

### **8 out of 10 UK Workers take less than 30 minutes for lunch**

- 18% of workers take a full lunch break
- 44% dine at their desks
- 41% feel guilty if they take a full hour

A culture of desk dining and feeling guilty for taking a full lunch hour exists in offices across the UK according to a Reed Employment poll of almost 5,000 workers registered on [www.reed.co.uk](http://www.reed.co.uk) this month.

A staggering eight out of ten workers take less than 30 minutes lunch break each day and only 18% take a full hour. A total of 44% of employees dine at their desks every day, even though 71% state that their company provides an area where they can take a break away from their desks.

Perhaps this reluctance to leave their desks can be explained by the fact that 55% of workers report that there is no culture of taking proper breaks in their offices and because they don't see their bosses taking a full hour, they feel it might be frowned upon. This is why one in four employees (41%) admits to feeling guilty if they do take a full lunch hour.

When asked how they spent their lunch hours, a third of workers (33%) venture out for some fresh air and a walk, however, another third (33%) continues working straight through their lunch hour or uses the time to visit clients and customers. The remaining 19% surf the internet; 13% run errands, whilst only 2% go to the gym. The statistics also revealed that workers might be feeling the pinch from the credit crunch. A total of 81% would never spend more than £5 on their lunch; 43% bring their own lunch into the office every day; 16% buy lunch from local supermarkets and 5% purchase sandwiches from a food supplier visiting their office. Just 17% spend their money eating in local cafes and restaurants.

Workers may however, be shooting themselves in their foot by choosing to stay at their desks to eat their lunch. Whilst they might be addressing their guilt about taking a full lunch hour, 62% feel under pressure to go back to work even more quickly.

Catherine Maskell, Brand manager for Reed Employment says, "A picture of office life is emerging from our research that is unhealthy and unproductive. While long working hours are fast becoming the norm in most offices, the failure to take regular breaks is bad for employees' health, productivity and safety. Workers need to shake off the guilt but equally bosses need to actively encourage their staff to get out in the fresh air during the day, take some exercise or socialise with colleagues – in doing so, they will end up with a healthier, happier and more productive workforce."

#### **Notes to Editors**

Reed Employment is the UK's leading independent specialist provider of administrative, clerical and support staff. Assisting jobseekers and Employers for over 40 years, a combination of a national network of over 150 branches and the industry-leading website, [reed.co.uk](http://reed.co.uk) which receives over 1 million job applications per month, mean that Reed Employment has the widest selection of skilled candidates and job opportunities available in the UK.

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