



## **Addleshaw Goddard LLP**

Addleshaw Goddard is a UK law firm with offices in London, Leeds and Manchester, formed by the merger of Addleshaw Booth & Co and Theodore Goddard in 2003. Over half of the 1,360 staff are lawyers and 60 per cent of the total staff are women.

Katherine Hallam is Diversity manager at Addleshaw Goddard: *“Law can be perceived as a very traditional sector with a long hours culture a reality for many.”*

The merger provided an opportunity to review the ways people were being employed. *“At the time the sector was losing a lot of women at mid ranking level, some following maternity leave. We recognised that long hours made juggling work and family very difficult. The firm invests a great deal in training and support to develop all of its staff and we estimated that the true cost of losing lawyers at this level is around £200,000 This does not include some of the hidden costs such as impact on the teams affected by departures.”*

An Addleshaw Goddard staff survey around that time indicated that people didn't want to work less hard, because they valued their career, but they did want more control over their time. *“This led us to look at how we could be more creative and think about working in different ways.”*

Addleshaw Goddard now has a mix of formal and informal flexibility. 16 per cent of employees have a formal flexible arrangement including 10 per cent of partners. *“We will plan ahead and try and find a solution when someone wishes to change their working arrangements. The firm's culture and values are strong and we like team players, openness and honesty. We work together to find solutions.”*

Addleshaw Goddard has found that flexible working has fitted well within its culture. *“We don't have a head office and work very well across our three offices. People are used to working with colleagues remotely. This legacy from the past has helped us with one of the big challenges with flexible working - that you won't always sit next to your colleagues every day.”*

The firm also has an enhanced maternity package and the Little Additions network which provides support to all expectant and new parents.

Addleshaw Goddard found that transforming parts of the office environment has had an impact. Hotdesking areas have been created in London and Manchester. *“These areas were very successful. Open plan helped contribute towards a culture of much more flexibility and changed the idea of going to the office. We have now replicated this in other areas throughout the firm.”*

One measure of success has been the number of talented and senior women who are now joining the firm. Over the past two years, around 50 per cent of partners joining the firm have been women and almost 40 per cent of the firm's Governance Board are female.

In 2009 Addleshaw Goddard launched their new five year business plan. Talent management and innovative approaches to working continue to be central to the firm's strategic priorities and they aim to be an exemplar of flexible working. *“Under our contract and output objectives we value what is achieved over where it is done. Flexible working is encouraged and supported.”*

## Supporting Statement

**Organisation:** Addleshaw Goddard LLP

**Approximate number of employees:** 1,360

**Sector:** Legal

**Brief description of nature of business:** UK corporate law firm

**1. Why is your organisation a good place for parents to work today? We are looking for evidence (eg, maternity return rate, men working flexibly, extra support for carers, senior level diversity) as well as any programmes or initiatives which mark you out from your competitors.**

### Flexible Working

Flexible working for all is a key priority for our business. We proactively encourage both formal and informal flexible working and a significant number of parents choose to work in this way. For those looking to apply for a formal contractual change, rather than a fixed set of options we encourage an open discussion with regard to the impact on the client, the individual, the firm and the team. 16 per cent of our people have in place a formal flexible working arrangement, around 10 per cent of which are men.

Role models are important – nine per cent of our partnership work formalised flexible patterns and many more work flexibly informally. We are creative in finding working arrangements which suit, acknowledging that there is no "one size fits all" – successful examples include longer holiday arrangements, annualised hours and compressed hours, as well as standard part time. IT is provided to enable greater freedom to work away from the office and we have substantially increased our investment in recent years. One example is a corporate transactional lawyer (a working mother) who chooses to work full time but varies her days in the office each week. Depending on client requirements this can vary from every day to no days and she has, on many occasions, successfully managed completions from home.

Feedback confirms that our flexible working programme has a positive impact. One of our managing associates, a working father explains "the firm helps me juggle looking after my children through a tailored flexible working arrangement whilst at the same time allows me to maintain a fulfilling role within my team. The firm really delivered with practical help - what you might call 'working solutions for working families'."

### Little Additions

Our Little Additions network is available to all expectant and new parents, both male and female, and offers support:-

(1) During pregnancy - practical advice includes regular sessions with a dedicated HR contact and lunchtime network meetings providing an open forum for discussion. A free annual subscription to Practical Parenting magazine and discounts at various high street and online parent-related retailers are also available.

(2) During maternity leave - we encourage mothers-to-be to identify a buddy within their department who will keep in regular contact and those with laptops and blackberries have the option to retain these should they so wish. Additionally, the quarterly Little Additions newsletter updates on firm wide news.

(3) On return to work - arrangements include a structured programme of re-orientation and further Little Additions lunchtime meetings to offer advice and support throughout this important time.

Some of our senior women benefit from maternity coaching, attending either one to one meetings or group sessions.

## Benefits

Our enhanced maternity package includes full pay for the first 20 weeks of maternity leave and whilst this is dependant on returning to work, payments are made based on the hours worked before maternity leave irrespective of the hours an individual returns on. We recently extensively reviewed our maternity package and feedback confirmed that it provides financial support at a time when it is most required. Equally we have for many years paid two weeks full pay for paternity leave, and encourage individuals to be flexible as to how best they manage this time. We are particularly proud of our return to work rate – 90 per cent of those who commenced a maternity leave period during 2007 returned, and approximately 75 per cent of these did so on a flexible working basis.

Our childcare voucher scheme allows parents to take advantage of tax and NI free vouchers to pay for childcare costs. Take up has increased steadily – 93 individuals have registered, a third of whom are men. Links from our website provide access to emergency childcare and we are currently negotiating a more structured response. Our buy and sell holiday scheme (which enables the purchase of up to one week's additional leave) and sabbatical programme are both popular with parents.

We are accredited by the baby charity Tommy's which offers online advice, a pregnancy helpline staffed by midwives and practical workplace guides. Our employee assistance programme also provides practical information, including support around childcare.

We keep under review our benefits and support – for example we are reviewing how we can develop more support for all parents, perhaps through lunch time seminars on various parent related topics. We are also creative in ensuring development opportunities are inclusive – a recent example was arranging for an associate to attend a promotional development centre and providing the facilities for her baby and carer to be present at the venue for this two day course.

### **2. Please describe up to three milestones, changes or initiatives which helped the organisation become the great place for working parents that it is today.**

(1) The firm has been committed to flexible working for many years and this gained momentum around the end of 2006/beginning 2007. Since then it has had an impact on a number of our people. Just one piece of anonymous feedback amongst many received following our Best Companies submission in 2008 stated:

*"I have worked for this company for many years and although I initially worked full time, I now (after having children) need to work part time. I have found this firm, from a working parent's point of view, extremely flexible and up to date with its working conditions and attitude to working parents."*

(2) The complete review of our maternity and paternity programme, which commenced in autumn 2005, led to the creation of the Little Additions network and has resulted in a more consistent experience amongst expectant and new parents. It has also created opportunities for people to network and share experiences, and been the catalyst for wider change, for example the introduction of reduced chargeable hours targets on return from maternity leave.

### **3. What was the driving force behind these initiative(s)? This might have been, for example, a particular business challenge, internal or external; leadership shown by an individual; employee demand for change, etc.**

Feedback received from our staff survey in 2006 clearly demonstrated the importance of flexible working for many of our people. Additionally, at around the same time we were aware talented women were choosing to leave our firm, and the profession, many because they could not see how it was possible to balance a career with family responsibilities.

The review of our maternity programme, and subsequent creation of Little Additions, followed feedback which showed a lack of consistency of experience for expectant and new parents. A significant amount of time was also being spent talking individuals through the maternity process, which was inefficient and wasting resources.

**4. How do you think that your initiative(s) or practice, past or current, have influenced other employers?**

We recognise that flexible working is something that many law firms struggle with and it was this reason which led us to sponsor an innovative piece of research, conducted by Working Families, which was launched in October 2008. 13 firms participated in *Legal Lives, Retaining talent through a balanced culture*, which looked at numerous barriers to work life balance encountered by many lawyers within private practice, as well as highlighting successful initiatives. Underlining the importance of the research, the launch was attended by the Attorney General, other influential speakers, firms and in-house legal departments. We have established some excellent contacts through this research and are now working with some of these to see how we can collectively embed flexible working further within the profession.

Our association with Tommy's led to a member of our Little Additions team being asked to present at a CIPD conference talking about the work we have undertaken to create it and our subsequent accreditation by that charity.