

Our working lives are subject to constant change and upheaval with many of us spending well beyond our contracted hours at work and finding it difficult to leave the office behind – still thinking about work when we are travelling home, when we are with family or friends and even when we are trying to get to sleep....



We have 24/7 shopping and communications and, with family structures also changing, it is normal for many children to have both parents at work. We can continue with the way things are in the hope it will get better or we can choose to take back some control by striking the right balance between our work and home lives.

Five reasons to create a flexible workplace:

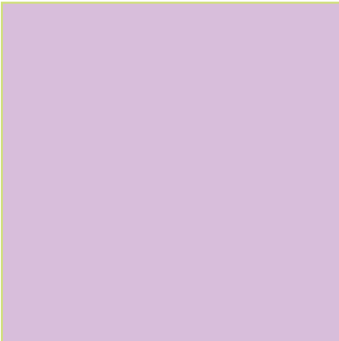
- The proportion of the workforce with caring responsibilities – both child and elder care – is increasing.
- The proportion of women in the workforce is increasing.
- The number of workers who are lone parents is growing.
- The Government is increasing legal rights to flexible working for working people with families.
- Competition for skills and talent amongst companies makes providing attractive work environments important.





Who are we?...

...Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) is a thriving, vibrant university located at the heart of one of the most exciting cities in the UK.



We have been awarded significantly more research funding than many of the new universities due to our strong Research Assessment Exercise ratings. Businesses have been quick to recognise the benefits of a relationship with LJMU and have taken advantage of the services we offer - from consultancy to professional training.

With funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3, the School of Science has just completed a research project; "Combining Work and Family Life: the

experiences of the UK and the Netherlands", which was led by Dr Kay Standing, to investigate how women combine work and childcare. This new project - Equilibrium - aims to address the initial findings by developing a free training package for women and employers on work life balance.



The European Social Fund (ESF)

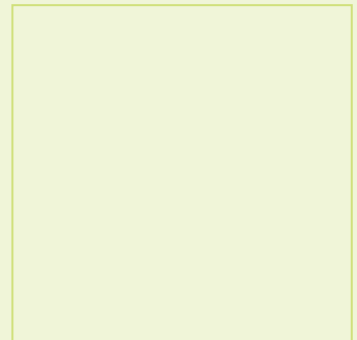
The European Social Fund (ESF) is designed to strengthen the economic and social cohesion in the European Union.

The European Social Fund aims to:

- help unemployed people enter work
- provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market
- promote lifelong learning
- develop the skills of employed people
- improve women's participation in the labour market

Objective 3 specifically aims to improve people's skills and employment prospects by:

- tackling long-term unemployment
- helping young people and those at risk from not being able to find work
- improving training, education and counselling for lifelong learning
- encouraging entrepreneurship and adaptability in the workplace
- promoting equal opportunities and improving the role of women in the workplace



what's it about?

Initial findings from the “Combining Work and Family Life” project are that women remain unaware of their rights under work life balance policies. Policies are constantly changing, making it difficult for both employees and employers to be aware of current policy and legislation.

Evidence suggests that part time and flexible workers in the UK are predominantly female and clustered in low paid jobs with few possibilities of progression.

The primary aim of Equilibrium will, therefore, be to deliver a **free** training package to raise awareness of policy and of the benefits of flexible working practices to both female employees and employers.

Equilibrium aims...

- to provide accessible information on work life balance policy and legislation to women
- to develop a **free** training package and provide initial training on accessing family friendly and flexible working practices for women.



The free training will enable participants to:

- Identify a range of work life balance practices and explore how they work.
- Identify and introduce techniques to manage the conflicting demands of home and work.
- Develop knowledge, skills and confidence in working with employers on work life balance.
- Appreciate the concept of aligning business needs with the individual needs.
- Identify a strategy for overcoming obstacles for women's progression in the workplace.
- To build awareness of how individual work styles impact on others in the participant's team or organisation.
- To develop a 'Personal Toolkit'.

eligibility?

To benefit from the **free** training offered there are certain criteria which must be satisfied, as Equilibrium is partially funded by ESF: Objective 3. This basically means that the funding cannot be used in the Objective 1 parts of England i.e. South Yorkshire, Merseyside and Cornwall, neither can it be used in Scotland or Wales. Accordingly the address of the person attending the training must be in the Objective 3 areas.

In addition, the ESF funding restricts this project to women only. This complies with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and is exempt from Equal Opportunities legislation.

YES	NO
<p>Woman</p> <p>Resident in non-objective 1 area of the UK</p>	<p>Man</p> <p>Resident in objective 1 area of UK i.e.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Merseyside Cornwall Scotland Wales</p>
<p>Employed in Private Sector i.e.</p> <p>Any privately owned company or organisation e.g. retailers, legal firms, blue-chip companies</p> <p>HEI's but only those in traditionally low-paid work</p> <p>SME's</p> <p>Voluntary sector organisations</p>	<p>Employed in Public Sector i.e.</p> <p>Grant Maintained Schools NHS Police Army</p>

meet the team...



Dr Kay Standing is the Project Manager and is responsible for the overall management of Equilibrium. Kay is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Liverpool John Moores University specialising in gender and equal opportunities. Kay was the Project Manager for the ESF research project 'Combining Work and Family Life: the experiences from the UK and the Netherlands' and has numerous publications on gender discrimination and social policy.

Susanna Lloyd is the Research Officer and is responsible for co-ordinating and incorporating the research gleaned from the "Combining Work and Family Life" project into the training materials for this project. Susanna also brings established networks with trade unions, academics, researchers and policy makers to Equilibrium. Susanna has been lecturing at LJMU since 2001 in the field of gender, development and health, she is currently conducting research on "The Reproductive Health of Nepalese women" for her PhD.

Emma Ruffinato is the Training Officer and is responsible for developing and delivering a training package to raise awareness of policy and the benefits of flexible working practices to female employees and employers. Immediately before joining the project Emma was based in the Personnel department of LJMU and was involved in projects to develop and disseminate work life balance initiatives.

Linda Pringle is the Project Administrator and also has responsibility for maintaining the web site. She was the Administrator on the previous project and has extensive network links with work life balance associations. She has a personal interest in Equilibrium as she has a young family.

where can I get details?

Email: Emma Ruffinato – Training Officer
E.Ruffinato@ljmu.ac.uk

Susanna Lloyd – Research Officer
S.J.Lloyd@ljmu.ac.uk

Web: www.ljmu.ac.uk/SOC

Write: School of Social Science,
Clarence Street Building,
Clarence Street,
Liverpool L3 5UG.

Tel: (0151) 231 3610

Fax: (0151) 231 3777

