

All work and no play a new reality for British parents

Submitted by: TUI UK

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- New research shows 1 in 5 parents can't take a enough time off work to have a holiday
- A staggering 49% of workers have not used their holiday allowance
- Over two thirds (72%) are home late from work so can't spend time with their kids
- Dads spend over an hour less with their kids than mums each day in a working week
- Thomson creates first ever Family Charter to put quality time at the heart of the family

Almost half of British workers have not used their holiday (www.thomson.co.uk) allowance in the last year and 1 in 5 parents can't take enough time off work to have a holiday at all says new research by Thomson Holidays (www.thomson.co.uk). Depressingly, some 10% already know that they won't use all their holiday allowance.

Out today and commissioned by Thomson to coincide with the publication of a new All Party Parliamentary Group report – Giving Britain a Break – the research shows that each member of the average British household, whether parent or child, truly values family time on holiday as the most precious and memorable time spent together each year. And when asked what parents would ideally like to do with their children if they had some time off work, more than half would go on holiday.

Work is taking its toll so much these days, that over two thirds are home late so they can't spend time with their kids and for those that do get home, more than 1 in 8 (16%) are working on their Blackberry's, mobiles or laptops. Over a quarter (27%) of parents stated that in an average week they spend less than an hour a day together with their children – despite almost half saying they wanted to spend more time together.

Dads are missing out more than mums - with an hour less time with their children each day - adding up to almost a year by the time they leave school. But with parents working longer and harder than ever before, true quality time together is becoming alarmingly rare.

In response to the new findings, Thomson is creating a first ever Family Charter to put quality time back at the heart of the family – both at home and on holiday. It is calling on parents and kids to identify the promises they should make to each other about spending time together. A national vote will then create the top five rules for the official Family Charter. The Charter will be developed with leading children's champion Nicky Cox MBE, editor of award winning children's newspaper First News, which is read by more than a million UK children every week and their families.

Nicky Cox, MBE said: "Forget 'me time' and 'you time', what we need now is 'our time', together as a family. We are inviting every reader of First News – children, teenagers and parents alike – to identify the top promises they should make to create quality time together. The Thomson Family Charter will help us all ditch the distractions and dedicate more time to our families. We know it's tough, but let's find a way of working together as families. It's not just about parents offering more time, but kids making time too."

The creation of the Charter comes alongside news that families are healthier and happier when they

holiday together. Giving Britain a Break, a parliamentary report published today, supported by the Family Holiday Association, reveals that when it comes to the overall wellbeing of British families, quality time spent on holiday makes all the difference and could have a positive impact on Britain's economy. As stated in the report, if social tourism initiatives in the UK could ultimately mirror the success of schemes in neighbouring Europe they could deliver up to £5 billion to the tourism sector.

ENDS

Note to editors

The Thomson research was undertaken on a randomly selected sample of 471 families (over 1000 respondents) in the UK with children aged 8-12 years. Part of the questionnaire required answers by children of respondents; agreement to child participation was given by all adult respondents. The research was conducted by Kids Industries in October 2011.

Giving Britain a Break – the All Party Parliamentary Group report supported by Thomson Holidays is being launched on Monday 31st October 2011 at the House of Commons.

For more information please contact pressoffice@thomson.co.uk