

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

October 2016

**Good morning!
How to jump-start
your productivity**

**Tips on how to
organise your office**

**How defensive
are you at work
and home?**

- **Are tattoos a barrier to employment?**
- **Female politicians inspire confidence in working women**

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As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?

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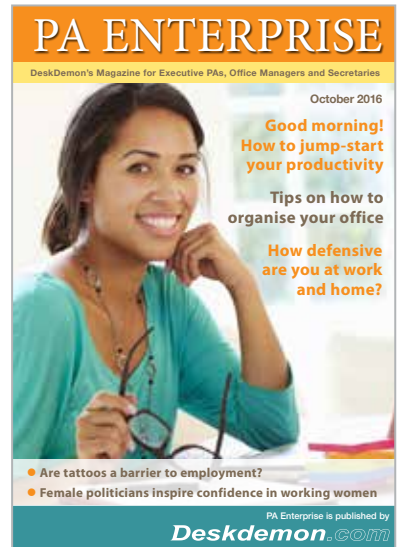
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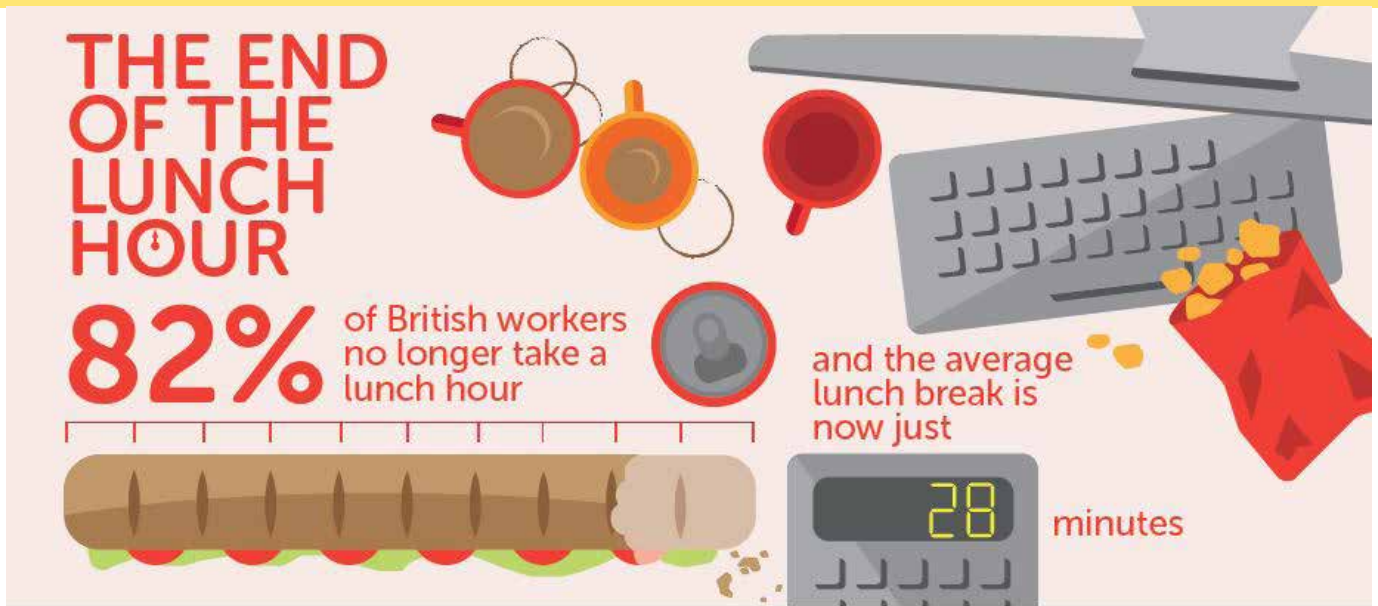
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Is the lunch hour dead?

Former Apprentice star Margaret Mountford urges firms to bring back the lunch hour, as research reveals that 82% of workers do not take one

The average lunch break is now just 28 minutes and only 17% of British workers take a full hour, according to research from Mastercard. A hardcore 12% of workers never or hardly ever take a lunch break. Two thirds of workers don't leave their workplace to eat lunch – 70% of office workers don't leave the building.

Margaret Mountford, businesswoman, lawyer and star of **The Apprentice** is urging British businesses to bring back the lunch hour. She said: "Throughout my career I've seen employees hunched over their desks wolfing down a sandwich. It makes workers less productive, hampers creativity and numerous studies have shown it's bad for health, so why do we still do it? Bosses should lead the way by encouraging a culture of lunch breaks – it will boost productivity, creativity and morale as workers feel better and take on the afternoon revitalised. It's time to stamp out the culture of not taking a lunch hour."

Around three in five bring a packed lunch and 36% say they never eat out for lunch during the working week. When asked why they didn't eat out for lunch more often, two fifths say they don't have the time.

Qkr with Masterpass saves diners on average 12 minutes, as they can pay the bill from their smartphone. They can also split the tab, order items and add a tip. Scott Abrahams, Mastercard said: "New technology means it's never been easier to get out and have a good meal during your lunch hour – with our Qkr app diners can save 12 minutes by paying the bill on their smartphone. Research shows getting out of the office for lunch is good for health and productivity, so it's time more of us took a break."



Minister confirms support of Prompt Payment Code

New measures to support the Prompt Payment Code and drive a culture of better payment practice have been confirmed in a letter to PPC signatories from Margot James, Minister for Small Business and Philip King, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management.

The authors of the letter confirm that signatories should be paying within 30 days where possible and that this should increasingly be the norm. The Code Compliance Board will not be enforcing 30 day terms but states that paying invoices within 60 days will be a requirement unless there are exceptional circumstances that will be considered on a case by case basis. An example of 'exceptional circumstances' might be where a company is able to demonstrate that it applies different terms to the benefit of their smaller suppliers.

The Minister says that: "Prompt payment can make all the difference to small businesses, boosting their cashflow and allowing them to invest in growth for the future. Although we have seen some progress, there are still too many business owners across the country who have not been paid on time by their customers.

"We need a culture change to stamp this out and the Prompt Payment Code continues to play an important role in bringing this about, alongside a package of measures taken forward by government and industry. The

businesses signed up to the Code commit to demonstrating the gold standard of payment practices and it's great to see so many of Britain's leading household names on the list."

The Prompt Payment Code is administered by the CICM on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It currently has more than 1,800 signatories, with each signatory committing to best practice in the fair and equal treatment of suppliers, many of whom are smaller businesses.

www.promptpaymentcode.org.uk



Avery lift the lid on office life

Have you ever wondered how much of your time in the office is spent on the phone, reading emails, drinking tea and looking for missing stationery? A new study from Avery UK has lifted the lid on office life, revealing that the average office worker will drink 24,684 cups of tea, fall out with colleagues 479 times and send 400,816 emails during their working lifetime.

The research coincides with the launch of a new online guide to getting organised from Avery UK, available at www.avery.co.uk/organiseyourlife. Did you know the average office worker will spend 13 minutes and 13 seconds each day searching for missing paperwork and stationery? That's despite one in five decluttering their desks on a weekly basis.

Marketing Director for Avery UK, Fiona Mills commented on the findings: "It's fascinating to see just how much people experience throughout their careers. It may be quite an eye opener for office workers as they may not realise quite how much time they'll spend doing individual tasks or the number of times they'll do them. In particular, it's staggering to see how much time is lost to simple things like being disorganised and not knowing where essential items are. This is why we have launched an online guide to getting organised at home and in the office, with tips and ideas for each room. The guide is packed with advice, inspiration and product suggestions to inspire the nation to banish clutter and get their space in order."

In addition to sending 33 emails every day, the typical office worker will receive 44 emails a day - or 537,860 throughout the course of their entire career. The typical daily commute is 29 minutes long and UK workers are late to work about twice a month on average. Bad traffic is the number one reason respondents don't make it in on time, followed by poor timekeeping and oversleeping, suggesting some of the nation's office workers need to be better organised both at home and at work.

More than 80% of office workers felt that having a clear filing system, so that they knew where everything belongs, would make working life less stressful.

Office workers will get through 196 notepads and run 282 pens dry throughout their working careers. Paperwork piling up is a problem for UK offices too, with the average worker printing-off 343,504 pages of documents over their lifetime in the office.



Over half of office workers spend around 15 minutes a week looking for essential items like paperwork and missing stationery, that equates to more than a day a year lost to looking for things.

The biggest cause of conflict at work is the temperature of the building, followed by people pretending to busy when they're not. Other factors including messy desks and colleagues not returning stationery were cited by respondents too.

The boss is the third biggest reason for conflict – in fact, the average worker will have 891 showdowns with their superior throughout their professional life.

It seems a little organisation could go a long way towards making office life easier, of those polled, 85% agreed that having a clear filing system and knowing where everything is makes their job less stressful. Avery's Fiona Mills commented:

"It's clear from this study that little things like clutter, missing stationery and piles of paperwork can really have a negative impact on life in the office. Something that starts off as a small issue can quickly leave office

workers overwhelmed – we'd urge anyone who's feeling this way to take a look at www.avery.co.uk/organiseyourlife for advice and inspiration on where to start with office organisation."

What's more Avery has a fantastic range of organising products and solutions to help office workers to restore order. These include a wide variety of labels for organising and filing, dividers, signage, desktop accessories, cable markers and so much more. Plus, with Avery Design & Print Online, many of Avery's organising solutions can be personalised with company colours, fonts, logos or images to suit each individual workspace. There is plenty of free online templates and designs to customise too.

For full details visit www.avery.co.uk/organiseyourlife. Keep up with Avery's organising tips on social media at @UKAvery using #organiseyourlife.

Tips on how to organise your office from Avery

Keeping your workspace clean and organised can have a profound effect on your productivity, concentration, and ability to find everything you need. You might be surprised how much more efficiently you'll be able to work after restoring some order to a messy desk. All you need is a little bit of time, the discipline to throw away unneeded items, and a system for making sure everything is in its proper place.



Label your file boxes or filing cabinets

If you are archiving old paper work in boxes or simply filing into cabinet drawers, make sure they are clearly labelled so you and others know where to find in them. Use Avery Blockout™ labels as these will completely cover any old labels, text or marks.

Label bulldog clips for loose paperwork

When you have loose paper work that needs attending to but isn't quite ready for filing, use labelled bulldog clips to keep it tidy and organised. The clips will ensure that odd pages don't go missing and the label means you can easily identify the papers. Avery Handwritable Small Labels are great for this.

Label ring binders and lever arch files

Avery Filing Labels are ideal for making your files look neat and tidy. Labels can be printed as and when you need them so it's easy to keep your files up to date. You can even add your company logo to give your files that professional finishing touch.



Fuss Free Filing

Do you get frustrated trying to find the file you need on a shelf filled with identical-looking folders? Or are you just bored looking at dull and dreary folders? You can colour code your files and find what you need quickly and easily with Avery Lever Arch File Spine Labels. It's easy to organise your files by project, client, date or other categories by designing a label for each. You can create corporate labels with company logos or fun labels with bright colours, images or photos – whatever takes your fancy!

Colour code documents with dots

Colour coding is an ideal way to make information stand out. For example, you could mark financial information in red, marketing documents in yellow and customer details in blue. Small coloured dots from the Avery stickers and labels range make it easy to colour code your filing system.

Label your possessions and prevent them going missing

Lost your stapler? Sticky tape gone missing? Ruler gone for a walk? When you're mid-task or rushing to a meeting, you don't want to stop to search for essential desk tools.

By labelling your items with Avery Durable Heavy Duty Labels you can make sure the things that get borrowed or misplaced are returned. Make sure you use heavy duty labels, they're dirt resistant and tear proof and will stand up to the wear and tear of office life and stationery-stealing colleagues. Instead of simply writing your name, why not label your stationery with a message, such as "Please return me to Claire" or "I belong to Tracy and she misses me". Who knows, maybe your message might even make your colleagues smile as they return your stationery.

Can't find your notepad with all those important notes? From the front, your notepad probably looks the same as everyone else's. A quick way to identify yours is to put a large label on the front with your name. Add a great photo or background to make it easy to spot (and to add some fun to your day). An A4 Avery Shipping Label is completely opaque, using a feature called TrueBlock®, so it completely covers any pattern underneath.



Are tattoos are a barrier to employment?

New research reveals negative attitudes towards tattoos could result in bosses missing out on talented young workers

Workplace experts Acas have published new research on dress codes which shows that employers risk losing talented young employees due to concerns about employing people with visible tattoos.

The new independent study on various aspects of employee appearance found that young people are especially affected as almost one in three young people have a tattoo. Other findings revealed that:

- Negative attitudes towards tattoos and piercing from managers and employees can influence the outcome of recruitment exercises within some workplaces;
- Some public sector workers felt that people would not have confidence in the professionalism of a person with a visible tattoo; and
- Some private sector employers, from law firms to removal companies, all raised concerns about visible tattoos in relation to perceived negative attitudes of potential clients or customers.

Acas Head of Equality, Stephen Williams, said:

“Businesses are perfectly within their right

to have rules around appearance at work but these rules should be based on the law where appropriate, and the needs of the business, not managers’ personal preferences.

“We know that employers with a diverse workforce can reap many business benefits as they can tap into the knowledge and skills of staff from a wide range of backgrounds.

“Almost a third of young people now have tattoos so, whilst it remains a legitimate business decision, a dress code that restricts people with tattoos might mean companies are missing out on talented workers.

“We have updated our dress code guidance today, which also includes advice for employers to help ensure they don’t fall on the wrong side of the law with their dress codes.”

Acas has updated its dress code guidance in light of the research and latest developments:

- Following the recent case of a temporary worker who was sent home without pay for refusing to wear high heels at work, Acas’ revised advice is clear that any dress code should not be stricter, or lead to a detriment, for one gender over the other;

- An employer's dress code must not be discriminatory in respect of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 for age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation;
- Employers may adopt a more casual approach to dress during the summer, but this may depend on the type of business; and
- It is good practice when drafting or updating a dress code for an employer to consider the reasoning behind it. Consulting with employees over any proposed dress code may ensure that the code is acceptable to both the organisation and employees.

Acas' full dress code guidance and the new research paper, 'Dress codes and appearances at work', can be found at www.acas.org.uk/dresscode

The issue for people with tattoos is getting employers to see beyond this stereotypical bias, in just the same way as people with visible disabilities have to. The biases may be different in terms of type and manifestation but the discrimination experienced by both parties is broadly the same.



Good Morning!

7 ways to jump-start your productivity

By Brittney Helmrich, Business News Daily

How does your morning usually look? If it involves hitting “snooze” repeatedly and rushing out the door, you’re probably not in store for a productive day. If you want to take on the work day and win, you need to make your morning routine as simple and stress-free as possible. That means being prepared ahead of time, getting quality sleep and doing things that will wake you up, boost your energy and motivate you to make it through the day. Ready to rise and shine?

Pack your lunch in advance

One easy way to cut out added morning stress? Decreasing the number of tasks you need to complete when you wake up. If you’re one to bring your lunch instead of stepping out midday to pick up food, you may want to consider preparing your meal the night before.

Rushing to make your lunch right before you walk out the door takes up time from your morning routine that could be used for other productivity-boosting activities and adds another responsibility to your to-do list: washing the dishes. Instead of waiting until the morning to pack your lunch, try preparing everything right after you’ve made dinner —

this way, you’re cutting down on how often you have to do the dishes, and in the morning all you have to do is open the fridge, grab your food and go.

Lay out your clothes the night before

Another way to cut down on responsibilities in the morning is to take some time before you go to bed to choose and lay out what you’re going to wear the next day.

Unless your job requires you to wear a uniform, deciding what you want to wear can often be frustrating and time-consuming, and if you’re distracted and in a hurry while you’re getting ready, you could end up leaving in

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clothes that don't even match. Prevent that from happening by choosing pieces that work and laying them out so that in the morning, you can just get dressed and save yourself the hassle.

Change your alarm clock

Are you used to getting jolted awake by an obnoxious alarm clock? It could be the reason you keep hitting the snooze button or why you might still feel tired and cranky first thing in the morning, and it's called sleep inertia.

So how can you combat this to make your mornings less miserable? Try changing your typical alarm clock for one that slowly wakes you up using light and gradual sound — the light simulates a sunrise and makes waking up feel more natural.

Wait to check your emails

It can be tempting when you first wake up to grab your phone and check all of the emails, texts and social media posts you missed while you were snoozing, but it might not be the best way to start your day.

It might seem that getting your emails and notifications out of the way would be a productive to start your day, but apparently it can be quite damaging. This is because email is reactive, not proactive, so you wind up "bouncing from task to task, letting your inbox set your agenda."

Get in a few minutes of exercise

Exercise has a lot of benefits for your physical and mental health, but it is especially effective in the morning if you want to be

more productive and motivated.

Exercising in the morning is an energy boost and gets your endorphins up, which means you'll be more awake and ready to take on the day. And a morning workout can boost your mental clarity too.

If you can't get in a full workout, try to at least set aside a few minutes to stretch and do some light exercise to help perk you up in the morning.

Eat an energising breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. You've probably heard that a thousand times, but it's true — the right breakfast can be the boost you need in the morning to stay motivated, plus, in the long run, it's good for your health.

Foods rich in vitamin B, like oatmeal, avocados, bananas and pineapple, can give you an energy boost and help improve your concentration.

Plan out your goals (but not your to-do list)

Planning your goals for the day can be a great way to start your morning, but if you get too detailed, you could find yourself feeling discouraged instead of motivated.

Why? Because the more detailed you plan out your responsibilities, the more you realise how difficult it may be to complete them.

So, if you're feeling overwhelmed by your to-do list, take a step back and look at the bigger picture instead.

Female politicians inspire confidence in working women

A third of British women feel more confident at work as a result of more female world leaders, finds new Crunch study

The recent success of female world leaders is inspiring greater confidence amongst women in the workplace, according to a new study released by online accountancy Crunch. A third of women say they feel more confident to speak their mind at work, following the rise of notable female leaders, such as Theresa May and Angela Merkel.

Almost a fifth of respondents feel greater confidence to speak up and have a greater voice in meetings. A further one in 10 women say they are more willing to haggle or negotiate a business deal.

The boom in female leaders may also have inspired a new wave of entrepreneurs – 40% of women said they feel more confident about pursuing their dream of starting a business.

However, while many women are feeling more confident at work, not all agree they are commanding more respect at work. Only 5% of women said they are being taken a lot more seriously since the appointment of a female Prime Minister.

Justine Cobb, operations director at Crunch said: "It's fascinating to see that the female business community in the UK is feeling buoyed by the rise in female political leaders. Having said that, with powerful role models such as Angela Merkel and Theresa May



A third of women say they feel more confident to speak their mind at work

frequently in the limelight, this doesn't come as a total surprise.

"Two fifths of women feel more confident about starting their own business. The number of women starting their own business has grown 42% since 2010, and almost a third of all the new businesses are now founded by women. While it's encouraging women feel more confident to speak out in meetings and to get ahead at work, it's important not to lose sight of the fact gender inequality in the workplace is still happening".

Who me, defensive?

By Linda Adams, President of GTI

In your relationships at work and at home, you know the discomfort you feel when you become defensive and the unease you feel when you sense it in others. When we feel threatened, defensiveness or resistance is our initial, natural, perhaps inevitable reaction. We would probably be surprised if we stopped to think how much energy we use up resisting new ideas, blocking unwelcome feedback, defending our position. The reaction is so automatic, the habit so deeply ingrained that often we aren't conscious of being in a defensive or resistant posture.

Defensiveness is an unwanted, uncomfortable feeling—it causes disequilibrium. Our urge is to make it go away by trying to ignore it or denying its existence even though this is often at an unconscious level. Most of us have become highly skilled at ignoring the inner cues that we're resisting—often pretending like everything's okay without being aware that we're doing so. When this happens, whatever feelings or fears or truths lie underneath the resistance remain hidden.

Why does this matter so much? Because each and every time you pretend that everything is okay when you feel resistant, you avoid looking at, exploring and examining what's underlying your defensive reaction. As a result, while you may gain self-protection for the moment, what you lose is a valuable opportunity to get more insight into yourself, to learn more about who you are, to be open to a new way of thinking or being, to be fully alive.

Accepting Resistance in Yourself

Admitting to yourself that you feel defensive or resistant is often very difficult. We feel that it's a sign of weakness or vulnerability—a part of us we cannot allow others to see, especially at work. So there's a strong tendency to resist accepting that yes, right now, I'm feeling threatened because my boss wants to see me or someone has challenged my point of view in a meeting or my spouse is upset with me or my teenager won't talk to me.

This inner resistance confronts us with the possibility that something might need to change which most likely involves us. Often we resist change because it means something new and yet unknown. There's comfort in the familiar even when it isn't working. Maintaining the status quo seems safer—it's what we know. So we justify why we don't delegate even though it means we work far

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too many hours and are exhausted much of the time; we make excuses for why we stay in a job we have begun to dread; we deny that our relationship with our spouse isn't satisfying.

The price we pay for continually refusing to uncover and examine what's beneath the resistance is that we remain stuck, surviving, making do—not living life to its fullest.

To accept your resistance as a natural part of you and to open yourself up to discovering what's beneath it requires an inner shift—a shift from seeing the resistance as a bothersome feeling to be avoided to seeing it as an opportunity or even as a gift—because it's a signal that there's something more.

Accepting Resistance in Others

Just as we feel unease with our own feelings of defensiveness, we don't like to experience it from others with whom we interact. We've all heard people say things like:

"We've already tried that."

"It would cost too much/take too long."

"I'm too tired right now."

Even when we confront a co-worker, a spouse or a child with a perfect I-Message, they sometimes will react defensively:

"I did not do that!"

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Why are you bringing this up again? You know I'm already stressed out."

Reactions like this can cause you to feel defensive and it's very tempting to respond

in kind. But we've all done that and know for sure that it doesn't work—the interaction becomes an escalating argument or the conversation shuts down. When this happens, not only does the issue or problem not get resolved, the relationship suffers damage.

To avoid that from occurring, it's important to shift gears to hear the other person's feelings. By actively listening, you send a very important message to him/her: "I see that you're upset and I want to hear your concerns."

Utilising Resistance

In yourself: become more conscious of what causes you to become resistant or defensive. Instead of denying that inner signal, respect it, give it your attention, listen to it—accept it as an invaluable part of yourself that is offering you an opportunity to challenge an old pattern, to learn what's true for you and to move toward actualizing more of who you're capable of being.

In others: become more alert to the signals they give out when they're feeling resistant and make a conscious effort to listen to them with acceptance, empathy and understanding. Listening with acceptance gives the other person a chance to vent their feelings and as a result gives them the opportunity to probe below their resistance to discover what's beneath. They too have a valuable opportunity to discover more about themselves. Further, the relationship between you is strengthened.

Men twice as likely to be allowed flexible – but still take more sickies

Despite being more willing to work overtime, women are afforded less flexibility in the workplace. Factor in that men are more likely to pull a sickie, are women getting a raw deal from employers?

New research has revealed that men are more likely to be given the luxury of flexibility, but are twice as likely to fake illness to skip work.

A survey conducted by Powwownow, found that on average, men work an average of six flexible hours a week, compared to just three for women.

Less than half of female respondents (47%) are permitted to work flexibly during an average week, while two thirds of men are afforded this workplace perk.

Jason Downes, managing director of Powwownow said: "It's quite astonishing that men are granted twice as much flexibility in the workplace than women, especially as the flexible working law allowing employers to request flexible hours came into force two years ago."

As well as the added benefits of flexibility, men are also rewarded more for working overtime, as 55% are paid extra for working outside their contracted hours, compared to 33% of women.

When asked to work overtime, 35% of male respondents said they would be 'angry' or 'frustrated', whereas 56% of women expressed a positive reaction such as 'motivated' or 'confident'.



Despite their better deal, men are more likely to fake illness, with a third admitting they take at least one or more day off a year without good reason. Just 20% of women admitted the same discretion.

Downes commented: "From the research it is clear that attitudes towards men and women in the workplace, as well as general approaches to flexible working, still leave a lot of room for improvement; employers need to take urgent action to address this imbalance.

"If businesses want to attract skilled talent to their workforce, these are the types of approaches that need to change. Without change, people will be reluctant to join an outdated workplace and businesses will miss out on the next generation of talent required to drive the economy forward."