



UK REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK ON TELEWORK

1. Representatives of the CBI, TUC and CEEP UK were active participants in EU-level negotiations over the Agreement on Telework, and fully supported the text agreed by UNICE, ETUC, CEEP and UEAPME. The Agreement was implemented in the UK through the production of Telework Guidance, which was drafted by representatives of the three bodies and published in August 2003.¹
2. The UK's record on the promotion and take-up of telework is very good, and recent official figures demonstrate that the period since the publication of the Telework Guidance has seen a major increase in the numbers and proportion of workers choosing to use telework. Eight per cent of all UK workers (2.4 million people) currently tele work regularly – many more telework on an informal or infrequent basis.

A joint guide to the Telework Agreement was produced by the CBI, TUC and CEEP UK

3. The Agreement, which was the first UNICE-ETUC-CEEP cross-sector agreement designed to be implemented by the social partners, rather than through a Directive, fitted in well with the UK labour market, both in terms of the work of CBI, TUC and CEEP UK, and in terms of how telework has affected the UK economy. The government praised the three parties for working “so productively together to produce this (Telework Guidance) document.”²

Guidance was published to implement and promote the Framework Agreement

4. The Agreement notes that its provisions were to be implemented “in accordance with the procedures and practices specific to management and labour in the Member States”. This was particularly important to the UK, as it does not have a formal system of cross-sector collective bargaining, nor do CBI or TUC negotiate such agreements on behalf of their members. Instead, the UK government and CBI, TUC and CEEP UK work together in an informal basis, using a more flexible system to co-operate on topics of mutual concern and interest. Telework is an issue where employers and trade unions share a common appreciation and understanding of the value of this form of flexible working.
5. The Guidance document which was used to implement the Framework Agreement was a non-statutory instrument, designed to provide employers, employees and other parties with information, advice and guidance on telework. This method of implementation is one that suits the procedure and practice of the UK labour market.

The Guidance outlined how to put the Framework Agreement in to practice – with help from the UK government

6. The stated aim of the UK guide was to “provide a useful checklist of issues to consider when implementing teleworking and explain how the text of the European agreement might best operate in the context of the UK labour market.” As such, it expanded on the Framework Agreement, with extensive use of quotations from the original agreement, helpful practical

¹ *Telework Guidance: As agreed by CBI, TUC and CEEP UK*, DTI, 2003.

² *ibid.*

advice on implementation and information on UK-specific legislation such as the right to request flexible working. The Guidance also follows the same structure and covers the same issues as the Framework Agreement.

- The production costs for the UK guide were met by the UK's Department of Trade & Industry, with a foreword written by Gerry Sutcliffe, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment Relations, Competition and Consumers. The final document, 'Telework Guidance', was launched in August 2003, and disseminated by TUC, CBI and CEEP UK in a variety of ways to ensure maximum coverage, as outlined below:

CBI – Copies of the Guidance and the Framework Agreement were sent to all CBI regional offices, and the agreement was publicised through the CBI's email update to members, and through the CBI's publication *HR Report*. Special events were held to promote the guidance and provide case study examples. The CBI continues to publicise the report and helps members with requests for information on teleworking.

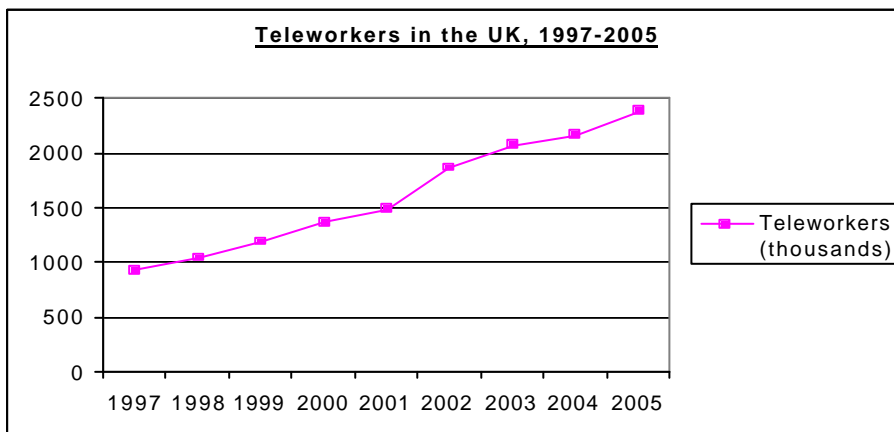
Information on the agreement and the Guidance (along with copies of the Guidance) is also available on the CBI's website www.cbi.org.uk/employment

TUC – Copies of the guidance and the Framework agreement were sent to all TUC affiliated unions with a message from the TUC urging them to ensure that all branch and regional officials were given copies. Copies are also available from the TUC website. In the UK employees' terms and conditions are set out in their contracts of employment. Unions have therefore also been encouraged to raise the issue of teleworking in negotiations with employers, referring to the Guidance to assist in this process.

CEEP UK – The guidance document was circulated through Human Resources networks in the NHS, the civil service and local government. It supplements existing guidance documents on flexible working and there is evidence that teleworking, where it is a feasible option, is highly popular with both employers and employees in the public services.

- The DTI also publicised, and continues to publicise, the document, and provides free copies to all interested party through its website – <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/individual/telework.pdf>.

The proportion of employees teleworking has doubled in recent years



- The number of UK employees teleworking has increased markedly in recent years. Figures for the number of teleworkers were first collected in 1997 – showing that 921,000 (4%) of the UK workforce teleworked. This has increased by more than 150% since 1997 to 2.4 million (8%) in spring 2005.³ Teleworkers also make up an increasingly large proportion of all those working from home – 77% of all homeworkers are now teleworkers, compared with only

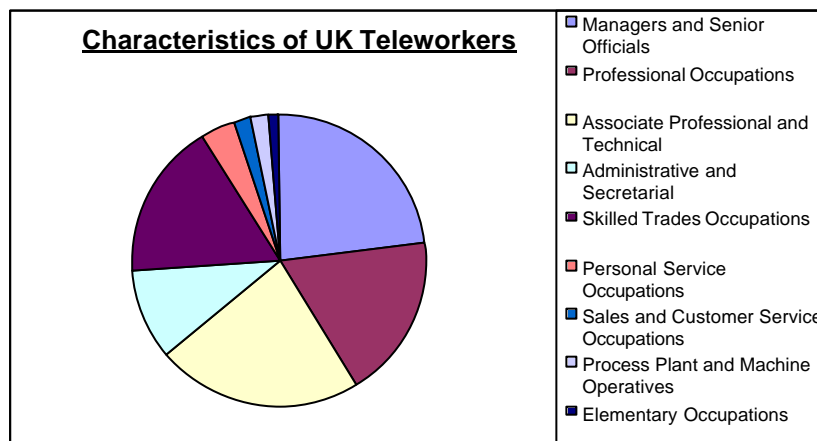
³ *Home-based working using communication technologies*, Office of National Statistics, October 2005.

40% in 1995. Official statistics characterise these teleworkers as those who use a telephone and computer to work from home. Indeed, 2.1 million teleworkers reported that a telephone and computer were essential to the way in which they worked.

- Most teleworkers – 1.8 million in 2005 – worked in different places using home as a base, whereas 603,000 worked mainly at home. The growth was strongest among those who worked in different places; they now account for 6% of all workers compared with 2% in 1997.

Telework growth has been particularly strong amongst the self-employed, managers and skilled tradespeople

- The main occupations for teleworkers were managers and senior officials (23% of all teleworkers), associate professional and technical (also 23%) and professional (18%). Almost one in five (17%) of skilled trades people teleworked in spring 2005. It is also noticeable that, although self-employed people form a relatively small share of the workforce, the majority (62%) of teleworkers were self-employed in 2005.



- All business sectors use teleworking to some extent – over a fifth of workers in building and construction are teleworkers. The rise in teleworking in the construction industry – from 8% in 1997 to 23% in spring 2005 – is also the biggest of any sector.

Implementing the Telework Agreement has helped promote existing trends

- The social partners’ initiative on telework was, as anticipated – a timely intervention. The period after the implementation of the Framework Agreement – 2003-2005 – have clearly seen large increases in the numbers of people using teleworking. This trend was evident in the years before implementation, and has largely been driven by the development of the necessary technology, chiefly mobile telephones, personal computers and the internet. The aim of the Telework Guidance was to identify the key issues that need to be considered when promoting or introducing telework, including health & safety, organisation of work and data protection and explain them in an accessible manner.
- This aim has been achieved by the UK Guidance. The CBI, TUC and CEEP UK, in their work implementing the Framework Agreement, have noted the success of teleworking as a phenomenon. The guidance has served as a useful checklist to help explain the issues surrounding telework, and the feedback that the three parties have received suggests that many employers and employees have benefited from the guidance.