

# Beyond Policy:

ensuring flexible working is a lived  
experience

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# Working Families

to create a world where work works for people, families and the economy

- ▶ Work with individuals through providing advice and information to parents and carers
- ▶ Work with employers to create family friendly flexible/agile workplaces: benchmark, advice, training, profile
- ▶ Work with government and policy makers on shaping legislation, policy and practice

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# Why flexible working?

- ✓ Better alignment of workforce with demand
- ✓ Recruitment & retention
- ✓ Cost savings
- ✓ Engagement, performance & productivity
- ✓ Wellbeing & resilience
- ✓ Diversity & gender
- ✓ Career progression
- ✓ Expectation & demand

# Embedding flexible working: change the culture

- ✓ Business case/benefits
- ✓ Lead from the top
- ✓ Change the conversation
- ✓ Leader/manager education, support and training
- ✓ Communications strategy
- ✓ Monitor, measure impact,

# Flexible Employment at UEL – A case study

- the current picture at UEL
- our plans to address identified issues and barriers
  
- Links to:
  - Athena SWAN
  - Equal pay
  - Workforce development
  - Staff engagement
  - Recruitment and retention

Work-life balance is ...	Flexible working is ...
a background issue that gets in the way of work and an issue that line managers need to work around on an individual by individual basis. The organisation supports the individual if required.	a legal obligation to specific employee groups only
is part of life. It is the role of an employer and or line managers to proactively encourage and support employee wellbeing (recognising that teams and line managers need help to manage)	an integral part of the organisational strategy and a means of improving operational effectiveness
a means of addressing structural social inequalities, such as low pay and job quality.	

# Flexible Employment at UEL



Athena SWAN self-assessment process:

- Gender Equality Survey
- One to one discussions

Working Families Benchmark exercise

Qualitative feedback example:

“I believe that focusing on outputs and achieving our goals, rather than hours and modes of working would be more productive, and improve motivation and effectiveness”

Table 5.17 – Q.12.4 (GES): ‘The working culture in my School / Service provides me with the flexibility, understanding and trust to enable me to balance my home and work commitments.’

















% of respondents providing a positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree)	All UEL	STEMM	AHSSBL	Services
	  72%    59%	  59%    62%	  82%    40%	  74%    73%

Table 5.23 – Q.12.11 (GES): ‘It is possible to progress in my School / Service if you work part-time or flexibly’

% of respondents providing a positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree)	All UEL	STEMM	AHSSBL	Services
	  34%    30%	  29%    30%	  24%    25%	  44%    34%

(Note on the above – a high % responded to this statement ‘Neither agree or disagree’, for all UEL 42%M / 39% F)



# Athena SWAN Action Plan

Develop a more inclusive flexible working environment for all support and academic staff through facilitating culture change and providing more supportive processes and networks for parents and carers

Build capacity / **resources** to support development of Career Break / Flexible Working support for staff

Develop **cultural change** strategy which will drive a more supportive family friendly environment consistently across all Schools and services

Develop and **promote** improved guidance on family friendly policies and benefits

Investigate, develop and implement a Parent / Carers Network at UEL to better **support** staff and as a potential benefit to new staff.

# Policy review and promotion

Read more about work-life balance stories from the HR team.



Being allowed to work 9am to 3pm allows me to make breakfast for my daughter Harriet and discuss current affairs that preoccupy a six year old and a middle aged man. Working desks can host a little out of 6 with their kids and breakfast table really helps me to keep in touch. I also drive into work and leaving a bit later helps with my journey. The HR team see a bunch of early starters so this fits in nicely with my colleagues and of course I am always available to arrive earlier if required.  
*Graig Price, Senior HR Manager (Strategy and Change)*

When we found out we were expecting my first thought was, how long will I get off to spend time with the new baby? Two weeks for parental leave was not enough as I really wanted to be around for the baby's first couple of months! Shared parental leave was ideal in this case. I took 28 weeks to be around for Zak's first 5 months and really experience all the wonderful things that come with being a new parent.

**Parental leave - how will you share yours?**

From 1st April 2015, parents can share 52 weeks of parental leave with their baby, any way they like.



*Marianne, Equality and Diversity Manager*

I came back from maternity leave last February, at the time contracted to work 2.5 days per week. I was able to work the 0.5 at home. This really helped adjusting back to work especially as my son was only 5 months old. I have recently increased to 4 days per week. I still work at home alternate Wednesdays with my partner working at home the other Wednesdays which saves on over 3 hours commuting and means we can drop our older son off at school. He started reception class last year, we were able to join him for the ten minute parent / child reading session before school and still be at the desk by 9am. I also find these days really effective for working on something that requires lots of concentration.  
*Clare Mayes, Athena SWAN Project Officer*



I started out working Mon-Wed but realised after I came back from maternity leave that it made more sense for me to cover Wed-Fri. Having one of us available 5 days a week is really helpful to getting my job done. Incentively my colleagues and ourselves when I was off on a fairly urgent piece of work so it means I'm more productive when I'm here and happily running was less busy. Thurs and Fri and Friday's at work seem quieter too so I tend to get a lot more done!  
*Jane Young, HR Project Manager*




I used to work the hours of 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday. However, following the time change in breakfast club provision at my daughter's school, I have had to shift my start time to 8:30am allowing me to drop her off at school every morning. I take half hour lunch breaks each day so that I can leave the office promptly at 4:00pm to allow time for pick up at the end of the school day. By shifting my working hours, I am still able to fulfil my role both as a full-time mum and an employee!

*Hannah, HR in the Heart of HR*



Myself and a few colleagues get together to play at basketball each week at Sports Dock. It's a shared interest, away from work commitments, a good way to build team spirit, make sure I take my lunch break and if I'm having a good day I even win the odd match!  
*Julie Willis, HR Project Manager*

# Next Steps

# Resources



# Culture Change

