



**EEO TRUST**  
**Work & Life Bulletin**  
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- 02 EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2007 winners  
Ten years of supporting work-life balance
- 07 Job sharing – Ways to make it work
- 09 Latest news
- 09 Recent research

## EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2007

### Large Organisation Award

**Winner:** Franklin Kindergarten Association

**Runner-up:** Anderson Lloyd Lawyers

### Small to Medium Organisation Award

**Winner:** Phoenix Inc Supported Employment

### First Steps Award

**Winner:** Enterprising Manukau

### Manāki Tangata Innovation Award

**Winner:** Southern Cross Healthcare

### Diversity Award

**Winner:** New Zealand Defence Force

**Winner:** Beca Transportation

### Walk the Talk Award

**Winner:** Helen Anderson (Ministry of Research, Science and Technology)

**Winner:** Matt Pickering (ANZ National Bank)



# Ten years of supporting work-life balance

The 10th anniversary of the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards was marked with a special Diversity Award and a diversity symposium on the day of the awards presentation.

Around 400 people attended *The Diversity Effect*, hearing an eclectic range of presenters explore a range of diversity issues. Keynote speaker was author Frans Johansson who described the enormous creative impact of bringing

diverse people together into work teams.

While all the speakers touched on work-life themes, Dr Sven Hansen of PricewaterhouseCoopers most directly addressed issues related to work-life balance and resilience. His presentation slides are available at [www.eeotrust.org.nz/symposium/speakers-presentation.cfm](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/symposium/speakers-presentation.cfm) and highlights of his and the other speakers' presentations will be made available on DVD.

The new Diversity Award attracted 16 entries, the largest number of entries of any EEO Trust Work & Life Awards category in the past 10 years. Judges chose two winners, one from the public sector and one from the private sector. Go to [www.eeotrust.org.nz/awards/leaders.cfm#faq1305](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/awards/leaders.cfm#faq1305) for details of all the awards winners.

## Lawyers and kindergarten teachers – supported at work and at home

A South Island law firm and a South Auckland kindergarten association were both recognised by the judges of the Large Organisation Award at this year's EEO Trust Work & Life Awards presented on Thursday 30 August.

Although they face very different business challenges and operational demands, both Anderson Lloyd Lawyers and Franklin Kindergarten Association are acutely aware of the need to recruit and retain the very best staff. They developed and refined work-life initiatives which meet the needs of staff and suit the demands of their businesses.

Winner of the Large Organisation Award was Franklin Kindergarten Association (FKA), an incorporated society which employs 70 teachers and 30 support staff in 25 kindergartens to the south of Auckland. Its funding comes almost entirely from the Ministry of Education as families only contribute through non-compulsory fees and fundraising. Most of its budget is spent on salaries.

Staff retention is critical to the FKA's success as Professional Practice Manager Raewyn van Lingen explains. "It's important that children receive continuity of care with adults who they know well and trust."

However, many of the usual retention strategies such as higher remuneration packages and flexible working hours are not possible given the constraints of the business. "Teachers must start and finish work at set times in order to meet teacher-child ratios and it is these ratios that determine the FKA's income," says Raewyn van Lingen.

The FKA provides as much flexibility as it can by offering full-time and part-time roles and supports staff in many ways, first finding out what's important to them.

For example, in 2003 the FKA began consulting with head teachers on what would support them in their role. Head teachers reported that the high volume of administrative work meant they regularly took work home, spending about 10 hours a week on this extra work.

As a result, the FKA introduced a release allocation to each head teacher of four half-days each term. This allocation costs \$30,000 per annum and is considered by the FKA as an investment



*The team from Franklin Kindergarten Association accept their certificate: Cathy Bebelman, Victoria Johnston, Hon Margaret Wilson MP, Dianne Akast, Marianne Mudaliar and Rhonda Barrett.*

in retaining quality staff.

As a result of this approach, the turnover of teaching staff within the FKA over the past three years averaged eight per cent per year. All of its 70 teaching positions are currently filled and all its permanent teaching staff are qualified and registered teachers. Nearly 50 of its permanent staff have been employed by the FKA for five years or longer.

"We estimate that the savings over the past three years through retaining employees who have returned to work after a period of parental leave is more than \$300,000," says Raewyn van Lingen.

As a result of changes in the profession, the FKA now employs part-time support staff in kindergartens to help teaching staff manage their administrative workloads. The support staff are almost all employed in part-time positions, generally working up to 15 hours each week.

Teaching staff are entitled to six weeks annual leave but, in the past, staff were often interrupted during their breaks. In 2005, the FKA defined the first week of any break as annual leave days. It tries to ensure that teaching staff are not interrupted by any work matters during their annual leave.

"Although annual leave allocations are traditionally taken during term breaks, previously there was no clear definition around which days were leave days and which were days that teachers could be required to work," says Raewyn van Lingen. "As a result, many teachers would

not have an uninterrupted break and they found it difficult to plan their annual leave. They could be completing administration work, supervising cleaning and other work at the kindergartens, attending professional development and being involved in other work-related activities."

Since 1997 the FKA has given every employee up to \$150 annually to help them meet the cost of activities that support a work-life balance, such as memberships to sports clubs, costs of clothing or items associated with health and wellbeing. This money can also be used for costs associated with teaching such as stationery and office equipment that are used at home for work-related activities.

Regular professional development is an on-going expectation of teachers. Teachers face paying about \$600 annually for professional development courses. The FKA arranges and fully funds professional development courses for teaching staff throughout the year. "If any teacher chooses to attend additional professional development courses they will receive \$150 per year towards the cost," says Raewyn van Lingen.

All staff who have been employed for two years or longer are eligible for a study grant of \$400 for teachers and support staff and \$500 for head teachers.

Teacher working hours are structured to ensure that all teachers have no more than 26.5 child contact hours and 13.5 non-contact hours each week. This helps teams complete administrative work,

attend meetings and deal with other professional matters during working hours.

Raewyn van Lingen says teaching staff can transfer to similar positions in other FKA kindergartens and to less senior roles or positions. "This enables teaching staff to stay in work when their personal circumstances change."

The association employs an increasingly ethnically diverse workforce and a range of initiatives encourages staff to include celebrations and significant cultural events in the kindergarten programme.

FKA management plans to continue to strengthen its work-life initiatives. Raewyn van Lingen says it needs to address a number of issues including an ageing workforce, strong competition for trained teachers, retention of administration staff and the ongoing funding constraints.

"We're really proud of what we manage to achieve on a shoestring budget," says Raewyn van Lingen.

Like FKA, the runner-up for the Large Organisation Award, Anderson Lloyd Lawyers, was interested in finding ways to recruit and retain staff, particularly female staff. It recognised that the relatively low number of women in the senior ranks of law firms throughout New Zealand, indicated a waste of talent and experience, particularly given the high number of women graduating from law school. It has consciously used flexible working practices to try to redress the balance for many years and more than half its 65 partners/associates and solicitors are now women.

Anderson Lloyd Lawyers is represented in Dunedin, Queenstown and Christchurch but its work spans the length and breadth of New Zealand. It employs 86 lawyers and legal staff and 58 secretarial and support staff.

While it has offered a range of work-life initiatives for many years, the firm introduced a flexible working policy last December after thorough consultation at all levels.

Anderson Lloyd now has 55 people out of a staff of 144 on some form of flexible work arrangement. This includes 18 on part-time, three on school term-time, two on job share and 32 on some other flexible time arrangement like



*The Anderson Lloyd Lawyers team: Janice Finnie, Kelly Pankhurst, Hon Margaret Wilson MP, Lauren Semple, Bill Eade.*

compressed working weeks. Career breaks, study leave and domestic leave are all available and many staff can do their work from home when required.

If accounts from staff and partners are anything to go by, Anderson Lloyd's work-life initiatives make a real difference to people's ability to contribute fully at work, confident that their personal commitments are being met.

Legal Executive Nadine Smith says, "I've been very happy with the way Anderson Lloyd have been accommodating to my needs to meet work-life balance. I was able to set my own hours (within reason of course) when I indicated that I wanted to come back to work after maternity leave but not at full-time hours."

And HR Assistant Janice Finnie describes how flexibility works for her and Anderson Lloyd. "The availability of flexible working initiatives at Anderson Lloyd allows me to manage family commitments and lead a full and healthy life outside work. The hours I work enable me to spend time with my children each day when they are not tired or grumpy; and it enables my children to take swimming lessons, art classes, and participate in gymnastics and rugby."

Staff can leave work suddenly to deal with family emergencies or take time off for appointments and make it up later. Phased retirement plans are also available.

Anderson Lloyd's other work-life balance initiatives include reimbursement of \$150 annually for any activity that

promotes and maintains general personal health and wellbeing. An active social club arranges sports events, drinks and meals, as well as charity fundraising efforts.

"We've observed a dramatic improvement in employees' commitment to the firm since the introduction of our flexible work practices," says HR Manager Dunedin Kelly Pankhurst. "They appreciate the efforts that the firm puts into a healthy work-life balance. This is evident in our staff retention rate and length of service. Our employees consider the impact on their home life when moving to a firm with a non-flexible working policy."

Over the past two years 17 employees have become pregnant. Five are still due to take parental leave and 11 have taken leave and returned to work. Only one resigned from her position. Most of the women indicated that the flexibility of their hours was a key factor in their decision process.

"We evaluate the attitudes and receptiveness of our staff on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis," says Kelly Pankhurst. "We encourage our staff to be open with us about any home-related issues that may affect their performance at work and we then guide and support them in any way we can."

## Walk the Talk Award winners

Two winners were selected for this year's Walk the Talk Award, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST), Helen Anderson, and Northern Regional Manager of the ANZ National Bank rural banking team, Matt Pickering.

Helen Anderson was appointed Chief Executive of MoRST in 2004 after being Chief Scientific Adviser for more than five years. "My personal mission sounds terribly grand and slightly embarrassing to say publicly," she says, "but it is to play a leadership role in making New Zealand a more effective player on the global stage."

Alongside the intense demands of her job, Helen is a wife, mother of two and step-mum to four. She models the importance and benefits of work-life balance, wellness, self-development and developing others in every aspect of her life. She makes time to exercise regularly, spend quality time with her family, extend her own learning and to act as mentor to a number of young people within MoRST and externally.

For Helen, the term "work-life balance" means actively prioritising the things

that matter most – people, family, friends and personal health – as they provide personal joy and energy for her busy life.

Her husband is semi-retired and manages the household. "He's my rock," she says. "We enjoy spending time travelling together and always make special time for ourselves, such as walking together on Saturday mornings."

Her son James, 21, is intellectually disabled and loves spending time with his mother. They enjoy walking and shopping together.

Supporting all her family is very important to Helen. If that means looking after James for an afternoon when alternative care has fallen through or helping her daughter Saskia with her university choices, she will coordinate her diary and engagements to suit. She believes that family is the most important thing and makes this clear right from the initial induction session at MoRST.

Helen actively manages her weekend time, so she is able to spend the majority of it with her family. But there is an understanding in the family that Sunday nights are her work time, to catch up and prepare herself for the week ahead.

Helen's role involves a considerable amount of national and international travel. A lot of forethought goes into planning her year and she books family holidays well in advance.

She is reticent about putting herself forward as a perfect role model for work-life balance. "I don't want to be a flawless model. It's about being honest and authentic. Everybody needs to re-energise by focusing on other parts of their life. This is what I role model."

The culture at MoRST is very directly a result of the importance Helen places on people, especially her mantra of celebrating success, regardless of whether it is professional or personal. "People deliver great stuff when their humanity is allowed to be part of their work," she says.

The culture is very egalitarian, with the entire senior team having the same seating arrangements as their staff in the open-plan office space. The move to open-plan was very much driven by Helen's belief in the importance of good communication and sharing, as well as increasing accessibility across the organisation.



*Helen Anderson enjoys some work-life balance.*

MoRST's senior management team all speak positively about Helen's proactive approach to ensuring they take breaks and holidays and are not consistently working long hours. "Helen has high expectations, but she knows when people are stressed or under a lot of pressure. When people are sick she will openly acknowledge this and make arrangements for someone else to do the work. 'Don't you have a life?' is a question she can often be heard putting to anyone working late," says Roger Ridley, General Manager, Investment & Performance.

People within MoRST describe Helen Anderson as inspirational, open, engaging and caring. There is a sense that people feel proud to know her.

Matt Pickering too places a strong emphasis on family time. He lives near the beach at Papamoa in the Bay of Plenty and has been available for volunteer beach patrol for 19 of the past 21 summers. Matt Pickering is also a summer coach at the club for 20 eight-year-olds.

He was recognised as Club Member of the Year in 2007 and was New Zealand Surf Lifeguard of the Year in 1994.

Matt Pickering also participates in long-distance ocean swimming events (his training covered 350km last year) and

blo-karts with his oldest son.

"I know Matt loves the surf, and living at the beach is ideal for him," says his manager Charlie Graham. "He's set up to work from home. He can take his kids to school when he's not on the road. He deals with administrative tasks when it suits him from his home office and adjusts his hours to suit his lifestyle. He maintains excellent results and leadership effectiveness."

Matt Pickering's business area runs from Taupo to Whakatane and north to Kaitaia, encompassing more than 6000 customers. His role includes developing the strategic direction of rural banking as well as providing effective leadership to the region's staff.

His results speak for themselves. At ANZ National, staff are measured in terms of their engagement – how passionate they are about working for the bank, their satisfaction and commitment and also their level of involvement. A recent measure of the 110 staff in Matt Pickering's area puts his team in the best employer zone, with a result of 76%. This is also reflected in staff turnover in his region which currently stands at less than 4%.

Matt works flexibly so he can support his commitment to his wife Hilary and his two sons. He spends a lot of time

travelling for work and says he can achieve work-life balance as a result of the decisions he has made. He sets himself personal and professional goals by developing a personal development plan at the start of each year and reviews it regularly.

T3G and mobile phone resources enable him to make his home and car his office. Matt is committed to school activities and plans ahead by ensuring important events are diarised before business meetings are made. His job takes him to the Waikato where his parents live so he builds time into his work to stay the night with them.

Matt proves that it is possible to achieve business results and maintain strong relationships with staff while planning work around life outside work.

"Matt leads and champions a culture of self-responsibility. He believes this to be the cornerstone of people's ability to truly embrace work-life balance," says Stuart Ewing, who formerly reported to Matt Pickering and is now a regional manager himself.

Just as Matt Pickering prepares a personal development plan, so do his staff. He shares his own plan and goals with his staff. "He actively promotes self-disclosure and believes that to be an effective leader you need to let people in so they know more about the 'whole person'," says Stuart Ewing.

He works actively with his staff to decide on and commit to their own goals for work and life and will regularly follow up to ensure they are making progress. He supports them in attending development opportunities which are linked to their personal goals, and ensures there is a critical debrief afterwards.

Matt encourages and supports his own team of managers to help them implement work and life choices with their people. This approach comes from his belief that to be the best you can at work you also need to be achieving what's important to you outside work. In addition to being fully supportive of flexible working patterns, he also encourages part-time and job sharing arrangements.

Go to [www.eeotrust.org.nz/awards/leaders.cfm#faq1305](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/awards/leaders.cfm#faq1305) for details of all the awards winners.



Matt Pickering and his son Mason.

# Job sharing – ways to make it work

Job sharing is becoming increasingly common in New Zealand as employers devise working arrangements that will help retain staff. A set of guidelines and tools on job sharing is now available from the EEO Trust website. This article explores the challenges and benefits of job sharing.

Job sharing is a flexible work alternative which creates opportunities to retain and recruit people who cannot, or choose not to, work full-time. It can be attractive to parents and to older people transitioning to retirement.

Job sharing is when two people share the responsibilities of one fulltime job, sharing the pay and benefits between them proportionate to the hours they each work. The two people sharing the job arrange the division of responsibilities and hours between themselves in agreement with their employer. This arrangement is then formalised into a written job sharing contract. The position, however, remains a full-time position.

In contrast, job splitting is where a full-time post is split into two separate part-time jobs with separate duties.

## Benefits

The benefits of job sharing to employers can include:

- Increased staff retention
- Gains from pooling experience
- Reduced absenteeism
- Greater continuity as the sharers are often able to cover each other's sick leave and annual leave
- Improved performance/productivity through higher morale and reduced stress

Sharing of office space and equipment is also a potential benefit. Job sharing can also offer employers the opportunity to offer longer hours of operation, thereby extending customer service.

Another benefit of job sharing is often described as "two heads are better than one". Two people bring additional skills and experience to a job, as well as the increased productivity of people working fewer than full-time hours. A British study found that 70% of senior managers in job share or other reduced hour arrangements had a 30% higher level of output and scored higher on resilience,

leadership and commitment than their full-time colleagues. (O'Hanlon and Morella 2003:5)

As with other flexible work arrangements, job sharers tend to repay their employer with discretionary effort, "going the extra mile", in appreciation of the flexibility.

A job sharing arrangement may mean the difference between leaving a job and staying for highly skilled employees. In a 1999 Australian survey of job sharing bank workers, 27% said they would definitely have resigned if they could not job share, and a further 40% said they probably would, while 11% said they probably would have stayed anyway and only 2% would definitely have stayed anyway (O'Hanlon and Morella 2003:6).

Employers in a 1993 Dunedin study said the benefits of providing job share arrangements included increased productivity, additional and continuous cover for breaks and peak periods, additional skills for the price of one full-time salary and retention of specialist skills, as well as reduced training time and costs (Hall, 1993).

A particular benefit of job sharing to women with children is being able to remain in their career position while their children are young, rather than having to downshift, resulting in a loss of their skills. This makes job share positions a powerful attraction for professional women.

New Zealand evidence confirms that when a job sharing programme is properly implemented and integrated into an organisation, it significantly contributes to an organisation's ability to attract and retain staff. In the Hudson 2007 survey, 79% of respondents saw a positive impact on the attraction and retention of staff as a result of job sharing.

Similarly, in Hall's Dunedin study, only 25% of employers said they would not use job sharing again.

In the Hudson survey, only a minority (14%) of responding organisations reported no positive impact on attraction and retention of staff and this was attributed to lack of management support and poor knowledge and implementation. Conversely, a similar proportion (14%) noted that lack of job sharing provisions had negatively impacted on their ability to attract and retain staff.

The Canterbury United Council (CUC) notes that resistance to job sharing overseas has reduced as more organisations have tried it. Potential problems such as extra costs were found to be marginal and there were no serious disadvantages in relation to supervision. However, good communication was found to be essential to making job sharing work.

## Perceived potential problems

Employers who are reluctant to offer job sharing sometimes expect increased administrative costs and training costs, problems arising from communication breakdown between sharers, problems meeting client demands and expectations, and the problem of finding a new co-sharer if one leaves.

However, international evidence suggests that it takes less time to manage a job share arrangement because job sharers work hard to make the arrangement work. Since they benefit from it, they are strongly motivated to do so.

New Zealand research has found evidence that after initial training and a coordination period, job sharers need less close supervision, especially if they are responsible for making the arrangement work (Meakin, 1998). There is also an inbuilt quality assurance process when two people overlap and share a role.

There may be a slight increase in costs, for example if job sharers need to overlap

occasionally and if extra time is needed to manage the payroll or provide training. This has to be weighed against the savings of improved staff retention and in continual coverage during leave periods.

Support for job share arrangements at senior management and line manager level is critical. The Hudson report recommends effective education and communication campaigns to counteract myths and preconceptions about job sharing.

## Provision in NZ workplaces

The EEO Trust Work-Life Survey 2006 found that only 20% of respondent organisations<sup>1</sup> formally offered job sharing, with a further 41% providing for it on an ad hoc basis.

While 57% of the employers surveyed by Hudson said they would consider offering job sharing, only 30% currently did so. Job share options are most prevalent in the healthcare, not for profit, financial services/insurance and education sectors and least common in male dominated sectors. Large and medium size organisations are more likely to offer job share arrangements than small businesses.

## Characteristics of job sharers

The Dunedin study found that job sharers were predominantly female (82%) and professional (69%). They included all age groups and two-thirds had children living at home. While most job sharers were secondary income earners in their household, 65% were in career positions, indicating that job sharing is not about working below your level of qualification in order to get work-life balance.

Job sharers do not need to have the same skills profile, rather their combined skills need to match the role. The most important characteristic is that job sharers are committed to making the arrangement the work.

## Case study examples

### Staff retention

For the Department of Conservation, a job share arrangement helped retain a senior planner returning from parental leave. The other sharer, who also had childcare responsibilities, was employed on a temp basis to cover the rest of the hours for the position. (State Services Commission, 2005)

### Sharing a financial industry executive position

IOMA reports (2006) that two women shared an executive banking position for six years. Each worked 2.5 days per week, overlapping some days for face-to-face communication and both having Friday afternoons off. According to the job sharers, the benefits are getting 100% focus all the time, whereas one person finds that focus difficult to maintain over a whole week.

### Ford Motor Company, Australia

Ford has successfully used job sharing in reception and personal assistant roles for many years. Other roles have been job shared for defined periods of time. Ford says the benefits to the organisation include attracting and retaining talent, improved productivity, and improving the Ford brand through promoting diversity and work-life balance. (O'Hanlon and Morella, 2003:18)

### A community care organisation

The benefits of job share arrangements in the caregiving sector include reduced stress and burnout. Clients benefit through having two carers which means someone they know is almost always available. They also benefit from a greater range of knowledge and experience, and different perspectives on the same issue. (O'Hanlon and Morella, 2003:18-19)

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Go to the EEO Trust website [eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits](http://eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits) for comprehensive job sharing guidelines.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents were mostly EEO Trust Employers Group members or those with an interest in work-life balance issues. Thus these results are likely to be higher than could be expected across all New Zealand organisations.

## Latest news

### Work-life tools for small business

Two new tools to help businesses better manage flexible working arrangements and work-life balance were launched by Minister of Labour Ruth Dyson and Small Business Minister Lianne Dalziel late last month.

The two tools – one targeting small and medium-sized business, and the other designed for larger enterprises – were developed by the Department of Labour after consulting New Zealand businesses and other organisations about what was working well for them.

The tools provide practical advice based on the experience of owners and managers whose staff have already been using flexible work practices. One outlines practical steps to making work-life balance a reality and the other provides ideas from small workplaces that have already implemented flexible practices.

The tools are available from [www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/making-it-work-index.asp](http://www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/making-it-work-index.asp).

### Flexible work from Business NZ

Business NZ has developed a booklet exploring issues around flexibility in the workplace and highlighting simple things employers can do to offer greater flexibility to their staff. It includes basic tools, policy examples and case studies which will be particularly helpful for SMEs.

In his introduction, Chief Executive Phil O'Reilly, says the booklet "cuts through the jargon to highlight a few simple things businesses – particularly small to medium-sized enterprises – can do to offer greater flexibility to their staff."

It includes examples of flexible working arrangements, policy guidelines and brief case studies. Download from [www.businessnz.org.nz/](http://www.businessnz.org.nz/).

### Pressure on for more paid parental leave

Both the Families Commission and the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW) have recently developed a range of recommendations around paid parental leave (PPL) provisions. They want PPL to be available for longer, to more parents and with higher payment levels.

The Families Commission's recommendations include:

- Providing 13 months paid leave, including a month's paid leave for fathers/partners, by 2015
  - Paternity/partner leave to be taken at any time during the child's first year of life, including alongside part-time work
  - Widening the eligibility criteria so that parents are eligible if they have been employed for six out of the 12 months prior to birth or adoption
  - Removing the minimum hours test
  - Increasing the maximum payment cap
- NACEW's recommendations are similar and include:

- Widening the eligibility criteria by allowing workers to achieve the qualifying hours in any number of parallel or sequential jobs
- Lengthening the period of PPL to one year with an extension to six months as a top priority and then increase the level of payment
- Introducing a new PPL entitlement that is ring-fenced for fathers
- Providing for both mothers and fathers on PPL to work for a limited number of days
- Providing for flexible leave arrangements in line with decisions on the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Hours) Amendment Bill

For more details:

[www.familiescommission.govt.nz/media/20070828.php](http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/media/20070828.php) and [www.nacew.govt.nz/publications/workandcare/leave/](http://www.nacew.govt.nz/publications/workandcare/leave/)

## Recent research

### Working below potential

Research by the UK Equal Opportunities Commission has found that an estimated 6.5 million people in the UK are not fully using their talents in the labour market, but might be enabled to do so if better flexible working practices were available and developed. This figure comprises:

- 1.7 million people who are not working but could be encouraged back into full-time or part-time work if an employer offered them flexible working arrangements
- 4.8 million employees who feel they are working under their past potential and would have made different choices if better flexible working options were available to them

For the research report [http://www.eoc.org.uk/PDF/Impact\\_of\\_flexible\\_working.pdf](http://www.eoc.org.uk/PDF/Impact_of_flexible_working.pdf)

### UK parents fear harder balancing act

An Equal Opportunities Commission survey of views on family and community found that 82% of people think it is difficult for parents to balance work and home life and 72% say it will get harder in 10 years.

The survey was conducted in January 2007 and found that:

- Spending time with the family or finding time for key relationships is the biggest concern in daily life (64%) for men and women ahead of money, health, work and local safety. This concern is felt most strongly by fathers - 74% express this view, compared to 68% of mothers.
- 77% say that it should be as easy for men to take time off for caring responsibilities as it is for women – with 84% of those with children agreeing
- 96% say it is difficult for carers to balance work and home life with 83% saying it will be worse in ten years' time.

For more information <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=19967>