

'Right to Disconnect' – many see little change in practice

COLMAN HIGGINS

While 32% of employees in a survey by a HR firm said their workplace had a 'Right to Disconnect' policy, 43% said they had noticed no change since the policy was introduced.

The survey by HR Buddy, which provides outsourced HR for smaller firms, found that 32% of employees surveyed had the benefit of a 'right to disconnect' policy in their workplace, 37% did not and 31% didn't know.

But when asked if they had noticed a change since the Code of Practice on the 'Right to Disconnect' was introduced in April 2021, 43% said they noticed no difference, 14% did notice a difference and 23% said there was a slight improvement. As many as 20% said they were unaware of a 'right to disconnect' policy.

The survey also found that as many as 72% feel obligated to engage in out-of-hours work emails and calls, although 60% said it was their decision and 20% said it was their decision and also felt it was expected of them. Just 20% said it was because their employer expected it of them.

OUT-OF-HOURS EMAILS

Just 26% said that their employer discouraged out-of-hours emails, while 74% said employers did not discourage such out-of-hours contact on work matters.

As many as 46% said they found it difficult to switch off from work, while 44% said they could improve in this area.

HR Buddy's chief executive, Damien McCarthy, said it was "incredible to think that the 'right to disconnect' code of practice has not achieved its purpose with two-thirds of workers saying that they were not aware of this as a policy in their workplace".

Almost half (48%) said sometimes their mental health and wellbeing has been impacted by work in the last 12 months, while three in ten (30%) said it was rarely impacted. One in ten (13%) said they have always suffered issues.

Thirty-two per cent said there was a 'workplace well-being' policy in their workplace, while 37% said there was not, while 31% said they did not know if there was such a policy.

The sample size for the survey was about 170 employees.