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The Second Work-Life Balance
Study: Results from the
Employees' Survey

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MORI

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Jane Stevens
Juliet Brown
Caroline Lee



Foreword

The Department of Trade and Industry's aim is to realise prosperity for all. We want a dynamic labour market that provides full employment, flexibility and choice. We want to create workplaces of high productivity and skill, where people can flourish and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

The Department has an ongoing research programme on employment relations and labour market issues, managed by the Employment Market Analysis and Research branch (EMAR). Details of our research programme appear regularly in the ONS journal *Labour Market Trends*, and can also be found on our website: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/emar>

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The views expressed in these publications do not necessarily reflect those of the Department or the Government. We publish them as a contribution towards open debate about how best we can achieve our objectives.



Grant Fitzner
Director, Employment Market Analysis and Research

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Glossary

Below some common terms, references and abbreviations used throughout the report are listed.

Term	Definition
Annualised hours	Where the number of hours an employee has to work is calculated over a full year. E.g. instead of 40 hours a week, employees are contracted to work 1,900 hours per year.
Bereavement leave	Time taken off after the death of a relative.
Career break	When the employer agrees that time may be taken off work for a fixed period and that the employee will be able to return to the same job afterwards.
Compressed working week	Compressed working week – for example working a 40-hour week over four days, a nine-day fortnight. This is NOT the same as shift working.
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing.
Emergency time off for dependants	Unplanned (unpaid) time off work to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant.
Flexitime	Where an employee has no set start or finish time but an agreement to work a set number of hours per week or per month. Also where there is a requirement to work core hours, but outside of those hours, an employee can choose their start and finish time.
F-T	Full-time (defined for this survey as working 30 hours or more a week).
Job-sharing	Where a full-time job is divided, usually between two people and where the job-sharers work at different times. Sharers each have their own contract of employment and share the pay and benefits of a full-time job on a pro rata basis.
LFS	Labour Force Survey, carried out by the Office of National Statistics Labour Market Division.
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International.
MTS/MDS	MORI Telephone Surveys/ MORI Data Services.
Non-parent	Employees without dependent children, including parents with children aged 19 and under who are not financially dependent on them.

Parent	Employees with dependent children aged 19 and under.
Term	Definition
Parental Leave	Where both mothers and fathers can take unpaid leave to look after their children in their early years. Statutory parental leave is available to employed parents with one years continuous service with their employer. Generally parents have a right to 13 weeks unpaid statutory parental leave which they can take up to the child's fifth birthday. Parents of disabled children can take 18 weeks unpaid parental leave up to the child's 18 th birthday.
P-T	Part-time (defined for this survey as working less than 30 hours a week).
Paternity leave	Time off for fathers around the birth of a child that can be paid or unpaid. Two weeks <i>statutory</i> paid leave was only introduced in April 2003.
Reduced hours for a limited period	Where an employee has an agreement to cut their hours for a set period of time (e.g. a month, six months) and then return to their original working hours. This is sometimes known as V-time working.
SMS	Sample Management System.
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification.
SOC	Standard Occupation Classification.
Study leave	When an employer agrees to an employee taking time off work to study for a fixed period of time, e.g. one day per week, three months per year.
Term-time work	Where an employee works only during school term times.
WLB	Work-life balance.
WLB1	The first work-life balance study (by Hogarth et al., 2000).
WLB2	The second work-life balance study (by MORI, 2004).
Working from home	Where an employee works all or part of the time from home as part of their working hours.

Executive summary

The findings indicate strong employee support for the importance of achieving work-life balance. There appears to have been a significant increase since 2000 in the reported availability and take-up of several (but not all) flexible working practices. However, despite relatively high demand for flexible working practices, employees were not always convinced that many of the flexible working arrangements would be feasible for their job. There was also some employee concern about the consequences of adopting flexible working practices for their job security and career prospects.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this study was two-fold. First, to monitor change since the 2000 work-life balance (baseline) study¹ by collecting data on (a) employer provision of work-life balance practices and policies; (b) employee take-up of, and demand for, these initiatives; and (c) the impact of employers' provisions (including costs and benefits). Second, to establish a robust baseline for future evaluation of the provisions brought in under the Employment Act 2002; in particular the right for parents of young children and parents of disabled children to apply to work flexibly, and the duty of their employers to seriously consider their requests, as well as the introduction of paid paternity and adoption leave.

Attitudes to work-life balance

- Employees' strong support for the importance of achieving a successful work-life balance has remained relatively constant since the 2000 work-life balance study (WLB1). The majority of employees continued to agree that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want to (78 per cent) and that people work best when they can balance their home and other aspects of their lives (95 per cent).
- Most employees thought their employer had a role to play in helping their employees to balance work with other aspects of their life; 57 per cent disagreed that 'it's not the employer's responsibility to help people balance work with other aspects of their life'. The majority of employees also agreed that employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties parents of young children and disabled children face (85 per cent).
- However, compared with the 2000 study, more employees agreed that business needs must take priority over employee demand for changed working patterns. In 2003, three-fifths of employees (60

¹ T. Hogarth, C. Hasluck and G. Pierre from IER, with M. Winterbotham and D. Vivian from IFF Research, *Work-Life Balance 2000: Results from the Baseline Study*, 2001, DfEE Research Series, No. 249. Hereafter known as WLB1.

per cent) agreed that employees must not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business, compared with just over half (53 per cent) in 2000.

Working time: hours of work and time off

- The findings indicated that since WLB1, the hours employees usually worked had marginally decreased. However, the Second Work-Life Balance Study (WLB2) found that employees still worked longer hours in a 'usual' week (on average, 37 hours) than their contracted hours of work stipulated (on average, 34 hours). Male employees, especially fathers, managers and professionals and employees with supervisory responsibilities worked the longest hours. Moreover, the majority of employees (70 per cent) who usually worked over 48 hours per week had not signed an agreement to opt-out of the Working Time Regulations.
- Two-thirds (67 per cent) of employees surveyed undertook either paid or unpaid overtime, working an average of seven extra hours per week. Managers and professionals were much more likely to work unpaid, rather than paid, overtime, whereas unskilled employees and operatives were more likely to be paid for their extra hours. The most common reason for working additional hours tended to be pressure of work, typically cited by women, managers and professionals, supervisors and older employees.
- When asked about changing their working hours, considering their personal circumstances, employees were twice as likely to prefer to work longer hours for more pay (30 per cent) than work fewer hours for less pay (14 per cent).

Requests for flexible working

- A sixth of employees (17 per cent) had approached their employer in the last two years to make a request to change how they regularly work for a sustained period of time.
- These requests were most likely to be made by women, mothers, and parents whose youngest child was under two years old. Almost one-third (29 per cent) of mothers had requested a change in how they regularly worked from their employer in the last two years, compared to only 12 per cent of fathers.
- Reducing the hours of work, including switching to part-time hours, was the most common request made by employees who wanted to change the way they regularly worked (29 per cent). A further 23 per cent wanted to change *when* they worked including the number of days they worked (such as a compressed working week or changing shifts).
- Of those employees who made a request to change the way they regularly work, over three-quarters (77 per cent) said their request had been agreed. However, one in five employees (20 per cent) said their request had been refused. Agreement to such requests did not vary significantly by the size of the establishment the

employee worked in, an employee's occupation or their length of service, or by whether they were a parent or not.

Awareness of statutory leave entitlements and new rights

- Awareness of rights to universal leave entitlements such as annual leave and time off to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant were relatively high (77 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively). Awareness of time off for emergencies was higher among women than men (27 per cent were aware of the policy and detail, compared to 21 per cent of men). There were significant differences with regards to being a parent.
- Employees' awareness of entitlements for parents was generally low. Only 22 per cent of employees were aware of the right to parental leave. Parents were no more likely to be aware of this right than non-parents but parents with a child under the age of two were more likely to be aware of this right. Of parents with a young child, 22 per cent were aware of the policy and detail, compared to eight per cent of parents with children aged two and older. Even fewer employees were aware that this right also extended to adoptive parents (16 per cent) and parents with disabled children under 18 (13 per cent).
- With regards to the new employment rights introduced in April 2003, half of employees (49 per cent) were aware of the new entitlement to two weeks paid (£100 per week) paternity leave and two-fifths (41 per cent) were aware of the extension of paid maternity leave to six months². Fewer employees (32 per cent) were aware that women who had worked for the same employer for a year would be entitled to a further six months unpaid maternity leave.
- Two-fifths of employees (41 per cent) were also aware that employers will have to consider requests to adopt flexible working practices from parents of young children (under the age of six) or with disabilities. Parents were no more likely to be aware of this new right than other employees.
- In general, awareness of statutory leave entitlements was higher among women, particularly those working full-time, parents, especially those with children under two years of age, supervisors, managers and professionals, and employees who had worked for their employer for more than five years.

² The WLB2 employee survey was conducted in January and February 2003, before the new employment rights were brought in.

Availability and take-up of statutory leave entitlements

- Of those employees who reported that their employer provided emergency time off for them to deal with emergencies involving dependants (73 per cent), over two-fifths (43 per cent) stated that this was paid leave (in addition to annual leave).
- Prior to the introduction of paternity leave legislation in April 2003 a fifth of fathers (19 per cent) also said that paternity leave was available at their workplace and others stated that time off was available at the discretion of a manager or that there was a written policy (10 per cent and seven per cent, respectively). The results showed that the lower the age of the youngest child, the more likely it was that fathers said that paternity leave was provided, which suggested that there had been an increase in provision over time.
- There were high proportions of employees who were not aware of their employer's provisions of leave arrangements. This was particularly the case in relation to parental leave, where a large proportion of parents (40 per cent) did not know about their employer's provision of this leave. Where parents stated that it was provided (35 per cent), a relatively high proportion did not know the detail, for example, almost three in ten parents (29 per cent) did not know whether it was provided paid or unpaid. Awareness of the detail of employer provision was also limited for time off for dependants; where it was provided, over a fifth of employees (22 per cent) were unaware of whether the leave was paid or unpaid.
- Take-up of leave arrangements varied. Just under half (45 per cent) of all employees had taken time off work, with their current employer, to deal with an emergency in the last year (not necessarily related to a dependant). Conversely, only 12 per cent of those parents who said that parental leave was available in their workplace had taken this form of leave in the last year and with their current employer. This translates as four per cent of *all* parents taking parental leave in the last year.

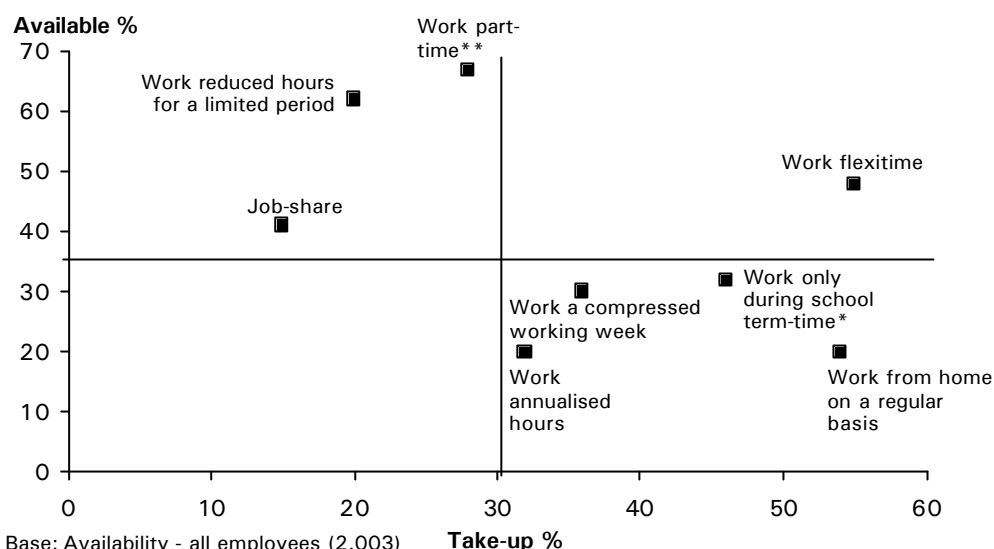
Availability and take-up of work-life balance practices

- Reported *availability* (see Figure 1) of work-life balance practices varied considerably and for several practices appeared to have increased since 2000. Working part-time (67 per cent), working reduced hours for a limited period (62 per cent), and working flexitime (48 per cent) were more commonly available than other practices, including job-sharing (41 per cent), working only during term-time (32 per cent)³, working a compressed working week (30 per cent), working annualised hours (20 per cent) and working from home on a regular basis (20 per cent).

³ This was only asked of parents of dependent children in WLB2.

Figure 1

Flexible working arrangements - availability vs. take-up



Base: Availability - all employees (2,003)
 Take up - all who say each flexible working arrangement would be available
 *only asked of parents with dependent children aged 19 and under
 ** this figure has been rebased to include all employees who already worked part-time
 Source: MORI

- Again take-up (see Figure 1) for several practices appears to have increased since 2000. Where flexible arrangements were provided by their employers, *take-up* amongst employees in the previous year and with their current employer was highest for flexitime (55 per cent), working from home (54 per cent) and term-time working (46 per cent)⁴. Around a third of employees who reported that they were available had worked a compressed working week (36 per cent) and annualised hours (32 per cent). However, less than three in ten employees had, where it was available, worked part-time (28 per cent), worked reduced hours for a limited period (20 per cent) or job-shared (15 per cent).
- Mothers (who had reported their availability) were more likely than fathers to take-up practices which reduced their working hours. For example, 59 per cent of mothers had worked during term-times only compared to 24 per cent of fathers. Fathers were more likely to have worked from home (67 per cent, compared to 60 per cent of parents).

Demand for work-life balance practices and feasibility of employer implementation

- There was relatively high demand for flexible working arrangements amongst employees who, with their current employer, had not adopted flexible working patterns in the last year. The most common wish was to work flexitime (49 per cent), followed by around a third of employees who said they would like to work reduced hours for a limited period (36 per cent), a compressed working week (34 per cent), work only during school term-times (32 per cent) or work from home on a regular basis (29 per cent).

⁴ This was only asked of parents of dependent children in WLB2.

- However, the demand to work annualised hours (25 per cent), part-time (22 per cent) or to job-share (17 per cent), among employees who had not already worked in these ways in the previous year, was relatively low.
- There were limited differences in demand for work-life balance practices between parents and non-parents, but there were between mothers and fathers, and demand also varied depending on the age of a parent's youngest child. Mothers were more likely to want to work part-time, to job-share and work during term-times only. Parents with a child under the age of two were more likely to want to work flexitime, part-time, reduced hours for a limited period and from home.
- Despite this relatively high demand for work-life balance practices employees were not convinced that several of the flexible working arrangements discussed would be feasible for their jobs. The majority of employees who had not done so in the previous year considered that job-sharing would be possible (58 per cent), whereas working during term-time and from home on a regular basis were deemed to be the least feasible working practices (17 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively).

Childcare provision

- There had been very little change in employer provision of childcare facilities since the 2000 survey. One quarter (24 per cent) of working parents (with children under 16) reported they had access to some form of childcare provision at the workplace, although relatively high proportions were unaware of their employer's provision. The highest level of reported provision was for employers providing information about local provision and availability of childcare (12 per cent), followed by accessible employer provided childcare facilities (nine per cent).
- The relatively low levels of provision overall were, nevertheless, matched by low levels of take-up. Where employers provided some assistance with childcare, over four-fifths (84 per cent) of parents of children aged under 16 years had not made use of the support in the last year.

Impact of work-life balance practices

- When asked about various working patterns and leave arrangements, only in the case of working reduced hours (such as part-time working) did more employees consider that adopting this way of working would negatively affect their career (51 per cent) than those who stated that it would not (38 per cent). However, there were still relatively high proportions of employees who considered that not being able to work beyond their contracted hours (i.e. leaving on time) (42 per cent), taking leave to look after their children or other dependant (37 per cent), working different work patterns (32 per cent), or working from home (25 per cent) would have a negative affect on their career.

- In most cases, men were more likely than women to consider that these working patterns would damage their career prospects, particularly in the case of working reduced hours (56 per cent of men, compared with 45 per cent of women) and leaving on time (46 per cent of men, compared with 37 per cent of women).
- In addition, men thought that working fewer hours would also negatively affect their job security more than women. Nearly half of men (48 per cent) agreed that this would be the case, compared with 38 per cent of women. Over two-fifths of employees (43 per cent) agreed that working fewer hours would damage their job security; 38 per cent disagreed.

About this study

- The Second Work-Life Balance (WLB2) employee survey is based on 2,003 interviews, and the response rate was 29 per cent. The survey was carried out between January and February 2003 by MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry.
- A companion employers' survey was undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). The report, *The Second Work-Life Balance Study: Results from the Employers' Survey*, was published in November 2003 in the DTI Employment Relations Research Series, No. 22.
- This programme of research represents a follow-up of an earlier study conducted in 2000, the results of which were published in the Department for Education and Employment Research Series, Research Report No. 249. The title of the report was: *Work-Life Balance 2000: Results from the Baseline Study*.
- The sample was generated using random digit dialling, but quotas were set for gender and industrial classifications. Interviews were carried out with employees in Great Britain, in establishments with five or more employees, and excluded the self-employed, proprietors and owners, and those under 16 years of age and those over 65. Gender, part-time/full-time, industrial classifications and age biases in the achieved profile were corrected by weighting the data.
- The study was conducted over the telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Interviews lasted an average of 29 minutes.

1

Introduction and background

Background and objectives

This volume contains the findings from The Second Work-Life Balance Study (WLB2): Survey of Employees carried out by MORI⁵ Social Research Institute on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)⁶.

The aim of this study was two-fold. Firstly, to monitor change since the first work-life balance study (WLB1)⁷ by collecting data on:

- Employers' provision of work-life balance practices and policies;
- Employee take-up of, and demand for, these initiatives; and
- The impact on employees of flexible working practices (including costs and benefits).

Secondly, to establish robust baseline data for future evaluations, in terms of the provisions brought in under the Employment Act 2002; in particular the right for parents of young children and parents of disabled children to apply to work flexibly, and the duty of their employers to seriously consider their requests, as well as the introduction of paid paternity and adoption leave.

The employee survey objectives included:

- Assessing employees' awareness of the current statutory leave entitlements, including maternity leave, parental leave, and time off for dependants, as well as forthcoming new rights;
- Assessing take-up of work-life balance practices including reasons for non take-up (e.g. impact on job security and promotion);
- Ascertaining the demand for work-life balance practices;

⁵ Market and Opinion Research International.

⁶ A separate technical report detailing the survey methodology, sampling, quotas, weighting and analysis issues in full, along with a 'marked up' questionnaire, accompanies this report. This will be registered with the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>) along with the dataset and tables of findings by key employee characteristics and technical report.

⁷ T. Hogarth, C. Hasluck and G. Pierre from IER, with M. Winterbotham and D. Vivian from IFF Research, *Work-Life Balance 2000: Results from the Baseline Study*, 2001, DfEE Research Series, No. 249.

- Establishing the extent to which work-life balance practices meet employee needs, including views on the feasibility of employers extending these arrangements; and
- Ascertaining employees' views on the impact of work-life balance practices.

The findings of the research will be used to track changes since the first study and assess the impact of new legislation governing leave entitlements and employers' flexible working practices on different cross-sections of the population.

A discussion of the policy background to this research can be found in the WLB2 Employer Survey report⁸

Study design⁹

Content of interview

The questionnaire was developed by the research team at MORI together with the study's Steering Group at the DTI. The design had to take into account the need for some consistency with WLB1 in order for analysis of change over time to be conducted as well as to facilitate longitudinal study, i.e. assessing future change against the baseline for the new measures. The questionnaire for WLB2 included some questions from WLB1 as well as new questions developed specifically to investigate the impact of new legislation and changes in work-life balance practice, and to explore awareness of, demand for and take-up of work-life balance practices. Additional questions were included to capture demographics, personal and other characteristics of the work-life environment.

An initial draft was prepared in September 2002, and tested during cognitive interviews and pilot telephone interviews in November and December 2002.¹⁰

The questionnaire was then refined, taking into account the issues and findings arising from the cognitive and pilot interviews¹¹, and transferred to Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) format. The majority of the questions were pre-coded, but there were some open-ended questions to be coded, in addition to the information required for Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

The topic areas covered by the questionnaire included:

- Section A – About Your Job;
- Section B – Hours of Work;

⁸ Woodland S., Simmonds N., Thornby M., Fitzgerald R., and McGee A. (2003) *The Second Work-Life Balance Study: Results from the Employer Survey – Main Report*, National Centre for Social Research, DTI ERRS No. 22.

⁹ The WLB2 Employee Survey Technical Report is supplied under a separate cover. Please refer to this for full details about the methodology of the survey.

¹⁰ For more information about the cognitive and telephone pilots see section 3.1 and 3.2 respectively in the WLB2 Employee Survey Technical Report.

¹¹ Issues arising from the cognitive and pilot interviews are contained in Appendix A and B respectively of the WLB2 Employee Survey Technical Report.

- Section C – Work-life Balance Practices and Policies;
- Section D – Maternity Leave Arrangements;
- Section E – Other Forms of Leave;
- Section F – Childcare;
- Section G – You and Your Employer; and
- Section H – About You (Demographics).

Main fieldwork

The survey fieldwork was conducted by MORI Telephone Surveys (MTS), between 10 January and 10 February, 2003. The average interview length in practice was 29 minutes.

Respondents were deemed ineligible for the study if they were:

- Under the age of 16 or over the age of 65;
- Unemployed;
- Self-employed or the proprietor of the business where he or she worked; or
- Employed at a workplace with less than five employees.

This criteria replicates that used in the WLB1 survey.

The target number of completed interviews was 2,000. By the close of the fieldwork period, a total of 2,003 interviews were completed¹².

Quotas

Quotas were introduced during the end stages of the WLB1 survey to correct for sample bias. Due to the smaller sample size, it was deemed preferable to set quotas at the start of WLB2 fieldwork. Quotas were set on gender (QD1A) and SIC (QD8). These quotas were based on up-to-date information provided by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of employees in Great Britain.

Despite these efforts, the final sample profile revealed a slight discrepancy between quotas set and interviews achieved for gender, some industry types, and some age groups. These were corrected by weighting the data at the analysis stage.

Weighting

Non-response bias was introduced to the survey design through low, or differential, rates of response. Where profiles differed significantly, it has been possible to weight the survey findings to reflect the correct population profiles. For example, respondents under the age of 25 were under-represented, as is frequently found in research where quotas for age have not been set.

¹² Quite often slightly more interviews than required are completed, because when there are many interviewers working on the same project, interviews are likely to overlap, and the total count of interviews is not updated until the interview has been fully completed.

To correct under or over-representation, weights were applied to the following:

- Gender;
- Work status;
- SIC; and
- Age.

It was decided to weight according to LFS data, rather than the profile obtained by WLB1, given that the profile of employees may have changed since 2000.

Response rates

Sample leads were supplied to interviewers in a random order through a computerised sample management system (SMS). The SMS allowed the status of each lead to be monitored, and for appointments with willing participants to be made and kept systematically.

In total, the WLB2 sample consisted of 34,015 leads, and of these 2,003 interviews were conducted with employees in Britain, representing an achieved response rate of 29 per cent. See Table A for full details of sample outcomes. Calls to leads were made at different times of the day up to a maximum of ten times, in order to be sure to have 'exhausted' the lead. Only after ten calls without a successful outcome were leads regarded as 'dead'. The response rate of 29 per cent was due to the long interview length and low interest in the subject matter among the general public¹³. Every effort was made during the course of the fieldwork period to encourage potential respondents to take part in the survey. This included changing the introduction to the interview. However, this failed to impact on the response rate.

¹³ The response rate for the previous WLB1 employee survey was calculated at 58 per cent. This survey was, however, far shorter at only 15 minutes, and took place shortly after the Government launch of the Work-Life Balance Campaign, which may have helped to raise interest in the survey.

Table A – Survey of Employees Response Rate	TOTAL (number)	Proportion eligible for interview	Known <u>in</u>eligible for interview	Known eligible for interview	Presumed eligible for interview
Sample drawn	34,015				
Sample issued	31,324				
Sample not yet issued	2,691				
Total sample called during fieldwork period (of those issued)	31,324				
Still active	1,740				
Total used during fieldwork period	29,584				
<i>No contact with respondents</i>	<i>5,659</i>				
Incorrect telephone number/ Telephone number out of service	4,602				1,083
No response after 10 or more calls	1,057				249
Contacted	23,925				
Interview conducted	2,003			2,003	
Refused – eligibility unknown	15,418				3,629
Not eligible	5,977		5,977		
Out of quota (inc. over quota)	527		527		
<i>All eligible ineligible (presumed eligible)</i>		0.24 ¹⁴	6,504	2,003	4,961
Valid/ presumed valid sample ¹⁵	6,964				
Completed interviews	2,003				
Response rate¹⁶	29%				
Contact rate ¹⁷	76%				
Co-operation rate ¹⁸	36%				
Refusal rate ¹⁹	64%				

¹⁴ The proportion eligible for interview is calculated in the following way: Divide the number who are 'Known eligible for interview' by the total of 'Known ineligible for interview' + 'Known eligible for interview' (2,003/ 6,504 + 2,003).

¹⁵ The valid / presumed valid sample is calculated by adding together those who are 'Presumed eligible for interview' with those who are 'Known eligible for interview'.

¹⁶ The response rate is calculated as the number of completed interviews as a percentage of the presumed valid sample.

¹⁷ The contact rate is calculated as the number of people contacted as a percentage of the sample issued.

¹⁸ The co-operation rate is calculated as the number of people who took part in the research plus those who were out of quota as a percentage of the sample issued.

¹⁹ The refusal rate is calculated as the number of people who refused to participate as a percentage of those who were contacted.

Cross-break definitions

Where key employee characteristics are mentioned in the report, a list can be found in Appendix C.

The report

Content of the report

The report begins by discussing employees' awareness of the statutory leave entitlements in place at the time of the survey, and reports on awareness of provisions which were introduced in April 2003, after the survey took place (see *Chapter 2*).

Chapter 3 focuses on employees' hours of work, both contracted hours and hours worked in a 'usual' week. Overtime, both paid and unpaid, will also be examined as will the take-up of part-time and shift work. The final section of the chapter concentrates on annual leave.

Chapter 4 examines the availability and take-up of flexible working arrangements, alongside employees demand for flexible working arrangements and their perception of what is feasible, within their workplace. The findings highlight types of arrangements that were available, but were rarely taken-up, and the reasons why. The chapter also covers the extent to which employees are consulted about flexible working and the extent to which these arrangements are promoted by employers. In addition, reasons for working flexibly and the way in which employees can make a request to work flexibly are discussed.

Chapter 5 looks at provision and take-up of leave arrangements, specifically paternity leave, emergency time off for dependants and parental leave. Provision of other leave such as bereavement or study leave is also covered.

Chapter 6 focuses on employer support for working parents, specifically in terms of childcare. Again, the provision of support and the form it takes is discussed, alongside demand for employer support for parents.

Chapter 7 examines what employees' attitudes are towards work-life balance initiatives and considers how these initiatives benefit or disadvantage employees²⁰.

Interpreting results in the report²¹

The report presents data for 2,003 employees, employed in establishments with five or more employees.

The respondents to WLB2 were a sample of the total 'population' of employees in Britain²². This means it is not certain that the figures

²⁰ The dataset, tables of findings by key employee characteristics and technical report are registered with the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>).

²¹ As discussed more thoroughly in section 2.1 in the WLB2 Employee Survey Technical Report, statistical reliability tests are based on the assumption that every respondent has an equal probability of being selected, however, this is not the case with a quota sample. As such there is no reliable way to estimate confidence intervals with a quota sample. However, the practice of testing for statistical reliability with a quota sample is common amongst social researchers.

obtained precisely match those that would have obtained had the entire population been interviewed about work-life balance in January and February 2003.

It is possible to predict what the difference between the results of the WLB2 survey and the 'true' results might be, based on what is known about the size of the sample on which the results are based, and the number of times that a particular response was given. This is normally presented as a 95 per cent confidence interval – that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the true value will fall within a specified range.

Based on the achieved sample of 2,003 interviews, and assuming a simple random sample, aggregate findings will be reliable to within +/- 2.2 percentage points based on 95 per cent confidence intervals (before any design effects²³ are calculated). Table B below illustrates the predicted ranges for different percentage results at the '95 per cent confidence interval'.

Table B		Statistical reliability at 95% for WLB2	
% respondents			%
10%/90%			1.3
20%/80%			1.8
30%/70%			2.0
40%/60%			2.1
50%/50%			2.2

Based on 2,003 employees

In order to compare findings with the previous survey, a difference of +/-2.5 per cent will be required for significance. Table C gives the breakdown of the aggregate percentage required to show statistically significant difference between a sample of 7,500 (as in WLB1) and a sample of 2,003 (WLB2); again assuming a simple random sample.

Table C		Statistical reliability at 95% (comparing results for WLB1 and WLB2)	
% respondents			%
10%/90%			1.5
20%/80%			2.0
30%/70%			2.3
40%/60%			2.4
50%/50%			2.5

Based on 2,003 employees (WLB2) vs. 7,500 employees (WLB1)

²² Employees in establishments with at least five employees, but not proprietors or the self-employed, aged between 16 and 65 years.

²³ See section 5.5 in the WLB2 Employee Survey Technical Report for explanation of design effects.

Only significant differences at the 95 per cent confidence level are reported in this main report and those considered to be the most relevant differences. Significant differences are highlighted (in bold) in the tables included within this report²⁴.

Results with unweighted bases of less than 30 employees are not commented on in the text of the report, or shown in tables or figures. Where the unweighted base is between 30 and 50 employees, results are not referred to in the text, but, if relevant, will be commented on in footnotes to give an indication of the results. Where findings are based on more than 50, but less than 100, employees the results are commented on in this report, but a note of caution will have been included.

Where percentages in tables or charts (figures) do not sum to 100, this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of don't know or not stated responses or multi-coded answers²⁵. An asterisk (*) featured in a chart or in the tables, either in the main body of the report or in Appendix A Additional Tables, indicates a percentage of less than 0.5 per cent but greater than zero, while a hyphen (-) indicates zero. In the charts all figures are weighted, but the base number shown refers to the unweighted base. In the tables within this report, '=' is where the difference between figures is zero, and N/A indicates 'not applicable'.

²⁴ Significance testing was done within the Quantum data processing/analysis package used by MORI Data Services (MDS). It should be noted that it is the effective base size that is important when looking at significant differences in the data, rather than the weighted or unweighted base. For example, in the Region cross-break, there are 116 respondents in Wales (weighted) but this figure is marked with an asterisk, which signifies that this is a small base as the effective base size is only 99. Quantum does not use the weighted totals, as this might overstate the significant differences. Instead it uses the effective base, which is smaller than the weighted base because it reflects the amount of weighting of the data.

²⁵ For many questions, respondents were able to give more than one answer, for example QD8a, the parental status question.

For the data tabulations contained within a separate volume (see footnote 6), an asterisk (*) to the right of the figure denotes where the base is small (i.e. under 100). Very small bases (i.e. under 30) are shown by two asterisks (**) to the right of the figure and results based on these are not eligible for significance testing²⁶.

²⁶ The numbers of 30 and 100 are the default figures on Quantum, regardless of sample size, and cannot be changed.

2

Awareness of work-life balance policies

Introduction

One of the key objectives of the WLB2 survey of employees was to gauge employees' levels of *awareness* of their rights with regards to balancing their work and home lives. This meant looking at their awareness of entitlements to take leave from their job including awareness of existing rights to parental leave, time off for dependants and annual leave, forthcoming extensions to maternity leave entitlements and the introduction of paternity and adoptive leave as well as the right for parents to request flexible working, and rights for part-time workers²⁷. The survey also aimed to gauge the *level of detail* employees were aware of in relation to these entitlements. Awareness was, therefore, measured using a scale, whereby respondents were asked if they were 'aware of the policy *and* the detail of the policy', just 'broadly aware of the policy', or if they were 'not aware of the policy *or* the detail'.

This chapter investigates employees' awareness of several statutory entitlements in place at the time of the survey, and reports *baseline* levels of awareness in relation to forthcoming provisions introduced after the fieldwork for WLB2 was completed. Firstly, it examines rights to time off from work for parents in the case of maternity and paternity leave and pay entitlements, and parental leave, including entitlements for parents who have adopted a child and for those who have a disabled child under 18, and then for all employees with regards to the right to take time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant and annual leave. Secondly, it considers the rights for employees at work including rights for part-time employees and the right for parents to request flexible working.

²⁷ A recent study by PSI (2004), *Maternity and Paternity Rights in Britain 2002: Survey of Parents*, addressed changes in levels of awareness of parents' entitlements to leave (available prior to the legislative changes in April 2003) in more detail.

Entitlements to leave²⁸

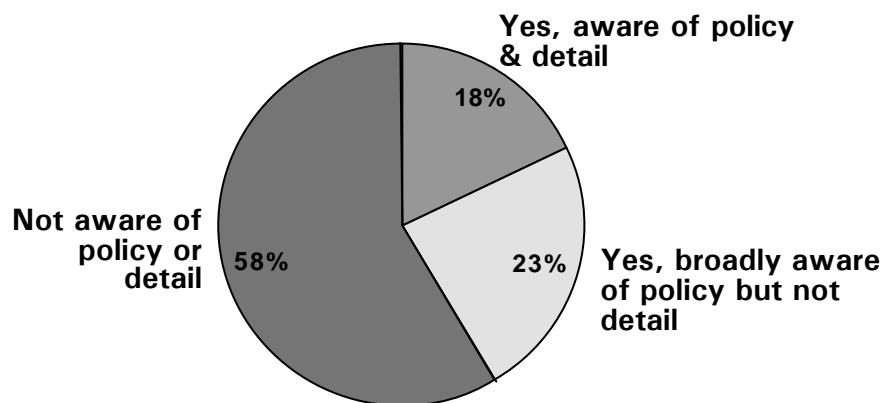
Maternity rights – paid and unpaid leave, and maternity pay

From April 2003, paid maternity leave was extended to 26 weeks for women regardless of the length of time they have been with their employer. Prior to the introduction of this new entitlement²⁹, awareness of the proposed extension to paid maternity leave was relatively low; just two in five employees (41 per cent) had some level of awareness, including only 18 per cent of employees who said they were aware of the details of this policy (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1

Awareness of paid maternity leave entitlement

Q *From April 2003, working women will be entitled to six months paid maternity leave. Were you aware or not aware of this change to maternity entitlements?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Table A2.1 shows how the awareness of the change to maternity leave varied by key employee characteristics and was highest among the groups who had recent experience of maternity leave (or a partner taking it) or were most likely to benefit from the new entitlement in the future, such as:

- Parents (21 per cent aware of the policy and detail), especially those whose youngest child was under two years of age (33 per cent aware of the policy and detail);
- Mothers who had one child (27 per cent aware of the policy and detail); and,

²⁸ Please note that the awareness questions asked in the study simplified some aspects of the legislation to make them easier for respondents to understand. For example, although there are different qualifying conditions for maternity leave and maternity pay, for simplicity, questions on maternity provision refer to 'paid maternity leave' as this better reflects general understanding of the provision.

²⁹ It should be noted that the WLB2 fieldwork took place between 10th January and 10th February 2003, prior to the introduction of new entitlements to maternity leave and pay.

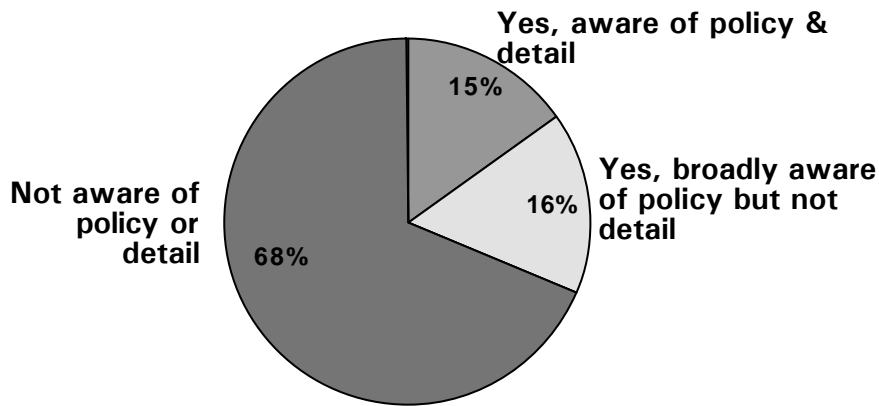
- Female employees (21 per cent aware of the policy and detail), especially women in full-time employment (25 per cent aware of the policy and detail)³⁰.

As Figure 2.2 shows, awareness of the new entitlement to a further six months unpaid maternity leave, for women who have worked for the same employer for a year, was low. Only a third of employees (32 per cent) were aware of the new entitlement prior to its introduction, including 15 per cent who said they were aware of the policy in detail.

Figure 2.2

Awareness of unpaid maternity leave entitlement

Q *From April 2003, women who have worked for the same employer for a year, will be entitled to a further six months unpaid maternity leave. Were you aware or not aware of this change to maternity entitlements?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Overall, levels of awareness regarding this entitlement were low among all sub-groups of employees (See Table A2.2). However, the groups significantly more likely to be aware of the new entitlement include:

- Parents whose youngest child was under two years of age (26 per cent aware of the policy and detail); and
- Female employees (17 per cent aware of the policy and detail), especially women in full-time employment (21 per cent aware of the policy and detail).

With regards to the increase in maternity pay to £100 per week (or 90 per cent of average weekly earnings if less than £100), shortly before its introduction in April 2003, awareness was very low. Only one in nine employees (11 per cent) were aware of the policy and detail, with a further one in 11 (nine per cent) broadly aware of the policy.

As expected, and in line with the findings for the new maternity leave entitlements, women were more likely to know about the detail of the changes to maternity pay rights, than men (14 per cent and eight per

³⁰ Interestingly, female employees **without** dependent children are one of the groups most likely to be aware of the policy and detail of the new entitlements to maternity leave (23 per cent). One explanation could be that this group included women who were pregnant or were considering having a child in the near future. If the assumption that higher awareness is linked to higher take-up is accurate, then it is important to ensure that this group are aware of these new entitlements.

cent, respectively). Again, this was particularly the case for women who worked full-time (17 per cent aware of the policy and detail). Awareness of the policy detail was also significantly higher among parents (13 per cent), especially parents whose youngest child was under two years of age (26 per cent aware of the policy and detail) (see Table A2.3).

These findings indicate that there was consistency in the types of employees who were most aware of the new entitlements to maternity leave and pay. These tended to be parents (especially of younger children), and women (particularly those who worked full-time). Moreover, higher levels of awareness of all three maternity leave and pay entitlements were also apparent among employees with supervisory responsibilities, those who had been with their employer for five or more years and those in managerial and professional occupations (see Tables A2.1-A2.3).

Paternity rights

The survey found that more employees were aware of the new entitlement to two weeks paternity leave than were aware of the extensions to maternity leave and pay. This was despite the fact that changes to both entitlements were to be introduced at the same time. Almost half (49 per cent) of all employees had some level of awareness of the new entitlement to two weeks paid paternity leave at the same standard rate as maternity pay (i.e. £100 per week) including 17 per cent who were aware of the policy and detail.

Table A2.4 illustrates the variations in awareness by key employee characteristics. There were some interesting variations in levels of awareness, most notably that female employees were more likely to be aware of the details of the new statutory right to paternity leave, than men (19 per cent of women, compared with 15 per cent of men). Awareness was particularly high amongst women in full-time employment (23 per cent aware of the policy and detail) and women without dependent children (21 per cent aware of the policy and detail). This corresponds to their overall higher level of awareness of entitlements to maternity leave and pay.

Similarly, looking at overall levels of awareness, rather than awareness of the policy and detail, managers and professionals, employees who had been with their current employer for five or more years, and those with supervisory responsibilities were more likely to be aware of the new right to paternity leave, as were older employees (aged 45 and over).

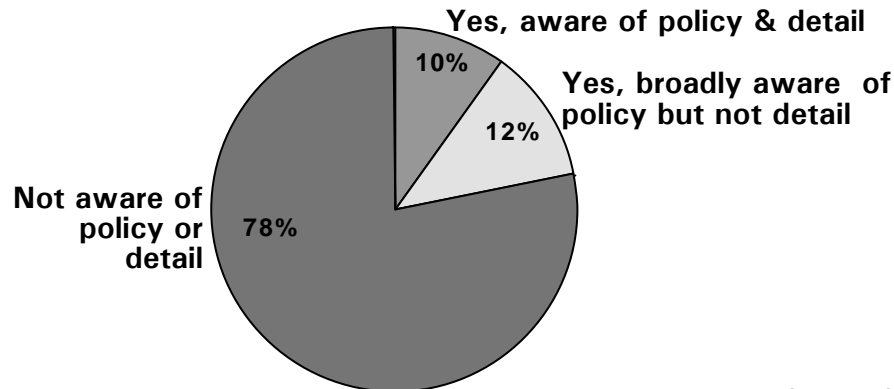
Parental leave

Parents with children under five years of age, who have been working for their current employer for a year or more, have a legal right to take 13 weeks unpaid leave from their job. Although this entitlement was introduced in 1999, prior to this survey, employees' awareness was relatively low. Figure 2.3 below shows that less than a quarter of employees (22 per cent) had any awareness of the right to parental leave, with only one in ten who were aware of the policy and detail of parental leave.

Figure 2.3

Awareness of parental leave

Q *Parents with children under 5 years old, who have been working for their employer for a year, have the legal right to take 13 weeks unpaid leave from their job. Were you aware or not aware of this right?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

It was notable that being a parent did not significantly impact on levels of awareness of parental leave, largely due to the low levels of awareness overall. However, employees who had a child aged under two years of age were significantly more likely to have heard of this form of leave (22 per cent aware of policy and detail) than parents with children aged two or above (eight per cent). Awareness was also higher among employees working full-time, managers and professionals, employees who had been with the same employer for five years or more, and those with supervisory responsibilities. (See Table A2.5).

Parents of adopted children are also given the entitlement to take 13 weeks unpaid parental leave from their job, if they have been working for their employer for a year; this is until five years of adoption have elapsed. Parents of disabled children who are under 18 are entitled to 18 weeks³¹ unpaid leave, again if they have been working for their employer for a year. The survey found that only 16 per cent of employees overall were aware of the right for adoptive parents and 13 per cent overall were aware of the right for parents of disabled children.

There were few significant differences by sub-groups of employees because of the low levels of awareness (see Table A2.6a and A2.6b). However, overall levels of awareness follow patterns to those of other entitlements to leave. For example, employees with young children (under two years of age), women in full-time positions of employment and managers and professionals were more likely to be aware of these entitlements to parental leave. Women were also more likely to be aware of the right to parental leave for adoptive parents.

Time off for dependants

All employees have the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of unpaid time off work to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a

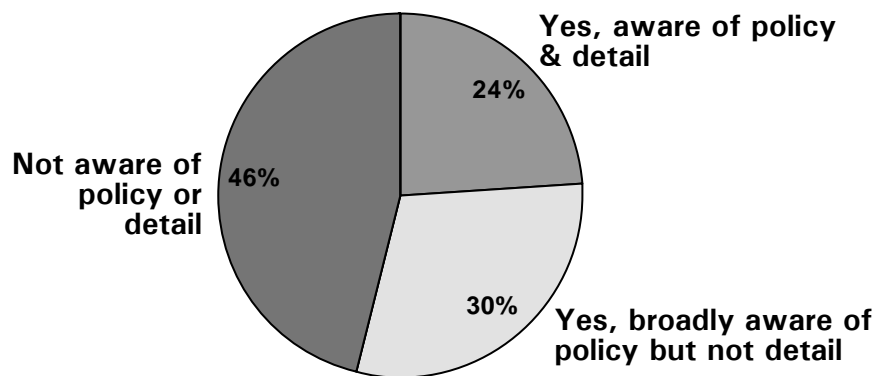
³¹ There was an error in the questionnaire as the question on parental leave for parents of disabled children stated that they were entitled to 13 weeks unpaid leave instead of 18.

dependant (parent, child, or someone living as part of the family). The WLB2 survey found that awareness of this entitlement appeared to be relatively high, with over half of employees (54 per cent) generally aware of their entitlement to do so, including a quarter (24 per cent) who were aware of the detail of their entitlement (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4

Right to emergency time off for dependants

Q *Were you aware or not aware that employees have a right to take unpaid time off work to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

As with other employees' leave entitlements, female employees (27 per cent) were more likely to say they were aware of emergency time off for dependants (the policy and detail) than their male counterparts (21 per cent). This gender difference was further highlighted when the results were broken down by gender within work status, and gender within parental status (see Table A2.7). Awareness (of the policy and detail) was also higher amongst employees who had been with their current employer for five years or more and those who supervised other members of staff. However, being a parent did not significantly impact on the level of awareness of the right to emergency time off.

Annual leave

The majority of employees were aware that they were legally entitled to four weeks paid leave per year (77 per cent)³². Twenty-nine per cent of employees were broadly aware of their entitlement to take four weeks paid annual leave every year and, furthermore, almost half of all employees (48 per cent) were aware of the policy and detail. This was a far higher level of awareness in comparison to the other rights to leave discussed above, which may be explained by the fact that this entitlement has been a legal right since 1998 and is universal, applying to all employees, unlike most forms of leave previously discussed. However, it is also important to note that a quarter (23 per cent) of employees had no knowledge of their right to four weeks paid annual leave.

³² This is pro rata for part-time employees.

Table A2.8 shows the variations in awareness by key employee characteristics. Awareness of the legal entitlement to four weeks paid annual leave was higher among female employees than male employees (79 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively), which is common to awareness of other forms of leave entitlement. In addition, full-time employees, particularly women (82 per cent), were more likely to be aware of their rights to take annual leave than part-time employees (78 per cent and 72 per cent, respectively), as were employees who have been with their current employer for five years or more (78 per cent, compared with 71 per cent who had been with the same employer for less than a year).

Employees' rights at work

Legislative and employer entitlement for part-time employees

All employees were asked whether they were aware of rights which provide part-time workers with the same hourly rates of pay and leave entitlements as their full-time equivalents³³. Over half of all employees (54 per cent) said they had some awareness of this entitlement. Although, only a fifth (21 per cent) said they were aware of the detail of the policy.

The levels of awareness of rights for part-time employees were, perhaps surprisingly, no higher among part-time employees than full-time employees. However, awareness did differ according to age, with older employees more aware of the rights than younger ones, and by occupation, with managers and professionals more aware of the rights for part-time employees (see Table A2.9).

The majority of employees who worked in establishments employing part-time employees said that their employer provided part-time employees with the same rights to hourly pay, sick pay and maternity and paternity leave as full-time employees (see Figure 2.5). Two-thirds of employees (66 per cent) who worked in establishments that employed people on a part-time basis thought that part-time employees had equal rights in terms of hourly pay and contractual sick pay. This rose to nearly three-quarters who stated that equivalent annual, maternity and paternity leave was provided on a pro rata basis (72 per cent).

However, it is important to note that for each entitlement around one in five employees were unsure of their employer's part-time workers' provision.

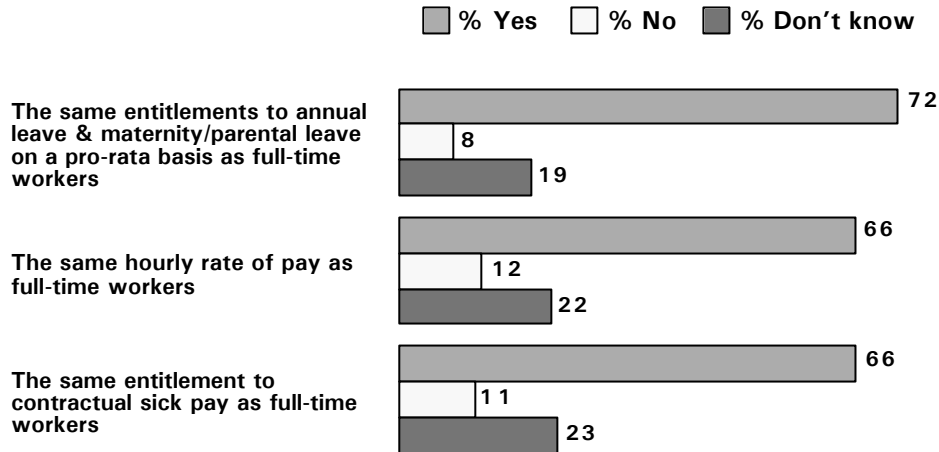
Women with dependent children (who are more likely to work part-time), and those who actually worked part-time were the most likely to state that all three of these equivalent pay and conditions entitlements for employees were provided by their employer. Moreover, supervisors were more likely to have said that equivalent sick pay and leave entitlements were provided by their employer than other employees (see Table A2.10a – A2.10c).

³³ Introduced in July 2000.

Figure 2.5

Rights for part-time workers

Q Does your employer provide part-time workers with the following?



Base: All employees whose establishment employs part-time workers (1,821) Source: MORI

Right to request flexible working arrangements

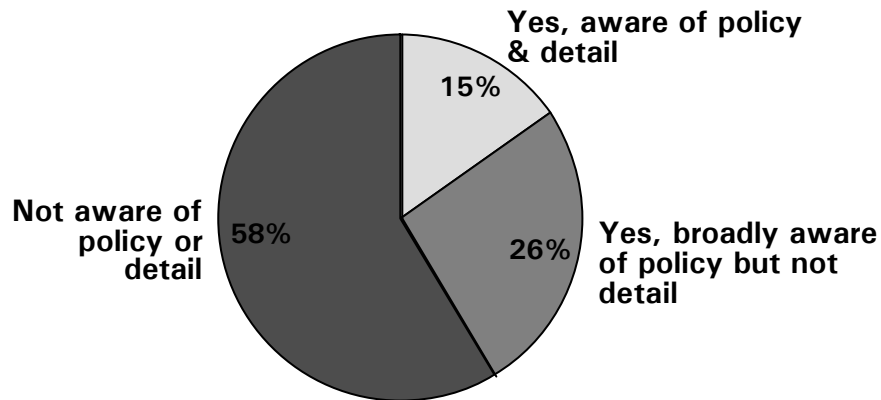
In April 2003, the government introduced a right for parents with children under six or with a disability to request flexible working and a duty for employers to seriously consider such requests. Findings from the WLB2 study will be used to inform the review of the effectiveness of this right over the coming years. The survey found a relatively high level of awareness of this entitlement³⁴, with two in five (41 per cent) employees saying they had some awareness of the employers' forthcoming duty to consider requests for flexible working arrangements from parents (see Figure 2.6).

³⁴ Note that fieldwork for the survey took place between 10 January and 10 February 2003, prior to the introduction of this right to request.

Figure 2.6

Awareness of rights for parents with young or disabled children

Q *Next year, employers will legally have to consider requests to adopt flexible working practices from parents with young children under the age of six or with disabilities. Were you aware or not aware of this right?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Table A2.11 illustrates the differences in awareness of this right by key employee characteristics. Parents' levels of awareness of this right were not significantly higher than levels of awareness among employees who were not parents. Consistent with awareness of other forms of leave, female employees (17 per cent), specifically those working full-time (20 per cent) were more likely to be aware of the details of the rights for parents with young or disabled children. Managers and professionals were more aware of the policy and detail than other occupational groups (19 per cent), as were supervisors (19 per cent). Employees aged 45 or over were also more likely to be aware of the details of the legislation than employees under the age of 45 (19 per cent compared with 13 per cent).

Summary³⁵

Overall, the findings indicate a relatively high level of awareness for rights which are universal such as annual leave (77 per cent) and time off for dependants (54 per cent), but relatively low levels of awareness for leave and pay entitlements for parents, in particular for parental leave (22 per cent) and maternity pay (20 per cent). With regards to the new legislation, awareness was highest amongst employees for paternity leave (49 per cent), the right to request flexible working (41 per cent) and for the extensions to paid maternity leave (41 per cent). It was not common for employees to know the policy in detail.

In general, the employees who were most likely to be aware of the different rights were: women, particularly those who worked full-time;

³⁵ A question was also asked about awareness of the entitlement to take two weeks statutory paternity leave, and be paid £100 per week, for men who are adopting a child. However, because there was a mistake in the detail given on the legislation this question has not been reported.

parents, especially those with children under two; supervisors; managers and professionals; and employees who had worked for their employer for more than five years.

However, with the exception of maternity leave and pay entitlements, those who were aware of the legislation were not always those to whom it was aimed. For example, parents with younger children were no more likely to be aware of parental leave (except for parents with children under 2) or the right to request flexible working than other employees. Moreover, mothers were more likely to be aware of paternity leave legislation than fathers and part-time employees were no more aware of their specific rights than full-time employees.

These findings suggest, therefore, that there is a need to raise awareness of leave entitlements among employees, and particularly to ensure that the sub-sections of the population directly concerned are informed of the detailed content of their rights.

3

Working time: hours of work and time off

Introduction

The number of hours worked by employees plays a significant role in their ability to balance their work and home commitments. Compared with other EU countries, Britain is generally recognised as having long working hours (i.e. over 48 hours per week). This has been especially the case amongst men, managerial and manual occupations, with employees working well over their basic contracted hours (Kodz et al., 2003³⁶).

This study explored the extent to which this was still the case. Employees were asked about their hours of work, both in terms of contracted hours and their actual hours (which may differ considerably), alongside their experience of overtime, the number of days they had off in a week and their take-up of annual leave. It also investigated the extent of part-time working, which has been the most widely available, and most used, flexible working arrangement (Hogarth et al., 2000). Over 20 per cent of female employment in OECD countries is part-time, compared with just 10 per cent of male employment. The UK ranks in the top three, alongside Norway and the Netherlands, of countries with a high level of part-time work among women aged between 24 and 35 (36 per cent of female employment) (OECD, 2001³⁷).

As well as part-time work, women tend to be well represented in other types of 'non-traditional' employment (Labour Force Survey, Spring 2000). Casual, temporary and short-term working can offer flexibility to women with caring responsibilities for young children, but equally can be characterised by difficult and long working hours, such as shift, night and evening work, for which limited formal childcare options exist. The WLB2 survey assessed the prevalence and nature of shift working.

This chapter covers three main issues: hours of work, working patterns and time off. Firstly, it explores employees' contracted and usual hours of work, before looking at the extent of paid and unpaid overtime. For those who worked more than 48 hours a week, the extent to which they have signed the opt-out from the Working Time Regulations is then examined. This section also assesses the preference for shorter or longer working hours with a related change in pay. Secondly, it looks at the

³⁶ J. Kodz et al. (2003) *Working Long Hours: a review of the evidence*. The Institute for Employment Studies, DTI ERRS No.16.

³⁷ OECD (2001), *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*.

working patterns of part-time and shift working. Thirdly, it will explore the number of days employees' take off during a working week and their take-up of annual leave.

Hours of work

Contracted hours of work

Four in five employees (79 per cent) had a set number of contracted hours of work, that is, hours written into their contract of employment. This had remained static since WLB1, although employees then were asked about this with regards to their 'main job' (if they were multiple job holders)³⁸. Eighteen per cent did not have a set number of contracted hours³⁹ and a further two per cent said they did not have a written contract of employment.

Table A3.1 illustrates how having a set number of contracted hours of work varied by several key employee characteristics. Women were more likely to have contracted hours of work than men (81 per cent, compared with 77 per cent), reflecting the predominance of women working in occupations such as services and sales work. This did not differ significantly from the WLB1 survey results, which showed that 83 per cent of females and 76 per cent of males had fixed weekly hours.

The following groups of employees were less likely to have a set number of hours written into their contract of employment:

- Employees aged between 16 and 24 years; a quarter (26 per cent) reported not having a set number of contracted hours, compared with 16 per cent of employees aged 25 years and over;
- Employees in operative and unskilled occupations (24 per cent);
- Employees in small workplaces with between five and 24 employees (23 per cent), with another five per cent having no written contract at all; and,
- Employees who had been with their employer for less than a year (23 per cent).

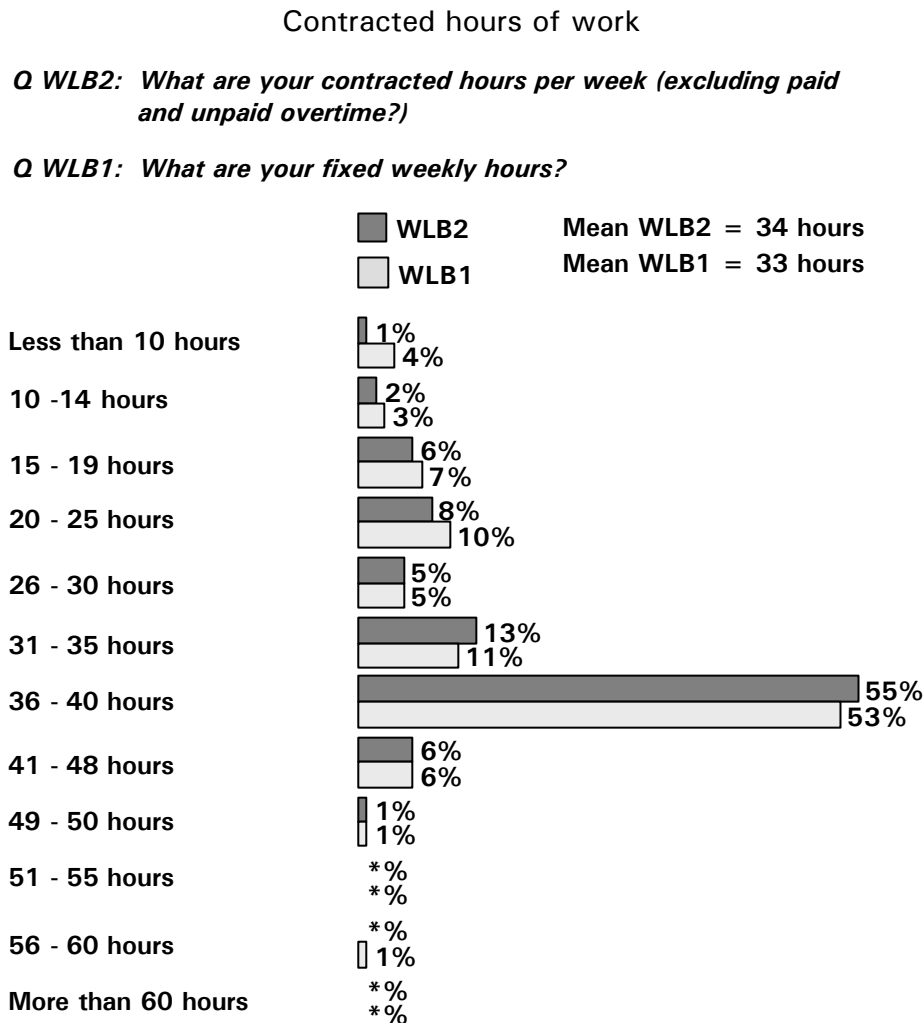
Employees who had a set number of hours written into their contract were then asked the number of hours that they were contracted to work. The findings from WLB2 illustrated that the average number of hours that employees were contracted to work was 34. This was in line with the findings from WLB1; the average number of contracted hours reported then was 33⁴⁰. Over half (55 per cent) of employees' contracted hours

³⁸ In WLB1, the question wording was 'Do you have fixed hours of work each week, excluding any overtime, that is specified in your terms and conditions of employment, such as working 40 hours a week?'. In WLB2, the question was 'Do you have a set number of contracted hours of work, that is, the hours (excluding paid or unpaid overtime) written into your contract of employment?'.
³⁹ Respondents who said they did not have contracted hours, or were unsure, were asked whether they had a contract of employment. Of these people, over three-quarters (78 per cent) said they did have a contract of employment.

⁴⁰ This figure is based on all those who said they had fixed weekly hours, as specified in the employees' terms and conditions of employment.

of work were between 36 and 40 hours a week (see Figure 3.1). This was similar to the findings in WLB1, where 53 per cent of employees had the same contracted hours.

Figure 3.1⁴¹



* denotes a percentage less than 0.5% but greater than zero

Base WLB2 : All employees who have a set number of contracted hours and one job only(1,503)

Base WLB1: All employees with fixed weekly hours (5,996)

Source: MORI

The number of contracted hours worked by employees with one job only, varied by certain key employee characteristics (see Table A3.2 and Figure 3.2). The following findings were identified by the survey:

- **Men** were usually contracted to work longer hours than women (37 hours, compared with 31 hours per week) which was partly explained by the fact that more women work part-time than men;

⁴¹ In WLB1, respondents were asked how many hours they were contracted to work in their main job, and in WLB2, respondents were asked about their contracted hours, which included all their jobs if they were multiple job holders. To make this data comparable, WLB2 data was rebased to include only those who had one job.

- Employees with **supervisory responsibilities** were contracted to work longer hours than those who did not supervisor others (36 hours, compared with 33 hours);
- **Operatives and unskilled employees** tended to have the longest contractual hours per week (37 hours, compared with 29 hours for services and sales);
- **Employees in larger establishments** (with 250 employees or more) were contracted to work longer hours than those who worked in smaller establishments (with between five and 24 employees) (35 hours, compared with 33 hours); and,
- **Employees aged between 25 and 54** were contracted to work marginally more hours than those under 25 or over 54 (35 hours compared with 33 hours for under 25 year olds and 34 hours for employees 55 and over.)

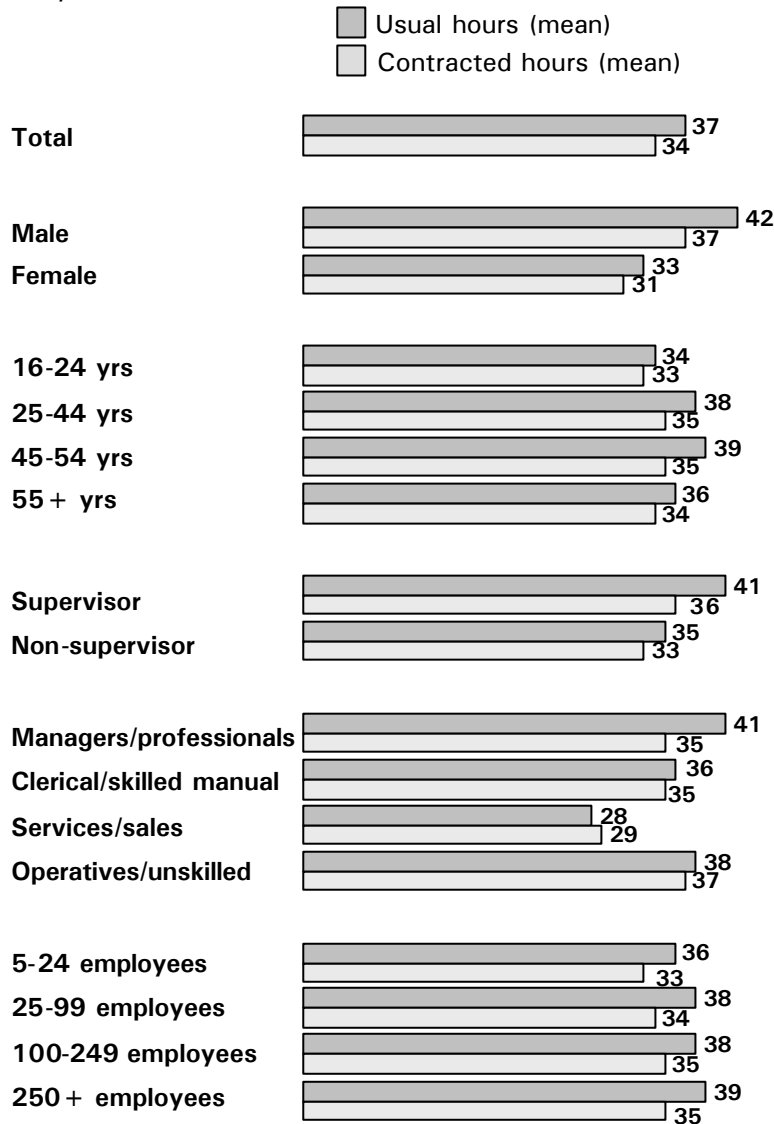
Usual hours of work

Over nine in ten employees (94 per cent) had only one job; this remained static between the WLB1 and WLB2 surveys. Overall, the average number of 'usual' hours worked by an employee in Britain with one job was 37 hours, which demonstrated that employees were working longer hours in an average week than they were contracted to do (34 hours) (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2⁴²

Usual versus contracted hours of work

- Q In your current job, how many hours per week do you usually work on average, excluding meal breaks, but including paid and unpaid overtime?
- Q And what are your contracted hours per week (excluding paid and unpaid overtime)?



Base for usual hours: All employees who had one job only (1,880)

Base for contracted hours: All employees who had a set number of contracted hours and one job only (1,503)

Source: MORI

The average number of hours usually worked per week was marginally lower than that reported in the WLB1 study, when the average hours in a typical week were reported as 39 (see Figure 3.3). In both studies, the most often stated usual hours of work were between 36 and 40 hours a week. However, Figure 3.3 illustrates that the usual hours of work reported in WLB2 differed from those reported in WLB1, with employees reportedly working fewer hours in WLB2. For example, employees in

⁴² The figures for contracted hours have been rebased to show only those who had one job only.

2000 were more likely to have worked between 41 and 48 hours a week than employees in 2003, whereas the latter were more likely to have worked between 36 and 40 hours a week, with over a third (36 per cent) working these hours.

The decline in employees who worked over 41 hours between the WLB1 and WLB2 surveys seems to be accounted for by the increase in employees who worked between 36 and 40 hours per week. This corroborates the recent data collected in the Labour Force Survey⁴³, which found that the number of employees usually working more than 45 hours per week has been declining since 1997 (23 per cent in 2003, compared with 26 per cent in 1997).

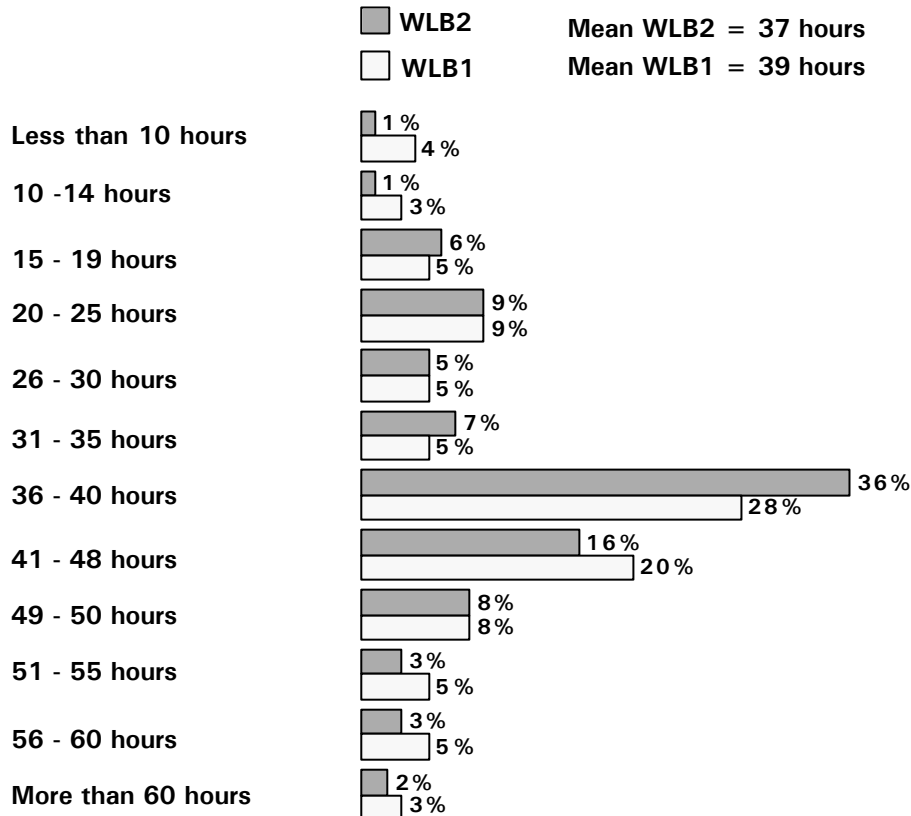
⁴³ Labour Force Survey 2003, Office for National Statistics; data based on all persons in employment.

Figure 3.3⁴⁴

Usual hours of work

Q WLB2: *In your current job, how many hours per week do you usually work on average, excluding meal breaks, but including paid and unpaid overtime?*

Q WLB1: *How many hours a week do you usually work (in your main job) including any overtime?*



Base WLB 2 : All employees who have one job only (1,880)

Base WLB 1: All employees (7,563)

Source: MORI

The hours worked in an average week varied by several key employee characteristics including gender, parental status, occupation and size of establishment in which the employee worked (see Table A3.3). The following results were found with regards to the types of employees who worked longer hours than the average working week (37 hours):

- Corresponding to the findings for contracted hours, **men** worked longer hours than women (42 hours per week, compared with 33 hours per week), which as highlighted above could be partly explained by the fact that more women work part-time;

⁴⁴ In WLB1, respondents were asked how many hours they worked in their main job, and in WLB2, respondents were asked about how many hours per week they usually worked, which included all their jobs if they were multiple job holders. To make this data comparable, WLB2 data was rebased to include only those who had one job, hence the different base definitions.

- While there was no overall significant difference in the hours worked by parents and non-parents, **mothers** worked far fewer hours on average (29 hours a week) than fathers (44 hours). Moreover, **fathers** worked slightly longer hours than men who did not have dependent children (41 hours);
- Although they were contracted to work the same hours on average as younger workers, **employees between the ages of 45 and 54** worked on average 39 hours per week, whereas employees aged 16-24 worked on average 34 hours. This may be linked to the fact that employees who had worked for their employer for five years or more, worked longer hours than those who had worked for their employer for less than five years (an average of 39 hours for employees who have worked for the same employer for more than five years compared with an average of 35 hours for employees who have worked with same employer for less than one year);
- Although operatives and unskilled employees tended to have the longest contracted hours per week, **managers and professionals** usually worked longer hours. They worked 41 hours in an average week, compared with the weekly average of 28 hours for employees in sales and services occupations. However, a large proportion of employees in sales and services occupations work part-time;
- Linked with the higher than average hours worked by managers and professionals, **employees with supervisory responsibilities** worked longer hours than those who did not supervisor others (41 hours, compared with 35 hours); again corresponding to the findings for contracted hours; and,
- **Employees who worked in larger establishments** (with 250 employees or more), as well as having longer contracted hours, tended to work longer hours than those who worked in smaller establishments (of between five and 24 employees).

Overtime⁴⁵

With the average number of hours usually worked in a week longer than employees' average contracted hours, it was not surprising to have found that two-thirds of employees (67 per cent) regularly worked some form of overtime in their jobs⁴⁶. Three in ten employees worked paid overtime only (29 per cent), while one in eleven (nine per cent) worked overtime that was either paid or unpaid. However, a further three in ten (29 per cent) only ever worked unpaid overtime.

Certain types of employees were more likely to either work paid or unpaid overtime only. Table A3.4 shows the differences by key employee characteristics. The key findings were that:

⁴⁵ When asked about the number of hours worked, in this case overtime, interviewers rounded up half hours to the nearest hour, as is standard practice with MORI interviewers.

⁴⁶ The full question wording was: 'Do you ever do work which you regard as paid or unpaid overtime? By this I mean in general, and not just at particularly busy times of the year, like Christmas'.

- Men (35 per cent) were more likely, than women (23 per cent), to work paid overtime, and particularly those men without dependent children (37 per cent);
- Operatives and unskilled employees were more likely to work paid overtime (53 per cent), whereas managers and professionals (45 per cent) were more likely to work unpaid overtime;
- Employees who did not have a supervisory role were more likely to work paid overtime (34 per cent), while supervisors (38 per cent) were more likely to work unpaid overtime; and,
- Older employees, aged 45 and over, were more likely to work only unpaid overtime (34 per cent, compared with 26 per cent of employees aged under 45).

However, a third of all employees (33 per cent) reported that they did neither unpaid nor paid overtime. These employees were typically:

- Women; two in five (39 per cent) said that in their current job they did not work overtime. This figure increased to 43 per cent of mothers, and 48 per cent who were lone mothers. The proportion of fathers who did not work overtime was far lower, at 26 per cent;
- Parents with young children; two in five parents with children under the age of five (40 per cent) did no overtime at all, in comparison to 29 per cent of parents whose youngest child was over 12;
- Employees aged between 16 and 24 years (40 per cent, in comparison to 32 per cent of employees aged 25 or over);
- Employees who did not have a supervisory role; two in five (39 per cent) said that they never did any extra work which they regarded as overtime (paid or unpaid);
- Employees who worked part-time (46 per cent, compared with 29 per cent of full-time employees); and,
- Employees whose gross annual household income was under £12,000 (49 per cent of whom did not work overtime, paid or unpaid).

Table 3.1 below shows that the WLB2 findings for overtime were in line with the survey of How parents balance work, family and home (forthcoming)⁴⁷, where it was found that two-thirds of employees (67 per cent) did work which they considered to be overtime, regardless whether it was paid or unpaid, compared with 65 per cent of parents in WLB2.

⁴⁷ How parents balance work, family and home, (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming).

Table 3.1: Do you ever do work which you regard as paid or unpaid overtime?

	Total		Gender			
	Employees who are parents ⁴⁸		Males with dependent children		Females with dependent children	
	WLB2	Parents Survey	WLB2	Parents Survey	WLB2	Parents Survey
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes ⁴⁹	65	67	73	76	56	56
No	35	33	26	24	43	44
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>876</i>	<i>1,002</i>	<i>472</i>	<i>436</i>	<i>404</i>	<i>566</i>
<i>Weighted base:</i>	<i>825</i>	<i>1,002</i>	<i>420</i>	<i>536</i>	<i>405</i>	<i>455</i>

Source: MORI Survey of How Parents Balance Work, Family and Home, 2000 (Parents Survey)
Source: MORI WLB2 Employee Survey

Amount of paid and unpaid overtime

On average, employees who worked any paid overtime, worked seven hours extra a week. Similarly, for those who worked any unpaid overtime, the average was seven hours extra (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5, respectively).

The types of employee who were more likely to work paid overtime, for example men (35 per cent), and operatives and unskilled employees (53 per cent), typically worked the highest number of hours of paid overtime each week (eight hours and nine hours respectively). However, this did not hold for employees without supervisory roles, who worked a similar number of paid overtime hours to supervisors (average of seven hours of paid overtime per week for both groups) (see Table A3.5a).

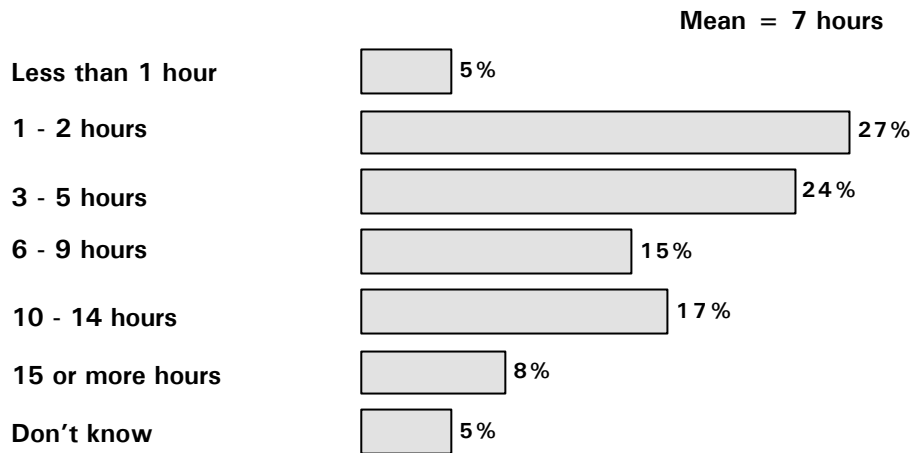
⁴⁸ For WLB2, parents are defined as 'employees with dependent children aged 19 or under', and for the survey of How parents balance work, family and home, they are defined as 'parents or guardians of dependent children under 16, in full or part-time employment'

⁴⁹ The survey of How parents balance work, family and home asked whether respondents (who were all parents) worked any overtime, rather than asking whether it was unpaid, paid, both or neither as in WLB2. Therefore for the purpose of this comparison, the proportion of respondents saying they worked overtime was calculated by adding the proportion saying unpaid overtime only, the proportion saying they worked paid overtime only, and the proportion saying they worked both.

Figure 3.4

Paid overtime

Q How many hours paid overtime do you usually work each week?



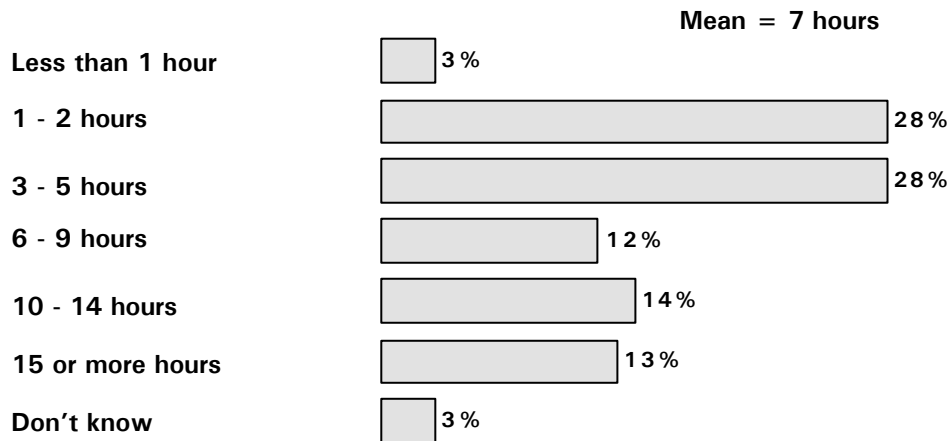
Base: All employees who work paid overtime (742)

Source: MORI

Figure 3.5

Unpaid overtime

Q How many hours unpaid overtime or extra hours do you usually work each week?



Base: All employees who work unpaid overtime (805)

Source: MORI

The amount of time spent working unpaid overtime was highest for managers and professionals (on average eight hours a week), and employees with supervisory responsibilities (again, usually eight hours a week) (see Table A3.5b). Linked to the propensity for managers and professionals to work unpaid overtime, employees with a gross annual household income of £48,000 or more, typically worked nine hours of overtime that was unpaid per week (see Table A3.5a and A3.5b).

In WLB1, employees were asked how many extra hours they worked⁵⁰ (regardless of being paid or unpaid), whereas WLB2 asked about these separately. The mean number of additional hours employees worked in WLB1 was nine hours per week⁵¹, while for WLB2 the mean for both unpaid or paid leave was seven hours each.

Forty-five per cent of employees who worked overtime in WLB1 reported that they were paid extra for their overtime, while one in five said they received time off in lieu (20 per cent). Two in five (40 per cent) reported that they were not reimbursed at all for their additional work.

Time off in lieu

Over half of employees who did unpaid overtime (56 per cent) said they were not given time off in lieu of the additional hours they had worked. Only one in five employees (19 per cent) *a/ways* received extra time off in lieu of additional pay, while just under a quarter (24 per cent) were given time off in lieu some of the time.

Certain types of employees appeared more likely to *a/ways* receive time off in lieu as a consequence of working unpaid overtime, whilst others were more likely to *never* receive it. Table A3.6 shows the key employee characteristics. The main findings were that:

- Mothers were more likely to report that they always received time off in lieu (25 per cent), whereas fathers were more likely to say that they never received it (60 per cent);
- Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of employees with a gross annual household income of £48,000 or more never received time off in lieu of unpaid overtime;
- Part-time employees were more likely to always be compensated for working unpaid overtime with time off in lieu, than full-time employees (30 per cent compared with 17 per cent of full-time employees);
- Related to this, employees in the sales and services occupations, who were typically women working part-time, were more likely to always receive time off in lieu (29 per cent), whereas the opposite was found for managers and professionals of whom three-fifths (59 per cent) never received time off in lieu of unpaid overtime; and,
- Employees who worked in large workplaces with 250 or more employees (25 per cent) were more likely to report always receiving time off in lieu, compared with employees who work in workplaces with less than 250 employees (17 per cent).

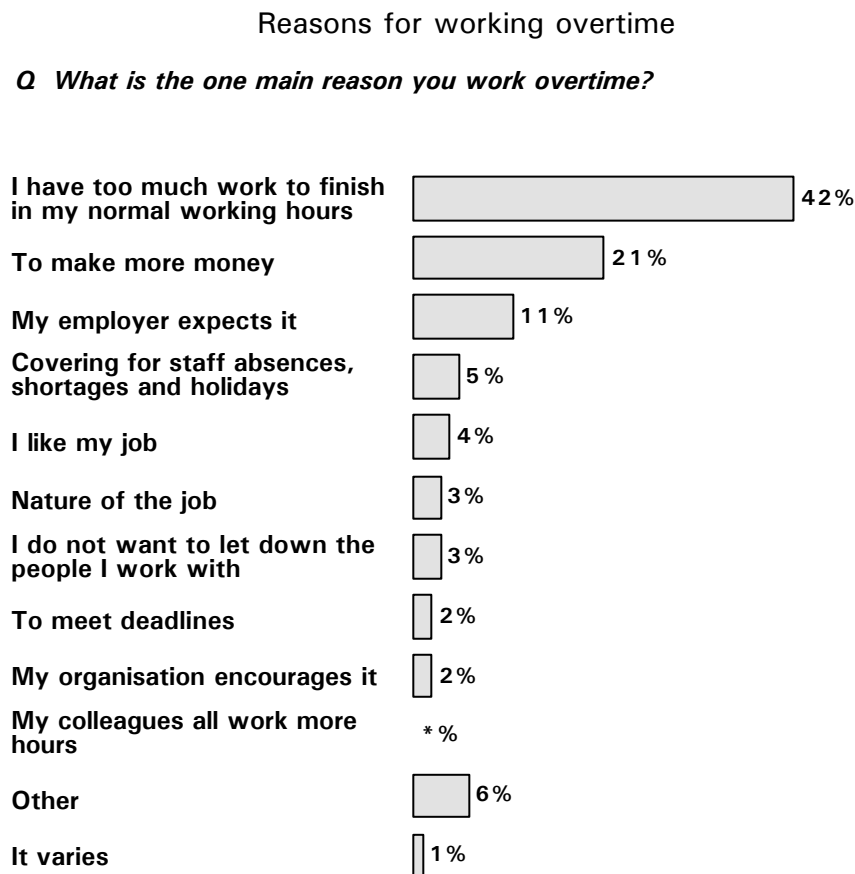
⁵⁰ WLB1 asked 'On average, how many hours do you usually work each week over and above your fixed or standard hours of work? Please include any time you spend working away from the office or time spent on business travel.'

⁵¹ This figure includes all overtime worked, regardless of whether it was paid or unpaid. Whereas in WLB2, employees were asked specifically about paid and unpaid overtime separately.

Reasons for working overtime

Although some employees appeared to work overtime (paid or unpaid) by choice, others seemed pressured to work additional hours for financial reasons or due to the demands of their job.

The main reason for working overtime, mentioned by over two-fifths (42 per cent) of employees who worked overtime, was because they had too much work to do in their normal working day. This was by far the most common reason why employees worked additional hours. The second most common reason for working overtime was to make more money, mentioned by 21 per cent of employees who worked overtime. One in nine employees (11 per cent) said that they worked overtime because their employer expected it. Other reasons included covering staff shortages and the nature or enjoyment of the job, but these reasons were mentioned by only a small proportion of employees (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6

Base: All employees who work any overtime (1,364)

Source: MORI

The aggregate figures hide wide variations in the reasons why different types of employees worked overtime (see Table A3.7). Firstly, looking at gender; women who worked overtime were significantly more likely to have cited having too much work to do during the working day as a reason for working additional hours than men (45 per cent of women, compared with 39 per cent of men). In contrast, men were more likely to mention the need to make more money as a reason for working

overtime than women (27 per cent of men, compared with 14 per cent of women). This variation was consistent with the finding that men were more likely than women to undertake paid overtime.

Reasons for working overtime also differed by age. The most common reason mentioned by 16-24 year olds for working additional hours was to earn extra money (39 per cent, compared with 18 per cent of employees over 24), whereas employees over the age of 24 said that they worked overtime to finish work not completed during the working day (44 per cent compared with 29 per cent of employees under 25).

Moreover, employees who worked full-time were more likely to cite the pressure of too much work as a reason for working overtime than part-time employees (44 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively). This was also by far the main reason for managers and professionals working overtime (and this tended to be unpaid overtime); over half (52 per cent) mentioned that the one key reason for working additional hours was that there was too much work to do in the hours of a normal working day. In comparison, the main reason for employees in sales and services (33 per cent) and operatives and unskilled (47 per cent) occupations working overtime was to earn more money.

Equal proportions of employees who did not hold supervisory positions mentioned the pressure of work (33 per cent) and the chance of earning more money (31 per cent) as the main reasons for working overtime. However, workload was by far the most common reason why employees who supervised others worked additional hours (49 per cent).

Working Time Regulations

Since 1 October 1998, the Working Time Regulations have provided protection for workers, and special protections for night workers and adolescent workers. The basic rights and protections that the Regulations provide are: a limit of an average of 48 hours a week over a 17 week period which a worker can be required to work; a limit of an average of eight hours work in 24 which night workers can work; a right to 11 hours rest a day; a right to a day off each week; a right to an in-work rest break, if the working day is longer than six hours; and a right to four weeks paid leave per year. Employees are able to opt-out of the 48 hours a week limit to the working week.

One in five (19 per cent) of all employees worked or were contracted to work more than 48 hours per week. Of these employees just over a quarter (27 per cent) had signed an agreement to opt-out of the Working Time Regulations and work longer than the limits specified. However, 70 per cent of employees who worked more than 48 hours a week had not signed this agreement and three per cent did not know whether they had done so. There were no variations across sub-groups of employees with regards to opting out of the regulations, with the exception of occupation type. Employees in operative and unskilled

occupations, who worked over 48 hours a week, were more likely to have formally opted out of the regulations than managers and professionals (38 per cent⁵², compared with 22 per cent).

Preferences for changing hours of work

When asked about changing their working hours, considering their personal circumstances, employees were twice as likely to prefer to work longer hours for more pay (30 per cent) than work fewer hours for less pay (14 per cent) (see Figure 3.7).

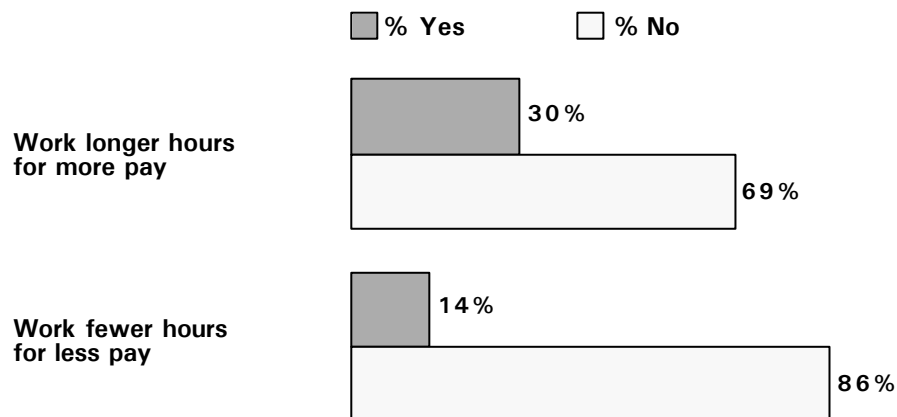
Overall, three in ten employees would like to work longer hours for more pay. This was a more popular choice among employees under 25 years old (45 per cent), men without dependent children (40 per cent), those in lower grade jobs (40 per cent of operatives and unskilled) and those on lower household incomes (44 per cent of employees with a household income of less than £12,000). However, this was not an attractive option for other groups of employees such as those aged over 54 (81 per cent said they would not consider this), coupled mothers (79 per cent), employees who worked for the same employer for five years or more (75 per cent), women (75 per cent) and parents (71 per cent).

The option of working fewer hours for less pay, while less popular for all types of employees, was more likely to be considered by women working full-time (18 per cent).

Figure 3.7

Demand for different ways of working

Q *Considering your personal circumstances would you like to . . . ?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Working patterns: part-time working and shift working

Part-time working

Just under a quarter of employees (23 per cent) worked less than 30 hours per week, which for the purpose of this study was considered to

⁵² This figure is based on responses from 64 (unweighted) employees.

be part-time work. This figure had not significantly changed since the WLB1 survey, when 25 per cent of employees reported working part-time⁵³ (see Table 3.2).

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, other research has found that women tend to dominate part-time employment and this was borne out by the findings of the WLB2 employee survey: Two-fifths of female employees (40 per cent) said they worked part-time compared with less than one in ten men (eight per cent). This represented a fall in the proportion of women working part-time since WLB1 (44 per cent), although the proportion of male part-time employees remained static.

Table 3.2: In your main job are you working . . . ?

	Total		Gender			
			Male		Female	
	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time	77	75	92	92	60	56
Part-time	23	25	8	8	40	44
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	2,003	7,562	1,092	3,324	911	4,238
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	2,003	7,562	1,062	4,006	941	3,556

*Source: WLB1 Employee Survey (IER/IFF)
Source: WLB2 Employee Survey (MORI)*

There were some specific findings with regards to parents (see Table A3.8), which included that:

- Three in ten parents (29 per cent) said that they worked part-time, which is a significant decrease since WLB1, when 33 per cent of parents said they worked part-time;
- Mothers were the most likely employees to work part-time: Over half of mothers (55 per cent) stated that they worked part-time;
- Three in five mothers who were in a couple (61 per cent) were working part-time. However, fewer lone mothers worked part-time (45 per cent); and
- Mothers with two children were more likely to work part-time (62 per cent) than those with one child (48 per cent).

There was a greater incidence of part-time employees working in service and sales occupations than in any other occupation. Over half of those who worked in these occupations worked part-time (56 per cent), compared with one in seven in managerial and professional occupations

⁵³ In WLB1, respondents defined part-time employment themselves. Where there was uncertainty, part-time was defined as less than 30 hours a week. In WLB2, respondents were read out the definition of part-time as 'By part-time I mean less than 30 hours a week'.

(14 per cent). Moreover, employees with no supervisory responsibilities were twice as likely to work part-time (30 per cent) than those who supervised others (15 per cent).

Employees who worked in small establishments were also twice as likely to work part-time than those in larger establishments; almost a third of employees (32 per cent) who worked in establishments with between five and 24 employees said they worked part-time, compared with only 15 per cent of employees in larger establishments with 250 or more employees. Comparing these figures with WLB1 results, there appeared to have been a decline in the proportion of people working part-time in smaller workplaces. In 2000, 39 per cent of employees who worked in establishments with between five and 24 employees were employed on a part-time basis.

Changing to part-time working

A significant minority of employees who worked part-time had changed from working full-time to part-time in the past year whilst working for their current employer (17 per cent). The majority of these employees (67 per cent) reported that their workload was reduced in order to take into account this change in their working hours, but a third (33 per cent) said that there was no reduction. Moreover, 82 per cent of these employees reported that they maintained their job and level of seniority, whilst 15 per cent either lost both (six per cent), or one or the other⁵⁴.

Reasons for working part-time

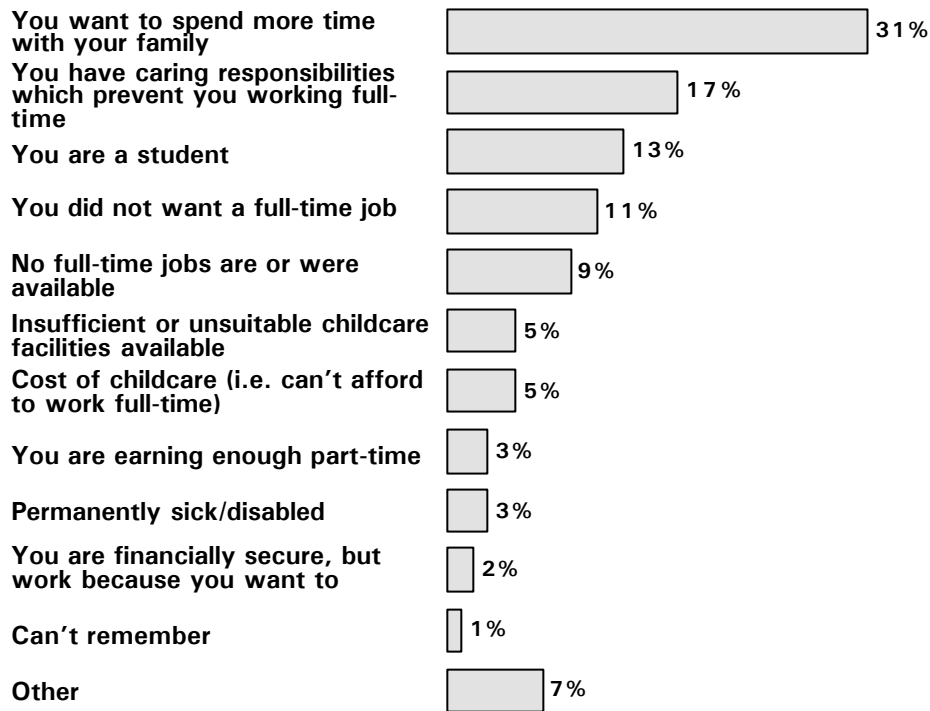
Employees who were working part-time were asked why they had taken a part-time position rather than working full-time. The main reasons for working part-time were to spend more time with family members (31 per cent), to fulfil caring responsibilities (17 per cent), to study (13 per cent) or that the employee did not want a full-time job (11 per cent) (see Figure 3.8).

⁵⁴ Please note that these figures are based on a small base size as there were only 77 respondents (unweighted) who had changed to work part-time in the previous year whilst working for their current employer.

Figure 3.8

Reasons for working part-time

Q What were your main reasons for taking a part-time rather than a full-time job?



Base: All employees who work part-time (370)

Source: MORI

There were several variations by gender and parental status in the reasons given for working part-time (see Table A3.9). Women (37 per cent) were more likely to report wanting to spend more time with their family as a reason for working part-time than men (four per cent). They were also the most likely to say that they worked part-time to fulfil caring responsibilities (20 per cent). Men were more likely to have cited studying as their reason for working part-time than any other reason (34 per cent).

Perhaps not surprisingly, a far higher proportion of parents mentioned that they worked part-time in order to spend more time with their family, than non-parents (46 per cent, compared with 12 per cent), and that insufficient and unsuitable childcare (eight per cent) and/or the cost of childcare prevented them from working full-time (nine per cent).

Furthermore, nearly half of mothers (49 per cent) said that they worked part-time in order to spend more time with their family, increasing to 64 per cent of mothers with three or more children. Mothers were also the most likely to state that they worked part-time to fulfil caring responsibilities (28 per cent). Employees who were not parents were more likely to report studying as their reason for working part-time (28 per cent).

Shift work

All employees were asked whether they worked shifts in their main job, and over one in five (22 per cent) said that they did. This was consistent with the findings from the WLB1 survey (21 per cent). The propensity to do shift work varied by gender, parental status, age, work status, occupation group and workplace size (see Table A3.10). Employees who were more likely to work shifts included:

- Men, especially those without dependent children (27 per cent). A quarter of male employees (25 per cent) worked shifts, compared with one in five women (19 per cent). Again, this did not differ significantly from the findings from the WLB1 survey (24 per cent of men and 18 per cent of women, respectively);
- Lone mothers (26 per cent, compared with coupled mothers⁵⁵ 16 per cent), perhaps as a result of having to combine work with their caring responsibilities and the availability of childcare and/or school opening times, and the lack of a partner to assist with this;
- Younger employees between the ages of 16 and 24 years (32 per cent). However, there was evidence that there had been a significant increase in the proportion of employees between the ages of 55 and 65 who worked shifts, from 14 per cent in WLB1 to 24 per cent in WLB2;
- Employees who worked part-time (27 per cent, compared with 21 per cent of full-time employees); this increased to 41 per cent of men who worked part-time;
- Employees who worked in operative and unskilled occupations (40 per cent) and in services and sales occupations (33 per cent), compared with those in managerial and professional (16 per cent) or clerical and skilled manual occupations (13 per cent). These findings correspond with the higher level of shift working among employees with a gross annual household income of less than £24,000 (30 per cent compared with 18 per cent of employees with annual household income of £24,000 and over). Since WLB1, there was a decline in the proportion of clerical and skilled manual employees working shifts (17 per cent); and,
- Employees who worked in establishments with 100 or more employees than those who worked in smaller establishments with between five and 99 employees (27 per cent compared with 19 per cent respectively), which was consistent with the findings from WLB1 (25 per cent compared with 18 per cent).

Changing shifts

Shift working does not necessarily assist employees in obtaining a work-life balance and can mean employees have to work unsociable hours. However, if employees can vary their shifts, then this may provide them with the flexibility they need to balance their work and outside work

⁵⁵ The WLB2 definition of a coupled mother is a female parent, living with a partner or spouse, with a child under the age of 16 who lives with her.

responsibilities and interests. Where employees worked shifts, nearly four-fifths (78 per cent) were able to swap the shifts they worked. The survey identified the following groups of shift workers as being those typically able to swap shifts (see Table A3.11):

- Mothers; a high proportion of these employees (86 per cent) said that they would be able to swap the shifts they worked. This may reflect the nature of their work, as they were more likely to work in the sales and services occupations (see above), but also may reflect employer recognition of the difficulties faced by mothers in trying to balance their home and work life;
- Part-time employees; almost nine in ten (89 per cent) reported that they were able to change shifts, compared with three-quarters of full-time employees (74 per cent). This may be partly explained by the fact that part-time work is more flexible by definition than full-time work;
- Employees who had worked for their employer for less than five years (85 per cent, compared with 71 per cent of employees who had been working for the same employer for five years or more); and,
- Employees working in sales and services occupations (88 per cent, compared with only 68 per cent of employees in operative and unskilled occupations).

Time off: days off in the week and annual leave

Days off in the week

The majority of employees were given at least one day off every week, which included both Saturday and Sunday. Over nine in ten (93 per cent) said they got one day off, whereas seven per cent said they did not. This did not vary greatly by type of employee with the exception of gender, work status and size of establishment. One in ten male, part-time employees did not get a day off (11 per cent) with the same proportion of employees who worked in small establishments (with between five and 24 employees) also not being given one day off a week⁵⁶.

Annual leave

Employees were also asked to reflect on their take-up of annual leave over the previous year. For the purposes of the study annual leave was defined as follows: 'The number of days off work you take each year for which you are paid'. Although the majority of employees (71 per cent) took all of their annual leave entitlement, more than a quarter (27 per cent) said they did not. Take-up of the full annual leave entitlement was lower amongst men (30 per cent did not take all their leave) and specifically men working part-time (37 per cent). It was also notably lower among supervisors; 32 per cent did not take all of their annual

⁵⁶ There is no comparable question on WLB1. Respondents were asked 'What days of the week do you usually work?' rather than asking specifically about the days when they did not work.

leave, compared with 22 per cent of non-supervisory staff (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Did you take all of your annual leave entitlement in your last working year?

	Total	Gender		Supervisory role	
		Male	Female	Yes	No
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	71	69	73	67	74
No	27	30	24	32	22
Don't know	2	1	4	1	4
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	2,003	1,092	911	991	1,012
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	2,003	1,062	941	929	1,074

Source: MORI

Reasons for not taking annual leave

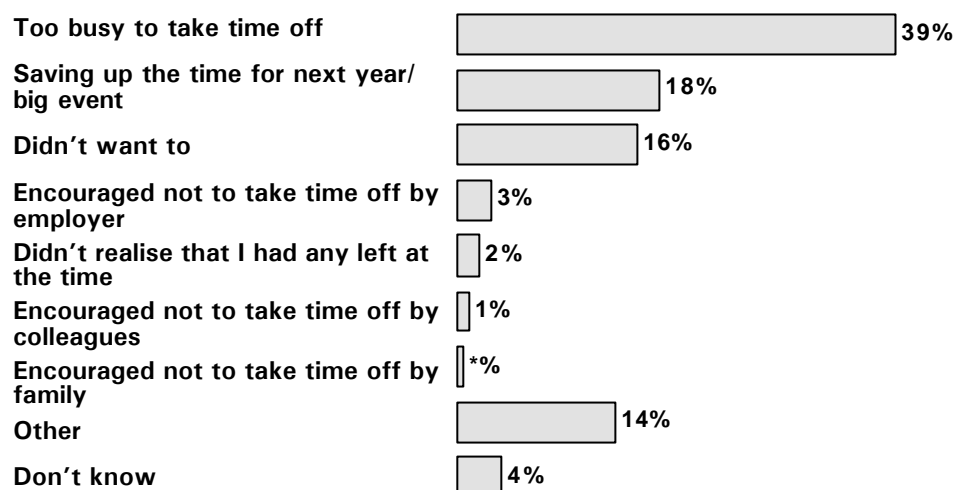
As noted above, 27 per cent of *all* employees did not take their full entitlement to annual leave. These employees were asked why they did not and the reasons are illustrated in Figure 3.9. Typically, it was because they were too busy to take time off (39 per cent). One in five employees (18 per cent) said that they purposefully did not take their full annual leave because they were saving up their leave, in some cases for a big event, and a similar proportion simply said that it was because they did not want to (16 per cent). Only three per cent of employees stated that their employer had encouraged them not to take the time off⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ There were a wide variety of reasons provided for why employees had not taken up their full annual leave entitlement and, thus, 14 per cent of responses were coded under 'other'. Such responses included employees who had stated that they had taken extended sick leave and had, therefore, lost their entitlement to leave, or employees who had chosen not to take holiday and receive additional pay in lieu.

Figure 3.9

Reasons for not taking annual leave

Q *You say that you did not take your full entitlement to annual leave last year. Why was that?*



Base: All employees who did not take their full entitlement to annual leave in their last working year (545)

Source: MORI

The reasons for not taking their full annual leave entitlement varied by gender, age, parental status and occupation (see Table A3.12). The main findings are as follows:

- An employee's occupation appeared to be the key factor in their reason for not taking their annual leave entitlement. Employees in managerial and professional occupations were far more likely to have cited being busy as a reason for not taking their annual leave than other occupations (53 per cent, compared with 20 per cent of operative and unskilled employees). In contrast, over a quarter of those in unskilled and operative occupations (26 per cent) stated that they did not take their annual leave entitlement literally because they did not want to;
- Men were more likely than women to have said they did not take their full annual leave entitlement because they were too busy (44 per cent, compared with 33 per cent). This rose to 48 per cent of fathers in comparison to just 28 per cent of mothers; this may be more of a reflection of their occupation type or gender rather than their parental status. Male employees were also more likely to have stated that they did not take their annual leave because they simply did not want to (mentioned by 20 per cent of men, compared with 11 per cent of women);
- The most common reason why young employees (aged 16 to 24 years) did not take-up their annual leave was because they did not want to (29 per cent). This was compared with older employees who typically cited the pressure of work; and,
- While pressure of work was the main reason why parents did not take their annual leave entitlement, saving up the time for a big

event in the future was cited by more parents than employees overall (23 per cent of parents, rising to 26 per cent among mothers).

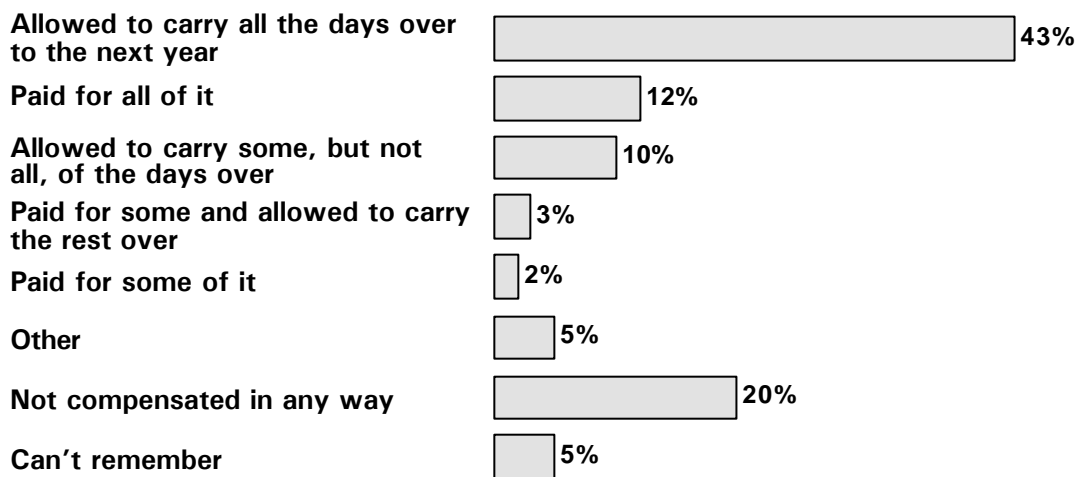
Compensation for annual leave not taken

Where leave was not taken, employees were usually able to carry it over to the next year (43 per cent) or they received financial compensation for all of the annual leave they were unable to take (12 per cent). However, 20 per cent of employees were not compensated for their lost leave (see Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10

Compensation for annual leave not taken

Q How were you compensated for the leave you did not take?



Base: All employees who did not take their full entitlement to annual leave in the last working year (545)

Source: MORI

Compensation for annual leave not taken by employees varied by work status, occupation and size of establishment (see Table A3.13). It was found that employees who were allowed to carry over all their 'unused' annual leave entitlement into the following year were more likely to be:

- Full-time employees; 46 per cent, compared with 30 per cent of part-time employees. In contrast, employees who worked part-time were more likely to state that they received no form of compensation for lost leave (29 per cent, compared with 18 per cent of full-time employees);
- Managers and professionals; 50 per cent were able to carry leave over, compared with 29 per cent of employees in services and sales occupations; and,
- Employees who worked in larger establishments; 54 per cent of those who worked in workplaces with a 100 or more employees, compared with 35 per cent of those who worked in establishments with less than a 100 employees. The practice of paying employees for all their leave not taken appeared more common in smaller

workplaces than larger ones; 18 per cent of employees in workplaces with between five and 99 employees cited being paid, compared with just five per cent of those working in establishments with 100 or more employees.

Taking the WLB2 findings a step further, reasons why employees were not taking their full annual leave entitlement were analysed by the types of compensation received⁵⁸. In doing so the following question was answered: are employees who state that they are too busy to take their annual leave, or employees who are saving up leave for an event in the following year, doing so in the knowledge that they will be compensated? The findings suggested that this was the case, with employees who cited these reasons more likely to say that they were allowed to carry over their days into the following year⁵⁹.

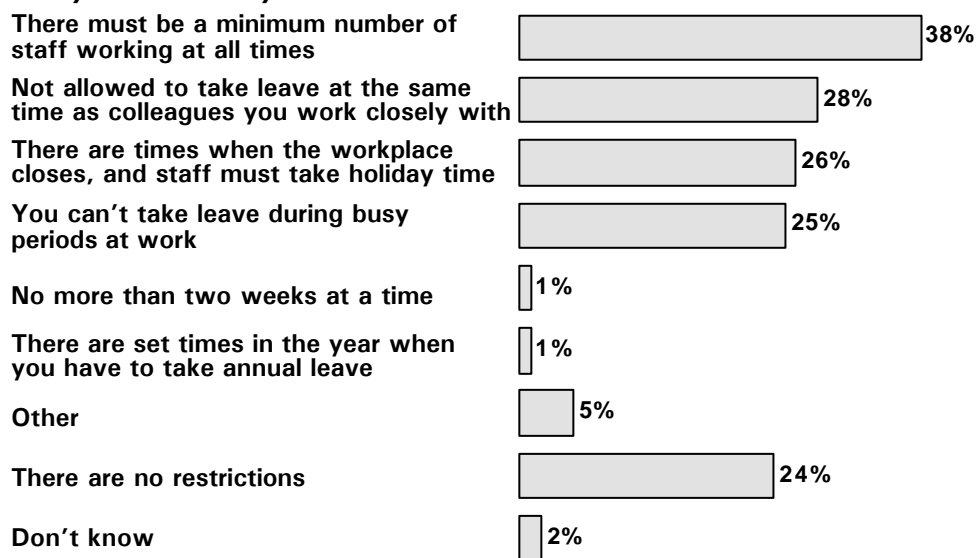
Restrictions on taking annual leave

All employees were asked whether their employer placed restrictions on when annual leave could be taken. The WLB2 survey found that for a quarter of employees (24 per cent) there were no restrictions. However, for three-quarters of employees there were considerations that needed bearing in mind before deciding on when to take annual leave. These typically related to ensuring that there were a minimum number of staff working during those periods or that close colleagues were not away at the same time (38 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively). A quarter of employees cited that they were unable to take leave during busy periods (25 per cent). Moreover, a similar proportion of employees (26 per cent) stated that their workplace closed at specific times, during which they were obliged to take their annual leave (see Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11

Restrictions on taking annual leave

Q What, if any, restrictions does your employer place on when you can take your annual leave?



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

⁵⁸ Due to small base sizes, these findings can only be thought of as indicative.

⁵⁹ Further secondary analysis would be needed to corroborate these findings.

Table A3.14 shows the variations in restrictions on when employees could take their leave by gender, work status and occupation. Men were a little more likely than women to be free to take their annual leave entitlement whenever they wanted (26 per cent, compared with 21 per cent). Consideration of the holiday plans of other staff they worked closely with was more likely to affect part-time employees than full-time employees (30 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively).

Those employees working in clerical and skilled occupations were less likely to be restricted on when they could take their leave (32 per cent), whilst just 15 per cent of those in sales and services occupations said there were no restrictions. The latter tended to be affected by the impact of the workload of the business (i.e. busy periods) (33 per cent) or the requirement that a minimum of staff were present at any one time (44 per cent).

Summary

The hours employees usually worked had marginally decreased since WLB1, with fewer employees working longer hours than before. This reflected the recent Labour Force Survey data and is encouraging in terms of helping employees to obtain a work-life balance. However, employees still worked longer hours in a 'usual' week (on average, 37 hours) than their contracted hours of work stipulated (on average, 34 hours). Male employees, especially fathers, managers and professionals and employees with supervisory responsibilities worked the longest hours.

The majority of employees (70 per cent) who usually worked over 48 hours per week had not signed an agreement to opt-out of the Working Time Regulations, with managers and professionals, the occupation type most likely to have worked long hours, the least likely to have signed the agreement.

Working overtime was a very common practice amongst a large proportion of the British workforce, whether it be paid or unpaid (67 per cent). The average number of extra hours worked was seven hours per week, regardless of whether the leave was paid or unpaid. WLB2 findings show that managers and professionals were much more likely to work unpaid overtime, whereas unskilled employees and operatives were more likely to be paid for their extra hours. Among employees who did unpaid overtime, over half (56 per cent) said that they had not been given any time off in lieu of the additional hours they worked. The most common reason for working additional hours tended to be pressure of work, typically cited by women, managers and professionals, supervisors and older employees. In contrast, the second most common reason for working overtime was the desire or need to make extra money; this was typically stated by men, younger employees and those in unskilled and operative occupations. This was consistent with the fact that these groups were more likely to work paid overtime.

With regards to working patterns, the proportion of employees, around a quarter, who worked part-time remained at the same level as in 2000, with women dominating part-time employment. There were many

reasons for choosing part-time work over full-time positions, but in general women chose this way of working in order to spend more time with their family or due to caring responsibilities. In contrast, men who worked part-time did so because they were studying. The proportion of employees who worked shifts (about 20 per cent) also remained at the same level as in 2000. Men, particularly fathers, lone mothers, employees aged 16 to 24 years, part-time employees, those in operative and unskilled occupations and those who worked in larger establishments were most likely to work shifts. The findings from WLB2 suggested that there was a great deal of flexibility around shift working with the vast majority of employees stating that they were able to swap shifts if they chose to (78 per cent).

In terms of time off, the vast majority of employees (93 per cent) said that they get at least one day off every week, and took their full annual leave entitlement (71 per cent). However, over a quarter of employees reported not taking their full entitlement to annual leave, typically because they were too busy to do so. Although employees were usually allowed to carry any unused holiday into the next year, the problem of non-take-up is likely to be perpetuated unless employees reduce their workloads. Moreover, a fifth of employees stated that they were not compensated in any way for not taking their annual leave. When to take leave was also an issue, with only around a quarter of employees free to take it when they liked.

Hence, while employees were working slightly shorter hours than in 2000, they were still working over and above their contracted hours with a quarter not taking their full annual leave entitlement. The most common reason for working overtime and not taking their full annual leave entitlement was the pressure of work.

4

Flexible working arrangements

Introduction

Work-life balance depends heavily on working patterns being adapted in order for people to find a way to combine their work with other responsibilities and free time. As such, employers are more than ever being encouraged to offer their employees flexible working arrangements.

In terms of flexible working arrangements, the most well known is part-time work. As discussed in the previous chapter, women have tended to be well represented in this as well as other types of 'non-traditional' employment (Labour Force Survey, Spring 2000), frequently choosing a flexible working arrangement (whether by choice or by necessity) as a solution to caring responsibilities (see Chapter 3). This chapter examines common forms of flexible working practices, such as part-time working and flexitime, but also working reduced hours, job-sharing, term-time working, working a compressed week, working annualised hours and working from home.

There is still some debate, however, as to whether *all* employees benefit from flexible working arrangements, fuelled by evidence suggesting that professional parents are more likely to reap the benefits (such as arrangements meeting both career and family needs), while lower socio-economic groups have less choice or power in negotiating flexibility, finding themselves pushed towards shift-parenting patterns as a means of reducing or eliminating childcare costs (LaValle et al., 2002).

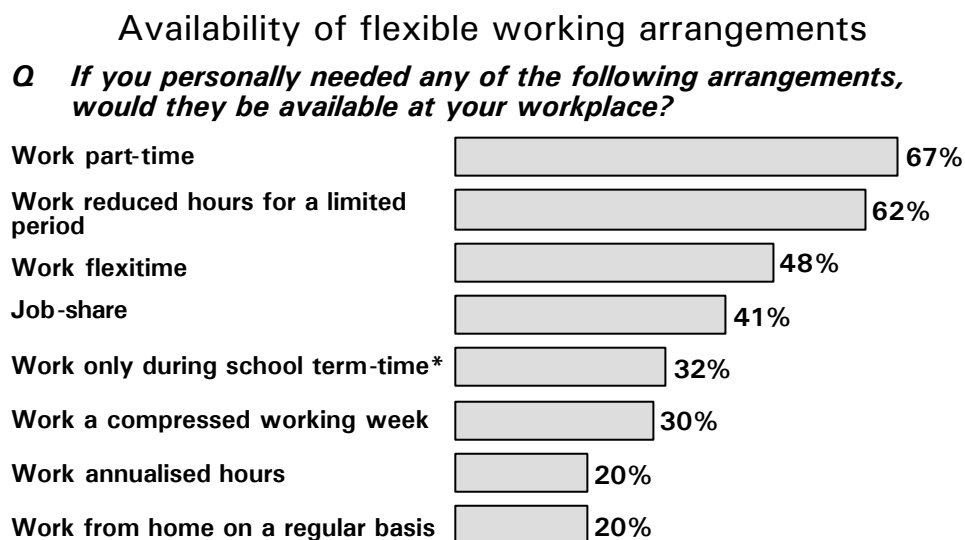
This chapter firstly addresses employer provision⁶⁰ of flexible working arrangements, and whether they promote and consult employees over work-life balance practices. Secondly, it examines employee take-up of this provision including why employees work flexibly and why they do not. Thirdly, it looks at employee demand for such practices as well as whether employees consider them as feasible ways of working. Fourthly, the chapter explores how employees make requests to change their working patterns. Where applicable comparisons are made with the WLB1 survey.

⁶⁰ An important caveat here is that this is the employee's perception of what their employer provided and therefore they may not be aware of it. The accompanying WLB2 employer survey report shows figures on provision from the employers' perspective (NatCen, 2003).

Availability of flexible working arrangements

Employees were asked about a range of working practices and whether they would be made available to them in their workplace if they personally needed them. Only three forms of working arrangements, working full-time, working part-time, and working reduced hours for a limited period, were available to more than half of the employees (see Figure 4.1). The findings show that the most commonly available way of working was full-time work; 91 per cent of employees had the opportunity to work full-time (i.e. they either did so already or, if they worked part-time, it would be available to them if they needed to work in this way). The most commonly available flexible working arrangement was working part-time with 67 per cent of employees having the opportunity to work part-time (i.e. they either did so already or, if they worked full-time, it would be available to them if they needed to work this way), followed by working reduced hours for a limited period (62 per cent). Conversely, working annualised hours and working from home on a regular basis were practices only made available to a fifth (20 per cent) of employees.

Figure 4.1⁶¹



Base: All employees (2,003)

* only asked of parents with dependent children (base: 876)

Source: MORI

The perceived availability of each type of working arrangement and how this differed by key employee characteristics are detailed in Tables A4.1a and A4.1b. The main findings are outlined below.

Part-time working

The majority (57 per cent) of employees who worked full-time considered that they would be able to work part-time if necessary. Women were more likely to say this than men (67 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively). Moreover, a high proportion of mothers (74 per cent), and

⁶¹ This chart has been rebased for questions not asked of every employee, with the exception of working only during school hours. The rationale for this is that employees who already worked part-time or full-time were not asked whether their way of working was available, as this was already known.

specifically coupled mothers (78 per cent), mentioned that part-time hours would be available to them, if they needed to work this way. Employees in sales and service occupations (typically women) were also more likely to say that the option of part-time working would be available to them than those employed in other occupations (73 per cent compared with 43 per cent of operatives and unskilled employees). This relates to the high proportion of part-time workers who were employed in sales or services occupations (see Chapter 3). This implies that when a specific form of flexible working arrangement is frequently taken-up by a particular occupation, in this case part-time working, employees are likely to perceive that it will also be made available to them, should they need to work in that way.

It is also notable that part-time work was more likely to be perceived as being made available in workplaces with 250 or more employees (62 per cent) than in small workplaces with under 25 employees (54 per cent).

Working reduced hours for a limited period

Over three in five employees (62 per cent) thought that, if necessary, they would be able to reduce their hours for a limited period. One of the reasons that this arrangement might be considered possible for most employees is that working reduced hours for a limited period, is for just that, *a limited period*, rather than a permanent arrangement. Employees might perceive this arrangement as something their employer would consider solely on the basis of it being temporary.

The perceived level of availability of the arrangement to work reduced hours for a limited period was consistent across most employee types, with two exceptions: those who worked part-time were more likely to consider that this arrangement would be available to them than employees who worked full-time (70 per cent compared with 60 per cent). Linked to this was the fact that a high proportion of employees in services and sales positions (who are generally more likely to work part-time) considered that working reduced hours would be possible (66 per cent). As highlighted in the later section on take-up, employees who worked part-time and those in sales and services occupations were more likely to have had experience of working reduced hours for a limited period than other types of employee. Hence, their perception of availability would naturally be higher.

Working flexitime

Approaching half (48 per cent) of all employees said that flexitime would be available to them if they personally needed to work in this way. The size of the establishment in which an employee worked, their occupation and supervisory responsibilities were key factors in the perception of the availability of flexitime. Fifty-six per cent of employees who worked in large workplaces (of 250 or more employees) said that flexitime would be available to them. In comparison, only 45 per cent of employees who worked in establishments with under 250 employees said that flexitime would be possible. Operatives and unskilled employees were less likely to perceive that they had this option available to them (36 per cent) than those in clerical and skilled or managerial and professional occupations

(51 per cent in both cases). It should also be noted that supervisors were more likely to state that flexitime would be available to them than those with no supervisory responsibilities (51 per cent, compared with 45 per cent).

Job-sharing

Two-fifths of employees (41 per cent) said that the ability to job-share with another colleague would be an option available to them, if they required it with their current employer. Women were more likely to consider that job-sharing was available than men (52 per cent, compared with 32 per cent), possibly because they were the group who most frequently made use of this flexible working arrangement, and thereby may already have used or discussed this arrangement with their employer. Corresponding with this, coupled mothers were the most likely to believe that job-sharing would be available to them (59 per cent), however, parental status per se does not appear to have a bearing on whether employees perceived job-sharing to be available.

Those working part-time were also more likely to report that job-sharing was an available option (54 per cent, compared with 38 per cent of full-time employees) along with employees who worked in sales and service occupations (48 per cent, compared with 30 per cent of operatives and unskilled employees) and those who worked in large workplaces with 250 or more employees (46 per cent).

Term-time working

Only parents⁶² were asked whether term-time working would be available at their workplace. While, a third of parents (32 per cent) thought that this would be available, 58 per cent said it would not be and nine per cent were unsure. However, this figure may be an overestimate as parents who worked in education (schools and universities) considered that this way of working was offered as a flexible arrangement rather than it being as standard (55 per cent of parents who worked in public administration, education and health considered that term-time working was available at their workplace, compared with 19 per cent of parents in manufacturing).

A relatively high proportion of mothers (42 per cent) considered that term-time working would be available at their workplace, rising to 46 per cent of coupled mothers. Similarly, parents who worked part-time (45 per cent), specifically mothers (46 per cent), were more likely to have said that working only during term-time would be available. This finding is linked to the fact that employees in services and sales occupations (typically women) considered that term-time working would be made available if they needed it (46 per cent). Moreover, these types of employees (i.e. mothers, part-time employees and those in services and sales) were likely to have had experience of working in this way (see the next section on take-up) and, thus, they were more likely to be aware of their employer making term-time working available.

⁶² Parents with dependent children aged 19 or under.

Smaller workplaces (with less than a 100 employees) appeared more flexible in this regard than larger workplaces (100 or more employees). More than a third of employees (37 per cent) who worked in smaller workplaces considered that it would be possible to work only during school term-time, compared with a quarter (26 per cent) in larger workplaces.

Compressed working week

Three in ten employees (30 per cent) considered that the option of working a compressed week would be made available at their workplace, if they personally needed it. There were very few differences by employee characteristics, other than employees who worked in large workplaces (with 250 or more employees) were more likely to state that this arrangement was available than those who worked in medium-sized workplaces with 25 to 99 employees (35 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively).

Working from home

Regularly working from home was perceived as an available option by just a fifth of all employees (20 per cent). This arrangement appeared to be more available to men (23 per cent) than to women (17 per cent), and to full-time employees (22 per cent) than part-time employees (12 per cent). This is probably linked to the types of occupation held by women and part-time employees, notably relatively high proportions worked in sales and services, which do not lend themselves to homeworking. Indeed, 95 per cent of employees in this occupational group said that working from home would not be available in their workplace.

The opportunity to work from home was more likely to be reported by managers and professionals than by any other occupational group (32 per cent), and, linked to this, by those with a higher annual household income (37 per cent of those whose household income was more than £48,000). In addition, a quarter of employees (26 per cent) who worked in establishments with 250 or more employees considered that working from home would be available, compared with just 14 per cent of employees in workplaces with 5-24 employees. Across the regions, working from home was more likely to be considered available in London (29 per cent) and the south-east (26 per cent) than in other regions.

Working annualised hours

A fifth of employees (20 per cent) also said that annualised hours would be available at their workplace, if they needed to work this way. There were no clear patterns of variation in terms of size of establishment or occupation type. However, younger employees (aged between 16 and 24) were more likely to think that this flexible working practice would be available to them than other age groups (29 per cent, compared with 18 per cent of employees between 25 and 54 years old).

Change in availability over time

Overall, it appeared that the reported availability of flexible working practices had increased since WLB1, with the exception of working regularly from home which remained static (see Table 4.1 column 4). It

seems surprising that this figure for homeworking had not increased, especially as there have been advances in technology that assist a greater proportion of people to work remotely, although clearly many jobs still cannot be done from home.

However, looking more closely at the question structure for WLB1, there are differences that may explain the large increases in availability since the first survey. WLB1 included an additional code for availability that was not replicated for WLB2; the 'depends/possibly' code. Table 4.1 overleaf shows the differences in availability where responses for this particular code are included, while also showing the results for 'yes' only. However, not all those who answered 'depends/possibly' in the WLB1 survey would have necessarily answered 'yes', if the former reply had not been available to respondents. The footnotes that accompany the table explain this in further detail.

Looking at differences over time between WLB1 (including 'depends/possibly' responses) and WLB2 in Table 4.1, the differences are less pronounced and are significant only for part-time work, working reduced hours for a limited period, job-sharing and working annualised hours. However, there are several caveats that must be considered when comparing availability between the two surveys such as the different question wording and subsets of employees who were asked the questions, although the data has been rebased to take account of some of these differences (see the footnotes to Table 4.1 for more detail).

Table 4.1: WLB1: If you were to approach your employer about [*flexible working practice*], do you think they would allow you to?

WLB2: If you personally needed any of the following arrangements, would they be available at your workplace?⁶³

Table shows all saying arrangement is available

Ranked by WLB1 availability figures (column 1)	WLB1 ⁶⁴	WLB1 inc. depends ⁶⁵	WLB2 ⁶⁶	Difference (3-1)	Difference (3-2)
	%	%	%	% (+/-)	% (+/-)
Work part-time ⁶⁷	50	59	67	+17	+8
Work flexitime	42	49	48	+6	-1
Working reduced hours for a limited period ⁶⁸	41	55	62	+21	+7
Job-share	32	44	41	+9	-3
Work only during school term-time ⁶⁹	25	29	32	+7	+3
Work from home on a regular basis ⁷⁰	20	N/A	20	=	N/A
Work a compressed working week	23	30	30	+7	=
Work annualised hours	13	18	20	+7	+2
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	7,561	7,561	2,003		
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	7,561	7,561	2,003		

Source: MORI

⁶³ Please note the different question wording for WLB1 and WLB2.

⁶⁴ In WLB1, 'availability' questions were asked only of those who said that they didn't already work in these ways. Hence the 'availability' figures in the table above were calculated on the assumption that an employee saying that they worked in a particular flexible way automatically meant that this practice was 'available'. Hence the figures in the tables are an amalgam of those who said they worked in a certain way and those who said they thought their employer would allow them to work in that way.

⁶⁵ In WLB1, 'availability' questions included an additional code of 'Depends/Possibly', whereas in WLB2, the codes were simply 'Yes, No or Don't know'. This may be a possible reason why there are differences in availability between WLB1 and WLB2, and suggests that WLB1 may have under-reported the possibility for employees to work in these ways.

⁶⁶ In WLB2, all employees were asked availability questions (with the exception of term-time working, part-time and full-time working) (see below).

⁶⁷ Working part-time in both WLB1 and WLB2 was asked only of those who were working full-time at the time of the survey. To make these figures more comparable with the other data in the table above, both figures have been rebased to include all employees and includes those who were already working part-time at the time of the survey.

⁶⁸ Working reduced hours for a limited period in WLB1 was asked of all employees, whereas availability of the other flexible working arrangements in WLB1 were asked of all who were not working in those particular ways at the time of the survey. This is explained by the absence of a question in WLB1 asking whether employees were working reduced hours for a limited period.

⁶⁹ Working only during school term-time was asked of all employees in WLB1, whereas in WLB2 this was only asked of parents with dependent children. The WLB1 figure was therefore rebased, and the table above shows parent only responses.

⁷⁰ WLB2 asked respondents about the availability of working at home on a regular basis in the same way that other flexible working arrangements were asked about. However, WLB1 asked about it in a separate question 'Do you work from home as part of your normal working hours; most of the time; one or two days of the week; or occasionally'. The figure in the table above shows the sum of these responses, plus those who said their employer would allow them to work this way. Also, therefore, there is no figure for 'depends' in the table.

Working part-time was considered by employees to be the most likely flexible working practice that their employer would allow them to do in WLB1, with half of employees (50 per cent) saying their employer would allow them to work part-time. This was significantly less than in WLB2, where two-thirds (67 per cent) of employees said that a part-time position would be available if they personally needed it. When 'depends/possibly' was included in the WLB1 figure, the difference was reduced to eight per cent.

Significantly more employees reported in WLB2 that working flexitime would be available should they need to work this way, than in WLB1. Almost half of employees (48 per cent) in WLB2 said this compared with just over two in five (42 per cent) in WLB1. However, including the 'depends/possibly' figure for WLB1, the difference was not significant.

According to employees, working reduced hours for a limited period was more likely to be available in WLB2 than in WLB1 (62 per cent and 41 per cent respectively). Including the proportion who said 'depends/possibly' in WLB1, the difference was reduced to seven per cent, which was still significant.

The WLB2 findings showed that job-sharing was also more likely to be available than in 2000 (41 per cent in WLB2 and 32 per cent in WLB1). However, including the 'depends/possibly' responses changed this finding, with job-sharing more likely to be perceived as available in WLB1.

The availability of term-time working in WLB2 was greater than in WLB1 (32 per cent and 25 per cent respectively). However, if the 'depends/possibly' responses are included the difference is not significant.

The reported availability of working from home on a regular basis had remained stationary since WLB1⁷¹, as one in five employees (20 per cent) in both WLB1 and WLB2 reported that their employer would allow them to work at home.

Working a compressed working week appeared to be more widely available in WLB2 than in WLB1 (20 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). However, if the 'depends/possibly' responses are included, there is no perceived difference in availability over time.

Working annualised hours was the least likely flexible working arrangement available in both WLB2 and WLB1 (20 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). Including the 'depends/possibly' category, the difference was reduced to only two per cent, however, this is still significant.

⁷¹ In WLB2, employees were asked about working from home *on a regular basis*, whereas WLB1 simply asks about the possibility of working from home in general. The definition of 'on a regular basis' will obviously differ from one employee to another, so this may have some bearing on the findings.

Promotion of and consulting employees about working arrangements

Managers' promotion of flexible working arrangements and employer consultation with their employees or their representatives, over them is likely to have affected employees' reported availability and take-up of such practices.

Two-thirds of employees (66 per cent) considered that their manager did enough to provide and promote flexible working practices, with the remaining third either saying their employer did not (29 per cent), or they did not know (five per cent). Table A4.2 shows the detailed breakdown of these responses by gender, work status and SOC. While expected, it is interesting to note that often the perceived availability of flexible working arrangements was higher among employees who considered their manager to have done enough to provide and promote such practices. Seven in ten employees (70 per cent) who said their manager did enough to provide and promote flexible working also said their employer provided at least one flexible working arrangement⁷², compared with 39 per cent who said their employer provided none of the arrangements.

Women (69 per cent), and specifically mothers (70 per cent), were positive about their managers' provision and promotion of flexible working practices, whereas men were less convinced (62 per cent). A high proportion of employees who worked part-time (74 per cent) and those aged 55 or over (72 per cent) perceived their manager to be doing enough to provide and promote flexible working practices. Conversely, employees with young children under the age of two (55 per cent), and employees in unskilled occupations (55 per cent) were less convinced.

Consultation of either employees or their representatives about adjusting working arrangements, so that they can strike a better work-life balance, did not appear to be as widespread as the promotion of flexible working arrangements. While 47 per cent of employees said that this had happened, 45 per cent said it had not and eight per cent did not know. These findings varied by occupation type and size of workplace. Over half (55 per cent) of employees who worked in establishments with 250 or more employees recalled having been consulted about working arrangements in an attempt to strike a better work-life balance, and half of all managers and professionals (51 per cent) also said they had been consulted directly or via their representatives (see Table A4.3).

Excluding part-time and term-time working, availability of flexible arrangements appeared to be higher where consultation occurred. Half of employees (51 per cent) who said that their employer had consulted them about adjusting working arrangements reported that their employer

⁷² This analysis excludes part-time and term-time working, as these were not asked of all employees.

provided at least one of the flexible working arrangements⁷³. This is in contrast to the 29 per cent who said they had been consulted but none of the flexible arrangements were available to them⁷⁴.

Where employees said that managers did enough to provide and promote flexible working practices, there was no consistent pattern in terms of take-up of flexible working arrangements. Similarly, where employees said that their employer had consulted them about adjusting working arrangements, there was again no consistent pattern in terms of take-up.

The chapter will now look at the take-up of flexible working practices.

Take-up of flexible working arrangements

Just under half of all employees who said the practices were available (46 per cent) had taken up at least one flexible working practice in the previous year with their current employer⁷⁵. As shown in Figure 4.2, flexitime and working from home on a regular basis were the most popular working arrangements with over half of employees who said the arrangement was available⁷⁶, having worked in that way. In contrast, job-sharing and working reduced hours for a limited period were rarely taken up by employees.

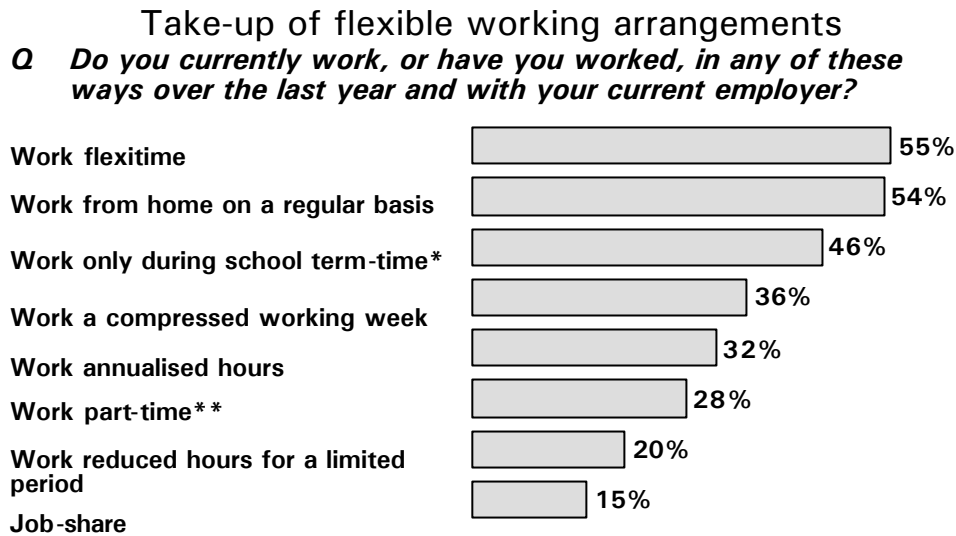
⁷³ This analysis excludes part-time and term-time working, as these were not asked of all employees.

⁷⁴ This analysis excludes part-time and term-time working, as these were not asked of all employees.

⁷⁵ This analysis excludes part-time and term-time working, as these were not asked of all employees.

⁷⁶ Questions on take-up of flexible working arrangements were asked of employees who had previously stated that these arrangements were available at their workplace. However, for part-time work, employees who worked in this way were not asked whether part-time work was available as it inferred that it would be if they already worked this way.

Figure 4.2



Base: All who say each flexible working arrangement would be **available** if required

* only asked of parents with dependent children aged 19 and under

** this figure has been rebased to include all employees who already worked part-time

Source: MORI

The take-up of each type of working arrangement including variations by key employee characteristics (see Tables A4.4a-A4.4c) is discussed below along with changes overtime.

Flexitime

Flexitime was the most common form of *flexible* working arrangement taken-up by employees⁷⁷. Where it was available, 55 per cent of employees had worked in this way. Managers and professionals (60 per cent) were more likely to have worked in this way compared with operatives and unskilled employees (38 per cent⁷⁸). Take-up was also higher for employees who worked in establishments with 250 or more employees (63 per cent) than in small establishments with between five and 24 employees (51 per cent).

Working from home

Working from home appeared to be an attractive option for employees. Just over half of employees (54 per cent), who considered that it would be available at their workplace, had worked from home on a regular basis at some point in the previous year. This may be because this type of working is a lifestyle choice which would not affect their income. Other arrangements such as working part-time or job-sharing would mean a loss of income from working fewer hours, which for many would not be possible. For many, working from home has benefits such as greater freedom to choose working hours.

Men and parents were the employees most likely to have worked from home (58 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively); in particular, the take-up of homeworking by fathers was relatively high (67 per cent). The

⁷⁷ Full-time work has been excluded from this discussion as it is not referred to as a flexible working arrangement.

⁷⁸ This figure is based on responses from 94 (unweighted) employees.

survey also found that, where it was available, a high proportion of supervisors took up the opportunity to work from home (59 per cent, compared with 47 per cent of those with no supervisory responsibilities).

Term-time working

Term-time working had been taken up by 46 per cent of parents who said that their employer made this form of flexible working arrangement available. Again, as mentioned in the availability section, this figure may have been overestimated as a result of parents who worked in education considering that they worked term-time only but actually this was the nature of their job rather than a flexible way of working (64 per cent of parents working in Public administration, Education and Health sectors said they worked in this way).

A high proportion of mothers (59 per cent, compared to 24 per cent of fathers, and part-time employees (65 per cent) (who are generally women) took up the opportunity to work only during school term-times, respectively). Perhaps not surprisingly, where it was available, parents with children in their initial years of full-time education (aged six to 11 years) were more likely to have taken up term-time working (56 per cent) than parents with children in other age groups. Term-time working was also concentrated in the professions which women, and specifically mothers, tended to dominate such as sales and services (57 per cent). As highlighted in the discussion about availability, larger workplaces appeared less flexible with regard to school term-time working than smaller workplaces. Take-up was low for employees who worked in establishments with 250 or more employees (19 per cent⁷⁹, compared with 53 per cent of employees who worked in establishments with less than 250 employees).

Compressed working week

The arrangement to work a compressed week was taken up by over a third (36 per cent) of those who said that this arrangement would be available at their workplace. There were few notable variations in terms of the type of employee who worked in this way, but it was slightly higher among part-time employees (44 per cent, compared with 33 per cent of full-time employees)⁸⁰.

Annualised hours

Of those employees who said annualised hours working was available at their workplace, a third (32 per cent) of employees had taken up the opportunity to work in this way. The only notable variation was that take-up of working annualised hours was higher among employees who had been working for their employer for five or more years (38 per cent, compared with 18 per cent of employees who have been with their employer for less than a year).

⁷⁹ This figure is based on responses from 54 (unweighted) employees.

⁸⁰ Given that there was no variation in the perceived availability of the arrangement to work a compressed week between part-time and full-time employees, this finding might imply that some part-time employees had not interpreted the definition of a compressed working week correctly.

Working part-time

Employees who worked full-time at the time of the survey and said that part-time working was available at their workplace were asked whether they had worked part-time in the previous year. One in nine (11 per cent) reported having done so. A higher proportion of full-time mothers reported having worked part-time at some point in the previous year (19 per cent, compared to seven per cent of fathers). Similarly, 19 per cent⁸¹ of full-time employees who worked in the sales and services occupations reported taking up the arrangement of part-time working.

Reduced hours

Only a fifth of employees (20 per cent) who reported that it would be available at their workplace had made use of the arrangement. As mentioned in the section on availability, working reduced hours for a limited period is a temporary arrangement, and this may explain the lower level of take-up. The instances where an employee might consider working in this way are likely to be exceptional, such as returning from maternity leave, having to look after a sick relative or perhaps recovering from an illness before an employee is ready to go back to work full-time.

The arrangement to work reduced hours for a limited period was more likely to have been used by mothers (26 per cent, compared with 12 per cent of fathers) and part-time employees (35 per cent, compared with 15 per cent of employees working full-time). Take-up was also notably higher among young employees aged between 16 and 24 (36 per cent, compared with 17 per cent of employees aged 25 and over) and those in services and sales occupations (30 per cent).

Job-share

The arrangement to job-share with a colleague had only been taken up by 15 per cent of employees who perceived this arrangement to be available in their workplace. As mentioned earlier, flexible arrangements such as job-sharing may have a financial impact on the employee, as it is likely their salary will decrease. Hence, for many people working this way would not be possible. It was typically taken up by mothers (21 per cent, compared to six per cent of fathers) and, particularly lone mothers (30 per cent⁸², compared to six per cent of coupled fathers). In addition, employees in unskilled and operative roles and those working part-time were among the key groups who had taken advantage of this arrangement at some point in the previous year (27 per cent⁸³ and 29 per cent, respectively).

⁸¹ This figure is based on responses from 99 (unweighted) employees.

⁸² This figure is based on responses from 41 (unweighted) employees.

⁸³ This figure is based on responses from 80 (unweighted) employees.

Comparing availability and take-up

Figure 4.3 compares availability of flexible working practices and take-up by employees, where they were available.

Figure 4.3

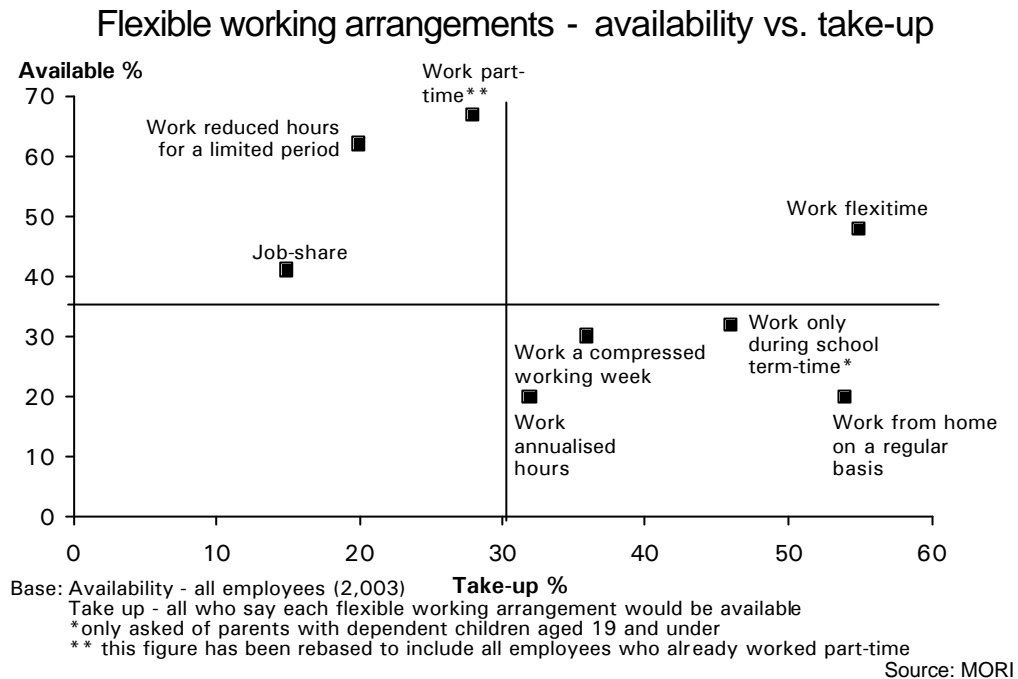


Figure 4.3 above shows that arrangements such as working reduced hours for a limited period, working part-time and job sharing, were relatively widely available, but that take-up was low. Therefore even though employers appeared to be making these flexible arrangements available, they were not attractive to the majority of employees. Working flexitime was widely available and widely taken up. The least available, but more popular when they were offered, are working a compressed week, annualised hours, working only during school term-time and working at home on a regular basis. These findings suggest that these arrangements should be more widely offered by employers, and employees would be likely to take them up.

Change in take-up over time

Table 4.2 illustrates how take-up has changed since WLB1⁸⁴. However, comparisons between the WLB1 and WLB2 surveys are difficult because of the different question wording; the former asked only about current practice, whereas the latter asked whether an employee was working or had worked in a particular way in the last year and with their current employer. However, with this in mind, the take-up of full-time working,

⁸⁴ The figures for WLB2 presented in Table 4.2 are different to those included in the above discussion about take-up of individual work-life balance arrangements. These were recalculated to aid comparison with the WLB1 data which was based on take-up by *all* employees, and not, as is the case with the WLB2 data, based only on the response of employees who perceived each arrangement to be available in their workplace. In addition, there are no directly comparable questions from the WLB1 survey for working from home on a regular basis and working reduced hours for a limited period.

part-time working, compressed working week, job-share and working annualised hours had increased. There was also an apparent significant decrease in the proportion of employees who worked from home on a regular basis. This may be partly explained by the question wording which differs quite substantially between the WLB1 and WLB2 surveys. For example, employees who said they worked at home 'occasionally' in WLB1 were included in the figure for take-up of homeworking here but respondents may not have thought this frequent enough to have considered this to be on a 'regular basis' for the WLB2 survey.

The take-up of working flexitime and working only during school term-time has not changed significantly since WLB1.

**Table 4.2: WLB1: In your (main) job, do you work...?
WLB2: Do you currently work, or have you worked, in any of these ways, over the last year and with your current employer?
Table shows all saying 'Yes'**

Ranked by WLB1 take-up figures	WLB1	WLB2	Difference
	%	%	% (+/-)
Work full-time	75	80	+5
Work flexitime	24	26	+2
Work part-time	24	28	+4
Working from home	20 ⁸⁵	11	-9
Work only during school term-time ⁸⁶	14	15	+1
Work a compressed working week	6	11	+5
Job-share	4	6	+2
Work annualised hours	2	6	+4
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	7,561	2,003	
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	7,561	2,003	

Source: MORI

⁸⁵ WLB1 asked about working at home in a different way to WLB2. Respondents were asked 'Do you work at home as part of your normal working hours? Most of the time; One or two days a week; or Occasionally?'. However, WLB2 asked a more straightforward question 'Do you currently work, or have you worked from home on a regular basis, over the last year and with your current employer? Yes; No; Don't know'.

⁸⁶ In WLB2 this question was asked of parents only, and therefore the WLB1 figure has been rebased to aid comparison.

Reasons for working the way they do⁸⁷

A single question⁸⁸ was asked to establish why employees chose to take-up certain working arrangements that were available at their workplace. The main reasons are shown in Figure 4.4 and included:

- To make life easier, get things done or be more efficient (18 per cent). This was typically mentioned by male employees (22 per cent) rather than women (14 per cent). It was also associated with full-time work (20 per cent), working in a large workplace with 250 or more employees (24 per cent), having a supervisory role (22 per cent) and a relatively large annual household income of £30,000 or more (23 per cent).
- Childcare needs (17 per cent). This was the main reason why working mothers took up particular working arrangements (43 per cent), and parents with children under the age of two (48 per cent⁸⁹). It was a particular issue where the household income was low (and, therefore, paid childcare was less of an option). This reason was given by 34 per cent⁹⁰ of those whose household income was under £12,000.
- The demands of the job (15 per cent) with little variation by sub-groups.
- The nature of the job (11 per cent). Employees who worked in small workplaces with less than 100 employees (13 per cent) were more likely to have mentioned this rather than those who worked in larger workplaces, with 250 or more employees (seven per cent).
- Other reasons, mentioned by less than one in ten employees, were typically related to personal issues, such as health problems, wanting more free time or more time to spend with the family.

⁸⁷ The following discussion includes part-time employees who said they had worked full-time in the last year and with their current employer and full-time employees who said they had worked part-time in the last year and with their current employer, but not employees who had worked full-time and part-time only.

⁸⁸ Due to the length of the interview, it was not possible to ask employees for reasons why they chose to take-up each individual working arrangement. Employees who said they worked at least one of the ways were asked this question.

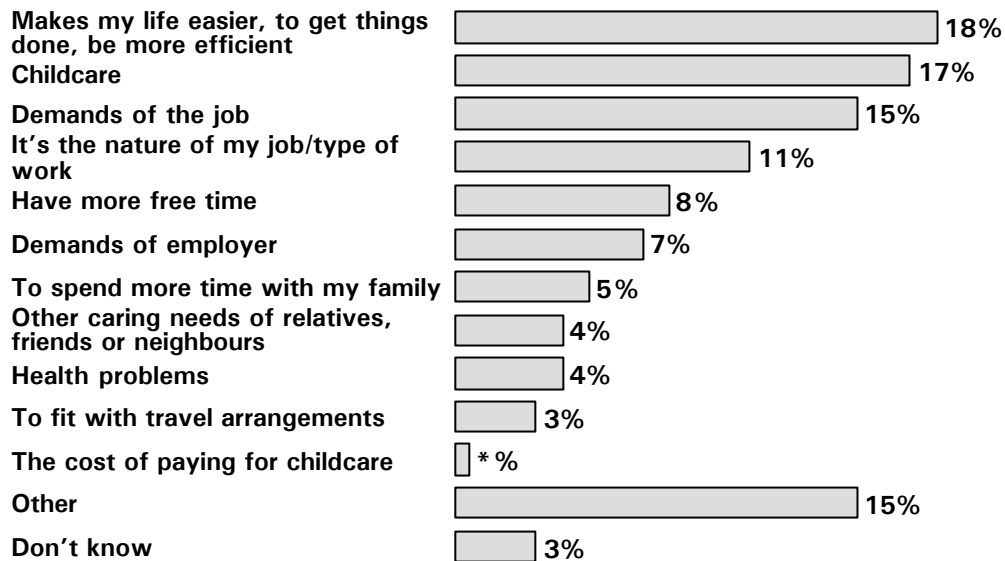
⁸⁹ This figure is based on responses from 80 (unweighted) employees.

⁹⁰ This figure is based on responses from 63 (unweighted) employees.

Figure 4.4^{91,92}

Reasons for working the way they do

Q What are the main reasons you work in this/these ways?



Base: All who have worked in one of these ways (1,039)

Source: MORI

Employees who chose *not* to take-up particular working arrangements⁹³, where they were available, were also asked a single question⁹⁴ in order to gain a broad understanding of their main reasons for not working in other ways. The most frequently cited reason for not taking up a particular working practice was that they were happy with their current arrangements, which was mentioned by a third (34 per cent) of those who did not take-up particular working arrangements available to them (see Figure 4.5). While there were few differences by sub-group, a higher proportion of employees with supervisory responsibilities mentioned this (37 per cent, compared with 32 per cent of non supervisors).

A further quarter (26 per cent) said that their job did not allow them to take advantage of these ways of working, rising to 29 per cent of those who were in managerial and professional occupations. Thirteen per cent also said that they did not take advantage of these arrangements due to financial considerations, primarily those working full-time (15 per cent) and employees working in service and sales occupations (17 per cent). However, there were no significant differences by household income.

⁹¹ The figure includes part-time employees who said they had worked full-time in the last year and with their current employer and full-time employees who said they had worked part-time in the last year and with their current employer, but not employees who had worked full-time and part-time only.

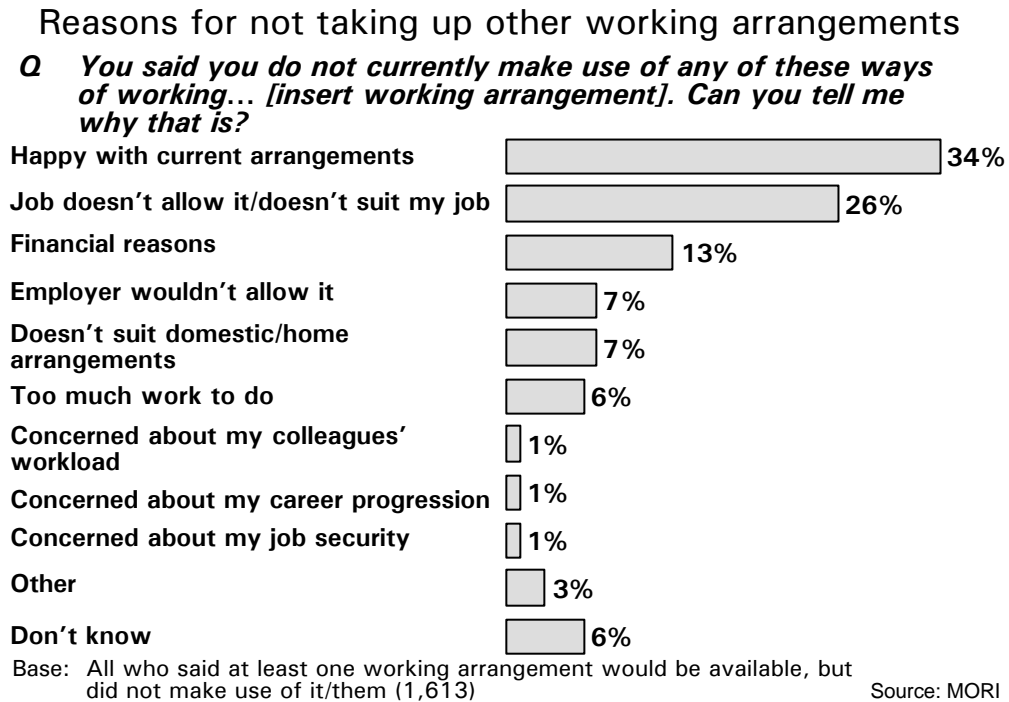
⁹² The large proportion of 'other' reasons is due to the considerable variation in employees' responses, which are not possible to show on this chart.

⁹³ This discussion and Figure 4.5 includes full-time employees who had not worked part-time where it was available and part-time employees who had not worked full-time where it was available.

⁹⁴ Due to the length of the interview, it was not possible to ask employees for reasons why they chose not to take-up each, individual flexible working arrangement. Employees who did not make use of at least one of the flexible working arrangements that were made available by their employer were asked this question.

Seven per cent of employees mentioned that the type of working practice available would not suit their domestic arrangements or that their employer would not allow it. Moreover, concern about how taking up particular working arrangements would have a detrimental affect on their job was mentioned by eight per cent of employees; concerns included the impact on colleagues workload (one per cent), the affect on job security (one per cent) or career progression (one per cent) and that there was simply too much work to do (six per cent).

Figure 4.5

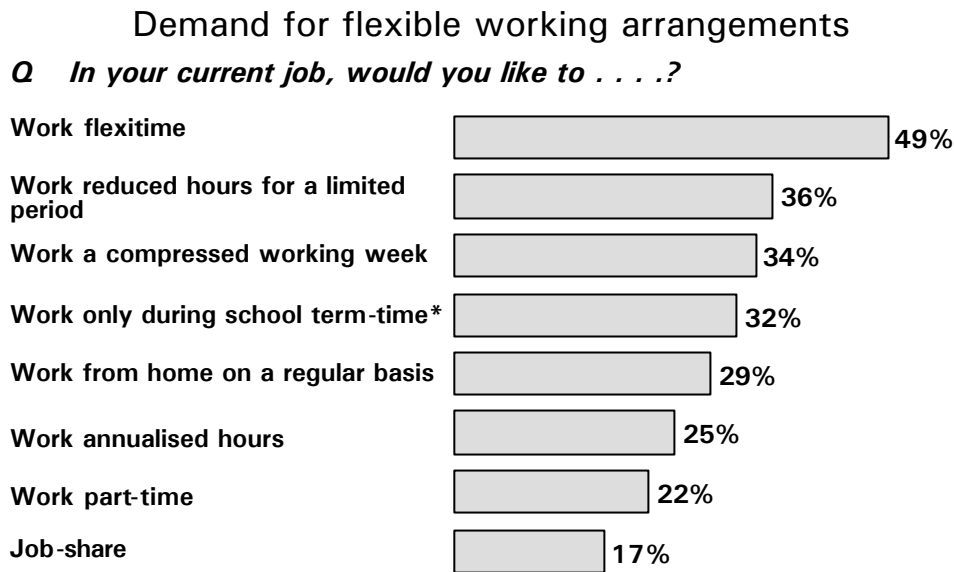


Demand for flexible working arrangements

In addition to examining which flexible working arrangements were available to, and taken-up by, employees, WLB2 also set out to understand the types of arrangements that employees would like to make use of.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the relatively high demand for flexible working arrangements amongst employees who had not taken up each of the practices, with four practices mentioned by over three in ten employees. Overall, flexitime would be the most popular arrangement, as half (49 per cent) of employees, who had not already worked this way in the last year, said that they would like to do so. This correlates with the finding that flexitime was the most widely used form of flexible working (as shown in Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.6



Base: All employees who have not worked in this way in the last year and with their current employer
 *only asked of parents of dependent children aged 19 and under Source: MORI

The demand for each type of working arrangement and how this differed by key employee characteristics are detailed in Tables A4.5a-A4.5d. The main findings are outlined below.

Flexitime

Demand was highest for flexitime with just under half of employees who had not worked in this way in the last year wanting to do so (49 per cent). Parents with children under two years old were most likely to want to work this way (66 per cent). Similarly, full-time employees were more likely to want to work flexitime than part-time employees (52 per cent, compared with 35 per cent).

In addition, employees in managerial or professional occupations were more likely to want to work flexitime (54 per cent) than employees in other occupations (compared with 39 per cent of employees in services or sales positions). There was also greater demand for flexitime in larger workplaces, with 250 or more employees (56 per cent), than in establishments with less than 25 employees (43 per cent). This is consistent with the findings for take-up.

Working reduced hours

More than a third of employees (36 per cent) who had not done so in the last year said they would like to be able to work reduced hours for a limited period. Demand for working this way was high among parents with younger children (46 per cent of employees with children under two and 45 per cent with children aged between two and five years), who did not already work in this way. A higher proportion of full-time employees also said they would like to work reduced hours, than part-time employees (39 per cent, compared with 23 per cent). There was also

higher demand amongst those in supervisory roles (40 per cent compared with 23 per cent of non-supervisors), and managers and professionals (39 per cent).

Compressed working week

A third of employees (34 per cent) who had not already done so said they would like to work a compressed working week. Full-time employees (37 per cent) were more likely to express an interest in working this way than part-time employees (26 per cent). Similarly a higher proportion of managers and professionals (39 per cent) said they would like to work a compressed working week, than those in the sales and services occupations (24 per cent).

Term-time working

A third of parents of school-age children (32 per cent) who had not already done so said they would like to be able to work only during term-time. Demand for working this way was particularly high amongst mothers; almost half (48 per cent) expressed a desire to work this way, as opposed to just 21 per cent of fathers. Coupled mothers were more likely to express an interest in this working arrangement than coupled fathers (55 per cent, compared with 23 per cent). Demand was also higher among employees currently working part-time (55 per cent compared with 25 per cent of full-time employees).

Working from home

Twenty-nine per cent of employees who had not worked from home in the previous year said they would like to be able to. This form of flexible working was particularly popular among employees with young children (40 per cent of those with children aged five or under) and mothers with one child (40 per cent, compared to 26 per cent of mothers with three or more children). Managers and professionals were also more likely to say they would like the opportunity to work from home (35 per cent), than employees in other occupations (22 per cent of operatives and unskilled workers), as were employees in workplaces with 250 or more employees (34 per cent) and full-time employees (31 per cent compared with 24 per cent of part-time employees).

Annualised hours

Demand for working annualised hours was low. Only a quarter (25 per cent) of employees who had not done so in the last year, expressed an interest in working this way. However, interest was slightly higher among full-time employees, in comparison to part-time employees (27 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). With this exception, the level of demand for annualised hours is consistent across all employee types.

For many employees, this form of working would be a new concept to them and not something that they would readily think of as a way of working flexibly. Given time to consider this proposition in more detail, employees may have felt differently about working this way.

Working part-time

Only one in five full-time employees (22 per cent), who had not worked part-time in the past year, said they would be interested in doing so. Demand to switch from working full-time to part-time was notably higher among women (31 per cent, compared with 17 per cent of men). This figure increased to 42 per cent of mothers, compared to 17 per cent of fathers, and 39 per cent of parents with children under two years of age. Linked to this was the higher level of demand among employees in sales and services occupations (38 per cent).

In contrast to working annualised hours, working part-time is something that most employees will have heard of and therefore employees' responses to this would have been more measured. For many, working part-time would be impossible, particularly as there would be a corresponding loss of income associated with working fewer hours.

Job-share

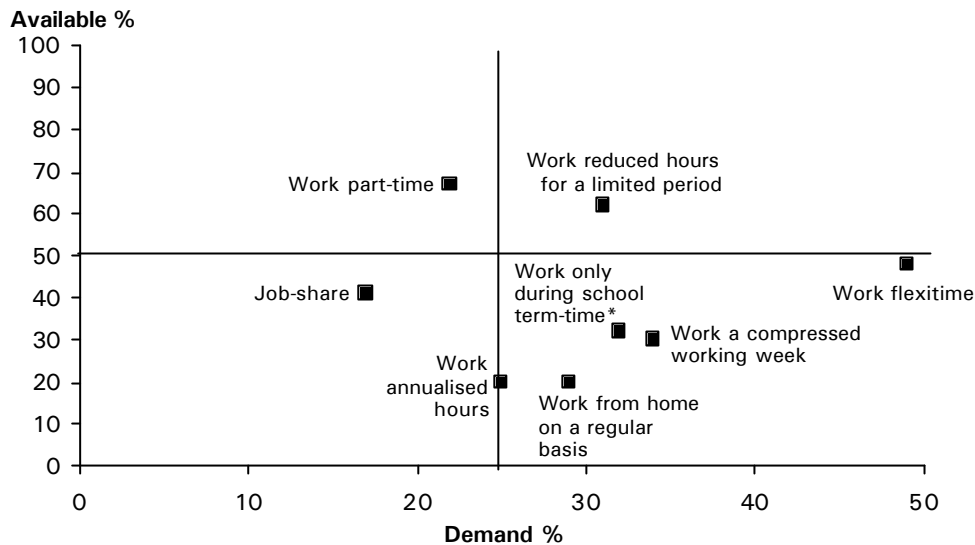
The opportunity to job-share was less popular. Only 17 per cent of employees, who had not worked this way in the last year, said they would like to be able to job-share. However, as might be expected, this figure was higher for parents (19 per cent compared with 15 per cent of non-parents) and increased to 26 per cent among mothers (compared to 13 per cent of fathers). Part-time employees were also more interested in working a job-share (22 per cent compared with 16 per cent of full-time employees). One reason for a large proportion of employees not wanting to work this way is that by sharing a job, the salary is also shared. Also, for many jobs it would not be possible to share the workload.

Comparing demand for flexible working arrangements with availability

Figure 4.7 below illustrates the disparity between the types of flexible working arrangements that were perceived to be available by employees and those which they said they would like to adopt if given the opportunity.

Figure 4.7

Flexible working arrangements - availability vs. demand



Base: Availability - all employees (2,003)
 Demand - all who have not worked in this way in the last year and with their current employer
 *only asked of parents with dependent children aged 19 and under
 Source: MORI

Figure 4.7 above shows that working part-time was relatively widely available but less in demand. In contrast, working flexitime, a compressed working week, working only during term-time, working from home or annualised hours were more highly in demand, but less likely to be available. Job-sharing was the least in demand and also less available to employees.

Changes in demand over time

Comparisons were made between the WLB1 and WLB2 surveys to explore how demand had changed over time (see Table 4.3). The key differences were the increase in the proportion of employees who expressed an interest in working reduced hours for a limited period and working annualised hours (which is in line with take-up⁹⁵). In contrast, demand for term-time working, working at home on a regular basis and working part-time had decreased since WLB1. However, take-up for these three arrangements were not consistent with demand; take-up of working only during term-time had remained the same, working part-time had increased, while only working from home had decreased.

**Table 4.3: WLB1: Would you like to...?
WLB2: In your current job, would you like to ...?
Table shows all saying 'Yes'**

Ranked by WLB1 demand figures	WLB1	WLB2	Difference
	%	%	% (+/-)
Work flexitime	47	49	+ 2
Work only during school term-time ⁹⁶	36	32	-4
Work a compressed working week	35	34	-1
Work at home on a regular basis	33	29	-4
Work part-time	25	22	-3
Working reduced hours for a limited period ⁹⁷	24	31	+ 7
Work annualised hours	21	25	+ 4
Job-share	16	17	+ 1

Base WLB1: All employees who do not work in this way

Base WLB2: All employees who have not worked in this way for the last year and with their current employer

Source: MORI

Reasons for not expressing an interest in particular working arrangements

Once again, a single question⁹⁸ was asked of employees in order to gain a broad understanding of why certain employees did not want to adopt one or more of the working arrangements discussed. For example they may have expressed an interest in job-sharing and part-time employment, but rejected the idea of annualised hours. However, it is important to bear in mind with this question that employees were asked for their reasons if they had said 'No' to at least one type of working arrangement. The main reasons can be grouped as follows (see Figure 4.8 below for all reasons cited):

- A third (34 per cent) said that they were not interested in changing the way they worked because they were happy with their arrangements at the time of the survey. Women without dependant children (40 per cent), part-time employees (41 per cent)

⁹⁶ Demand for working only during term-time is based on parents who had not worked in this way in the last year with their current employer.

⁹⁷ WLB1 did not ask a take-up question for working reduced hours for a limited period, therefore this figure is based on all employees, rather than for the other arrangements which are based on 'all employees who do not work in this way'. Therefore the demand figure for WLB2 has been rebased to reflect all employees.

⁹⁸ Due to the length of the interview, it was not possible to ask employees for reasons why they were not interested in each individual flexible working arrangements. This discussion includes part-time employees who had not worked full-time and did not want to.

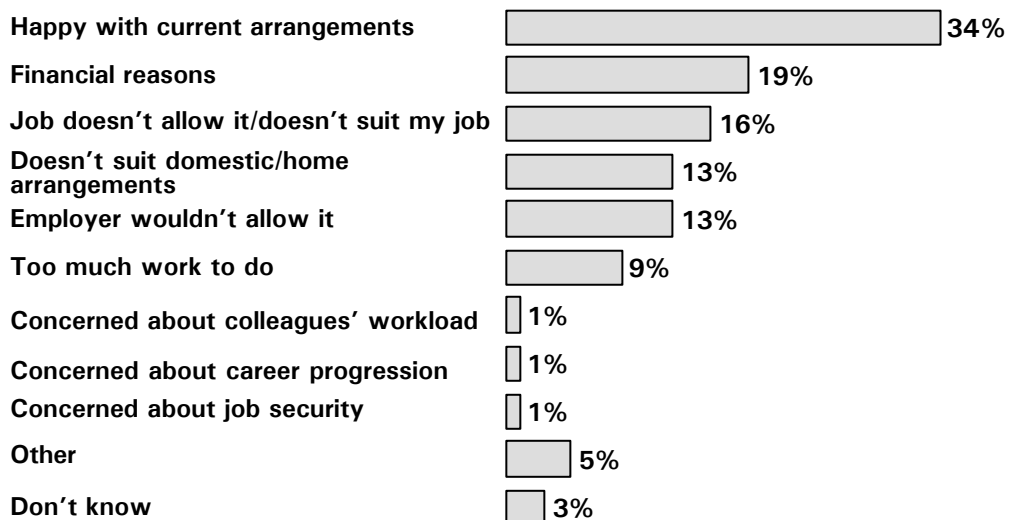
and those in clerical and skilled manual occupations (40 per cent) were more likely to say this.

- For a fifth of employees (19 per cent), financial considerations were the reason for not wanting to adopt one or more particular working arrangement. Financial considerations were more important for men (22 per cent compared with 16 per cent of women); full-time employees (22 per cent) and unskilled employees and operatives (26 per cent).
- One in six employees (16 per cent) said that their job does not allow or does not suit these types of working practices. This reason typically applied to male full-time employees (19 per cent).
- One in eight employees (13 per cent) said their employer would not allow them to work in these ways. While the same proportion (13 per cent) said that they would not want to adopt a particular working arrangement because it would not suit their domestic arrangements, rising to over a quarter (26 per cent) of mothers, 29 per cent of coupled mothers, and 28 per cent of females working part-time.

Figure 4.8⁹⁹

Reasons for not wanting to work in various ways

Q *You said you would not like to work in this/these ways. Can you tell me why that is?*



Base: All who said they did not work in at least one of the ways, and who said they would not like to work this/these ways (1,930)

Source: MORI

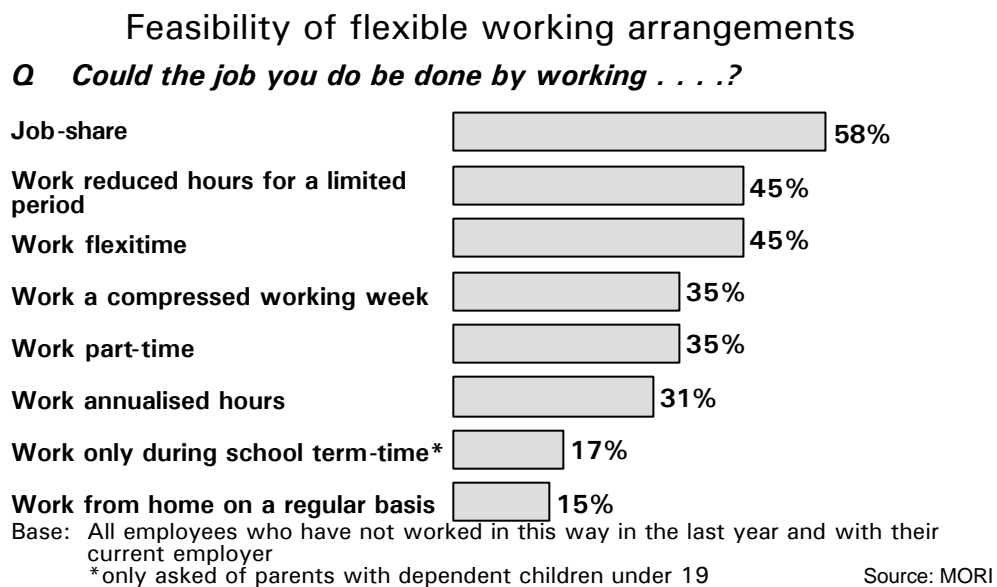
⁹⁹ This figure includes part-time employees who had not worked full-time and did not want to.

Feasibility of making use of flexible working arrangements

As highlighted previously, there was a high demand for flexible working arrangements among employees. The WLB2 survey then set out to examine whether employees could feasibly adopt specific flexible working arrangements and still be able to continue with their job.

Figure 4.9 illustrates that well over half of employees who had not job-shared in the last year (58 per cent) considered that their job could be adapted to this arrangement. However, for each of the other flexible working arrangements, such as working from home on a regular basis, less than half of employees who had not worked in these ways in the last year said they would be feasible bearing in mind the nature of their current job.

Figure 4.9



Employees' perceptions of how feasible each type of working arrangement would be and how this differed by key employee characteristics are detailed in Tables A4.6a-A4.6d. The main findings are outlined below.

Job-sharing

The majority of employees (58 per cent) who had not job-shared in the last year said that it would be feasible to do so. Interestingly, the group most likely to want to work this way are also the group who are most likely to consider job-sharing feasible within the context of their job, namely women with dependent children (69 per cent).

Overall, women were more likely to regard job-sharing as feasible than men (68 per cent compared with 50 per cent), rising to 70 per cent of women in full-time jobs. Similarly employees in clerical and skilled manual positions (64 per cent) were more likely to consider it feasible. In contrast, only 53 per cent of employees working in unskilled and operative jobs considered job-sharing to be feasible within the context of their jobs.

Flexitime

In the previous section, it was found that demand for flexitime was high among employees who had not already worked this way in the last year (49 per cent). However, slightly fewer (45 per cent) considered that their job could be adapted to incorporate flexitime working arrangements. Over half of parents with a child under the age of two (53 per cent) considered flexitime as feasible in terms of their current position, which might be related to the high demand for flexitime amongst this group (65 per cent). Clerical and skilled manual positions appeared quite flexible in this regard, which is consistent with the finding for adopting job-sharing. Again, over half of employees working in this occupation (53 per cent) considered working flexitime feasible. In contrast, less than two in five employees in sales and services occupations (38 per cent) considered that their job could be adapted to accommodate flexitime arrangements. Similarly, this practice was also regarded as less feasible in small workplaces, with between five and 24 employees (mentioned by only 41 per cent of employees, compared with 53 per cent of employees in workplaces with 250 or more employees).

Working reduced hours

Just under half of employees who had not worked reduced hours in the last year (45 per cent) considered that their job could be adapted to working this way for a limited period. However, only a third of these employees said they would like to. Women more than men envisaged this way of working feasible (49 per cent compared with 42 per cent), specifically women working full-time (49 per cent) and those with dependent children (50 per cent). As found elsewhere, the possibility of working reduced hours was also affected by the type of job employees did, with unskilled employees and operatives less likely to regard this arrangement as feasible (37 per cent), compared with all other occupation categories. Moreover, consistent with other findings, employees working in larger workplaces with more than 250 employees were more likely to consider that adapting working practices in this way would be feasible (50 per cent, compared with 44 per cent of employees working in establishments of between five and 24 employees).

Working part-time

A third of employees (35 per cent) who had not worked part-time in the previous year, considered that their job could be adapted to work this way, rising to almost half of women (47 per cent) and mothers (48 per cent); two groups who were most likely to work in occupations where part-time employment is common, namely services and sales occupations. Consistent with this was the high proportion of employees in these occupations (63 per cent) who had not already worked part-time, but considered that it would be feasible to do so. Those less likely to perceive part-time working as feasible were employees with supervisory responsibilities (28 per cent compared with 43 per cent of non-supervisors) and those employed in unskilled and operative occupations (30 per cent).

Compressed working week

A third of employees who had not worked in this way in the last year (35 per cent) said that it would be feasible for them to work a compressed working week, rising to 42 per cent of those in large workplaces (with 250 or more employees) and 40 per cent in clerical and skilled manual occupations. Employees in workplaces with less than 25 employees and those working in services and sales occupations were less optimistic about the feasibility of working a compressed week (33 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively).

Annualised hours

Three in ten employees (31 per cent) considered that, although they had not worked in this way in the last year, their job could be adapted to working annualised hours. However, demand for working this way was quite low (just 25 per cent of employees who had not done so in the last year reported wanting to work this way). While demand to work this way was slightly higher among employees working full-time, work status did not appear to impact on employees' perceptions of feasibility. However, men without dependant children (39 per cent), employees aged under 25 years (47 per cent) and those working in large establishments (35 per cent) were more likely to regard this arrangement as feasible.

Term-time working

Relatively few parents who had not worked in this way in the last year (17 per cent) regarded term-time working as an arrangement that would be feasible in the context of their job. However, mothers were more likely than fathers to envisage that this would be possible (24 per cent compared with 12 per cent, respectively). Parents working part-time (who were predominantly women) were more likely to regard term-time working as possible than their full-time equivalents (29 per cent compared with 14 per cent, respectively). Term-time working was also more likely to be considered a viable arrangement by employees in services and sales occupations, than those working in managerial and professional positions (28 per cent¹⁰⁰, compared with 12 per cent).

Working from home

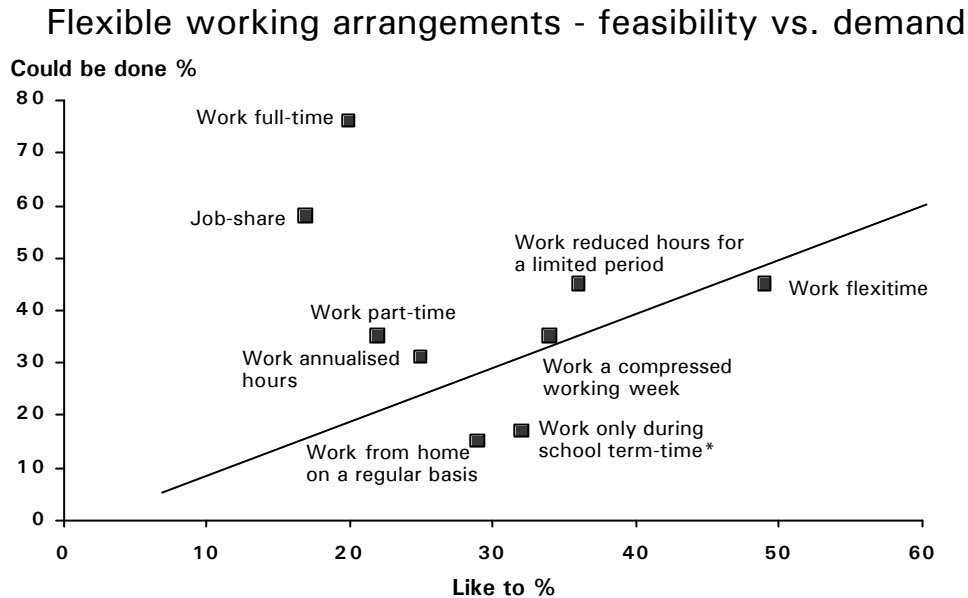
While, three in ten employees who had not done so in the last year said they would like to work from home on a regular basis, few considered that it would be feasible for them in their job (15 per cent). However, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of managers and professionals, the group who would most like to do so, considered that it would be possible to work from home.

¹⁰⁰ This figure is based on responses from 90 (unweighted) employees.

Comparing demand for flexible working arrangements with feasibility

Figure 4.10 illustrates the level of demand for flexible working arrangements compared with the feasibility of working this way.

Figure 4.10



Base: All employees who have not worked in this way in the last year and with their current employer
 *only asked of parents with dependent children
 Source: MORI

The flexible working arrangements around the line of best fit are those where feasibility matches demand.

While there was demand for term-time only working and working from home from employees who had not done so in the last year, they accepted that this was unlikely to be feasible in their current job. In contrast, arrangements such as working full-time and job-sharing, while considered feasible, were not in great demand by employees who had not already worked in these ways in the last year.

Employee requests to change the way they work

The previous sections have looked at the availability, take-up, demand for and feasibility of flexible working practices. The following section examines how employees approached employers about changing the way they regularly work.

Only one in six employees (17 per cent) had approached their employer in the last two years, to make a request to change the way they regularly work for a sustained period of time. This may seem surprising since there was relatively high demand for some forms of flexible working arrangements, and a relatively high proportion of employees considered many practices to be feasible for their employer to provide. However, there were significant variations by employee type (see Table A4.7) with women more likely to approach their employer with a request to change the way they worked (21 per cent), especially mothers (29 per cent). In the two years before the survey, three in ten mothers (29 per cent) had

made a request to change how they regularly worked. Parents with young children (under two years old) were also more likely to have made a request (31 per cent) (see Table 4.4 below).

Linked to the finding that women were more likely to make a request to change the way they worked, part-time employees were also more likely to do so than full-time employees (27 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively) as were employees in sales and service occupations (26 per cent, compared with 14 per cent of operatives and unskilled workers).

Table 4.4 Over the last two years, have you approached your current employer to make a request to change how you regularly work for a sustained period of time?

	Total	Gender by parent		Age of youngest child	
		Male with child(ren)	Female with child(ren)	Under 2	2 or over
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	17	12	29	31	17
No	83	88	71	69	83
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	2,003	472	404	138	736
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	2,003	420	405	153	670

Source: MORI

When making a request to change the way they regularly worked, it was usually line managers who dealt with the request (48 per cent) (see Figure 4.11). The proportion of employees stating that their line manager dealt with their request increased to 59 per cent¹⁰¹ of employees in clerical and skilled occupations, and 56 per cent¹⁰² of employees who worked in large establishments with 250 or more employees (compared with 35 per cent¹⁰³ of employees working in establishments with less than 25 employees). A fifth of employees (21 per cent) who requested a change to the way in which they worked, had their request dealt with by the managing director or owner of the establishment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees who worked in small workplaces were more likely to say that the managing director dealt with their request than anyone else (38 per cent in workplaces with between five and 24 employees). Less than one in seven employees had their request dealt with by their Head of Department (14 per cent) or their personnel department (12 per cent).

Only a quarter of employees (27 per cent) who in the last two years had made a request to change the way they regularly worked, did so in writing. However, three-quarters (75 per cent) had a meeting with their

¹⁰¹ This figure is based on responses from 63 (unweighted) employees.

¹⁰² This figure is based on responses from 92 (unweighted) employees.

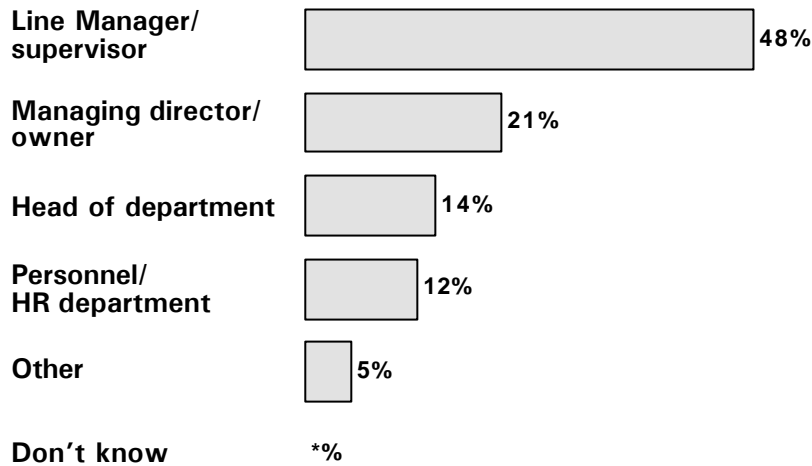
¹⁰³ This figure is based on responses from 86 (unweighted) employees.

employer (or line manager or supervisor) to discuss the request. Managers and professionals (78 per cent) and clerical and skilled employees (87 per cent) were more likely to say that a meeting took place than employees in other occupations.

Figure 4.11

Request to change the way you work

Q Who dealt with your request to change how you regularly work?



Base: All who have approached their current employer to make a request to change the way they regularly work (314)

Source: MORI

Requested changes to working patterns and outcome

Reducing the hours of work, including switching to part-time hours, was the most common request made by employees who wanted to change the way they regularly worked (29 per cent). This was consistent with the finding that overall women, who were generally more likely to work part-time than men, were more likely to request a change to their way of working. Moreover, women (regardless of parental status) were more likely to mention this as the way in which they would like to change their work pattern than men (39 per cent compared with 16 per cent respectively). A quarter of employees who made a request to change the way in which they worked, did so to change *when* they worked, including the number of days which they worked (such as compressed working week or changing shifts) (23 per cent). Other requests made were for: flexitime (13 per cent), to increase hours worked (nine per cent) and for time off (eight per cent). Base sizes for these groups were too small to allow comment on key variations by employee characteristics.

For the majority of those employees who made a request to change the way they worked (77 per cent), the request was agreed to by their employer. However, one in five employees (20 per cent) said that their request was refused, and this increased to over a third (37 per cent¹⁰⁴) of parents who had a child under the age of two.

¹⁰⁴ This figure is based on responses from 41 (unweighted) employees.

Summary

The ability to work full-time, part-time or reduced hours for a limited period, if needed, were arrangements which were perceived by employees to be widely available. However, fewer employees considered that working a compressed week, annualised hours or from home would be available if they needed to work in these ways. Regardless of how change over time was measured, there appears to have been significant increases since WLB1 in the reported availability of working part-time, annualised hours, term-time only and reduced hours for a limited period.

Where available, flexitime and working from home were the most frequently taken up flexible working arrangements. Take-up was lower where a reduction in income would have resulted such as for job-sharing or reducing working hours for a limited period. While there had been no significant change in take-up of flexitime since the last survey, there were significant increases in the proportion of employees working part-time, a compressed working week, working annualised hours and job-sharing.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there is some debate as to whether *all* types of employees are able to benefit from flexible working arrangements. The findings from WLB2 did not allow us to conclude that flexible working was being taken-up in equal measure by employees in high and low socio-economic groups, but they did indicate that take-up of flexible working arrangements was seemingly driven by caring responsibilities, with a high proportion of mothers making use of several of the practices especially those that would reduce working hours.

There was relatively high demand for flexible working arrangements among employees who had not already worked in these ways. Flexitime was the most popular, and broadly matched the proportion who stated it would be feasible in their job, followed by working reduced hours for a limited period and working a compressed working week. The key differences since WLB1, in terms of demand, were the increase in the proportion of employees who expressed the desire to work reduced hours for a limited period and the decline in demand for term-time working, part-time working and homeworking.

Despite this relatively high demand employees were not convinced that many of the flexible working arrangements discussed would be feasible for their jobs. The majority considered that job-sharing would be possible, whereas working during term-time and from home on a regular basis were deemed to be the least feasible working practices.

For the majority of employees who made a request to change the way in which they worked, the request was agreed to. However, less than a fifth of employees had approached their employer in the previous two years before the survey to change the way they regularly worked. Employees' requests tended to be dealt with by their line manager, and the majority of employees who made requests had a meeting to discuss it.

5

Leave arrangements

Introduction

There has recently been an increase in the legislation governing leave arrangements. One of the objectives of this study was to assess the extent of employer provision¹⁰⁵ and employee take-up of these leave arrangements, as well as establishing a baseline against which to evaluate provision and take-up of rights introduced through the Employment Act 2002.

This chapter examines, in order, the availability and take-up of paternity leave, emergency time off, parental leave and other leave arrangements such as bereavement leave. Where possible findings are compared with the WLB1 employee survey and the results from the survey of 'How parents balance work, family and home' (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C. forthcoming)¹⁰⁶.

Paternity leave – provision and take-up

Fathers of children under the age of 16¹⁰⁷ were asked about the arrangements their employer had in place at the time of the birth of their last child (see Figure 5.1). While a fifth of fathers (19 per cent) said that paternity leave was available, the most common response was that no arrangements were in place at the time of the birth of their last child (24 per cent).

Other arrangements mentioned included taking annual leave (10 per cent) and time off at the discretion of their line or personnel manager (10 per cent). However, one in five fathers (18 per cent) were unsure about arrangements available at the time of the birth of their last child. As this was typically fathers whose youngest child was born at least six years ago, it is possible that they simply could not remember.

¹⁰⁵ The results on provision discussed in this section are employees' perceptions of what their employer provided.

¹⁰⁶ How parents balance work, family and home (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming).

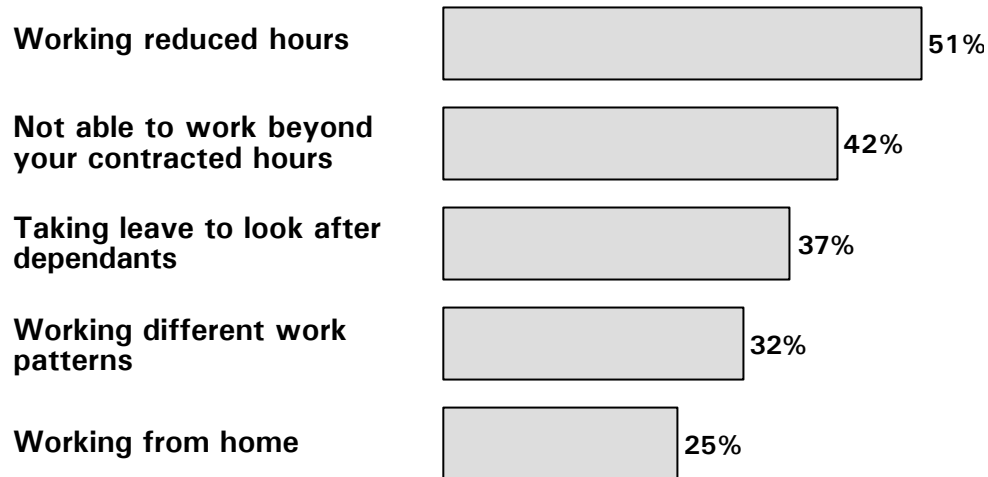
¹⁰⁷ Base sizes were too small to allow for analysis of fathers whose child was born within the last year. For more detailed analysis of paternity rights see Lissenburgh, Stephen, Maria Hudson and Melahat Sahin-Dikmen (2004) *Maternity and Paternity Rights in Britain 2002: Survey of Parents*.

Figure 5.1

Provision of leave for fathers

Q *What arrangements, if any, did your employer have in place at the time of the birth of you (last) child?*

All saying 'Yes'



Base: All fathers of children under the age of 16 (429)

Source: MORI

It is not possible to show comparisons between WLB1 and WLB2 as the question wording differed, as did the group of respondents who were asked this question¹⁰⁸.

The aggregate findings hide the fact that much appears to have changed in the past decade in terms of leave arrangements available to fathers at the time of the birth of their child. While one in five (19 per cent) fathers whose youngest child was under two years old said that there were no arrangements in place when their last child was born, this figure increased to two in five (39 per cent) for those whose youngest child was aged 12 or over. Moreover, paternity leave was made available to a quarter (26 per cent) of fathers whose youngest child was five years old or younger, whereas only six per cent of fathers with children aged 12 or over, said that their workplace offered paternity leave at that time (see Table A5.1).

The size of establishment where an employee worked also appeared to impact on the availability of paternity leave arrangements (see Table A5.1). According to fathers, workplaces with 250 or more employees were more likely than smaller workplaces (with less than 250 employees), to offer paternity leave and have a written policy on entitlement to leave at the time of the birth of a child. In contrast, employees in workplaces with less than 25 employees were more likely to have said that their employer had no arrangements in place at the time of the birth of their last child.

Only one in ten¹⁰⁹ fathers (10 per cent) with a child under the age of 16 said they had taken time off for paternity leave in the last year with their

¹⁰⁸ WLB1 question wording: 'Over the past 12 months and while you were with your current employer have you made use of paternity leave (allowing father to take time off when their children are born)?'.

current employer. Due to the small number of responses for this question, it is inadvisable to highlight variations according to employee characteristics or to assess whether this leave was paid and the amount of days leave taken¹¹⁰.

Time off in an emergency¹¹¹

During the year prior to the interview, almost two-fifths (38 per cent) of employees had experienced an emergency involving a dependent child or relative during their working week which they had to deal with at short notice. This figure increased to 53 per cent amongst parents, compared with only a quarter (27 per cent) of employees without children. Furthermore, 56 per cent of coupled mothers and 64 per cent of lone mothers said they had to deal with an emergency at short notice during their working week (see Table 5.1). These findings were in line with the survey of 'How parents balance work, family and home' (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming), which found that 49 per cent of parents in work had experienced an emergency involving a dependant, with the figure typically higher among mothers (51 per cent). This suggests there is a need for emergency time off, especially amongst mothers.

Table 5.1: Thinking back over the last 12 months, have you experienced an emergency which you have had to deal with at short notice involving a dependant (e.g. children, other family members) during your working week?

	Total	Parent		Parental/ marital status	
		Parent	Non-parent	Coupled mother	Lone mother
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	38	53	27	56	64
No	62	47	73	44	36
Can't remember	*	-	*	-	-
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	2,003	876	1,032	252	87 ¹¹²
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	2,003	825	1,094	260	86

Source: MORI

¹⁰⁹ This equates to only 36 fathers (weighted and unweighted base). These 36 employees include 11 fathers whose youngest child was two years or over. This suggests that some fathers who said that they had taken paternity leave were unclear about the definition of paternity leave and may have taken some other form of leave.

¹¹⁰ To give an idea of responses, of those who took paternity leave, a majority said that it was fully paid (77 per cent) and the average number of days taken was six. These figures must be treated with caution as they are based on responses from only 36 fathers.

¹¹¹ An error in the questionnaire meant that in the section on take-up, emergency time off in general is discussed rather than focusing on emergency time off for dependants. This has still provided useful data on employees' perceptions of what their employer provides beyond the statutory minimum.

¹¹² These figures should be treated with a degree of caution due to small base sizes.

Employer provision of emergency time off for dependants

Three quarters of employees (73 per cent) reported that their employer provided emergency time off for them to deal with emergencies involving dependants, for example to deal with childcare arrangements or to make longer term arrangements for dependants (including relatives) who have fallen ill or been injured. One in nine (11 per cent) said their employer did not make this type of leave available, while 16 per cent were unsure.

A comparison of the findings from WLB2 and the survey of How parents balance work, family and home¹¹³ indicates an increase in the provision of emergency time off. In 2000, 63 per cent of parents reported that emergency time off was provided, compared with 74 per cent of parents who participated in WLB2.

Table A5.2 provides details of how provision varies by occupation, parental status and size of establishment. The following types of employee were more likely to report that emergency time was *not* provided by their employer:

- Those working in sales and services occupations (16 per cent);
- Parents (13 per cent). This may be because they were more likely to have tried to take it up and were, therefore, aware of availability; and,
- Employees who worked in small establishments with between five and 24 employees (14 per cent).

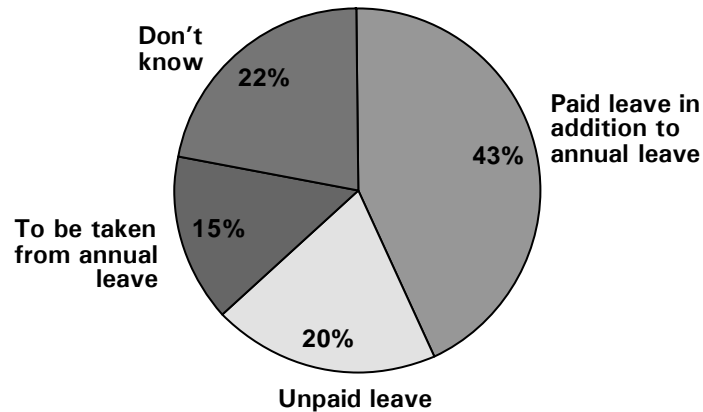
Where emergency time off for dependants was provided, employees reported that it was typically provided in the form of paid leave in addition to annual leave (43 per cent). A fifth of employees (20 per cent) said that this type of leave was unpaid and 15 per cent said it had to be taken out of their annual leave entitlement. However, over a fifth of employees (22 per cent) were unaware of whether the leave was paid or unpaid. It is possible that some of these employees had not taken emergency time off for dependants and, therefore, were unaware of the intricacies of the arrangement (see Figure 5.2).

¹¹³ How parents balance work, family and home (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming).

Figure 5.2

Provision of emergency time off - Pay

Q *Is this time off . . . ?*



Base: All employees who say that their employer provides emergency time off for dependants (1,487)

Source: MORI

Table A5.3 in the Appendices illustrates the variations in the payment of emergency time off for dependants by occupation, length of time with current employer, size of establishment and work status. Emergency time off for dependants that could be taken as paid leave (in addition to annual leave) was more likely to be available to employees who worked in large establishments with 250 or more employees (48 per cent), to those who worked full-time (46 per cent), those who had been with their current employer for five or more years (49 per cent) and managers and professionals (50 per cent). Conversely, the leave was more likely to be unpaid if employees worked part-time (26 per cent) or where in operative or unskilled occupations (35 per cent).

Taking time off to deal with an emergency

Just under half (45 per cent) of all employees had taken time off work, with their current employer, to deal with an emergency in the last year. The proportion here was higher than for those who experienced an emergency in the last year because the question on experience of an emergency specified that it should involve a dependant, whereas for take-up the type of emergency was unspecified. It does, however, demonstrate that employers allow employees to take time off in an emergency which does not necessarily involve a dependant (i.e. the leave was provided for beyond the legislation).

However, the findings suggest that many employees taking time off in an emergency were doing so for a dependant. Parents were more likely to have taken time off to deal with an emergency than other employees (54 per cent, compared with 40 per cent of non-parents) (see Table 5.2). Moreover, mothers were more likely to have taken time off to deal with an emergency at short notice than fathers (56 per cent compared with 51 per cent). This finding suggests that it is mothers who are more likely to be responsible for dealing with emergencies. Not surprisingly, this

figure was notably higher among lone mothers (68 per cent), as lone parents would have to deal with emergencies without the support of a partner.

Table 5.2: Have you taken time off at short notice to deal with an emergency in the last year and with your current employer?

	Total	Parent		Parental/ marital status	
		Parent	Non-parent	Coupled mother	Lone mother
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	45	54	40	54	68
No	55	46	60	46	32
Can't remember	*	*	*	*	-
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	2,003	876	1,032	252	87
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	2,003	825	1,094	260	86 ¹¹⁴

Source: MORI

The age of a parent's youngest child also appeared to affect whether an employee took emergency time off, with the proportion taking time off higher for parents with children under the age of 12. Similarly, employees who worked in managerial and professional and services and sales occupations were more likely to report taking time off at short notice to deal with an emergency than other occupation types (see Table A5.4).

Pay received and length of leave taken in the event of an emergency

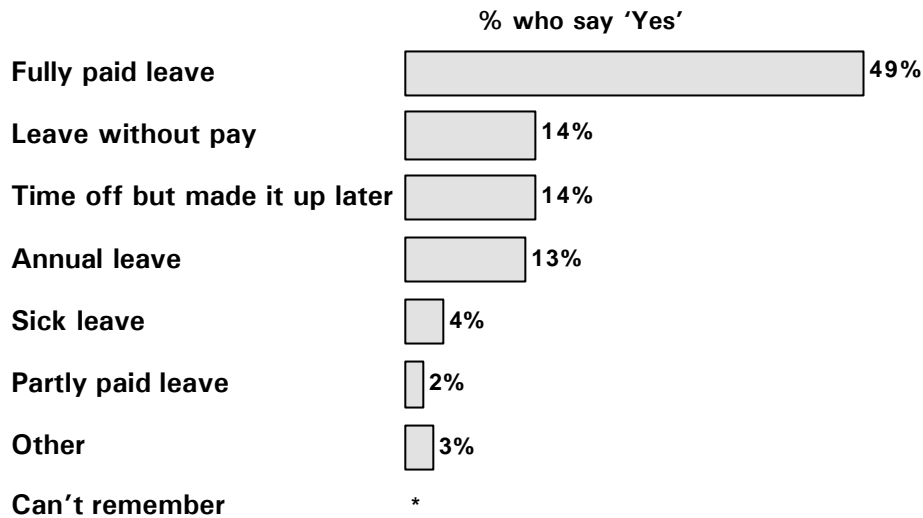
Employees who had taken time off at short notice to deal with an emergency were asked whether the time was taken as paid or unpaid leave and how many days they took off in total. Half (49 per cent) of those who took time off for an emergency took fully paid leave. A further one in seven took time off that they made up later (14 per cent), took leave without pay (14 per cent) or took annual leave (13 per cent) (see Figure 5.3).

¹¹⁴ These figures should be treated with a degree of caution due to small base sizes.

Figure 5.3

Emergency time off - Pay

Q Did you take this time off as . . . ?



Base: All who have taken time off at short notice to deal with an emergency in the last year and with their current employer (923) Source: MORI

Table A5.5 shows the variations as to whether employees were paid or not when they took time off in an emergency, by length of time with employer, age of employee, occupation group and working status. The following main findings were reported:

- Older employees, specifically those aged 45 and over (56 per cent), were more likely to be fully paid for emergency time off than younger employees (aged 16-24). Younger employees were more likely to take leave without pay (33 per cent);
- Managers and professionals were also more likely to take fully paid leave (55 per cent), while employees in operative and unskilled positions were more likely than other occupations to take leave without pay (33 per cent);
- Employees who had been with their current employer for five years or more (53 per cent) were also more likely to take fully paid leave; and,
- Part-time employees were also more likely to take unpaid leave (21 per cent, compared with 12 per cent of employees who worked full-time).

Over half (53 per cent) of the employees who had taken time off to deal with an emergency in the last year took just one or two days off, with a further fifth (22 per cent) taking three or four days off. At the other extreme, one in 20 (five per cent) employees took off 15 days or more. The mean number of days an employee took off in the last year, at short notice, to deal with an emergency was two.

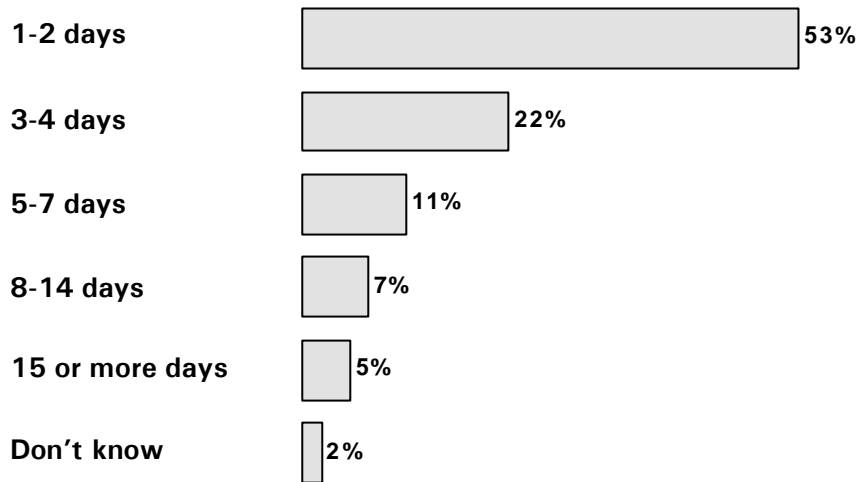
No clear patterns emerged in terms of the types of employees who were more likely to have taken short or long periods of time off to deal with emergencies, for example the mean number of days taken by parents did not differ from that of other employees. Moreover, whether the leave

was paid or unpaid did not appear to impact significantly on the length of time taken off to deal with an emergency, for example 53 per cent of those who had taken this form of leave fully paid, while 51 per cent of those who had taken it unpaid, took the same amount of time off.

Figure 5.4

Emergency time off - Leave taken

Q Can you tell me how many days you took in total . . . ?



Base: All who have taken time off at short notice to deal with an emergency in the last year and with their current employer (923) Source: MORI

Parental leave – provision and take-up

Provision of parental leave

In addition to paternity leave and emergency time off, employees who had dependent children were asked about the provision of parental leave in their workplace and their experiences of taking this form of leave. While a third of parents (35 per cent) said their employer provided parental leave, distinct from paternity leave and emergency time off, a quarter (25 per cent) said it was not provided by their employer.

However, as with awareness of the legislative provision for parental leave, a large proportion of parents (40 per cent) did not know about their employer's provision of this leave. Typically these employees were parents with older children (aged 12 years or older), who perhaps had not needed to take-up this leave and thus, had not enquired about it (51 per cent).

Reported provision varied by age of youngest child and occupation (see Table A5.6). Parents who had young children (under the age of two) were more likely to say their employer provided parental leave (40 per cent) than parents with older children (29 per cent of those whose youngest child was aged 12 or above). Managers and professionals (39 per cent) and skilled manual and clerical employees (37 per cent) were more likely to work for an employer who provided parental leave than employees in sales or service occupations (23 per cent) or unskilled and operative occupations (28 per cent).

There was no comparable question on parental leave in WLB1.

Formalisation of parental leave provision

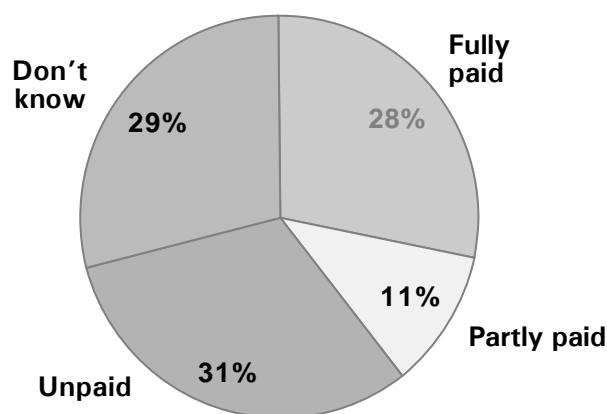
The majority of parents who said their employer provided parental leave said that they had a written policy for this form of leave (57 per cent) and one in five (18 per cent) said this was not the case. Again a relatively large proportion of employees (25 per cent) did not know this level of detail about their employer's provision and whether their employer had a written policy. Awareness of an employer having a written policy on parental leave was highest amongst managers and professionals (63 per cent) compared with 41 per cent of operative and unskilled employees. It was also higher amongst employees who worked in establishments with 250 or more employees (71 per cent) compared with those who worked in small establishments with less than 25 employees (47 per cent) (see Table A5.7).

Payment for parental leave

Parents who said their employer provided parental leave were also asked whether it was provided as paid or unpaid leave. A third of parents (31 per cent) reported that it was unpaid. A similar proportion (28 per cent) stated that it was fully paid, whilst just over one in ten thought that parental leave would be partly paid (11 per cent). Almost three in ten parents (29 per cent) who stated that their employer provided parental leave did not know whether it was provided paid or unpaid. Findings were either insignificant or small base sizes prevented further analysis of the variations of paid and unpaid provision by key employee characteristics.

Figure 5.5**Provision of parental leave - Pay**

Q Is this fully paid, partly paid or unpaid leave?



Base: All parents of dependent children aged 19 or under, who say their employer provides parental leave (311)

Source: MORI

Take-up of parental leave

Only a small proportion (12 per cent) of those parents who said that parental leave was available in their workplace had taken this form of leave in the last year and with their current employer. This translates as four per cent of *all* parents with dependent children taking parental leave in the last year¹¹⁵. Sample sizes were too small for further analysis of take-up of parental leave by employee characteristics and for analysis of the average numbers of days parents took off¹¹⁶.

Provision of other leave arrangements

All employees were asked whether three further types of leave were available at their workplace: bereavement leave, career breaks and study leave. As illustrated in Figure 5.6, while the vast majority of employees stated that bereavement leave was available (85 per cent), only half (52 per cent) said that study leave was provided and just a third (35 per cent) stated that it would be possible to take a career break.

This variation in reported provision of these types of leave was not surprising as bereavement leave was more likely to be needed by employees than study leave or career breaks and therefore, employees may be more aware that their employer provides it. Thus, perhaps not too great an emphasis should be placed on employees' perceptions of whether these three arrangements were available, especially when there were relatively high proportions of employees who did not know about their employer's provision.

Employees were also asked whether there were any other forms of leave available at their workplace. Only a minority of employees mentioned other types of leave (15 per cent), notably mentioning secondment or training leave (two per cent), compassionate leave¹¹⁷ (three per cent) and extended holiday leave (two per cent). The small numbers mentioning these other forms of leave meant that further analysis of the results by employee characteristics was not possible.

¹¹⁵ This is equivalent to 34 employees.

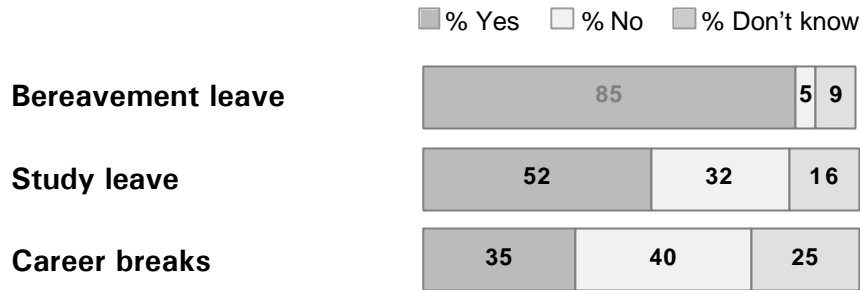
¹¹⁶ However, to give an idea of the responses, of those who took parental leave, 40 per cent took only one or two days. The figures must be treated with caution as they are based on responses from only 34 parents.

¹¹⁷ Given that employees had just been asked about 'bereavement leave', it was assumed that compassionate leave was available to cover issues other than the death of a close relative/partner.

Figure 5.6

Provision of other leave arrangements

Q Are the following practices provided by your employer?



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

The perceived availability of bereavement leave, study leave and career breaks varied consistently by the size of workplace in which respondents were employed, their occupation type, their length of service and work status (see Table A5.8). Findings included that:

- Employees in large workplaces (with 250 or more employees) were more likely to report that their employer provided career breaks, alongside study and bereavement leave, than employees who worked in small workplaces (with between five and 24 employees);
- Managers and professionals were much more likely to report that their employer provided these three types of leave than any other occupation type;
- Employees who had been with their employer for five years or more were more likely to state that all three forms of leave were provided by their employer than employees who had only been with their employer for less than a year; and,
- Employees who worked part-time were more likely than full-time employees to be unsure whether their employer provided all three forms of leave.

Comparing these findings to those of the WLB1 employee survey, fewer employees reported that their employer provided bereavement leave in the WLB2 survey (85 per cent) than in the WLB1 survey (95 per cent), but this may be a result of different question wording¹¹⁸. In the case of career breaks, there has been no significant change in the proportion of employees saying that their employer would allow a career break (37 per cent in WLB1, compared with 35 per cent in WLB2)¹¹⁹.

Provision for employees with different cultural and/or religious needs

Only a minority of employees (38 per cent) said that flexible working and leave arrangements available at their workplace made special allowances

¹¹⁸ The question wording in WLB1 is different to WLB2. In WLB1, respondents were asked 'If it proved necessary would your employer allow you personally to take...?'. In WLB2, respondents were asked 'Are the following practices provided by your employer...?'.
¹¹⁹ Study leave was not specifically asked about in the WLB1 study.

for employees with different cultural and/or religious beliefs. A quarter of employees (25 per cent) stated that arrangements did not make allowances in this regard, while a third (34 per cent) did not know. Three per cent of employees said it depended on the circumstances.

Table A5.9 shows the variations in this provision by key employee characteristics. Special allowances for employees with different cultural and/or religious beliefs were considered more common by young people (52 per cent of those aged 16-24). Similarly, employees who worked in Greater London were more likely to report that this was the case at their workplace (52 per cent), than employees in other areas. Special allowances were also more commonly reported by employees who worked in larger workplaces (46 per cent of establishments with 250 or more employees, compared with 37 per cent of establishments with between five and 24 employees).

Looking at differences by ethnicity, employees from non-white ethnic groups were more likely to mention that their employer provided these special allowances than employees from white ethnic groups (51 per cent and 37 per cent respectively).

Summary

There were three main findings with regards to the provision and take-up of the leave arrangements outlined above. Firstly, the findings suggested that employers' provision often extended beyond legislative entitlements. Prior to the introduction of paternity leave, for example, a fifth of fathers (19 per cent) said that paternity leave was available at their workplace with others stating that it was available at the discretion of a manager or that there was a written policy (10 per cent and seven per cent, respectively). Although the most common response was that no arrangements were in place at the time of the birth of their last child (24 per cent), the results showed that the lower the age of the youngest child, the more likely it was that fathers said that paternity leave was provided, which suggested that there had been an increase in provision.

In the case of time off for dependants, where the leave was provided, employees reported that it was typically provided in the form of paid leave in addition to annual leave (43 per cent), and half (49 per cent) of those who took time off for an emergency reported taking fully paid leave. For parental leave, where it was provided, 28 per cent of parents stated that it was fully paid, whilst just over one in ten thought that parental leave would be partly paid (11 per cent). However, leave arrangements beyond the legislation were not always provided, for example where time off for dependants was provided, 15 per cent of employees said that it would be taken out of their annual leave entitlement.

Secondly, there were high proportions of employees who were not aware of their employer's provisions of leave arrangements. This was particularly the case in relation to parental leave, where a large proportion of parents (40 per cent) did not know about their employer's provision of this leave. This was also the case for other leave arrangements, especially in the case of the detail of the provision. For example, where

time off for dependants was provided, over a fifth of employees (22 per cent) were unaware of whether the leave was paid or unpaid. Almost three in ten parents (29 per cent) who stated that their employer provided parental leave did not know whether it was provided paid or unpaid.

Finally, take-up of the leave arrangements varied. Just under half (45 per cent) of all employees had taken time off work, with their current employer, to deal with an emergency in the last year. Conversely, only a small proportion (12 per cent) of those parents who said that parental leave was available in their workplace had taken this form of leave in the last year and with their current employer. This translates as four per cent of *all* parents taking parental leave in the last year.

6

Childcare arrangements

Introduction

Traditional gender roles continue to persist, with women in the majority of dual income households still seeing themselves as the main provider of the caring and nurturing role. Most men still play the role of 'breadwinner', although there is some evidence to suggest that these roles are not so clearly defined. For example, many women describe how their husbands provide childcare while they are working, particularly if this involves shift work (MORI, 2001)¹²⁰. Nevertheless, studies have found British fathers' long working hours and poor access to family-friendly policies prevent them playing a fuller role in family life (Ferri and Smith, 1999)¹²¹.

While an estimated 58 per cent of mothers with a child under five years old are in work, and 43 per cent of women of working age have dependent children (ONS, 2001)¹²², mothers with young children are more likely to be working shorter hours than fathers. Furthermore, mothers of older children also have to reconcile work with school hours, availability of childcare and partners' work hours, often resulting in atypical and part-time employment (MORI, 2001)¹²³.

Childcare provision is important to enable parents to work, but there is considerable complexity in decision-making for working parents of young children. It is not only a matter of whether childcare services exist or not, but how appropriate they are both for children and for their parents – factors such as trust, location, affordability, opening hours, and ability to react to changes in children's and parents' lives are very important in this decision making process (MORI 2001; 2000)¹²⁴. For more details of the relative importance of cost see the *Repeat Study of Parental Demand for Childcare* (DfES, 2002).

¹²⁰ MORI (2001), *Women's Experiences and Perceptions of Government Initiatives*, The Women's Unit.

¹²¹ Ferri, E. and Smith, K. (1999). *Parenting in the 1990s*. London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

¹²² ONS (2001), *Labour Force Survey*, The Office of National Statistics.

¹²³ MORI (2001), *Women's Experiences and Perceptions of Government Initiatives*, The Women's Unit.

¹²⁴ MORI (2001), *Women's Experiences and Perceptions of Government Initiatives*, The Women's Unit.

MORI (2000), *Working Mothers Survey*, The Daycare Trust.

It is against this background that this chapter examines employer childcare provisions¹²⁵, and take-up of these forms of support. Employer childcare provisions (support) includes accessible, employer provided facilities, for example a crèche, as well as financial help with childcare, help with childcare during school holidays and the provision of information about local provision and availability. Finally it explores actual demand for this kind of provision from parents of children under 16.

Employer childcare provisions

This study found that only a quarter (24 per cent) of working parents (with children under 16) thought they had access to some form of employer childcare provision. This supports the findings from other studies such as the WLB1 employee survey and the survey of 'How Parents Balance Work, Family and Home' (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming)¹²⁶. Figure 6.1 shows the proportion of parents who said that a specific practice was provided by their employer with the highest being the provision of information about local childcare provision and availability (12 per cent).

In addition to these forms of provision, only three per cent of parents with children under 16 said their employer provided any other type of childcare arrangement support, with nine out of ten (89 per cent) saying their employer did not, and a further one in 10 (nine per cent) saying they did not know. The findings also highlighted the relatively high proportions of working parents who did not know about their employer's provision of childcare support, specifically in the case of financial help with childcare and help with childcare during the school holidays where more respondents did not know whether their employer provided this support than said they definitely did.

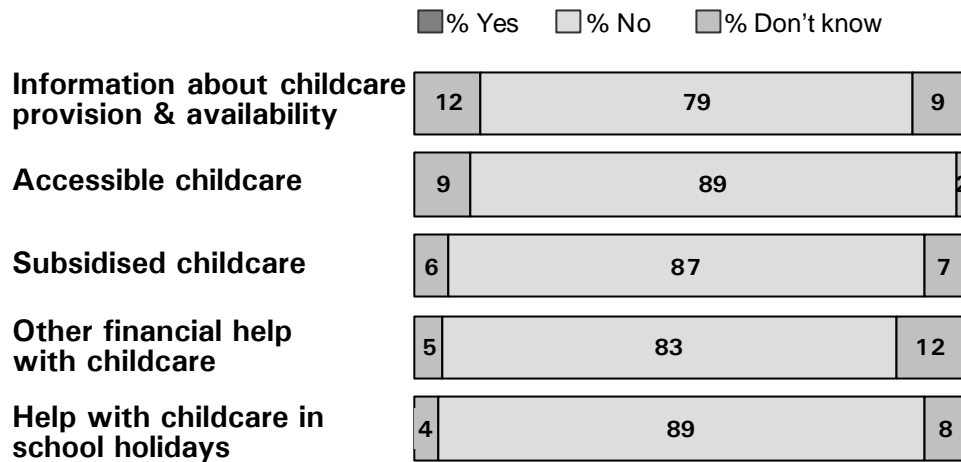
¹²⁵ The results on provision here are employees' perceptions of what their employer provides.

¹²⁶ How parents balance work, family and home, (Kersley, B. and Alpin, C., forthcoming).

Figure 6.1

Employer childcare provision

Q Does your employer provide the following?



Base: All employees who are parents of at least one child under 16 (770) Source: MORI

The findings suggested that there had been very little change in employer childcare provisions since the WLB1 survey (see Table 6.1). The only notable change being the slight decrease in the proportion of employees who reported that their employer provided information about local provision and availability of childcare (from 15 per cent in WLB1 to 12 per cent in WLB2).

Table 6.1: WLB1: Can you tell me if the organisation you work for provides any of the following facilities that you would be able to use if the need arose?

WLB2: Does your employer provide?

	WLB1		WLB2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	%	%	%	%
Accessible childcare	9	90	10	89
Subsidised childcare	5	90	6	87
Other financial help with childcare	4	89	5	83
Information about childcare provision & availability	15	76	12	79
Help with childcare in school holidays	6	88	4	89

Base: All employees with dependent children aged under 19, WLB1 (unweighted 3,306, weighted 3,277)

All employees who are parents of at least one child under 16, WLB2 (unweighted 770, weighted 734)

Source: MORI

Provision of information about local childcare provision and availability and accessible childcare

Focusing specifically on WLB2 findings, it is worth looking beyond the aggregate figures, despite the low levels of assistance reported, as there were variations in provision highlighted by different types of employee. This was only possible for two types of provision, the provision of accessible childcare facilities and information about childcare services and availability, because of small sample sizes and even for these the figures were based on responses from around 100 employees.

The provision of information about local childcare, for example, varied by occupational status. Sixteen per cent of managers and professionals reported that their employer provided information about childcare, as opposed to just six per cent of operatives and unskilled employees.

In terms of the provision of accessible childcare facilities, such as a crèche, playgroup or nursery, the following employees were more likely to report the availability of this form of support:

- **Mothers;** 12 per cent said that their employer provided accessible childcare, compared with seven per cent of fathers. This could be because employers were more likely to regard mothers as the main provider of the caring and nurturing role and thereby more likely to promote childcare support provision amongst this group. Alternatively, this could result from the organisational style of their workplace, or the nature of their jobs;
- **Part-time employees;** 14 per cent reported that their employer provided accessible childcare facilities, compared with eight per cent of employees who worked full-time. However, it should be noted that parental and work status are interlinked with mothers being more likely to work part-time than fathers.

Table A6.1 illustrates the variations in provision of childcare support provided by employers by gender of the employee, occupation and work status.

Take-up of employer childcare provisions

The above findings show only a quarter (24 per cent) of working parents (with children under 16) thought they had access to some form of employer childcare provision. However, the majority of employees (84 per cent) who reported that their employer did provide some form of assistance with childcare had not made use of the support in the last year.

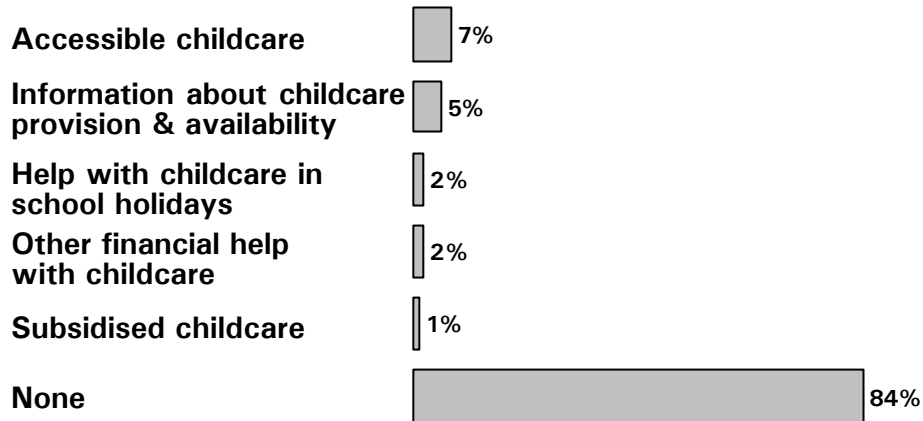
The lowest levels of take-up were reported by parents whose youngest child was aged 12 years or above (96 per cent had not used any form of employer provided childcare support) and fathers, with 92 per cent saying they had not used any of the forms of assistance provided by their employer. This will be explained by the fact that the mother normally takes responsibility for the childcare. Of those parents who had made use of any of their employer's provision, the most commonly used was accessible childcare facilities, but this was still used by less than a tenth of employees (seven per cent) (see Figure 6.2). This suggested that

either employer provision was not meeting parents' needs, or that other factors were influencing take-up (such as limited vacancies, affordability and availability outside the workplace).

Figure 6.2

Take up of employer supported childcare

Q Which, if any, have you used in the last year and with your current employer?



Base: All employees who are parents of at least one child under 16, who say their employer provides assistance with childcare (194)

Source: MORI

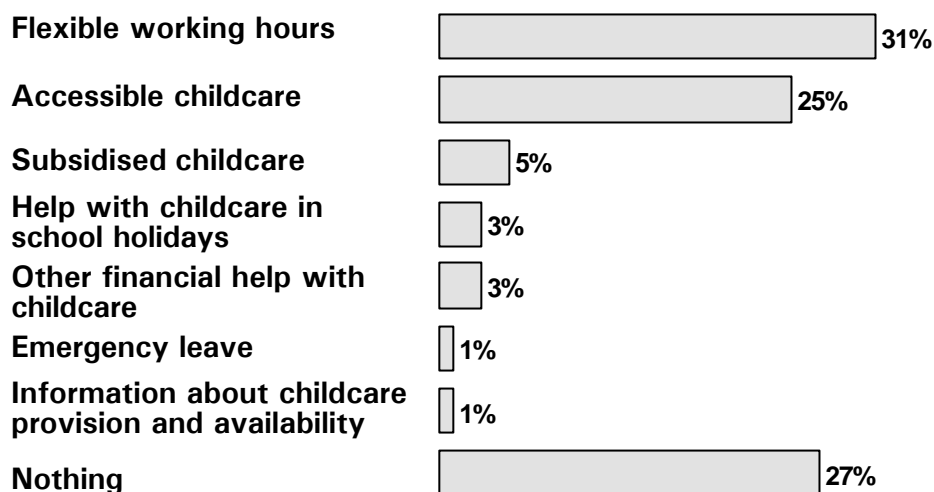
Demand for employer support for working parents

All employees were asked to consider what would be the one main arrangement, if anything, that employers could provide to help support working parents (see Figure 6.3). The most common response was flexibility in the hours of work (31 per cent) rather than help in providing childcare support such as accessible childcare facilities (25 per cent) or subsidised childcare (five per cent). This was not surprising given the low level of take-up of employer childcare provisions. Interestingly, over a quarter of employees (27 per cent) stated that they could think of nothing that employers could provide to support working parents.

Figure 6.3

Demand for employer support for working parents

Q What would be the one main arrangement, if any, that employers could provide to support working parents?



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Responses varied by whether the employer was a parent or not. For example, eight per cent of parents said that the one arrangement they would like employers to provide was subsidised childcare places, whereas only three per cent of employees who were not parents thought this would be helpful. Similarly a higher proportion of parents (28 per cent) than employees who were not parents (23 per cent) specified accessible childcare facilities. Conversely, significantly higher proportions of employees without children (35 per cent) thought that flexible working hours would be the most useful arrangement employers could offer working parents, compared with 26 per cent of parents. However, this was still the most popular arrangement specified by both parents and non-parents.

Summary

There had been very little change in employer provision of childcare support, such as accessible employer provided facilities, for example a crèche, financial help with childcare, help with childcare during school holidays or the provision of information about local provision and availability, in the last three years.

Only a small proportion of working parents (with children under 16) reported they had access to some form of childcare provision at the workplace (24 per cent) with relatively high proportions unaware of their employer's provision. The low levels of provision overall were, nevertheless, matched by low levels of take-up (less than 10 per cent) where facilities were provided. This was reinforced when employees were asked what their employer could provide to support working parents. The most common response was flexible working hours (31 per cent) and then 'nothing' (27 per cent). However, a quarter

(25 per cent) of employees suggested accessible childcare as an arrangement that employers could provide to support working parents. This would tend to suggest that working parents were still perceived as being in need of employer assistance in successfully balancing work with caring responsibilities.

7

Employee attitudes to work-life balance

Introduction

Previous studies have highlighted the benefits to both employers and employees of the introduction of flexible working practices such as fewer sick days and a more content workforce (Dex et al., 2002, 2003)¹²⁷. This final chapter examines employees' attitudes towards work-life balance and the impact, if they should take-up any of these practices.

Firstly, it explores employees' *attitudes* towards work-life balance by: i) discussing their responses (i.e. whether they agree or disagree and how strongly) to a series of statements about it, ii) looking at their views on recent legislation, and iii) examining what they consider their employers' future role to be in helping employees to achieve a work-life balance. Secondly, it assesses the *impact* on employees of taking up flexible working practices and leave arrangements. It does this in two ways. It looks at what employees' perceive would be the impact on their career progression and job security if they were to take-up these arrangements. Then, it analyses whether employees' responses to questions about employee-manager relations and satisfaction with their working arrangements varied by whether their employer provided and/or the employee took up work-life balance arrangements.

The ability to balance work and other aspects of your life

Employees were asked a series of questions about work-life balance. Their responses highlighted strong support for the importance of achieving a work-life balance, which is consistent with the findings from WLB1.

Almost all employees (95 per cent) considered that people work their best when they are able to balance their work and the other aspects of their lives, with 57 per cent who *strongly* agreed. This finding has not differed since WLB1. In addition, over three-quarters of employees (78 per cent) agreed that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want, once again consistent with the WLB1 study.

¹²⁷ Dex, Shirley and Colin Smith (2002), *The Nature and Pattern of Family-Friendly Employment Policies in Britain*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Dex, Shirley (2003), *Families and Work in the Twenty-First Century*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Employees were mindful of the impact that a change in working patterns can have on the establishment in which they work, with three in five (60 per cent) in agreement that they should not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business. These findings indicate that employees are now more conscious of the impact that a change in working patterns would have on their employer, than was previously the case. Significantly fewer employees in WLB1 agreed that employees must not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business (54 per cent in WLB1).

Employees' views on the role of the employer in achieving a balance between work and home life were divided. While a third of employees agreed that it is not the employer's responsibility to help people find a satisfactory work-life balance, over half (57 per cent) disagreed. Employees' attitudes on the role of the employer were consistent with WLB1.

There was broad agreement that employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties parents of young or disabled children face in balancing their work and family life (mentioned by 85 per cent of employees). With support for this, perhaps unsurprisingly, higher among working parents with young children.

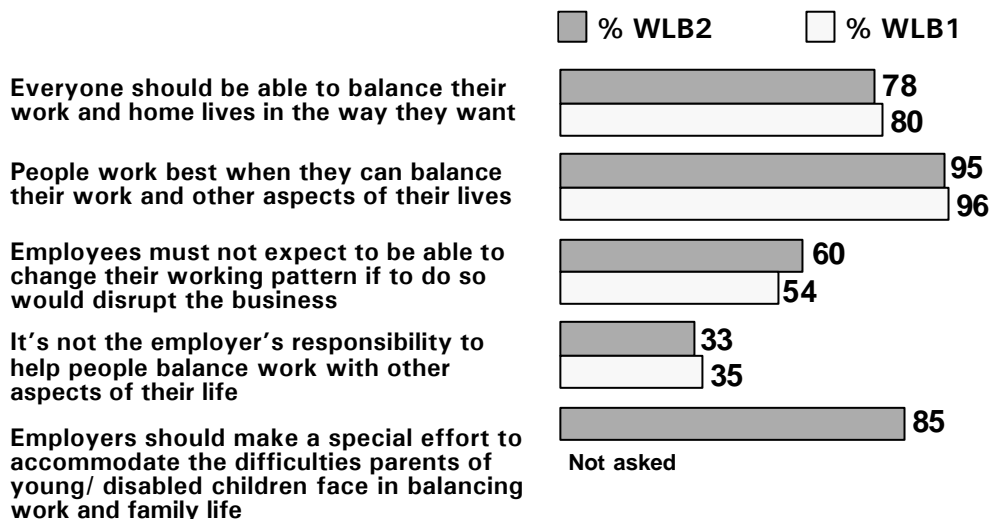
Figure 7.1 below illustrates (where comparable) how attitudes towards work-life balance issues have remained largely consistent since the WLB1 survey in 2000.

Figure 7.1

Balancing work and other aspects of your life

Q Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements and how strongly.

Table shows % who agree



Base: All employees (2,003 WLB2, 7,561 WLB1)

Source: MORI

The following main findings were reported in relation to the variations in attitudes towards work-life balance between different types of employees:

- Women, and particularly mothers, were more likely to perceive a link between a successful work-life balance and working at your best, than men (97 per cent of women agreed, compared with 94 per cent of men). Similarly, women were more likely to emphasize the overall importance of being able to balance work and family lives, than men (83 per cent of women, compared with 74 per cent of men);
- Men were more likely to believe that employees wishing to change their working pattern should take into account the possibilities of disruption to the business in which they work, than women (64 per cent, compared with 56 per cent). Furthermore, men were more likely to play down the employer's role in helping employees to maintain a work-life balance, than women (35 per cent of men did not consider it to be the employer's responsibility, compared with 30 per cent of women);
- The opinions of older employees (aged 55 and over) were in line with those of men. They were less likely to agree that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want, than employees aged between 25 and 44 years (72 per cent, compared with 80 per cent). In addition they were more likely to have agreed that employees cannot expect to change their working pattern if to do so disrupts business (71 per cent, compared with 49 per cent of employees aged between 16 and 24 years) and that the employer is not responsible for helping people balance work and other aspects of their life (39 per cent, compared with 31 per cent of employees aged between 25 and 44 years);
- Attitudes towards the issue of work-life balance also varied by occupation type. Employees in managerial and professional occupations (74 per cent) were less likely to agree that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want, than employees in clerical and manual (81 per cent) or operative and unskilled occupations (83 per cent). However, employees in clerical and manual occupations (38 per cent) and operative and unskilled occupations (38 per cent) typically down play the responsibility of the employer in helping people balance their work with other aspects of their life.

Table A7.1 in the Appendices details the findings for attitudes to work-life balance by the key sub-groups where variations are significant.

Attitudes towards new legislation on requesting flexible working

Along with the high proportion of employees who agreed that employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties parents of young or disabled children face in balancing their work and family life (mentioned by 85 per cent of employees), the majority of employees (69 per cent) considered that it was fair that employers should legally be made to consider requests to adopt flexible working practices from parents with young or disabled children. Again support increases among the very group who would benefit from this right, namely parents whose youngest child is aged five or under. In contrast,

a quarter (24 per cent) of employees whose youngest child is over six years of age believed that this right is unfair (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Next year employers will legally have to consider requests to adopt flexible working practices from parents with young children under the age of six or with disabilities.

Do you think this right is fair or unfair in relation to other employees without children under the age of six?

	Total	Age of youngest child			
		Under 2	2-5	6-11	12+
	%	%	%	%	%
Fair	69	73	76	64	67
Neither fair nor unfair	7	11	7	7	7
Unfair	20	14	14	26	22
Don't know	4	3	3	4	4
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>179</i>	<i>324</i>	<i>233</i>
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>294</i>	<i>201</i>

Source: MORI

The employer's role in helping employees achieve a better work-life balance

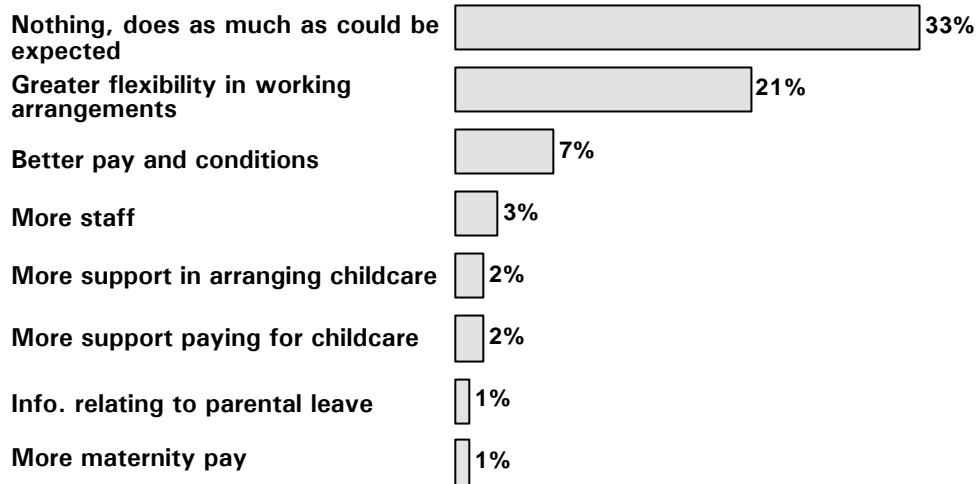
When asked what single thing their employer could do to help them achieve an improved work-life balance the most common response was very encouraging for employers, in that they were judged to already do as much as could be reasonably expected, mentioned by a third of employees.

However, a fifth (21 per cent) of employees stated that the provision of greater flexibility in working arrangements would help them to improve their work-life balance. Seven per cent mentioned that better pay and conditions would contribute towards a better work-life balance.

Figure 7.2

Employer's role in achieving a better work-life balance

Q *What single thing, if anything, could your employer reasonably provide for you personally to achieve a better work-life balance?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

NB: Chart shows all issues mentioned by 1 per cent or more of employees

Source: MORI

These overall findings hide wide variations in the views of different types of employee, in terms of what their employer could do to help them achieve a better work-life balance:

- While 37 per cent of women stated that their employer currently does as much as they could reasonably expect in this regard, men were less convinced (29 per cent). Instead men were more likely to raise the issue of better pay and conditions as a way of helping them achieve a better work-life balance (10 per cent, compared with four per cent of women who mentioned this);
- Parents with at least one child under the age of two were less convinced that their employer is doing as much as they can in this regard, than parents with children in full-time education (21 per cent, compared with 35 per cent of parents with children aged between six and 11). This finding may reflect the fact that parents with very young children were more likely to need their employer's help in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance than parents with older children;
- Almost half (47 per cent) of all part-time employees were satisfied with the current level of support offered by their employer in helping them to achieve a better work-life balance. However, only 29 per cent of full-time employees agreed. Instead they point to the need to introduce greater flexibility in working arrangements (23 per cent);
- Looking at occupation type, clerical and skilled and service and sales employees (37 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively) were more likely to be satisfied with the current level of support offered by their employer than employees in managerial and professional and operative and unskilled occupations (31 per cent in both cases).

Managers and professions highlighted the need for greater flexibility in working arrangements (23 per cent) and operative and unskilled employees called for better pay and conditions (14 per cent); and,

- Employees aged 55 or older were more likely to consider that their employer does all that they can in this regard, than young employees (46 per cent of employees aged 55 or over, compared with 30 per cent of employees aged 16-24). Perhaps younger employees have higher expectations of employers in regard to the provision of flexible working arrangements that would help achieve a better work-life balance.

Table A7.2 in the Appendices details the variations in employees' views in regard to the employer's role in helping employees achieve a better work-life balance.

The impact of adopting flexible working arrangements

Employees emphasised the importance of achieving a work-life balance, however changing working patterns in order to achieve this balance could impact on both job security and career prospects. The following section examines employees' perceptions of both their job security and career prospects.

Impact on job security of working fewer hours

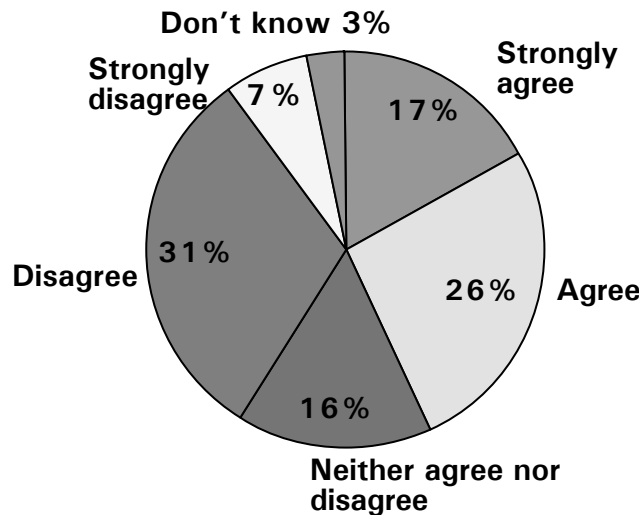
Considering job security first, employees were divided on the affect that working fewer hours would have. Just over two in five employees (43 per cent¹²⁸) felt that working fewer hours would negatively affect their job security, whereas 38 per cent disagreed.

¹²⁸ The figures referred to in the text are combinations of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' or 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree'.

Figure 7.3

The impact on job security of working fewer hours

Q *Considering your personal circumstances, to what extent do you agree or disagree that working fewer hours would negatively affect your job security?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Table A7.3 in the Appendices illustrates the variations in perceptions of the impact that working fewer hours would have. The main findings were that men (48 per cent) and specifically fathers (53 per cent) were more likely than women (38 per cent) and mothers (37 per cent) to consider that working fewer hours would have a negative impact on their job security. This may partly explain why these two groups were significantly less likely to have worked, or to currently work reduced hours (see Chapter 4).

Over half (54 per cent) of employees in unskilled and operative occupations felt that working fewer hours would negatively impact on their job security. In comparison to just a third (34 per cent) of employees who worked in services and sales occupations. Perhaps unsurprisingly, concern about the negative impact on job security of working fewer hours was more evident among employees in full-time positions than those in part-time employment (46 per cent of employees working full-time, compared with 34 per cent of part-time employees).

Employees who had taken up at least one flexible working arrangement were marginally less likely to consider working fewer hours to be something that would negatively affect their job security, than employees in general (42 per cent disagreed with the statement, compared with 38 per cent overall).¹²⁹

¹²⁹ This analysis excludes take-up of part-time and term-time working practices, as take-up of these arrangements was not asked of all employees. Further analysis is required to determine whether take-up of specific flexible working arrangements (rather than any one flexible working arrangement) impacts on views relating to job security.

The impact of work-life balance practices on career prospects

The following section examines the impact that different work-life balance initiatives may have on an employee's career prospects (see Figure 7.4 below).

Working fewer hours was more likely to be regarded as having a negative affect on career prospects, than job security. As highlighted above, while 43 per cent of employees considered that working fewer hours would have a negative impact on their job security, a higher proportion (51 per cent) considered that working reduced hours on a regular basis would negatively affect their career prospects.

In WLB1, employees were asked about the affect that working part-time might have on their personal career progression¹³⁰. A slightly higher proportion of employees expressed concern about the negative affect of working part-time in WLB1, (55 per cent compared with, 51 per cent in WLB2). However, this may be because they were asked specifically about part-time working, rather than working reduced hours in general.

Two-fifths (42 per cent) of employees think that not being able to work beyond their contracted hours would have a negative affect on their careers. This is in line with the findings in WLB1, where 43 per cent of employees said they thought not being able to work beyond their standard hours would adversely affect their career progression¹³¹. However, it is important to note that half of all employees (49 per cent) do not consider leaving on time to be something that negatively affects career prospects.

While half of employees (50 per cent) considered that taking leave to look after children or other dependants would *not* have an impact on their career prospects, 37 per cent think it could do so. These findings indicate that concern about the negative affect on career prospects of taking leave to look after dependants has decreased since WLB1. In the previous survey almost half of employees (47 per cent) thought taking extended leave to look after children would adversely affect their career progression, while just over half of employees (51 per cent) thought taking extended leave to care for others would adversely affect their career. However, caution should be taken in comparing WLB1 and WLB2

¹³⁰ The question wording in WLB1 was different to WLB2. WLB1 asked 'Do you think that in your current situation working part-time can adversely affect your personal career progression?' This is more specific than being asked about 'reduced hours' as is the case in WLB2.

¹³¹ The question wording in WLB1 was different to WLB2. WLB1 asked 'Do you think that in your current situation any of the following can adversely affect your personal career progression? – Not being able to work beyond your standard hours.' In WLB2, 'Do you think doing any of the following on a regular basis would have a negative affect on your career prospects? Not being able to work beyond your contracted hours (i.e. leaving on time)'.

findings as the questions were asked in a different way¹³². As a consequence the findings can be considered as indicative, at best.

A third of employees (32 per cent) said that working different working patterns, such as annualised hours or a compressed working week, could negatively affect their career. Although 17 per cent of employees felt that this form of flexible working did not apply to them. Looking at the findings from WLB1, a similar proportion of employees (30 per cent) thought that having more flexibility in when they work their normal hours would adversely affect their career progression¹³³.

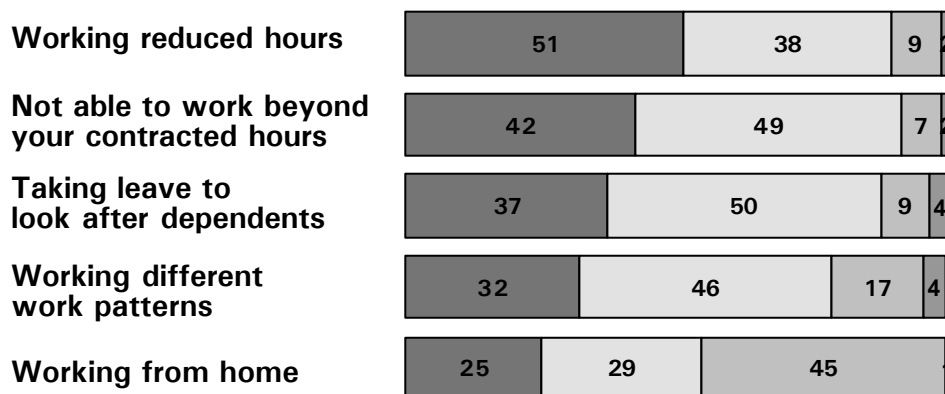
Just a quarter (25 per cent) of employees think that working from home could have a negative impact on their career. This implies that this work-life balance practice is considered least likely to have a negative affect on career prospects. However, it is important to note that 45 per cent of employees say that this way of working is not applicable to the job they do. Indeed, only three in ten (29 per cent) of employees were confident that working from home would *not* affect their career prospects.

Figure 7.4

Impact on career prospects

Q Do you think that doing any of the following on a regular basis would have a negative affect on your career prospects?

■ % Yes □ % No ▒ % Not applicable ▒ % Don't know



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

These aggregate findings hide variations by employee type in terms of the different types of work-life balance arrangement that were considered to have an negative affect on career prospects, as discussed below and illustrated in detail in Table A7.4 in the Appendices.

¹³² In WLB1 respondents were asked two separate questions about 'Taking extended leave to care for children' and 'Taking extended leave to care for others'. In WLB2, respondents were asked a single question about 'Taking leave to look after children or other dependants, e.g. maternity or paternity leave'. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that this question was asked in a different way in WLB1 (as noted above).

¹³³ WLB1 asks respondents about 'Having more flexibility in when you work your normal hours', but WLB2 asks about 'Working different working patterns e.g. annualised hours or a compressed working week'.

The following groups were more likely to express concern about their career prospects, in light of adopting flexible working arrangements, than others:

- **Gender:** Male employees were more likely to express concern about changes in their hours affecting their career prospects, than female employees. Around three in five men (56 per cent) considered that their career prospects would be adversely affected if they worked reduced hours and 46 per cent said that their career prospects would be affected if they did not work beyond their contracted hours. This is compared with 45 per cent of women who expressed concern about working reduced hours and 37 per cent who expressed concern about not working beyond their contracted hours on a regular basis;
- **Employees with a supervisory role:** In terms of career prospects, supervisors were more likely to express concern about the negative affect of working reduced hours, not being able to work beyond their contracted hours and working from home than employees who do not have supervisory responsibilities;
- **Managers and professionals:** Employees in this category were more likely to express concern about the negative impact of not being able to work beyond their contracted hours (46 per cent) than employees working in clerical and skilled (37 per cent) or sales and service occupations (34 per cent). They were also more likely to consider that working reduced hours would have a negative affect on their career prospects than all other occupation types.
- **Employees working full-time:** Concern about the negative affect on their career of adopting work-life balance arrangements on a regular basis was more likely to be raised by full-time employees than those working part-time. Notably in terms of not being able to work beyond their contracted hours (45 per cent of full-time employees considered that this would have a negative affect, compared with 32 per cent of employees working part-time). Working different work patterns was also of greater concern for full-time employees (34 per cent), than those working part-time (27 per cent), as was working from home (27 per cent full-time employees, 15 per cent part-time employees) and working reduced hours (56 per cent of full-time employees, 33 per cent of part-time employees).

These findings correlate with the significantly lower level of take-up of practices such as part-time working and working reduced hours among men, full-time employees, and managers and professionals. However, the views of employees on the possible negative affect on their career prospects of adopting different working practices such as those outlined above are broadly consistent whether they have experience of taking up at least one flexible working arrangement or not¹³⁴ (see Chapter 4 for more information on take-up of flexible working arrangements).

¹³⁴ This analysis excludes take-up of part-time and term-time working practices, as take-up of these arrangements were not asked of all employees. Further analysis is required to determine whether take-up of specific flexible working arrangements (rather than any one

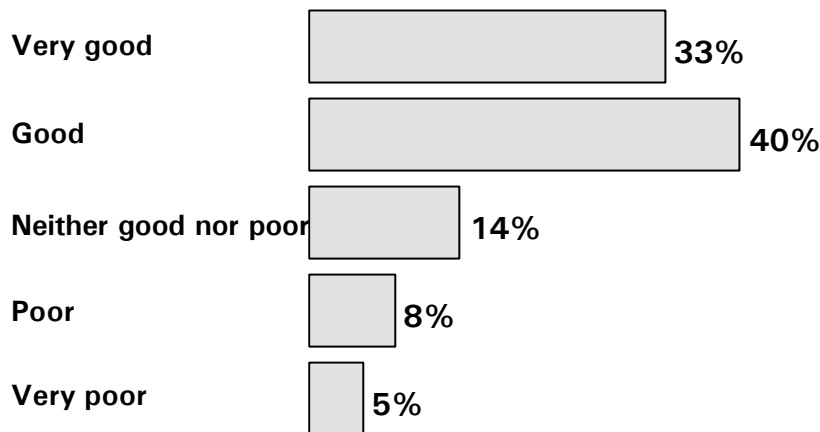
Relations between managers and employees

Almost three-quarters of employees (73 per cent) reported that relations with managers at their workplace were good, while a third (33 per cent) perceived them to be very good (see Figure 7.5 below).

Figure 7.5

Relations between managers and employees

Q *In general, how would you describe relations between managers and employees at the establishment where you work? Are they?*



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Table A7.5 shows breakdown by key employee characteristics, while the main findings are as follows. Female employees were more positive about relations between employees and managers, than men (36 per cent considered relations to be very good, compared with 30 per cent). Moreover, part-time employees state that relations are better than full-time employees (39 per cent and 31 per cent respectively).

The longer employees have been with their employer, the more jaded they appear about management relations: 38 per cent of those with less than a years service say relations are very good, falling to 30 per cent of employees who have been with their employer for five or more years. Furthermore, operative and unskilled employees are less likely to view relations between managers and employees as positive than other employees.

Impact of provision of work-life balance arrangements on employee-manager relations

Employees who stated that at least one flexible working arrangement would be made available in their workplace were more likely to consider relations between managers and employees as very good, than employees who stated that no flexible working arrangements would be

flexible working arrangement) impacts on views relating to career prospects. In addition, further analysis would be able to determine whether other factors are affecting employee attitudes on their career prospects, and if there is an actual correlation between take-up of flexible working arrangements and perceptions of career prospects.

available (35 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively)¹³⁵. Looking at the availability of flexible working arrangements further (as illustrated in Table 7.2 below) we can see that employees who said that four or more arrangements would be available were more likely to rate relations between employees and managers as very good, than employees who said that just one arrangement was available.

Table 7.2: In general how would you describe relations between managers and employees at the establishment where you work?

	Total	Number of flexible working arrangements employee said would be made available to them				
		None	One	Two	Three	Four or more
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	33	23	26	36	35	44
Good	40	32	41	39	45	41
Neither good nor poor	14	23	16	14	12	9
Poor	8	13	11	6	5	4
Very poor	5	10	6	4	2	2
Don't know	*	0	1	1	0	*
<i>Base: All employees (unweighted)</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>458</i>	<i>407</i>	<i>390</i>	<i>440</i>
<i>Base: All employees (weighted)</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>408</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>435</i>

Source: MORI

Attitudes towards current working arrangements

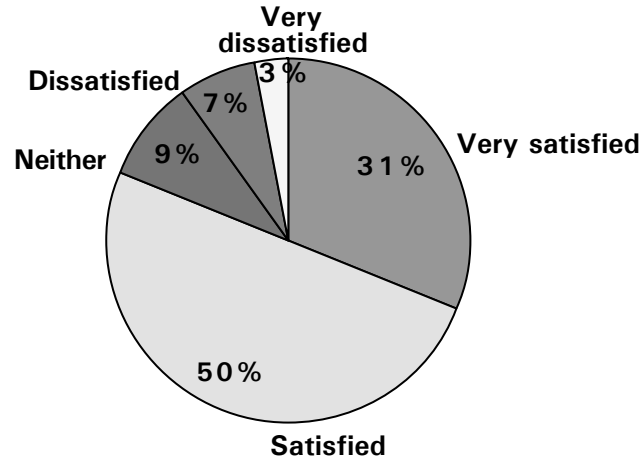
It is encouraging to note that the vast majority of employees said that they were satisfied with their current working arrangements, at the point of being surveyed. Figure 7.6 below shows that while 50 per cent said they were satisfied, a further 31 per cent were very satisfied.

¹³⁵ This analysis excludes availability of part-time and term-time working practices, as availability of these arrangements was not asked of all employees. Further analysis is required to determine whether availability of specific flexible working arrangements (rather than any one flexible working arrangement) impacts on views relating to relations in the workplace. In addition, further analysis would be able to determine whether other factors are affecting employee attitudes on employee-manager relations, and if there is an actual correlation between availability of flexible working arrangements and perceptions of relations.

Figure 7.6

Attitudes towards current working arrangements

Q To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your overall current working arrangement?



Base: All employees (2,003)

Source: MORI

Satisfaction with working arrangements was higher among women (36 per cent very satisfied), and in particular women without dependent children (39 per cent) (see Table A7.6). It is also higher among employees working part-time (40 per cent) and older employees (39 per cent of those aged 55 or over). Employees in sales and services occupations (37 per cent) and those working in small workplaces with between five and 24 employees (37 per cent) were also significantly more satisfied with their current arrangements.

However, it should be noted that levels of dissatisfaction were notably higher among employees working in operative and unskilled positions (15 per cent say they were dissatisfied in total).

Employees who have been consulted about adjusting their working arrangements (either directly or via a representative)¹³⁶ were more likely to state that they were very satisfied with their current working arrangements (38 per cent) than employees who have not been consulted about this issue (22 per cent). Furthermore, satisfaction was also higher among employees who considered their manager to be doing enough to promote and provide flexible working practices. Two in five (40 per cent) of employees in this category were reportedly very satisfied with their current working arrangements. However, it is important to bear in mind that other issues may be driving satisfaction, such as occupation type (as noted above).

¹³⁶ See Chapter 4 for full details about consultation on working arrangements.

Impact of take-up of flexible working arrangements and satisfaction with working arrangements

In this section we briefly explore whether employees' satisfaction with working arrangements is affected by current, or recent, take-up of different working arrangements¹³⁷.

Overall, employees who stated that they had taken up one or more flexible working arrangements were more likely to be very satisfied with their current working arrangements (35 per cent) than employees who had not taken up at least one flexible working arrangement (28 per cent very satisfied¹³⁸).

Looking at this in more detail: Employees were more likely to be very satisfied with their working arrangements if they worked, or had recently worked, only during school term-time (43 per cent very satisfied, compared with 37 per cent who had not taken up the opportunity to work during school term-time only), from home on a regular basis (41 per cent very satisfied, compared with 36 per cent who had not taken up the opportunity to work from home), or reduced hours for a limited period (37 per cent very satisfied, compared with 33 per cent who had not taken up the opportunity to work reduced hours for a limited period).

Different factors influence satisfaction with working arrangements and further analysis would be needed to determine whether this is a result of working flexibly.

Summary

There was strong support for the importance of achieving a balance between work and home life. The majority of employees considered that people work their best when they are able to achieve this balance and believe that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want.

Employers were regarded as having a role in helping employees to achieve a reasonable work-life balance, although employees were mindful of the impact that changing working patterns can have on business. However, when asked what single thing their employer could do to help them achieve an improved work-life balance the most common response was that they were judged to already do as much as could be reasonably expected.

Employees were concerned about the consequences of adopting flexible working practices in terms of their job security and career prospects. Employees were more likely to agree that working fewer hours would negatively affect their job security than disagree. However, only in the case of working reduced hours (such as part-time working) did more employees consider that adopting this way of working would negatively affect their career (51 per cent) than those who stated that it would not (38 per cent). There was still relatively high proportions of employees who considered that not being able to work beyond their contracted

¹³⁷ Take-up of flexible working arrangements is discussed in full in Chapter 4.

¹³⁸ This analysis excludes take-up of full-time, part-time and term-time working practices, as questions relating to take-up of these arrangements were not asked of all employees.

hours (i.e. leaving on time) (42 per cent), taking leave to look after their children or other dependant (37 per cent), working different work patterns (32 per cent), or working from home (25 per cent) would have a negative affect on their career.

The good news is that the vast majority of employees reported that relations between employees and managers at their workplace were good and that they were satisfied with their current working arrangements. On both factors the availability of flexible working arrangements positively influenced employees' views.