

Workplace Employment Relations in the West Midlands

A profile based on the regional tabulations from the 2004
Workplace Employment Relations Survey compiled for
ACAS by John Forth and Lucy Stokes (NIESR)

Prepared for the West Midlands Employment Relations
Forum's Steering Group

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Introduction

This report provides a first-ever profile of employment relations at workplaces across the West Midlands region. The evidence is drawn from the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS2004), which is widely regarded as providing the most authoritative and comprehensive survey-based portrait of workplace employment practice in Britain. The report presents findings on a range of topics from West Midlands workplaces surveyed in WERS2004, and compares these with the national picture. The findings draw on responses from both managers and employees at these workplaces.

A key aim of the West Midlands Employment Relations Forum has been to raise the profile of employment relations in policy decision-making within the region. Regional economic prosperity, business success and service excellence need to be built on good employment practice and on employers, employees and their representatives working together. The ways in which work is organised, the adaptability of the workforce, the practices used to motivate and involve employees, the extent to which employees receive equal treatment and the ways in which managers and employees and their representatives interact are crucial to the productivity and performance of companies and organisations, and for the quality of employees' working lives.

Raising the profile of employment relations has become all the more important given the increasing regional focus in economic development and policy-making in Britain. One indication of this has been the establishment of Regional Development Agencies in England, including Advantage West

Midlands. AWM, and its counterparts in the other English regions, have five statutory objectives:

1. to further economic development and regeneration;
2. to promote business efficiency and competitiveness;
3. to promote employment;
4. to enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment; and
5. to contribute to sustainable development.

Employment relations practice has evident implications for several of these. To date, however, there has been very little regional data available on workplace employment relations in the West Midlands. This report goes some way towards filling this evidence gap.

WERS2004 is the fifth in a series of periodic surveys, dating back to 1980, which provides a representative portrait across virtually all sectors of the economy of workplace employment relations. Although previous surveys also offered the potential for regional analysis, none was actually undertaken. The survey series is jointly sponsored by DTI, ESRC, Acas and the Policy Studies Institute. WERS2004 contains two, linked, cross-sectional surveys of workplaces in Great Britain with 5 or more employees. The first is a survey of managers at the workplace responsible for employment relations and personnel matters, which involved a face-to-face structured interview of some 2 hours duration. 2,295 management interviews were obtained nationally and 225 in the West Midlands. The second is a survey of up to 25 employees at each of these workplaces. These were selected at random and asked to fill out and return a self-completion questionnaire. Returned questionnaires were received from 22,451 employees nationally and 2,153 in the West Midlands.

This report covers ten main topics, and reports findings for workplaces across the West Midlands and, as a point of reference, nationally for Great Britain. Practice could also have been compared with other regions, but less confidence could be placed in the outcome of any inter-regional comparison (see Annex).

The ten topics are as follows:

- profile of workplaces
- the workforce
- the management of employees
- employee representation
- training, internal flexibility and teamworking
- employee consultation and involvement
- pay and performance appraisal
- workplace justice and employment relations climate
- equality and diversity
- work-life balance

The report could not be prepared from a direct, regional analysis of the WERS2004 dataset by the authors. This was because of guarantees given to respondents that location information (including standard economic region) would not be made available for external analysis for a period of time after completion of the survey. Instead, the findings are drawn from an extensive compendium of tables disaggregating the national findings for all the English regions (and Scotland and Wales), which was commissioned by Acas in its role as one of the sponsors of the WERS series. The compendium was compiled by John Forth (a member of the WERS2004 research team) and Lucy Stokes of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. The report's analysis is in some respects constrained by the structure and content of this tabular analysis, valuable as it is. It

has not been possible to investigate associations between, say, features of the workplace or the workforce and the use of particular practices if these were not covered by the tabular analysis. Inevitably, this precluded the pursuit of some potentially interesting lines of enquiry.

Findings from WERS2004's survey of managers can be reported in two ways. The first is the percentage of workplaces at which a particular arrangement or practice is found. The second is the percentage of employees employed at these workplaces. Since proportionately more employees work at larger workplaces, and these are fewer in number than smaller workplaces, then the two figures will differ if a particular practice is not randomly distributed across workplaces of different sizes. For example, larger workplaces are more likely to recognise trade unions. Hence the proportion of employees covered by trade union recognition will be higher than the proportion of workplaces. Both types of percentage are reported, in separate panels, in the tables which draw on managers' responses in the report. Tables drawing on employees' responses report a single set of figures (in italics), namely the percentage of employees covered by a particular arrangement or practice. Since WERS2004 surveyed a sample of workplaces, the findings are estimates of the true picture for the complete population of workplaces in Britain and the West Midlands, respectively. A degree of caution is therefore advised in drawing conclusions from these estimates, particularly where differences are small. Further information about the alternative ways of reporting findings, and the interpretation and accuracy of the figures presented, is provided in the Technical Annex.

1. Workplace Profile

The top panel of table 1.1 shows that the majority of workplaces employ small numbers of employees. For both the West Midlands (WM) and Great Britain (GB) approximately three-quarters of workplaces employ between 5 and 24

employees. Although large workplaces (500+ employees) are not common, the bottom panel of table 1.1 shows that they account for a significant portion of employees. 18% of WM employees work in these large establishments and 20% for the whole of GB.

Table 1.1 Size of establishment

| | 5 to 9 employees | 10 to 24 employees | 25 to 49 employees | 50 to 99 employees | 100 to 199 employees | 200 to 499 employees | 500 or more employees |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | |
| WM | 48 | 27 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| GB | 44 | 32 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | | | |
| WM | 11 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 11 | 17 | 18 |
| GB | 9 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 20 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2295

The WM is more heavily represented in manufacturing with 22% of employees compared with the national average of 15%. The WM is under represented in the private services sector. The bottom panel of table 1.2 shows that nationally this sector accounts for 49% of workers, whereas the figure for the WM is noticeably lower at 43%. In line with the above, the top panel of table 1.2 shows that the WM has a much greater proportion of manufacturing workplaces (21%) compared with the national average

(11%). A lower proportion of WM workplaces are private services establishments, though the difference is not great (57% WM, 59% GB). Despite equal proportions of employees being employed in the public sector, there is a lower proportion of public sector workplaces in the WM (18%) than there is for GB as a whole (25%). The implication is that public sector workplaces in the WM tend to be relatively larger in employment terms.

Table 1.2 Industry sector (SIC 2003)

| | Manufacturing | Production non-manufacturing | Private Services | Public Services |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | |
| WM | 21 | 3 | 57 | 18 |
| GB | 11 | 5 | 59 | 25 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | |
| WM | 22 | 3 | 43 | 32 |
| GB | 15 | 4 | 49 | 32 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2295

Table 1.3 indicates that a greater proportion of WM employees (30%) work in single independent establishments compared with the national average of

23%. Commensurate with this, the WM has a larger proportion of independent workplaces than the national average (46% versus 35%).

Table 1.3 Branch site, head office or single/sole UK site

| | Branch site of larger organisation | Head office of larger organisation | Sole UK site of foreign organisation | Single independent establishment |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | |
| WM | 44 | 6 | 4 | 46 |
| GB | 53 | 10 | 3 | 35 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | |
| WM | 56 | 13 | 1 | 30 |
| GB | 60 | 14 | 3 | 23 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2293

The balance of private sector versus public sector employment in the WM, differs only slightly from GB, as table 1.4 shows. The bottom panel indicates that 78% of WM employees work in the private sector as opposed to 76% for GB. Correspondingly, for the WM 22% of

employees work in the public sector compared with 24% for GB. Again, however, there is a noticeable difference in terms of workplaces. The proportion of public sector workplaces in the WM is half what it is nationally (6% WM, 13% GB).

Table 1.4 Ownership

| | Private sector | Public sector |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | |
| WM | 94 | 6 |
| GB | 87 | 13 |
| Percentage of employees | | |
| WM | 78 | 22 |
| GB | 76 | 24 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2293

2. Workforce Profile

The all sector columns in table 2.1 show that at the aggregate level the profiles of employees by major occupation group differ in some respects between the WM and GB. The WM workforce has a lower proportion of managers (9%) than the

national average (12%). On the other hand, professional occupations and skilled trades account for larger proportions of the WM workforce (14% and 10%) than they do for GB as a whole (11% and 7%). The larger proportion of skilled trades in the WM is likely to reflect the larger role of manufacturing in the WM economy.

The private sector production columns in table 2.1 show that a larger proportion of private sector production workers in the WM are in skilled trades (29% versus 22% nationally). In the public sector a larger proportion of WM employees are employed in professional occupations

(29% against 20%). In the WM there are lower proportions of managerial employees across all three sectors (8% versus 13% in private sector production, 11% versus 14% in private sector services and 4% versus 7% in the public sector).

Table 2.1 Occupational group

| Occupation: SOC Major Group | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------|-----|---------------|---------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Serv. | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Serv. | Public | All |
| Managers and Senior Officials | 8 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 12 |
| Professional Occupations | 6 | 11 | 29 | 14 | 7 | 8 | 20 | 11 |
| Associate Professional and Technical Occupations | 9 | 15 | 17 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 22 | 15 |
| Administrative and Secretarial Occupations | 14 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 12 | 19 | 21 | 18 |
| Skilled Trades | 29 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 22 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Personal Service Occupations | 0 | 4 | 16 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Sales and Customer Service Occupations | 1 | 14 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 9 |
| Process Plant and Machine Operatives | 25 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 24 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| Elementary Occupations | 8 | 17 | 9 | 13 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 12 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2136 (608 production, 1010 services, 518 public); N (GB) 22200 (4485 production, 10661 services, 7054 public)

Table 2.2 indicates that the gender profile of the three different sectors is quite different from the aggregate picture. However, the pattern is the same for the WM as it is for the whole of GB. So whereas the aggregate picture shows that the proportions of male and female employees are approximately equal (48%:52% for the WM and 47%:53% nationally) private production is

approximately three-quarters male (72% WM, 74% GB), the public sector approximately two-thirds female (68% WM, 66% GB) and the private services sector is marginally more female (57% for both WM and GB).

Table 2.2 Gender

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|--------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Male | 72 | 43 | 32 | 48 | 74 | 43 | 34 | 47 |
| Female | 28 | 57 | 68 | 52 | 26 | 57 | 66 | 53 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2148 (618 production, 1011 services, 519 public); N (GB) 22345 (4523 production, 10729 services, 7093 public)

Table 2.3, which shows the profile of employees by ethnic background, indicates considerable similarity in the profiles of the WM and GB in aggregate and broken down by sector. The one

noticeable difference is the higher proportion of Asian employees in the public sector in the WM as compared to GB (5% WM, 2% GB).

Table 2.3 Ethnicity

| Ethnic group | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| White | 91 | 90 | 92 | 91 | 93 | 92 | 93 | 93 |
| Mixed | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Asian | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Afro-Caribbean | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2139 (615 production, 1009 services, 515 public); N (GB) 22196 (4505 production, 10663 services, 7028 public)

The aggregate profile of employment by age for the WM is similar to the national picture. Table 2.4 shows that the estimates for workers in their thirties, forties and fifties are approximately equal and together these groups account for approximately three quarters of all employees. There are differences between

the sectors and these differences are true of both the WM and the national picture. For example, workers under 30 account for approximately 30% of private service sector employees. The figure is less than 20% for the private production sector and less than 15% for the public sector.

Table 2.4 Age

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|---------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| 16-21 | 7 | 12 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 7 |
| 22-29 | 11 | 20 | 11 | 15 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 16 |
| 30-39 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 23 | 25 |
| 40-49 | 22 | 19 | 34 | 24 | 27 | 22 | 31 | 25 |
| 50-59 | 26 | 20 | 30 | 24 | 23 | 19 | 27 | 22 |
| 60 plus | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2152 (619 production, 1014 services, 519 public); N (GB) 22362 (4526 production, 10736 services, 7100 public)

Approximately three-quarters of all employees work full-time hours (defined as 30+ hours per week) (74% WM) (77% GB). Table 2.5 shows that this overall picture varies according to sector. Part-time workers account for only 6% of employees in the WM private production sector. The national picture is almost identical at 7%. However, differences

between the WM and GB are apparent for the public and private services sectors. 30% of WM public sector employees work part-time as opposed to 26% for GB. And 35% of WM private services sector employees work part-time compared with 27% of employees in the same sector across GB.

Table 2.5 Full or part-time worker

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|-----------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Part-time | 6 | 35 | 30 | 26 | 7 | 27 | 26 | 23 |
| Full-time | 94 | 65 | 70 | 74 | 93 | 73 | 74 | 77 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2112 (609 production, 993 services, 510 public); N (GB) 22010 (4470 production, 10577 services, 6963 public)

Table 2.6 provides a more detailed breakdown of usual weekly hours. Amongst part-time workers the proportion working less than 16 hours is greater in the WM (6%) than nationally

(4%). Amongst full-time workers, the proportion working 39 hours or more in the WM is lower than the national average (8% versus 11%).

Table 2.6 Usual weekly hours

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Weekly hours | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 16 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| 16-29 | 5 | 28 | 21 | 20 | 5 | 22 | 21 | 19 |
| 30-38 | 83 | 59 | 64 | 66 | 79 | 62 | 66 | 66 |
| 39-48 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 14 | 12 | 8 | 11 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2112 (609 production, 993 services, 510 public); N (GB) 22010 (4470 production, 10577 services, 6963 public)

WM employees report that it is less common for them to work more than a 48 hour week. Table 2.7 shows that over the past 12 months 61% of WM employees have never worked more than 48 hours per week, whereas nationally the figure is 54%. In part this may be because of the higher incidence of part-time working in the WM as compared with GB. Yet even in the private production

sector where the incidence of part-time working in the WM is virtually identical to GB, 54% of WM employees never worked 48+ hours compared with 43% for GB. This difference in private production may reflect differences in the occupational profile, and in particular the smaller proportion of managers and higher proportion of skilled trades in the WM compared to GB.

Table 2.7 Frequency of working more than 48 hours per week over last 12 months

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Frequency worked more than 48 hours | | | | | | | | |
| Every week | 9 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 9 |
| Two or three times a month | 11 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 11 |
| Once a month | 9 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Less often than once a month | 17 | 17 | 14 | 16 | 22 | 17 | 16 | 17 |
| Never | 54 | 61 | 69 | 61 | 43 | 56 | 61 | 54 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2144 (616 production, 1012 services, 516 public); N (GB) 22278 (4511 production, 10713 services, 7054 public)

Table 2.8 shows that the aggregate profile of employment by type of contract in the WM is similar to the national picture, with the vast majority of workers being employed on permanent contracts. Fixed

period contracts with no agreed end date are more common in WM private sector production than in the same sector nationally (4% versus 2%).

Table 2.8 Contractual status

| | West Midlands | | | | Great Britain | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------|------------------|--------|-----|
| | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All | Private Prod. | Private Services | Public | All |
| Type of employment contract | | | | | | | | |
| Permanent | 95 | 91 | 91 | 92 | 96 | 91 | 90 | 92 |
| Fixed period – no agreed end date | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Fixed period – agreed end date | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2149 (619 production, 1012 services, 518 public); N (GB) 22347 (4525 production, 10724 services, 7098 public)

3. The Management of Employees

Table 3.1 shows that in the WM the person responsible for employment relations is less likely to be an HR

specialist. HR specialists are found at 11% of WM workplaces compared with 16% nationally.

Table 3.1 Job title of managerial respondents

| | HR specialist | Proprietor/owner | Financial manager/company secretary | General manager |
|----|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | |
| WM | 11 | 28 | 14 | 47 |
| GB | 16 | 26 | 6 | 52 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | |
| WM | 41 | 13 | 6 | 40 |
| GB | 46 | 11 | 4 | 39 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 198; N (GB) 1901

In terms of membership of employers' organisations, table 3.2 shows that WM workplaces are less likely than the national average to be members of employers' associations (5% versus 9%), but more likely to be members of the chamber of commerce (30% versus 20%). Yet although a lower proportion of

WM workplaces are members of an employers' association, the number of employees who work at such places is higher for the WM than for GB. 27% of employees in the WM work at a workplace which is a member of an employers' association compared with 21% nationally

Table 3.2 Memberships of employers' organisations

| | Employers' Association | Chamber of Commerce |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 5 | 30 |
| GB | 9 | 20 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 27 | 39 |
| GB | 21 | 25 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 209; N (GB) 2130

Table 3.3 shows that WM workplaces are less likely to be part of an organisation which is an accredited Investor in People (33% versus 37%).

Table 3.3 Accreditation as an Investor in People?

| | Yes | No |
|----|--------------------------|----|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 33 | 67 |
| GB | 37 | 63 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 48 | 52 |
| GB | 47 | 53 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 218; N (GB) 2211

Table 3.4 shows little difference in the profile of strategic planning between the WM and GB. Just over one-third of

workplaces (for both) have no strategy and just over one half have strategies which cover ER issues.

Table 3.4 Strategic plan covers ER issues

| | Strategy covers ER issues | Strategy covers other issues | No strategy |
|----|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | |
| WM | 54 | 9 | 37 |
| GB | 56 | 8 | 36 |
| | Percentage of employees | | |
| WM | 71 | 10 | 19 |
| GB | 72 | 9 | 19 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 224; N (GB) 2281

4. Employee Representation

Trade union membership is less common amongst WM employees (28%) than it is for GB employees (32%) as table 4.1 indicates. Consistent with this, a slightly

larger proportion of WM employees have never been a trade union/staff association member (53% versus 51%).

Table 4.1 Individual membership of a trade union or staff association

| | Yes | No, but have been in the past | No, have never been a member |
|----|-----|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| WM | 28 | 18 | 53 |
| GB | 32 | 17 | 51 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2150; N (GB) 22329

The top panel of table 4.2 indicates that slightly more WM workplaces have no trade union members than for the whole of GB (74% versus 71%), although this

difference almost disappears for the employee measure.

Table 4.2 Union membership density at the workplace

| | No union members | 1% to less than 25% | 25% to less than 50% | 50% to less than 90% | 90% to less than 100% | 100% union members | Members present but % unknown |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | |
| WM | 74 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| GB | 71 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | | | |
| WM | 45 | 14 | 14 | 21 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| GB | 44 | 16 | 12 | 19 | 3 | 2 | 4 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2295

WM workplaces are also less likely to recognise trade unions for the purpose of negotiation of pay and conditions. 17% of WM workplaces recognise unions for this purpose compared with 24% nationally.

45% of WM employees work where there is union recognition for negotiation of pay and conditions compared with the national figure of 47%.

Table 4.3 Union recognition for negotiation over pay and conditions

| | At least one union recognised | No union recognised |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | |
| WM | 17 | 83 |
| GB | 24 | 76 |
| Percentage of employees | | |
| WM | 45 | 55 |
| GB | 47 | 53 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 217; N (GB) 2219

5. Training, Internal Flexibility and Teamworking

Table 5.1 shows that training of core employees is somewhat less widespread in the WM. In the previous twelve months 27% of WM workplaces provided off-the-job training for all of their core employees compared with 30% nationally. In

addition to this, WM workplaces are also more likely not to have provided off-the-job training for any of their core employees over the previous twelve months (28% versus 24%).

Table 5.1 Proportion of core employees receiving off the job training in past 12 months

| | All (100%) | Almost all (80-99%) | Some or most (20-79%) | Just a few (1-19%) | None (0%) |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | |
| WM | 27 | 7 | 18 | 19 | 28 |
| GB | 30 | 6 | 25 | 15 | 24 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | |
| WM | 24 | 12 | 35 | 16 | 12 |
| GB | 30 | 13 | 32 | 14 | 11 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 219; N (GB) 2249

The data from the survey of employees shown in table 5.2 indicates that a larger proportion of WM employees received no

training over the previous twelve months than nationally (42% versus 37%).

Table 5.2 Amount of training received in the past 12 months

| | None | Less than 1 day | 1 to less than 2 days | 2 to less than 5 days | 5 to less than 10 days | 10 days or more |
|----|------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| WM | 42 | 9 | 13 | 19 | 8 | 9 |
| GB | 37 | 9 | 15 | 21 | 10 | 8 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2143; N (GB) 22281

Table 5.3 shows teamworking is less common in the WM than it is for GB as a whole. 32% of WM employees work in workplaces where all of the largest occupational group (LOG) work in a team

compared with 38% for GB. 23% of WM employees work in workplaces where none of the LOG operate in a team compared with 17% for GB.

Table 5.3 Proportion of largest occupational group that works in teams

| | All (100%) | Almost all (80-99%) | Some or most (20-79%) | Just a few (1-19%) | None (0%) |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | |
| WM | 32 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 44 |
| GB | 38 | 9 | 12 | 3 | 38 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | |
| WM | 32 | 24 | 14 | 6 | 23 |
| GB | 38 | 23 | 18 | 4 | 17 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 222; N (GB) 228

Despite teamworking being more common nationally, the proportion of employees who work at workplaces where the nature of teamworking is based around interdependence, rotation, autonomy and product responsibility is

approximately one quarter for both WM and GB (23% and 24%). It is other, more restricted, types of teamworking that would seem to be less common in the WM than across GB (54% versus 59%), as table 5.4 shows.

Table 5.4 Nature of teamworking in the largest occupational group

| | Interdependence, rotation, autonomy & product responsibility | All other types of teamworking | No teamworking |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | |
| WM | 22 | 34 | 44 |
| GB | 21 | 41 | 38 |
| Percentage of employees | | | |
| WM | 23 | 54 | 23 |
| GB | 24 | 59 | 17 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 219; N (GB) 2249

Table 5.5 shows that the pattern of functional flexibility for WM workplaces is similar to the national pattern. In

approximately two-fifths of workplaces none of the LOG are trained to be functionally flexible.

Table 5.5 Proportion of largest occupational group trained to be functionally flexible

| | All (100%) | Almost all (80-99%) | Some or most (20-79%) | Just a few (1-19%) | None (0%) |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | |
| WM | 12 | 1 | 30 | 16 | 41 |
| GB | 11 | 4 | 26 | 18 | 40 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | |
| WM | 7 | 3 | 38 | 25 | 26 |
| GB | 5 | 4 | 33 | 32 | 25 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 223; N (GB) 2243

Problem solving groups are slightly more common in WM workplaces (22%) than they are for all GB workplaces (17%) as table 5.6 shows.

Table 5.6 Incidence of problem solving groups

| | Problem solving groups, non-managerial employees participate | No problem solving groups |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 22 | 78 |
| GB | 17 | 83 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 35 | 65 |
| GB | 34 | 66 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: Great Britain in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2283

Table 5.7 shows that only 12% of WM workplaces and 11% of GB workplaces combine teamworking, functional flexibility and problem solving groups.

Table 5.7 Combined incidence of teamworking , functional flexibility and problem-solving groups

| | Yes | No |
|----|--------------------------|----|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 12 | 88 |
| GB | 11 | 89 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 27 | 73 |
| GB | 26 | 74 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 222; N (GB) 2269

6. Employee Consultation and Involvement

Consultative committees are less common in the WM as compared with GB as a whole. Table 6.1 indicates that 70% of WM workplaces have no such committee compared with 63% of workplaces nationally. A similar difference between the WM and GB is evident in terms of employees covered by consultative arrangements. The gap is largely

accounted for by the lower incidence of committees at higher levels of organisations in the WM. This probably reflects the comparatively larger number of single independent workplaces in the WM. These in turn seem less likely to have (site-based) consultative arrangements.

Table 6.1 Presence of consultative committees at workplace or higher level

| | No committee(s) | Single or multi-issue workplace JCC only | Higher level committee(s) only | Single or multi-issue workplaces JCC(s) + Higher level committee(s) |
|----|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | |
| WM | 70 | 6 | 21 | 3 |
| GB | 63 | 5 | 28 | 4 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | |
| WM | 49 | 24 | 15 | 11 |
| GB | 43 | 22 | 19 | 15 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 218; N (GB) 2250

Regarding direct forms of employee communication and involvement, slightly fewer WM workplaces conduct meetings between senior managers and the whole of the workforce than is the case for GB workplaces (71% versus 75%). Table 6.2 also indicates that meetings of line

managers and their workers are slightly more common in WM workplaces (64% versus 60%). A similar proportion of WM workplaces (87%) and GB workplaces (86%) conduct meetings with workforce or briefing groups.

Table 6.2 Incidence of face-to face meetings

| | Meetings between senior managers and the whole workforce (either altogether or group by group) | Meetings between line managers or supervisors and all the workers for whom they are responsible | Meetings with workforce or briefing groups |
|----|--|---|--|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | |
| WM | 71 | 64 | 87 |
| GB | 75 | 60 | 86 |
| | Percentage of employees | | |
| WM | 69 | 83 | 94 |
| GB | 77 | 81 | 93 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 223; N (GB) 2292

Table 6.3 indicates written two-way communication between management and employees, such as suggestion schemes or employee surveys, is less common in WM workplaces than GB ones (57% versus 60%). The use of any form of downward

communication from management to employees such as the use of company intranet, emails to employees or newsletters, is however as widespread in WM workplaces as it is nationally (both 82%).

Table 6.3 Types of communication used

| | Any written two-way communication | Any downward communication |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 57 | 82 |
| GB | 60 | 82 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 78 | 94 |
| GB | 78 | 93 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; minimum N (GB) 2294

Table 6.4 shows attitudinal data from the survey of employees. The two items measure how employees rate their managers for responding to suggestions from employees or their representatives and for allowing employees or their representatives to influence final decisions. For both of these items the

WM pattern closely follows that for GB. For the first measure (responding to suggestions) responses from employees are, on balance, positive. For the second measure (allowing influence on final decisions) responses from employees are, on balance, negative.

Table 6.4 Employee ratings of how good managers are at responding to suggestions and allowing influence on final decisions

| | Overall, how good would you say managers at this workplace are at responding to suggestions from employees or employee representatives | | | | |
|----|---|------|-----------------------|------|-----------|
| | Very good | Good | Neither good nor poor | Poor | Very poor |
| WM | 10 | 35 | 29 | 18 | 9 |
| GB | 11 | 32 | 30 | 18 | 9 |
| | Overall, how good would you say managers at this workplace are at allowing employees or employee representatives to influence final decisions | | | | |
| WM | 7 | 25 | 33 | 22 | 13 |
| GB | 8 | 24 | 34 | 21 | 13 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: minimum N (WM) 1946; minimum N (GB) 20126

7. Pay and Performance Appraisal

In terms of regular appraisals, the overall picture indicates that at both national and regional level the great majority of workplaces appraise either all non-managerial employees or none. Table 7.1 shows that regular appraisal of all non-managerial employees is less common in

the WM. 59% of employees work at workplaces where this is the practice, compared with 64% in GB as a whole. Conversely a higher proportion of employees in the WM (26%) are in workplaces with no regular appraisal than for GB as a whole (21%). Nationally

linking pay to appraisal outcome for non-managerial employees is more common than for the WM. 29% of employees

across GB work in workplaces where pay is linked to outcome of appraisals compared with 22% in the WM.

Table 7.1 Appraisal for non-managerial employees

| | Proportion of non-managerial employees who are regularly appraised | | | | Pay linked to appraisal for non-managers | |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| | All appraised regularly | Most (60-99%) appraised regularly | Some (1-59%) appraised regularly | No regular appraisals for non-managers | Pay linked to outcome of regular appraisals for non-mgrs | Pay not linked |
| | | Percentage of workplaces | | | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 48 | 3 | 7 | 42 | 21 | 36 |
| GB | 56 | 4 | 5 | 35 | 25 | 40 |
| | | Percentage of employees | | | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 59 | 6 | 10 | 26 | 22 | 52 |
| GB | 64 | 6 | 9 | 21 | 29 | 50 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 221; N (GB) 2247

The method of pay determination is shown in table 7.2. Similar proportions (approximately one-third) of WM employees and GB employees have their pay set by some form of collective bargaining. Setting pay by individual negotiation is not common practice either for the WM or GB as a whole: 4% of WM employees have their pay set in this way compared to 5% nationally. The main difference is that WM employees are more likely to have their pay set by management at the workplace (45% versus 38%) and less likely to have their pay set by management at a higher level (19% versus 24%). This probably reflects the greater proportion of single independent establishments in the WM.

Table 7.2 Methods of pay determination

| | Set by multi-employer bargaining, all | Set by single employer collective bargaining, all | Set by workplace collective bargaining, all | Set by management at a higher level, all | Set by management at workplace, all | Set by individual negotiation, all | Set by other means, all |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Percentage of employees | | | | | | |
| WM | 15 | 10 | 7 | 19 | 45 | 4 | 1 |
| GB | 16 | 11 | 6 | 24 | 38 | 5 | 1 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 198; N (GB) 2040

Table 7.3 shows that WM employees are less likely to work at workplaces where there is an incentive element to pay. 42% of WM employees work where there is some form of incentive pay compared

with 47% across GB. Where there is incentive pay, a combination of merit pay and payment by results is slightly more

common in the WM than for GB (11% versus 9%). Profit related payments or bonuses are less common in the WM

(30% of employees) than nationally (33% of employees).

Table 7.3 Types of incentive pay

| | Any employees receive PBR, merit pay or both | | | | Profit related payments or bonuses | |
|----|--|----------------|----------|------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Neither | Merit pay only | PBR only | Both | None | Profit related pay or bonuses |
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | | | |
| WM | 60 | 7 | 21 | 12 | 74 | 26 |
| GB | 60 | 9 | 26 | 6 | 70 | 30 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | | | |
| WM | 58 | 12 | 19 | 11 | 70 | 30 |
| GB | 53 | 15 | 23 | 9 | 67 | 33 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2294/2293

8. Workplace Justice and Employment Relations Climate

Table 8.1 shows that a smaller proportion of WM workplaces have formal procedures for dealing with collective disputes with non-managerial employees (33% versus 41%). Formal procedures for dealing with an individual grievance raised by employees are much more common,

although still slightly less likely in the WM as compared with the national average (81% WM, 83% GB). Table 8.2 also shows employees are less likely to have to put the grievance in writing in the WM than nationally, but more likely to have a right of appeal.

Table 8.1 Formal procedures for dealing with collective disputes raised by non-managerial employees

| | Yes | No |
|----|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Percentage of workplaces |
| WM | 33 | 67 |
| GB | 41 | 59 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 51 | 49 |
| GB | 56 | 44 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 221; N (GB) 2265

Table 8.2 Formal grievance procedures and the nature of grievance handling

| | Formal procedure for dealing with individual grievances | | Employees required to set out in writing the nature of the grievance? | | | Employees asked to attend a formal meeting with a manager to discuss the nature of their grievance? | | | Employees have a right to appeal against a decision made under the procedure | |
|----|---|----|---|---------------------------------------|----|---|---------------------------------------|----|--|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes, always | Yes, sometimes – depends on the issue | No | Yes, always | Yes, sometimes – depends on the issue | No | Yes | No |
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 81 | 19 | 33 | 28 | 39 | 52 | 35 | 13 | 98 | 2 |
| GB | 83 | 17 | 40 | 28 | 32 | 63 | 24 | 12 | 92 | 8 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 92 | 8 | 51 | 29 | 20 | 65 | 29 | 6 | 98 | 2 |
| GB | 94 | 6 | 56 | 27 | 16 | 73 | 22 | 5 | 96 | 4 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: Great Britain in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 223; N (GB) 2264

Table 8.3 shows that there is no difference between the WM and GB in the proportion of workplaces (both 5%)

where an employee (or ex-employee) has made an application to an employment tribunal in the last twelve months.

Table 8.3 Applications to an Employment Tribunal in the past 12 months

| | Yes | No |
|----|--------------------------|----|
| | Percentage of workplaces | |
| WM | 5 | 95 |
| GB | 5 | 95 |
| | Percentage of employees | |
| WM | 29 | 71 |
| GB | 27 | 73 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2280

Table 8.4 shows managers' perceptions of the relationship they have with employees. The patterns for the WM and GB are very similar. Managers at over 90% of workplaces rate the relationship between themselves and the employees as good or very good. These workplaces account for almost 90% of employees. Data from the survey of employees indicate that the picture is somewhat different from the perspective of the employees. Table 8.5 shows that just under two-thirds of employees rate the relationship between

themselves and management as good or very good. Again this is true of both the WM and the national picture. Yet the survey of employees reveals that a significant percentage of employees (approximately 15%) regard the relationship with managers as poor or very poor. The survey of managers (table 8.4) shows that virtually no managers describe the relationship in those terms.

Table 8.4 Managers' assessment of the relationship between management and employees at the workplace

| | Very good | Good | Neither good nor poor | Poor | Very poor |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|------|-----------|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | |
| WM | 52 | 42 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| GB | 49 | 44 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | |
| WM | 32 | 57 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| GB | 35 | 55 | 9 | 1 | 0 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2278

Table 8.5 Employees' assessment of the relationship between managers and employers at the workplace?

| | Very good | Good | Neither good nor poor | Poor | Very poor |
|----|-----------|------|--------------------------|------|-----------|
| WM | 20 | 43 | 23 | 10 | 4 |
| GB | 21 | 40 | 23 | 11 | 4 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2113; N (GB) 22061

9. Equality and Diversity

Table 9.1 shows that a formal policy relating to equality and diversity is less common in WM workplaces. 47% do not have any formal written policy compared with 35% nationally. These workplaces

account for 26% of employees in the WM and 16% nationally. The incidence of policies on specific grounds of discrimination is, in each case, lower in the WM than nationally.

Table 9.1 Grounds covered by formal written equal opportunities policies

| | No formal written policy | Sex/ gender | Race | Religion or belief | Marital status | Disability | Age | Sexual orientation | Trade Union member- ship | Other type of discrim- ination | Our policy does not specify particular groups |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 47 | 44 | 45 | 41 | 32 | 41 | 36 | 37 | 22 | 11 | 8 |
| GB | 35 | 57 | 56 | 53 | 43 | 55 | 44 | 46 | 29 | 11 | 8 |
| Percentage of employees | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 26 | 67 | 67 | 63 | 50 | 67 | 52 | 57 | 37 | 19 | 7 |
| GB | 16 | 77 | 77 | 73 | 59 | 75 | 60 | 65 | 43 | 16 | 7 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 223; N (GB) 2264

10. Work Life Balance

Table 10.1 shows eight measures of flexible working which might be offered by employers. Offering none of the eight options is more common in WM workplaces. 22% of WM workplaces offer none compared with 17% of GB workplaces. The most commonly offered method of working flexibly is the ability to reduce working hours which is offered by 55% of WM workplaces and 63% of GB workplaces. Table 10.2 shows data on

forms of flexible working which are taken from the survey of employees. The general pattern shows that in the WM employees are less likely to be able to take advantage of flexible working options; the scores for GB are typically a few percentage points higher than for the WM. Flexi-time is the most commonly available flexible working method (38% WM, 38% GB).

Table 10.1 Flexible working arrangements

| | Working at or from home in normal working hours | Ability to reduce working hours (e.g. switching from full-time to part-time) | Ability to increase working hours (e.g. switching from part-time to full-time) | Job sharing schemes (sharing a full-time job with another employee) | Flexitime (where an employee has no set start or finish time) | Ability to change shift patterns | Working compressed hours (e.g. a 9 day fortnight / 4½ day week) | Night working | None of these |
|----|---|--|--|---|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 27 | 55 | 41 | 21 | 31 | 38 | 10 | 9 | 22 |
| GB | 25 | 63 | 51 | 26 | 35 | 40 | 11 | 11 | 17 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 36 | 73 | 59 | 42 | 41 | 46 | 23 | 26 | 11 |
| GB | 40 | 81 | 68 | 46 | 43 | 55 | 26 | 30 | 9 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2292

Tables 10.1 (bottom panel) and 10.2 show some discrepancies between the perspectives of managers and employees. The survey of managers indicates that greater proportions of employees are able to take advantage of flexible working arrangements. For example the survey of managers indicates that 73% of WM

employees and 81% of GB employees have the option of reducing their working hours. However the responses from employees suggest that only 27% of WM employees and 32% of employees nationally are aware that they have this option.

Table 10.2 Perceived availability of flexible working arrangements

| | All employees | Flexi-time | Job sharing | The chance to reduce your working hours | The chance to increase your working hours | Working at or from home in normal working hours | Changing work patterns including shifts | Working the same number of hours per week across fewer days |
|----|---------------|------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| WM | 100 | 38 | 18 | 27 | 28 | 14 | 24 | 16 |
| GB | 100 | 38 | 19 | 32 | 31 | 14 | 27 | 20 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2153; N (GB) 22451

Table 10.3 shows the different forms of emergency leave which are available to employees. The crucial differences between the WM and GB are in the forms of leave which are available, not whether emergency leave is permitted. The bottom panel shows that employees in the West

Midlands are less likely to work at workplaces where special paid leave is available; they are more likely to have to take emergency leave out of annual leave, as leave without pay or to have to make the time up later.

Table 10.3 Forms of emergency leave

| | Take time off but make it up later | As leave without pay | As sick leave | As special paid leave | As annual leave | Depends on individual/circumstance | Other | Never been asked for | Not allowed |
|----|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 40 | 35 | 7 | 42 | 36 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| GB | 45 | 37 | 9 | 47 | 35 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | | | | | | |
| WM | 54 | 50 | 8 | 51 | 47 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| GB | 46 | 45 | 9 | 56 | 44 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2291

Table 10.4 shows attitudinal data taken from the survey of managers. Managers in the majority of workplaces still consider that it is up to individual employees to balance their work and family responsibilities, and this is more common in the WM than for GB as a whole.

However the findings from the survey of employees shown in table 10.5 suggest that WM employees consider their managers to be, if anything, slightly more understanding about the employees' having to meet responsibilities outside work.

Table 10.4 Managers' perspective on whether it is up to individual employees to balance their work and family responsibilities

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| | Percentage of workplaces | | | | |
| WM | 11 | 62 | 9 | 17 | 0 |
| GB | 13 | 53 | 18 | 16 | 1 |
| | Percentage of employees | | | | |
| WM | 9 | 45 | 16 | 26 | 4 |
| GB | 10 | 46 | 19 | 23 | 2 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 225; N (GB) 2293

Table 10.5 Employees' perspective on whether managers understand about employees having to meet responsibilities outside work

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|----------------|-------|-------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| WM | 13 | 48 | 22 | 12 | 6 |
| GB | 14 | 45 | 22 | 13 | 6 |

WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

Base: All employees in workplaces with 5 or more employees: N (WM) 2054; N (GB) 21501

Summary and Conclusion

This report addresses a noticeable gap in the evidence base for policy-making on the West Midlands economy by providing a profile of employment relations and employment practice in the region's workplaces. The profile is drawn from the nationally representative 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS2004). In comparing the situation in the West Midlands with the national picture, there are considerable similarities. For example, at both regional and national level managers overwhelmingly, and to similar extent, assess management-employee relationships as 'good' or 'very good'. Employees in both the West Midlands and the country as a whole offer a somewhat different perspective, with a minority of around one in seven assessing management-employee relations as being 'poor' or 'very poor'.

At the same time there are also differences in profile and practice between the West Midlands and Britain as a whole, and it is these which are the focus of this final section. Reviewing the findings reported in the foregoing sections, differences between the regional and national pictures can be identified in three areas: the characteristics of workplaces and the workforces they employ; employment relations actors and institutions; and various aspects of employment practice.

Characteristics of workplaces and workforces

- *Workplaces* in the West Midlands are more likely to be in the manufacturing sector, and more likely to be single-independent establishments than nationally; a greater proportion of the West Midlands workforce is also

- employed in these two types of workplace.
- There are fewer public sector *workplaces* (but not fewer employees) in the West Midlands than nationally.
- There are fewer managers amongst the West Midlands *workforce*, and more in the professional occupations and skilled trades than nationally.
- A higher proportion of the West Midlands *workforce* in the public and private service sectors works part-time than nationally.
- A lower proportion of the *workforce* in the West Midlands occasionally or regularly works more than 48 hours a week, than nationally, a difference which may reflect the lower proportion of managers in the region's workforce.

Employment relations actors and institutions

- The *management of employees* is less likely to be the responsibility of an HR or employment relations specialist in the West Midlands than nationally.
- Workplaces are less likely to be affiliated to *employers' organisations* in the West Midlands than nationally, although the percentage of the workforce employed in establishments which are employed in affiliated workplaces is higher.
- Fewer employees are *trade union members* in the West Midlands than nationally. *Union recognition* for negotiation of pay and conditions is not as widespread in the West Midlands as it is nationally.

- Procedures for *resolving collective disputes* are less widespread in the West Midlands than nationally. *Individual grievance procedures* are present in the vast majority of workplaces, and cover more than nine out of every ten employees, but their incidence and coverage is slightly less in the West Midlands than nationally.
- Workplaces and employees are both less likely to be covered by *joint consultation arrangements* in the West Midlands than nationally. The difference principally lies in the lower incidence of arrangements at a higher, beyond the workplace, level of organisations, which may reflect the relatively lower proportion of multi-site organisations found in the region.

Aspects of employment practice

- Employees are less likely to report receiving any *training* over the previous 12 months, and managers less likely to report that all their core workforce have had any off-the-job training, in the West Midlands as compared to the national average.
- The incidence of *teamworking* is lower in the West Midlands than nationally. However, more autonomous forms of teamworking are no less widespread than in the country as a whole, perhaps reflecting the weight of manufacturing in the region's economy.
- Two-way forms of *employee communication*, enabling the exercise of employee voice as well as the downwards flow of information from managers, are less common

in the West Midlands than nationally.

- Employees are less likely to undergo regular *performance appraisal* in the West Midlands than nationally. At the same time, performance appraisal is less likely to be linked to pay.
- *Variable payments schemes* are less in evidence in the West Midlands than nationally. The proportion of employees (but not workplaces) covered by merit pay and/or payment-by-results is lower in the West Midlands. For both workplaces and employees, the incidence of profit-related pay and other bonuses is lower in the West Midlands.
- Workplaces are less likely to have formal *equal opportunities policies*, and workforces less likely to be covered by these, in the West Midlands than nationally.
- *Flexible working arrangements* are less likely to be available in the West Midlands than nationally. In particular, employees in the region are less likely to have the chance to change working hours or the pattern of hours worked.
- Leave for family or other emergencies is less likely to take the form of *special paid leave*, and more likely to be taken out of annual holiday or as leave without pay, in the West Midlands than nationally.

The differences in the *characteristics of workplaces and the workforce* in the West Midlands underline the distinctiveness of the region's economic and industrial structure, including the continued prominence of manufacturing. Single

independent workplaces are also more prominent in the region's economy than nationally. The incidence of part-time working amongst the workforce in the region is noticeably higher than for the country as a whole, a difference which is accounted for by employment patterns in the private and public service sectors.

In terms of *employment relations actors and institutions*, managers responsible for employment relations are less likely to be specialists in the West Midlands than nationally and employees less likely to be union members. Workplace employment relations in the region are comparatively less likely to be based around interaction between management and representative structures of employees, through either union recognition or joint consultation arrangements. It might be said that the conduct of employment relations in the region is less 'institutionalised' in a traditional sense than nationally.

As for *employment practices*, the incidence of practices associated with 'high involvement' management, such as teamworking and two-way communication is lower in the West Midlands than for Britain as a whole. The same applies to training, suggesting less emphasis in the region on the employee development associated with 'high involvement' management. The practice

of performance management, and whether pay is related to performance, seems also to be less widespread in the region than nationally, as indicated by the findings on performance appraisal and variable payments schemes. Growing attention to policies on equality and diversity, and to the issue of work-life balance, would seem to have had less impact on practice in the West Midlands than it has nationally.

These findings raise important further questions which could not be investigated, given the tabular structure of the regional findings from WERS2004 on which the report is based. How far can differences in employment practice in the West Midlands, as compared to the national picture, be attributed to the differences in the actors and 'institutionalisation' of employment relations in the region? How far do they relate to differences in the structure of the region's economy, and therefore the profile of its workplaces, or its workforce? And do workplace and workforce differences also account for some of the difference in employment relations actors and institutions? On the basis of this report it can be concluded that the pattern of employment relations in the West Midlands has some distinctive features, although the sources of this regional distinctiveness remain to be established.

Technical Annex

Further detail about WERS2004 can be found at the dedicated website.

<http://www.wers2004.info/>

Weighting

The estimates presented in this report have, through weighting, been corrected to ensure they are free from any sample-selection biases and any known non-response biases. Two weights have been applied to the data from the survey of managers, so that estimates can be reported in two ways. Estimates either refer to the proportions of workplaces with the particular feature or the percentage of employees who work at workplaces with that particular feature/practice. In the case of the latter it should not be assumed that all the employees who work at a workplace are covered by the particular feature/practice.

Data taken from the survey of employees are weighted so that the estimates indicate the percentage of employees with the particular feature.

Interpretation of estimates

As in any sample survey of a given population, the figures derived from WERS remain only estimates of the true population parameters. Survey estimates are expected to vary with repeated sampling. The key issue for interpretation therefore, is the precision of the estimate. In general the precision of the estimate is influenced by two factors: the value of the estimate itself and the number of observations from which the estimate has been made. Because of this second consideration WM data were compared with the national average, rather than with another standard economic region.

All estimates are presented as integer values after rounding. Hence a figure of 0 indicates an estimate of less than 0.5 (including 0) and a figure of 100 indicates an estimate of 99.5 or greater (including 100). Hence estimates of 0 and 100 respectively, should not be taken to mean 'none' and 'all'.

The usual method of establishing whether or not there is a 'true' difference between different estimates is by testing for statistical significance. However this relies on having access to the raw data and hence could not be used here. Some caution needs to be advised and strong claims, based on the data presented, are best avoided. Tables A and B illustrate the point. For example table A shows that an estimate of 20% produced on a base of 750 observations will have a standard error of 2.3 percentage points; we can then be 95% confident that the true population value lies somewhere in the interval 15.4% - 24.6% (calculated as two standard errors either side of the survey estimate). These tables also indicate the limitations associated with further disaggregating the data beyond the broad sector categories reported here.

Table A: Approximate standard errors for estimates derived from the WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Managers

| Estimate | Number of observations (unweighted) | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 100 | 250 | 500 | 750 | 1000 | 1250 | 1500 | 1750 | 2000 | 2250 |
| 10% | 4.7 | 3.0 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| 20% | 6.3 | 4.0 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| 30% | 7.2 | 4.6 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| 40% | 7.7 | 4.9 | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| 50% | 7.9 | 5.0 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| 60% | 7.7 | 4.9 | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| 70% | 7.2 | 4.6 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| 80% | 6.3 | 4.0 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| 90% | 4.7 | 3.0 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.0 |

Source: Forth and Stokes (2006)

Table B: Approximate standard errors for estimates derived from the WERS 2004 Cross-Section Survey of Employees

| Estimate | Number of observations (unweighted) | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1000 | 2500 | 5000 | 7500 | 10000 | 12500 | 15000 | 17500 | 20000 | 22500 |
| 10% | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| 20% | 2.0 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| 30% | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| 40% | 2.5 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| 50% | 2.5 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| 60% | 2.5 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| 70% | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| 80% | 2.0 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| 90% | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 |

Source: Forth and Stokes (2006)