



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Council adopts smarter working to achieve efficiencies

As part of Cardiff Council's ongoing efficiency agenda, employees from administration to managers, grounds staff to road workers, are being given the opportunity to explore flexible working as a way of becoming a more efficient and responsive public service.

Working in partnership with Chwarae Teg on their *Work Life Balance in Wales* initiative, the Council's Work Life Balance (WLB) Strategy will be encouraging employees and managers to adopt more flexible ways of working to help them achieve a better Work Life Balance.

In addition to the range of flexible working arrangements currently in place, a number of flexible working policies will be developed and implemented as part of the WLB Strategy including Homeworking, a revised Flexible Working Hours Pilot Scheme and WLB Team Based Solutions. These are designed to improve services for some 320,000 people living in the Capital and enhance business efficiency.

"Our programme is ultimately aimed at making our business more flexible to meet the needs of employees, the citizens of Cardiff and users of our services", said Philip Lenz, Chief Human Resources Officer at Cardiff Council.

"Once fully operational it will be key to cementing the Council's reputation as an employer of choice and as a means to support our People Strategy, in particular improving employee engagement and achieving business efficiencies."

Progressing in partnership with the Council's WLB Project Group, which includes Trade Unions and Service Area Management Representatives, HR and Chwarae Teg, the first phase of the Strategy aimed to raise awareness of the current WLB policies already in place and identified Team Based Solutions as a possible solution for employees who cannot necessarily access the Flexible Working Hours Scheme.

Philip said: "We're really encouraged by initial interest expressed by employees into the various ways they can take ownership of their own working arrangements, and consequently, how the Council can become more efficient as a public service provider."

According to Chwarae Teg, the organisation leading the flexible working agenda in Wales, there are 31,000 public sector employees and 1,600 workers in the private sector now working for companies with clear policies as a direct result of the *Work Life Balance in Wales* initiative.

Since 2002, 10 public sector organisations have received consultancy and training support from Chwarae Teg, with 31,551 employees at all levels now having access to work life balance initiatives. Chwarae Teg has also trained 150 public sector managers in how to successfully manage a flexible work force.

Fifty-five SMEs have been directly assisted through the initiative and 1,670 employees are successfully adapting smarter working practices.

Marcella Maxwell, Chief Executive of Chwarae Teg said: "The public sector accounts for almost a quarter of total employment, so it's very encouraging to see organisations such as Cardiff Council championing the wider adoption of flexible working at all levels across the authority.

"The revolution in changing working practices is set to grow with evidence suggesting that offering flexibility in working methods for all employees is a sure fire way to encourage the best and the brightest talent to seek out such organisations for employment. In an increasingly competitive global economy forward thinking businesses are embracing smarter working practices as a way of achieving their business objectives."

At Chwarae Teg's recent *Better Balance Better Business* conference, business leaders from the CBI, TUC, IOD and FSB came together to promote the wider adoption of flexible working by all employers in Wales, acknowledging it as a means to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Welsh business.

Chwarae Teg intends to build on the positive achievements through its work with public, private and voluntary sector employers to ensure as many companies and workers are able to benefit from the full range of smarter working practices as possible.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors:**

The Work Life Balance in Wales programme was introduced in 2002 through a partnership between Chwarae Teg and the Welsh Assembly Government. It is open to any size organisation seeking support and advice on how to introduce more flexibility to the workplace. More information can be found at [www.wlbinwales.org.uk](http://www.wlbinwales.org.uk).

**About Chwarae Teg:**

Chwarae Teg was established in 1992 to support, develop and expand the role of women in the Welsh economy and has undertaken a number of projects which have directly assisted women in the areas of enterprise, employment and learning.