

PRESS RELEASE

ISSUED: 10 October 2007



## Best practice achieved for Swansea charity

A leading Swansea-based charity is bucking the trend that says small organisations struggle to allow staff to work flexibly.

In fact, for Tai Esgyn the organisation's continued success has been down to being able to make sure all their staff have a great balance between work and life contradicting recent research\* that suggests that SMEs are falling behind larger organisations in their reluctance to introduce work life balance policies.

Benefiting from a higher productivity rate, reduced absenteeism and a more motivated workforce, the 19-person strong charity is now hoping to see further improvements as it implements increased flexible working and work life balance (WLB) policies.

Based in Plasmarl, Tai Esgyn provides a range of support and accommodation services to people with mental health problems within Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. As well as celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the charity has also recently formalised its flexible working policies with the help of Chwarae Teg, Wales' driving force behind the Welsh Assembly Government's work life balance agenda.

Since implementing WLB policies the charity has witnessed numerous business benefits. Angela Medway-Smith, corporate services manager at Tai Esgyn said: "As a small organisation, it's been one of the most successful and effective human resources initiatives we've ever introduced. It goes to show that organisations of any size can do it, as long as they are realistic and understand that one size doesn't fit all – WLB policies need to be matched to the needs of your businesses and your staff."

Tai Esgyn is one of 55 SMEs that Chwarae Teg has worked with to implement successful WLB programmes over the past five years. This is part of the Welsh Assembly

Government's WLB initiative called 'Getting the Balance Right' which is open to SMEs, charities and public and private organisations in Wales.

Tai Esgyn's WLB programme has enabled all members of staff to have access to home working, flexi hours and compressed working weeks. More recently the charity has introduced the Government's Child Care Voucher Scheme for parents of children under age 15 which means they can sacrifice part of their salary to purchase vouchers which they can redeem against the cost of child care.

Angela continued: "With the support and advice from Chwarae Teg we've revised some of our existing policies and have implemented some new ideas. By making it a formal part of the staff's employment terms it has been possible to extend it and make flexible working an option for men and women regardless of job title or location."

"We work in a very high pressured environment with clients who cannot always be supported during the usual 9-5 working day. As such we could see that there was a strong business case for looking at different ways of working, not only from a productivity point of view but also from the standpoint of meeting our clients' needs."

Staff at Tai Esgyn are able to accrue on average 10 extra days off per year if they choose to work flexibly and build up time when most productive. Angela continued: "We focus more on results rather than hours spent behind a desk. If a job can be done more effectively at another time at another place then we encourage this, we don't believe in presenteeism."

Hayley Dunne, business development manager at Chwarae Teg said: "Tai Esgyn has been successful in implementing flexible working for more than 10 years and we have supported them and advised them on key changes to make the programme even more effective.

"There are a number of key elements involved in a successful work life balance programme, one of which is trust. If an employer trusts staff to carry out their role and to achieve targets, and focuses on outputs rather than inputs as Tai Esgyn do, then success is

more likely. By offering staff opportunities and initiatives to facilitate a good WLB an organisation instantly becomes recognised as an employer of choice.”

-ENDS-

For further media information please contact Rhiannon Price at Working Word PR on 02920 488778 or [Rhiannon.price@workingwordpr.com](mailto:Rhiannon.price@workingwordpr.com)

**Notes to editors:**

\*Research by Citrix Online

Chwarae Teg has been supporting, developing and expanding the role of women in the Welsh economy, since 1992. Promoting women's economic development, challenging stereotypes in employment and education, working to close the gender pay gap, supporting women in enterprise and business. Chwarae Teg is currently responsible for rolling out the Welsh Assembly Government's Work Life Balance programme across Wales, championing flexible working.