TUC

5 million work a day a week unpaid, says TUC

Nearly five million employees (4,759,000) worked on average an extra day a week in unpaid overtime in 2005 (7 hours 24 minutes) according to a TUC analysis of official figures published today (Thursday).

If each employee worked all their unpaid overtime at the beginning of the year, the TUC estimates that they would have worked for free and would not start to get paid until Friday 24 February 2006. That is why the TUC has dedicated Friday 24 February as their third 'Work Your Proper Hours Day'. On that day the TUC is urging people who do unpaid overtime to take a proper lunch break, and arrive and leave work on time.

The TUC research published today shows that employers are starting to tackle the UK's long hours culture. The percentage of people working at least an extra hour a week unpaid has fallen slightly, and is now at its lowest level since 1992 (19.4 per cent). Although there are still 600,000 more people working unpaid overtime than in 1992 this is a half million fall from the first 'Work Your Proper Hours Day' in 2003, when 5,217,000 worked extra hours for free.

The official figures also show that employees in small workplaces were the least likely to work unpaid overtime.

TUC General Secretary, **Brendan Barber**, said: "Millions are still putting in up to an extra day a week for free, but there are now some welcome signs that some employers are beginning to realise that endless hours of unpaid overtime are often a sign of an inefficient workplace and not something to celebrate.

"We don't want to turn into a nation of clock watchers. Most people enjoy their jobs, and don't mind putting in extra effort when there's a rush or an emergency, but that easily turns into the long hours culture of extra hours every week.

"But in smart workplaces, people work fewer hours. The run up to 'Work Your Proper Hours Day' is a great opportunity for bosses to show staff that they want to

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start tackling their long hours culture. And on the day itself managers can say thanks for their staff's hard work by taking them out for a coffee or a cocktail."

The research also shows that Londoners put in the longest hours. Those doing unpaid overtime put in an extra 8 hours 12 minutes in a week. Londoners were followed by employees in Wales at 7 hours 48 minutes and those in Northern Ireland were just behind on 7 hours 36 minutes (full regional table below).

NOTES TO EDITORS:
- Figures for how much this unpaid overtime is worth in unpaid wages are currently unavailable due to a delay in the publication of the relevant official statistics.
- The unpaid overtime figures published today are from the latest Labour Force Survey (Summer 2005).
- Employees in workplaces with less than 25 staff are the least likely to work unpaid overtime - 14.6 per cent of employees compared to almost a quarter in workplaces with over 500 staff. Staff working unpaid overtime in small businesses (25 staff or less) also work the least amount of unpaid overtime (6 hours 54 minutes) compared to bigger workplaces.
- For more information about the day visit: www.workyourproperhoursday.com

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Unpaid overtime by region

Region	number in region who do unpaid overtime	Average hours of unpaid overtime per week
North East	153,000	7.1
North West	379,000	7.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	344,000	7.4
East Midlands	323,000	7.2
West Midlands	354,000	7.0
East of England	488,000	7.5
London	722,000	8.2
South East	848,000	7.3
South West	403,000	6.9
Wales	199,000	7.8
Scotland	408,000	6.8
Northern Ireland	62,000	7.6
UK	4,759,000	7.4

Sources: LFS summer 2005