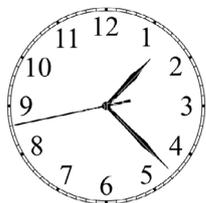


Working Hours

October 2013



AFF conducted a working hours survey 9 September to 9 October 2013, in order to assess the impact of increased hours on families, in particular spousal employment. There were 2,578 respondents with 72% being Other Ranks (ORs). The headline statistics are as follows:

- Over 10% of spouses have had to quit work due to soldier's increased hours
- Only 24% believe they have a good work/life balance
- 71% reported an increase in hours over the last 2 years
- 64% are doing over 10 hours a day
- 65% did not take full complement of leave.

Impact on families

AFF Comment: The impact on family life has been great. With soldiers transiting from high tempo operations to long working hours and busy exercise programmes, there is no recuperation and family time. AFF is concerned by a large number of responses where families are on the brink.

Working hours are increasingly erratic...cannot plan any family time without having the back up plan as the chances are that he'll not be around/will have to cancel. Daily life has become about nothing more than the daily grind.

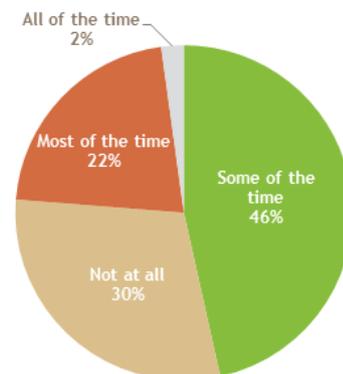
Impact on spouse career

AFF Comment: Under NEM spouse employment is key to removing the dependency on military housing. However, the results of this survey are alarming. 292 spouses (over 10%) have had to quit work to manage their soldier's increased hours. The hardest hit are the ORs where the need for two incomes to support a mortgage is greatest! 468 families have had to meet extra childcare costs which are themselves an obstacle to work. A key burden for dual parent working families was the unpredictability of the soldiers' hours and absences. AFF is keen to highlight that critical to supporting spousal working is reliability and predictability of the soldiers hours.

Work life balance

Only 24% of respondents felt that they had a good work life balance. The key statistic is the 46% that believe that they only have a good work life balance some of the time.

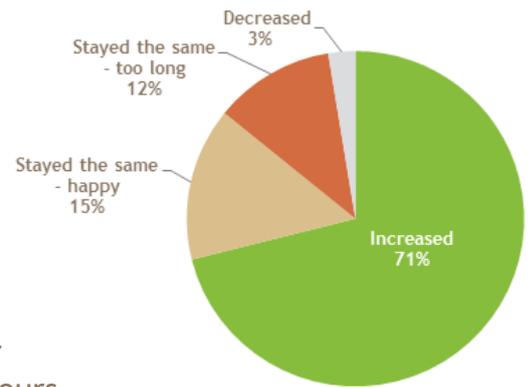
AFF Comment: This is indicative that the long hours are taking their toll on the morale of the soldier and the family. There is a chance that this 46% of 'waverers' will vote with their feet.



Increase in hours

The increase in working hours has affected Officers and ORs in equal measure. The only marked difference was that more Officers, 16%, felt that their hours had stayed the same but were too long compared with 10% ORs.

My husband recently went 3 months without a single day off, and I'm not talking about leave, I mean no weekends, nothing.

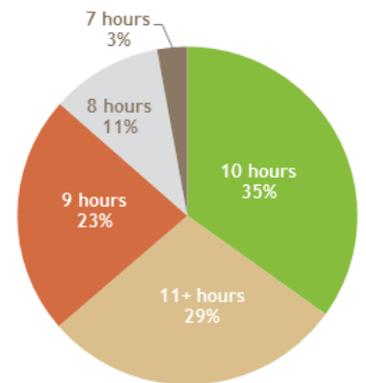


AFF Comment: There is a clear perception that working hours over an extended period have increased. Results indicate the Officers hours have been 'too long' for some time but the recent trend is a substantial increase in OR's hours.

Long days

64% are consistently doing over 10 hours a day. Officers are working marginally more 10 hour days than ORs and they are working significantly more 11 hour days than ORs. However, the percentage of ORs working long days is still very high with 34% 10 hours and 23% 11+ hours.

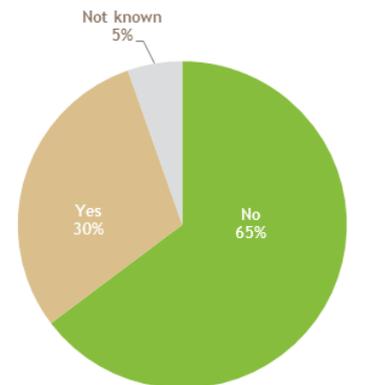
AFF Comment: Whilst it is accepted that executive management equivalents in the corporate sector will work 10+hour days it is clear that the long working hours are not isolated to senior officers. We have ORs earning between £18 - £38k working senior management hours.



Failure to take leave

Only 30% of respondents were confident that they had taken all their annual leave entitlement last year. 65% reported that they had not. Failure to take leave entitlement is particularly marked in Officers with 75% saying they did not take their leave entitlement.

Although my soldier is RMP, his leave is often not taken due to manning issuesthis year my soldier has only had two weeks leave.



AFF Comment: The systemic failure to take leave is indicative of unsustainable working practices. Comments made by respondents revealed that this failure was despite concerted efforts to take leave. It is also clear that personnel are falling a long way short of their leave entitlement.

Chief Executive Comment:

Families are accepting of specific periods of intense work activity surrounding a deployment or exercise. The perpetual pace of lengthy days with no respite will be regarded as a covenant issue. The traditional pattern of periods of absence balanced with periods of acceptable 'in barrack' hours which allowed family time has disappeared-families associate this with a poor quality of life and are likely to encourage their soldier to look elsewhere unless a better work life balance is restored.