

Expert Commission  
on the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Federal Government:  
**New ways of restructuring paid work and (unpaid) care work**

## Factsheet 4:

# Gender equality in dependent employment

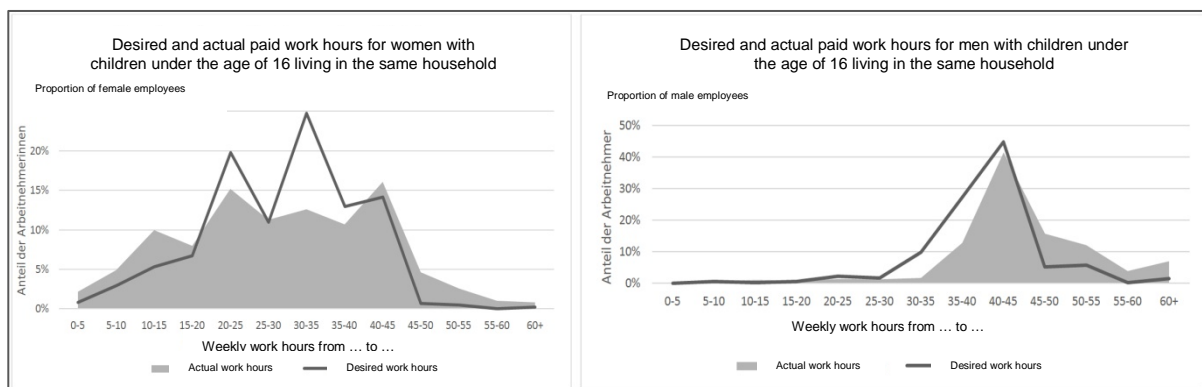
Conditions in dependent employment are essential when it comes to achieving equal capabilities for women and men. Employers and social partners can advance gender equality in both private enterprises as well as in the public sector via appropriate work organisation and corporate culture.

The underlying situation implicit in the still widespread “traditional standard employment relationship” makes it harder for persons with care responsibilities to maintain a fair employment-care work arrangement.

The concept of a 40-hour working week as standard for dependent employment disadvantages and does not do justice to the normal employee with care obligations, who is unable or unwilling to dedicate him- or herself exclusively to gainful employment. The importance of being responsible for children, dependants or oneself is then put aside. It comes as no surprise that full-time employees therefore wish for somewhat shorter working hours and part-time employees for longer ones.

- » Women with children often wish for employment of between 30 to 35 hours per week.
- » Men with children often wish for a slight decrease in their weekly work times.

### Allocation of wished for and factual (paid) work hours of women with children



Source: SOEP 2014: Calculations by the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT), commissioned by the Expert Commission.

### Temporal and locational flexibility

Flexible work concepts and mobile working provide the opportunity to allocate the shares of paid work and care work more equally between women and men.

Employers can thus add to work satisfaction, ease the return to work from parental leave and increase the time that workers stay in their job with the enterprise.

- » The example of single parents particularly shows that work routines must be flexible in order to show consideration for the challenges of private organisation of unpaid care work.
- » Temporal and locational flexibility at work can be reconciled with good performance on the job and with accepting management responsibilities.

A life-phase concept of working time and location provides everyone with the same options for forming an earner-carer-arrangement based on partnership.

- » Companies often reduce 'gender equality' to compatibility of family-/elderly-/care work and paid work, which is then treated more or less as an offer to female employees only.

### **Part-time work and flexible working time**

The Expert Commission recommends temporary part-time work arrangements. This would increase flexibility in care work phases. The recommended introduction of a universal right to flexible allocation of work times - unless operational reasons at the job make this impossible - would also help to achieve this objective.

- » Elective working time concepts like an Elective Working Time Act (Wahlarbeitszeitgesetz) would give the individual employee with care obligations the capability to adjust their working times to their needs without encountering long-term disadvantages.
- » Parents should be able to claim a flatrate benefit (family allowance) for up to 24 months if both continue working in a reduced full-time mode within a certain time corridor.

Flexible working time concepts can change working time routines and contribute toward reducing discrimination against part-time employees.

### **Mobile working**

Mobile working provides the opportunity to allocate the shares of paid work and care work more equally between women and men.

- » Men working from home can also allocate more time for childcare.
- » Women working from home work more hours and are less often employed in precarious ways.
- » Furthermore, up to 80% of time saved on travel benefits the family.
- » About 50% of employed persons would like to work in a mobile manner.

The Expert Commission recommends a right to mobile work - where possible, given the operational circumstances.

- » Mobile working should be part of a company's working time concept and become part of a new Elective Working Time Act.

### **Protection against softened boundaries**

Temporal and locational flexibility give the employee sovereignty over her or his working time, but also create the risk of softened boundaries, excessive demands and work overload. Flexible working time models should thus go along with health and safety measures.

- » This includes gender equality in personnel management, seeing all workers as active in both paid work as well as care work.
- » This includes offering all workers the opportunity to benefit from temporal and locational flexibility. To prevent work overload, sufficient personnel capacities have to be guaranteed.
- » Existing agreements and good solutions should be elevated to collective agreement (or legal) levels.

## **Corporate gender equality for discrimination-free work environments**

To achieve change in corporate culture as well as in public administration, new principles are needed.

- » If corporate and administrative working cultures are to change, top management must set a visible example and present itself as role model.
- » This also requires management cultures that dispense with availability expectations if these conflict with care-work responsibilities.
- » Part-time management, e.g. with a 'tandem solution', whereby two senior managers share a management position, is just one of several possibilities.

Employers and social partners have already devised exemplary gender equality policy measures.

- » Reflection training and the revision of preconceived ideas of gendered roles at all levels of management;
- » educational opportunities and concepts for career advancement with an explicit gender equality dimension;
- » the prevention of and fight against sexual harassment;
- » coupling of managerial remuneration to the attainment of gender equality targets in human resource policy;
- » gender-equality oriented staff assessment;
- » transparent payment systems and anti-discriminatory job rating procedures;
- » anonymised application procedures;
- » mentoring programmes;
- » gender equality officers playing a supportive and advisory role in order to prevent discrimination.

Human resource management taking into account gender equality issues narrows the pay gap and supports a discrimination-free work environment.

- » Especially qualified personnel will look for work corresponding to their expectations regarding remuneration and work-time organisation.

## **Gender equality in the public sector**

In terms of gender equality, the situation in the public sector is slightly better than that in private business.

- » Standing at 6%, the Gender Pay Gap in the public sector is lower than the overall average of 21%.

## **Gender equality laws**

Existing laws on the promotion of gender equality and of women require federal and state agencies to provide for gender equality in personnel management. The public sector could thus assume a role-model function and instigate a shift in working and management cultures.

- » There are hints that strengthening the role of gender equality agendas and gender equality officers would be helpful.

## Discrimination-free and gender-equality oriented staff assessment

In the public sector, where job advancement and career structures are more formalised than in the private sector, staff assessment plays a key role.

- » Part-time work, teleworking, parental leave and nursing care leave are often negatively assessed, though this lacks objective justification.

A problem are assessment criteria which the appraiser can only assess in a subjective manner and which focus on the person's characteristics. They are prone to the unconscious influence of gender stereotypes, individual prejudices and judgements as well as other aspects that are not related to the person's performance. Minimum standards and assessment criteria and processes should be incorporated in respective laws and guidelines.

- » To ensure transparency, assessment criteria should be substantiated.
- » Both appraiser and appraisee should be trained in respect of gender competence and the risk of discrimination.
- » Gender equality officers and staff councils should be involved in critical stages of assessment processes, especially when assessment criteria are being determined, as well as in appraisal meetings.

For the appraisal on management level, it should also be considered in how far the appraisee has successfully strived for gender equality.

### Further reading:

Expert Commission on the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Federal Government (2017): New ways of restructuring paid work and (unpaid) care work. Expertise of the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Government. Available online at

[www.gleichstellungsbericht.de/gutachten2gleichstellungsbericht.pdf](http://www.gleichstellungsbericht.de/gutachten2gleichstellungsbericht.pdf)

- With regards to this factsheet, see in particular chapters C.I, C.III and C.V

### Factsheet created by the Agency for the Second Gender Equality Report

#### Contact:

Institute for Social Work and Social Education  
Agency for the Second Gender Equality Report  
of the German Federal Government  
Brachvogelstrasse 1; 10961 Berlin

[www.gleichstellungsbericht.de](http://www.gleichstellungsbericht.de)  
[gleichstellungsbericht@iss-ffm.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbericht@iss-ffm.de)



#### Funded by:



Bundesministerium  
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen  
und Jugend