



5 Nethercote  
Newton Burgoland  
Leicestershire  
LE67 2ST  
Tel/Fax:  
01530 273056

Business News Editor

## PRESS RELEASE

**Embargoed until Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005**

August 26th 2005

### **COULD UK WORKERS HOLD THE WORK LIFE BALANCE KEY?**

#### **Could UK workers have the answer when it comes to getting the right balance between home and work?**

The researchers behind the 24-7 survey into working life hope employees in the UK will share their good and bad experiences of office life in an attempt to uncover the key to good work life balance with the launch of their latest survey on **Thursday September 8<sup>th</sup> 2005**.

The 24-7 survey is the annual research project conducted by the Work Life Balance Centre, Leicestershire, Keele University Staffordshire and Sheffield University, Sheffield. It can be accessed by logging on to a dedicated web site at [www.24-7survey.co.uk](http://www.24-7survey.co.uk) and all information collected is strictly confidential.

Julie Hurst, director of the Work Life Balance Centre said: "We want to know as much as we can about how people feel about work, the role it plays in their lives, the things they enjoy and the problems it causes. We are interested in both the good and bad aspects of current working life and our experience of past surveys shows us that people have a great deal of valuable information to share. The more we learn the better it is for everyone as the survey findings are shared with organisations around the world to help improve work life balance."

Last year's survey confirmed the vital role their job plays in the lives of many workers. The results showed: around half of respondents enjoyed the challenge of their job, felt more fulfilled when busy, made sure work did not dominate their entire life and felt work to be an important part of their life.

But it was not all good news. Some of the other findings revealed:

- More than 8 in 10 people felt unable to cope with the demands placed upon them to the point that it harmed their health at least some of the time.
- More than half of the respondents felt they had suffered ill health related to their work.
- Increasing the amount of control people have over their working life can drastically reduce illness levels,
- More than a third of respondents felt extra staff would be the answer to overworking issues. Almost as many wanted less red tape more effective managers and colleagues and better communication.

Gar Daniels, Lecturer in Industrial Relations, Keele University said: "The role of work can be a complex one. It brings with it many positives and negatives and we want to explore both. While people clearly enjoy their jobs, they are also becoming ill through the stress of the demands placed upon them and it is very important that we try to find as many solutions to these issues as possible."

The survey is divided into a number of sections covering a range of topics from demographic data through to health, lifestyle, national policy and legislation. The questionnaire takes only a few minutes to complete and is anonymous so all data is completely confidential.

Each year the results are collated into a final report which is disseminated to companies, universities and business support organisations all over the world as a basis for tackling the many problems associated with poor work life balance.

Steve French, Lecturer in Industrial Relations, Keele University explained: "By sharing their experiences with us, employees will be providing invaluable insights into their experience of work and the effects of modern working life. We hope that the information we gather will identify some of the most acute problems experienced by workers, which will help inform government and company policies aimed at creating a healthy balance between work and home lives. The more information we have the better we are able to ascertain trends and influence future policy development, so taking part could make a real difference by helping to shape future work policies and practices."

Many major employers and business organisations support the survey each year by encouraging their staff to take part. The final report contains regional breakdowns of the major trends and individual case studies looking at some of the experiences in more depth.

Ends

**Further Information:**

**Julie Hurst** is the director of the Work Life Balance Centre and author of a book on spending less time at work. She is a frequent speaker at work life balance conferences and has appeared as a work life balance coach on the BBC1 television show Heaven and Earth. The Work Life Balance Centre, is an organisation that promotes practical solutions to improved work life balance through active workload management. For more information please contact the Work Life Balance Centre on (tel/fax) 01530 273056, email: [hurstj@worklifebalancecentre.co.uk](mailto:hurstj@worklifebalancecentre.co.uk), (**out of hours:** 01530 270969, mobile 07074 333385)

**Steve French and Gary Daniels** are both lecturers in industrial relations at Keele University. Their research, within the Institute for Public Policy and Management, focuses upon the regulation of the employment relationship, notably the implementation or avoidance of employment legislation, employer's personnel policies, and employees' perceptions of their working lives. Steve can be contacted upon 01782 583609 or [s.r.french@hrm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:s.r.french@hrm.keele.ac.uk), Gary on 01782 583489 or [g.daniels@hrm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:g.daniels@hrm.keele.ac.uk)

**About the 24-7 survey:** The 24-7 survey is conducted annually via the internet. It is completely confidential and is open to all workers in the UK and beyond. By repeating the survey year on year it is hoped to be able to chart the trends and patterns in work that effect people's lives. The findings of the survey are made freely available to both employers and individuals to allow them to use the knowledge it contains to make changes in their own workplace. The findings of the survey will be published in early 2006.