



Better ways of working: Flexible working



**CONSTRUCTING
EXCELLENCE**

in the built environment

Foreword



Vaughan Burnand

Chairman, Members Steering Group, Constructing Excellence

In 2007, the core members of Constructing Excellence carried out a review of futures reports to decide on priorities for new guidance for our members who remain committed to a collaborative future. Six themes emerged and task groups were established to review existing material and produce a guide to help members stay one step ahead:

- Collaborative procurement
- Collaborative cost reduction
- Collaborative design management
- Whole life costing and facilities management
- Environmental sustainability
- Better ways of working

This guide was produced by a task group of members and others, all of whom committed time and resources to support this work, they are duly acknowledged at the introduction to this publication. It was also peer reviewed at meetings of the full membership to ensure maximum relevance and coherence as a set of publications.

We welcome feedback on all our publications at any time, please contact us at the address shown on the back cover.



How many times
have you thought

“there must be a
better way”?

It is increasingly important from both a personal and a business perspective that we use the limited time we have to best effect.

This paper explores what could be done in the Construction Sector and indicates what is being done by successful business by way of inspiration.

The intent is to stimulate different thinking about how we work. Flexible working can be a real “win-win” for individuals and organisations.

I trust that the paper will generate debate and open up channels of learning among Constructing Excellence members in how to establish “better ways of working”.

I commend the paper to you.

Mike Emmott

CIPD Adviser Employee Relations

Executive summary

At a time of hardening economic conditions and increasing competition for scarce talent the construction industry faces a tough challenge. Great strides have been made over recent years including partnering contracts, frameworks, new products and off site manufacturing techniques and the emphasis on sustainability. However the way we deploy our people has not significantly changed. Many other industries have changed the way staff work and now implement flexible working where previously the mindset was fixed.

The employment challenges facing the construction industry are in all areas of recruitment, retention, development and reward of a strong and capable workforce and management. In a project based business time is always at a premium and how to use time to best effect for the individual and the company is the key.

As an industry we solve problems all the time. Other industries are already finding better ways of working which is attracting the current limited pool of talent capable of dealing with the constant change. The construction industry offers a huge range of careers and must also look to offer a similar range of methods of working.

People are aware and do care about the world we live in. They understand that aspects of flexible working really do help the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability, while at the same time contributing to the success of dynamic businesses that they want to work for and importantly that clients want to partner with.

There are clearly some major barriers and entrenched attitudes that do not assist in establishing more flexible ways of working. In section 1 suggestions are made, drawn from experience from those who have succeeded in changing, on how to address the obvious barriers. The approach follows what we, as an industry, do best – treating it as a change management programme, with a simple phased approach.

In section 2 we indicate a phased approach to flexible working that identifies what are perceived to be quick wins through to areas of meaningful investment and culture change.

The purpose of this guide is to stimulate thought, debate and sharing of others' current flexible working practices for the benefit of the wider construction industry. It concentrates primarily on the Management and office based roles within the Construction Industry although many of the suggestions do clearly have relevance to site based staff, either between projects or as a part of their normal working week.

Many companies already do offer some flexible working practices but they are either informal, hidden or not widely discussed. If we are to improve our industry we must join together to find better ways of working.

The paper recommends that receiving organisations review the findings of this paper, identify which issues may provide benefit and devise a plan for better ways of working. Requests are made of CE Members to:

- **Review their own position and identify gaps against best practice.**
- **Refer to the references available and listed for further information.**
- **Share their experience and case studies of any such flexible working practices through Constructing Excellence**

Collectively we can identify and implement better ways of working and in so doing make us a more attractive industry for talent, customers and investors.

Introduction

Members of the Building & Estates Forum in Constructing Excellence identified the need to explore “New Ways of Working”. The following challenge was identified:

“To develop an understanding of the implications for member companies of diversity, flexible working and other new working practices.”

A working group was established under the Chairmanship of Brendan Morahan of Taylor Woodrow and the following members contributed:

Franck Crosnier - Taylor Woodrow
Hilary Richardson - Rider Levett Bucknall
Charles Tincknell - Willmott Dixon
Jonathan Adams - Constructing Excellence & J.Adams Management
Sarah Bowles - Costain
Danny Granger - Turner & Townsend
Chris Harty - University of Reading
Dan Hutchings - Costain
Milan Radosavljevic - University of Reading
Christina Reschke - Horden Cherry Lee
Chris Sargent - Turner & Townsend
Chris Slezakowski - SIG plc
Alison Symmers - Willmott Dixon

It quickly became apparent that the subject matter was so vast that it became necessary to approach the subject in discrete parts, looking at flexible working, diversity and “other ways” separately.

It is acknowledged that there is inevitable overlap between the parts and it is planned that this will form part of a consolidation exercise at a future stage.

This paper focuses on “flexible working” and it is anticipated that the other areas will form the basis of work in subsequent phases.

A lot of research has been drawn upon by the group to produce this paper and whilst the majority of it has been drawn from non-construction related experience the group are confident that the learning has valid application in the construction sector.

This guide is prepared with senior decision-makers and influencers in mind as the intended audience.

There is perceived to be great benefit to accrue from working more flexibly at operation level but it is considered that, for this to succeed, the culture and leadership of businesses in the sector must be open to the concept and convinced of the merits.

The subject-matter is complex and farreaching and the paper outlines a stepped approach indicating ‘quick wins’ that businesses could take through to areas of meaningful investment.

The aim of this paper is to raise awareness of potential, provide challenge to the status quo and share proven initiatives – it does not provide all the answers nor does it suggest that what works for one business will work for another. Readers must assess the merits against the particular issues faced by their business.

The business case for better ways of working

The challenge

Many areas of the construction industry have changed over recent years, partnering contracts, frameworks, new products and off site manufacturing techniques, and the drive for sustainability to name but a few. One area that has not changed at the same pace is the way we employ our staff and work as an industry.

Many other industries have changed the way staff work and now implement flexible working where previously the mind set was fixed.

Will those working for construction companies today be able to cope with future workload?

Should we start competing for the untapped pool of "human resources"

The employment challenges facing the construction industry are in all areas of recruitment, retention, development and rewarding a strong and capable workforce and management. In a project based business, time is always at a premium and how to use time to best effect for the individual and the company is the key. Many of our activities are site based and in the past so was the whole team - the choice was simply to travel to site or travel to the office and as a conscientious worker also to be seen to be there working early and late. Presenteeism rules prevailed.

There must be a better way of working!

(A more effective way to use time to best effect for both individual and company!)

As an industry we solve problems on site every day of the week. Other industries are already finding better ways of working which is attracting the current limited pool of talent capable of dealing with the constant change. The construction industry offers a huge range of careers and must also look to offer a similar range of methods of working.

Where flexibility in working does exist in our industry, it usually appears to be based on informal arrangements with trusted long term staff, and often kept semi hidden so as not to upset other members of staff.

It is seen as a favour or possibly even a reward, such as, working from home on a Friday. However, all the studies clearly show that, in general, home workers compensate for not being visible by working harder and more effectively at home. In the last few years we now have broadband in the majority of UK homes, we have office networks that can be connected into and a computer literate workforce. Home working is just one form of flexible working available as a means of satisfying the many and varied demands for work life balance that have developed for both the individual and company.

Today's workforce are aware and do care about the world we all live in. They understand that aspects of flexible working really do help the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability, while at the same time contributing to the success of dynamic businesses that they want to work for and importantly that clients want to partner with.

Why then do we insist on employing staff in the same way as we did twenty years ago?

There are clearly some major barriers and an entrenched attitude of finding reasons why it will not work, rather than how we can really look to make all or some elements of it work for us.

If we did have that "can do" attitude, and aligned this with our problem solving skills, we really would be a leading industry..... and we clearly are not!

Did you know?

At BT they have 75,000 flexible workers out of a 111,000 people and 14,500 are homeworkers. Even the AA has challenged the need to have all their operators in call centres and now employ 300 call centre staff working from home.

Barriers to flexible working

So what is stopping us? How do we address the obvious barriers? Firstly, what are they?

Barrier	Additional Comment
Number one issue - is trust.	
Lack of understanding	Flexible working is not just about part time returning to work or working from home! There are a myriad of different ways of working flexibly.
Fear of change	Because we have already undertaken changes in the industry doesn't mean that we should stop there. Instead it proves that we are capable of adapting for further improvement!
Suspicion	Will people really be as productive – just try it and see! Remember even if you cannot see them they are still trying. Measure outputs not inputs.
Lack of control	Traditional workplace controls are less effective with flexible working. The solution lies in communication and clear aims, objectives and outputs. Other industries have managed this – there are tried and tested ways of managing and leading flexible working.
Control of mavericks	Flexible working can in fact be highly effective in managing mavericks if linked to outputs and process. It also limits the impact and exposure of disruptive behaviour and methods on other staff.
Managing people and managing their stress	How do I know when my people are struggling and need help – as above there are proven methods!
Number two issue - the way we work	
Need to shift to output measurement rather than attendance	That old presenteeism again! Surely it is important that we manage output and not just check who is sitting at their desk with little or no output.
Accept the fact that it is not for every individual / job role	It just needs some thought as to what is appropriate – flexible working is not for every role or just as importantly for every individual in the organisation.
Social networking	Many people do like working in offices and the social side that goes along with this! Formalised and more inclusive events and effort need to be given, where before, informal activity occurred.
Impact on corporate ethos (understanding of)	Will this impact on our culture? This has been proven to work so it enhances and aids company culture and ethos.
Fear of career progress limitation (not visible)	Out of sight out of mind. Both the organisation and the individual need to make sure that outputs are recognised and non visibility is not an issue.
Regulation (competition act, health and safety, etc)	Many fear that this will mean more work and/or cost for the company – is this really the truth?
Home environment not conducive	Will we have to pay to make this available to everyone? It may just not be appropriate for everyone but it is worthy of consideration!
Invest in a flexible infrastructure (IT, etc)	As the construction industry, we are better placed than many others to invest in flexible infrastructures. Aren't we supposed to be masters of cost/benefit analyses?
Risk to business if not implemented properly (H&S, disruption, confidentiality etc)	Any change involves risk as does the lack of change. We as an industry, have the skills and really should practice what we preach re risk analysis and planning!

What can we do?

This whole issue is easily made sense of, if we treat this as a change management programme – something we do with our clients every day! The solution is to address these issues using our strengths and make this a Project. Develop a Project Plan, devise a programme, develop a budget, implement, control and monitor. Take a simple phased approach...

A phased approach

As with all projects, adoption of flexible work needs

- Risk management
- Change management
- Staff engagement
- Alignment for business/client needs

The Project Plan will be unique to your organisation but firstly, what are the objectives –

Project Execution Plan for the Introduction of Flexible Working

1. Overall create a great inclusive place to work as an industry.
2. Become an Exceptional performing employer
 - Better client satisfaction
 - Better delivered projects
 - Better staff satisfaction
 - Better use of resources
 - Better construction industry
3. Why? The Benefits
 - Attract talents of people used to working in different ways
 - Raise our profile – Changing perception of construction
 - Maximise the ROI of IT solutions, site set up costs through usage and flexible ways of working
 - Reduce wasted travel time
 - Reduce business travel carbon foot print and costs
 - Reduce staff turnover and associated costs
 - Reduce estate and related requirement (including carbon footprint)

A successfully delivered plan will provide us with solutions to many of the questions facing the industry. The Egan Report talked about the step change needed and this will help release some of that latent capacity to deliver it. The construction industry has some specific barriers, but we also have some great advantages. We are starting from a relatively low baseline, so some simple quick wins can make a big difference.

Can working patterns be created to suit an individual's circumstances?

We have opportunities with client frameworks to change the way we work together on a series of projects once trust can be built up. We have a huge number of roles and don't just work at desks where the options are limited.

We have sites all over the country rather than just one location and we have by nature a highly mobile workforce who are good at managing change. We have sustainability as a big issue that flexible working can also assist with delivering. Environmentally, we can reduce travelling and congestion; economically, we need less office space, have less unproductive time; and socially, a better work life balance, not being stuck in traffic and even seeing the kids in the working week.

We also now have the ability as an industry to take advantage of the opportunities IT technology offers. The low tech construction industry is in the past - we now have to embrace the opportunities it gives our people just as we have to help deliver our projects.

Case studies:

1) Cranfield University and Working Families

Cranfield University and Working Families undertook a two year research project reaching 3,850 persons. According to the respondents, 40% to 82% of the organisations contacted could demonstrate some form of flexible working practice.

They reviewed the employees and the employers perspective. It was encouraging that both felt that the introduction of flexible working had a positive effect on performance (61% and 45% respectively).

Employees reported that their relationship with their manager improved as they felt more trusted and they were judged on their output. They felt that their freedom to manage their time and/or location improved their productivity while enjoying a better work life balance. Managers confirmed their satisfaction with the level of quality of work from flexible workers (with a neutral or positive view on impact in excess of 65%) while acknowledging that co-operation was vital. Flexible workers tended to demonstrate a higher commitment to their organisation.

It works well when flexible and nonflexible workers are not treated equally. Some identified a training need with regard to managing employees with a flexible working arrangement.

Overall, the report concludes that "flexible working was seen as an appropriate method of working and culturally acceptable when it was available to all employees regardless of their personal circumstances". In our experience, there is more and more evidence from job interviews that - flexible working is not only "acceptable" but essential for a large number of talented candidates. They expect it as a recognised way of working with HR policies. It is a must have, no longer a favour.



"The key findings of this rigorous two year research project strengthen the business case for flexible working. The research involving seven blue chip companies shows that flexibility has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of work and on employee commitment. It is also clear that flexible working works best where it is available to all employees"

Sarah Jackson OBE
Chief Executive, Working Families

"These findings are important because they show both performance-related and longer term benefits from flexible working. However flexible working should not be seen as an add-on activity. Other HR policies may need to be adjusted in order to ensure they support flexible working."

Dr Clare Kelliher
Report co-author and Senior Lecturer in Strategic Human Resource Management, Cranfield School of Management.

2) BT

- St. Paul's office includes 1500 work stations and has an average of 8,000 working visitors every day
- By 2005, BT was saving £500m per annum through reduction in office estate for 70,000 staff
- Productivity of 11,600 home workers is 20% higher than office based colleagues; Home workers take 63% less sick leave
- Use of video conference results in 12 million litres of fuel saved per annum (54,000 tonnes of CO₂)
- Retention rate following maternity leave: 99%, compared with UK average of 47%

3) Centrica

A review of work styles followed by the implementation of flexible working has generated cost savings of £10 million p.a (for the West End estate only)

- Flexible workers increased from 0.5% to 12%
- Work/life balance improved by 38%
- Employee engagement improved by 3.9%
- 55% of mobile workers felt their productivity increased
- Average of 90 miles travel saving per person per week or the equivalent to 13 return trips to the moon!

Work-life balance

We value our people and want to build long-term relationships together. This means we're committed to thinking creatively about ways of working that will help you achieve a healthy work-life balance.

We have a flexible working policy and support requests for flexible working arrangements wherever possible. In particular, we provide support for those employees who have caring responsibilities – whether for a member of the family or for a close friend.

The screenshot shows the BT Careers website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, CONTACT BT, and a search box. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for About BT Group, Investor centre, Media centre, Society & environment, Innovation, and Careers. The main content area is titled 'Careers' and has a breadcrumb trail: Home > Careers > Why join BT? > Work/life balance. On the left, there is a sidebar menu with 'About us' expanded to show 'Why join BT?' with sub-links for 'Work/life balance', 'Benefits', 'Personal development', 'Our promise to you', 'Our future', and 'More than just an employer'. Other sidebar items include 'Meet our people', 'BT Apprenticeships', 'Undergraduate placements', 'Graduates', 'Fast Track Leadership Programme', 'MBAs', 'Research fellowships', and 'Experienced candidates'. The main content area features a graphic of a coiled spring and the heading 'A more flexible approach'. The text below reads: 'If you work for BT, we believe you should be able to enjoy the physical and mental benefits of a healthy work-life balance. Which is why we actively encourage flexible working. By working in partnership with each other, thousands of our people have already established alternative working arrangements that are making our business more productive, cost effective and energised. We fully understand that many people have talents and interests outside work. In achieving their desired work-life balance, most people discover not only renewed energy, but new enthusiasm and reward in their work and their other commitments.'



4) AA

- The AA has been offering its call centre employees the option of working from home since 1997 when it started a pilot scheme in Leeds.
- Due to the consolidation of premises across the UK it was the perfect solution to help retain experienced staff.
- The AA now has around 300 homeworkers spread across Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Cardiff who are managed by remote team managers.

Benefits:

- AA has retained valued and experienced employees
- Absence rates have fallen compared to call centres
- Morale is extremely high
- Homeworkers showing exceptional performance
- Flexibility means that doctors/dentists appointments are never a problem
- Very low stress levels – no traffic jams and being late
- No more getting up early in winter and scraping ice off the car!
- Working environment calmer than noisy call centres

After years as a police telephonist and nine years in the AA's insurance call centre, Anne was desperate to get out of the call centre environment. When she saw an announcement in 2001 offering staff home working opportunities Anne jumped at the chance, especially in light of having two boys both at school. Her family really enjoy the fact that she is always at home and her friends think she has a 'job in a million'.

Anne Walker

(47) married with two teenage sons from Newcastle upon Tyne



5) Microsoft

People at Microsoft expect to be able to work when and where they want to. However they also value the buzz associated with being in the office and want their own space when they are in.

Consequently it has been difficult to get people to accept hot-desking and a recent survey showed that on an average day 60% of the space in the Reading office is not being used. Despite this, flexible working has allowed an extra 400 people to fit into the existing campus in Reading and delayed the construction of another building for two years so far.

Each year's delay saves the company about £1 million.

By providing a standard size of desk, regardless of position in the company, Microsoft has made its offices more flexible. Although this cuts across some of the 'fiefdoms' that managers like to create, it saves the £1 million a year the company used to spend moving furniture when it had specific desks for managers. Technology is also allowing people to work on the move even when they are in the building. Wi-fi enabled tablet PC's enable people to carry their office with them and hold meetings wherever they want. Hence the casual meeting area in the atrium is always busy and there is increasing pressure on the catering facilities to keep up with demand.



Microsoft®

Phased approach for the construction industry

We have looked at a number of case studies into better ways of working and have developed a phased approach for the construction industry.

- Phase 1 : Quick Wins**
- Phase 2 : Structured Change**
- Phase 3 : Investment**
- Phase 4 : Embedded**

	DEFINITION	TYPICAL FUNCTION	BENEFITS
Phase 1 – Quick wins	The first phase of implementation of “better ways of working” consists of making best use of technology and tools already available to the business to reduce unnecessary travelling and optimise use of work space.		
Use of mobile phone, portable computers, wireless network	Equip more staff with mobile technology to reduce dependency on location.	Bid teams, Commercial Managers, Procurement.	Facilitate collaboration, reduce travelling time, optimise space use with move to hot-desking.
Digital data sharing	Promote the benefit of remote monitoring. Also, sharing digital pictures or video to report on work progress rather than relying on physical attendance to site.	Project Managers, Engineers, Surveyors.	Reduce unproductive travelling time and cost.
Ad hoc home-working	Providing staff with the tools enabling them to work from home on specific instances when it is more convenient than going to the office (e.g. after or before a meeting away from the office, when there is bad weather or traffic conditions, etc).	All staff.	Reduce unproductive travelling time and cost.
Desk sharing	Encouraging part time workers and staff who are not always working from the office to share their desk.	All staff.	Optimise space and reduce requirement for premises.
Opportunity to work from “satellite” sites (drop in centres)	Create easy access for all staff to all sites occupied by the company, resulting in the creation of a network of drop in centres.	All staff.	Reduce unproductive travelling time and cost. Optimise space use and encourage collaboration.
Encouraging tele and video conferencing	Arrange meeting over the phone or via video conference.	All staff.	Reduce unproductive travelling time and cost.
Hot-desking	Hot-desking refers to permanent workstations that can be used on a temporary basis by different employees as and when required. The work surface could be an actual desk or just a terminal link. A limited number of staff have their own personal domain.	Directors, Consultants, Bid teams.	Optimise space use and reduce requirement for premises. Anywhere staff work with different teams.

	DEFINITION	TYPICAL FUNCTION	BENEFITS
Phase 2 – Structured Change	The implementation of flexible working practices beyond phase 1 will require a more planned and methodical approach with a formal “smarter working programme”. This will ideally involve a staff consultation / survey to review the flexible working option and prepare their seamless adoption by the staff. The programme will lead to the publication of formal policies and procedures to ensure a fair and safe implementation for all staff involved. It requires a shift to output base measurement of staff performance, rather than attendance.		
Job-share	Job sharing is an arrangement where two or more employees share the duties and responsibilities of a single full-time job. Each job sharer has broadly the same responsibilities, although their contractual terms and conditions of employment may differ. Sharing might also include shift swapping within groups of employees who carry out the same task.	Useful as a way of combining part-time and flexi-time.	Can lower recruitment costs. Improved staff effectiveness.
Flexi-time	Flexi-time (or flexitime) is a variable schedule as distinct from the nine-to-five day. Under flexi-time, there is typically a core period of the day when employees are expected to be at work, for example between 10:00 and 16:00. The rest of the working day is on flexi-time. Employees can choose when they work, as long as they meet the total of daily, weekly or monthly hours expected by their employer and they get the necessary work done.	Can range from administration workers to maintenance staff.	Reduced premises costs. Reduced staff turnover. Access to expanded labour market.
Time off in lieu	TOIL or ‘banked hours’ is similar to flexi-time. Workers are credited for extra hours worked and then allowed to take them off at another time. Unlike flexi-time, time taken off usually has to be agreed in advance and time may have to be earned or banked before it can be taken.	Project Managers, Quantity Surveyors, Estimators.	Staff retention. Improved capacity planning.
Part-time work	Part-time work is defined as employment that is less than a full-time organisational commitment on the part of the employee. For example, ‘halftime’ would involve working two-and-a-half days a week.	Project Managers, Site Managers, Planners.	Lower absenteeism. Reduced work related stress. Working parents or carers may particularly welcome this.
Homeworking	Activities and functions are mainly performed at home and typically require the establishment of a suitably equipped workspace to allow full, regular contact with colleagues and customers.	Professional and knowledge workers, Technical experts, Sales staff.	Reduce need for office premises. Improves work life balance. Can be helpful if covering different time zones or round-the-clock cover.
Full time worker homeworking part-time	Activities and functions are partly performed at home and typically require the establishment of a suitably equipped workspace to allow full, regular contact with colleagues and customers	Professional and knowledge workers, Technical experts, Sales staff.	Reduce need for office premises. Improves work life balance.
Zero-hours Contracts	Workers with zero-hours contracts are not guaranteed work but are ‘on call’ to work according to the short-term needs of their employer. They are then paid an agreed level for the number of hours for the period worked.	Market analysts, Technical experts, Auditors.	Retain skills and therefore reduce recruitment costs increased capacity.
Term-time working	Term-time working is most common within the education sector, it allows people who have children of school age to be at home during the school holidays. It is also found in other sectors where this pattern fits the demands of the workload	Administrators, Auditors	Improves staff retention with parents and carers in all types of roles. Contribute to increased workforce diversity
V-time working	This is a voluntary agreement in which an employee’s hours are reduced for an agreed period, with a guarantee that full-time employment will be available again at a specific date.	Design Teams, Researchers, Legal, Proposals.	Allows the employer to retain skills but reduce costs in the short term.
Breaks from Work	This could be the more traditional issue of time for the birth of children, but can also be extended into unpaid sabbaticals or career break schemes, which allow the organisation to retain staff, while extending a high degree of flexibility for a short period of time.	All roles.	Retains staff. Retain staff and skills. Respect cultural difference.
Mobile working	Mobile workers may have a permanent base, but spend most of their working time in other locations. Suppliers of business services, in particular, are mainly on site with clients. These workers can communicate with their office and stay away from base for long periods by using mobile phones, wireless internet enabled laptops and personal digital assistants (PDAs), a handheld device that combines computing, telephone/fax and networking features.	CEO, Directors, Sales force, H&S Managers.	Employees who have to make face-to-face calls and can use time between appointments to manage administration.
Virtual teamworking	In virtual teams, people collaborate on joint projects, but rarely or never meet face-to-face. Developments in video conferencing, virtual private networks and collaborative-project software are making such work possible. Where physical items have to be exchanged, courier services are used.	Copywriters, Editors, Illustrators, Graphic designers.	High skill level work where teams might work together for a short period of time.

	DEFINITION	TYPICAL FUNCTION	BENEFITS
Phase 3 – Investment	This phase involves the application of flexible working practices to a wider range of workers. It requires a shift to output based measurement of staff performance, rather than attendance. A business case approach will identify the savings (travel cost, productivity and reduction of estate) to be partially reinvested in new technology, or even the provision of alternative work places (hubs, serviced offices, drop in centres).		
Agile working	Agile workers may work from any location ranging from home, client sites, construction sites and drop in centres. The concept of “base” becomes less relevant as the worker works and collaborates from anywhere by using the entire network of premises available with mobile phones, voice over IP, wireless internet enabled laptops, personal digital assistants (PDAs), etc.	All staff.	Combines benefits of flexible working and hot desking.
Teleworking	Teleworking refers to jobs and assignments performed from a distance, typically over a network such as the internet, as opposed to work performed directly on site.	Sales, Customer support, Technical helplines.	Where most work is conducted by telephone.
Compressed hours	Compressed (or restructured) hours result in work taking place in fewer and longer blocks during the week or month, for example, a nine-day fortnight or a four-day week.	IT Project, Bid Teams, Handover teams.	Reduces overall time for project Allows loyal staff some flexibility.

	DEFINITION	TYPICAL FUNCTION	BENEFITS
Phase 4 – Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion of the new approach. • Approach as part of brand value for customers and staff. • Cultural change. 		
Annualised hours	Working annualised hours means an employee is contracted to work a number of hours per year, which are worked flexibly and not in a fixed way.	Engineers, Help Desk staff.	Allows business costs to be defined. Helps budgeting.

Conclusions and next steps

With this document we present an initial study into better ways of working and specifically flexible working. It is intended to stimulate thought, debate and sharing of others' current flexible working practices for the benefit of the wider construction industry.

We have currently focused primarily on the Management and office-based roles within the Construction Industry although many of the suggestions do clearly have relevance to site-based staff, either between projects or as a part of their normal working week.

We are aware that many companies already do offer some flexible working practices but they are either informal, hidden or not widely discussed. If we are to improve our industry so as to compete for the best quality candidates in the labour market and also face confidently the increasing global challenge, we must join together to find better ways of working.

How can you help?

At the very least we would recommend that as an organisation you set up an internal project to review the findings of this paper, identify which issues may apply and initiate a plan for better ways of working for your organisation.

We ask that all CE Members contribute to this project and:

- **Review their own position and current gaps against best practice.**
- **Refer to the references available for further information.**
- **Share their experience and case studies of any such flexible working practices**

The last words

**Remember no one had written
on their gravestone.**

**"I wish I'd spent more time in
the office!"**

References

Enabling your workforce through flexible working', a portal produced by BT

www.btinsights.co.uk/flexibleworkingresources

Flexible working: can home workers and their managers make it work? Knowledge Ability, 2005

www.knowab.co.uk

Flexible working: can your company compete without it? BT, 2007

www.btglobalservices.com

Flexible working employee survey, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2004 and 2005

www.berr.gov.uk

Flexible working: impact and implementation: an employer survey, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2005

www.cipd.co.uk

Flexible working: the right to request and the duty to consider, a guide for employers and employees, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2003

www.berr.gov.uk

Homeworking: guidance for employers and employees on Health and Safety, a report by the Health & Safety Executive

www.hse.org.uk

Managing change: practical ways to reduce long hours and reform working practices, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform in association with the CBI and TUC, 2005

www.berr.gov.uk

'Mobile and teleworking initiative for a smarter South East', the MATISSE website produced by Hampshire County Council

www.hants.gov.uk/matisse

Older workers and options for flexible work, a research report, Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005

www.eoc.org

Telework guidance, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform in association with the CBI and TUC, 2003

www.berr.gov.uk

The Second Work/life Balance Study: Results from the Employer Survey, National Centre for Social Research, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2003

www.berr.gov.uk/publications

Working hours, a factsheet, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2007

www.cipd.org.uk

Work-related stress: a short guide, Health & Safety Executive, 2001

www.hse.gov.uk

'Workers wake-up call', an article by Alison Millen, Opportunities, 2005

www.opportunities.co.uk



The tables presented in the Section 2 of this document, are the result of workshops with the “Better Ways of Working” team and have used for reference the “Work Wise UK/TfL Smarter Working Guide (c) 2007

All Rights Reserved “ Elements which are included in the Better Ways of Working business case are reproduced with the Permission of Work Wise UK.

The research referred to in section 1 is “Flexible Working and Performance © 2008 all rights reserved” a Working families publication.

© Constructing Excellence. Requests to reproduce any part of this document should be sent to Constructing Excellence. Published: March 2009

Constructing Excellence, Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP

T 0207 592 1100 W www.constructingexcellence.org.uk

Constructing Excellence is committed to reducing its carbon impact.