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Millions set to have day at home

By Catherine Lillington

IN WHAT could be the largest mass absence from work for a generation, an estimated five million people will not be going to work tomorrow.

None of them will be calling sickies, skiving or making excuses. In fact, their bosses may even be joining them and taking work home for the day, on National Work from Home Day 2009.

Work Wise Week promotes smarter working practices, such as flexible, remote and mobile working, and working from home. It aims to give half the working population, some 14 million people, the opportunity to work smarter by 2011.

The week includes Mobile Office Day and Remote Office Day to encourage people to work while on the move and to use remote working instead of travelling to a central

office.

National Work from Home Day is to persuade people to work from home on that day, instead of commuting to their usual place of work.

Remote Employment, a web service dedicated to flexible and home based working, believes that the traditional 'office' is on the verge of a workplace revolution.

Paula Wynne, co-founder of Remote Employment and The Remote Worker Awards, advocates that the notion of nine-to-five might gradually vanish, with staff working ad-hoc hours around their home commitments.

Offices will probably disappear and instead mini business centres could spring up near satellite offices. Increasingly people will work from home as organisations cut their overheads on office space.

She says adopting a modern approach to working lives will

increase business productivity and competitiveness, reduce transport congestion and pollution, improve health by reducing stress, assist disadvantaged groups and harmonise work and family commitments.

Paula said: "The recent emergence of 'virtual jobs' and 'virtual communities' is changing the way companies attract and retain skilled employees. With this new approach, the labour market is evolving towards remote working and working from home as viable options in their recruitment drive."

There are already around 3.1 million people working from home in the UK and this is expected to more than double by 2012.

Remote Employment invites companies across the UK to support National Work from Home, by giving their employees the opportunity to work flexible hours or work from home.

To coincide with National Work from Home Day, it has launched awards to highlight how home working benefits the British public.

■ **For more information, browse www.remoteemployment.com or www.workwiseuk.org. Enter The Remote Worker Awards at www.remoteworkerawards.com.**