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Attention: newsdesks, industrial and social affairs correspondents

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TUC launches new guide to family friendly working

The TUC has today (Tuesday) launched a new guide on how to persuade employers of the benefits of introducing family friendly policies at work.

The TUC guide says that unions have led the way in calling for more family-friendly working. The issue is an increasingly high priority for unions, with work-life advice now the most popular equality issue that members ask their union rep for guidance on.

The guide makes the case for good family friendly working practices and features case studies where unions have negotiated forward thinking policies with employers. Good flexible working practices benefit staff and their companies by helping to retain employees, increase productivity and morale, the guide says.

However, while millions of workers and their families have benefitted from the growth of flexible working, the guide warns that poorly managed workplaces can do harm more than good, often leading to long and unsocial hours.

The guide explains the various legal entitlements to paid and unpaid time off, as well as the right to request flexible working. Unions are often able to negotiate policies that go well beyond the legal minimum, with some of the most effective policies open to all staff and not just parents, the guide says.

The TUC says that many employers still base family friendly working practices on traditional notions of family. This is likely to exclude many workers such as fathers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, who also have rights as parents and carers, the guide says.

Midlands TUC Regional Secretary **Cheryl Pidgeon** said: "Unions have led the way in the long battle for more family friendly rights and it's now one of the main issues that members ask their union rep for guidance on.

"As fewer parents and carers fit the stereotypical model of the breadwinner husband with part-time working wife, it's important for union reps to be fully informed on everyone's legal entitlements.

“Our new guide should help union reps negotiate better family friendly working practices. After all, as the examples in our guide show, good policies can benefit both staff and employers alike.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The TUC guide is available to download from www.tuc.org.uk/extras/familyfriendlyguide.pdf
- Printed copies are available for £8 each, with discounts for bulk buys, from the TUC publications office. Please contact Steve Mills on 020 7467 1294

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- A series of TUC rights leaflets are available on our website and from the *know your rights line* 0870 600 4 882. Lines are open every day from 9am-9pm. Calls are charged at the national rate.

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