

## Transforming the way we work

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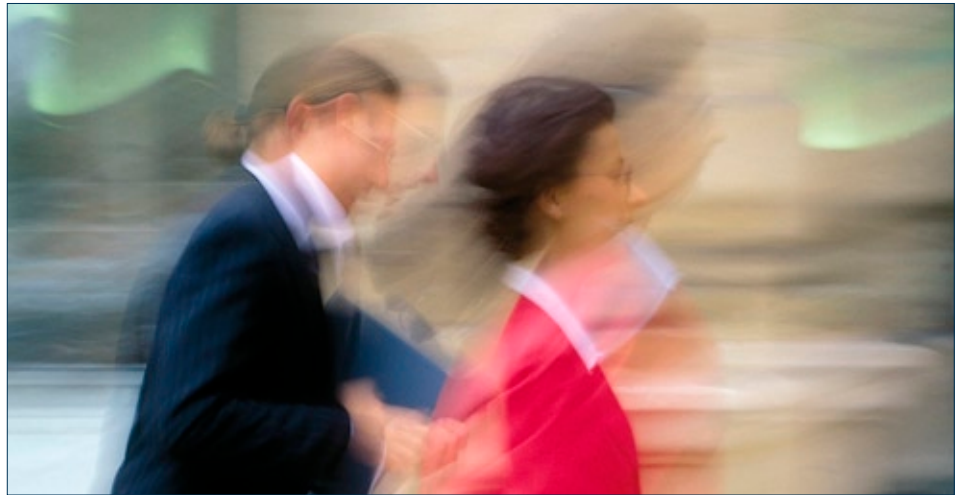
A broad consultation with employers and the general public concerning current and future working practices, conducted by GfK NOP and the Policy Studies Institute on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Commission (now part of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights).

## The research challenge

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The Transformation of Work investigation was initiated in the context of dramatic changes in family and working life: a desire to work flexibly contrasts with the growth of the global economy and the need for many employers to work 24/7, scheduling staff resources against the company workload.

GfK NOP, in partnership with the Policy Studies Institute (PSI), was commissioned to undertake two surveys: one of employers and one of the general public. These would feed into a larger programme of investigation to determine how work organisation and pathways into work could be changed to improve business productivity whilst delivering better choices for men and women.



Amongst employers, the key aims of the survey were to explore:

- whether they had adopted/were planning to adopt new ways of working, and whether these applied to certain staff grades or occupations
- whether developing new ways of working was an organisational priority
- whether information about flexible working was included in recruitment literature. How opinions varied by key demographics such as size, industrial sector and region

For the survey of the general population, the research aimed to identify:

- the changing needs and aspirations of people in relation to work and home
- the choices made about ways of working, including the availability and

potential usage of 12 flexible working solutions

- access to information
- how opinions varied by demographics, qualifications, employment sector and life stage.

## Why GfK NOP Social Research?

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A competitive tendering process was followed for each survey, with three and five companies short listed for the employer and individuals' research respectively. GfK NOP and PSI were awarded both contracts due to our ability to cover both research subjects using innovative and cost effective solutions.

“The tender ...convinced us of commitment and understanding of the issues/policy requirements. The team were prepared, convincing and impressive at interview. There was a useful degree of creativity and flexibility demonstrated in relation to the research methods, including different survey methods and approaches to sampling.”

**Client Project Team**

## What we did

The employer research was in two stages.

- Stage 1: seven depth interviews with HR directors in companies that were ‘best practice’ in their approach to working practices. These ensured that the main survey covered the most important issues and allowed the testing of new survey questions.
- Stage 2: telephone survey of 900 establishments in England with 5+ employees.

The general public survey involved:

- Stage 1: a literature review, carried out by the Policy Studies Institute, to review previous research about flexible working.
- Stage 2: four focus groups with employees and prospective employees to identify key trends and inform the questionnaire design.

### Planet Work

During the focus groups, all participants were asked to imagine ‘Planet Work’, a place where they could work in ways that suited them. By imagining that they been transported 20 years in to the future they were able describe their ideal workplace.

- Stage 3: a general population on-line survey of British people (2,300 interviews)

## Benefits

Qualitative and Quantitative researchers worked in partnership providing joined up research.

“Thank you to everybody for your patience, and flexibility in a project with many component parts, people and dimensions.”

**Client Project Team**

The client’s report was launched at an event in January 2007 where Alistair Darling, then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, presented the Government response.

GfK NOP enabled the client to meet their survey objectives by ensuring:

- Close collaboration between GfK NOP and PSI during the project, allowing a policy perspective to be captured
- Seamless project management from commission to final deliverables (including two reports, each referencing the other study)
- Qualitative and Quantitative researchers worked together in partnership providing joined up research

“the whole project...has been used to make policy recommendations to the Government. We expect the report to have a long influence on academic thinking.”

**Client Project Team**

## Overview of organisations

The **Equal Opportunities Commission** is now part of the **Equality and Human Rights Commission (CEHR)** which was founded in October 2007. The Commission champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

The **Policy Studies Institute** is one of Britain’s leading independent research institutes, conducting research to promote economic well-being and improve the quality of life.

**GfK NOP Social Research** is a leading primary research partner to public sector organisations in the UK providing both quantitative and qualitative research services to all major government departments as well as non-governmental organisations. We frequently work in partnership with a range of academic institutions and consultancies to supply outputs that incorporate specialist sector knowledge and recommendations. We combine first class research experience and public policy knowledge to deliver robust data that is used to inform policy development, spending decisions and communication strategies. ■

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