

# WORKAHOLIC NATION PUTTING LIVES – AND MILLIONS – AT RISK

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BUSINESS owners and senior managers are risking not only their own health but that of their company by working up to 100 hours a week, a new survey has revealed.

More than a third of bosses questioned admitted routinely working more than 48 hours a week, the current limit set by the European Working Time Directive.

"The results of this survey are shocking," said Peter Mooney, of Employment Law Advisory Services (ELAS), the company which commissioned the research.

"We advise business owners daily of the risks associated with long hours, not only breaching the Working Time Regulations, but also of the dangers to the health and safety of both themselves and their employees."

The country which produced Margaret Thatcher has long been a nation of workaholics, with modern equivalents including Carphone Warehouse founder Charles Dunstone and Richard Glynn, chief executive of spread betting firm Sporting Index.

But it's not just Britain's industry leaders who spend every waking hour in the office.

A survey of 600 small and medium sized businesses found that at least 34 per cent of bosses regularly work more than 48 hours a week.

Of those, the average working week lasted around 58 hours. Some bosses even admitted to spending an average of 80 hours a week in the office – with that figure occasionally rising to as much as 100 hours a week.

And even aside from sectors such as transport, where fatigue can be lethal, Britain's long hours culture could actually be costing the economy millions.

"Signing an opt out to enable staff to work more than 48 hours a week is one thing, but to work such long hours routinely has a negative effect.

"Apart from lower morale, employees and owner managers suffer higher degrees of stress, which in turn leads to more time off work.

"In addition, stress and fatigue may be a factor in workplace accidents, and could end up with owner managers being prosecuted in the Criminal Courts as well as being sued in the Civil Courts by any injured employees."

Note to editors

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