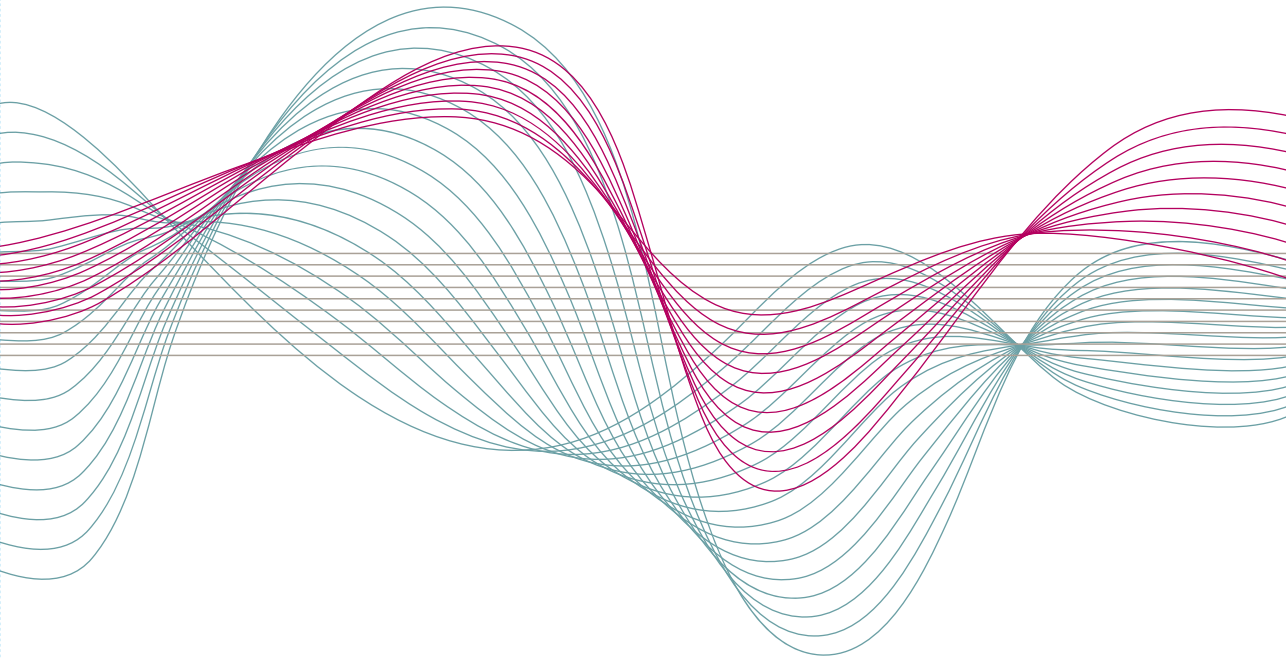


# Linklaters



Agile working: find your own rhythm


[#lifestories](#)

## A message from our sponsoring partner Charlotte Morgan...

We all aspire to balance our working life with our personal life. With the technological advancements made over recent years, the possibilities for agile working are so much greater. When I joined the firm 18 years ago, I had two young children, and working from home was difficult. I had to download email through an ethernet cable and send mark-ups from a rickety fax machine that produced an indecipherable scroll across the bedroom floor.

Now with our interconnectivity and smart devices I routinely draft documents and take conference calls and am just as responsive from home as from my desk in London. Working from home allows me more time with my children, to play an active role in their lives, with no impact on the work I deliver.

We wanted to share the possibilities that agile working presents. This book profiles those who are already contributing to the firm's



success through agile working arrangements, displaying amazing examples of what can be achieved. I would personally like to thank all those that feature in the book for acting as trailblazers for 21st century working.

As a firm, we are committed to supporting people at different stages of their lives, and hope that will enable everyone to understand that working patterns can evolve throughout your career. We want to inspire change and to empower you to think about how you can combine your professional and personal lives to the full.

Please let us know your thoughts on agile working and share your story on Yammer using #lifestories

**Charlotte Morgan**  
Projects Partner



**Ben Finger**

Associate



**Jacqueline Chaplin**

Managing Associate

## Mainstream Corporate

As an Orthodox Jew I am required to observe the Jewish Sabbath, which means that I can't work or use electricity for 25 hours each weekend, as well as for some Festivals. This includes not using my BlackBerry or reviewing documents and means I need to work irregular hours (including Sundays and early mornings) to get the job done.

At times, I have to rely on the support of colleagues to make this possible and I am really grateful to them. I am always open about my religion and have never found the time I take off to be a problem.

The ability to purchase five extra days of leave to cover Festivals is also a real bonus.

## Dispute Resolution

I requested a period of unpaid leave to take up a position as a Judicial Assistant at the Court of Appeal.

I had a three-month placement working with a Lord Justice of Appeal on his caseload, based in the Royal Courts of Justice. It was extremely valuable working with a Court of Appeal judge, debating the merits of the cases we were considering. I also gained an invaluable insight into the mechanics of the court and the judicial process.

I feel better able to prepare my cases going to court as a result of the experience, as I now understand the approach taken to cases before the court, and the procedural issues which can arise along the way.



Nicola Rabson

Global Practice Head



Jo Rose

Engagement Manager

## Employment & Incentives

When my children were younger, I had various working arrangements. I was open about it with clients and never had a negative reaction. In recent years I have found part time working harder to maintain because of the determination and commitment required when running a business so have returned to a full time status.

When you are considering if flexible working will work for you, you should assess your whole life, not just your work priorities. I knew that a flexible arrangement was critical to me at the time and I question whether I would still be here if I hadn't been able to work a pattern that enabled me to spend a day with my children.

## ISS

I've been working flexibly for 10 years, taking one day off each week and it hasn't stopped me from being promoted to manager. Though I lengthened my working hours when I became a manager, leaving on time means that I am still able to be there for my children, rather than getting home late in the evening.

This summer, I took a month's unpaid leave so that I could spend time with my son as he progressed from primary to secondary school. I was able to give back by volunteering at the school, helping organise the school leavers' book for example.



Ian Hunter

Managing Associate



Anjalee Mead

Managing Associate

## Mainstream Corporate

When my son Hugh was born extremely prematurely, he spent over a year in hospital before coming home, and at first, I was unable to work at all. I now work full time on transactional work. Although Hugh is thriving, he becomes unwell fairly frequently which means I can disappear to hospital at short notice. Working flexibly allows me to do what I need to as a father and husband, while also keeping up my practice and progressing my career.

There have been surprisingly few occasions where crises at home have coincided with crunch periods at work. Understanding colleagues and modern technology help me to make it work.

## Projects

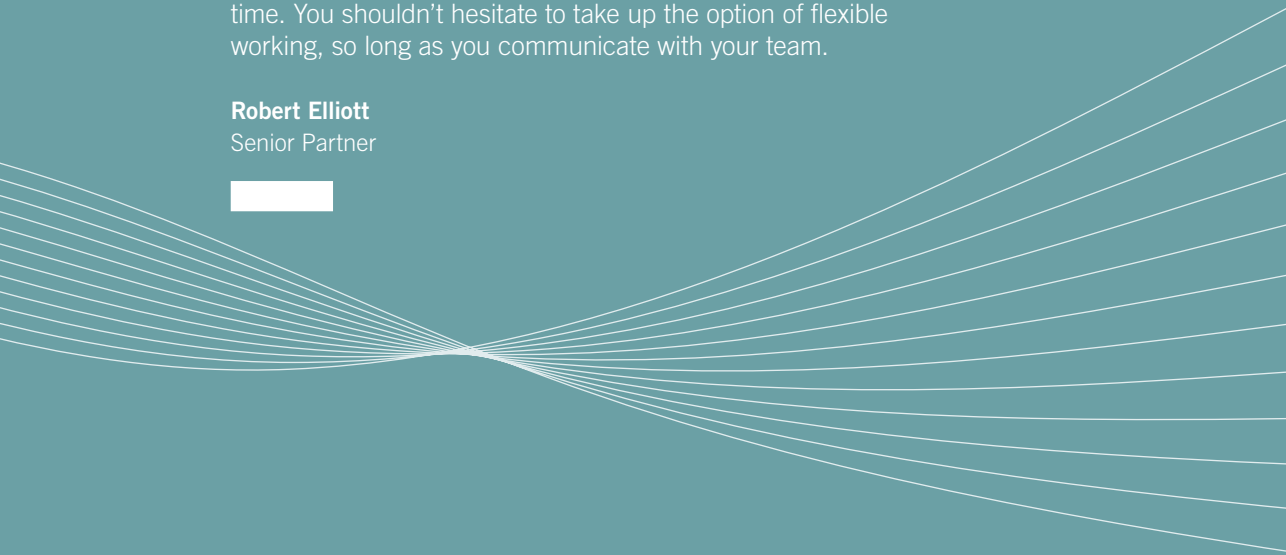
I work flexibly from Zimbabwe on a 60% contract. I went on maternity leave in October 2012 (to have triplets) and I spent this time in Zimbabwe. I quickly realised that life in London without my family's assistance was going to be challenging, so I visited London in September 2013 intending to resign.

Andrew Jones, Projects Partner, convinced me that it didn't matter what location I was in, and encouraged me to trial working remotely. It works because the group is supportive, I have a fantastic secretary and childcare support at home – I do miss Print Room's services though!



I think that we all want to achieve effective working, whether that is from home or from the office. Sometimes it is the case that you can simply work more effectively from home. For example, if you are working with someone in a different time zone, it makes sense to get up early, do a couple of hours work from home and then take some time out before coming into the office later that day. Working from home can therefore be a responsible and conscientious use of time. You shouldn't hesitate to take up the option of flexible working, so long as you communicate with your team.

**Robert Elliott**  
Senior Partner





**Aylie Ewing**

Head of HR WEELEG



**Sarah Parkin**

Managing Associate

## Human Resources

Though I have an agile working arrangement, I've continued to work in roles with a lot of responsibility, which are both challenging and interesting. I have been with the firm nearly 15 years, working flexibly for 10 of those. I worked four days a week after my first child but in 2013, I decided I wanted to spend more time with my children so I resigned from the firm. However, as a result of having a very open conversation with my manager, the firm offered me an arrangement working two days a week in a projects based role. In April 2014, I became Head of HR for WEELEG and am now working three days a week.

## Pensions

It's important to work with your group to find out what's best for your team and yourself, so I have Tuesdays off as other colleagues have different days off. Knowing that there are people in my team working flexibly meant that I knew these types of arrangements were possible and accessible.

My group know that I pull my weight and my clients are happy because we ensure that we are still providing the same service level. It means that I can spend time with my son, and that I can really focus on work when I'm in the office.





## Michael Kent

Global Head of  
Finance & Projects

### Finance & Projects

In 1992 I decided to leave the firm to take on a role in a local church and spend time with my children, while undertaking legal work on a consultancy basis. I returned to Linklaters after a year, when flexible working was relatively new. I worked four days a week, including one at home, which allowed me to continue with non-work interests. I returned to full time working after three years.

That experience left me with a sense of gratitude and loyalty to the firm, and resulted in my being supportive of others working flexibly. We have a number of flexible working arrangements within the group, which have undoubtedly helped us grow quickly and build a high quality and diverse practice.



## Alex Talbot

Head of Strategic Projects

### Strategy & Project Services

Working flexibly is the recipe for efficiency. You get really good at delegation and prioritising your to-do list. There was a time when it felt quicker to do a task myself when it was urgent and I had time. It's not. It's quicker to learn how to delegate and empower your team.

I recently went onto an 80% contract which means that I can be there for my children as they start school. As a result of the firm supporting me, I am more loyal to the firm. They trust me to do what is a senior, responsible job, and I fulfil that trust, reassuring the people I work with that the job will get done.



**Marcus Blacker**

Managing PSL



**Mandip Englund**

Managing Associate

## Competition/Antitrust

I recently reduced my working hours and now job-share with a colleague who has returned from maternity leave. My new arrangement means that I will be able to devote more time to my record label, Chapter 24 Records, which I started with a friend towards the end of last year.

Co-owning and running a label was taking up the majority of my spare time: from managing artists and promoting their music, to hosting events. It made sense to try to restore the balance between work and my other commitments, particularly as I recently got married. It's also great for our team as we now have some additional capacity.

## Banking

After having children I wanted to find a balance between the demands of my job and being a parent. I currently take Mondays off so that I can spend quality time with my children. I have worked on significant transactions since I adopted my arrangement with a variety of clients, flexing my work pattern when needed to meet client demands.

There is no “one size fits all” with flexible working – I have found something that works for me, my team and my practice, as well as my family – and my arrangement has evolved over time to accommodate their changing needs and my career aspirations.



Sarah Parkhouse

Partner



Pamela Reger

Managing Associate

## Financial Regulation Group

I returned to FRG in 2004 on an 80% contract over five days following a career break with my children. I later upped to 90% and was made partner on a 90% basis in 2010. I really appreciate being able to leave the office between 5pm and 6pm and spending time with my family whilst managing emails from home. It was hugely important for me to be there when they were growing up. I work well early in the morning, so often I will do that to make sure clients still have what they need by the start of their working day and associates get the supervision they are entitled to expect.

## Dispute Resolution

I recently returned to work after having my second child, and work in the office from 8am to 4pm, logging in again at home once my children are in bed. After my first child, I was working with a Platinum client and my arrangement was never an issue. As most of my work is done via phone and email, I was still as contactable as though I was there face to face.

To make it work you need to communicate well with your team and be organised. Make sure that your clients and colleagues know when you are available, and have the confidence to leave the office at a certain time.



Richard Godden

Partner



Alisa Fiddes

Counsel PSL

## Mainstream Corporate

I have charitable commitments and was feeling under pressure to make space for them. Having spent 35 years in the firm, I decided it was time to make a change.

I now take an additional 20 days off a year to dedicate to my role as Deputy Chairman of the London City Mission and to my speaking and other work for my church and other charities.

Flexible working has to mean just that: I am there when I need to be and no client has noticed a difference in the service I provide. If anything, I am more relaxed at work as I am not worried about fitting in my charitable / other commitments.

## Projects

I work up to one month each year at home in Melbourne during December/January. I take with me a significant project that requires uninterrupted time, and work Australian business hours.

I wanted to form close relationships with my nieces and nephews in Australia and be part of their lives in a way that I couldn't do when I saw them for a few days each year on holidays.

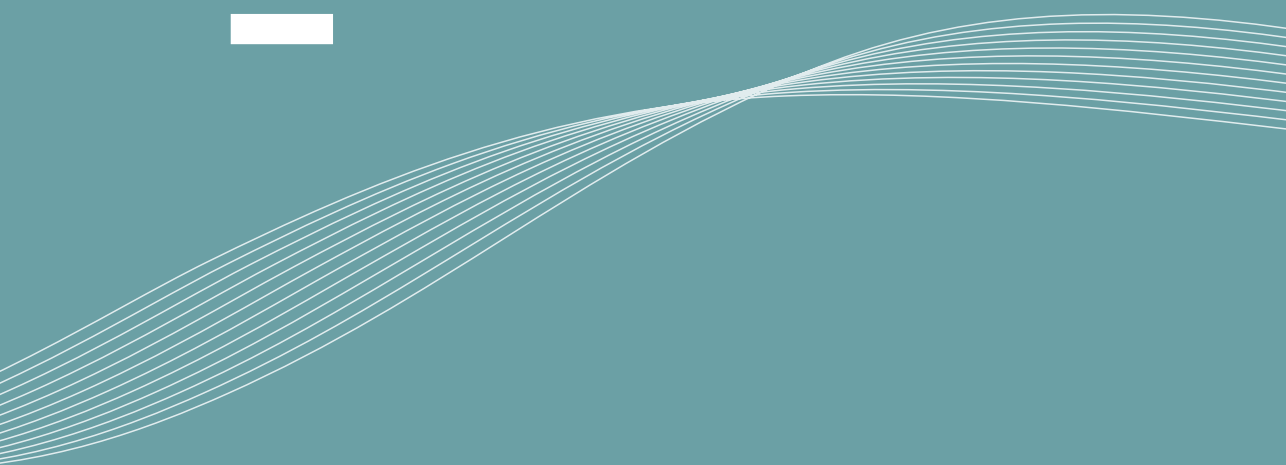
You need discipline and a good team to make it work, but technology helps. This has given me a deeper appreciation for the importance of face-to-face contact, and I always feel re-energised when coming back to my team in London.



We are fortunate enough to work with a group of able and trustworthy people who understand we value them based on what they do, rather than when they clock in or out. We trust them to work in a way that's best for our clients. That doesn't mean being physically present in the office at all times.

**Owen Clay**

Partner, Mainstream Corporate





**Mirit Ehrenstein**

Senior PSL



**Michael Smith**

Systems Management  
Engineer

## Employment & Incentives

A partner once told me ‘we judge by results, not by hours’, and that’s key. I may well have been one of the first ‘part timers’ at Linklaters, as I’ve worked this way for nearly 20 years, both in fee-earning roles (including working from home for four years) and more recently as a PSL.

Employers are increasingly aware of the benefits of flexible working, as it means that they maintain expertise, foster loyalty and retain employees in the long term. Working part time teaches you to be fully committed and efficient and to optimise productivity.

## ISS

I work four days a week, and haven’t worked on Mondays for four or five years. I use the time to balance my work with the Boys’ Brigade – a youth group for boys. I’m captain of a group in Chelmsford and was spending many weekends running competitions or away camping and, of course, filling in various admin forms. I found I was coming back to work exhausted having had no ‘me time’.

My manager ensured that my arrangement wouldn’t leave the team short-staffed or put additional pressure on them. My advice is that if you can afford it, then you should assess your options.



## Hannah Bronwin

Managing Associate



## Peter Church

Counsel PSL

### Projects

Since returning from maternity leave, I have been working on a 60% contract. I work all day Monday and Tuesday and from lunchtime on Wednesday and Thursday. I find being in the office on four days helps me to meet our business needs, while the half days keep me focused, so I make the most of my time at home and at work.

I can track my utilisation as normal. This helps with work allocation, as the partners can compare utilisation like-for-like. This arrangement works well for me: I can stretch my intellect, collaborate with colleagues and work hard, without crowding out quality time with my little girl.

### TMT/IP

I work nine days out of ten, taking every other Friday off. I started this three years ago as my wife was going back to work after our third child, and I knew it would be better for my family to be around more at home.

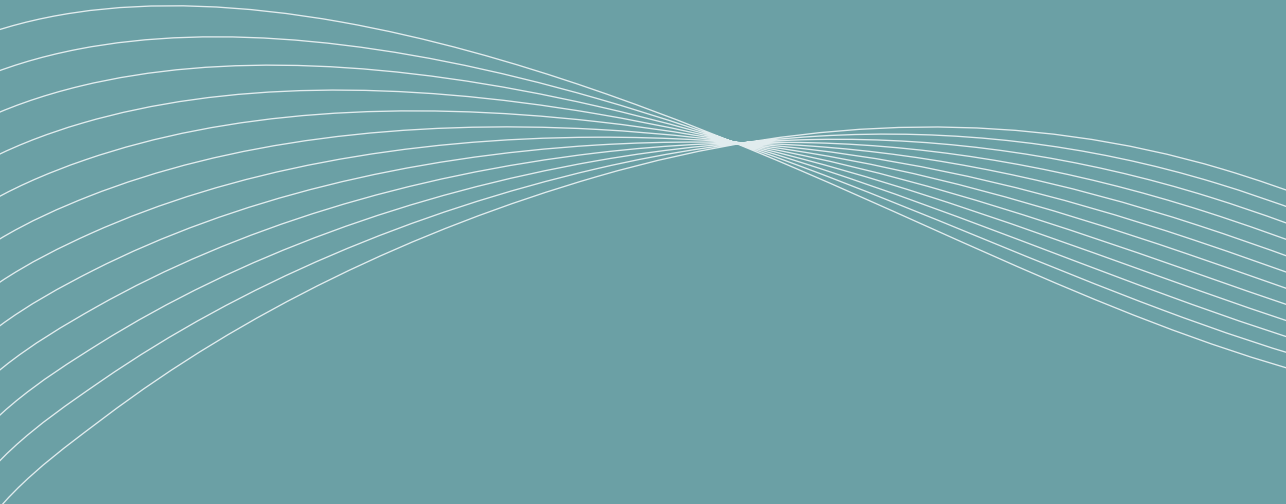
I now understand more what it is like for my wife when I am not around, and it was nice to spend more time with my daughter when she wasn't yet at school. I am rarely contacted on my day off. I wish that I had done it sooner!



Many of our clients tell us they value outputs and not inputs, and so should we. Some have global teams who connect virtually and regularly to serve their businesses. Clients also have team members who work flexibly and communicating this is often the key to a successful client relationship.

**Sarah Wiggins**

Partner, Mainstream Corporate and Clients and Sectors Partner







Justine Shackleton

Managing Associate



Alison Wilson

Partner

### Financial Regulation Group

I have worked flexibly in one guise or another for 11 years now. Currently, I work three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday), which works well for me as it enables me to combine interesting and challenging work with an active role in my children's lives.

This arrangement means I am not out of the office for more than one day at a time, making it easier to manage client expectations. I feel that there are opportunities for me to develop my career and flexible working has not prevented me taking part in initiatives such as the Women's Leadership Programme.

### Dispute Resolution

I have two small girls and am on an 80% contract, working four days a week. I have full time childcare so am able to flex my days off to meet clients' needs. The firm trusts me to manage my own time so when I can, I leave at 5.30pm, put my children to bed and work from home as necessary.

Busyness means I don't always make my arrangement work, but that's something I think you need to be realistic about when applying for agile working. Flexibility is key, and making it work most of the time is my idea of success.



Joanne Marshall

Group Secretary



Georgie Keene

Senior HR Manager,  
Corporate

## Banking

I work four days a week, Monday to Thursday. I got to a stage in life where I wanted to spend more time at home. It's allowed me to take my dad, who has Parkinson's, for hospital appointments, and to take my mum out for lunch. I have more time to stay in touch with friends, to go away with my partner and to keep on top of the housework, too.

I feel more positive about work and the secretaries I work with are understanding because they have similar arrangements or because they might like to do the same one day.

## Human Resources

In exploring our people's stories for this book, I have seen how we can achieve solutions for those who need balance. I hope that by raising awareness we can change the perception of what is actually possible when it comes to working arrangements.

I apply an agile mind-set to working. I work from home when I can, as this means I can try to balance a busy home life with three children, alongside my busy job. Technology enables me to stay connected and puts my mind at rest as it means that if anyone needs to get hold of me, they can whether I am working remotely or in the office.



## Nicola Gillespie

Head of Professional  
Indemnity

### Risk

I actually joined the firm because of the flexible working arrangements offered here. In 1999, I joined the Litigation department, working four days a week. So, later, when I was asked to set up the Risk and Compliance department with a former Corporate partner, we implemented flexible working right from the start.

The technology we have to support working from home is great. It's fantastic that I can forward my calls to my mobile and speak to colleagues in Asia from home during their business day, for example. I have always been supportive of flexible working in my team and think it works best for those who are proactive and make their presence felt.



## Frances Richardson

Managing Associate

### Dispute Resolution

I work on an 80% contract spread over five days in term time, and 60% in the school holidays. I work from home one day a week. This allows me to balance being available to clients and colleagues, with the ability to drop-off or collect my daughter from school a few times a week and, crucially, to travel outside of peak rush hours (necessitated by being on immunosuppressant post-transplant medication). This flexibility has enabled me to continue working effectively in my role.

In the course of a normal working day, many people are out at meetings or on calls so clients don't think twice if you are unavailable for an hour or so.



**Graham  
Rowlands-Hempel**  
Counsel



**Caroline Cheney**  
Senior PSL

## Employment & Incentives

I work three days a week: Monday Tuesday and Thursday, which I have done for four years. I was a partner here for 10 years before working at PwC, and then returning on a part time basis.

Agile working is personal and it won't be the same for everyone. You have to make it work for you, for your clients and for the team you work with. The nature of my work (particularly on transactions) means that I have to be prepared to work on my non-working days if needed, or swap my days. You have to be very disciplined to get everything done, however, I find that I have more energy and enthusiasm for my work.

## Finance & Projects

I work flexible hours supporting our United Arab Emirates (UAE) offices from London.

When Charles Clark, Global K&L Partner, was at a client meeting in Abu Dhabi, I assisted him while working from home in Dubai. I was due to move back after six years in Dubai and this prompted a discussion about my continuing to support the UAE offices from London. I put together a business case and the partners approved it.

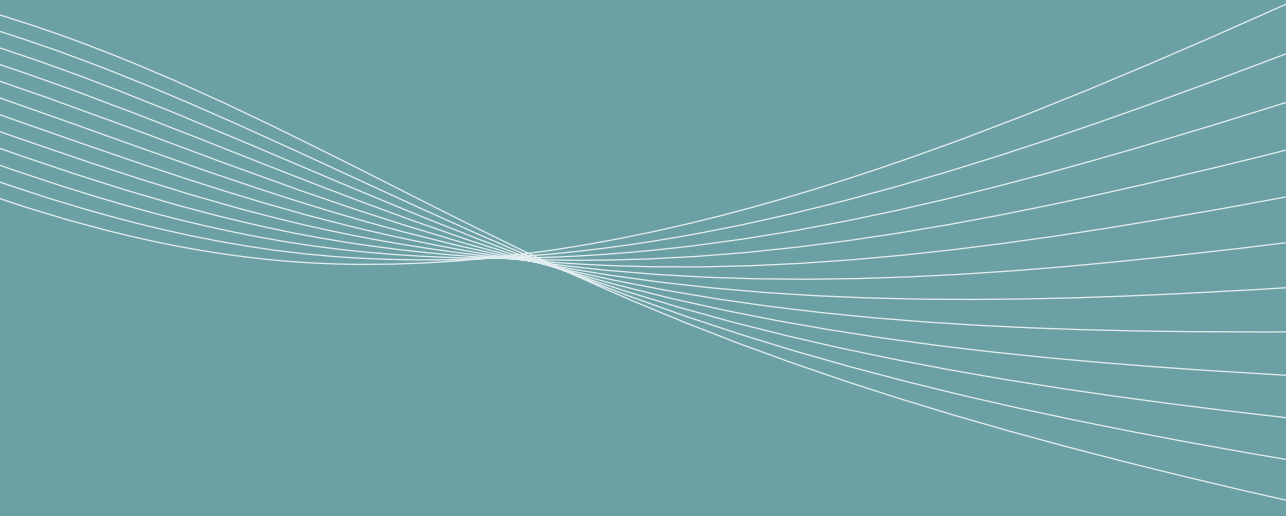
I work three and a half days, over four days. Skype is my best friend, I start work early and speak to colleagues in Dubai and Abu Dhabi (sometimes from home). This arrangement fits perfectly with my childcare arrangements.



I have seen first hand how supporting flexible working patterns can help us attract and retain the best talent, and respond to client needs whilst maintaining a competitive edge. It requires a high trust environment, leadership buy-in and individual accountability, but when you have all these elements it can and does work.

**Tony Bugg**

Global Practice Head, Banking

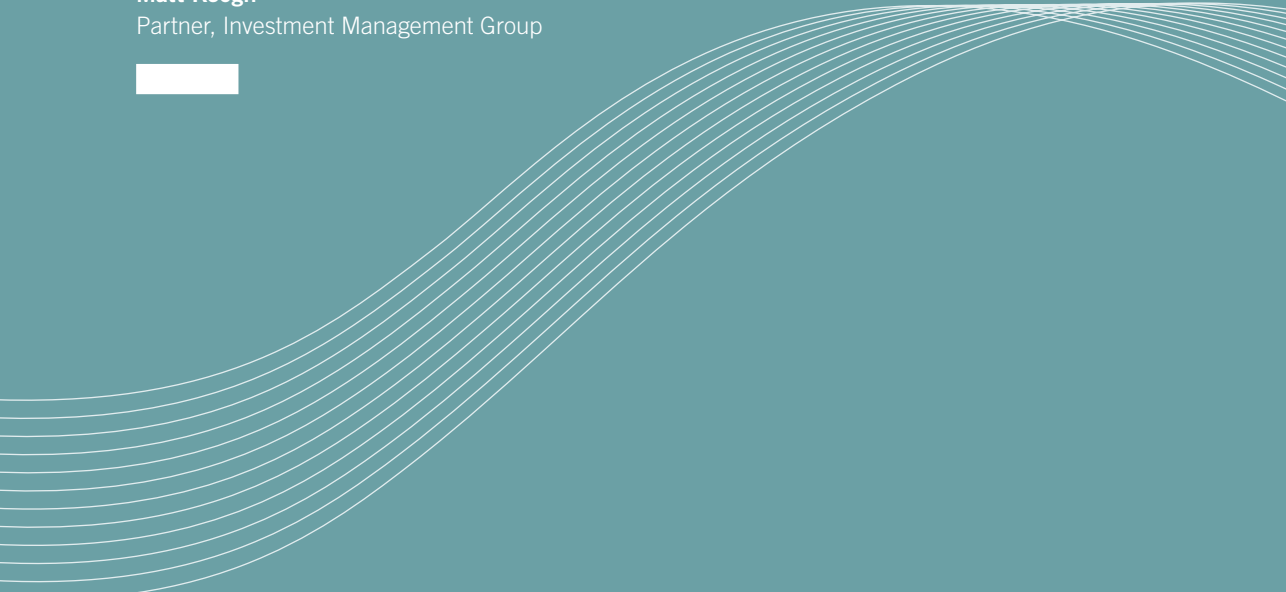




In my practice area, we have a 'working from home day' each week. People share their intended whereabouts with the group prior to the start of the week. We implemented this two years ago and found the flexibility is appreciated, particularly as they can use the hour they would have been commuting working instead.

**Matt Keogh**

Partner, Investment Management Group





## Rachel Manser

Global Head of Knowledge  
and Learning

### Knowledge & Information

I worked part time for nearly all of my career, only recently returning to full time work. As a single parent, I had a fair amount of football lessons and matches to take my son to. It was important for me to be there for him and to be able to fit my work in, too. You learn so much about networking, prioritising and time management from managing your various commitments.

Working part time has not negatively impacted my career – I've made it to associate director level. My advice is to do what you do with pride and have a positive attitude because you know you are committed to the firm no matter what your working hours.



## Harriet Ellis

Partner

### Dispute Resolution

Following maternity leave, I returned to work as a managing associate on an 80% contract, and subsequently carried that arrangement over upon election as a partner. Currently, I am on a 90% contract.

Clients' attitudes are changing and it's increasingly acceptable to be frank with clients about why you're unavailable at a particular time (for example, because you're at home without childcare) – provided that, as a senior member of the team, you remain flexible and responsive. Don't be concerned that asking to work flexibly or part time will mark you out as not being serious about your work. Remember, there is usually scope to adjust an arrangement if it's not working for you.

## Where to go for support...

Our aim is to be the leading global law firm, which depends on the strength of our ability to attract, retain and develop the best people from a range of backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, it is important that we offer an agile working environment that continues to meet the ever-changing demands of our clients and supports the needs of our people.

We recognise that client demands and the global nature of our business mean that individuals can work long hours for intense periods. We will always look for ways to help make life easier for our people, providing support and resources to help manage the demands of the job.

Agile working covers formal and informal working practices and options relating to when and where an individual works. As we have found during the course of our research for this book, there are a variety of approaches in operation, from informal ad hoc arrangements to contractual agreements.



It is important to be aware of possible different working practices, which can maximise the success of agile working arrangements. Every request will be different, depending not only on the proposed working pattern itself, but also on the individual's approach, working style and personal circumstances, as well as the needs of the job, team and clients. It is important that those who adopt agile working have a willingness to adapt to new working practices, an openness to change and new ideas, and a desire for continuing learning. In return, we recognise the need to offer support to enable our people to meet the demands and high expectations of the firm, and to balance their home and work lives.

If you are interested in discussing agile working, please speak to the relevant partner in your group, or your line manager. Alternatively, please contact your local Human Resources Manager for an informal discussion.

**Hilary Maurice**

Head of HR, London Practice





#lifestories