



# Living Well North Tyneside

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

**National Work Life Week**, running from **7th to 11th October 2024**, is an annual event aimed at encouraging employers across the UK to showcase their commitment to promoting a healthy work-life balance and flexible working arrangements. Organised by the charity Working Families, this campaign offers employers the chance to highlight how they support employees in balancing their work and personal lives, which is crucial for employee wellbeing, retention, and productivity.

## Why Work-Life Balance Matters

Achieving a good work-life balance is essential for mental and physical wellbeing. For employees, the ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal and family life reduces stress, prevents burnout, and improves overall job satisfaction. Meanwhile, organisations that foster a flexible working culture benefit from higher employee morale, increased retention rates, and greater engagement.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of flexible working, particularly after the global shift towards remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, employees value the ability to manage their time and responsibilities in a way that supports both their career and personal life. National Work Life Week provides a platform for organisations to demonstrate how they meet these evolving expectations.

## What is Flexible Working?

Flexible working encompasses various arrangements that allow employees to work in ways that best suit their needs. These may include:

- **Remote Working:** Employees work from home or another location outside the traditional office setting, either full-time or part-time.
- **Flexitime:** Employees have the flexibility to start and finish their working day at times that suit them, provided they meet core hours or total working time requirements.
- **Part-Time or Job Sharing:** These arrangements allow employees to reduce their hours or share responsibilities with another colleague, creating more flexibility in their schedule.
- **Compressed Hours:** Employees work their full contracted hours over fewer days, allowing for longer weekends or additional days off during the week.
- **Staggered Hours:** Employees work different hours than the standard working day to fit their personal circumstances, such as childcare or other commitments.

By offering these types of flexible working arrangements, employers demonstrate their commitment to fostering a supportive work environment where employees can thrive both professionally and personally.

## The Benefits of Promoting Work-Life Balance

Supporting work-life balance isn't just about helping employees feel good—it has tangible benefits for organisations too. Here's why more companies are adopting a flexible working culture:

### 1. Increased Productivity

Employees who feel supported and have control over their working arrangements are often more motivated and productive. When people are able to manage their time effectively, they tend to focus better on their tasks and deliver higher-quality work.

### 2. Better Employee Wellbeing

A positive work-life balance reduces stress, anxiety, and burnout. Employees who feel in control of their working hours are more likely to report better mental health, which translates into fewer sick days and improved overall wellbeing.

### 3. Improved Recruitment and Retention

In today's competitive job market, potential candidates are increasingly looking for employers that offer flexibility. Offering flexible working arrangements helps companies attract top talent and retain skilled employees who value work-life balance as a key part of their employment.

#### 4. **Diverse Workforce**

Flexible working makes it easier for people with different needs and commitments to enter and remain in the workforce. Parents, carers, and people with disabilities often find flexible roles more accessible, leading to a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

### **How Employers Can Get Involved in National Work Life Week**

National Work Life Week gives employers a chance to showcase their efforts in promoting flexible working and a healthy work-life balance. Here are some ways organisations can get involved:

#### 1. **Review Your Policies**

This week is an excellent opportunity to review your organisation's policies around flexible working. Ensure that your employees are aware of their options and that your policies are up to date with current legislation and best practices.

#### 2. **Highlight Your Flexible Working Culture**

Use National Work Life Week to publicly celebrate your organisation's flexible working culture. Share stories from employees about how flexible working has positively impacted their lives and highlight any new initiatives or support systems you have in place. This can be done through social media, internal newsletters, or your company's website.

#### 3. **Organise Work-Life Balance Events**

During National Work Life Week, consider hosting events that promote wellbeing and balance for your staff. This could include wellness workshops, mindfulness sessions, or talks on how to manage work and personal life effectively. These initiatives can demonstrate your commitment to supporting your employees' wellbeing.

#### 4. **Encourage Open Conversations**

Fostering an open culture where employees feel comfortable discussing their needs is essential. Encourage managers to check in with their teams, discussing any work-life balance concerns, and explore ways to make workloads more manageable or working arrangements more flexible.

#### 5. **Participate in Go Home on Time Day**

As part of National Work Life Week, Go Home on Time Day encourages employees to leave work on time and make time for their personal lives. Employers can support this by ensuring workloads are manageable and encouraging their teams to finish work without staying late.

### **Flexible Working and the Law**

In the UK, flexible working is a legal right for employees who have worked for their employer for at least 26 weeks. They have the right to request flexible working arrangements, and employers must consider these requests in a reasonable manner. National Work Life Week is a great time for both employers and employees to revisit these rights and understand how they can be applied in the workplace.

### **Working Families: Leading the Campaign for Work-Life Balance**

Working Families, the charity behind National Work Life Week, has long been advocating for better support for working parents and carers. Through research, policy development, and employer engagement, they help businesses create workplaces that are family-friendly and inclusive. Their mission is to promote a work culture where everyone can achieve their best at work while balancing their responsibilities at home.

As part of National Work Life Week, Working Families provides resources for employers, including toolkits, guides, and webinars on how to implement flexible working policies and support employee wellbeing. Employers who demonstrate best practices in supporting work-life balance can also apply for the annual Working Families Best Practice Awards, which recognises organisations making significant strides in this area.

### **The Future of Work-Life Balance**

With work-life balance becoming an increasingly important consideration for employees, National Work Life Week is a timely reminder for organisations to reflect on how they support their teams. Employers that embrace flexible working not only contribute to the wellbeing of their staff but also position themselves as forward-thinking and attractive to current and prospective employees.

By adopting policies that promote balance, flexibility, and wellbeing, organisations can foster a more engaged, productive, and loyal workforce.

### **Related Links**

- [To learn more about National Work Life Week and access resources to support your business, visit Working Families](#)

