Managers work the longest hours – but don’t get paid for it

Managers and senior officials work the longest total hours of any major occupational group, but much of it is unpaid overtime, a new report by the Office for National Statistics on hours worked has shown.

By comparing data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), which looks at paid hours, and the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which collects total hours worked, it is possible to draw inferences about which groups are likely to work more hours than they are paid for. This analysis shows that full-time managers and senior officials work 38.5 paid hours a week, but actually work 46.2 hours, a difference of 7.6 hours. Likewise, professionals work 36.6 paid hours and 43.4 total hours (a gap of 6.8 hours). By contrast, process, plant and machine operatives and workers in elementary occupations, regarded as the lowest skilled jobs, work paid hours of 44.2 and 41.4 hours respectively, but have little gap between paid and total hours.

LFS data show that in April-June 2011 average working time for all in employment stood at 36.3 hours a week, a fall of 4.7 per cent on the 1992 level of 38.1 hours a week. This has been affected by changes in the structure of the economy, with a higher proportion of employment being in services where hours tend to be shortest (35.0 a week in 2011 compared with 41.2 for both manufacturing and construction). However, the increase in part-time working (up from 24 per cent of all in employment in 1992 to 27 per cent in 2011) has also affected average hours.

The report also looks at how hours worked in Britain compare with other major European countries. The average working time in the UK for April to June 2011 was shorter than the European Union average (36.3 hours a week compared with 37.4). This is because the UK has a higher percentage of part-timers, 27 per cent compared with 20 per cent in the EU as a whole. Looking only at full-timers, people in the UK work longer than the EU average (42.7 hours compared with 41.6), with only people in Austria and Greece working a longer week, both at 43.7 hours a week. The shortest full-time hours were in Denmark at 39.1 hours per week.

A short video using graphical animations and commentary explaining this story is available on the ONS Youtube channel at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oT17z1XBiiG4.
Background notes


2. The occupational analyses from ASHE and LFS are not directly comparable due to sampling differences, but it is possible to draw inferences on which groups are likely to work more hours per week than they are contracted to do.

3. Follow us on www.twitter.com/statisticsONS and on the ONS Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/user/onsstats

4. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the media relations office.

5. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2011.

Issued by: Office for National Statistics, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG

Media contact:
Tel Media Relations Office 0845 6041858
Emergency on-call 07867 906553
E-mail david.bradbury@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Statistical contact:
Tel Jamie Jenkins 01633 455840
E-mail jamie.jenkins@ons.gov.uk

Website:
www.ons.gov.uk

6. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Copyright
© Crown copyright 2011

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.