

**News release**

***Embargoed until 00:01 on Tuesday 25th October 2016***

**Pressure at work is damaging our relationships, says new report**

***Charities call for employers to offer flexible working and relationship support***

Research released today by Relationships Scotland and Relate has lifted the lid on the immense pressure felt by many employees to prioritise work ahead of their relationships. Scottish workers are feeling the effects of this, 40% of those polled believe their bosses think that the hardest workers put their work ahead of their family life. Across the UK, 1 in 3 employees say their boss thinks the ideal employee is available 24 hours a day.\*

The *Labour of Love or Love vs Labour* report shows that employees struggling to balance work and family are more likely to become ill, perform less well and resign; but those satisfied with work and work-life balance are more likely to perform better and be more productive. The report calls for employers to aspire to offer flexible working arrangements as default and to provide free relationship support as part of Employee Assistance Programmes.

**Jonathan Tait**, 38 from Edinburgh, recently changed career from the music industry in order to start having children with his wife. Now, six months into his traineeship as a solicitor at Ennova Law, Jonathan and his wife share child care for their two young children Jessica and EIlliot:

“A lot of my time was spent travelling, dealing with day to day workload, attending different sites, meeting with colleagues, as well as dealing with my own consultancy clients. Now, although I am still active in the music business to an extent, I’m able to build a proper family routine. My wife and I concentrated on building our careers and had always planned to have our children a little later and now is the time to reap the rewards.”

The research reveals that Relationship Counsellors believe work-life balance is the third biggest strain on couple relationships - after affairs and not understanding each other, and ahead of money worries and sex drive.\*\*

Stuart Valentine, Chief Executive of Relationships Scotland, said:

 “For many people, almost half of our waking life is spent at work, or travelling to and from work, and there is an inescapable link between our overall wellbeing and happiness and the quality of our working life. This report reminds us again of the need to value and prioritise the relationships that we have with those around us. By doing so, we can become happier, more satisfied and indeed more productive people. This in turn can only help nourish the organisations and communities within which we spend so much of our lives.”

As well as the impact of work pressures on relationships at home, the report also looks at workplace relationships with colleagues and bosses. Worryingly, the study reveals an undercurrent of bullying, with 12% of employees saying that their boss behaves in an intimidating way towards them.But the good news is that 63% of employees say they have a good relationship with their boss and three quarters of employees reported good relationships with colleagues.

*Labour of Love or Love vs Labour* is the first in a series of reports from a major piece of research by Relationships Scotland and Relate. Over 5000 UK adults were surveyed as part of *The Way We Are Now* study, providing a unique window into the current state of the nation’s relationships.\*\*\*

-ENDS-

**Read the full report (available from 25 Oct) and download our infographic:** [**bit.ly/TWWAN16**](http://bit.ly/TWWAN16) **< Password: TWWAN16**

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**Photographs of case study Jonathan Tait attached in email, if you would like further photographs or comment from Jonathan please contact Ross McCulloch on details above.**

\* All figures are taken from *The Way We Are Now*– an annual study of the relationships of over 5000 people across the UK by Relate and Relationships Scotland. The Sample size for Scotland was 252. The study was carried out by YouGov. Fieldwork was undertaken between 18th June and 7th July 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 16+). YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

\*\*Relate and Relationships Scotland also surveyed 300 relationship support practitioners as part of their *The Way We Are Now* study. 69% of counsellors selected work life balance as the top strain on relationships out of a possible 23 strains.

\*\*\**The Way We Are Now* is an annual report into the state of the nation’s relationships by Relate and Relationships Scotland. This year, the report is divided into a series of mini reports covering Work, Sex, Partners, Family, Friends and Disability which will be published throughout the year. The Work report is the first to be released in 2016. For publication dates of upcoming reports, please contact the Relate media office.

**Notes to editors:**

The research also found that:

* 30% of employees said they felt pressured to work by their manager even when they are ill.
* 21% of employees said attending to care responsibilities is frowned upon at work.
* 27% of employees said that they worked longer hours than they would choose and this was damaging their physical or mental wellbeing.
* 12% of employees said that their boss behaves in an intimidating way towards them.
* Relate and Relationships Scotland have released The Way We Are Now 2016 report to raise awareness of the importance of relationships for individuals and society. We are working together to let people know how relationship support can help people of all ages, at all stages of their relationships.
* The Relationship Foundation (2015) estimated that the cost of family breakdown in Scotland was £3.5bn each year, with an annual cost of per taxpayer of around £1,500. Relationships Scotland’s vision is for positive and respectful relationships to be at the heart of Scotland
* Relationships Scotland’s network provide relationship counselling, family mediation, child contact centres and other family support services across all of mainland and island Scotland. Their work supports individuals, couples and families experiencing relationship difficulties. Around 40,000 people have contact with our services each year. For more information visit: [www.relationships-scotland.org.uk](http://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk/)