

Short and sweet

Firms and employees reap the benefits of a shorter working week says report.

Working smarter is the key to improving employee satisfaction, according to a joint DTI, TUC and CBI report, published recently, which explores the ways in which firms can manage change to improve working patterns and address the long hours in the workplace.

Companies, which included BT, Accenture, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Eversheds took part in the research and have all introduced flexible working practices. These measures include part time working, flexitime, job sharing and annualised hours in a bid to modernise working practices, while maintaining and improving productivity.

Benefits have included enhanced customer service, retention of skilled staff, improved morale and less absenteeism, which have all contributed to improved worker satisfaction and productivity.

Employment Minister Gerry Sutcliffe said: "Changing work patterns can benefit everyone – employers, workers and their families. The government is firmly committed to giving people real choice about their working hours to achieve a better work-life balance.

"While regulation has a part to play, creating a culture where we work smarter rather than longer is key to improving worker satisfaction, as well as improving competitiveness, productivity and retaining skilled workers."

The report also states that businesses need to earn the trust of



their workforce and encourage their input when considering any major changes within the organisation.

John Cridland, deputy director of the CBI said: "Maximising company performance by modernising work

working smarter and that workplaces can do even better when managers and employees work together.

The report was produced as the culmination of a series of nine masterclasses around the UK, at

Changing work patterns can benefit everyone

patterns is a key issue for UK firms. This project demonstrates how involving employees in these new patterns can raise productivity, reduce absenteeism and give people a better work-life balance."

The TUC believes that it is possible to beat Britain's long hours culture by

which the participating 'business champions' shared their experiences. In addition to the companies mentioned the contributors included Land Rover, Excel Assemblies, Parkin Elmer, Exel, Rolls Royce, BMG Sellafield, Unilever Foods, BI Worldwide and Westinghouse.