**Beth Farhat column for Monday 7 August**

We all like to make the most of summer – even if the British weather doesn’t always help!

One of summer’s great pleasures is sporting events. Last year it was the Olympics, and next year the football World Cup. But right now, it’s the World Athletic Championships in London.

Although there’s just one session of the athletics that clashes with standard weekday working hours, more than one in five UK employees work evenings and weekends. So they will be at work when most sessions are happening, and when the finals for events take place. And many of them will want to watch Team GB sporting heroes like Katarina Johnson-Thompson and Mo Farah in action.

Not everyone likes sport, but there’s other summer fun we want time for too. The UK has over 200 music festivals taking place this summer. And lots of workers want a long weekend, and an early getaway, to beat the rush-hour and bag the perfect spot to camp.

And if nothing else, it is great to have a bit of flexibility at work in the summer to get off early when the sun is shining, or to spend a bit more special time with the kids while they are off school.

The TUC is a big believer in flexible working, and we encourage bosses to talk with staff about what they can do, especially at this time of year.

If there’s a big sporting event that lots of workers might want to watch, we suggest that employers talk to staff in advance. There are simple ways of making it possible, such as flexible break times, or making up the hours by working earlier or later than usual.

Allowing staff to work from home where possible is a great option. If you need to make an early get away for a festival, or summer weekend away, it’s a lot easier if you don’t have to carry a suitcase, backpack or tent into the office before travelling on.

Flexibility with annual leave requests can be a big help too. Letting staff take their paid leave as half days, rather than just whole days, helps people get a lot more out of their entitlement.

Some employers give staff flexibility by allowing them to meet their required hours on a monthly or annual basis, instead of daily or weekly. This can be helpful for bosses too, as in some workplaces August is a very quiet month, with less work to do. Longer hours may be more valuable at a busier time of the year.

So this isn’t only about being nice to workers. Flexible working has real benefits for businesses too. And many bosses already recognise these benefits by operating flexitime policies.

Flexibility is a win-win for workers and bosses. It cuts absenteeism, and it raises productivity by keeping staff happy, healthy and motivated.

Let’s hope there’s lots of wins this week for Team GB too!

Beth Farhat

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