

**COI LIVE EVENTS AND BROADCAST FACILITIES**

**TRANSCRIPT OF GOOD JOBS, GOOD HEALTH CONFERENCE  
HELD AT THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS  
IN LONDON  
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**(DEBATE: SHOULD HEALTH AND SAFETY BE INVOLVED IN THE GOOD  
JOBS, GOOD HEALTH AGENDA?)**

## FACILITATOR

I think that was a very poignant and very significant and very moving video. It certainly hit some with me. One of my best friends killed himself three years ago entirely because of a situation created at his work in a very major national company, so I have been there and I know about it and this is a debate that we do actually have to focus on. But it isn't as simple as saying that is absolutely right and proper and we should always do that in those situations. That is a very good case history that shows where the intervention was appropriate and produced a wonderful result, but there is a debate to be had about how far UK Plc needs to carry the costs and the interventions for a lot of what is going on in society. If for example we say that the four ... of the apocalypse are drugs, drink, fags and food – I will now hold up my hands to three of those and hopefully you know which one it isn't – how far should employers have to intervene with their employees to wean people off those lifestyles? How much is it an employer's responsibility to if you like take the role of a kibbutz, the role of a crèche, as opposed to taking the role of a wealth creator and a job creator, and more specifically how far should HSE and HSC go in this debate, which is why we are holding this conference today because we genuinely want your views.

As my Chairman said, we are an enforcer, but we like to think that these days we are also an advisor and a counsellor and an aide memoire on everything to do with health and safety at work, but if somebody has an unhealthy lifestyle at home should an employer be intervening in that at work because of their concern about the Health and Safety at Work Act, as opposed to for societal reasons? It is a complex debate. We on the Commission do actually not know what the final answer is, which is why we wanted to have this debate with our stakeholders.

We are going to do this in two parts. Firstly, we are going to have an expert panel on the stage and do a sort of Dimbleby Question Time session because we want to hear the views from across a spectrum of very key stakeholders, and then we are going to break you into three workshops so that you too can also debate these big issues we have raised this morning, and don't worry we will give you some coffee and we will feed you later as well, we are nothing if not careful about the needs of our guests this morning.

So without further do I would like to if I may introduce our very distinguished panel and ask them to come up on the stage. Firstly we have Kay Carberry, who is Assistant General Secretary of the TUC; next we have Julia Cleverdon, who is Chief Executive of Business in the Community; followed by Michael Roberts who is the Director of Environment for the CBI; and last but by no means least Richard Tyler who is the Enterprise Editor at the Daily Telegraph. So as you see I think we have been very balanced, we have got the media, we have got community, we have got employers and employees, a good representational spread. And this is not one of those nasty quiz shows, I am certainly not trying to do a Bruce Forsythe, so our panellists have actually been advised of our questions in advance because we wanted them to have some time to think about the contributions they wanted to make to this debate.

If I could have the first question up on the screen please, which is: Should health and safety be involved in the Good Jobs, Good Health agenda, which is a very

simple straightforward question, and I think if I may I would like to start with Kay to give us the TUC point of view.

#### KAY CARBERRY

Well there is only one answer to this, isn't there, and I think that Bill and Professor Kumar, and also the video, have already given the answer, so I am not sure whether this question is redundant. I was particularly struck by what Dr Steve Feast (phon) said on that video, which is that work is good for us, and of course it is, but the problem is that not all work is good for us and the way that work is managed and organised does have a huge effect on the health of the working population. And I think it came out of what we have heard already very well, that what we should be talking about here are two strands to the approach going forward, and that is preventing people becoming ill at work in the first place, and then dealing with getting people back to work.

And so obviously the TUC is absolutely delighted that the government is championing a new approach with Dame Professor Carol Black set out in the video to rehabilitation and sickness absence, and I think one thing that she didn't say about the work, health and wellbeing strategy is that it is a very good example of what Bill was talking about. Bill used the word partnership, and that strategy was a good example of two government departments and the HSE working together on occupational health and I don't think that we should under-estimate the importance of that.

But from the point of view of the unions, we are a bit disappointed that there aren't any new resources being made available to develop a national rehabilitation framework and we would really like to see rehabilitation added into NHS targets and rather surprised that they are not there, and that really is something that does need to be done. And we would also like to see a bit more policy guidance from government for employers, that is important, but it is equally important for employers to have access to services. It is all very well answering your question Judith about whether employers ought to be responsible, but they do need a bit of help. We need to see more trained staff, more for example case managers, physiotherapists and other occupations allied to medicine, those services being made available to employers. And ideally the trade unions would like to see a national rehabilitation service, but we do accept that that is sometime away.

And the question is really focused on the HSC and I must say the trade unions are very appreciative of what the HSC has done in this area already, because of course it is not a new focus for the HSC, indeed the HSC in recent years has been at the cutting edge of work on health issues that do arise in the workplace, and by that I mean not just safety, the familiar territory, but the work that the HSC has done on preventing particularly stress-related illnesses that were obviously highlighted in the video there, and on issues like back pain. And the HSC, as many of you will know, has got absolutely excellent guidance already on handling sickness absence that concentrates on the causes. And this work is already beginning to show dividends, but mainly in large employers, so I think we need to have a look a bit more at what is happening amongst SMEs.

And what we are particularly interested in is where in workplaces you see a partnership between HSC and employers and the trade unions where we are seeing

joint programmes being set up to reduce injury and ill-health. And there have been some quite interesting sectoral approaches, I could highlight for example the glass, ceramics and quarrying section where we have seen as a result of that kind of partnership quite a marked reduction in sickness absence, and in quarries in particular over the last while there has been a reduction of 50%. So I think that kind of approach does demonstrably bear dividends and partnership is a practical tool and the unions very much want to play their part in this.

So the short answer to that question is yes, absolutely.

#### FACILITATOR

Kay, thank you for both your short answer and your long answer. What is the CBI's view Michael?

#### MICHAEL ROBERTS

Good Morning Judith, Good Morning everyone. Well I think this question could equally have been should motherhood and apple pie go together, to which the answer is, surprise, surprise, as with Kay, yes.

The point that I want to sort of reflect on is this, it is really about where do the boundaries lie, and this I think was a point that came out from your comments Judith, and also what we heard from Parveen, and there are two ways it seems to me of getting into this issue. The first is, conscious of the question, referring to health and safety as part of the sort of good jobs agenda, you know what is a good job? Trying to answer that question, which I think is going to be one of the panel discussions after this session, helps us to understand the extent to which health and safety is a key part, but only a part of a wider agenda within the employment community. A good job – well presumably one that carries with it appropriate financial reward for the post holder, one that is carried out in an operating environment in any organisation that is supportive in terms of if you like the operations of management, but also in terms of the quality of that operating environment, and clearly it is a job which contributes to that organisation's objectives, whether they are a private sector organisation trying to deliver shareholder value, or a public sector organisation trying to deliver quality public services.

So good job is a rich point, a rich agenda, within which health and safety is important but not the only thing, but it is equally important that health and safety is joined up with all of those other things that need to take place to ensure that we are delivering on this particular agenda.

The other way into this issue of boundaries that I think is important to relate again reflects something that has been said already, which is that to the extent that health and safety is a workplace and an employer issue, it is clearly important but it is not the only thing that is material to good health. Clearly there is a responsibility on individuals, which is a point I think that came out in the opening presentation, and I think the stat that Parveen came out with, which is that of the 160 million odd days lost in working days, less than a quarter are due to work-related illness and health. That is still a large proportion, but we need to get a sense of perspective. And developing that point a little bit further and briefly by way of conclusion, clearly there are issues for individuals in terms of the way in which they conduct their lifestyles, and I think there are issues there around the role that employers have legitimately in

educating people about what is a reasonable lifestyle to pursue, dealing with the two D's and the two F's – three of which, as you said, apply to yourself Judith.

The other issue, and my final thought, is to think a little bit about what is going on specifically on the safety agenda as opposed to the health agenda where there is increasing focus on the role of supply chains, where businesses increasingly in their relationship with their sub-contractors, with their partners in a commercial sense, are increasingly expecting those partners to adopt the best in terms of safety arrangements as part of their responsibility as responsible employers. How far can that agenda actually be extended to the health agenda, which I think is an interesting one that no-one perhaps yet has got a handle on and perhaps will be explored in the course of the conversation.

#### FACILITATOR

Michael, thank you very much indeed. Julia, your organisation has been advocating businesses as stakeholders in the country for many, many years, what is your view on this first question?

#### JULIA CLEVERDON

Well you have sitting in front of you a completely driven workaholic with a very, very nasty chest infection, absolutely determined that she was going to come and talk about workplace and health. So I just wanted to pick up I think the point about the boundaries. We have seen over the last 10 years I suppose a really clear rising expectation of how businesses behave, how they invest, how they market, how they trade, how they employ, how they particularly manage the expectations of their employees. And one of our dipsticks to have a look and see what UK corporate Britain is doing is the corporate responsibility index that we run every year, and I think we have seen rising evidence in the sophisticates of the importance of health, as opposed to safety, rising challenges about how the health and safety agenda is understood, integrated across the whole business. When we did some research in March I think called Spend Now, Save Now, with Chief Execs, Finance Directors, HR Directors, it was interesting to see where they thought the health arguments were as opposed to the safety arguments. A healthy workforce rated in the top five people issues that boardrooms are concerned about now. 8 out of 10 directors had not read or heard of the Health at Work chapter in the Choosing Health White Paper - you may say not entirely surprising. There is a lack of definition of health at work and little clarity about how to measure it. Only 8% of those companies actually who are publishing reports at national company level mention health as opposed to safety, and in our book 70% are not effectively promoting health and wellbeing at work.

So actually, this is an oxymoron question, it cannot in our book be seen as something which companies concerned about added value, concerned about the long term health of their own business, couldn't not be concerned about the health of their employees. And I think the Health and Safety Commission have done a tremendous job in the last few years in trying to get this more on to the agenda.

But if you actually look at the examples of what is happening, I would be slightly concerned that much more needs to be done to explain what we mean in the business, and it isn't just about workplace communication, I think it is also about marketplace communication. I had an interesting conversation with the Department of Health the other day about the Tesco's Race for Life initiative where they have

125,000 employees and 17,500 of them ran in the Race for Life marathon the other day, and that they believe has had a profound effect on getting people in their workplace to train for the marathon, to talk to their customers about which tee-shirt to wear, and have really they believe put it very clearly on the agenda for Tesco employees that we mind about health. That is also of course communicated out to a vast number of people that the power of that brand, to get customers to think about their health, is something that I think we shouldn't miss.

So the boundaries is always the question, but from where ... is sitting, this is increasingly an issue which really businesses concerned about their impact on society have got to be concerned about.

#### FACILITATOR

Julia, thank you very much. And last but by no means least, Richard, the view from Enterprise Britain.

#### RICHARD TYLER

Good Morning. I think I am here because the Commission couldn't quite bring itself to invite the Daily Mail, but in the spirit of open debate my short answer is no, just to provide an alternative.

If the Health and Safety Executive gets involved with this agenda this will actually mean fewer people in jobs, which will mean fewer healthy people in this country. We have already seen from Parveen that the more policies, the more guidelines that you have, the more confusion that it creates and the less compliance that there is. What I really want to share with you is who are we actually talking about here? The latest stats from the DTI are that we have got 4.3 million businesses in this country and the vast majority of those, 99.3% are small businesses, so these are businesses with fewer than 49 staff. So we are not talking about the Royal Mails of this world or the BTs, or British Polythene, or whoever you want to put up as a good example of great occupational health policy, we are talking about small companies, and they don't get out of bed in the morning to worry about the health of their staff, they expect their staff to look after themselves.

So with that in mind, yes we can look at BT. BT has just put out something last week, it has just launched what looks like a quite comprehensive scheme on mental health, it did one earlier this year on physical health and its Press Office told me yesterday that its staff lost the equivalent weight of 60 traditional red phone boxes, and to their girth, which I thought was even better, the equivalent of the BT tower in inches, and they walked the equivalent of 12 times round the planet. Which is great, but that is BT, they employ people who are looking to talk to the Health and Safety Executive, they are looking for something to do and you know their human resources teams and senior management look at their people as unit costs and how can we drive performance out of those unit costs, and yes them being in work as opposed to not being in work is one way of doing that.

But for small businesses that is not the case, they are overwhelmed. You can cite whoever, you can go from the Hampton report on better regulation, which the HSE has benefited from, it has grown in size as a result, I am not sure that is what Philip intended, but it has, you can cite David Arculus's Better Regulation task force with his Less is More, you can cite the professor that was on the radio this morning

talking about Carolyn Flint's announcement that 1 in 5 of us is obese in this country and we are the fattest in Europe apparently, and the professor countered saying well the government shouldn't put flyers into pubs because it will impede on people's lifestyles, it will be seen as a nanny state.

Well what are we doing trying to engage with people through corporates? Where do you stop when you engage through a corporate, where does someone's personal life start and where does their work existence finish? I interviewed Angela Smith, the Fire Minister last week when the new fire regulations came in and she quite happily told me one of the reasons they were putting the responsibility back on to employers in checking their workplaces are safe was because inspectors were so inconsistent in the way they actually policed the existing rules that it was a nightmare for employers, they didn't know who to comply with, so it was a case of fire hydrants, you know one inspector from the HSE would come in and say the fire hydrants have got to be there, someone else from Environment would come in and say no they have got to be over there, so in the end one firm she visited had brackets in different places around the building and just moved them around depending on who turned up.

And so you know you have got Ministers saying this, and I just think there needs to be some consistency, some simplicity. I will be interested to see what the HSE's Simplification Plan is tomorrow. And I will finish by basically saying yes we should inform individuals, as Parveen said, but they should be making the choices themselves.

#### FACILITATOR

Richard, thank you very much indeed. Before we move on to the next question, does anybody from the panel want to have a quick response to anybody else on the panel?

#### JULIA CLEVERDON

Well surely employees want to work for businesses whose values we share. We are not any longer I would have thought in the business, in small businesses or in large businesses, of employers saying they couldn't give a damn what the health of their employees is like. Not only is it an absolutely critical issue for productivity, for efficiency, for long term employment, for everything else, I just don't think that any small business I know would take that line. I accept of course that BT have many very major specialists and BT have done some brilliant stuff. BT ran an online weight loss programme to their employees for 16 weeks, 16,000 employees said they wished to lose weight and were very keen to send in their food diaries every day to some mythical head office to see what they were doing – a damned sight cheaper than paying a trainer – and at the end of that time they had lost 10 tons in weight. That is a staggering ability of a large company to make a difference. But I don't recognise the small businesses that you are talking about.

#### RICHARD TYLER

Obviously small businesses care about their staff, they probably care much more about their staff than large companies do, they see them every day, they meet them in the lift going up, they rely on them. Family businesses have got a long tradition of investing in their staff, caring about them. A lot of small and medium sized businesses in this country haven't taken advantage of outsourcing to low cost

countries because they just can't bring themselves to tell their staff they are going to lose their jobs in the interests of the business, and some are waking up to that belatedly. So that has always been the case. What I am arguing against is any agency government co-ordinated stakeholder action that involves guidelines, regulations, forcing people to add a new level of compliance. There is even in the policy document, there is talk about adding good health to investors in people. It is just ridiculous, it will put people off doing what is at present a very good exercise.

#### KAY CARBERRY

I don't think this is all about employers being benign and employers, however large or small they are, caring about their staff and being warm and cuddly, we are talking about employers' own interests, it is employers' own interest to keep their workforce uninjured, healthy, present in the workplace and productive.

#### FACILITATOR

Thank you. Let's move on to the next question, if we may. Have we – that is the government and Health and Safety Commission and Executive – made the case to employers and other stakeholders in terms of the benefits to be gained from investing resources to better manage sickness absence and promote better health and wellbeing? Well I know who would say yes and I know who would say no, based on the debate we have already had, but if we could just talk for a couple of minutes about making the case and are we missing any tricks in terms of how we make the case, has the case got through, particularly to the world of SMEs. Michael, can we start with you please.

#### MICHAEL ROBERTS

I think the short answer again is yes. We conduct, as many people will know, absence surveys every year and that in a small way helps maintain awareness about the benefits and the disbenefits indeed of not acting sensibly in this area. Julia's own organisation, 9 years now with their awards highlighting good case studies. Often admittedly I think they are amongst the large and powerful, but again these are strong examples which help advocate the merits of all of this. Our surveys have shown that over 80% of companies do have in place rehabilitation plans, three-quarters have active stress management policies. So I think there is plenty going on there and it is a reflection of the recognition that this is a good thing to do. And the good news is that in our latest workplace absence survey the number of working days lost in 2005 was the lowest since we started carrying out this survey. The cost has gone up because of the value added of individuals going up over the course of time, but the number of working days is at its lowest and that is a signal I think that businesses, large and small, take this seriously.

The issue is how do we generate further benefit, how do we make the case for further change, how do we unlock businesses of all sorts and sizes to do more, and that is where I think the grit starts to appear. Again there is a whole range of initiatives, some focus on the larger firms like Chaspey (phon) for example that HSE is running, some focus on the smaller firms like Workplace Health Connect and NHS Plus, but there is friction in the system, despite all this help. And I think what we hear consistently from the business community as being the two remaining obstacles to doing more are first of all the need to help with some of the upfront cost, notwithstanding that there is a pay-back in the medium term from better health and safety in the workplace, and that takes you into the area of looking at the extent to

which fiscal incentives might help companies do the right thing that aren't doing the right thing now.

And the second thing I think is the relationship between employers and GPs and the extent to which GPs are fully embedded in this agenda. And it was great to see a GP on the video. I think the experience of some firms is perhaps less positive than the one that we got an impression of there. We keep on coming back to BT, they are not the only company in Britain, Thank God, nearly though, they actually are a company who have recognised this agenda and it takes us back interestingly to the boundaries issue, they have been working quite actively to develop a relationship with their employees' GPs to generate a common sense of purpose which hopefully then prevents people from being sick in the first place, but when they are, finding ways in which they are encouraged to come back to the workplace sooner rather than later.

So I think the case essentially has been made, that is not where the battleground is, if I can use that rather emotive term, it is how do you unlock further reaping of benefit.

#### FACILITATOR

Julia, has the case been made?

#### JULIA CLEVERDON

Well I don't think the case will ever really be made until the board discusses on a regular basis the health stats. Nigel Rudd of Barclays, Boots, Pilkingtons, practically every other business you can think of, has been chairing our Business Action on Health team in the last 18 months and he very interestingly, when he had been persuaded to lead this particular initiative, about 10 companies, amazingly BT not on it come to think of it, he said as Chair of Boots that he had never taken in before how important the health agenda was because he had been chairing Pilkingtons where he knew how important the safety agenda was. And they began every board meeting at Pilkingtons with the stats on safety, they never mentioned health. It wasn't until he got to Boots that when he said why are we losing on the following places in Britain, they said because if we don't have a pharmacist at work in a market town shop we cannot open the shop. Well what the hell is the matter with the pharmacist? Well they are sick. Well you mean they are not accident sick? No, they are just sick. Well what are we doing about their health? And it wasn't until he began to recognise that actually at board level they didn't discuss health, they only discussed safety, that we realised that actually the numbers of companies that were considering health at the most senior regular KPI level was minimal. So the target for us in the business community is in five years time what percentage of the top 350 will be looking at health, and how many more examples of innovative best practice, which by that time will have become mainstream, will there be.

So I think that the case is increasingly being made amongst the sophisticates and there is attention about I think driving it through the business, and across the business and getting line managers' engagement and so forth, but I think there is a lot more to be done. If you just look at the areas of concern in companies, whether you are talking about the healthy eating canteen tendering, few companies actually until about two years ago in my book were really taking much notice about what was being served in canteens, let alone in directors dining rooms. Now as ... Compass will report a much greater stress on those factors for the business. If you look at the

physical activity, walking schemes, there is that marvellous stat which says that if every one of the business in community's member companies encouraged their employees to take just one half an hour walk once a week, they would increase physical activity in the UK by more than 95 million hours a year. So you have a look at something like 3M who are running very clever walking clubs in lunch hours, and how many of us in this room actually take lunch hours any more unless you happen to be in the sorts of businesses that I began in in the British Leyland Swindon body and assembly plant where we did take lunch hours. But by and large I think there is much more that can be done, it is about the practical examples that we need to do better on spreading and sharing.

FACILITATOR

Richard, have we made the case? Obviously not to you, but how far do you think we have got?

RICHARD TYLER

Well you are making the case.

JULIA CLEVERDON

By 11.30 you will be with us.

RICHARD TYLER

It started, Lord Hunt I remember when it was announced last September, and then there was a conference in March, a time around then, and then there was some sort of agreement of agreed course of action, and then during the summer there was more, and it will go on, and go on, and go on. And in the meantime, just as Julia has mentioned and Michael has mentioned, businesses are just doing it, they are deciding that it is in their self-interest to do it, where they want to do it. You know you can go back. Look at Cadbury's, look at Bourneville, look at cotton mills with sports fields, we wouldn't have rugby league had they not already recognised the value of keeping their staff healthy. Does the government need to belatedly get involved with this? Yes, their message needs to come across of the importance of good health and then let's leave it there.

KAY CARBERRY

Well the case may have been made among CBI members and it is encouraging that your surveys are going in the right direction, but overall I would have to answer No to this question. The conservative estimate is that occupational illness is costing 3% of GDP and it is not as if the information is not already out there and guidance available to employers, but many employers, perhaps CBI members excluded, are not taking advantage of the guidance that the HSE and others have provided about managing illness and preventing injury and illness at work. And still too many employers look (Tape turnover ...) as a question of quick fixes and as if the objective is simply to reduce the number of sick days, and some employers are still trying to achieve that through effectively punitive means by not paying sick pay for perhaps the first day or even the first few days. And the consequence of this is that those who can least afford it, and also workaholics like Julia, will stagger back to work before they are ready to, and all that that results in is spreading germs around or people not taking care of their long term health.

And then I would pick up a point that you made earlier Michael, from an employer's point of view a lot of illness, sickness, is not work-related. Well if you don't manage that sickness absence which is not work-related, it can become work-related if people are coming back to work too soon or if you are losing an employee that you have invested in because you haven't paid any attention to rehabilitation. So these are matters for employers and our impression at the TUC is that by and large employers are not prepared to make the investment that they really ought to be making in their best interests. We would like to see employers giving more priority to occupational health. Again Michael you gave a rather high percentage of CBI members who have got occupational health services, but overall only 15% of British firms provide basic occupational health, and only 3% provide comprehensive support. So there is a long way to go.

FACILITATOR

Thank you very much indeed. Do any of you wish to add any final comment on that question about making the case?

MICHAEL ROBERTS

Just a quick one on some of those figures. The survey actually covers not just our members, but non-members and indeed the public sector as well. I think also, just going back a little bit to some of the earlier comments in the first question, I think there is perhaps a more sophisticated picture around what is going on in the SME community than perhaps we have given credit for. The surveys we have done on workplace absence in general, of which the health agenda is an important part but only part, the surveys actually reveal that in terms of numbers of working days lost to companies SMEs consistently perform better than larger companies. So on the face of it there is actually something interesting and positive going on. I suspect however that if you scratch the surface, part of the reason for that may be the pressure that employees feel in smaller firms to attend work, precisely because there is less resource around in smaller firms and people's absence is noticed. And I think there is therefore a need to make sure that behind the stats we aren't actually encouraging or perhaps overlooking the fact that there may be some perverse activities going on which are masking some rather unhelpful practices in terms of people's long term health. But I think the debate is actually much more sophisticated about what is going on in the SME community than perhaps we have alluded to so far.

FACILITATOR

Thank you. Let's move on to the next question, let's get a little more specific: I would like to know what the panel think about is it reasonable to expect all employers to provide workplace health activities for their workforce?

JULIA CLEVERDON

Well you would expect good ship lollypop to say yes.

FACILITATOR

All employers?

JULIA CLEVERDON

I think that this is a business case for business, it isn't about, in my book, regulation it is about how do you actually produce the most likely successful entrepreneurial business? Is it by driving your people into the ground and not taking any notice at all

about their health? I think we are seeing in the more sophisticated end of the marketplace that companies are increasingly taking health seriously, determined very much by the values and culture of that business. So I am not entirely sure that if you went to have a look at the mating call of the Porsche merchant banks you would see perhaps the sort of commitment on the long hours culture that we would like to see, but I do think that increasingly businesses are recognising that this is an issue which they do need to take more seriously. So building it into the everyday way of managing life, will that be fruit at lunch, better, healthier food in the canteen, monitoring who is or is not taking holidays, encouraging lunch breaks, and a lot of the things that actually can be done don't cost all that much. So yes I think it is something that employers would sense, which most of them have, that this is an issue really worth taking seriously. And I believe we need more examples of what to do and how to do it and what is working. If you have a look at Standard Life, who have done some fantastic work, they can identify a 13% reduction in staff turnover, a 25% reduction in sickness absence, 57% improvement in nutrition skills of staff, and 15% improvement in stress levels. If you look at London Underground, which I think is even more interesting in a way, their stress plan has saved them half a million, a return on investment of 8 – 1, and quantitative data supporting an increase in employee satisfaction which is worth an estimated £3.5 million in customer benefit, because actually the tie between healthy staff and improved customer satisfaction is a very real one. So I think on that basis businesses who are really looking to drive their performance up must be concerned about what they are doing to increase the health of their employees.

#### FACILITATOR

Richard, is it reasonable to expect all employers?

#### RICHARD TYLER

No, no it is not. Sorry, I am following a line of thought on this. How do you interpret reasonable to expect, what does that mean if it is reasonable? Does that mean then we force people to do it, or is it just reasonable because people are reasonable and they might freely choose to do it? As long as it is the latter that is fine, but you have just got to look at the big picture on these things. Of course it is reasonable in isolation to expect this, but then we have a big fuss over something else we expect all businesses to do. The CBI withdrew support for the Work and Families Bill that has just gone in over a small technicality on whether or not small companies had to administer the maternity pay, and it is a fiendishly complicated bit of maths to push it from small firms back to the Treasury, lots of disagreement over the cost and savings and all the rest of it, but anyway the CBI chose to stand up and say we are not going to support what is a perfectly reasonable extension of people's rights, you could argue, for extended maternity leave, paternity caring leave, and they withdrew support because they argued that it is a burden on employers. So if it is the case then, then there should be some consistency on this.

#### KAY CARBERRY

Well I think the not simple answer is it depends what you mean by the question. The other day there was a large employer who decided unilaterally that they were going to withdraw the full English breakfast in the canteen and almost had a strike on their hands, so I think that whatever an employer does need to do needs to be done in a non-paternalistic way jointly with the workforce. But this is more than looking at whether the employer can afford to subsidise your gym membership, or is providing

fruit at lunchtime, or is encouraging the social club not to go on so many booze cruises and do a fun run instead, it is much deeper than this, as others have said. It is very fundamentally about the way work is organised and it struck me watching Joe on that video that he might well have not ended up as he did if his line managers were better, had been more sensitive to the way the pressures were crowding in on him, and so this takes you a bit outside the classic health and safety agenda to actually how jobs are constructed and the degree to which people have got autonomy and choice over the hours that they work and how they divide their work tasks in their working day and the old question of work-life balance. So it is actually much more complicated I think than the question would imply.

#### MICHAEL ROBERTS

I am with Richard on this one in the following sense, not so much a problem with the question but what is implied by the question, and the sense that perhaps if you think it is reasonable that all employers should do this that therefore why don't we just legislate for it and be done with the damned thing, and that is where I think there would be an unfortunate consequence.

Let's start from the beginning. First of all under law at the moment every business that employs more than 5 people must have a health and safety policy, they must publish their risk assessment, and I think that is the way into this. There is already an obligation on employers to do basic things, I think the risk assessment is the thing that unlocks the door as to whether or not it is appropriate for an employer to provide amongst other things workplace health activities. Clearly for some it would be desperately important. I was up, just to show you that BT is not the only company in the world, I was up in Cumbria a couple of weeks ago, a process industry, not a terribly good record as a sector in health and safety, desperately getting their act together, they provide chiropractors because actually it is the sensible thing to do in a process industry where people suffer from certain ailments as a consequence of the way that the operations happen. That makes sense for that business, for other businesses it won't make sense. And actually again going back to our survey and the experience we have gleaned from that, a lot of other things may actually be more important to improving the record of a company and their employees in being happy and at work. Traditionally we have found that actually the availability of private medical insurance, the clarity of responsibilities within management for both health and safety, all of these issues are important and may be more important than specifically providing workplace health activities.

#### JULIA CLEVERDON

My first job was at British Leyland body and assembly plant in 1973 where I was responsible for stamping the timekeeping cards, and I learnt at a very, very early age that interestingly enough if you compared toolroom 1's absenteeism, with toolroom 2, by stamping the timekeeping cards, they were more sick under Smith than they were under Brown. And as in those days the industrial relations department had all power you could move Brown and you could watch that those that were well get sick, and the lot that were sick get well. So that by and large let me just put a rider on this question, that the single biggest determinant I suspect as to whether people give the benefit of the doubt of their bed or their job is actually to do with their immediate line manager. So if it is reasonable now to expect that companies in the UK should be striving, if they care about their impact on the bottom line and indeed their impact on the planet and society and people and all the rest of it, they should be striving

towards investors in people. And increasingly companies are saying, certainly to Business in the Community: Have you got investors in people, because we don't really want to be a member of yours unless you have got an Investors in People. That sort of chain of influence I think is an important way, not by regulation or legislation, of encouraging best practice. But I think in the end workplace health activities, when I think about it, the examples I am thinking of are where the values and the leadership and the culture of the business is one which through the line encourages people to be concerned about how people are able to give their best to their job and to their lives.

I think the other point I would just make is that on the work-life balance issue, we ran a big campaign called Opportunity Now, which is all about gender, all about the rising ... women, I think there are some real issues around the life of carers in the business which are not particularly being taken enough notice of, particularly around maternity returnees and the sort of support to them in the first two years, and that is one of the bits of analysis we have got out of the recent benchmarking.

#### FACILITATOR

Let me move to our final question, if I may. Should the investment of sufficient financial and human resources help to prevent ill-health and injury in the workplace be a top priority for all organisations? Shockingly written, but basically we are saying should it be a top priority for all organisations to put in sufficient investment of both money and people to meet this health at work agenda. Richard, let's start with you.

#### RICHARD TYLER

I was worried you were going to say that. I didn't think we were going to get to number four.

#### FACILITATOR

You have all been so focused and wonderfully chaired.

#### RICHARD TYLER

Well it is a continuation of the same theme isn't it? Yes is the simple answer. I am not sure if I can add anything. Perhaps if I can play off some of the other panel members.

#### KAY CARBERRY

Well I think we are probably all going to answer yes to that, so perhaps I will just make one point, slightly straying off that question. But just in response to what the other three colleagues up here have said about the role of regulation, obviously the questions that we are talking about today are not all going to be solved by regulation, but let's not throw the baby out with the bath water here. We know that the vast majority of employers in this country regard health and safety regulation that we already have in much the same way that most of us regard speeding laws – we will sort it out if we get caught. And a minority of employers do proper risk assessments and we know that in other areas of employment regulation we have good employers and we have bad employers. There is widespread ignoring of minimum wage regulations for example, so there is a role for regulation, there is a role for enforcement and that is why we have to invest properly in the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive. So we need incentives for good

employers, but we also need effective laws to penalise those employers who are actively damaging the health and safety of their workforce.

Now I know that that is not a direct answer to that question but I thought it was important to say because there seemed to be a mood coming from up here that there was no role at all for regulation.

#### MICHAEL ROBERTS

A very quick rejoinder to that, which is no problem with regulation being part of the mix, but there are plenty of bits of regulation already out there and let's make sure that the bits we have already got are working properly before we start adding some extra ones on.

Let me turn to this question. A qualified yes I think is my answer, and the reason for that is looking at the last line which is about a top priority for all organisations, I think is actually more of a priority for certain organisations than others, simply because whilst I said earlier that the record of employers, both public and private sectors incidentally, is getting better, there is a very wide degree of performance. The employer community is not homogenous when it comes to performance in this regard. The best in class in terms of managing workplace absence lose on average per employee two days a year, the worst in class lose 11 days a year per employee, and there are all sorts of colours and flavours inbetween the two. Therefore I think there are certain parts of the employer community where this needs to be a bigger agenda item in the boardroom and down the line and through the organisation than it is at the moment. And there are certain things that we discover from our survey material on a consistent basis, it isn't simply about the distinction between the public sector and the private sector, although there are differences in the record of performance between the two and the private sector consistently is out-performed, the public sector employer, in terms of managing workplace absence. But it isn't just that. Within the private sector there are some parts of the business community who don't perform as well as others, and classically it is the utility areas and classically it is those sectors of the economy where there is a significant preponderance of manual and non-skilled activity going on.

There are other aspects, and at the risk of being controversial, you know it is those parts of the employer community where there is a heavy unionised element where traditionally the performance has not been as strong as in non-unionised areas. Now I am not saying that is because unions are somehow being obstreperous or obstructive or whatever because I think there is a responsibility both on the union reps and also on employers to do the job. But that is all a long winded way of saying it rather depends on what sort of organisation you are as to what degree of priority you give this.

#### JULIA CLEVERDON

I agree with Michael entirely that it is about where the best in class is and where the best in sector is. Funnily enough I was just thinking about that latter point about where very heavy manual trade unionised areas are. We have been absolutely amazed in Business in the Community to see the progress that some of those businesses have made on the basic skills agenda as a result of the involvement of trade union learning centres. If you look at First Direct Bus where they have just saved £3.5 million in driver recruitment fees as a result of their sort of investment in

basic skills and other things, I think you see that once you get an energy running inside the organisation about the importance of this, I think lots more can in fact be achieved. And so I would have thought this was a partnership between employees, trade unions and their employer, it is certainly not, of course it isn't, about employers marching about saying I can tell you haven't drunk any water this morning, you have had a heavy breakfast and you are now about to sit hopelessly in front of your screen sitting in the wrong direction. I can't imagine that that is a picture of how you get employees enthused and enlivened. All I am saying is that I think we see increasingly that those businesses, large and small, who are in touch with what employees want to do in their lives, they can make a real difference, whether that is by community activity, whether that is by helping people to do better on their own health, or to be supported better in the health of their family and their teenagers. I was watching a company the other day who were running a series of lunchtime events called Homework without Tears, supporting employees who had got kids. I think the boundaries of all this stuff is moving quite a lot and I see no reason as to why they wouldn't move in this direction as well.

FACILITATOR

Richard, do you want to come in?

RICHARD TYLER

Well I didn't know we could answer a different question.

JULIA CLEVERDON

I was answering Richard's question.

RICHARD TYLER

I know. Sorry, I need to do this more. Just on a couple of points, Kay mentioned earlier about the importance of rehabilitation. Go back three years, we had employers liability insurance rocketing. At the time there was a lot of concern that employers were not taking out the insurance policies and so their employees were being exposed, well they couldn't sue their bosses if there was an accident in the workplace because there was no insurance in place. And so the government got together a group of stakeholders, including the unions, I think the CBI was probably involved, the engineering employers federation were certainly involved, to try and come up with a way of dealing with it and getting people back to work quickly, rehabilitation, and they also brought in the vultures – the personal injury lawyers – to try and diffuse that sort of adversarial situation that always exists when someone is injured, who is to blame where there is a claim, or whatever the phrase is. And they tried to do this, they tried to set up a pilot but it was scuppered by the TUC. Now I am not completely aware of why it was scuppered, it was possibly not in the interests of the TUC to allow something like that to go on, but you sit and talk about making change and trying to do good and intervening, and actually the picture is just not as clear as it is presented, there are always ulterior motives at play. So best just to leave it alone.

FACILITATOR

OK, well I would very much like to thank the panel for what I think has been a very lively and interesting debate which I am supposed to summarise in terms of one set of conclusions, which of course it is not possible for there to be.

I think in all health and safety debates we always come back to there are good companies and bad companies and they can be either big or they can be small, and then we have the debate about is it carrot or is it stick that moves the scenario along, and I guess over the last 20 years we have probably had a combination of carrot and stick that has got us to where we are today with some very commendable figures in terms of fatalities and injuries at work, although obviously not yet perfect.

This is a slightly more complicated debate and I think my colleagues would welcome the fact that nobody on the panel felt that HSC and E should carry this entirely on their own. I think there will be a debate about boundaries, you know how far the Health and Safety Executive should get involved in the delivery of these particular schemes, programmes and visions, and that is a debate that will probably run for some time. But there is no doubt that we need to be involved. I think my colleagues would also be very grateful for the support we have received in terms of recognising the role of others, recognising the need for much more rehabilitation within the NHS, recognising the need for more proactive partnerships with GPs, and recognising the need probably for some sort of infrastructure funding, whether that is seedcorn or piloting or programme developing.

I think there will always be a debate about Plc's versus SMEs and I don't think we can ignore Richard's point that the majority of businesses are SMEs and I think the culture there is entirely different. I ran an SME for 20 years and my biggest single workplace problem was young men playing football on Sunday and not being able to work on Monday, which as they had to drive round the country to look after clients was a bloody nuisance for a small business, but does not actually sit terribly comfortably within the debate we have had in the last hour, and I think there were so many different ways we can skin the cat.

But I think ultimately we all recognise that a good business is a good business and I think Michael's statistic showing the 2 days off per year versus the 11 days off per year between a good and a bad business does make that point very clearly, and certainly everything to do with health and safety is actually about being part of the better business agenda.

Richard, we don't particularly want to continue to regulate, we are pushing out a simplification plan tomorrow. I think the point has been made that the risk assessment framework, it should actually be sufficient for this if we can just start to raise the awareness of the issues. And I think Julia's points are very significant about the number of plc's who have not yet got health on to the boardroom table, not yet got it into their annual report and accounts, only 8% of large companies, there are probably less of them doing it than doing things like taking off the weight of an elephant or running a marathon, because in a sense sometimes PR stunts appeal to companies more and are sometimes easier to bring off, but it is actually measuring and embedding them throughout the entire company.

And equally I very much welcome Kay's point about the tripartite partnership between employers, employees and unions. This was a point that Parveen made and a point that is made to me all the time by the Small Firm Trade Association forums that I work with that there must be some employee responsibility and accountability as well. This won't work if it is imposed from on top, it has to be a partnership in the

workplace, which is why management, team structures and the sort of caring that we saw in the second part of the video will ultimately make the difference.

But that is what the panel think. I have tried to summarise fairly, but now you all tell us what you think in workshops. Could we please thank our panel for some fantastic contributions – Richard, Kay, Michael and Julia.

(END OF TRANSCRIPT)