

Issued: 14 March 2006

Comment: Western Mail Working From Home piece for Phil Thane (freelance)

Marcella Maxwell, chief executive of Chwarae Teg said:

“Although at the last count there were 5.6 million teleworkers in the UK, it still remains one of the less common flexible working practices, secondary to part-time working and job shares.

One explanation could be that workers believe career progression will be hampered by requesting the right to work remotely accounting for the fact that requests for teleworking is actually lower. Another explanation could be that businesses are still failing to realise the business benefits of offering teleworking deeming flexible working of this nature to mean less staff hours, less productivity and less control over what their employees are doing.

The opposite is in fact true. Whether defined as teleworking, compressed working weeks or annualised hours, flexible working can actually boost productivity, profits, motivation and retention.

Companies adopting flexible working strategies are increasingly having more choice of applicants as more employees are citing work life balance as a major factor when applying for jobs. Staff turnover is usually lower saving on recruitment costs, and benefiting from retention of skills. Flexible working employees are also generally more motivated.

Costs and overheads associated with office premises are usually reduced and productivity is increased due to less commuting time and interruptions of an office environment, and more focused hours on the job in hand.

The number of managerial and professional people becoming teleworkers is on the increase but mostly those either working for themselves or for forward thinking companies already experiencing the benefits of having a more mobile workforce.

Aside from the immediate gains for businesses, the wider economic and environmental advantages will be significant if teleworking becomes the norm rather than the exception.”

ENDS

For more information contact Lowri Jones at Working Word PR on 02920 488 778 or email lowrijones@workingwordpr.com

About Chwarae Teg

Chwarae Teg was established in 1992 to support, develop and expand the role of women in the Welsh economy, believing that the Welsh economy will only reach its full potential when every individual is given an equal opportunity to contribute.

Women, although playing a greater role than ever before, are often confronted with barriers in education, employment and enterprise that stop many from developing their skills and careers. Chwarae Teg draws funds from the Welsh Assembly Government and Europe to support projects designed to help women overcome these barriers and raise the profile of these issues. Membership and consultancy fees provide further income.