

Bridgend County Borough Council – Work-Life Balance Benefits All

Working in partnership with Chwarae Teg, Bridgend County Borough Council's Work-Life Balance Group developed a 3 year strategy and action plan to improve the Council's working environment.

Using a focus group of 500 employees, the Council has already introduced a variety of new policies, procedures and pilot schemes – including home working, flexible working, and a Childcare Voucher scheme – which have made an immediate impact.

Sarah Atkinson, a member of the Council's Adult Services Team, has already benefited. Working from home two days a week saves Sarah three hours of travelling time, enables her to plan her work better, and helps her to concentrate on the reading and report writing that is vital to her post.

'I feel less stressed as a result of having peace, quiet and time to think,' says Sarah. 'This supports better outcomes.'

Other benefits generated by the work of Chwarae Teg and the Council's Work-Life Balance Group include:

- Modernisation of services that leads to a culture of flexibility
- Improved morale, health and commitment
- Improved communication and engagement for employees and Trade Unions
- Better recruitment, retention and sickness absence management
- Council seen as an employer of choice.

All of this is helping the Council to deliver improvements to its operational activities and meet service delivery requirements. In fact, the Wales Audit Office recognises that the Council's Work-Life Balance strategy has been fundamental in supporting a more effective management of attendance across all of the Council's services.

Summary:**The WLB issue:**

- Cement the Council's reputation as an employer of choice
- Support Recruitment, Retention and Sickness Absence Management
- Improve employee and Trade Union engagement
- Introduce home-working and remote working
- Extend the availability of flexible working to all staff
- Deliver improvements to meet both the business and service delivery requirements of the Council and the operational activities of staff

The WLB Solution:

- Securing Senior Management, Elected Member and Trade Union buy-in
- Partnership working with employees and Trade Unions
- Engaging with employees through a Focus Group to inform the WLB strategy and action plan
- Increasing the range of WLB policies and procedures available to all employees
- Piloting new flexible ways of working
- Briefing and training managers