



## Top employers call for change to Flexible Working Requests

By **Elliott Lauder** - 24 June 2020

Earlier this week a group of 26 top employers including Deloitte, Schroders, Santander, TSB and Zurich Insurance have signed an open letter, written in collaboration with the charity Working Families, to call on the government to close the loopholes in the legislation on flexible working requests. The main demands of the letter were that employees should be able to make flexible working requests from day one in a new job (as opposed to after 26 weeks), employers should have to consider the request in a shorter time frame than the currently afforded 3 months, and that the grounds for turning down a request should be reviewed.

Steve Collinson, HR Director at Zurich Insurance, told The Telegraph that “This isn’t flexible. It locks parents into a different pattern but locks them in all the same”. He noted that Zurich have recently allowed their employees to fulfil their contracted hours flexibly and have since reported an increase in women applying for jobs and the number of women reaching senior positions.

The letter cites research conducted by the charity [Working Families](#), published on 19 June 2020, which notes that in 2019 the proportion of the workforce who were working from home was 5% and has increased during lockdown to approximately 63%. As offices across the UK begin to open their doors again over the coming months (with their health and safety compliant social distancing measures in place, of course) it will be interesting how the balance of office working and working from home re-shifts.

The post-lockdown working landscape would seem like an apt time for the government to take a look at reviewing the efficiency of the flexible working requests model, but it’s currently unclear yet whether the open letter has pushed this up their agenda. If you would like to know more about the current flexible working requests procedure, please click [here](#).