few departments. Homeworking has traditionally been confined to academic and management staff but in fact the pilot schemes indicated that many other roles may successfully incorporate some home working, frequently combined with other options such as flexitime, staggered hours and/or part-time working. Staff requests for homeworking tended to be related to work (as was the case in the DTI Work Life Balance Baseline Survey), such as to ease travel or to enable them to complete work in a quieter environment. Rarely were requests in order to combine work with fixed nursery/ school timings or childcare, and on the whole, participants did not want to work from home more than one or two days a week. Staff felt that they should be given more appreciation of their ability to manage their own workloads and working in a way to assist them to achieve their own. Access to and support for IT was an issue for some – one participant noted: *“If we are to work from home effectively, staff need to be provided with appropriate IT equipment and support.”*

FEO Project Audit of HEIs, 2000

In 2000, the FEO Project team identified a need to map accurately how much flexible working was being undertaken within the sector. Homeworking was one of the options asked about in the subsequent questionnaire. The survey received a response rate of 42%, with 50 returned from the 120 questionnaires distributed. Only one respondent (a post-1992 institution) had a formal policy on homeworking, but a further 29 had local informal arrangements in place. Six HEIs were considering introducing a formal policy, one had considered and rejected the implementation of a formal policy and 12 had no policy. One institution had local informal arrangements in place but was also considering the introduction of a formal policy. This exercise was repeated in 2004, and the results compared with those obtained in 2000.

FEO Project Research, 2004

Late in 2004, the FEO project carried out a further survey to identify the availability of the specific flexible working options – job share, homeworking and

flexitime. This questionnaire was more detailed, in order to form a view of the use of formal and informal schemes, the approximate numbers of employees involved and the groups of staff having access to each type of flexible working. Of the 132 questionnaires sent out, 64 were returned (a response rate of 48%). Although the survey respondents were not identical to those in the first survey, there was sufficient overlap to enable some comparisons to be made, as nearly 50% of the respondents to the 2001 survey also responded to the 2004 survey.

As with the previous survey, the results indicated that HEIs were far more likely to have a formal policy on flexitime or job share than homeworking. Research from the FEO project showed that from the sample of 64 institutions, only eight (13%) had a formal homeworking policy in place (this was still a significant increase from 2000, when only one institution had a formal policy in place). Of these, 5 had been in place for less than 2 years, 2 for between 2 and 4 years and only one for more than 5 years. Furthermore, informal homeworking arrangements were now reported to be much more widespread, with 45 institutions (70%) indicating that informal homeworking was done on a regular basis. In fact, only four respondents (6%) indicated that they did not have any employees who used homeworking, even on an ad-hoc basis.

Where a formal policy existed, homeworking was sometimes available to all groups of staff, although in one institution such arrangements were only available to research staff, in one all staff except clinical were included, and in three others both manual and clinical staff were excluded.

The survey also asked how many employees were covered by the formal policy. The size of institution having a formal policy varied in size from those with 560 employees up to 5500, with a mean size of approximately 2400 staff.

Equality and Diversity Initiatives in Higher Education, Coventry University, 2004

In 2004, researchers from Coventry University undertook to map equality and diversity initiatives in higher education, by means of a questionnaire distributed to all institutions in the UK. The Coventry team received 87 responses, of which only three specifically mentioned homeworking. This was in marked contrast with the 58 institutions (66%) that offered flexitime and 70 universities (80%) offering job share. Both Bournemouth University and the Central School of Speech and Drama noted that occasional homeworking was available as an option, and Coventry University mentioned a location-independent working project pilot scheme. In addition, a small number of other institutions reported that they had produced a comprehensive flexible working or work-life balance policy, which may have included the possibility of working from home.

Case studies

Below are a small selection of case studies taken from an HEI and from 2 other organisations outside the sector, to illustrate some of the many initiatives being undertaken with regard to homeworking provision.

1. Child Benefit Agency Telecommuting Scheme (Flexibility Website)

The Child Benefit Centre in Tyne and Wear processes over 60,000 incoming items each day and pays Government benefits to seven million customers. The telecommuting scheme was primarily introduced to improve retention, given that it takes up to six months to become a fully effective member of staff. The Centre was aware that much of the work currently produced by staff would be extremely suitable to be undertaken at home.

Who is the scheme for?	Staff processing child benefit awards
Public/Private Sector	Public sector (Government Department)
Most Common Working Pattern	2 days a week at home although some staff do 4 days
Equipment Provided	A fax, dedicated phone line and answerphone
Optional Extras	Desk and chair for those who would like them
Organisational Benefits	Average productivity improvements of 14% Speed and accuracy much improved Average increase in hours of 8 per week from part-time staff Improved retention
Personal Benefits	Less stress Improved morale
Issues identified	Increased importance of security and health and safety matters Some jealousy from colleagues Some difficulties from supervisors required to plan and structure more effectively

2. Nationwide Building Society (Flexible Working Article)

Who is the scheme for?	Primarily employees in areas of technology development, mortgage lending control and telephone assessment of job applicants
Public/Private Sector	Private Sector (Financial Services)
Most Common Working Pattern	One of two formal arrangements: Home based or split jointly between home and office
Equipment Provided	A laptop with modem and connection to corporate information system, mobile phone, printer, ISDN connection, direct internet access to own desktop
Optional Extras	Appropriate office equipment as required
Organisational Benefits	Staff have access to necessary information both from home and when they are on the move visiting clients. Improved retention Increased recruitment pool More suitable office accommodation available for some teams
Personal Benefits	Easier to match needs of the job with personal responsibilities More flexibility Able to match working style with individual preference
Issues identified	Need to ensure staff safety when out and about, so they are required to confirm when they have arrived home if they have been on the move during the day Health and safety issues and lone working need serious consideration and formal policies

Pilot Scheme – University of Birmingham

Who is the scheme for?	Staff in the Medical Education Unit, the Office of the Director of Personnel Services and Research and Enterprise Services
Public/Private Sector	Public sector (University)
Most Common Working Pattern	Most employees worked between a half day and one day a week from home
Equipment Provided	As this was a pilot scheme, no additional equipment was provided by the University
Optional Extras	
Organisational Benefits	Increased staff productivity and performance Reduction in stress, leading to an impact on attendance and retention Improved staff morale, leading to an impact on engagement and retention
Personal Benefits	Greater job satisfaction from increased productivity and/or performance Reduction in commuting time & associated costs Management of caring responsibilities Reduction in stress
Issues identified	Potential increased costs in overheads at home was regarded as the prime personal disadvantage of homeworking Loss of informal contact and spontaneous communication with colleagues was also seen as an issue

Section 5: The Benefits of Formal Policies

As noted in the last chapter, a large proportion of higher education institutions now offer some form of homeworking, although this is generally on an informal and/or ad hoc basis. Even where formal policies have been implemented, much informal practice still exists. The extent of informal practice suggests a considerable number of institutions recognise the benefits of homeworking and are prepared to consider it for at least some employees. However, it is clear from the available research that not all employees who seek or who could benefit from being able to work from home have access to this option, and the introduction of a formal policy could assist with this.

If formal systems are set up carefully, then they can operate much more effectively than informal systems. With a formal policy, there is a recognised procedure for managers to follow and both they and their staff understand clearly what is expected of them. The limits are well defined, as are the advantages for both parties and the penalties for abuse. This means that employees do not feel they are asking for special privileges, they feel the system is fairer as it can be applied more consistently, and they understand the process the manager will go through and know they will get a response. The arguments that generally support the use of formal policies for flexible working hold true for homeworking in that they are seen to be –

- Fair
- Transparent
- Effective
- Objective
- Easy to use
- Embedded in the culture

With the same set of rules for all employees, everyone has the same choice and control and there is no need necessarily to state why they wish to work a particular pattern or need a homeworking arrangement. No one needs to make a special case for working in this way, as applications should be evaluated in terms of their suitability for the effective achievement of business objectives.

Informal systems, although quick and useful for local situations and ad hoc requests, can be operated unfairly and are subjective, dependent on the attitudes and perceptions of local management and can therefore be inconsistent. This was one of the problems identified in the Flexible Employment Options audit. Staff may feel they need to be a special case to ask for a

homeworking arrangement. In addition, they may feel awkward about asking their line manager if they feel flexible working is not supported or is for “show” only.

Improved morale and productivity resulting from the introduction of homeworking is real and has been measured extensively within a number of organisations (see case studies on Child Benefit Centre, Nationwide Building Society, Birmingham University, and many others including BT and LloydsTSB, etc). For participants in the FEO pilot schemes, the existence of flexible working options such as homeworking had a psychologically positive impact even if they were not used to the fullest extent. Employees view their employer more favourably because their needs are being actively considered, and because they feel more positive about employers who consider their work-life balance. Formal policies have the added advantage of positively impacting upon the organisational culture, which is a key issue with a flexible option such as homeworking.

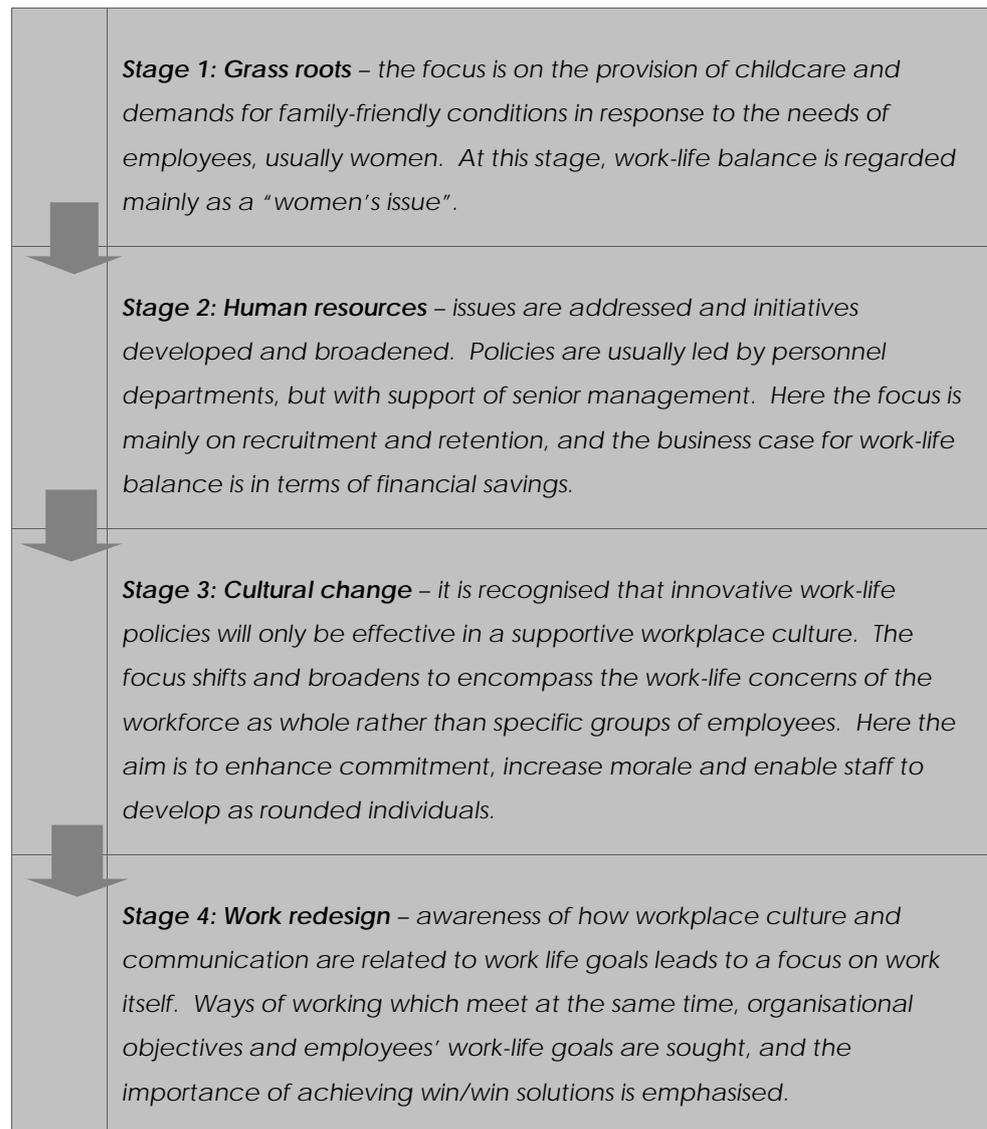
Organisational Culture

The cultural values of an organisation determine what work is undertaken and how employees perform their duties. This in turn affects the benefits that homeworking can offer an organisation. Homeworking should be consistent with, and ideally integrated with, the organisation’s strategic aims and values. A successful homeworking project needs to work effectively across all the organisation’s functional areas, with personnel/human resources, finance, facilities management and IT departments are having a particular input. For example, homeworking will involve making sure IT equipment is correctly specified (IT services), may have tax implications and is likely to impact upon travel expense claims (finance department), and may make it sensible to examine current working practices and related policies (personnel/human resources department). Some other relevant strategies are obvious – for example, there will clearly be health and safety implications, but others are less so. Homeworking could also mean that the institution is able to tailor its job advertising to make the most of the homeworking opportunities that are offered (staff recruitment strategy) and adapts its training activities to meet the needs of line managers (which impacts upon its staff development strategy). Locating a homeworking strategy in the broader context of university’s overall strategic direction also makes it more likely that senior management will support the project, which could have a major impact on success or otherwise of the scheme.

Although having a homeworking policy will meet the needs of some employees, there are a number of roles that are not suitable for this option. As with most

flexible options, homeworking is most effectively utilised as one of a range of options available to help employers as well as employees meet business objectives, while enabling individuals to manage other responsibilities or interests.

There is a recognised 4 stage work/life model that illustrates this change from a reactive approach to flexible working and a more considered cultural approach. It was developed in the USA and is outlined in “Work-life Benchmarking Framework” by Daniels, Lewis and McCarrahar (2000).



Although this is an American model, the process of development is also apparent within many UK organisations. The most difficult step to make is between stages 2 and 3, whereas many organisations at stages 3 and 4 reap the benefits of highly developed flexible working cultures, using homeworking in a more strategic way.

There is practical information on preparation, planning and implementing a formal homeworking scheme in the accompanying Guide to Good Practice, and a list of typical homeworking patterns in Appendix Two.

Section 6: Making Homeworking Work

For the majority of employees and managers, the experience of homeworking is very positive and there are relatively few problems. However, it is important to recognise that homeworking will work better for some staff tasks and some individuals than others. The following list should help organisations and managers assess to what extent particular tasks and job roles are likely to be feasible for homeworking:

- the degree to which work can be sent to and from the employee's home with ease, speed and confidentiality
- how much face-to-face contact is required with managers, colleagues, clients, etc
- how important it is to access equipment, materials, files etc. that are situated only at the workplace,

and

- whether and how much the task requires internet and remote access capability.

Apart from the tasks employees carry out, other points to consider when determining staff suitability for homeworking are characteristics such as self discipline, self sufficiency, trustworthiness, maturity, time management, communication and IT skills. Some staff will value day-to-day interpersonal interaction more than others, and this also needs to be taken into account. It may be preferable to choose staff who fit the 'desirable characteristics' for homeworking already, thus reducing associated training needs. However, if staff are keen on flexible working practices, it may be worth considering providing training for those who need it, in order to ensure that employees with suitable job roles are able to take advantage of homeworking if this also meets the organisation's needs. Staff who work from home also need a suitable location with enough space and privacy to work undisturbed in a healthy, safe environment, and advice on various issues such as health and safety, data protection, tax and insurance.

As well as the right type of job role and tasks, and staff with appropriate attributes, it also helps to have the "right" type of managers. Those who are best at managing staff working from home are usually skilled at supervision and communication and tend to trust the professionalism and integrity of their employees. They are good at setting objectives, agreeing appropriate performance standards and ensuring work is done to agreed deadlines.

Crucially, they also tend to manage performance by results rather than by relatively arbitrary input measures such as hours worked.

Elements of a Homeworking Policy

A typical homeworking policy will include many of the following:

- Tasks/location/times/hours worked
- Contact details
- Duration of agreement (e.g. pilot period)
- Changes in existing contractual terms and conditions
- Reporting/communication arrangements
- Supervisory/mentoring/management support arrangements
- Time recording, work monitoring, agreed work outputs and performance review
- Appraisal processes and career progression
- Grievance procedures
- Sickness/leave notification procedure
- Health and safety responsibilities
- Security / information confidentiality/passwords and access
- Authorisation of expenses (e.g. lighting, phone)
- Arrangements for provision of/upkeep of relevant equipment
- Misuse of equipment/theft of or damage to equipment
- Relevant insurance arrangements (theft, third party liability, employer's liability)
- Training

Key Points

- **Health and Safety**

Firms take widely varying approaches to health and safety when employees start working from home. Some insist upon undertaking a home visit, doing a formal risk assessment, and may even provide ergonomic furniture. Some do not give any consideration at all to health and safety issues. Even when a home office has been properly set up, safe working practices may deteriorate over time. Managers should also bear in mind that the home presents more safety hazards than any corporate office, and that individuals have a tendency to accept far lower safety standards at home than they would tolerate in a more traditional working environment.

Before setting up an employee to work from home, a health and safety officer or trained manager should visit and do a risk assessment. If large numbers are involved, this can be done by the homeworker his/herself using an appropriate checklist, but it is preferable that an impartial person

undertakes the initial assessment. The worker should be trained, be involved in the assessment, understand the signs of repetitive strain injury (RSI) and receive regular updates on health and safety as a reminder. Any pain or discomfort should be addressed immediately to minimise any long term damage. Adaptive technology is readily available and should be provided as soon as a problem starts to become apparent. The risk assessment should also consider whether the employee should be classified as a "lone worker" e.g. if they are conducting door-to-door survey work, or working in individual homes unaccompanied, and advice and guidance offered for safe working in these circumstances.

- **Furniture and Equipment**

The first items of furniture and equipment that need to be introduced into the home office are the desk and chair, as these are the basic essentials for any homeworker. An adequate office chair is essential for the worker's long-term physical well-being, particularly if they will be sitting at a desk for long periods and using a keyboard. Both the height and the back rest should be adjustable, and the chair should be stable and provide adequate back support. Workers should be encouraged to use a foot rest if necessary, and not under any circumstances to use an ordinary upright dining chair.

It is also important that the desk is appropriate for the job. For PC use, the height of the surface of the desk should be about 690 cms, so that the home row of the keys is about 720 cms off the floor. Just as important is to ensure that the desk is deep enough for the computer monitor to be placed straight ahead of the person using it. Squashing in a PC on to a small table or desk or placing the monitor at an angle can cause neck and arm aches. Many homeworkers use a laptop computer, for ease of data transfer from one work location to another. Laptops are really designed for short periods of usage and not for workers who spend much of their time using IT. If a laptop is to take the place of a desktop in regular use, it is important that a docking station and separate keyboard and wrist rest are used, in order to avoid physical problems. The big risk of frequent use of a keyboard, particularly a laptop, is repetitive strain injury, a potentially very painful condition which can best be avoided by ensuring that equipment is positioned correctly for the person using it (see health and safety above). These, and many other relevant potential health issues for the home-based worker are covered in an informative free booklet *Homeworking*, produced by the government's Health and Safety Executive.

It is also important to consider at an early stage what facilities will be required for use by homeworkers when they are in the office. Workers need to feel welcome and part of the team, so their space should be as inviting and attractive as those areas used by other staff, and should allow enough storage space for coats, bags, etc. Consideration should also be given to how staff will access facilities such as photocopiers.

- **IT Equipment/Technological Aspects**

Successful homeworking will involve using existing equipment effectively, but also may involve the purchase of new equipment. Although homeworking does not always require information technology (for example, working from home making comments on a colleague's draft report), most homeworkers will need access to IT equipment at some point in their working lives, and many will use this on a regular basis. This is therefore a crucial element to consider at the planning stage.

Many home-based workers have a second, work-only, telephone line installed at home and use their existing phone simply for personal calls. This means that work calls don't intrude into an employee's personal life when they are not working. BT and other telecoms companies offer a number of additional services, which may be worth considering. These include call redirect (for example, to a mobile number) and call minder (voicemail) options. For major internet usage or data communication, ISDN and broadband offer much faster transmission times than dial up services, and are now available from a wide range of operators. They also have the advantage of leaving the homeworkeer's phone line free whilst they are connected to the internet, and will therefore remove the need for a second line. Such a solution may, however, not be appropriate in more remote areas, which frequently have less access to broadband services, as well as poor or non-existent mobile phone network coverage.

It would be sensible to consider the linkages between various pieces of equipment, particularly in a large and complex organisation. The equipment is likely to include remote access infrastructure, office technology, homeworking equipment, and mobile working equipment. It may also include servers (to allow information to be centrally held and distributed) and cabling (for either voice or data). Other types of equipment include more sophisticated technology, such as teleconferencing phones, videoconferencing equipment and/or specialist computer hardware and software, and ideally all of these should operate in a mutually supportive and coherent fashion. In this respect, the overall IT strategy may be crucial to the

success of the institution's homeworking initiative. However, it is important to appreciate that getting these technical aspects working effectively can sometimes be a long and involved process, the time allowed for which should not be underestimated.

- **Legal Issues**

- Planning permission. Government guidelines state that planning permission for part-business use "is not normally required where the use of part of the dwelling house for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling" (Planning Policy Guideline 4). A homeworker could start to encounter problems if their activities lead to a considerable increase in traffic to their home, if neighbours complain of unreasonable disturbance or if the work generally involves activities which are unusual in a residential area. However, this is unlikely to be an issue with the types of activities with which this report is concerned.
- Business rates. Employees could be liable for business rates if an area of their house is used exclusively for work - some people have claimed that if a particular room in a house is used purely to work, that this could be interpreted in such a way. However, business rates should not be a problem where the work use of any area of an employee's residence is also used for domestic purposes, and this is also generally a theoretical issue, given the way in which most homeworking operates in reality.
- Legal restrictions on working from home. An employee will need to ensure that any mortgage lender (if they have a mortgage) or landlord (if they are renting) has no objection to their plans to work from home.
- Electricity and gas. The Telework Association has encountered a small number of occasions when utility companies attempt to charge business tariffs for electricity or gas supplies, but this is usually not an issue.
- Insurance. In many instances, standard household contents insurance policies do not cover equipment used for business purposes. Indeed, homeworkers may even risk invalidating their whole policy if they fail to disclose to their insurer that they are working from home. A number of brokers have specialist insurance packages for home-based workers, but the cheapest route is usually to try to insure work equipment through an ordinary household policy. If an employee's current insurance company is reluctant to help, homeworkers may fare better by shopping around.

- Capital gains tax. Generally, no liability arises when an employee sells their main residence. Accountants have traditionally pointed out that if part of the building has been used exclusively for work, then the owner could lose the CGT exemption on that part of the house. In practice, however, this problem is once again more theoretical than real for most people, partly because of the generous CGT annual exemption provisions which take many people out of the scope of liability altogether. Full relief is in any case normally available if the work area of your home has also been used for domestic use.

Section 7: Recommendations

The following are the major issues that should be taken into account when considering the introduction of a homeworking scheme –

- **Pattern of work** - for each homeworker, you will need to agree what their pattern of work will be. For example, will the individual work from home regularly one or two days a week? Will s/he always work from home on the same day or vary this according to the particular demands of their work for that week or month.
- **Person and Job Suitability** – consideration must be given to ensuring as far as possible that homeworkers will be self-motivated and disciplined, and able to ask for help and support when required. Arrangements to minimise isolation and enable good communication must be put in place and regularly reviewed, taking into account the views of colleagues and customers as well as the homeworker and their manager.
- **Physical Home Office Environment** – including proper consideration of health and safety, data protection, confidentiality of data (both electronic and hard copies), and privacy
- **Ongoing Health and Safety Issues** – including risk assessments, accidents, first aid, and measures to avoid the occurrence of repetitive strain injury or any other work related problems
- **Provision of Furniture and Equipment** – agreement must be reached on who will be responsible for the purchase and maintenance of furniture and equipment, including IT equipment, for homeworkers.
- **IT/Telephone Equipment** – including responsibility for purchase, maintenance and support for IT equipment, access to any shared data sources, connectivity, and consideration of the need for dedicated work lines/installation of broadband services
- **Communication** – agreement must be reached with all relevant people about how and when communication will take place (e-mail/phone/meetings) and how enquiries will be handled whilst members of the team are working at home
- **Terms and Conditions** – including contractual matters, travel expenses payments/base location, hours of work (and any agreed flexible

arrangements), allowances and expenses directly related to homeworking, appraisal and performance, training and development

- **Legal Issues** – employer's and employee's liability, home insurance, mortgage and tenancy agreements, taxation including local taxation

Section 8: Conclusions

- Homeworking schemes can work very effectively, but they need careful planning and preparation before they are introduced. This flexible option, above all others, has the greatest potential for both savings and expenditure for the organisation, so it is crucial that schemes are realistically costed and adequate support networks are in place to support homeworkers. Even with the required outlay for equipment, furniture, etc, homeworking schemes can produce cost savings, particularly where institutions are considering downsizing and reducing the amount of land and buildings they own or lease.
- To ensure that a homeworking arrangement succeeds there are critical factors that apply. These include ensuring that both the manager and the employee have clear objectives and a shared understanding of what outputs are to be produced, and both are comfortable working using virtual management.
- If the correct approach is adopted, homeworking can be utilised for a wide variety of roles. This method of working should not be regarded as a perk, available only to particular staff groups or individuals, but as a legitimate style of working which can improve productivity for a whole range of jobs across the spectrum within the institution.
- The support of senior managers is crucial if homeworking schemes are to succeed. However, this is true of most types of flexible working.
- When introducing a homeworking policy, there are certain steps that should be followed:
 - Define the rationale for introducing the policy
 - Identify the potential benefits for both the employer and the employees
 - Consider any possible issues for the employer and the employees
 - Design a transparent, flexible and workable policy that meets the institution's needs
 - Consult widely and communicate effectively
 - Implement the policy
 - Promote the policy
 - Monitor, review and adapt the policy as required

Appendix One - Bibliography

Altman, I & Low, S (Eds) (1992) *Place Attachment. Human Behaviour and Environment: Advances in Theory and Research*, New York, Plenum Press.

Commission on University Career Opportunity (CUCO) (1997) *Flexible Working in Universities and Higher Education Colleges*, CVCP

Croner's Flexible Working Practices, Various Publications

Daniels, L, Lewis S and McCarraher, L, (2000) *Work-Life Benchmarking Framework*, Work-Life Research Centre, UK

Department for Education and Employment (2000) *Work-Life Balance: A Baseline Study*, London, DfEE Publications

Department for Trade and Industry (2001) *The Essential Guide to Work Life Balance*, London, DIT Publications

Duxbury, L, Higgins, C and Neufeld, D (1998) *Telework and the Balance Between work and Family: Is Telework Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution*, in M Igbaria and M Tan (Eds) *The Virtual Workplace*. Idea Group, UK

Dwelly, T and Bennion Y (2003) *Time to Go Home: Embracing the Homeworking Revolution*, London, The Work Foundation

Felstead, A and Jewson, N (2000) *In work, at home*, London, Routledge

Foegen, J (1993) *Telexploitation*, *Labour Law Review Journal*, May, pp 53-61

Friedman, D and Johnson, A, *Moving from Programs to Culture Change: the Next Stage for the Corporate and Family Agenda*, in S Parasuraman and J Greenhaus (Eds) (1997) *Integrating Work and Family. Challenge and Choices*, Quorum Publications, Westport, CT, USA

Glynn, C, (1999) *Enabling Balance – the Importance of Organisational Culture*, Roffey Park Management Institute, UK

Glynn, C, (2000) *Work-Life Balance, Careers and the Psychological Contract*, Roffey Park Management Institute, UK

Gottlieb, B H, Kelloway, E K, and Barham, E (1998) *Flexible Work Arrangements: Managing the Work – Family boundary*, John Wiley, Chichester

Hill, J., Hawkins, A. and Miller, B. (1996) *Work and Family in the Virtual Office Perceived Influences of Mobile Telework*, *Family Relations*, Vol.45 pp. 293-301.

Holt, H and Thaulow, (1996) *Formal and Informal Flexibility in the Workplace*, in S.Lewis and J Lewis (Eds), *The Work-Family Challenge. Rethinking Employment*

Huws, U (1994) *Home Truths: Key Results from a National Survey of Homeworkers*, National Group on Homeworking.

Kompast, M. and I. Wagner (1998) *Telework: Managing Spatial, Temporal and Cultural Boundaries*, in P.J. Jackson and J.M.v.d. Wielen (Eds) *Teleworking:*

- International Perspectives. From Telecommuting to the Virtual Organisation*, pp 93-117, London, Routledge
- Labour Market Trends* (2002) London, Stationery Office
- Lamond, D (2000) Personality and Telework. In K. Daniels, D. Lamond, P. Standen (Eds.)
- Lewis, S and Lewis J (Eds) (1996), *The Work-Family Challenge. Rethinking Employment*
- Managing Telework: Perspectives from Human Resource Management and Work Psychology*, Business Press, Thomson Learning, UK
- Moore, J. (2000a) Placing home in context, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20 (3), pp207-218
- NATFHE (2002) *Overworked and Undervalued*, NATFHE Publications
- Nippert-Eng, C. (1995) *Home and work: Negotiating Boundaries in Everyday Life*, London, University of Chicago Press
- Olson, M.H. and Primps, S.B. (1984) Working at Home with Computers: Work and Nonwork Issues. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 40, No 3, pp97-112
- Phizacklea, A and Wolkowitz, C (1995) *Homeworking Women: Gender, Race and Class at Work*, London, Sage
- Qvortrup, L. (1998) 'From Teleworking to Networking: Definitions and Trends', in P.J. Jackson and J.M.v.d. Wielen (Eds) *Teleworking: International Perspectives. From Telecommuting to the Virtual Organisation*, pp 21-39, London, Routledge
- Sullivan, C. (2000) Space and the intersection of work and family in homeworking households, *Community work and family*, 3 (2) 185-204
- Sullivan, C. and Lewis, S (2001) Home-based telework, gender and the synchronization of work and family: Perspective of teleworkers and their co-residents. *Gender, Work and Organisation*. Vol 8, No 2, April
- Tremblay, D-G (2002) *Balancing Work and Family with Telework? Organizational Issues and Challenges for Women and Managers* Women in Management Review 17, pp 157-170
- TUC (2000), *Work Life Balance*, TUC Publications
- UCEA (2002), *Recruitment and Retention in UK Higher Education: A Survey and Case Studies*, UCEA

Appendix Two – Typical Homeworking Patterns

- Occasional homeworking – a member of staff works from home on an occasional, ad-hoc basis, usually in order to complete specified items of work. This pattern is quite common but tends to be undertaken on an informal basis
- Split week – working from home regularly on one, two or three days a week is a common pattern. Its popularity lies in its ability to deliver the benefits of homeworking without sacrificing the social aspect of work, and is suitable for a large number of roles, many of which require the delivery of various different types of work. This enables homeworking to be used as appropriate for work such as report writing, drafting documents, working with figures and other work that can most effectively be produced in a quiet environment.
- Based at home full time - this is popular with a minority of people, but is not the preferred choice of most, due to the problems of isolation and social exclusion identified in the report
- No fixed schedule – this option is rare as it requires very good organisational skills and is frequently not easy to manage within teams or with customers. It can however potentially be very flexible for an organisation that requires very innovative working practices and has highly skilled and confident virtual managers.

Appendix Three – Issues for Homeworking Employees

Many employees will regard homeworking as a potentially beneficial prospect because of their caring responsibilities. In 1996, one adult in eight in Britain was looking after, or providing some regular service, for a sick or elderly person, not to mention the large numbers of the working population with responsibility for children. Caring responsibilities are not just falling upon women, although they do of course carry the majority of the caring burden - almost 3 million men in the United Kingdom are carers. However, although homeworking can be a great benefit for those juggling work and caring responsibilities, it is important for both employers and employees to understand that to combine homeworking with caring for young children at the same time is NOT possible. You may wish to ask employees to provide written confirmation that they have adequate care arrangements in place, and for details of what these entail, when you are drawing up the precise details of the proposed homeworking "contract", whether this be formal or informal in nature.

Many experts on flexible working believe that it is helpful for people working from home to re-create their office environment, which includes making everyone aware of what his or her manager expects from him or her. Employees working from home benefit from some degree of flexibility in the hours they work, but both they and their employers need to be completely clear on what outcomes are expected from them and the timescales to which they are operating. Some people feel very fortunate and are regarded by their colleagues as such, which may lead to them feeling guilty and working too long hours.

Conversely, once the novelty of homeworking has worn off even the most mature and steady employees can suffer occasional lapses or a major crisis of self-discipline. They may be discouraged by the fact that no colleagues are available to greet them first thing in the morning, and they may miss the gossip and banter that provide stimulation and interest to the day. To counteract this, workers should be encouraged to keep in regular contact and drop into the office, as well as attending formal on-site meetings, especially if they are based from home for a substantial part of the week or full time. Managers should talk openly and honestly about self-discipline at the start of the homeworking arrangement and at appraisals, and make experienced homeworkers or homeworking champions available as mentors.

Working short hours or long hours need not be a problem - in fact freedom from the clock is one of the benefits of homeworking. The solution to uncertainty about hours is to be very clear about expectations, and manage by results. But results-based management brings its own problems, not least of which is, in the first place, setting clear targets that are aligned with corporate objectives and business needs, and which the individual understands.

Needless to say, it is particularly important for homeworkers to discuss their plans with their spouse or partner. Just as retirement can be a challenging time for relationships if it means that both partners find themselves at home all day, so too a decision to work from home can bring similar tensions. Indeed, in some respects, these problems are harder to adjust to than those of traditional retirement. Most people who work successfully from home will say that, to be effective, they have to shut out normal domestic distractions and focus on the job in hand. But, if this is to be possible, their partners and other family members also need to understand this.

Keeping a good work/life balance is the secret of working from home, and it is not always easy. Some people find that their work invades all aspects of their personal life: business emails are read and replied to late in the evening, for example, or work reports cover every available table and desk in the house. The well known businessman Sir John Harvey-Jones described how he was unable to resist the urge to rush to the home fax machine every time he heard a new message arriving. On the other hand, some people find it impossible to concentrate on work because of all the everyday domestic things such as the washing or gardening, which seem to be crying out to be done. It takes a strong minded person to create a sensible balance between what sometimes seem to be competing demands and this is one of the major challenges for homeworkers.

Creating barriers between work and home life is a good survival mechanism – such barriers can involve both time and space. Not many people go as far as the man who put on his business suit each day, let himself out the front door, walked round the side of the house and came in again by the back door because it helped, he said, to separate his home life from his work life. On the other hand, it is obviously common sense to ensure that you do have enough space to keep your work separate from home life. If possible, try to have a self-contained study or spare room that can be left, and if necessary locked, when work is finished for the day. Working on the dining room table is a bad idea for health and safety reasons, as indicated in the report, but also because of the tidying-up necessary every time people want to eat or you want to invite friends round for dinner!

Appendix 4

Flexible Employment Options Project



Organisation

Name

Telephone

E-mail address

1. Approximately how many employees (headcount) do you have in your organisation?

(Please include all permanent and temporary staff but not casual workers or part time hourly paid lecturers)

Formal Policies

2. Do you have a formal policy for any of the following:

(please tick as appropriate)

	Yes	No	Don't know
▪ Job Share			
▪ Flexitime			
▪ Home-working			

3. How many years has each one been in place?

(please tick as appropriate)

	Less than 2 years	2-4 years	5 years or more	Don't know
▪ Job Share				
▪ Flexitime				
▪ Home-working				

4. Which staff groups does each policy apply to?

(please tick as appropriate)

	Academic staff	Admin/ support staff	Management/ Professional/ Academic related staff	Manual staff	Research staff	Clinical Staff
■ Job Share						
■ Flexitime						
■ Home-working						

* Definitions of each group of staff can be found at the end of the questionnaire.

5. Approximately how many employees within your organisation currently do any of the following under a formal policy?

■ Job share	
■ Use flexitime	
■ Work from home on a regular basis (e.g. once a week/month)	
■ Work from home on an ad hoc basis	

6. Do you have employees who use any of the following on an informal basis:

(please tick as appropriate)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
■ Job Share			
■ Use flexitime/Toil (time off in lieu)			
■ Work from home on a regular basis (e.g. once a week/month)			
■ Work from home on an ad hoc basis			

If yes for any of the above, go to question 7, If no or don't know for all 4, go to question 8

7. Approximately how many employees within your organisation do any of the following under an informal policy?

- Job Share
- Use flexitime/Toil (time off in lieu)
- Work from home on a regular basis (e.g. once a week/month)
- Work from home on an ad hoc basis

8. Is there anything unusual about your flexitime scheme, e.g. no core hours, very early start or finish?

Yes Details _____

N/A _____

Academic	Staff on academic contracts primarily undertaking a lecturing/teaching role up to and including professors
Research	Staff on research contracts primarily undertaking a research role
Manual	Staff undertaking a practical role such as cleaners, gardeners, drivers, security staff, catering and craft workers
Management/Professional Academic Related staff	Staff primarily undertaking a management role, such as senior administrators, managers, heads of department, and academic related staff (usually those earning over £25,000)
Admin/Support	Staff undertaking a support role such as clerical and secretarial staff, technicians, and junior administrators (usually those earning less than £25,000)
Clinical	Staff undertaking a clinical role, such as doctors, nurses and physiotherapists