

MEDIA ALERT

**Adapt now or face the headache later, UK businesses must begin the move towards flexible provision working provision, urges THUS**

- PM looks to extend current right to request flexible working to parents of children under the age of 17
- Additional 4.5 million parents to be eligible for flexible working options
- Firms must begin trialling solutions immediately in order to support increasing numbers of flexible workers

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown this week launched a review to determine how the current right to request flexible working can be extended to parents of older children.

The current number of flexible workers in the UK stands at approximately 14 million with 6.25 million of these being parents. Extending this right to parents of children under the age of 17 is expected to make an additional 4.5 million parents eligible to ask for flexible working, according to figures from 10 Downing Street. Companies must begin the move to adopting such practices if they are to cope with these increased numbers, claims THUS.

The PM's comments were met with mixed feelings from UK businesses, with the Federation of Small Businesses claiming that employees need to be at work to enable their company to make money, pay their wages and grow to employ others. However, with the raft of dedicated mobile and remote applications and devices available today this is no longer the case, says THUS.

Providing access to technology has been seen as barrier to flexible working in the past, however the solutions available today can be tailored to suit almost any need. These include laptops, handheld devices and flexible access to the company network. 3G Broadband Data Cards also allow laptop users to connect wirelessly and one-stop communications solutions connecting mobile and remote workers to the office are now also available from some service providers. By maximising their use of the technology available, businesses can offer office-level productivity for flexible and remote workers, wherever they are based.

Firms which choose not to offer more flexible working options risk losing their most valuable asset, as employees increasingly look for more flexible working options. With the cost of replacing lost staff estimated to stand at between £5,000 and £10,000\* those businesses who do not start preparing now could be setting themselves up for a costly period of repentance in the future.

Ends

\* The CIPD Labour Turnover Survey of 2007

### **About THUS**

THUS plc provides communications solutions to business customers throughout the UK under the THUS and Demon brands. In an industry punctuated by inexperience THUS can draw upon a knowledge base established over more than a decade in the delivery of data, telecoms and Internet services.

Delivering both standard and bespoke solutions, THUS endeavours to address customers' existing business needs and works hand in hand with customers to develop new business opportunities. THUS' record in the creation of innovative new services is complemented by an award winning focus on quality and full certification of its internal processes and procedures under the ISO9001 standard. THUS plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

For further information visit <http://www.thus.net> and <http://www.demon.net>.