

PBSS and Family Friendly Policies

PBSS has been 'family-friendly' since the late 1990s. Apart from the inherent fairness of it all, the basic premise is that if employers want workers for the next generation, then they must allow this generation to raise them.

Being family friendly is an attitude. It is not a 'soft option', but a negotiated mutually beneficial agreement. We work round family commitments, school holidays, etc. because it makes sound business sense. The cost of recruitment is considerable, let alone the training and integration of new employees. Also, specific skills and competences like translation professionals and high quality administrators are not easy to find. Therefore retention is the answer.

This is not the only benefit...

The UK Department for Education & Employment commissioned a report in 1998. We have been taking advantage of the benefits for over 15 years, but the report findings sum them up very neatly.

The key business benefits of family-friendly employment practices include:

- **Reduced casual sickness absence:** most employers felt that sickness absence due to employees' caring responsibilities had been reduced. This was reinforced by employees who felt more able to be honest about absence due to dependants' illness.
- **Improved retention:** each of the firms was able to identify individuals who had stayed with them longer because of their access to family-friendly provision. Most could estimate the number of employees who would have left had such provision not been available.
- **Improved productivity:** many of the firms were convinced that employees working flexible hours were more productive than those working traditional hours.
- **Improved recruitment:** the firms felt that offering family-friendly practices can attract potential recruits when seeking vacancies and making comparative judgments of job offers.
- **Improved morale and commitment:** most firms believed that morale and commitment among employees with caring responsibilities was enhanced by family-friendly policies.

Family-friendly Employment: the business case, Bevan S, Dench S, Tamkin P, Cummings J. DfEE Research Report RR136, 1999.

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