

“You can have it all.. it’s tough at times but absolutely attainable!”

Lisa Meigh

Director of HR & Learning



My Story

After a troublesome journey to motherhood, I had my first child – Archie in 2005. I was delighted and took a full year out to focus completely on him, I was able to switch off and the business supported me to stay in touch on my own terms, which were all purely social.

After the year, I was ready to come back and be Lisa Meigh again as well as Archie’s mum. I requested flexible working and was supported to come back 3 days a week.

I had a renewed focus and was still ambitious. I started studying for a Post Grad in Organisational Development, Psychology and Change to support my role. I went on maternity leave with my 2nd child Nicole in Feb 2008, so had packed a lot into 18 months back at work!

I returned a year later, again working flexibly with one shorter day and 2 long days, this worked really well for me and the children.

In 2012, James (Reader – CEO) asked me if I would take on more as Head of Learning and Development and whether travelling to Reading was something I would consider. He was very mindful of my work/life balance and was clear that there was no pressure. The children were getting older and Nicole was starting school, so the timing felt right.

I went up to 4 days, and agreed that I would start a little later on a Monday so I could still do the school run. I was working with an external coach provided by the company at the time, and she helped me to work this out – the world would not stop turning because I started work 40mins late on a Monday, but I would have 2 happy children and wouldn’t be guilt-ridden for going back to work Mondays, a revelation!

I spent a year travelling most weeks for one night, occasionally two, but I had Fridays at home so the balance felt right. It was tough at times and I needed a great deal of resilience, but over time the need for me to travel as much reduced, and I was very proud of the work/life balance I had maintained.

In 2014 James came to me with another proposition – would I merge the learning, HR & Reward teams, with the same consideration for me and balance with my children? It needed to be full time as there was so much to do, and I would need to travel more again.

Career Highlights

- Joined Provident Insurance in the role of Claims Team Leader
- Opportunity to progress into people development as training manager
- Was supported to study and grow professionally, first insurance exams, then switched to professional development; including MBTi practitioner and Post Grad in OD

We agreed I would work full time, still take the children to school on a Monday and not be in the office on a Friday, I would be available for the business on that day, but would do my role flexibly to balance travelling, home-life and deliver the results the business needed. We transitioned as a family, and my husband and I have worked like a team to ensure Archie and Nicole have the right balance of us both, as he also travels a lot. I now have a strong team in place in Reading in HR & Learning, and we have great technology to be able to work very efficiently remotely.

The fact is, if I worked full time every day my children would be in breakfast and after school club most days, whereas with the flexibility we both have, despite being away some of the time, they have us around more in many ways.

In 2015 Covéa announced the acquisition of Sterling Insurance in Kent, the travel peaked again, but over time I know it becomes routine and manageable as things settle in.

Most recently we celebrated the collective efforts of all of our people achieving a Sunday Times Top 100 ranking, Best Companies 2 Star rating and delivered the aspirational Gold IIP status for Covéa Insurance (2015/16).

I have both a fabulous family life and a rewarding career as the Director of HR & Learning; I would not have accepted the role without the flexibility to work in a different way so that everyone was happy. I have a fantastic team, support from the CEO, amazing children, and my husband Tom and I work as a team. I like to think I am a role model for my children, you don’t have to compromise, if you are determined (a good organiser!) and have the right support at work you can achieve a successful career and be a good mum. It works and you can have both!