

## **Sunday Night Blues caused by weekend emails and blurred boundaries, study reveals**

- Preliminary findings show that emailing at the weekend and unfinished tasks from the week before contribute to the Sunday Night Blues.
- Trends indicate that boundaries between home and work life have blurred since the pandemic, which has intensified the problem.
- Experts advise that managers can check in with teams on Fridays and employees can complete their 'to do' lists on Fridays, to help Banish the Sunday Night Blues.

A study conducted by Channel 4, the University of Exeter and Investors in People has set out to find what employers can do to 'Banish the Sunday Night Blues'.

<https://business-school-expertise.exeter.ac.uk/banishing-the-sunday-night-blues/>.

Interviews with professionals from across the media industry have shown that triggers of the blues – or Sunday Scaries as they've also been dubbed - can include receiving emails over the weekend, unfinished work from the week before and self imposed pressure to perform.

The research was commissioned by Channel 4 after reports last year showed that more than two thirds of Britons suffer from feelings of anxiety and sleeplessness on a Sunday night.

Channel 4 People Director [Kirstin Furber](#) said: "Our study confirms that the Sunday Night Blues exist, and that they can negatively impact employee wellness and performance, and that's something we should all be concerned about as employers. This is about supporting our people so they feel fresh and rested on a Monday morning, and ready to face the week ahead."

Survey results of 650 respondents show that people experience energy dips on Sunday evenings and an increase to their energy levels on Monday mornings, which researchers believe can contribute to experiencing the Sunday Night Blues.

In interviews it was found that people who love their jobs also experience the Blues, so they are not confined to people unhappy at work.

The University of Exeter are now devising a toolkit, to be issued later this year, which will help employers 'Banish The Sunday Night Blues'. This will include suggesting people make a 'to do' list on a Friday for the week ahead, and organising positive interactions on a Monday so people have something to look forward to.

In the meantime Channel 4 will be testing some of the recommendations, with immediate effect. Kirstin Furber said: "At Channel 4 we'll be suggesting some fixes, which are based on the feedback we received during the study. For example we'll suggest that managers speak to their teams to ask them what would help them be at their best on a Monday, whether that's a Monday morning check in and/or a Friday 'check out' to reflect on the past week. Also, as a manager try not to send emails during the weekend."

Ilke Inceoglu, Professor of Organisational Behaviour and HR Management at the University of Exeter Business School said: "Our research has shown that the blurring of boundaries between home and work can make the experience of Sunday Night Blues worse. The

erosion of boundaries is an issue we have all experienced since lockdown and is something that impacts our wellbeing.

“By looking closely at employees’ experiences of the Sunday Night Blues and the factors that contribute to them, we are building a clearer picture of how organisations can tackle the problem. Emerging from our research are positive steps that line managers, HR professionals and employees can all take.”

Paul Devoy, Chief Executive of Investors in People said: “We are extremely proud to be working closely with Channel 4 and the University of Exeter Business School on this research project. Every person at every level within an organisation, regardless of length of service, industry or working pattern, has experienced the Sunday night blues. I know I have! We must do more to identify the key causes and more importantly, the solutions to better support people and ultimately make work better. I am very excited about the next stage of this project, and hope that together with Channel 4 and the University of Exeter Business School, we are able to support as many organisations and individuals as possible to eliminate the Sunday night blues.”

Channel 4 is renowned for its pioneering approach to staff wellbeing. It introduced the media industry’s first Menopause Policy in 2019, as well as the world’s first Pregnancy Loss Policy for all employees, plus it trialed free hormone and reproductive health testing last year.

Ends

## **Methodology**

Preliminary findings are based on qualitative (semi-structured) interviews with employees who were asked about their experience of the Sunday Night Blues. Self-reported energy was measured in a survey with 656 participants, recruited via the Prolific Academic platform and professional networks, who completed questions across three Sundays and Mondays (sample size varied by time point). The study is still in progress and results have not yet been peer-reviewed.

## **Notes to Editors**

### *About Channel 4:*

Channel 4 exists to create change through entertainment. Publicly owned yet commercially funded, Channel 4 generates significant and sustainable cultural, economic and social impact across the UK – at no cost to the taxpayer.

The broadcaster’s distinctive remit is set by Parliament, and it has a role to represent unheard voices, challenge with purpose and reinvent entertainment. For 40 years, it has been a British success story, engaging generation after generation of young people.

Across its bases in London, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Glasgow, Channel 4 is turbocharging its efforts to find, nurture and develop talent across the UK. Through its training and development initiative 4Skills, Channel 4 is opening up opportunities in broadcasting, with a particular focus on disadvantaged young people, and addressing skills gaps across the Nations and Regions.

Channel 4 has the UK’s biggest free streaming service, All 4, plus 11 television channels including: Channel 4, E4, E4 Extra, More4, Film4, 4Seven and The Box Plus Network.

*University of Exeter:*

The University of Exeter is a Russell Group university that combines world-class research with high levels of student satisfaction. Exeter has over 30,000 students and sits within the Top 15 universities in The Guardian University Guide 2023, and in the top 150 globally in both the QS World Rankings 2022 and THE World University Rankings 2023. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), more than 99% of our research was rated as being of international quality, and our world-leading research impact has grown by 72% since 2014, more than any other Russell Group university.

*Investors in People:*

Investors in People have been making work better for organisations across the world since 1991. In that time, they've worked with over 11 million people and over 50,000 businesses. Because happy people are healthier people, and healthier people are more productive. Productive people are good for business, and in turn, society. [www.investorsinpeople.com](http://www.investorsinpeople.com)