



Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was formed in May 2007 bringing staff together from a number of justice functions to form one of the largest Whitehall departments with around 80,000 employees.

Louise Wilson is Human Resources Director for Corporate Headquarters: *"The MoJ brings together staff on a number of different terms and conditions of employment. Over the past two years we have been consulting with the business and with the Trade Unions to develop simplified Human Resource policies for a significant part of the new organisation (excluding the National Offender Management Service). We have benchmarked these across public and private sector organisations and attempted to pick the best policies and procedures from the former component parts of these sectors of the new organisation."*

In 2002 the former DCA introduced leading edge work-life balance policies. *"We have sought to develop these because they have been very successful tools which have assisted us in retaining our talent."*

The MoJ offers generous flexible work options, flexible working hours and both paid and unpaid special leave with some enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption policies. Staff are additionally able to apply for childcare vouchers.

Staff have had the right to request flexible working. This includes the right to request a career break of between three months to five years. The MoJ has a significant number of senior roles that are worked on a flexible and reduced hours basis.

The Carers' Network has been in existence since 2002 and this was the first carers' network to be established in a Government department. It has provided support to new mothers and fathers in a significant part of the new organisation through information, mutual support and workshops. The work of the network has been supported by senior management including a board level Carers' Champion.

Proud of its inherited history of leading equality and diversity, Louise Wilson thinks that there is a particular culture which is already being carried through the new larger department. *"We have a diverse workforce which tends to stay with you. Inherent in our approach is 'what can we do to keep someone in the workforce through good times and bad'."*

There are a range of reasons why this culture has developed and been sustained. *"Part of our work is to understand diversity in the justice system. We have the expertise to do this. Our people understand these issues and have a value system that makes sure we serve the whole of society. This gives us the ability to reflect on our own organisation."*

Recently the MoJ has replaced the staff satisfaction survey with a new engagement survey. In the first year the response rate to the survey has been high, helping identify what they do well and what they want to improve. *"I feel we have done this well. The driving force in the past has perhaps been more for philanthropic rather than for business reasons. This will have to change in the future as we will have to adopt a more evidenced approach. In the current economic climate, it has become even more important for us to retain our most engaged employees. We know that talent will find its own level when staff don't face unnecessary barriers in doing their work."*

Supporting Statement

Organisation: Ministry of Justice

Approximate number of employees: 80,000

Sector: Public

Brief description of nature of business: Administration of Justice

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.

- We have a range of policies to support staff and encourage good work-life balance. The right to request flexible working and the length of paid maternity, paternity and adoption leave available extends beyond statutory provision and applies to all employees in our various business units.
- **Win Thomas** says, "Since January 2009 I have been working three days a week, spending Mondays and Fridays looking after my son. I can spend real quality time with him. As a father I feel fully involved, which on speaking to other dads, they feel this is something they missed out on."
- In addition to a generous annual leave allowance, paid special leave can be applied for a variety of reasons, including care for a sick child or dependant, or if there is a breakdown of existing care arrangements. A career break of between three months and five years can be requested and salary sacrifice schemes are offered which effectively reduce the cost of childcare.
- **Peter Handcock** – Director General and MoJ Carers Champion says "I have five children and have first-hand experience of juggling my work and home life. Making the right contribution is necessary, so too is balancing that against the needs of my family. I recognise the importance of both, and expect my team not to work consistently long hours. Senior managers play an important part in role modelling a work-life balance and should urge their teams to do the same."
- In addition, support and advice is available for a significant number of staff from a dedicated Network for Caring.

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.

We were the first government department to set up a network to support parents and carers in 2002. The Network for Caring provides support, advice and guidance to a significant number of staff who are parents and carers, including their managers. It hosts events, provides advice on parenting, childcare, and eldercare across the Ministry and provides practical help and information.

It aims to exchange views and provide mutual support in a safe environment. The Network runs a mentoring scheme and a personal development course, for example, aimed specifically at parents and carers focusing on self-esteem, assertiveness and confidence building. It provides telephone days for those who may have difficulties travelling due to their domestic responsibilities.

As well as providing input on policy issues, the Carers Network also works with other staff networks to provide workshops covering cross-Network issues.

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.

- The Network for Caring was established in 2002 following a report by a focus group of Carers which reported direct to the Permanent Secretary. The group concluded that parents or carers found it difficult to balance their work and personal commitments.
- The MoJ recognises that the Network and our forward-looking initiatives (detailed above at 1) support greater flexibility and help create a diverse and skilled work force, which reflects our society and better meets the needs of our customers. This makes us a more attractive employer and assists us in retaining skilled employees.
- It is more important than ever to retain staff that are well trained, able to multi-task, skilled and competent in what they deliver. Carers develop many talents in their caring role. The MoJ values these skills and utilises them for the benefit of the business. The MoJ is currently subject to a permanent recruitment control. This makes it even more crucial for existing staff to be “the best.”
- Increasing flexibility of staff enables coverage for absence and holidays to be available – a cost saving when budget constraints prevent the recruiting of temporary staff. Stress-related sick absence is likely to be reduced and staff are less likely to call in sick if there are difficulties at home.

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

- As well as assisting other government departments to set up similar networks, such as the Cabinet Office, The Ministry of Defence (MOD), Northern Ireland Court Service and Inland Revenue, we share the work we do with the private sector. We liaise closely with Centrica’s Carers’ Network who share news of our initiatives with their members. We also deliver presentations to assist other organisations, participate in events and provide case studies to share our best practice. For example we participated in the Working Families ‘Best of the Best Master class Event’ in 2005 and have delivered presentations to Inner London Transport and the Ministry of Defence.
- SCS job sharers **Judith Killick** and **Maggy Pigott** say “We have been in the SCS for 17 years, having been promoted as a pair. This has enabled us to combine an exciting and challenging career with bringing up our families and, now our children are grown up, we have time to undertake other activities such as voluntary work, learning languages and keeping fit.”
- “We also take every opportunity to promote flexible working both inside and outside the public sector, as our experience has demonstrated that it is a win:win arrangement for both employer and employee. We have spoken at a private sector conference, having featured as a case study in research about working flexibly at senior levels. Maggy is about to speak at an event launching the Civil Service wide Job Share Intranet Board. We have also been featured as a case study for published research called Flexi-Exec on flexible working.”