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The Second Work-Life Balance Study:
Results from the Employer Survey –
MAIN REPORT

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Foreword

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Grant Fitzner
Director, Employment Market Analysis and Research

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Glossary of terms

Annualised hours	Where the number of hours an employee has to work is calculated over a full year.
Bereavement leave	Where an employee is granted time off after the bereavement of a relative.
Career break	Covers situations where an employee, with the agreement of their employer, may leave work for a finite period of time and will be able to return to the job and the same level of seniority.
Compressed working week	Covers situations where an employee works a 40-hour week over four days, or a nine-day fortnight. Shift working should not be included here.
Employee	An employee is a person who works under a contract of employment in exchange for a wage or salary.
Flexible working Arrangements	In addition to all the practices covered under flexible working time arrangements, this also includes homeworking.
Flexible working time arrangements	These include the following: working part-time; working in school term-time only; job sharing; working flexitime; working a compressed week; working annualised hours; and, working reduced hours (for a limited period of time).
Flexitime	Covers situations where an employee has no set start or finish time but an agreement to work a set number of hours per week. However, in some establishments there is a requirement to also work core hours, but outside those hours, an employee can choose their start and finish time. Such an arrangement is also included as flexitime.
Homeworking	This applies to situations where an employee works all or part of the time from home as part of their working hours, with the sampled establishment being the establishment to which they principally report.

Job sharing	This is 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.
Keep-in-touch scheme	This is where an employer continues to keep employees who are on maternity leave informed about what is happening at the workplace. They do this by inviting them to meetings and sending them information.
Overtime	Hours of work done in excess of any standard or basic working week as laid down in a contract of employment and/or collective agreement.
Parental leave	This is 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.
Paternity leave	This is time off work for fathers around the time of childbirth either provided paid or unpaid. Two weeks <i>statutory</i> paid leave was only introduced in April 2003.
Part-time	This is defined as working less than 30 hours per week for this study.
Reduced hours for a limited period of time	This is where an employee has an agreement to cut their hours for a set period of time (e.g. month, six months) and then return to their original working hours. It is sometimes known as V-time working.
Standard working days	Workplaces open for business only from Monday to Friday are said to operate standard working days.

Standard working hours	These cover workplaces that operate the following hours: opening between 8am and 10am and closing between 4:30pm and 6:30pm.
Standard working week	This covers workplaces which operate Monday to Friday and open between 8am and 10am and close between 4:30pm and 6:30pm.
Supervisor / foreman / line manager	These terms are often used synonymously to denote first line management: i.e. those directly concerned with the detailed supervision of work. Although varying from company to company, responsibilities can include aspects of work organisation, handling minor disciplinary and grievance issues and acting as a 'communications channel' between the workforce and higher management.
Term-time working	This is when employees work only during school term-time.
Time off for dependants	This legislation entitles all employees to a <i>reasonable</i> amount of unpaid time off in order to deal with emergencies involving a dependant. In this context, 'dependant' means partner, child, parent or someone living as part of the family. It can also include someone who relies on the employee as his or her primary carer or only source of help in an emergency. Employees are able to take time off to deal with certain unexpected emergencies or to make any necessary longer-term arrangements.
WLB1	The first work-life balance study by Hogarth, T., Hasluck, C., Pierre, G., Winterbottom, M. and Vivian D. (2000), <i>Work-Life Balance 2000: Results from the Baseline Study</i> , DfEE (now DfES) Research Report No. 249.
WLB2	The Second Work-Life Balance Study.

Executive summary

The findings indicate strong support for work-life balance amongst employers and, although this has not always been matched in practice, provision has increased in the last three years.

The results also support the business case for the provision of work-life balance practices. Despite some concerns about staff shortages, the majority of employers that provided flexible working practices and leave arrangements found them to be cost effective, with a positive impact on labour turnover, motivation and commitment and employee relations.

Aims of the study

This report presents the findings of a major study of work-life balance among British employers with five or more employees. The Second Work-Life Balance Study (WLB2) employer survey was designed with two main aims in mind. Firstly, to measure the extent to which the key attributes of work-life balance from an employer's perspective have changed since the first work-life balance study (WLB1) in 2000. These attributes are:

- employer provision of work-life balance practices and policies;
- employee take-up of, and demand for, these initiatives; and
- the impact of employers' provisions (including costs and benefits).

Secondly, the study will establish a robust baseline for future evaluation, in terms of the provisions brought in under the Employment Act 2002; in particular the right for parents of children under six and parents of disabled children under 18 to apply to work flexibly, and the duty of their employers to seriously consider their requests, as well as the introduction of paternity and adoption leave and pay.

The key findings from the WLB2 employer survey are outlined below.

Attitudes to work-life balance

- There was a high level of support for work-life balance amongst employers. The majority agreed that everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want (65 per cent).
- More than nine in ten employers (94 per cent) were of the view that people work best when they can strike a better balance between work and the rest of their lives. Almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of employers strongly agreed with this statement; this represented a substantial increase from the WLB1 study (31 per cent).

- Less than a third (29 per cent) of employers considered that they bore no responsibility towards helping people to balance their work and other aspects of their lives. Around one sixth (17 per cent) of employers strongly agreed that business considerations should come before employees' wishes to change their pattern of working.
- The majority of employers agreed that trying to accommodate employees with their different patterns of work was not easy (65 per cent).
- Three-quarters (74 per cent) of employers agreed that people who work flexibly are just as likely to be promoted as those that do not, while 15 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know.
- Around two-fifths (42 per cent) of employers considered that work-life balance policies were unfair on some employees.
- Generally speaking, support for the basic principles and concepts of work-life balance was supported by actions – employers that indicated the strongest levels of support tended to provide a wider range of practices and entitlements that helped their employees with their work-life balance.

Awareness of statutory leave entitlements and new working parent legislation

Statutory leave entitlements

- In general there was a high level of awareness amongst employers regarding existing regulations on both parental leave and time off taken by an employee at short notice in order to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. More than a half of all employers (58 per cent) were aware of parental leave, and around three-quarters (74 per cent) were aware of time off for dependants. Employers were less aware of the more detailed aspects of the legislation on parental leave, including its provision to cover parents of adopted children (47 per cent) and parents with disabled children (49 per cent).

New working parent legislation

- Awareness amongst employers of the new regulations that came into force on 6 April 2003 was also high. With the exception of the right to leave and pay for adopters (47 per cent were aware of this), over half of employers were aware of each of these new regulations. Over two-thirds (71 per cent) were aware of an employee's right to request to work flexibly. Two thirds (67 per cent) were aware that all women would be entitled to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave regardless of their length of service and three-fifths (61 per cent) were aware of the right to a further 26 weeks additional leave for women that had worked for the same employer for at least one year. Half (52 per cent) of employers were aware of new legislation regarding paternity leave and pay.
- Overall, nearly 90 per cent of employers were aware of at least one of the new regulations (86 per cent), while a third (33 per cent) were aware of all five aspects of the new legislation.
- Awareness of the new regulations was higher in larger workplaces, in those that were part of a larger organisation, those in the public sector and those

with a trade union presence. It was also higher in workplaces with a dedicated personnel or human resource department, compared with those without (79 per cent were aware of all five new regulations, compared with 21 per cent in workplaces with no personnel function).

Requests for flexible working

Employees wanting to change how they work for a sustained period of time

- Less than a fifth (17 per cent) of employers had received a request in the previous year from an employee to change how they regularly worked for a sustained period of time, and almost all of them (98 per cent) reported that their managers would be expected to give consideration to such requests. In addition, amongst those employers who had not received such a request, there still remained a high proportion reporting that managers would consider these requests (87 per cent).
- The main reasons given by employers as to why employees had made a request to work flexibly were circumstances where an employee needed to look after their children or needed to care for someone other than a dependent child.
- The factors taken into consideration by employers when deciding whether to accept a request to work flexibly tended to be related to business demands. The impact on the business was the most often cited factor, along with the availability of cover.

Requests to change from full-time to part-time working

- A quarter of workplaces (24 per cent) had a request from at least one employee to change from full-time to part-time working in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Almost all (98 per cent) of the workplaces that had received a request in the last 12 months from an employee to change from full-time to part-time working said that managers would be expected to give consideration to such requests. Even when no request had been made by an employee, the vast majority of employers said that managers would give a request due consideration (85 per cent).
- The main reasons given by employers as to why employees had made a request to change to part-time working were women returning from maternity leave and when an employee needed to look after their children.

Women returning from maternity leave wanting to change from full-time to part-time working

- A majority of employers (60 per cent) said that changing from full-time to part-time working would be acceptable in all or nearly all cases for women returning from maternity leave.
- In those workplaces where such a change was possible, two thirds (65 per cent) reported that when making such a change the employee could keep their existing job and level of seniority.

Employees wanting to change from full-time to part-time working, excluding those returning from maternity leave

- Employers were less likely to accept requests in all or nearly all cases to change from full-time to part-time hours made by employees who were not returning from maternity leave. Just under two-fifths (38 per cent) of employers said that this type of request would be acceptable.
- It was more common for the response to this type of request to be dependent upon the particular circumstances surrounding the request or upon the individual position of the employee.
- Around half (48 per cent) of the employers that found this change either acceptable or that said the change would be conditional, agreed that the employee could keep their existing job and their level of seniority.
- One-in-ten (nine per cent) employers stated that this type of request was unlikely to be accepted.

Leave arrangements and work-life balance practices: provision and eligibility

Flexible working hours

- Over two-thirds (67 per cent) of employers, covering 72 per cent of employees, reported that employees were allowed to vary their working hours, such as working through their lunch breaks or leaving early. This represents an increase from the WLB1 study (62 per cent).
- This informal arrangement was particularly apparent in small independent workplaces with fewer than 50 employees (75 per cent). It was also more commonly found in the private sector compared with the public sector (69 per cent and 59 per cent respectively).

Flexible working time arrangements

- Around four-fifths (81 per cent) of employers provided at least one of the following seven flexible working time arrangements: part-time working, job sharing, flexitime, annualised hours, term-time working, compressed working weeks and reduced hours working.
- Aside from part-time working (74 per cent), the provision of flexible working time arrangements was not widespread, with less than one-in-four employers providing any one of the six other arrangements listed above. Flexible working time arrangements were often provided in combination. Just over two-fifths (44 per cent) of workplaces made available two or more of these practices, while a small minority (nine per cent) had four or more of these.
- Comparisons with a number of other studies suggested that there had been an increase in the provision of flexible working time arrangements. The increase appeared to have occurred across all workplaces, rather than being confined to workplaces of a particular size or to workplaces in a particular sector or industry.
- Having flexible working time arrangements formalised in written documents was not widespread with between a quarter and a half of the workplaces which provided the practices and where they had been taken up in the last 12 months having a written policy for any one of the seven practices. They

were most likely to have a written policy covering annualised working (56 per cent) and least likely to have one covering compressed hours or reduced hours working (29 and 30 per cent respectively). There was some evidence to suggest that employee take-up of flexible working was higher in workplaces that formalised their arrangements in this way.

- Under half of the workplaces that had flexible working time practices restricted their use to just some employees. Annualised hours working was the most likely practice to be restricted with just under half (49 per cent) of all workplaces that provided this practice doing so, while reduced hours working for a limited period of time was the least likely to be restricted (17 per cent). Managerial employees were the most likely employees to be excluded from any arrangement.

Homeworking

- Homeworking was provided by more than one-fifth of workplaces (22 per cent) and, of these, just over two-thirds (68 per cent), or 15 per cent of all workplaces, reported that homeworking was available and had been used in the last 12 months.
- Provision of homeworking was greater in larger workplaces. Workplaces with 500 or more employees were over five times more likely to provide this practice than those with fewer than 10 employees (50 per cent compared with nine per cent respectively). It was also significantly higher in the Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities industry (32 per cent).
- Most employers (71 per cent) restricted the employees that could use homeworking and it was usually a specific occupation or group of occupations that were restricted. This was mainly for practical operational purposes rather than being based on other grounds.

Maternity rights

- Around two-thirds (68 per cent) of employers already provided maternity rights beyond the statutory minimum. Three-fifths (59 per cent) had provisions for women to return to their job beyond 29 weeks. Around a quarter (27 per cent) of employers offered maternity leave which exceeded the 18-week statutory minimum, regardless of length of service. More than one-fifth (22 per cent) of employers provided women with more maternity pay than was required by law.

Paternity leave

- Just over a third (35 per cent) of workplaces had a written policy giving employees an entitlement to a specific period of paternity leave. This was a substantial increase from the Department of Trade and Industry Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000), which indicated that 18 per cent had such a policy. A further quarter (27 per cent) of employers had discretionary arrangements.
- In those workplaces where there was a written policy, the median number of days provided for paternity leave was five. In workplaces where there were no formal arrangements, the median number of days usually taken for paternity leave was seven.

- In over two-thirds (69 per cent) of workplaces where either there was a formal policy on paternity leave or fathers were allowed discretionary time off, this leave was fully paid.
- Overall, a third of workplaces (30 per cent) provided fully paid paternity leave of five days or more.
- One-in-five (22 per cent) workplaces had at least one male employee who had taken paternity leave in the 12 months prior to the interview.

Parental leave

- In around one-in-ten (11 per cent) workplaces, employers provided parents with parental leave entitlements that went beyond the statutory minimum. This represented an increase in comparison with the DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents, which stood at five per cent.
- A quarter of these employers (25 per cent or three per cent of all establishments) reported giving pay for all or some of this parental leave. The most commonly reported additional entitlement was the allowance of more flexibility over how the leave was taken.
- One-in-seven (14 per cent) workplaces had at least one employee who had taken parental leave in the 12 months prior to the interview.

Time off for dependants

- Two-fifths (39 per cent) of workplaces, covering half (50 per cent) of all employees, provided special paid leave to cover time off for dependants.
- In a large majority of workplaces where there was provision for special paid leave, this leave was fully paid. This translates into around three out of ten workplaces (28 per cent) providing special leave that was fully paid. The DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents estimated that just over a fifth (22 per cent) of employers had such an arrangement which was fully paid in 2000.

Childcare and other support facilities for working parents

- The provision of childcare or other support facilities for working parents by employers was not commonplace. Fewer than one-in-ten (eight per cent) employers provided such facilities or arrangements. Those that did covered around a quarter (25 per cent) of all employees in workplaces with five or more employees, which reflects the fact that provision was greater in larger workplaces.
- Support, when given, was most common in the form of on-site childcare facilities (36 per cent of workplaces which provided support facilities for working parents, or three per cent of all workplaces), financial assistance (31 per cent) or family-friendly working arrangements (27 per cent).
- A high proportion of employers reported a positive effect on their workplace performance from supporting working parents. Around three-quarters or more employers reported a positive effect on their employee relations (79 per cent), labour turnover (73 per cent) and employee motivation and commitment (72 per cent).

- A majority of employers (70 per cent) that did not already provide childcare or other support facilities for working parents indicated that they could be encouraged to provide support. Almost half (46 per cent) thought that some kind of financial incentive would be necessary.

Impact of work-life balance practices

- All employers were asked what they thought the benefits were from providing work-life balance practices. The overriding benefit reported was undoubtedly a 'happier workforce' with just over a quarter (29 per cent) giving this response.
- Other benefits included positive effects on the retention of staff (13 per cent) and higher levels of staff motivation (10 per cent).
- When asked about the disadvantages associated with the provision of work-life balance practices, the most common response was that there were no problems – almost a third of employers (28 per cent) reported this. However, others reported disadvantages which were most often to do with being short staffed (22 per cent).
- The majority of employers reported that work-life balance practices had a positive impact upon employee relations (71 per cent), employee commitment and motivation (69 per cent) and labour turnover (54 per cent).
- Nearly half stated that these work-life balance practices had a positive effect upon recruitment (47 per cent), absenteeism (48 per cent) and productivity (49 per cent).
- There was an association between the provision of specific flexible practices and leave arrangements (such as flexitime, job sharing and leave arrangements which went beyond the statutory minimum) and perceived financial performance. In terms of financial performance, almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of workplaces that had four or more of these flexible practices and leave arrangements, reported that it was better than that of other similar workplaces in the same industry. Workplaces with either one or none of these practices were significantly less likely to perceive financial performance to be above average relative to their competitors (30 per cent).
- Two-thirds (66 per cent) of employers who thought they provided some form of work-life balance practice(s) said they considered the practice(s) to have been cost effective.
- Just under a third (30 per cent) of workplaces reported having introduced some type of flexible working practice or leave arrangement in the past three years.
- Where a new practice(s) had been introduced, a large majority of employers (76 per cent) said there had been no set-up costs.
- Where there were set-up costs (24 per cent), most employers described their set-up costs as being minimal (36 per cent) or moderate (50 per cent). Few (seven per cent) said they were substantial.
- In just over one-in-ten workplaces (13 per cent), managers reported some ongoing costs resulting from the provision of flexible working practices and leave arrangements. A substantial majority of employers (71 per cent) said there were no ongoing costs while the remaining 16 per cent, in their

opinion, did not provide any flexible working practices or leave arrangements beyond the statutory minimum.

- Of those that reported any ongoing costs, just 14 per cent said they were substantial. The remainder was equally split between those that reported moderate (41 per cent) or minimal (40 per cent) costs. This translates into less than one-in-ten (seven per cent) of all workplaces (where managers thought there were some flexible working practices and leave arrangements) having reported substantial or moderate ongoing costs.

About the survey

- The WLB2 employer data is based on 1,509 interviews and the response rate was 60 per cent. The survey was carried out between December 2002 and April 2003 by the National Centre for Social Research on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry. At the same time, a quantitative study was undertaken among employees (MORI, 2003).
- 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*.
- Workplaces were randomly selected from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) from employers in Great Britain with five or more employees at the workplace. The survey over sampled larger workplaces and certain industries. The figures reported in this summary are weighted to produce nationally representative estimates.
- The study was conducted over the telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes and were conducted with a manager at the workplace who had day-to-day responsibilities for personnel and employment relations issues.

1

Introduction

Background

In the early part of 2000, the Prime Minister announced the launch of a Work-Life Balance Campaign. The principal objective of the campaign was to convince employers of the economic benefits of work-life balance, by presenting real-life case studies; and thereby to convince employers of the need for change. To achieve this the campaign sought to:

- tackle the long-hours culture
- target sectors with acute work-life balance problems
- provide support and guidance for both employers and employees.

At the time of the launch of the campaign, the DfES (or the DfEE as it was then known) commissioned the first work-life balance study (WLB1). The study was comprised of three surveys – an employee survey, an employer survey and a survey of head offices. Results from these were published in the DfEE Research Series, Research Report No. 249 (Hogarth *et al.*, 2000). While these surveys illustrated an overall high level of support for work-life balance, and showed a sound economic argument for the provision of practices that give work-life balance, the provision and take-up of work-life balance practices was far from widespread.

Three years on, there was a desire to measure the extent to which changes had occurred in all aspects of work-life balance. Two studies were commissioned¹, the first of which presented findings from a quantitative survey of employees (Mori, 2003). The second study, the focus of this report, is based on a quantitative survey of British employers with five or more employees. The survey was carried out between December 2002 and April 2003.

The employer survey was designed with two main aims in mind. Firstly, to measure the extent to which the key attributes of work-life balance from an employer's perspective have changed since WLB1. These attributes are:

- employer provision of work-life balance practices and policies;
- employee take-up of, and demand for, these initiatives; and
- the impact of employers' provisions (including costs and benefits).

¹ They were commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry who took over responsibility for these issues in 2001.

Secondly, the study will establish a robust baseline for future evaluation, 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.

More specifically, the study has attempted to do the following:

- to assess employers' **awareness** of the current statutory leave entitlements, including maternity leave, parental leave, and time off for dependants, as well as forthcoming new rights;
- to establish employers' **provision** of work-life balance practices, including provision beyond the statutory requirement, and reasons for non-provision;
- to establish the extent to which access to work-life balance practices is restricted, i.e. what (if any) are the criteria for **eligibility** to access these arrangements;
- to assess **take-up** of work-life balance practices, including how take-up is monitored; and
- to ascertain employers' views on the **impact** of work-life balance practices, including the costs and benefits for business, such as the impact on productivity.

Policy background

In Britain up to the mid-1990s, families' relationship to the labour market was regarded largely as a 'private matter', and the Government's intervention was limited largely to social policy measures which incurred little cost to the State, and on employment policies that relied mainly on voluntary action rather than regulation (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1996; Moss, 1996).

The reconciliation of paid employment and family life has been pushed up the political agenda since 1997 (e.g. DfEE, 2000; DTI, 2000). In 2000 the Government launched the Work-Life Balance Campaign to persuade employers of the benefits of work-life balance employment practices. The implementation of the EU Working Time Directive has introduced legislation to reduce excessively long hours, and compliance with the EU Part-Time Work Directive aims to reduce the disincentive to working part-time. The Employment Relations Act 1999 introduced rights to parental leave and emergency time off for dependants, while the Employment Act 2002 has enhanced maternity leave entitlement, and has introduced paid paternity leave and leave for adoptive parents. In addition, the 2002 Act gave legislative effect to the Work and Parents Taskforce recommendations (Work and Parents Taskforce, 2001; DTI, 2001) giving parents of children under six and disabled children under the age of 18 the right to request to work flexibly, and a duty to employers to consider such requests seriously. Employment policies to support working families have also been complemented by the National Childcare Strategy (DfEE, 1998) which aims to increase the level and quality of childcare to promote children's development, and offer more parents the opportunity to work and enhance their employability. As part of this strategy financial support for childcare is provided

to parents (through the Working Families' Tax Credit and subsequently the Working Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit) and to childcare providers (through a range of initiatives).

At the time the Government's Work-Life Balance Campaign was launched, WLB1 found widespread support among both employers and employees for policies and practices that better enable people to balance work with the rest of their lives. However, this study, as well as other recent research, also found that the provision and take-up of work-life balance working arrangements was patchy and varied considerably among different groups of workers and in different sectors. Flexible working arrangements were more likely to be found in the public sector and in workplaces with recognised unions and good human resources policies. Conversely, work-life balance policies were rarely found in male dominated sectors and, generally, men were considerably less likely than women to use them (Dex and Smith, 2002; Hogarth *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, while more prominence has been given in recent years to the need for family-friendly employment practices, economic pressures have also led to an increase in work at 'atypical' times, and such work cannot always easily be reconciled with family responsibilities (La Valle *et al.*, forthcoming). Variations in the level and nature of work-life balance working arrangements provided by different employers, differences in accessibility and take-up among employees and the increase in atypical work all raise some important research questions: What factors shape employers' decisions to introduce and maintain flexible working arrangements? Why are some employers so resistant to the introduction of working arrangements that enable employees to achieve a better balance between work and family life? Why are men still so unlikely to use work-life balance working arrangements? In addition to gender differences, what other employees' characteristics are more likely to be associated with access to and use of work-life balance working arrangements? These are all issues that have confronted the Work-Life Balance Campaign and are addressed in this and other research on this topic.

Study design

The basic design of this study consists of a large cross-sectional survey which will yield nationally representative data of employers' provision of flexible working time practices and leave arrangements along with other information concerned with work-life balance issues. Participants were selected from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) held by the Office for National Statistics. The IDBR was first stratified by workplace employment size and then by industrial activity. Workplaces were randomly selected within a particular category of size band and industry (e.g. manufacturing workplaces with 10 to 24 employees). Across the sample as a whole, however, larger workplaces were given a greater chance of being selected than smaller workplaces in order to enable comparisons between them. Without some over-sampling, the number of very large workplaces would be insufficient to generate statistically reliable estimates for this group. In the same way, workplaces in some industries were given a greater chance of being selected than those in other industries so as to allow comparisons across all major industry groups. The variation in the probability of selection of workplaces has been corrected for by weighting the data so that its size and industry profile after weighting matches that of the

IDBR. A fuller account of the sampling design and weighting can be found in the Technical Report that accompanies this report.

This design represented a variation from that used in the WLB1 employer survey. WLB1 used a different sampling frame – BT’s business database – and applied a different scheme for selecting workplaces. There was some over-sampling of public sector and larger workplaces, offset by under-sampling of smaller workplaces and workplaces in the retail industry. Changes in the design of the study were deemed necessary to bring about improvements in the quality of the estimates generated from the interviews. The biggest advantage of using the IDBR is its comprehensiveness. Compared with other registers it has far greater coverage, in particular of small independent organisations (and hence workplaces). It also comes with detailed, reliable information which can be used for sample stratification. While other registers have some of this information (for example, they may include size and industry), the validity of this information can be questionable. These alterations were considered to have had a minimal effect on the ability to identify change between the two surveys.

Content of the interview

All interviews were conducted over the telephone using Computer-Assisted-Telephone-Interviewing (CATI) and took on average 45 minutes to complete. In each workplace selected, an interview was to be conducted with the manager who had day-to-day responsibility for personnel matters. Sometimes this was a human resources (HR) or personnel specialist, at other times it was a general manager where there was no specialist HR function. The topics covered in the interview were as follows:

- Background information about the workplace
- Flexible working arrangements
- Overtime working
- Variations in working hours
- Leave arrangements
- Managing flexibility
- Support for working parents
- Attitudes towards work-life balance
- Impact of flexible working practices and leave arrangements
- Consultation and promotion of flexible working practices and leave arrangements
- Further general workplace information

Main fieldwork

The survey was conducted between December 2002 and April 2003, with the vast majority of fieldwork taking place from January to March. With a proposed campaign to launch new employment rights scheduled for April 2003, just prior to the new regulations from the 2002 Employment Act coming into force, the intention was to complete fieldwork as soon as was practical. This was to avoid any potential effects from the campaign on issues such as awareness of statutory rights².

² In practice there were a few interviews that took place after the start of the awareness campaign. These were analysed in such a way so as to identify whether the responses were

A summary of fieldwork outcomes is provided in Table 1.1. A total of 1,515 productive interviews were achieved, although after editing, six had to be dropped due to incomplete employment data leaving a total of 1,509 usable interviews for analysis purposes. This represents a response rate of 60 per cent.

A particular problem with fieldwork was the high level of survey deadwood – that is, sampled workplaces that were not eligible for one reason or another. The level of deadwood was especially high among small workplaces that were selected on the basis of having between five and nine employees.

Table 1.2 shows how the response rate varied according to the size stratum from which employers were selected. Larger workplaces were more likely to give productive interviews, with over two thirds of those workplaces employing over 500 employees participating, compared with 55 per cent in workplaces with less than ten employees.

There was also some variation in response rates according to the industry from which the establishment was selected (see Table 1.3). Public sector industries

Table 1.1: Summary of fieldwork response

	Number of cases	(%)	(%)
Total sampled from IDBR	3,710		
Not issued to Telephone Unit			
No telephone number after look-up	327	8.8	
Contacted HO telephone and letter	223	6.0	
Agreed to participate after fieldwork end	10	0.3	
Out of scope			
Less than 5 employees	333	9.0	
Number unobtainable	209	5.6	
Closed down	69	1.9	
Establishment not recognised as part of group	3	0.1	
In-scope of fieldwork	2,536		100
Non contact			
After 12+ calls	111	3.0	4.4
Establishment moved	22	0.6	0.9
Refusal			
To interviewer	569	15.3	22.4
To researcher from HO after initial letter	91	2.5	3.6
Other non-productive			
Broken appointment	43	1.2	1.7
No-one with knowledge of subject area	3	0.1	0.1
Contact away throughout survey period	6	0.2	0.2
Partial interview, not usable	22	0.6	0.9
Respondent refused multiple interview	36	1.0	1.4
Other reason	102	2.7	4.0
Total full interviews	1,515	40.8	59.7
<i>Of which</i>			
Dropped due to problematic employment data	6	0.2	0.2
Partial productive interview	16	0.4	0.6

Source: WLB2 (2003)

significantly different from those given early on in the course of interviewing. No differences were found and as a result it was decided to treat these cases in the same way as all other responses.

such as Public Administration and Defence and Education were more likely to respond to the survey (at 80 and 74 per cent respectively). Least likely to respond were workplaces involved in Manufacturing, Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities and Retail Trade.

Table 1.2: Summary of response by size of establishment

Size of establishment	<i>Row percentages</i>			
	Productive Interview (%)	Non contact (%)	Refusal (%)	Other non-productive (%)
5 to 9 employees	55	4	31	10
10 to 24 employees	61	6	24	8
25 to 49 employees	60	4	29	7
50 to 99 employees	65	4	25	6
100 to 249 employees	60	6	24	10
250 to 499 employees	63	5	25	8
500 or more employees	67	7	18	8
All workplaces	60	5	26	8

Base: All workplaces selected from IDBR and issued for interview
Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 1.3: Summary of response by industry

Standard Industrial Classification	<i>Row percentages</i>			
	Productive Interview (%)	Non contact (%)	Refusal (%)	Other non-productive (%)
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	58	7	25	11
Manufacturing	52	5	32	11
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	71	9	14	6
Construction	59	7	25	8
Wholesale and Retail Trade	56	4	32	8
Hotels and Restaurants	61	7	24	8
Transport, Storage and Communication	59	6	27	8
Financial Intermediation	61	4	25	10
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	56	6	32	6
Public Administration and Defence	80	8	7	6
Education	74	3	19	4
Health and Social Work	67	5	17	11
Other Community	62	4	23	11
All workplaces	60	5	26	8

Base: All workplaces selected from IDBR and issued for interview
Source: WLB2 (2003)

The report

Content of the report

The report will begin with a discussion of the hours British workplaces were open for business. Overtime, both paid and unpaid, will also be examined, as will the variation in the usual hours people worked, and comparisons will be made to the results from the WLB1 survey.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the provision of flexible working time arrangements. Both the eligibility and actual take-up of flexible working time arrangements will be discussed and the differences therein. Comparisons will be made with a number of nationally representative surveys of flexible working time arrangements.

Chapter 4 concentrates on the provision of working from home and how this has changed over time. Again, the eligibility for this provision and the actual degree of take-up will be examined.

Chapter 5 looks at the requests employees made to their employers and the kinds of responses they received. A particular focus of this chapter is to look at requests to change from part- to full-time working and vice versa, as well as those made by women returning from maternity leave. It also examines how employers dealt with employees' requests to work flexibly as well as their awareness of the new regulations covering this area.

Chapter 6 focuses on time away from work, leave entitlements, eligibility and take-up. The leave arrangements concentrated on are maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and time off for dependants.

Chapter 7 examines employer support for working parents. Again, the provision of support and eligibility to use it are discussed as well as the impact this support has had on workplace performance. Methods of encouraging employer support for parents who work will also be examined.

Chapter 8 focuses on the introduction and promotion of flexible working practices and leave arrangements in the workplace. This includes both consulting and informing employees about these practices and ways of promoting them.

Chapter 9 concentrates on managerial discretion in terms of how flexible practices were applied.

Chapter 10 examines the impact flexible working practices and leave arrangements had on workplace performance. It looks in particular at attitudes towards work-life balance, patterns of flexible practices, the costs and benefits of providing these practices and their impact on workplace performance, before arriving at a conclusion.

Interpreting results in the report

The report presents data for 1,509 workplaces with five or more employees.

The tables in this report contain the total number of cases in the whole sample or in the particular sub-group being analysed, and the base for different columns (e.g. different types of families, income groups etc.). The total base figure includes all eligible cases (i.e. all respondents or all respondents who were asked a particular question). In some tables the column bases do not add up to the total bases. This is mainly because some categories might not be included in the table, either because they are too small or are not useful for the purpose of the analysis. Where this has occurred, a footnote to the table has been included.

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to exactly 100 per cent but may total between 98 and 102 per cent.

The large sample size used for this survey means that the difference between percentages for most sub-groups of the sample are statistically significant. However, some bases for some estimates are still relatively small. So it is important to note the unweighted bases at the foot of the tables when drawing comparisons. The table below gives an indication of the confidence intervals to apply to different sizes of percentage results for different sample sizes within this report. These 95 per cent confidence levels are the levels within which it is possible to be 95 per cent confident that the true answer will lie (in other words, there is only a one-in-20 chance that the true answer will lie outside this range).

Table 1.4: Standard errors for various percentages and sample sizes

Sample size	Approximate 95 per cent confidence limits for a percentage result of:		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	+ / -	+ / -	+ / -
50	8	13	14
100	6	9	10
250	4	6	6
500	3	4	4
1,000	2	3	3
1,500	1	2	2

To take an example from the table, for a percentage result of 50 per cent on a sample of 1,000, there is a 95 per cent chance that the true result will lie within ± 3 per cent, that is, between 47 per cent and 53 per cent. (These confidence limits assume a simple random sample and no adjustment has been made for the effects of clustering. Although such an adjustment would increase the confidence limits slightly, they would not differ notably from those shown on the table and would in most cases still round to the same number of percentage points).

Tests of statistical significance are not detailed in this report. However, whenever the text comments on differences between sub-groups of the sample, these differences have been tested for significance and found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above. Similarly, although

standard deviations are not presented alongside mean figures in this report, these have been calculated and used to verify the statistical significance of the differences between mean figures which are commented on in the text.

When making comparisons with the WLB1 study along with other relevant surveys, only differences that are significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above have been reported.

The symbols below have been used in the tables and they denote the following:

[] to indicate a percentage based on fewer than 50 (unweighted) workplaces

* to indicate a percentage value of less than 0.5 per cent

- to indicate a percentage value of zero.

2

Open for business – hours of work in British workplaces

Introduction

The most direct way that work can impact on work-life balance is through the hours which are spent at work. Put simply, the longer someone is at work the less time they have to pursue outside interests, whether they be related to caring responsibilities or other activities. There is increasing evidence to suggest that a long hours work culture prevails among British employees, who on average work longer hours than most of their European counterparts (Kodz *et al.*, 2002). Not only can this have a detrimental effect on the workforce, but it may also cause workplace performance to suffer. For example, a recent study which focussed on the implementation of the Working Time Regulations found that some of the employers which had reduced the number of days on which they worked saw increases in their labour productivity (Neathey and Arrowsmith, 2001).

The results presented here are a useful addition to those which are usually presented on working time, since most other reports are based on employee accounts (as is the companion volume to this report). These other studies, whilst determining who is working long or un-social hours, cannot shed light on how the incidence of this practice is spread across workplaces. Are the employees that work long hours concentrated among a few workplaces or is it a more widespread phenomenon? Providing an answer to this question is one of the intentions of this chapter.

This chapter presents a detailed picture of working hours in British workplaces, taking into account:

- i) the hours and days workplaces are open and whether or not these hours are 'standard';
- ii) the incidence of overtime and long hours working and whether work beyond contractual hours is paid or unpaid;
- iii) the opportunities employees have to vary their hours.

In addition, comparisons are made between the findings of this survey and other comparable national studies of working time.

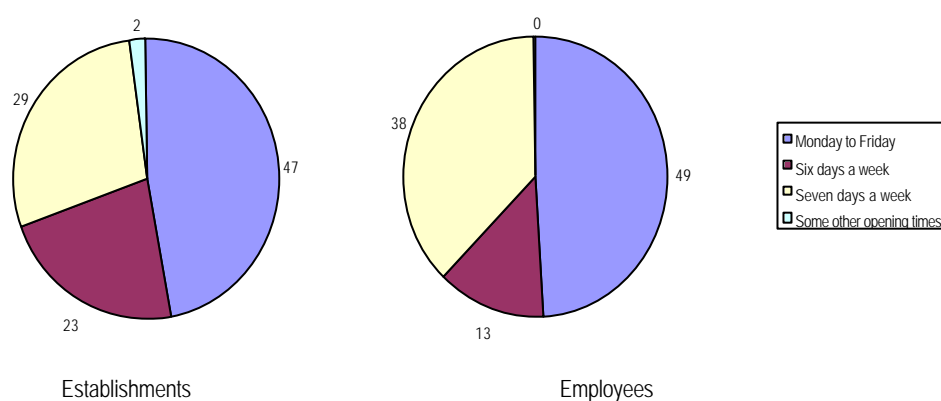
Days and hours of work

Employers were asked to define their *business* hours across two dimensions – the days on which they were open for business and the hours of opening. First, days will be examined, followed by a combined analysis of days and hours to give an overall picture of the allocation of work across a typical week.

Days ‘open for business’

Just under half (47 per cent) of British workplaces were usually open Monday to Friday only – which are referred to as standard days henceforth – while a quarter (23 per cent) operated six days and just under a third (29 per cent) were ‘open for business’ all week (see Figure 2.1, left-hand chart). In terms of the proportion of employees covered by these arrangements (see Figure 2.1, right-hand chart), workplaces that were open for seven days a week covered almost two-fifths of employees (38 per cent), suggesting that this arrangement was more commonly found in larger workplaces.

Figure 2.1: Distribution of days open for business



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

The distribution of the days open for business varied considerably across workplaces (see Table 2.1). Monday to Friday working was most commonly found in the public sector and in several industries, namely Manufacturing, Real Estate, Renting and Business activities, Construction and Education. Opening for six days a week was ostensibly a small workplace phenomenon. Workplaces with fewer than 10 employees were considerably more likely than other workplaces to work in this way. Workplaces involved in the wholesale and retail trade and transport, storage and communication industries were the most likely to work a six-day week. Seven day opening was more commonplace in larger workplaces and among workplaces that were part of very large organisations (with 10,000 or more employees). Unsurprisingly, a large majority of Hotels and Restaurants were open seven days a week.

Hours of working

For the purpose of analysing the hours of working data, they have been split into three groups:

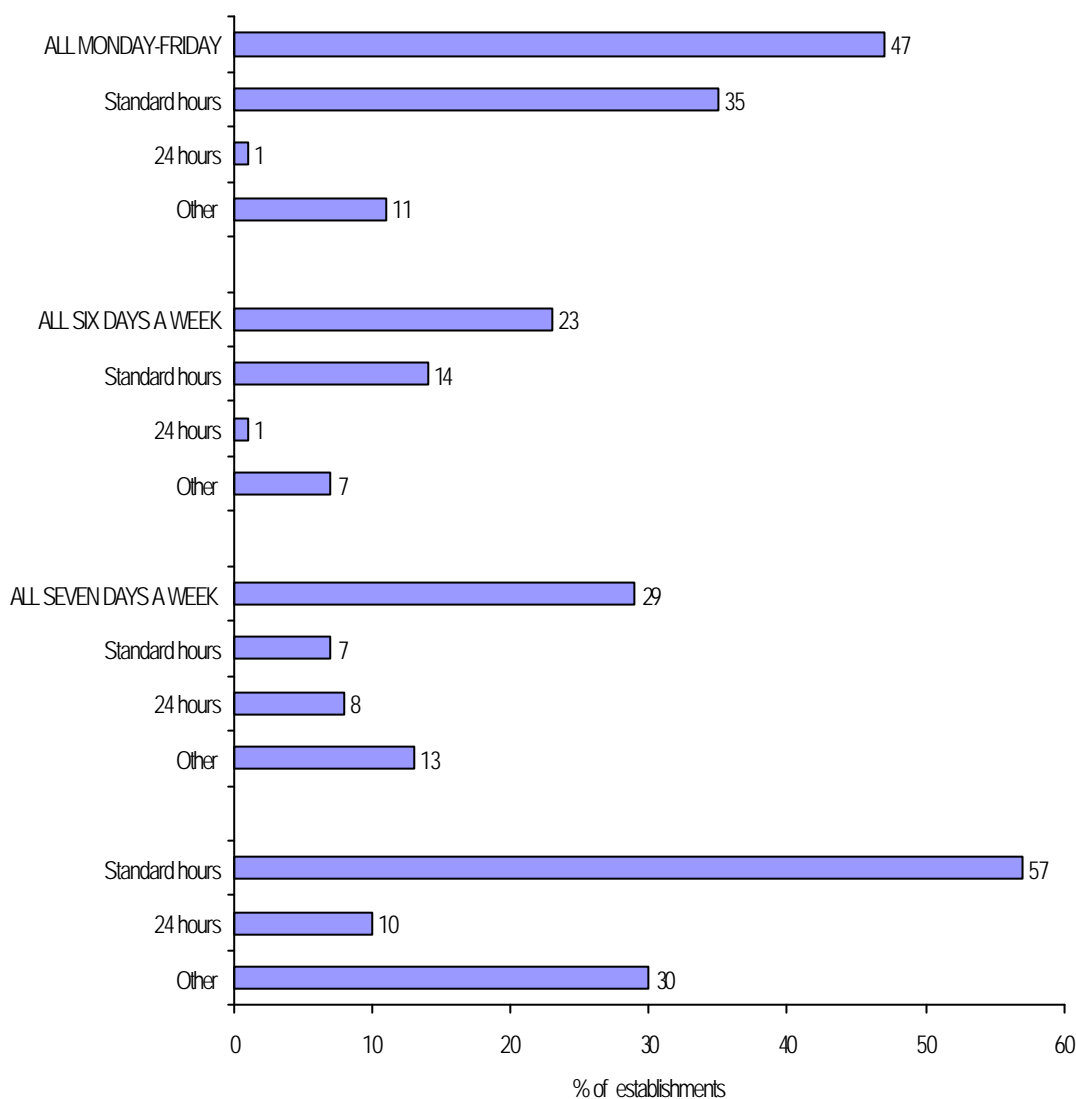
- standard hours, opening between 8am and 10am and closing between 4:30pm and 6:30pm;
- 24 hour opening; and
- some other opening hours.

This also conforms to the definitions used in the first work-life balance study (WLB1). In addition, as with WLB1 it seems sensible to analyse the hours of work in conjunction with the days of working as, on their own, hours of work do not necessarily convey a complete picture about how work is configured.

The most common form of working arrangement was for a workplace to open Monday to Friday for standard hours; however, under two-fifths (35 per cent) actually did this. This configuration aside, no other combination of hours and days of working was reported by more than 14 per cent of workplaces (see Figure 2.2). Round the clock operating – that is, workplaces that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week – was performed in just under a tenth (eight per cent) of workplaces. Operating for 24 hours was rare among workplaces that opened for five or six days a week.

There were significant variations in the hours and days of work across a number of the basic workplace characteristics (see Table 2.2). Much of this variation can be explained by the industry and sector in which the workplace is located. Two industries – Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities and Construction – were most likely to operate a standard working week, that is, Monday to Friday, opening between 8am and 10am and closing between 4.30pm and 6.30pm. While there were other industries with similarly large proportions working this ‘standard’ arrangement, they also had significant proportions with some other combination of hours and days of opening. For example, workplaces in Education not only had a large proportion of workplaces that operated Monday to Friday, which opened between 8am and 10am and closed between 4.30pm and 6.30pm, but there were also significant numbers that opened Monday to Friday for non-standard hours. These were mostly establishments involved in Higher and Further Education where teaching occurs outside standard hours. Wholesale and Retail Trade is interesting in that there appears to be, broadly speaking, a three way split in the working time arrangements. While two-thirds of workplaces in this industry worked standard hours, similar sized groups worked Monday to Friday, or six or seven day weeks. Those most likely to work 24 hours, seven days a week were workplaces involved in Health and Social Work, and these were predominantly hospitals and associated services (e.g. ambulance).

Figure 2.2: Days and hours of business



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

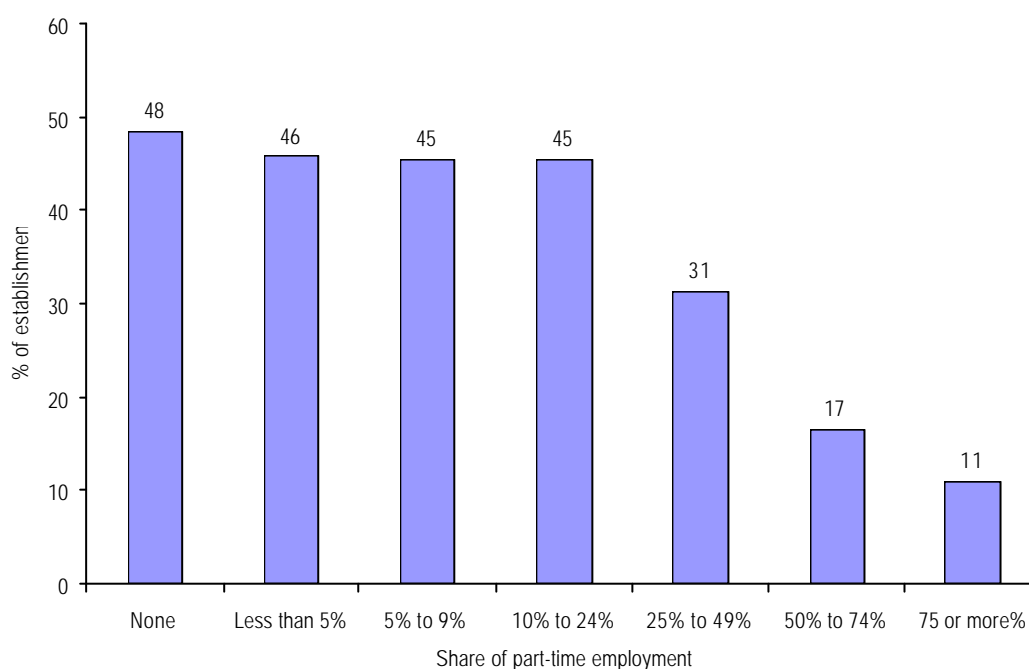
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Days and hours of opening also varied by size of workplace. In particular, small workplaces were significantly more likely than larger workplaces to operate a six day week with standard hours of working. Also, the larger the workplace, the greater the chance that it was open seven days a week, 24 hours a day. This is understandable given the need for more employees to cover the longer hours of working.

There appeared to be some regional differences in the times workplaces were open for business. Workplaces in London were most likely to work Monday to Friday and to work standard hours (42 per cent). The highest proportion of workplaces open seven days a week was located in Wales (39 per cent) and the lowest in London at 21 per cent. North East workplaces were most likely to remain open 24 hours (21 per cent) while only six per cent of Eastern establishments were open all the time.

Working outside of standard days and hours was closely associated with a higher presence of part-time employees in the workplace (see Figure 2.3). Only one-in-ten (11 per cent) workplaces that opened for business Monday to Friday and which had 75 per cent or more of their employees working part-time, had opening hours that were standard. In contrast, workplaces with much lower concentrations of part-time employment (e.g. less than a quarter) were almost equally split between those that worked standard hours and days and those that operated some other pattern of working.

Figure 2.3: Proportion of workplaces open for business Monday to Friday for standard hours, by share of part-timers in total employment



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that were open for business Monday to Friday.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 738 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

The concentration of part-time workers in total employment was found to be higher in workplaces that opened for more days in the week. For example, in workplaces where at least three-quarters of employees were working part-time, just under three-fifths (58 per cent) of these were open seven days a week compared with less than a sixth (16 per cent) where part-timers represented less than a quarter of total employment. A similar relationship existed with respect to the hours of opening. The higher the proportion of part-timers in employment, the more likely the workplace was to operate outside of the standard hours of opening between 8am and 10am and closing between 4.30pm and 6:30pm.

In Chapter 3, details are presented of the types of flexible working time practices provided by employers³ while Chapter 4 looks at the provision of homeworking. Workplaces that provided any of these flexible working arrangements were less likely than those that did not provide these practices to operate a standard working week (45 per cent compared with 58 per cent respectively). Similarly, workplaces providing flexible working arrangements were less likely to work standard hours than workplaces that did not provide any of these practices (56 per cent and 66 per cent respectively).

Overtime work

The employee survey that went alongside this study estimated that the average number of weekly hours worked was approximately 37 among British employees (Mori, 2003). While this is of interest in its own right, it does not indicate how these employees are distributed across workplaces. As such it cannot tell whether long hours working is isolated among relatively few workplaces or whether it is widespread and thus indicative of a 'long hours culture' in British workplaces which has received considerable attention in recent years (Kodz *et al.*, 1998).

To measure the extent of long hours working at the level of the workplace, a set of questions was asked, firstly about the extent to which employees work beyond their contractual hours, and secondly, the extent to which employees work over 48 hours per week over a continuous four-month period or longer. Much of the literature on this subject suggests that there are significant differences between managerial and non-managerial employees; hence there were separate interview questions for these two groups. For instance the Labour Force Survey compared the average weekly hours of ten occupation groups and found a range of differences therein (Williams, 2003).

Working beyond contractual hours

Almost every workplace (96 per cent) reported that at some stage in the past year managers worked beyond their contractual hours. Just four per cent did not. The same was true with respect to non-managerial staff (95 per cent), with just five per cent reporting that this group never worked additional hours. Across the basic characteristics of workplaces there was very little variation in overtime work.

Long hours

Long hours of work has for some time been seen as a particular problem for British employees (DTI, 2003). Convention dictates that long hours are defined as work of over 48 hours per week over a continuous four-month period, which is in line with the Working Time Directive Regulations (1998) governing working hours. This was the definition used in this study.

³ The seven flexible working time practices are: working part-time; working in school term-time only; job sharing; working flexitime; working a compressed week; working annualised hours; and, working reduced hours (for a limited period of time). For most of the discussion, *provision* is defined to only include workplaces that provided the practice where it had been used by at least one employee in the past 12 months.

One-in-four (25 per cent) workplaces reported that at least some of their managerial employees worked 'long hours' and just over a seventh (15 per cent) said some non-managerial employees had worked in this way.

Table 2.3 shows how the incidence of long hours varied across a number of basic workplace characteristics. In many cases there were no consistent associations across these characteristics. The exceptions were single independent workplaces and workplaces that were part of small organisations with fewer than 100 employees, both of which were more likely to report managers working these long hours compared with other workplaces.

There were, however, marked differences across industries. Workplaces involved in Agriculture, Mining and Fisheries and in Education were significantly more likely than workplaces in other industries to report that either managers or non-managerial employees had been regularly working long hours. In the construction industry, while reports of workplaces with managers working long hours were on a par with the average for all workplaces, reports of non-managerial staff working these hours were around twice that for all workplaces. Long hours were least likely to be found among managerial staff in the Wholesale and Retail Trade, Health and Social Work and Other Community industries, and in Wholesale and Retail Trade and Public Administration and Defence industries with respect to non-managers.

Across regions there were few significant differences in the incidence of long hours among managers and non-managers. The exceptions, however, were workplaces situated in the North West and Merseyside and in Scotland – the incidence of long hours was significantly lower in both these areas.

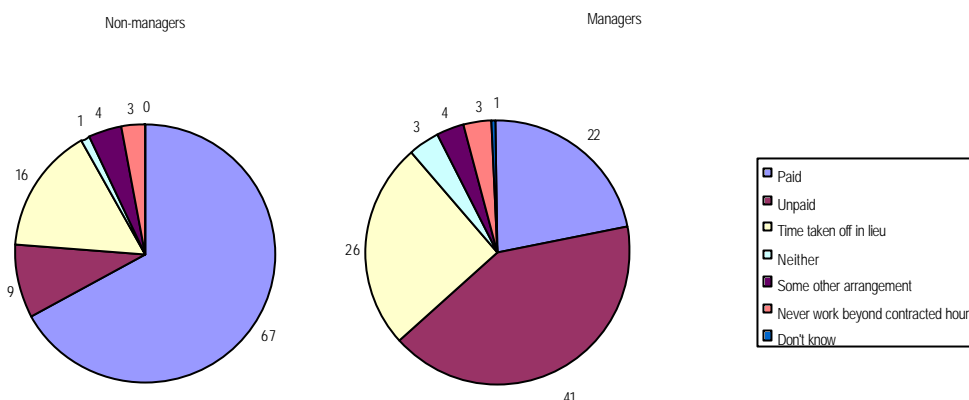
Of the workplaces where any employees were found to work long hours, it was usual for just managers (49 per cent) or both managers and non-managers (35 per cent) to have worked these hours. It was relatively rare – less than one-in-five workplaces (17 per cent) – for just non-managerial employees to be working long hours.

Paid and unpaid overtime

For at least some employees, being paid for overtime work will compensate for the reduction in time they have available for other activities. However, as other studies have shown, not all employers pay their employees for their overtime (Cully *et al.*, 1999). Indeed, the Trades Union Congress estimated that over 5.5 million British workers do unpaid overtime, representing over £5,000 worth of free labour to their employer per annum (TUC, 2002).

This study confirms earlier findings and, in addition, shows a vast difference in the treatment of managerial and non-managerial employees with regard to paid and unpaid overtime. Whereas two-thirds (67 per cent) of employers paid non-managerial staff for any work beyond their contractual hours, this practice was far less common where managers were concerned (see Figure 2.4). Just a fifth (22 per cent) of workplaces reported paying managers for this extra work. A similar proportion (26 per cent) reported that managers could take time off in-lieu. However, they were much more likely to report that this work was unpaid (41 per cent).

Figure 2.4: Methods of treating work that is beyond contractual hours, managers and non-managerial employees



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Across workplaces there was some variation in the treatment of overtime work for managers and non-managerial employees (see Table 2.4). Small workplaces with fewer than 25 employees appeared to be more likely than larger workplaces to pay managers for additional hours. This was particularly true of those that were not part of a larger organisation⁴. The same could not be said for non-managerial employees. They were more likely to be paid for overtime where they were employed by a workplace that was part of a large organisation with 10,000 or more employees. In contrast, managers were more likely to be paid in circumstances where the workplace was part of an organisation with fewer than 100 employees.

Paid overtime for both managers and non-managers was less frequently reported in the public sector compared with the private sector. For managerial employees, the lower incidence of paid overtime in the public sector was almost exactly offset by the higher proportion that granted time off in-lieu. The story was different for non-managerial employees, where the lower incidence of paid overtime was offset by a greater likelihood of this time being either unpaid or taken off in-lieu.

There was considerable variation in the treatment of overtime work across industries. A much larger proportion of workplaces involved in education reported unpaid overtime for both managerial and non-managerial employees than in other industries. Paid overtime was particularly high for both these groups of employees in the Hotels and Restaurants industry. This probably reflects the higher incidence of employees being paid by the hour as opposed to being salaried workers in this industry.

⁴ Just over a third (34 per cent) of single independent workplaces with fewer than 25 employees paid their managers compared with less than one-in-ten (nine per cent) workplaces that had 25 or more employees that were also not part of a larger organisation.

Working Time Regulations

The Working Time Regulations, mentioned earlier on in this chapter, implement the European Working Time Directive as well as parts of the Young Workers Directive. The basic rights and protections provided by the Regulations include: a limit of an average of 48 hours a week which a worker can work; a limit of eight hours work in 24 which night workers can work; a right to 11 hours rest a day; and, a right to a day off each week (DTI, 2003). Within the regulations there is the option for an employee to 'opt out' which allows them to work beyond these statutory limits. This requires the employee signing a special agreement.

Reports of managers or non-managers signing an opt-out agreement were not widespread. In just six per cent of workplaces managers had done so and in just seven per cent had a non-managerial employee done likewise.

Opting out of the Working Time Regulations was most common in larger and private sector workplaces (see Table 2.5). More so than workplace size or sector, however, industry appears to account for a significant amount of the variation in signing of opt-out agreements across workplaces. Workplaces in the Hotels and Restaurants industry (19 per cent of managers and 13 per cent of non-managers) and those involved in Agriculture, Mining or Fisheries (17 per cent of managers and 16 per cent of non-managers) were more likely to report employees opting out compared with other industries.

Construction and Health and Social Work were the only industries where significant differences appeared between managerial and non-managerial staff. Within Construction, only three per cent of workplaces reported that any managers had signed an opt-out agreement compared with 14 per cent with respect to non-managerial employees. Similarly, four per cent of managers in the Health and Social Work industry had signed an opt-out agreement compared to 10 per cent of non-managers.

There was little variation across regions in the incidence of either managers or non-managers opting out of the Working Time Regulations. The only exception was workplaces in Yorkshire and Humber which reported a much higher proportion of either of these employees having signed an opt-out agreement (15 per cent and 11 per cent respectively).

Variations in usual hours of work

Having the option to vary their hours through starting and finishing work earlier, or working through a lunch break so as to leave early, is an important way in which employees can gain flexibility in their working time arrangements. These are relatively informal mechanisms for gaining flexibility compared with more formal practices such as annualised hours contracts or flexitime. It was found to be a relatively widespread practice, with two-thirds (67 per cent) of workplaces, covering 72 per cent of employees, offering such flexibility.

Table 2.6 shows how the incidence of this practice varied across a number of basic workplace characteristics. While the size of the workplace and that of the organisation did not appear to be that closely associated with the incidence of

this practice, whether or not the workplace was part of a larger organisation did. More detailed analysis shows that three quarters (75 per cent) of small independent workplaces with fewer than 50 employees allowed their employees to vary their usual hours in the ways suggested compared with just three-fifths (61 per cent) of workplaces of the same size but that were part of a larger organisation. The reason for this difference may be due to the small standalone workplaces not seeing the need to formalise their arrangements for providing their employees with flexibility and instead relying on more ad hoc arrangements. This possible explanation is explored elsewhere in the report.

A greater proportion of workplaces in the private sector offered their employees the opportunity to vary their hours in comparison to those within the public sector (69 per cent and 59 per cent respectively). This may be explained by the types of industry most likely to be found within these two sectors. For example, predominantly public sector industries such as Education and Health may be more confined in the extent to which they can vary hours (for instance, by the school day), whereas private sector industries such as Manufacturing and Retail do not necessarily work within such constraints.

Agriculture, Mining and Fisheries along with Manufacturing and Other Community Services were the most likely industries to allow their employees to vary their hours (82, 77 and 77 per cent respectively). Workplaces involved with education (53 per cent) were the least likely to allow this kind of flexibility, which is not surprising given that the patterns of work are largely pre-set and out of the control of local managers.

Being able to vary usual hours of work was related to both the days and hours of usual business. In particular, workplaces that operated seven days a week or 24 hours a day were significantly less likely to offer their employees the option of varying their hours (62 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively). Given that many of these workplaces organised their work across shifts (see below) where the potential for cover may be reduced, it was no surprise that employers were less likely to give employees the option to vary their hours at will.

Shift working and the swapping of shifts

A traditional means by which employers gain flexibility in how they deliver a product or service is through the operation of shifts. Shift working can have the opposite effect on employees, allowing little flexibility in the way in which their labour is provided. In addition, shift working often has negative associations with work-life balance as it usually implies working at unsociable times.

Under a third (29 per cent) of workplaces organised their work around shifts (see Table 2.7). The larger the workplaces were, the more likely they were to use shift working. For example, only a fifth (20 per cent) of workplaces with five to nine employees worked shifts compared with four-fifths (80 per cent) with 500 or more employees. A similar association, although somewhat less pronounced, was evident in respect of organisation size.

Most of the variation in the incidence of shift working occurred across industries. Hotels and Restaurants stand out from all the other industries, in

relation to the high level of shift work found here, with almost three times as many workplaces in this industry operating shifts compared with the average for all workplaces. This can be explained by the high propensity of non-standard hours within this type of work. Health and Social Care showed the second highest level of shift working at 44 per cent, possibly due to the 'round the clock' nature of this work. The Construction and Real Estate and Business Activities industries were the least likely to employ shift working, with only nine per cent and 10 per cent respectively of these workplaces organising their work around shifts.

The potential for shift working to impact negatively on an employee's work-life balance is to some extent reduced where they have the option to swap their shifts. This practice was widespread, with approximately nine out of ten (92 per cent) workplaces that operated shifts allowing their employees to swap their shifts (see Table 2.7)⁵. Only very large workplaces with 500 or more employees were less inclined to offer this option, with just three-quarters (75 per cent) of these allowing this type of flexibility. The Construction industry also stands out with just under two-thirds (63 per cent) of workplaces in this industry allowing their employees to swap their shifts.

Changes in working time

To measure whether there has been any change in recent years in working time arrangements, comparisons have been made with the WLB1 employer survey. Some change was expected as a result of regulatory changes, but also because perceptions of acceptable working hours tend to adjust over time.

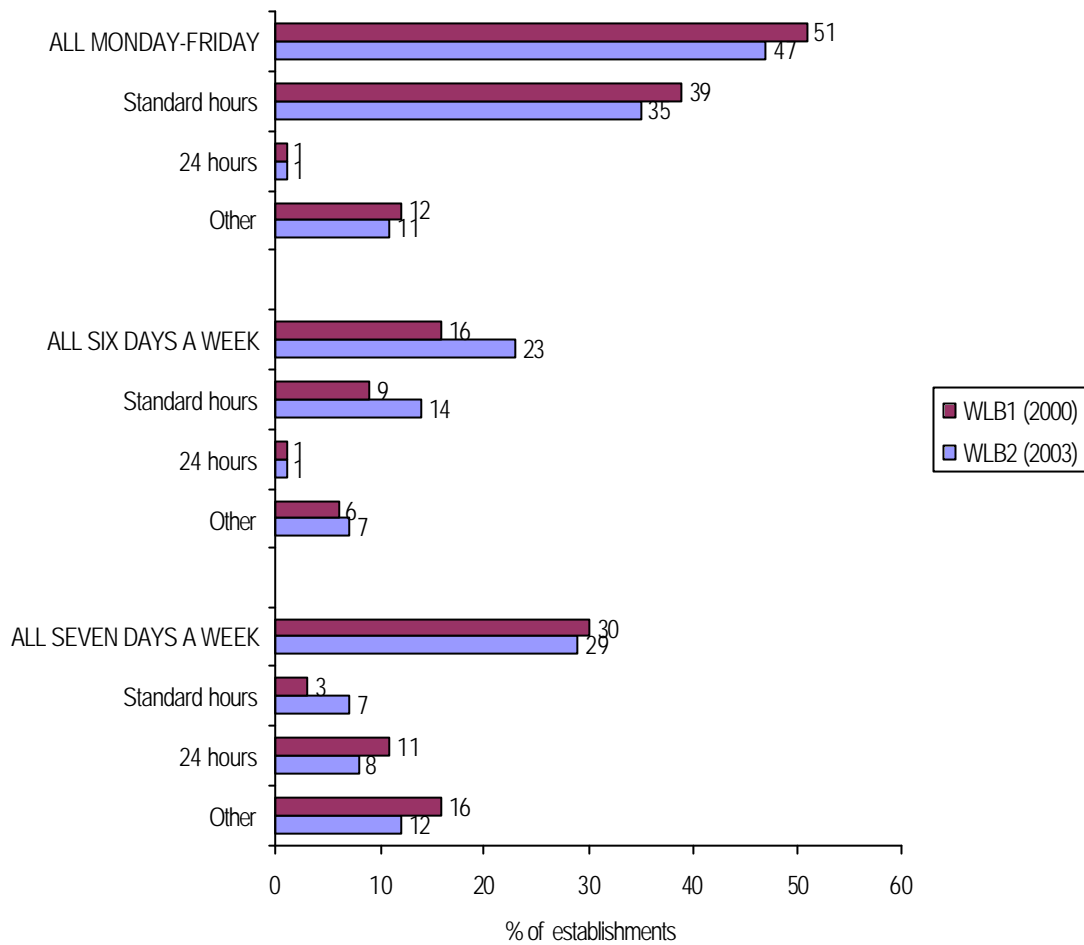
Comparing hours and days of work

Comparisons between the two surveys suggest a movement away from the standard working days, that is, Monday to Friday (see Figure 2.5). The proportion of workplaces operating in this way fell from just over half (51 per cent) to just under half (47 per cent). In place of this, more workplaces were opening six days a week (23 per cent compared with 16 per cent). There was no significant change in the proportion opening seven days a week.

In terms of the hours worked, workplaces that opened just Monday to Friday were less likely to work standard hours only (39 per cent in 2000 compared to 35 per cent in 2003) whereas workplaces that opened six or seven days a week were more likely to work standard hours (from nine and three per cent to 14 and seven per cent respectively).

⁵ This represents just over a quarter (27 per cent) of all workplaces with five or more employees.

Figure 2.5: A comparison of days and hours of business



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

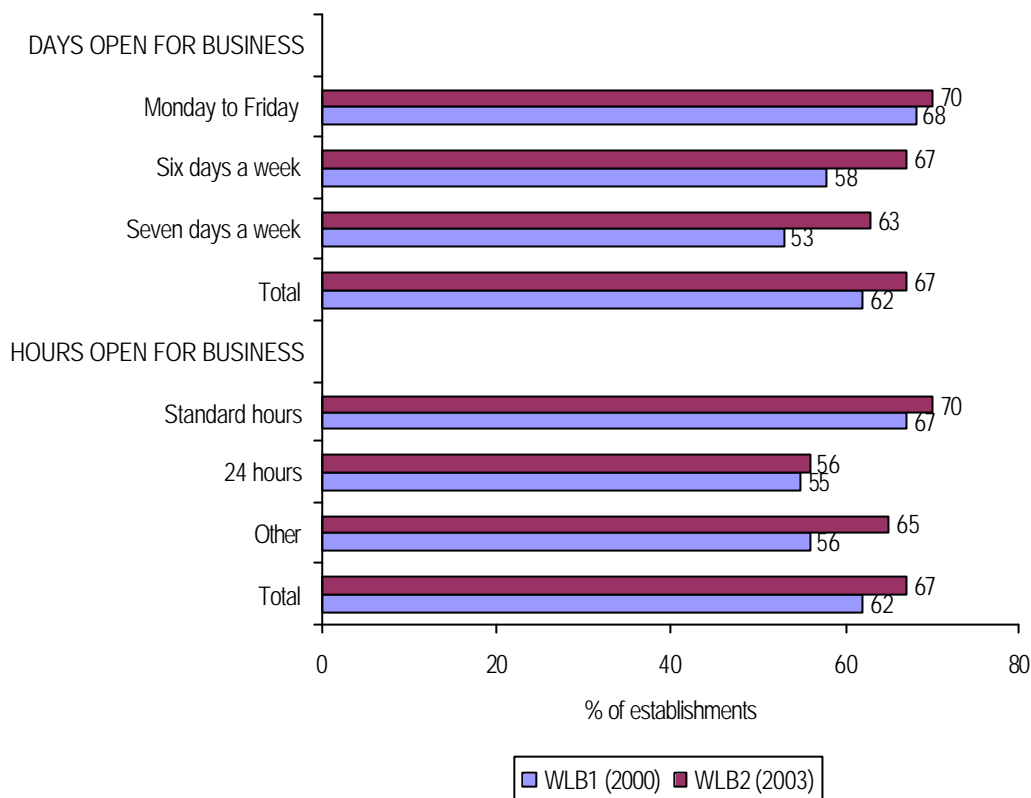
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 2,500 managers in WLB1 and 1,509 managers in WLB2.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003).

Comparing variation of hours

Overall, there was an increase in the proportion of workplaces that allowed their employees to vary their hours, for example starting and finishing earlier or working though lunch breaks in order to leave earlier. Whereas in 2000, just over three-fifths (62 per cent) of workplaces reported this practice, that figure had increased to over two-thirds (67 per cent) three years on. It also appeared that flexibility increased regardless of the pattern of working, that is, all workplaces, regardless of their opening hours were more likely to allow their employees to vary their hours in 2003 in comparison to 2000 (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: A comparison of whether employees were allowed to vary their hours by the days and hours the workplace was open for business



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers in WLB2 and 2,500 managers in WLB1.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003).

Conclusion

In this chapter details were presented on the hours of work in British workplaces, covering a number of aspects including the hours and days they were open, the incidence of overtime work and long hours working and whether or not employees could vary their hours.

There was an incredible diversity in the range of hours and days that British workplaces were open for business. The five-day week no longer applied to a majority of workplaces and almost two-fifths of employees worked in workplaces that were open seven days a week. In total, around two-thirds of workplaces had hours of business outside of the previously standard working week (Monday to Friday, opening between 8am and 10am and closing between 4.30pm and 6:30pm). And it appeared that there was a trend towards greater flexibility in operating hours. Since the WLB1 employer survey, the proportion of workplaces that operated standard hours and days had fallen (from 39 to 35 per cent), with most of the change taken up by employers moving from a five to a six-day working week.

Evidence from employers confirms employees' reports of long working hours. Most employers reported that both their managerial and non-managerial

employees, at some stage in the past year, worked beyond their contractual hours. This may not be problematic for an employee's work-life balance since these extra hours may only be a small increase on their contractual hours, they may occur infrequently and they may be paid for. What is of more concern were the reports of employees working beyond the limits set out in the Working Time Directive (WTD). One-in-four (25 per cent) workplaces reported that at least some of their managerial employees worked beyond the WTD limits and just over a seventh (15 per cent) said some non-managerial employees had worked these hours. Therefore, it was apparent that employees' working long hours was a widespread phenomenon and not simply concentrated among a minority of workplaces. Two industries stand out for having a high proportion of workplaces reporting that either managers or non-managerial employees had been regularly working long hours – Agriculture, Mining and Fisheries and Education. Few employers reported that either managerial or non-managerial employees had signed an agreement that would allow them to work beyond statutory limits.

An overwhelming majority of employers had employees – both managerial and non-managerial – that worked overtime. Whether or not these additional hours were paid for depended on who was working them, with non-managerial employees being considerably more likely to be paid than managers.

Giving employees flexibility over their hours of working was a widespread practice and was particularly apparent within small, independent work places. Two-thirds of workplaces (67 per cent) covering 72 per cent of employees, gave their employees the option to vary their hours through starting and finishing work earlier, or working through a lunch break so as to leave early. More employers were reported to be allowing this compared with evidence from the WLB1 employer survey. This may be how employers were compensating employees for having to work longer hours that were often unsociable and less 'standard'.

Table 2.1: Distribution of days usually worked, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Monday – Friday (%)	Six days a week (%)	Seven days a week (%)	Some other arrangement (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	41	31	25	2	486	295
10 to 24 employees	45	24	29	2	571	444
25 to 49 employees	58	11	30	1	249	229
50 to 99 employees	53	12	33	2	107	143
100 to 249 employees	53	12	34	*	65	178
250 to 499 employees	57	11	32	*	19	80
500 or more employees	50	8	42	*	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	52	24	21	2	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	50	15	34	1	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	36	28	35	1	246	317
10,000 or more	32	23	43	1	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	42	25	32	1	1,210	1,102
Public sector	68	13	16	3	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	52	23	23	2	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	44	22	32	2	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	45	25	29	1	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	39	21	38	2	64	83
Recognised unions	56	16	25	3	386	581
All workplaces						
	47	23	29	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.1 cont.: Distribution of days usually worked, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Monday - Friday (%)	Six days a week (%)	Seven days a week (%)	Some other arrangement (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	45	16	34	5	38	58
Manufacturing	64	26	10	*	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[87]	[1]	[12]	[*]	6	23
Construction	65	23	12	*	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	22	36	41	1	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	7	12	79	2	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	35	50	11	4	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[46]	[49]	[5]	[*]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	78	10	12	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	55	17	28	*	49	85
Education	87	5	7	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	48	15	34	3	187	220
Other Community	23	18	53	6	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	39	25	36	*	55	60
North West and Merseyside	34	31	35	*	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	44	32	23	2	121	126
East Midlands	57	17	23	2	117	119
West Midlands	41	32	25	1	113	126
South West	44	24	29	3	158	142
Eastern	48	17	35	*	144	142
London	58	20	21	1	185	183
South East	50	19	29	2	228	223
Wales	38	22	39	1	76	75
Scotland	52	16	28	5	154	152
All workplaces	47	23	29	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.2: Days and hours of business, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>									Weighted count	Unweighted count
	Monday - Friday			Six days a week			Seven days a week				
	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)		
Size of establishment											
5 to 9 employees	34	*	7	23	-	7	10	5	10	486	295
10 to 24 employees	33	1	12	14	1	10	7	7	15	571	444
25 to 49 employees	42	1	15	6	1	3	5	11	14	249	229
50 to 99 employees	38	2	13	1	3	8	7	14	12	107	143
100 to 249 employees	33	3	16	5	4	3	6	16	11	65	178
250 to 499 employees	44	3	10	4	3	4	4	26	3	19	80
500 or more employees	35	2	13	5	1	2	8	24	10	13	140
Size of organisation											
Less than 100	41	1	10	14	*	10	5	7	10	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	36	2	13	9	2	4	10	10	14	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	26	1	9	21	1	4	12	9	14	246	317
10,000 or more	22	-	10	12	2	9	12	12	19	176	232
Ownership											
Private sector	33	1	8	15	1	8	9	8	15	1,210	1,102
Public sector	44	*	23	8	1	4	2	11	3	299	407
Single or multi											
Single independent estab.	40	1	11	12	*	11	4	8	11	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	32	1	11	15	1	5	10	8	14	922	1,033
Union recognition											
No unions present	35	1	9	16	1	8	8	6	15	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	30	2	6	8	3	9	7	20	11	64	83
Recognised unions	37	1	18	10	1	4	6	11	8	386	581
All workplaces	35	1	11	14	1	7	7	8	13	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.2 cont.: Days and hours of business, by workplace characteristics

										<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Monday – Friday			Six days a week			Seven days a week			Weighted count	Unweighted count
	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)	Standard (%)	24 hours (%)	Other (%)		
Standard Industrial Classification											
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	27	-	18	4	-	12	17	8	8	38	58
Manufacturing	43	4	17	9	4	12	5	3	2	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[81]	[-]	[5]	[1]	[-]	[-]	[1]	[11]	[-]	6	23
Construction	54	-	11	12	-	11	7	3	3	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16	*	6	27	-	9	21	2	17	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	*	-	7	5	-	7	1	14	64	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	28	*	7	27	6	17	4	3	3	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[46]	[-]	[1]	[40]	[-]	[5]	[-]	[1]	[4]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	69	1	8	7	-	2	5	3	4	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	47	-	8	17	*	*	1	21	5	49	85
Education	48	1	38	3	-	2	*	6	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	39	1	8	8	1	6	2	29	2	187	220
Other Community	16	2	5	12	1	6	6	9	38	100	84
Government Office Region											
North East	33	3	3	14	4	7	7	14	15	55	60
North West and Merseyside	27	1	7	23	2	6	7	9	18	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	39	1	4	12	2	18	6	6	11	121	126
East Midlands	38	1	19	7	*	10	6	8	9	117	119
West Midlands	29	1	11	17	1	12	8	9	8	113	126
South West	34	*	10	17	*	5	5	12	12	158	142
Eastern	36	1	11	8	*	9	9	5	20	144	142
London	42	1	14	16	*	4	4	5	12	185	183
South East	36	1	13	13	*	5	7	8	14	228	223
Wales	32	2	4	15	1	6	13	13	13	76	75
Scotland	36	*	15	11	1	4	13	7	8	154	152
All workplaces	35	1	11	14	1	7	7	8	13	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.3: Incidence of long hours working, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>			
	Managerial employees (%)	Non-managerial employees (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment				
5 to 9 employees	21	13	486	295
10 to 24 employees	25	14	571	444
25 to 49 employees	30	20	249	229
50 to 99 employees	25	20	107	143
100 to 249 employees	21	15	65	178
250 to 499 employees	26	23	19	80
500 or more employees	25	14	13	140
Size of organisation				
Less than 100	28	17	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	24	10	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	18	14	246	317
10,000 or more	17	13	176	232
Ownership				
Private sector	24	15	1,210	1,102
Public sector	26	15	299	407
Single or multi				
Single independent establishment	29	18	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	22	13	922	1,033
Union recognition				
No unions present	24	14	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	37	28	64	83
Recognised unions	23	14	386	581
All workplaces	25	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.3 cont.: Incidence of long hours working, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>			
	Managerial employees (%)	Non-managerial employees (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification				
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	51	29	38	58
Manufacturing	25	19	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[4]	[13]	6	23
Construction	24	30	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	17	7	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	38	23	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	34	19	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[13]	[1]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	28	10	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	20	6	49	85
Education	43	23	136	182
Health and Social Work	17	16	187	220
Other Community	11	11	100	84
Government Office Region				
North East	22	12	55	60
North West and Merseyside	18	11	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	26	16	121	126
East Midlands	28	22	117	119
West Midlands	26	15	113	126
South West	29	18	158	142
Eastern	26	16	144	142
London	25	11	185	183
South East	27	18	228	223
Wales	25	16	76	75
Scotland	18	10	154	152
All workplaces	25	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.4: Treatment of overtime hours, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Managerial employees			Non-managerial employees			Weighted	Unweighted
	Paid (%)	Unpaid (%)	Time off in-lieu (%)	Paid (%)	Unpaid (%)	Time off in-lieu (%)		
Size of establishment								
5 to 9 employees	26	37	26	65	7	18	486	295
10 to 24 employees	25	35	29	70	8	14	571	444
25 to 49 employees	15	47	23	66	14	14	249	229
50 to 99 employees	13	61	20	71	7	16	107	143
100 to 249 employees	13	57	18	72	5	15	65	178
250 to 499 employees	2	43	50	57	4	32	19	80
500 or more employees	11	59	28	71	*	26	13	140
Size of organisation								
Less than 100	27	37	24	68	7	14	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	20	45	27	66	6	19	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	14	45	30	66	9	20	246	317
10,000 or more	19	41	30	74	10	12	176	232
Ownership								
Private sector	24	41	24	70	7	14	1,210	1,102
Public sector	14	42	32	55	16	23	299	407
Single or multi								
Single independent establishment	29	37	22	70	6	13	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	18	43	28	66	10	17	922	1033
Union recognition								
No unions present	25	40	25	70	7	14	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	20	47	26	72	8	13	64	83
Recognised unions	13	44	31	60	12	22	386	581
All workplaces	22	41	26	67	9	16	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.4 cont.: Treatment of overtime hours, by workplace characteristics

	Managerial employees			Non-managerial employees			<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Paid (%)	Unpaid (%)	Time off in-lieu (%)	Paid (%)	Unpaid (%)	Time off in-lieu (%)	Weighted	Unweighted
Standard Industrial Classification								
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	11	54	19	79	2	12	38	58
Manufacturing	29	46	16	80	4	8	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[24]	[66]	[2]	[87]	[1]	[9]	6	23
Construction	27	50	11	80	9	7	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	22	36	33	73	5	12	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	38	30	20	82	7	5	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	23	40	25	71	8	9	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[12]	[58]	[24]	[66]	[2]	[25]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	20	46	22	47	19	26	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	22	29	47	60	-	38	49	85
Education	12	56	13	48	32	12	136	182
Health and Social Work	17	32	41	65	2	25	187	220
Other Community	25	31	34	64	3	26	100	84
Government Office Region								
North East	10	39	20	57	11	18	55	60
North West and Merseyside	29	30	35	72	5	15	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	14	55	20	67	10	16	121	126
East Midlands	24	38	25	68	6	22	117	119
West Midlands	21	38	28	77	2	10	113	126
South West	29	36	21	69	11	12	158	142
Eastern	27	45	20	75	5	13	144	142
London	17	38	28	54	13	23	185	183
South East	21	46	28	68	10	14	228	223
Wales	19	39	32	64	4	23	76	75
Scotland	22	43	24	69	13	11	154	152
All workplaces	22	41	26	67	9	16	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.5: Proportion of workplaces where employees of the type mentioned had opted-out from Working Time Regulations, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>			
	Managerial employees (%)	Non-managerial employees (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment				
5 to 9 employees	7	6	486	295
10 to 24 employees	5	5	571	444
25 to 49 employees	7	10	249	229
50 to 99 employees	9	10	107	143
100 to 249 employees	6	11	65	178
250 to 499 employees	19	18	19	80
500 or more employees	10	12	13	140
Size of organisation				
Less than 100	7	7	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	8	6	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	6	8	246	317
10,000 or more	7	8	176	232
Ownership				
Private sector	8	8	1,210	1,102
Public sector	2	3	299	407
Single or multi				
Single independent establishment	7	8	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	6	6	922	1,033
Union recognition				
No unions present	7	7	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	7	12	64	83
Recognised unions	4	6	386	581
All workplaces				
	6	7	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.5 cont.: Proportion of workplaces where employees of the type mentioned had opted-out from Working Time Regulations, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>			
	Managerial employees (%)	Non-managerial employees (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification				
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	17	16	38	58
Manufacturing	9	11	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[4]	[12]	6	23
Construction	3	14	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	4	3	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	19	13	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	12	11	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[10]	[1]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	8	5	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	5	2	49	85
Education	1	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	4	10	187	220
Other Community	2	7	100	84
Government Office Region				
North East	6	7	55	60
North West and Merseyside	3	4	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	15	11	121	126
East Midlands	7	7	117	119
West Midlands	6	9	113	126
South West	9	7	158	142
Eastern	2	9	144	142
London	6	6	185	183
South East	8	8	228	223
Wales	6	3	76	75
Scotland	4	5	154	152
All workplaces	6	7	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.6: Whether employees were allowed to vary their usual hours of work, by workplace characteristics

				<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	67	31	1	486	295
10 to 24 employees	70	29	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	62	38	-	249	229
50 to 99 employees	60	40	-	107	143
100 to 249 employees	74	26	-	65	178
250 to 499 employees	74	26	-	19	80
500 or more employees	67	33	-	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	72	27	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	68	31	1	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	61	37	3	246	317
10,000 or more	66	34	-	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	69	30	1	1,210	1,102
Public sector	59	41	1	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	74	25	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	63	36	1	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	70	29	*	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	75	23	2	64	83
Recognised unions	60	38	2	386	581
All workplaces	67	32	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.6 cont.: Whether employees were allowed to vary their usual hours of work, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	82	14	4	38	58
Manufacturing	77	23	-	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[73]	[27]	[-]	6	23
Construction	63	37	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	71	29	*	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	57	41	2	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	63	37	-	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[70]	[22]	[8]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	76	24	-	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	72	28	-	49	85
Education	53	46	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	57	43	-	187	220
Other Community	77	21	2	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	57	43	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	68	32	-	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	64	34	2	121	126
East Midlands	66	34	*	117	119
West Midlands	75	25	1	113	126
South West	62	34	4	158	142
Eastern	76	23	1	144	142
London	67	33	-	185	183
South East	73	26	*	228	223
Wales	57	43	-	76	75
Scotland	62	36	1	154	152
All workplaces	67	32	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.7: Incidence of shift working and whether employees were allowed to swap their shifts, by workplace characteristics

	Shift working (%)	Employees can swap shifts (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
			Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment				
5 to 9 employees	20	91	486	295
10 to 24 employees	26	97	571	444
25 to 49 employees	37	93	249	229
50 to 99 employees	46	86	107	143
100 to 249 employees	55	82	65	178
250 to 499 employees	57	86	19	80
500 or more employees	80	75	13	140
Size of organisation				
Less than 100	21	92	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	34	85	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	38	94	246	317
10,000 or more	48	92	176	232
Ownership				
Private sector	30	91	1,210	1,102
Public sector	27	94	299	407
Single or multi				
Single independent establishment	23	91	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	33	92	922	1,033
Union recognition				
No unions present	27	91	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	45	95	64	83
Recognised unions	33	92	386	581
All workplaces	29	92	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 2.7 cont.: Incidence of shift working and whether employees were allowed to swap their shifts, by workplace characteristics

	Shift working (%)	Employees can swap shifts (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
			Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification				
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	18	97	38	58
Manufacturing	21	82	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[10]	[75]	6	23
Construction	9	64	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	25	95	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	85	93	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	35	90	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[14]	[80]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	10	84	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	30	87	49	85
Education	20	93	136	182
Health and Social Work	44	96	187	220
Other Community	34	91	100	84
Government Office Region				
North East	36	75	55	60
North West and Merseyside	29	94	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	26	85	121	126
East Midlands	24	77	117	119
West Midlands	32	97	113	126
South West	29	99	158	142
Eastern	29	91	144	142
London	30	94	185	183
South East	29	91	228	223
Wales	33	96	76	75
Scotland	28	95	154	152
All workplaces	29	92	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

3

Provision, eligibility and take-up of flexible working time arrangements

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that British employers operate with considerable diversity with respect to their hours and days of opening. It no longer appears that there is a standard working week, and the evidence suggests that this diversity has increased in recent times. Another dimension to the issue of working time is in the way that the hours of work are allocated amongst employees. While variations in opening hours are largely a product of business considerations, flexibility in the allocation of work hours can be beneficial to both the employer and the employee.

While there is no set definition of what constitutes a flexible working time arrangement, there appears to be a general consensus across the vast research on this topic that the following practices represent the most commonly available forms:

- Working part-time;
- Working in school term-time only;
- Job sharing;
- Working flexitime;
- Working a compressed week;
- Working annualised hours; and
- Working reduced hours for a limited period of time

Employer provision of these practices, along with employee eligibility to use and take up of these practices, is the focus of this chapter. In addition, changes in each of these dimensions of flexible working time arrangements are explored through making comparisons with the WLB1 employer survey, along with other comparable studies of workplace practices.

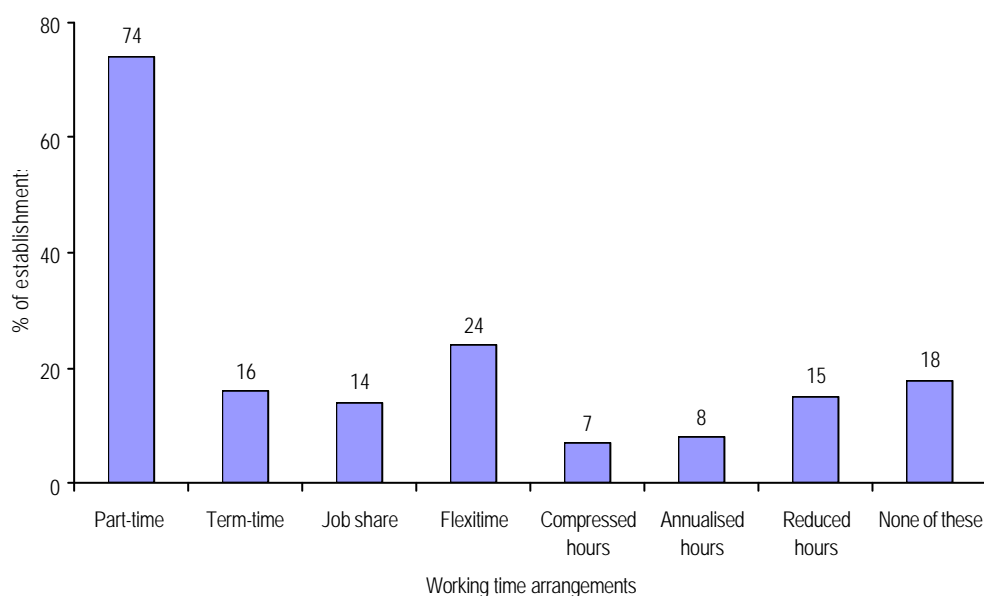
Provision of flexible working time arrangements

With respect to the seven flexible working time arrangements listed above, employers were asked whether any employees at their workplace *currently or in the past 12 months* had worked in these ways. This was in keeping with the

question on flexible working provision that was used in the WLB1 employer survey. In just over four-fifths (81 per cent) of workplaces employees had worked in at least one of these ways. In a further five per cent, although no employees had made use of these practices either currently or in the past 12 months, they were still available for employees to use. Therefore, 86 per cent of workplaces had some type of flexible working time arrangement available for their employees to use. When referring to *provision* throughout the remainder of this chapter, the former of these definitions is used, that is, for a practice to be provided by a workplace, it had to have been used by at least one employee in the preceding 12 months. However, there are instances where the broader definition of provision is used, mainly to illustrate where growth in provision may come from.

Aside from part-time working, the provision of flexible working time arrangements was not widespread, with less than one-in-four employers providing any one of the other six arrangements (Figure 3.1)⁶. Providing employees with the opportunity to work a compressed working week or on an annualised hours basis were the least common practices, with fewer than one-in-ten employers reporting that they operated either of these arrangements. Next to part-time working, flexitime was the most common arrangement, with just under a quarter (24 per cent) of all employers providing this form of working.

Figure 3.1: Provision of flexible working time arrangements



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers. Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

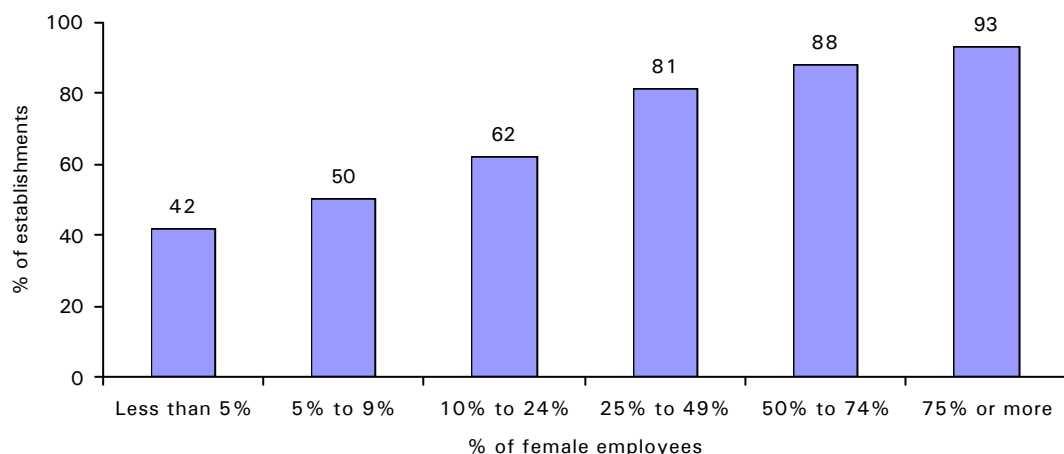
⁶ Indeed, excluding the provision of part-time working, just under half (49 per cent) of workplaces provided any of these other practices.

Table 3.1 illustrates how the provision of these practices varied across different workplaces. In most instances, provision was greater the larger the size of the workplace, with a similar relationship in respect to the size of the organisation of which the workplace was a part. However, it was not necessarily true that the relationship between these two workplace characteristics and provision was monotonic (i.e. provision increases proportionately with size). For example, fewer workplaces with 50 to 99 employees provided term-time only working than those with 25 to 49 employees. This seems to be due to a series of complex interactions between workplace size and other factors, such as which industry the workplace was part of, the sector it was in and the degree of unionisation, rather than saying something in particular about workplaces of this size.

Aside from the provision of a compressed working week and reduced hours working, public sector workplaces were significantly more likely to provide any of these arrangements than workplaces that were part of the private sector. The difference between these sectors was particularly marked with respect to the provision of job sharing arrangements and term-time only working.

Large differences were reported in the provision of each of these practices across industries. Two industries in particular stand out – Hotels and Restaurants, and Construction – the former for generally having above average provision of each of these practices and the latter for being below average. Regional variations in the provision of flexible working time arrangements were in the most part not significant, and where they were, tended to reflect the composition of industries within the region.

Figure 3.2: Provision of flexible working time arrangements in the private sector by proportion of females in total employment



Base: All private sector establishments with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,102 managers⁷.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

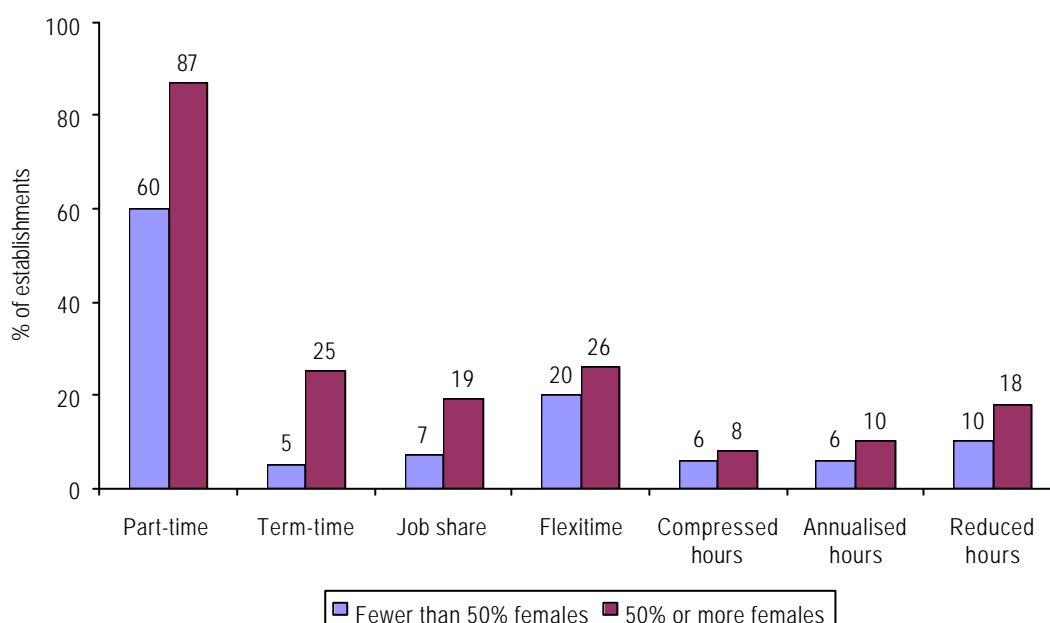
Source: WLB2 (2003)

⁷ The base includes 16 workplaces where it was not possible to estimate the proportion of females in total employment.

The gender mix of the workplace appeared to be an important factor in explaining the presence of flexible working time arrangements at a workplace, at least in the private sector. As Figure 3.2 shows, in the private sector the relationship between the proportion of females at the workplace and the provision of flexible working was monotonic, with incidence increasing as the share of females in total employment increased. In the public sector no such relationship was evident⁸.

The importance of gender with respect to the provision of flexible working time arrangements was even more apparent when each practice was looked at separately (Figure 3.3). Once the gender ratio of female to male employees was 50 per cent or more, the proportion of workplaces providing these practices, in most cases, increased significantly. For example, term-time only working was five times more common in workplaces with 50 per cent or more female employees. A similar, albeit less pronounced relationship was evident with respect to the provision of part-time working, reduced hours working and job sharing. This difference was more pronounced in the private sector than in the public sector, and in some cases was insignificant in the former of these.

Figure 3.3: Provision of flexible working time arrangements by proportion of females in total employment



Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers⁹. Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees

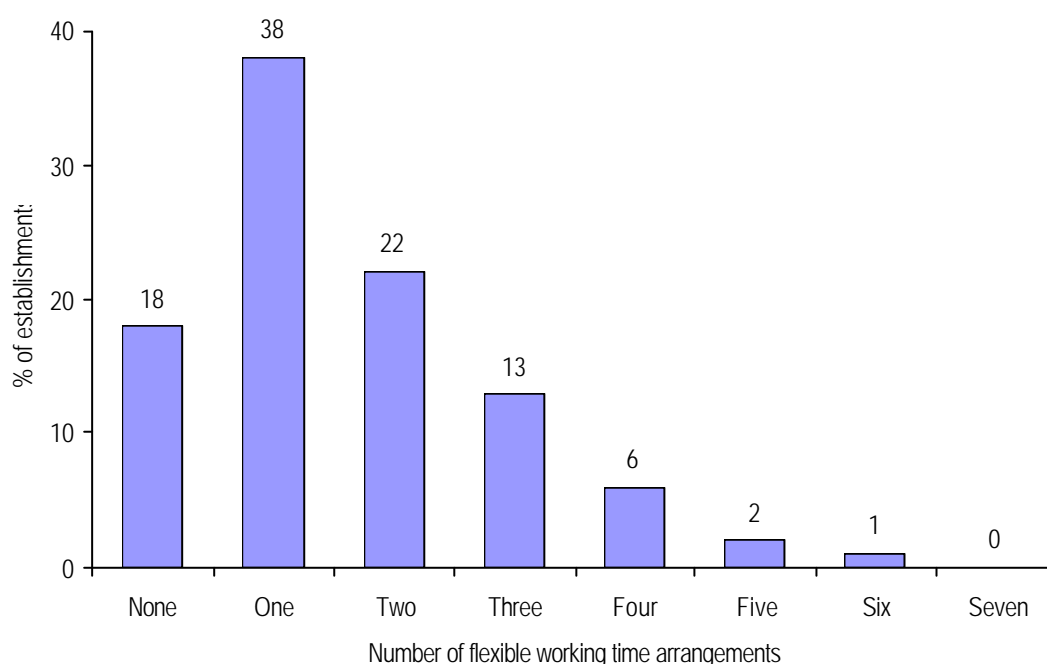
⁸ This is partly because it was rare to find public sector workplaces with relatively few female employees. Indeed, in just 13 per cent of public sector workplaces, less than half of total employment was female.

⁹ The base includes 34 workplaces where it was not possible to estimate the proportion of females in total employment.

Workplaces that operate non-standard opening hours¹⁰ were marginally more likely to provide some form of flexible working time practice than were other workplaces (86 per cent compared with 81 per cent). In terms of which practices were more likely to be in place, part-time working (79 and 71 per cent), annualised hours working (20 and 13 per cent), term-time only working (11 and six per cent) and working for reduced hours for a set period of time (20 and 12 per cent) were all more widespread where the workplace was operating a non-standard working week.

Flexible working time arrangements were often provided in combination (Figure 3.4). Just over two-fifths (44 per cent) of workplaces provided two or more of these practices, while a small minority (nine per cent) had four or more of these. The relatively widespread provision of part-time working, however, tended to inflate the incidence of multiple provision of these practices. If it was excluded, just a quarter (23 per cent) of workplaces had two or more of these flexible working time arrangements.

Figure 3.4: Provision of multiple forms of flexible working time arrangements



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.

Note: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers. Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Unsurprisingly, having multiple forms of these practices was strongly associated with the number of employees at the workplace (Table 3.2). Whereas just four per cent of workplaces with five to nine employees had four or more of these practices, the equivalent number for workplaces with 500 or more employees was 77 per cent. Sectoral differences were also significant, with public sector

¹⁰ See definition in the 'Hours of work' section in Chapter 2.

workplaces three times more likely than private sector workplaces to have four or more of these practices (19 compared with six per cent). Workplaces where unions were present were similarly more likely than those where no union was present to have this number of practices (17 compared with five per cent).

In terms of which practices go together, Table 3.3 shows that the mix was somewhat complicated and difficult to disentangle. One pattern that was apparent in the data was that, where a relatively less common form of flexible working time arrangement was available, it seemed to be associated with significantly higher levels of provision of other practices. For example, workplaces that provided annualised hours working were significantly more likely than the population of workplaces as a whole to also provide term-time only working (42 per cent compared with 16 per cent) or the flexibility to work reduced hours for a set period of time (30 per cent compared with 15 per cent).

Reasons for not providing flexible working arrangements

In workplaces where there were no flexible working arrangements, managers were asked to describe why this was the case¹¹¹². The main reason given was that such arrangements were not compatible with the nature of the business. Just over two-thirds (69 per cent) of employers who did not provide any flexible working arrangements responded in this way, with the next most common reason being the absence of any demand from employees for any such practices (24 per cent).

A small number of employers gave other reasons for not having any flexible working arrangements, and these included: the absence of female employees at the workplace; having to follow the working arrangements of other businesses they work with; and the costs associated with operating such practices.

A further breakdown of these responses was not possible given the small number of workplaces (131) that were asked this question.

Changes in the provision of flexible working time arrangements

There were a number of studies against which it was possible to measure change in the provision of flexible working time arrangements. The most obvious point of comparison was with the WLB1 employer survey. This follow-up was designed so as to make possible the identification of change, and thus definitions were kept consistent as far as was practicable. Other studies against which change could be measured included the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS98) and the DTI Employers' Survey on Support for Working Parents (DTI, 2000). Both of these used definitions which are close

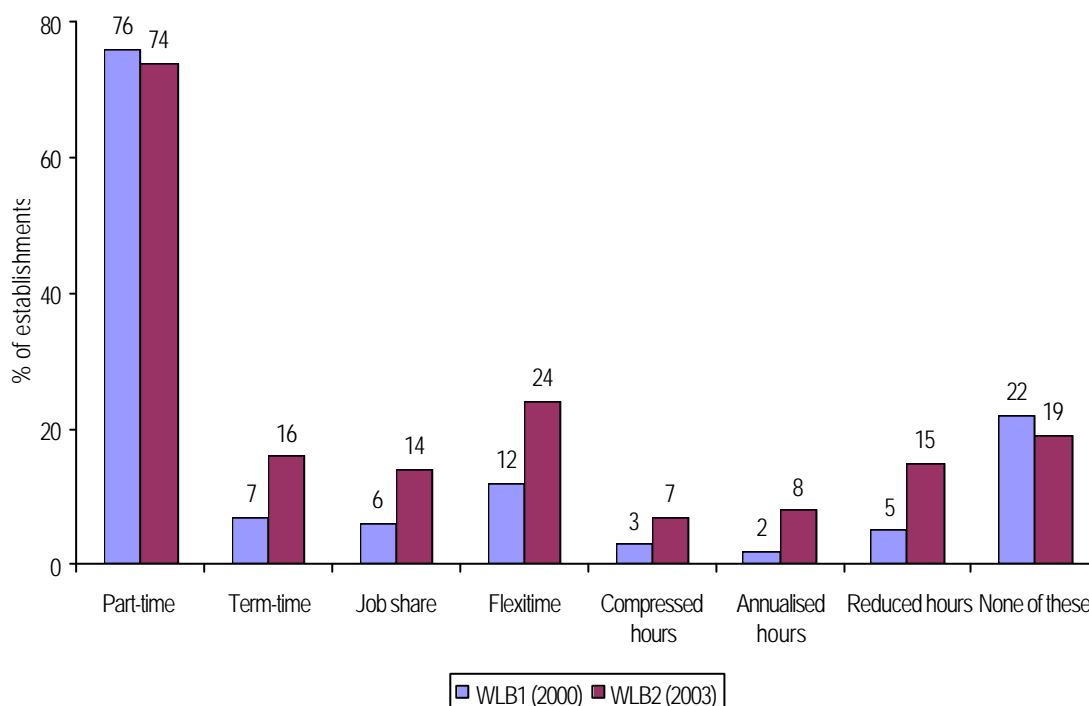
¹¹ Specifically, they were asked the following question: *What are the main reasons why flexible working practices such as job sharing, flexitime, annualised hours contracts and so on, are not available for employees to use at this establishment?*

¹² As well as covering reasons for not providing flexible working time practices, managers were at the same time asked why they did not provide homeworking. The results from this exercise are presented in this section and the reasons for not providing such practices apply equally to homeworking. All other issues with regards to homeworking are reported in Chapter 4.

enough to those employed in this study to allow for meaningful comparisons, although some notes of caution are necessary.

Starting with WLB1, comparative analysis of this data suggested a change since 2000 in the provision of flexible working time arrangements. As Figure 3.5 shows, for most of these practices there was a significant increase in their provision. Part-time working stands apart in that there was no significant change. For the other practices, the provision of each had approximately doubled over the three years since the WLB1 study was conducted. In aggregate terms this has meant that the proportion of workplaces that provided any of these increased from 78 to 81 per cent, a change which was significant at conventional levels¹³. Excluding part-time working from this made the change even more apparent, with just under half (49 per cent) providing any of the six other practices compared with 23 per cent in 2000.

Figure 3.5: Changes in the provision of flexible working time arrangements, 2000 to 2003



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.

Note: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers and 2,500 managers in the WLB2 and WLB1 surveys respectively.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

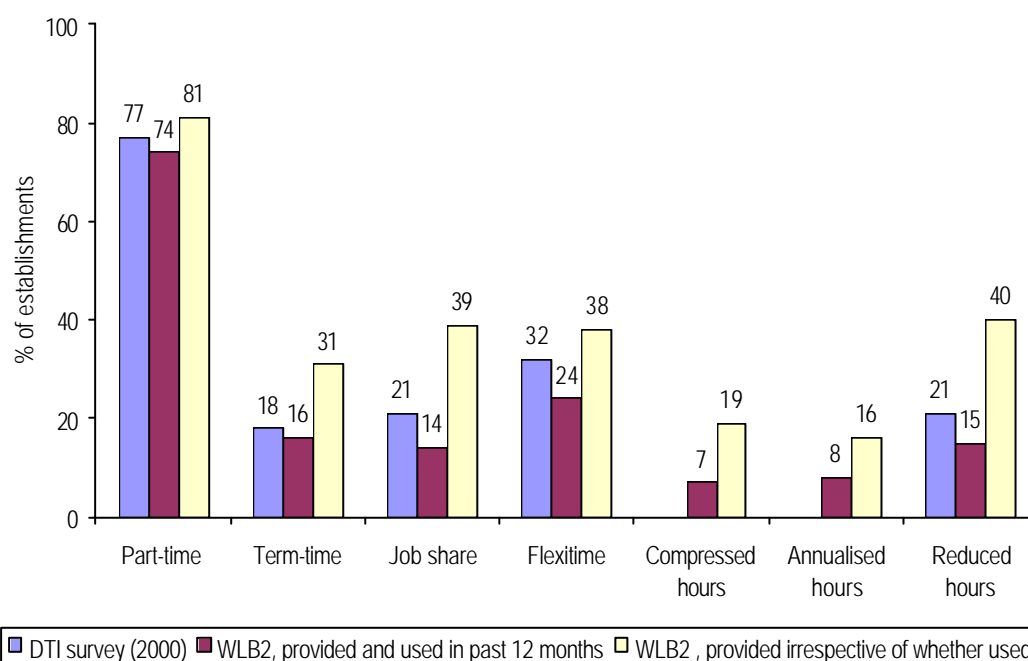
Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003)

The increase in the provision of flexible working time arrangements appeared to have occurred across most workplaces (Table 3.4). Indeed, there was no evidence to suggest that the increase in provision was confined to just small or just large workplaces, nor to particular sectors or industries.

¹³ The difference was significant at a 95 per cent confidence interval.

To substantiate the change in provision of these practices, comparisons were made with other studies. The closest point of reference was the DTI Employer Survey on Support for Working Parents, which was conducted in 2000. While it asked about the same set of practices as the Second Work-Life Balance Study (WLB2) employer survey, the question wording was slightly altered and hence some caution must be taken when interpreting differences in the estimates from the two surveys. The earlier DTI survey simply asked whether the workplace had any of the seven practices without making reference to whether any employees had been using them. It seems reasonable to assume that where a practice was not being used by any employees, the respondent would have still reported that the practice was available at the workplace. Therefore, to make meaningful comparisons it seems necessary to use the wider definition of provision for which data was also collected in the WLB2 survey, which covered both use of a practice in the last 12 months and availability even if it had not been used.

Figure 3.6: Changes in the provision of flexible working time arrangements, 2000 to 2003



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.

Note: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers and 1,000 managers in the WLB2 survey and 2000 DTI survey respectively.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Figure 3.6¹⁴ shows a smaller increase in provision across these two studies compared with that between the two work-life balance surveys. In relation to each practice, the third column plots the proportion of workplaces that had each practice in place regardless of whether it had been recently used by any employees. In all cases, this measure of provision showed an increase from the levels recorded in the DTI survey. For some practices the changes were only

¹⁴ The DTI survey (2000) did not ask about compressed hours working or annualised hours working, hence these figures do not appear in Figure 3.6.

small, but for others, like reduced hours working and job sharing, provision appeared to have almost doubled. Again these figures should be interpreted with some caution because of problems resulting from differences in the methods used to collect these data across the two studies.

In the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey employers were asked whether they '*... have any of the following working time arrangements for any non-managerial employees ...*' with the arrangements including annualised hours contracts and flexitime. In a separate question they were asked '*... are any non-managerial employees entitled to any of the following...*' and this included being asked about term-time only working and job sharing schemes. There were some obvious difficulties using these questions to make comparisons with the WLB2 survey. Firstly, provision in the WERS98 survey was only in respect to non-managerial employees¹⁵, whereas the WLB2 questions asked about all employees. Secondly, the WERS98 questions made no reference to whether or not the arrangements had been used by employees within a given reference period, whereas the WLB2 questions asked more specifically about the arrangements either being currently used or used in the past 12 months. This was less problematic as the WLB2 study also asked whether there was a practice available even if it had not been used¹⁶. A final difference was that the WERS98 study was limited to workplaces with at least 10 employees, which meant, that to make comparisons, workplaces with fewer than 10 employees had to be dropped from the analysis of the WLB2 data.

Figure 3.7¹⁷ shows the results from comparing these two studies. Again it supports the view that provision has increased in the past few years, particularly in respect to three of the practices. Flexitime, term-time only working and annualised hours working appeared to be provided by twice as many workplaces with 10 or more employees as was the case in 1998. Problems with consistency in the definitions may account for some of this change, although not all; therefore it seems reasonable to suggest that provision of flexible working time arrangements has increased in the past few years.

Formalisation of working time arrangements

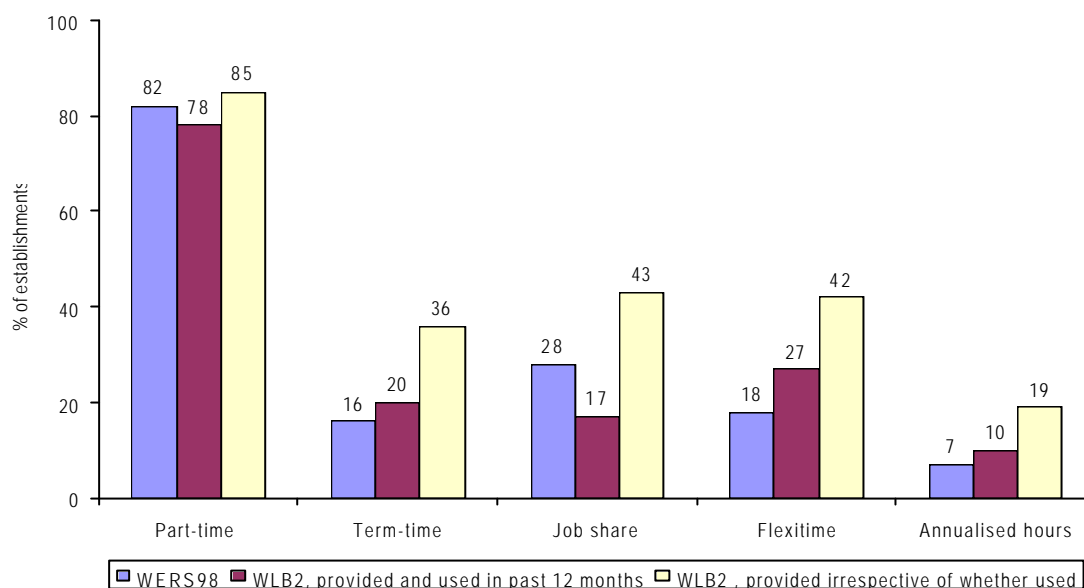
Respondents were asked whether the provision of each of the flexible working time practices at their workplace was set out in a written document. Apart from being of interest in its own right, the assertion was that the formalisation of a practice would be associated with increased take-up of the arrangement by employees. Before exploring this relationship below, the incidence of written policies is first described.

¹⁵ The exception to this was part-time working which was asked about all employees.

¹⁶ This follow-up question was not asked in the WLB1 survey.

¹⁷ WERS98 did not ask about reduced hours working, hence this figure does not appear in Figure 3.7. It did ask about compressed hours working but in a very specific form making reference only to nine-day fortnights. Three per cent of workplaces with ten or more employees provided this arrangement for their non-managerial employees. The specificity of this definition led to the exclusion of this data from Figure 3.7 and any subsequent analysis.

Figure 3.7: Changes in the provision of flexible working time arrangements, 1998-2003



Base: All establishments with 10 or more employees.

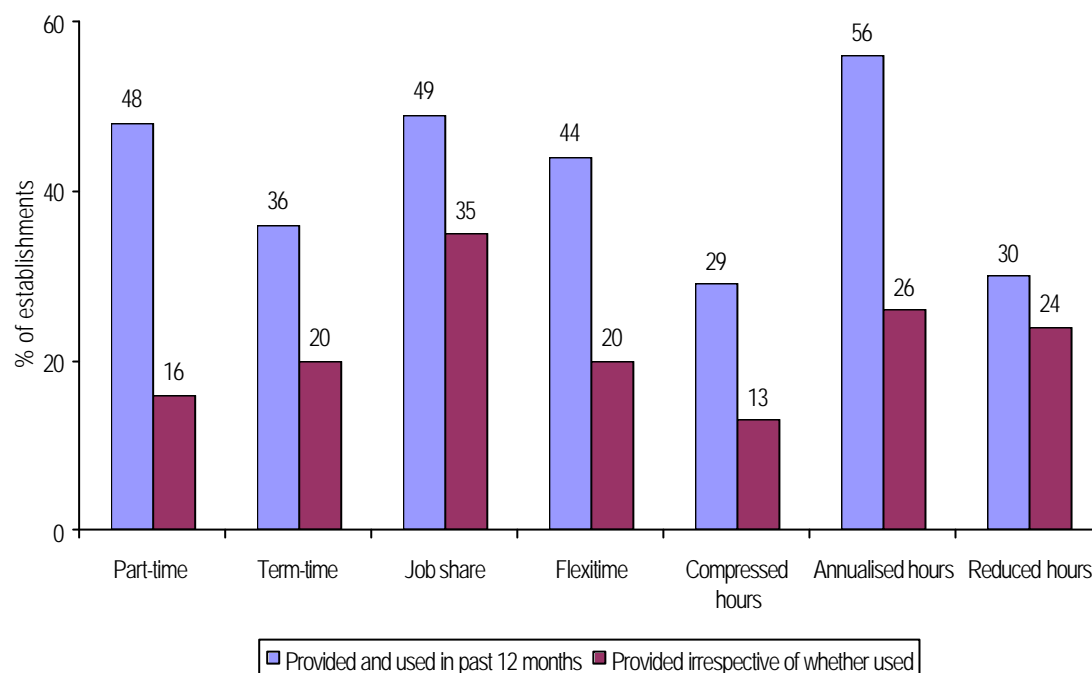
Note: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,214 managers in WLB2 and 2,177 managers in WERS98.

Source: WERS98, WLB2 (2003)

The incidence of written policies varied considerably across each of the seven flexible working time arrangements (Figure 3.8). Where each practice was currently being or had recently been used by employees, somewhere between a quarter and a half of these workplaces had a written policy. In contrast, where the practice was available but had not been used by any employees in at least the past 12 months, written policies were far less frequently cited. This raises the question whether it is the formalisation of the practice in a written policy that acts to encourage employees to use the practice.

In the absence of such a document, respondents were asked whether the flexible arrangement was provided on the basis of some set procedure, which by implication had not been formalised. Having a set procedure that was not written down was relatively rare, with fewer than one-in-ten employers reporting that they managed their flexible working time arrangements in this way.

Figure 3.8: Whether provision of flexible working time arrangements was set out in a formal written policy



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that provided flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.
Note: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,289, 576, 749, 674, 383, 300 and 711 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

The formalisation of practices via a written document is usually found to be more common in larger workplaces (Cully *et al.*, 1999). This is principally because these workplaces are more likely to have a specialised personnel function to manage such a procedure. While the incidence of written policies for each of the flexible working time arrangements was usually found to increase with workplace size, this result was neither universal nor always significant (Table 3.5). For example, workplaces with between five and nine employees were just as likely to have a written policy covering term-time only working as workplaces with 50 to 99 employees. What appeared to be more closely associated with the incidence of written policies was whether or not the workplace was part of a larger organisation¹⁸. Where it was, the incidence of written policies was upwards of twice that in single standalone workplaces. Workplaces with unions present and those in the public sector were also more likely to have a written policy for each of these working time arrangements.

Having a written policy covering one of these flexible arrangements did not necessarily mean that there would be a policy for any other arrangement. Indeed, in a majority of workplaces (56 per cent) there was a written policy for some but not their entire flexible working arrangements. Smaller workplaces with less than 25 employees were more likely than larger workplaces with 25 or more employees, to have a written policy for each arrangement, but this was

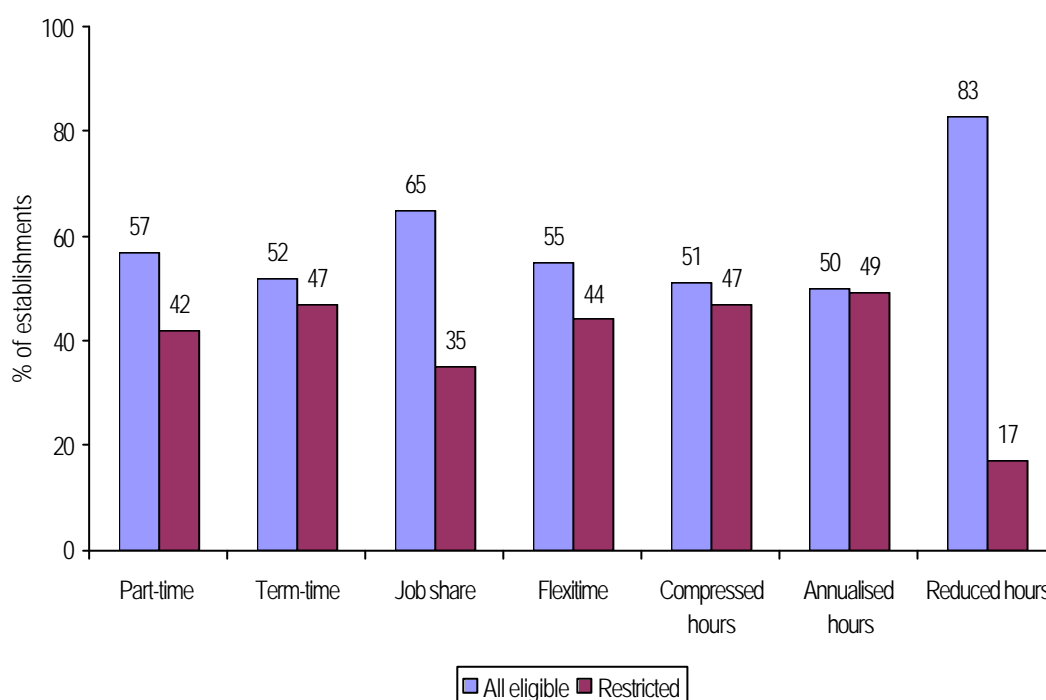
¹⁸ After controlling for whether the workplace was part of a larger organisation, workplace size was still not significantly associated with written policies.

largely explained by them having fewer of these practices to deal with (33 compared with 23 per cent respectively).

Eligibility to take up flexible working time arrangements

For each of the flexible working time arrangements, a majority of employers did not place any restrictions on who was eligible to use these practices (Figure 3.9). The practice of allowing employees to work reduced hours for a period of time was significantly less likely than any of the other practices to have any eligibility restrictions. For all the other practices, the split between those that had restrictions and those that did not was much closer. Nevertheless, the latter of these two groups was always in the majority.

Figure 3.9: Whether there were any eligibility restrictions on who could use flexible working time arrangements



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned and which had been used by employees in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,191, 338, 351, 467, 189, 167 and 365 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Workplaces with a written policy covering a particular working time arrangement were in most cases less likely to have a restriction on eligibility. For example, in workplaces where there was a written policy covering working in term-time only, around three-fifths (62 per cent) had no restrictions on which employees were eligible to work in this way. In comparison, where this arrangement was covered either by a set procedure (that had not been formalised in a written document) or if the decision to work this way was made on an ad hoc basis, fewer than half (46 per cent) of these workplaces reported that all of their employees were eligible to work term-time only. The exceptions to this were

flexitime, compressed hours working, and annualised hours working in which there was no difference in the likelihood of having eligibility criteria and the presence or otherwise of a written policy.

Where restrictions applied, respondents were asked to specify the type of employee who was not eligible to take up the particular practice (see Table 3.6). For all of the arrangements it was managerial employees that were most likely to be ineligible. In particular, among the workplaces where there was some restraint on who could work part-time, job share or in term-time only, around half of these excluded managers from using these practices.

Length of service was infrequently reported as a reason for not allowing an employee to use a flexible working time practice. Similarly, the absence of a permanent contract was not often cited. Both of these reasons were given by fewer than one-in-seven employers.

Earlier in this chapter it was reported that there was a strong positive association between the female density of a workplace and the provision of flexible working time arrangements. It did not appear, however, that gender was a factor in defining who was eligible to use these practices, since it was rarely reported that male employees specifically were excluded from using any of these practices. Likewise, few employers reported exclusion based on the employee not having children.

On a more general note, employers were asked whether their flexible working time arrangements were provided specifically for employees with children as opposed to any employee. Almost unanimously – upwards of nine out of ten – they reported that these practices were provided with all employees in mind.

Take-up of flexible working time arrangements

To gauge the number of employees using a particular practice or arrangement – referred to as take-up – it is probably best to measure this directly from the accounts of employees. While this will give precise estimates of the proportion of employees working flexitime, for example, it does not reveal how these employees are distributed across workplaces. Are there many employers that have just a few employees working flexitime, are there just a few employers with most of their employees using this arrangement or is it somewhere in between?

The answer to this question tended to depend upon which practice was being referred to. Table 3.7 summarises the take-up rates¹⁹ for each of the seven practices and shows that for job-sharing, reduced hours and compressed hours working the take-up rates were all relatively low. For the first two of these, around one-in-ten workplaces (13 per cent and seven per cent respectively) with either of these arrangements, reported that more than 25 per cent of their

¹⁹ In this study the take-up rate is defined as the proportion of employees that had made use of a particular working time arrangement in the past 12 months. It was clear, however, that some employers interpreted this in terms of current usage and hence said that the take-up rate (currently) was zero per cent. Rather than recode these observations, it was decided to keep them in order to maintain consistency with the WLB1 study.

employees were currently using them. In contrast, term-time only working, flexitime and annualised hours working all tended to be used by a large majority of employees where these arrangements were in place. For each of these practices, upwards of a quarter of workplaces had 75 per cent or more of their employees working in these ways. This was not surprising, given that these practices tend to be more universal and easier to organise when they apply to all employees.

Take-up rates differed vastly according to the number of employees at the workplace (see Table 3.8). This is largely a statistical artefact, since a single employee in a small workplace effectively has a much larger impact on the take-up rate compared with a single employee in a large workplace. What this did illustrate was the very mixed pattern of take-up across workplaces of different sizes, and that it tended to vary considerably for each practice. It also showed that smaller workplaces were much more likely to report that no employees were currently using the practice. In these cases, take-up was obviously sporadic and may simply reflect shorter term demands from employees.

Where the flexible working time arrangement had been formalised in a written policy, take-up rates tended to be significantly higher compared with situations where the arrangement was managed in a more informal manner. For example, a take-up rate of more than 25 per cent of employees was significantly more likely if there was a written policy covering part-time working (58 per cent had this level of take-up), term-time working (70 per cent), flexitime (67 per cent), compressed hours working (39 per cent) or annualised hours working (63 per cent), than if there was no written policy (46, 29, 39, 15 and 27 per cent being the respective proportion of workplaces with a take-up rate of 25 per cent or more).

Changes in the take-up of flexible working time arrangements

To measure changes in the take-up of these flexible working time arrangements, comparisons were made with the WLB1 employer survey. Overall the evidence was mixed. For some practices – term-time working, annualised hours working and job sharing – the proportion of workplaces that had take-up rates in excess of 25 per cent of total employees had increased. The size of these changes was generally small (for example, 44 per cent of workplaces reported a take-up rate in excess of 25 per cent for term-time only working in 2003, compared with 39 per cent in 2000 and the respective figures for annualised hours working were 51 per cent and 43 per cent), and in the case of job sharing, was not significant. For the other practices, falls were recorded in the proportion of workplaces reporting take-up rates in excess of 25 per cent of total employment. However, these changes were not significant.

It was difficult to judge whether there were more workplaces providing flexible working arrangements to just a few employees, or whether the intensity of use had also increased. The variation in take-up from practice to practice makes such a judgement less than straightforward. Further analysis of this, the WLB1 survey, along with other studies is called for here.

Conclusion

In this chapter, details have been presented on employers' provision of flexible working time practices, along with employee eligibility to use these practices and take-up of them. For provision and take-up, attempts were made to measure the extent to which each had changed in the past few years. The chapter also looked briefly at why employers did not provide these practices.

Provision was found to be relatively modest for most of the practices, aside from part-time working. No more than a quarter of workplaces provided any of these other practices, where provision was defined as having at least one employee using the practice at some time in the past 12 months. Provision varied considerably across workplaces, with larger workplaces and the public sector generally more likely to provide some type of flexible working time arrangement. The construction industry was notable for its low incidence of these practices.

Flexible working time arrangements were often provided in combination, with just over two-fifths (44 per cent) of workplaces making available two or more of these practices. However, if part-time working was excluded, just a quarter (23 per cent) of workplaces had two or more of these flexible working time arrangements.

Comparisons with a number of other studies suggested that there has been an increase in the provision of flexible working time arrangements. The increase appeared to have occurred across all workplaces in general, rather than being confined to workplaces of a particular size or to workplaces in a particular sector or industry.

Having flexible working time arrangements formalised in written documents was not widespread, with fewer than half of the workplaces that provided a flexible working time arrangement doing so. There was some evidence to suggest that employee take-up of flexible working was higher in workplaces that formalised their arrangements in this way.

Under half of the workplaces that had flexible working practices restricted their use to just some employees. Managerial employees were the most likely employees to be excluded from any arrangement.

The take-up rates of each of the practices – that is, the proportion of employees using a particular practice or arrangement in the past 12 months – varied considerably across each of the seven practices. It was relatively low for job-sharing, reduced hours and compressed hours working, but considerably higher for term-time only working, flexitime and annualised hours working.

Table 3.1: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

								<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment									
5 to 9 employees	66	8	7	18	2	5	8	486	295
10 to 24 employees	75	14	11	24	7	8	14	571	444
25 to 49 employees	83	29	21	28	10	10	19	249	229
50 to 99 employees	76	19	17	26	14	12	23	107	143
100 to 249 employees	85	27	25	33	12	16	29	65	178
250 to 499 employees	95	25	58	53	21	13	41	19	80
500 or more employees	98	55	78	72	56	24	66	13	140
Size of organisation									
Less than 100	69	11	9	23	6	6	11	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	74	11	15	26	9	7	16	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	75	17	12	23	9	10	18	246	317
10,000 or more	91	26	20	30	11	15	23	176	232
Ownership									
Private sector	72	10	8	21	7	6	14	1,210	1,102
Public sector	83	41	35	37	8	15	18	299	407
Single or multi									
Single independent establishment	69	12	9	23	7	6	11	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	78	19	16	25	7	10	18	922	1,033
Union recognition									
No unions present	71	10	8	21	6	5	13	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	73	30	17	28	12	18	20	64	83
Recognised unions	84	32	28	32	10	16	20	386	581
All workplaces	74	16	14	24	7	8	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.1 cont.: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

								<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification									
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	67	8	5	15	6	11	11	38	58
Manufacturing	60	4	5	15	4	6	12	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[52]	[5]	[10]	[12]	[5]	[-]	[10]	6	23
Construction	38	1	4	12	2	4	5	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	78	11	3	17	4	6	13	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	90	23	10	31	11	11	33	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	68	3	4	16	8	4	14	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[87]	[10]	[10]	[24]	[18]	[8]	[21]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	66	5	17	28	10	5	14	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	84	21	50	71	11	7	28	49	85
Education	87	81	45	21	4	24	10	136	182
Health and Social Work	82	13	15	35	12	5	19	187	220
Other Community	84	8	20	30	7	13	10	100	84
Government Office Region									
North East	76	9	12	14	12	7	13	55	60
North West and Merseyside	71	14	11	26	7	7	20	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	71	11	16	24	7	6	17	121	126
East Midlands	72	20	13	23	6	7	12	117	119
West Midlands	75	11	12	26	5	8	14	113	126
South West	77	16	12	18	8	10	11	158	142
Eastern	77	18	16	24	10	12	16	144	142
London	78	11	11	28	6	8	16	185	183
South East	70	19	16	24	6	7	15	228	223
Wales	76	11	11	23	7	9	15	76	75
Scotland	77	27	16	27	9	7	14	154	152
All workplaces	74	16	14	24	7	8	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.2: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

						<i>Row percentages</i>	
	None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four or more (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	27	46	18	5	4	486	295
10 to 24 employees	19	38	24	13	6	571	444
25 to 49 employees	9	32	25	21	13	249	229
50 to 99 employees	13	35	20	20	12	107	143
100 to 249 employees	8	29	25	17	21	65	178
250 to 499 employees	2	17	9	30	41	19	80
500 or more employees	1	1	6	15	77	13	140
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	23	41	19	11	5	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	21	39	19	8	13	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	16	35	27	13	8	246	317
10,000 or more	7	32	29	16	17	176	232
Ownership							
Private sector	22	42	21	10	6	1,210	1,102
Public sector	6	25	25	25	19	299	407
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	23	41	19	11	6	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	15	37	23	14	11	922	1,033
Union recognition							
No unions present	22	43	20	9	5	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	19	24	23	15	19	64	83
Recognised unions	8	28	26	21	17	386	581
All workplaces	18	38	22	13	9	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source:

WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.2 cont.: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>						
	None	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification							
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	29	41	13	12	6	38	58
Manufacturing	33	43	14	7	3	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[48]	[36]	[1]	[9]	[6]	6	23
Construction	51	36	11	1	1	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	17	48	23	7	4	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	4	31	33	22	11	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	29	39	20	9	2	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[6]	[45]	[28]	[10]	[10]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	21	42	20	6	10	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	4	21	24	24	27	49	85
Education	2	15	25	33	26	136	182
Health and Social Work	13	36	24	17	9	187	220
Other Community	12	42	19	17	10	100	84
Government Office Region							
North East	15	47	18	7	9	55	60
North West and Merseyside	22	32	23	13	9	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	24	29	25	15	6	121	126
East Midlands	20	35	25	11	8	117	119
West Midlands	18	38	28	11	5	113	126
South West	17	45	17	13	7	158	142
Eastern	17	36	21	13	12	144	142
London	15	45	19	12	9	185	183
South East	19	41	18	11	10	228	223
Wales	22	35	22	14	7	76	75
Scotland	14	37	23	16	11	154	152
All workplaces	18	38	22	13	9	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.3: Combinations of flexible working time arrangements

Per cent of workplaces

	Type of flexible working time arrangement provided							
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)	All workplaces (%)
Provision of other types of flexible working time arrangements								
Part-time	-	92	90	85	93	92	92	74
Term-time	20	-	42	23	27	42	24	16
Job share	16	36	-	22	31	30	23	14
Flexitime	27	34	40	-	49	39	44	24
Compressed hours	9	12	16	15	-	15	18	7
Annualised hours	10	21	18	13	17	-	16	8
Reduced hours	18	23	26	28	38	30	-	15
Weighted base	1,122	240	206	364	110	123	226	1,509
Unweighted base	1,191	338	351	467	189	167	365	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,191, 338, 351, 467, 189, 167 and 365 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.4: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics and by year

	Part-time		Term-time		Job share		Flexitime		Weighted count		<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)					
Size of establishment												
5 to 9 employees	68	66	1	8	3	7	7	18	1,016	486	299	295
10 to 24 employees	78	75	7	14	2	11	13	24	846	571	353	444
25 to 49 employees	84	83	12	29	11	21	13	28	353	249	375	229
50 to 99 employees	90	76	17	19	12	17	18	26	156	107	318	143
100 to 249 employees	90	85	20	27	23	25	23	33	87	65	514	178
250 to 499 employees	95	95	15	25	33	58	36	53	28	19	263	80
500 or more employees	95	98	27	55	51	78	43	72	13	13	378	140
Size of organisation												
Less than 100	73	69	5	11	4	9	9	23	1,564	741	769	541
100 to less than 1,000	72	74	8	11	8	15	13	26	324	236	711	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	83	75	8	17	9	12	17	23	200	246	440	317
10,000 or more	93	91	14	26	9	20	18	30	231	176	404	232
Ownership												
Private sector	-	72	-	10	-	8	-	21	2,039	1,210	1,953	1,102
Public sector	-	83	-	41	-	35	-	37	461	299	547	407
Single or multi												
Single independent establishment	74	69	6	12	4	9	8	23	1,322	587	891	476
Part of a larger organisation	79	78	7	19	8	16	15	25	1,171	922	1,604	1,033
Union recognition												
No unions present	73	71	4	10	3	8	8	21	1,918	1,023	1,279	818
Unions present no recognition	90	73	15	30	19	17	18	28	39	64	81	83
Recognised unions	86	84	17	32	16	28	26	32	520	386	1,110	581
All workplaces	76	74	7	16	6	14	11	24	2,500	1,509	2,500	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 2,500 managers in WLB1 and 1,509 managers in WLB2.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.4 cont.: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics and by year

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>											
	Part-time		Term-time		Job share		Flexitime		Weighted count		Unweighted count	
	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)					
Standard Industrial Classification												
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[55]	67	[2]	8	[*]	5	[13]	15	37	38	23	58
Manufacturing	60	60	2	4	2	5	5	15	306	164	427	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[99]	[52]	[-]	[5]	[4]	[10]	[4]	[12]	3	6	8	23
Construction	48	38	1	1	1	4	3	12	138	103	183	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	74	78	2	11	2	3	5	17	573	317	360	227
Hotels and Restaurants	94	90	6	23	*	10	13	31	250	111	129	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	68	68	6	3	4	4	8	16	120	76	299	79
Financial Intermediation	61	[87]	2	[10]	7	[10]	10	[24]	49	51	91	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	71	66	4	5	8	17	16	28	406	165	367	155
Public Administration and Defence	87	84	7	21	27	50	68	71	69	49	246	85
Education	92	87	57	81	14	45	9	21	144	136	139	182
Health and Social Work	96	82	5	13	12	15	17	35	248	187	162	220
Other Community	89	84	3	8	6	20	13	30	158	100	66	84
Government Office Region												
North East	66	76	7	9	8	12	12	14	179	55	252	60
North West and Merseyside	76	71	8	14	5	11	17	26	229	159	260	161
Yorkshire & Humber	82	71	6	11	6	16	11	24	238	121	265	126
East Midlands	80	72	4	20	7	13	8	23	191	117	209	119
West Midlands	66	75	6	11	6	12	10	26	268	113	211	126
South West	79	77	7	16	7	12	13	18	322	158	263	142
Eastern	77	77	4	18	7	16	10	24	223	144	222	142
London	72	78	6	11	5	11	10	28	205	185	263	183
South East	79	70	9	19	4	16	15	24	225	228	208	223
Wales	85	76	6	11	3	11	10	23	200	76	185	75
Scotland		77	8	27	4	16	9	27	220	154	162	152
All workplaces	76	74	7	16	6	14	11	24	2,500	1,509	2,500	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 2,500 managers in WLB1 and 1,509 managers in WLB2.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.4 cont.: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics and by year

	Compressed hours		Annualised hours		Reduced hours		Weighted count		<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2
	(%)		(%)		(%)					
Size of establishment										
5 to 9 employees	1	2	*	5	2	8	1,016	486	299	295
10 to 24 employees	2	7	1	8	2	14	846	571	353	444
25 to 49 employees	3	10	3	10	8	19	353	249	375	229
50 to 99 employees	6	14	6	12	13	23	156	107	318	143
100 to 249 employees	5	12	6	16	15	29	87	65	514	178
250 to 499 employees	11	21	11	13	28	41	28	19	263	80
500 or more employees	16	56	16	24	35	66	13	13	378	140
Size of organisation										
Less than 100	1	6	1	6	3	11	1,564	741	769	541
100 to less than 1,000	4	9	3	7	8	16	324	236	711	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	6	9	4	10	6	18	200	246	440	317
10,000 or more	2	11	5	15	7	23	231	176	404	232
Ownership										
Private sector	-	7	-	6	-	14	2,039	1,210	1,953	1,102
Public sector	-	8	-	15	-	18	461	299	547	407
Single or multi										
Single independent establishment	2	7	1	6	3	11	1,322	587	891	476
Part of a larger organisation	3	7	2	10	6	18	1,171	922	1,604	1,033
Union recognition										
No unions present	2	6	1	5	3	13	1,918	1,023	1,279	818
Unions present no recognition	1	12	2	18	17	20	39	64	81	83
Recognised unions	5	10	5	16	9	20	520	386	1,110	581
All workplaces	3	7	2	8	5	15	2,500	1,509	2,500	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 2,500 managers in WLB1 and 1,509 managers in WLB2.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.4 cont.: Provision of flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics and by year

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>									
	Compressed hours		Annualised hours		Reduced hours		Weighted count		Unweighted count	
	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2	WLB1	WLB2
	(%)		(%)		(%)					
Standard Industrial Classification										
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[-]	6	[1]	11	[2]	11	37	38	23	58
Manufacturing	2	4	1	6	3	12	306	164	427	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[-]	[5]	[-]	[-]	[4]	[10]	3	6	8	23
Construction	*	2	1	4	1	5	138	103	183	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	3	4	*	6	2	13	573	317	360	227
Hotels and Restaurants	5	11	2	11	5	33	250	111	129	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	3	8	1	4	3	14	120	76	299	79
Financial Intermediation	2	[18]	9	[8]	4	[21]	49	51	91	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	*	10	1	5	5	14	406	165	367	155
Public Administration and Defence	3	11	3	7	15	28	69	49	246	85
Education	1	4	11	24	6	10	144	136	139	182
Health and Social Work	7	12	2	5	9	19	248	187	162	220
Other Community	*	7	3	13	5	10	158	100	66	84
Government Office Region										
North East	3	12	2	7	6	13	179	55	252	60
North West and Merseyside	1	7	1	7	6	20	229	159	260	161
Yorkshire & Humber	1	7	2	6	7	17	238	121	265	126
East Midlands	5	6	2	7	6	12	191	117	209	119
West Midlands	4	5	1	8	4	14	268	113	211	126
South West	2	8	1	10	4	11	322	158	263	142
Eastern	3	10	5	12	2	16	223	144	222	142
London	1	6	1	8	3	16	205	185	263	183
South East	2	6	1	7	5	15	225	228	208	223
Wales	*	7	3	9	4	15	200	76	185	75
Scotland	4	9	2	7	4	14	220	154	162	152
All workplaces	3	7	2	8	5	15	2,500	1,509	2,500	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 2,500 managers in WLB1 and 1,509 managers in WLB2.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.5: Written policy covering flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>						
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	43	26	33	31	[17]	[35]	24
10 to 24 employees	42	24	35	26	18	39	26
25 to 49 employees	50	38	48	41	[14]	[42]	26
50 to 99 employees	54	26	49	51	[21]	[40]	30
100 to 249 employees	45	29	41	45	30	60	28
250 to 499 employees	71	[16]	55	86	[26]	[64]	27
500 or more employees	61	44	66	69	37	[49]	32
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	26	12	15	17	9	23	12
100 to less than 1,000	51	25	28	42	16	31	21
1,000 to less than 10,000	66	30	56	67	20	42	42
10,000 or more	74	51	76	58	57	73	47
Ownership							
Private sector	40	14	21	24	17	36	20
Public sector	64	54	75	68	27	54	47
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	24	13	14	19	10	24	12
Part of a larger organisation	57	35	51	45	24	48	33
Union recognition							
No unions present	37	12	16	19	13	20	16
Unions present no recognition	55	[37]	33	[35]	[38]	[66]	[22]
Recognised unions	64	47	70	69	30	61	48
All workplaces	45	28	40	35	19	41	26
Weighted base	1,233	471	589	581	285	240	599
Unweighted base	1,289	576	749	674	383	300	711

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice was provided irrespective of whether it has been used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,289, 576, 749, 674, 383, 300 and 711 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 3.5 cont.: Written policy covering flexible working time arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>						
	Part-time	Term-time	Job share	Flexitime	Compressed hours	Annualised hours	Reduced hours
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Standard Industrial Classification							
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[29]	[14]	[21]	[13]	[9]	[-]	[27]
Manufacturing	26	[*]	9	13	[15]	[23]	12
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[41]	[16]	[82]	[96]	[72]	[19]	[46]
Construction	18	[8]	[15]	[15]	[9]	[58]	[6]
Wholesale and Retail Trade	46	27	14	15	[13]	[32]	19
Hotels and Restaurants	49	[22]	[21]	[23]	[28]	[57]	[31]
Transport, Storage and Communication	36	[15]	[47]	[60]	[35]	[46]	[31]
Financial Intermediation	[65]	[8]	[60]	[70]	[26]	[67]	[44]
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	38	[7]	21	36	[8]	[8]	7
Public Administration and Defence	80	[34]	86	96	[52]	[58]	58
Education	51	58	66	32	[28]	62	41
Health and Social Work	52	17	43	42	16	23	29
Other Community	53	[24]	[57]	[44]	[24]	[67]	[41]
Government Office Region							
North East	44	[26]	[48]	[42]	[8]	[32]	[18]
North West and Merseyside	44	27	39	37	[27]	[36]	32
Yorkshire & Humber	51	[37]	66	68	[42]	[71]	52
East Midlands	39	[22]	44	26	[15]	[41]	[11]
West Midlands	40	[32]	24	35	[10]	[40]	16
South West	35	[23]	27	22	[11]	[41]	20
Eastern	50	33	34	27	[39]	[45]	31
London	47	31	39	42	11	[32]	27
South East	40	17	25	21	12	[38]	16
Wales	68	[25]	[37]	[51]	[24]	[54]	[24]
Scotland	52	41	63	39	[17]	[30]	32
All workplaces	45	28	40	35	19	41	26
Weighted base	1,233	471	589	581	285	240	599
Unweighted base	1,289	576	749	674	383	300	711

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice was provided irrespective of whether it has been used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,289, 576, 749, 674, 383, 300 and 711 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 3.6: Employees who were not eligible to use flexible working time arrangements

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>						
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)
Employees restricted from using practice							
Part-time employees	-	12	8	13	22	19	2
Full-time employees	38	26	14	17	21	31	16
Managerial employees	57	47	53	38	39	33	39
Non-managerial employees	18	21	13	23	19	27	7
Employees with the establishment for a short period of time	9	10	7	6	12	13	2
Employees not on a permanent contract	8	12	6	7	8	13	5
Any male employees	7	13	7	5	10	5	*
Shift workers	*	*	1	1	*	2	-
Some specific occupation(s)	12	4	10	23	11	9	10
No specific occupation restricted, depends on circumstances	2	1	2	1	3	1	2
Employees without children	*	*	-	1	1	-	2
Employees taken on as full-time staff	1	*	*	*	1	1	-
No specific occupation, depends on business considerations	1	1	-	2	2	-	3
Other specific answer	2	23	16	6	18	19	15
Other vague answer	3	3	*	1	*	1	2
Never happened	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Not answered	2	2	3	1	-	-	-
Don't know	1	*	2	-	2	4	2
Weighted base	468	113	72	160	49	61	38
Unweighted base	463	157	103	228	76	83	51

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that restricted the eligibility to use a flexible working time arrangement.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 463, 157, 103, 228, 76, 83 and 51 managers respectively that restricted the eligibility to use the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

The columns show all the types of employees that were restricted, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 3.7: Take-up of flexible working time arrangements

	<i>Column percentages</i>						
	Type of flexible working time arrangement provided						
	Part-time (%)	Term-time (%)	Job share (%)	Flexitime (%)	Compressed hours (%)	Annualised hours (%)	Reduced hours (%)
Take-up of flexible working							
None currently	1	13	10	12	20	13	16
Less than 5%	8	12	26	8	16	14	28
5 to 9%	9	12	21	9	16	8	18
10 to 24%	27	15	25	16	17	13	27
25 to 49%	18	8	8	11	8	15	4
50 to 74%	20	7	1	9	6	10	2
75% or more	15	28	4	31	9	26	1
Don't know	2	5	6	4	9	2	5
Weighted base	1,122	240	206	364	110	123	226
Unweighted base	1,191	338	351	467	189	167	365

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,191, 338, 351, 467, 189, 167 and 365 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.8: Take-up of flexible working time practices, by size of establishment

Column percentages

	Size of establishment							All workplaces (%)
	5 to 9 employees (%)	10 to 24 employees (%)	25 to 49 employees (%)	50 to 99 employees (%)	100 to 249 employees (%)	250 to 499 employees (%)	500 or more employees (%)	
Part-time								
None currently	1	1	1	4	1	-	-	1
Less than 5%	1	3	14	21	41	34	18	8
5 to 9%	-	14	12	16	15	8	10	9
10 to 24%	34	25	23	24	15	32	22	27
25 to 49%	24	18	13	12	15	9	16	18
50% or more	39	39	35	20	8	11	15	35
Don't know	1	1	3	4	5	6	19	2
Weighted base	323	425	208	81	55	18	13	1,122
Unweighted base	198	331	190	111	154	72	135	1,191
Term-time								
None currently	[27]	14	8	[12]	[1]	[8]	1	13
Less than 5%	[-]	3	16	[22]	[33]	[48]	42	12
5 to 9%	[-]	20	7	[18]	[12]	[21]	7	12
10 to 24%	[33]	15	9	[17]	[7]	[-]	2	15
25 to 49%	[11]	4	11	[8]	[7]	[15]	3	8
50% or more	[22]	43	41	[24]	[35]	[5]	13	35
Don't know	[7]	2	7	[-]	[6]	[3]	33	6
Weighted base	37	81	73	20	17	5	7	240
Unweighted base	26	71	73	31	49	18	70	338

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,191 and 338 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.8 cont.: Take-up of flexible working time practices, by size of establishment

Column percentages

	Size of establishment							All workplaces (%)
	5 to 9 employees (%)	10 to 24 employees (%)	25 to 49 employees (%)	50 to 99 employees (%)	100 to 249 employees (%)	250 to 499 employees (%)	500 or more employees (%)	
Job share								
None currently	[28]	5	12	[-]	4	[1]	6	10
Less than 5%	[1]	1	26	[75]	65	[67]	58	25
5 to 9%	[-]	19	43	[24]	17	[4]	6	21
10 to 24%	[18]	57	12	[-]	8	[8]	2	25
25 to 49%	[30]	7	3	[2]	-	[-]	-	8
50% or more	[11]	10	-	[-]	-	[-]	*	5
Don't know	[12]	*	4	[-]	6	[20]	27	6
Weighted base	33	64	53	18	16	11	10	206
Unweighted base	24	56	54	28	53	43	93	351
Flexitime								
None currently	12	17	14	[3]	2	[-]	2	12
Less than 5%	-	2	20	[17]	23	[9]	16	8
5 to 9%	-	11	8	[18]	15	[10]	7	9
10 to 24%	13	22	12	[8]	14	[14]	11	16
25 to 49%	19	8	8	[15]	7	[2]	5	11
50% or more	53	38	35	[33]	32	[54]	31	40
Don't know	3	2	2	[7]	8	[12]	28	4
Weighted base	88	136	70	28	21	10	10	364
Unweighted base	55	108	62	39	64	42	97	467

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 351 and 467 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.8 cont.: Take-up of flexible working time practices, by size of establishment

Column percentages

	Size of establishment							All workplaces (%)
	5 to 9 employees (%)	10 to 24 employees (%)	25 to 49 employees (%)	50 to 99 employees (%)	100 to 249 employees (%)	250 to 499 employees (%)	500 or more employees (%)	
Compressed hours								
None currently	[-]	[29]	14]	[28]	[14]	[-]	8	20
Less than 5%	[-]	[-]	11]	[24]	[62]	[75]	45	16
5 to 9%	[-]	[33]	6]	[14]	[2]	[14]	3	16
10 to 24%	[30]	[23]	12]	[12]	[4]	[4]	5	16
25 to 49%	[41]	[5]	6]	[4]	[5]	[-]	1	8
50% or more	[16]	[10]	31]	[13]	[9]	[-]	2	15
Don't know	[12]	[-]	19]	[5]	[4]	[7]	37	9
Weighted base	9	41	26	14	8	4	7	110
Unweighted base	6	31	24	16	28	17	67	189
Annualised hours								
None currently	[22]	[17]	[9]	[5]	[1]	[-]	[1]	13
Less than 5%	[-]	[-]	[20]	[40]	[29]	[38]	[67]	13
5 to 9%	[-]	[14]	[5]	[5]	[14]	[2]	[7]	8
10 to 24%	[24]	[7]	[17]	[10]	[6]	[17]	[1]	13
25 to 49%	[4]	[29]	[17]	[5]	[2]	[-]	[2]	15
50% or more	[50]	[31]	[32]	[28]	[43]	[43]	[4]	36
Don't know	[-]	[2]	[-]	[6]	[6]	[-]	[18]	2
Weighted base	25	43	26	13	10	2	3	123
Unweighted base	16	35	22	18	20	11	35	167

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 189 and 167 managers respectively that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 3.8 cont.: Take-up of flexible working time practices, by size of establishment

Column percentages

	Size of establishment							All workplaces (%)
	5 to 9 employees (%)	10 to 24 employees (%)	25 to 49 employees (%)	50 to 99 employees (%)	100 to 249 employees (%)	250 to 499 employees (%)	500 or more employees (%)	
Reduced hours								
None currently	[23]	17	[15]	[15]	4	[-]	7	16
Less than 5%	[6]	3	[42]	[48]	72	[74]	73	28
5 to 9%	[-]	29	[23]	[14]	12	[3]	7	18
10 to 24%	[58]	31	[12]	[18]	4	[15]	2	27
25 to 49%	[7]	8	[-]	[2]	-	[-]	-	4
50% or more	[6]	6	[-]	[-]	1	[-]	1	3
Don't know	[-]	5	[7]	[3]	7	[7]	10	5
Weighted base	40	79	48	25	19	8	9	226
Unweighted base	25	62	45	35	68	38	92	365

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where the practice mentioned had been provided and used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 365 managers that provided the flexible working time arrangement of the type mentioned.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

4

Working from home

Introduction

This chapter builds on the work presented in the previous chapter by focusing on another type of flexible working – working from home. For the purposes of this study, working from home was defined as a ‘situation where an employee works all or part of the time from home as part of their working hours ...’. Therefore, doing overtime or making preparations for the next working day at home were not included.

Employees may decide whether to work from home based on the benefits it offers. Working from home could be perceived as an attractive option for some employees, whilst others may wish to have clear boundaries between their home and work life. Employers may also make a similar cost-benefit analysis, but this may focus on the needs of the business rather than the needs of the individual. From the employer’s point of view, homeworking may have some advantages (for example freeing up office space), but at the same time not every industry is compatible with homeworking.

Employer provision of this practice, along with employee eligibility to use, and take-up of, homeworking, is the focus of this chapter. In addition, changes in each of these dimensions of homeworking are explored through making comparisons with the WLB1 employer survey, along with other comparable studies of workplace practices.

Provision of homeworking

Homeworking as a flexible working practice did not appear to be widely available. Just over one-in-seven workplaces (15 per cent) reported having provided homeworking that had been used by employees at some time in the past 12 months²⁰. Applying the broader definition of provision that does not take into account whether homeworking had been used by any employees in the preceding 12 months, increases the estimate of provision to just over one-in-five workplaces (22 per cent).

²⁰ Again, as for Chapter 3, when referring to *provision* throughout the remainder of this chapter, for a practice to be provided by a workplace, it had to have been used by at least some employees in the preceding 12 months. However, there are instances where the broader definition of provision is used, mainly to illustrate where growth in provision may come from.

Table 4.1 shows the variation in the provision of homeworking across a number of workplace characteristics. There appeared to be a clear association between the size of the workplace and homeworking. Workplaces with 500 or more employees were over five times more likely to provide this practice than those with fewer than 10 employees (50 per cent compared with nine per cent respectively).

The relationship between workplace size and the provision of homeworking was not linear – that is, for each successive increase in the size of the workplace, provision did not increase uniformly. It appeared that workplaces with fewer than 100 employees behaved somewhat differently from larger workplaces. There seemed to be a clear break at this point, which may be due to smaller workplaces being less well prepared to cope when employees work from home. Perhaps small companies experience greater difficulty meeting changes in business demand at short notice, if an employee is working from home.

Unsurprisingly, which industry the workplace was involved in appeared to be associated with the provision of homeworking. As one would expect, homeworking was not suited to all industries. Workplaces involved in Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities had the highest provision of homeworking (32 per cent). Perhaps the nature of these businesses offered considerable flexibility to work from home, with employees going to the office only when necessary. Compare this to the Wholesale and Retail Trade and Hotels and Restaurants industries where less than 10 per cent of workplaces had used homeworking in the last 12 months. Practical reasons tend to make homeworking unfeasible in these industries.

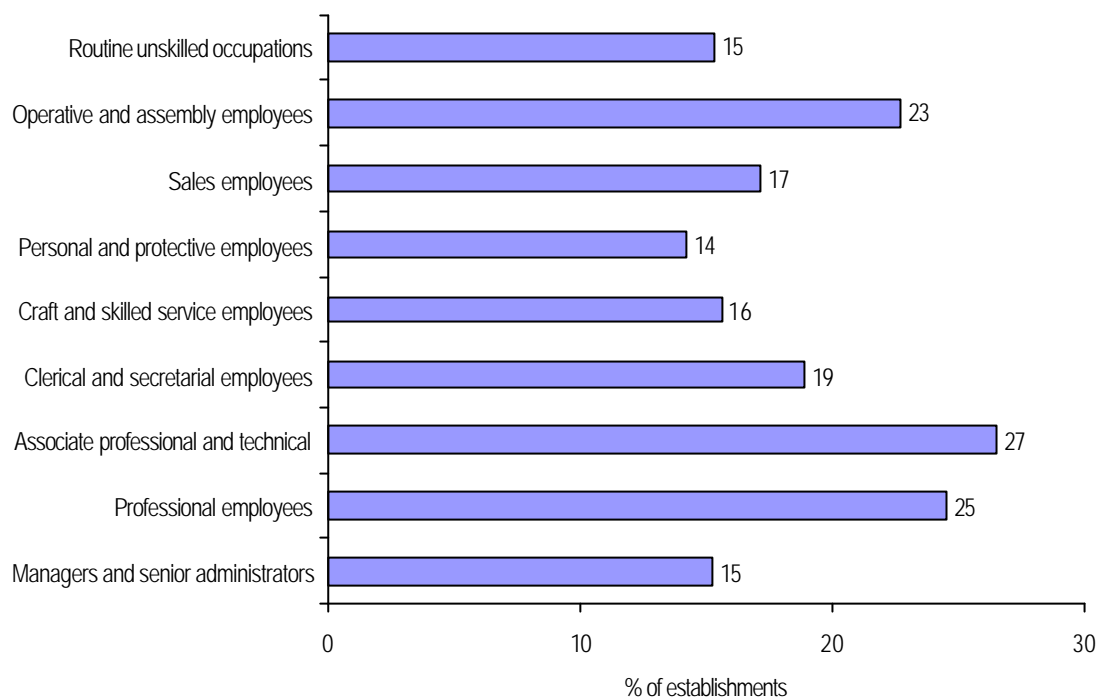
Regional differences were evident in the provision of homeworking. Workplaces located in London and the South-East had the highest incidence of workplaces providing homeworking (just under a quarter of workplaces). The North East and the East Midlands had the lowest use of homeworking (less than a tenth). This appeared to be at least in part explained by the industry mix of workplaces across these regions.

Other studies (e.g. Felstead *et al.*, 2001) have shown that homeworking is much more likely to be provided (and used) by employees of certain occupations. In particular, more highly skilled occupations, such as professional and technical related occupations, have been associated with higher provision of homeworking. While data was not collected on the occupations of those employees who were homeworking, there was some information about the occupations present at the workplace. Figure 4.1 clearly supports these other studies, showing that workplaces with some professional employees and those with any associate professional or technical employees were significantly more likely to provide homeworking for any of their employees²¹. The provision of homeworking was particularly high where technical employees were present. By way of comparison, workplaces with any routine unskilled employees were much less likely to provide any homeworking, with less than a fifth (15 per cent) doing so. However, where routine unskilled employees were present alongside more skilled employees, such as associate professional or technical employees,

²¹ It did not necessarily follow that these employees were using homeworking.

provision was more than double the rate where they did not work with these employees (27 per cent compared with 10 per cent).

Figure 4.1 Provision of homeworking, by occupations present at the workplace



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

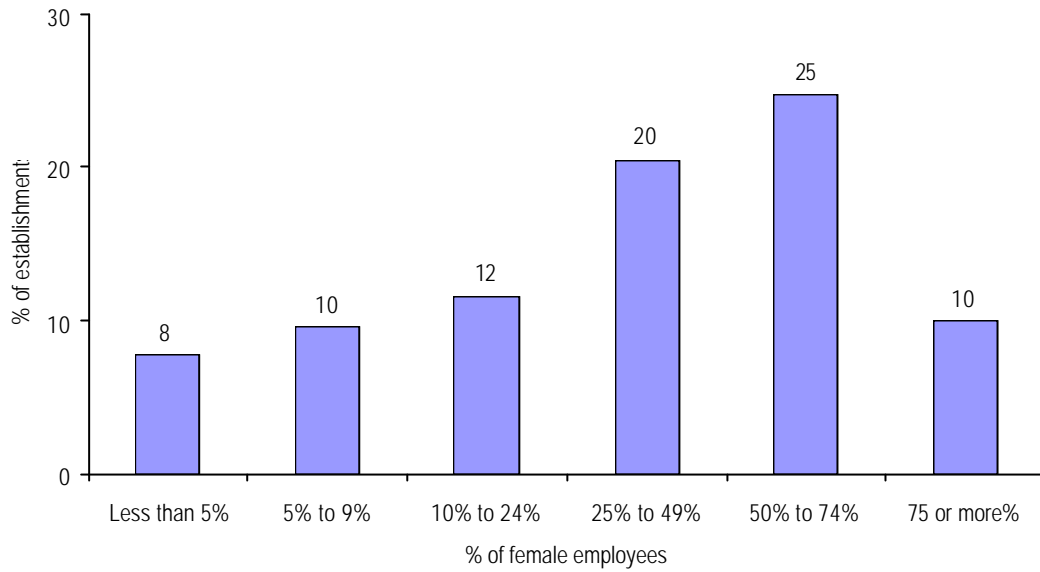
Workplaces with either a low or high²² proportion of female employees had significantly lower levels of homeworking than other workplaces with more mixed gender compositions (Figure 4.2). This can be explained by the types of industries that have these extremes in female density, namely the Construction, Manufacturing and Wholesale and Retail Trade industries. For each of these, homeworking is generally regarded as unfeasible.

Homeworking was more likely to be provided where it existed alongside flexible working time arrangements²³. Workplaces with four or more flexible working time arrangements were around twice as likely as all other workplaces to provide homeworking (Figure 4.3). It was relatively rare for homeworking to be provided without one of these flexible working time practices; fewer than one-in-ten workplaces did this.

²² Low was defined as less than a quarter of total employment and high was more than three-quarters.

²³ This refers to the arrangements set out in Chapter 3.

Figure 4.2: Provision of homeworking, by female density



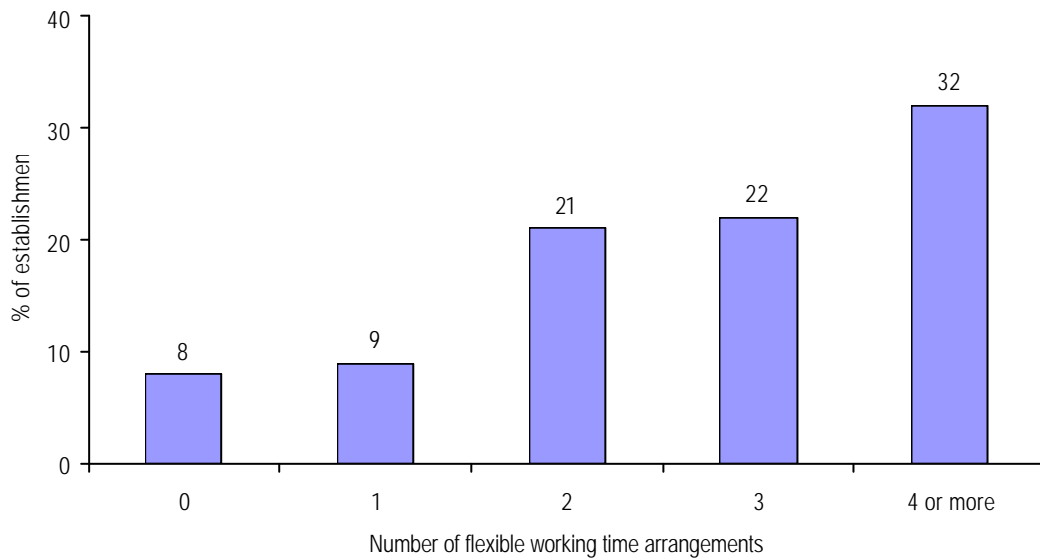
Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers²⁴.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Figure 4.3: Provision of homeworking, by number of flexible working time arrangements provided by the workplace



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

²⁴ The base includes 34 workplaces where it was not possible to estimate the proportion of females in total employment.

Homeworking was more likely to be provided in combination with some flexible working time arrangements than others (Table 4.2). For example, provision of homeworking was twice that of the average for all workplaces when it appeared alongside reduced hours working, compressed hours and flexitime. Provision was also significantly higher where job share arrangements were in place.

Changes in the provision of homeworking

As with the flexible working time arrangements, there were a number of different sources of information against which it was possible to measure changes in the provision of homeworking.

The WLB1 employer survey reported that approximately 22 per cent of workplaces had at least some of their employees working from home at some time in the 12 months prior to the survey interview. The comparable figure from the WLB2 study was 15 per cent, which represents a fall of seven percentage points. This seems rather large, and may be partly explained by the earlier study using a different set of questions to measure provision. But while the change in the question wording may explain some of the difference, it is unlikely to reduce it to zero; therefore it is likely that provision, against expectation, has fallen.

An alternative estimate comes from the DTI Employers' Survey of Support for Working Parents (2000). Employers were asked whether they had homeworking at the workplace. The question did not refer to whether any employees had used the practice, either currently or in the recent past. It was, therefore, akin to the broadest definition of homeworking provision in this study (22 per cent, see above). The DTI survey estimated that just under a fifth (18 per cent) of workplaces provided any homeworking, which would mean that provision has risen by four percentage points since 2000.

The WERS98 survey, again using another method of measuring provision, estimated that 13 per cent of workplaces with 10 or more employees provided homeworking arrangements that were used by at least some employees²⁵. After excluding workplaces with fewer than 10 employees from the WLB2 survey, 18 per cent were found to provide homeworking arrangements that were used by some employees in the past year. Over this five-year gap, this represents an increase of five percentage points.

The evidence is, therefore, mixed as to whether there has been an increase in the provision of homeworking in the past few years. If it has risen, the change has been small, and it still leaves around three-quarter of workplaces with no provision²⁶ for homeworking.

²⁵ In the WERS98 survey, no specific reference was made to a period over which employees could have worked from home.

²⁶ That is using the broadest definition of provision.

Formalisation of homeworking arrangements

Of the workplaces that provided homeworking arrangements, regardless of whether they had been used by employees in the past 12 months, just a fifth (21 per cent) had a written document that covered this form of working. In the absence of such a document, employers tended to rely on less formal arrangements, with a large majority (76 per cent) reporting that the decision on whether or not an employee could work from home was decided in an ad hoc manner. Few employers (two per cent) reported having a set procedure that had not been formalised in a written document. There was no difference in the likelihood of there being a written policy covering this practice according to whether or not any employees had worked from home in the past 12 months. Further evidence on the association between the formalisation of this practice and take-up is reported in the section on 'Take-up of homeworking'.

The incidence of written policies covering homeworking varied considerably across workplaces (Table 4.3). As with other flexible working arrangements, it was larger workplaces, in particular those that were part of a larger organisation, that were significantly more likely to have formalised this practice. For example, just under a third (30 per cent) of workplaces that were part of a larger organisation had a written policy covering homeworking compared with just eight per cent of those that were single, independent establishments. Small, private sector workplaces that were not part of a larger organisation rarely formalised this arrangement, with just five per cent of these workplaces having a written policy. Across the private sector as a whole, the incidence of written policies was low compared with the public sector, even when comparing workplaces of similar size. Workplaces with recognised unions were three times more likely to have a written policy, than those workplaces with no union present at the workplace (45 per cent compared to 11 per cent).

Compared with the results of the WLB1 survey, it appeared that there had been an increase in the formalisation of homeworking arrangements. Whereas a fifth (21 per cent) of workplaces with employees that had worked from home in the past 12 months had a formal written policy covering this practice in 2003, just a tenth (11 per cent) reported having a written policy in 2000. Public sector workplaces were particularly keen to embrace written policies on homeworking, with the proportion doing so approximately doubling since 2000 (18 to 46 per cent).

Eligibility to take up homeworking

Less than a third (30 per cent) of workplaces made their homeworking arrangements available to all their employees. Those that currently or at some time in the past 12 months had some employees working from home were marginally (but not significantly) more likely to restrict eligibility than those with no recent experience of homeworking (71 per cent and 69 per cent respectively restricted eligibility).

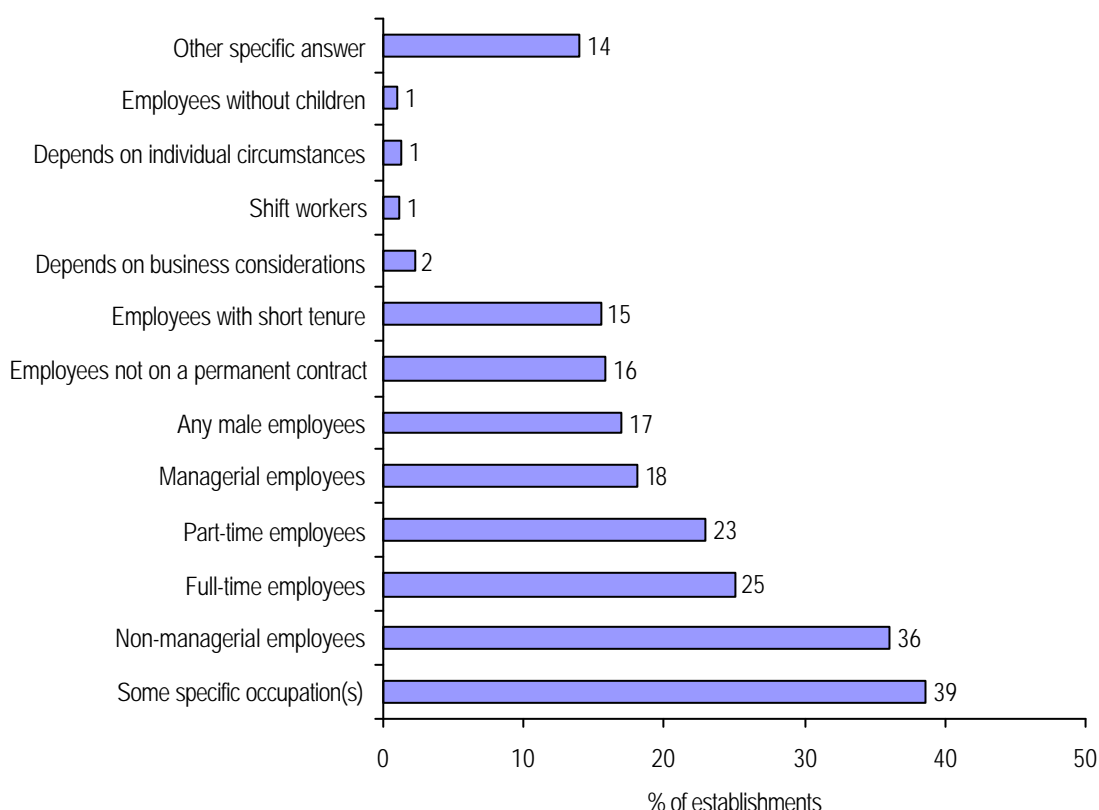
There was little to distinguish workplaces that restricted eligibility to work from home from those that did not. Across most of the standard workplace

characteristics differences were small and not significant. Also, whether or not the practice was formalised in writing did not appear to be related to restrictions on eligibility.

Employers were asked to describe the employees that were not eligible to work from home. Almost two-fifths mentioned a specific occupation or number of occupations as being ineligible (see Figure 4.4). Usually, the exclusion of an occupation was related to the nature of the job making homeworking impractical. For example, it was common for receptionists or sales staff to be excluded, and more generally, any employees that have to deal with the public.

Non-managerial employees were more likely than managers to be restricted from working from home. This again is probably due to differences in the nature of the jobs of these employees but it may also reflect concern over whether non managerial employees will be able to work efficiently at home. Just as many workplaces restricted full as well as part-time employees from working in this way. Around a sixth of workplaces excluded male employees from working from home. For a small number of workplaces (less than one per cent), technical factors, such as not having a PC at home, determined whether an employee could work from home.

Figure 4.4: Who was not eligible to work from home



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided homeworking but restricted who was eligible to use it.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 302 managers.

The columns show all the types of employees not eligible to work from home, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

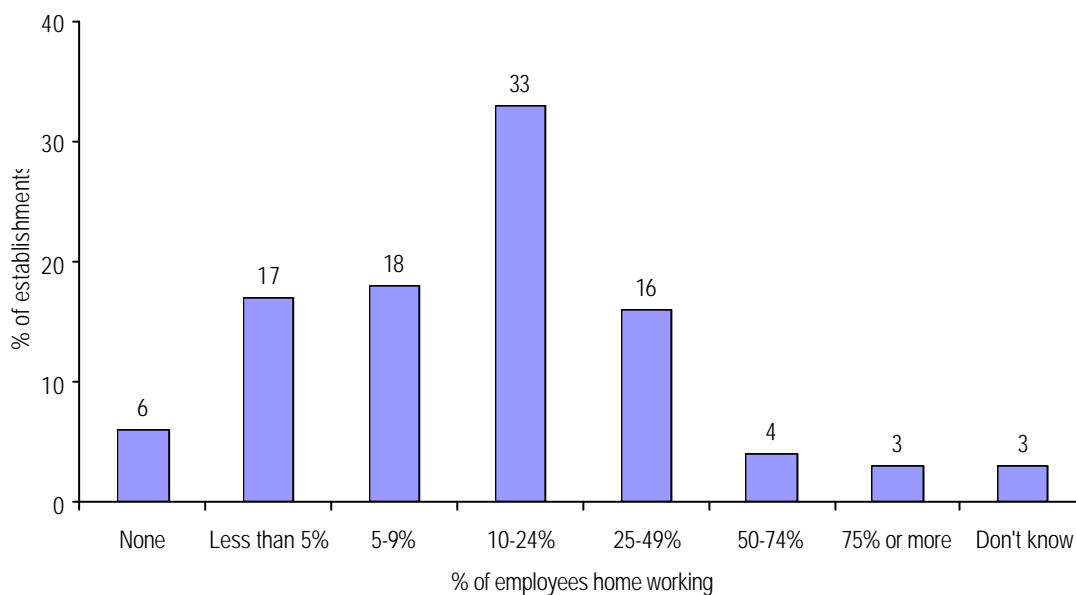
Source: WLB2 (2003).

There was evidence to suggest that fewer workplaces restricted employee eligibility to work from home. Whereas just under a third (30 per cent) of workplaces made their homeworking arrangements available to all their employees, the comparable estimate from the WLB1 survey was less than a fifth (18 per cent).

Take-up of homeworking

Provision of homeworking does not guarantee that a high proportion of employees will make use of it. In fact, the reality was that in most workplaces the take-up of homeworking was relatively modest. As Figure 4.5 illustrates, just seven per cent of workplaces reported a take up figure of 50 per cent or more. Homeworking was most likely to have been used by under a quarter of employees when available. In a third of workplaces where some homeworking occurred in the past year, between 10 and 24 per cent of employees used this form of working. A similar proportion (35 per cent) had fewer than ten per cent of their employees working in this way.

Figure 4.5: Take-up of homeworking



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided homeworking and at least some employees had used it in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 325 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Because of limitations arising from having only a (relatively) small number of workplaces with any homeworking, detailed analysis by the usual characteristics of workplaces was not possible. However, by aggregating some of the workplaces, some detailed analysis was still possible, and this identified some notable differences in the take-up of homeworking across workplaces.

The proportion of employees who had used homeworking varied considerably by the size of the workplace (see Table 4.4). Where there were fewer than 25 employees, over two-thirds (71 per cent) had take-up rates exceeding ten per cent of total employment, compared with a third of workplaces (34 per cent) with 25 or more employees. In these larger workplaces it was more common for a small proportion of employees to have used any homeworking – over a third (37 per cent) of these reported a take-up rate of less than five per cent of total employment compared with just two per cent in small workplaces²⁷.

Take-up was marginally higher in the private sector than in the public sector. Three-fifths (60 per cent) of private sector workplaces that had any homeworking had take-up rates of 10 per cent or higher compared with just two-fifths (40 per cent) of public sector workplaces. This is understandable given that many public sector activities – teaching, caring, fire fighting etc. – do not lend themselves to homeworking.

Having a written policy that covered homeworking arrangements did not appear to be related to the take-up of this form of working.

Changes in the take-up of homeworking

The WLB1 survey reported that less than half of workplaces (44 per cent) had a take-up rate for homeworking that was above five per cent of employees. A considerably higher rate of take-up was recorded in the follow-up survey, such that in almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of workplaces, more than five per cent of employees had used homeworking at some time in the past year. This represents a large increase over a short period of time. It suggested that homeworking was becoming a more viable working arrangement for more employees, especially with the growth in the use of information technology and the Internet. However, while take-up has increased, it may simply be that a larger number of employees were using homeworking, but they were doing so on a relatively infrequent basis. The WLB2 survey did not collect information on how often homeworking was used; therefore it was not possible to test this proposition.

Significant differences were also evident between the two work-life balance studies in respect of the reporting of restrictions on who could work from home. The WLB1 survey reported that just over four-fifths (82 per cent) of workplaces had restricted which employees could work from home, while the WLB2 survey found that this had fallen to 70 per cent of workplaces. Given this change, it was, therefore, less surprising that the take-up of homeworking had increased.

²⁷ Of course, this is largely a statistical artefact given that it is not possible for a workplace with, say, fewer than ten employees, to have a take-up rate that is less than ten per cent.

Conclusion

In this chapter details were presented on another form of flexible working – homeworking. It was provided by a minority of workplaces (22 per cent), and of these, just over two-thirds (68 per cent), or 15 per cent of all workplaces, reported that homeworking was available and had been used in the last 12 months. Provision was greater in larger workplaces, possibly because they were better equipped to cope when employees worked from home, and in several industries, namely Real Estate and Financial Services. Provision was also greater in London and the South East, in workplaces where professional and technical occupations were present and where the workforce had a mixed gender composition. This higher level of provision was probably related to the industry that the workplace belonged to. In addition, when other types of flexible working time arrangements were available, homeworking was more likely to be provided.

There was mixed evidence as to whether there had been a change in the provision of homeworking in the past few years. Compared with the WLB1 survey, provision had decreased; however, relative to other representative surveys, there had been a small increase. On balance, the evidence points to a small increase in provision, nevertheless, it still leaves around three-quarter of workplaces with no provision for homeworking.

In relatively few workplaces (21 per cent), homeworking arrangements had been formalised in a written document. This, however, was a considerable increase on the estimate from the WLB1 Survey (11 per cent). On the whole, the majority of employers (76 per cent) made decisions about working from home on an ad hoc basis.

Most employers restricted the employees that could use homeworking and it was usually a specific occupation or group of occupations that were restricted. This was mainly for practical purposes rather than on some other grounds.

There was a substantial increase in the take-up of homeworking since the WLB1 survey. Whereas the WLB1 survey showed that less than half of workplaces (44 per cent) had a take-up rate for homeworking that was above five per cent of employees, the comparable figure in the follow up survey was three-quarters (74 per cent). However, as with the other forms of flexible working, the take-up of homeworking was relatively modest. In a majority of workplaces, less than a quarter of employees had used this practice, with just seven per cent of workplaces reporting a take-up figure of 50 per cent or more.

Table 4.1: Provision of homeworking, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>		
	Homeworking (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment			
5 to 9 employees	9	486	295
10 to 24 employees	16	571	444
25 to 49 employees	18	249	229
50 to 99 employees	14	107	143
100 to 249 employees	32	65	178
250 to 499 employees	39	19	80
500 or more employees	50	13	140
Size of organisation			
Less than 100	17	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	20	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	9	246	317
10,000 or more	11	176	232
Ownership			
Private sector	15	1,210	1,102
Public sector	14	299	407
Single or multi			
Single independent establishment	17	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	14	922	1,033
Union recognition			
No unions present	15	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	13	64	83
Recognised unions	16	386	581
All workplaces	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 4.1 cont.: Provision of homeworking, by workplace characteristics

	Homeworking (%)	Row percentages	
		Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification			
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	11	38	58
Manufacturing	18	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[32]	6	23
Construction	12	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	9	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	2	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	13	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[21]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	32	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	15	49	85
Education	15	136	182
Health and Social Work	18	187	220
Other Community	17	100	84
Government Office Region			
North East	8	55	60
North West and Merseyside	12	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	11	121	126
East Midlands	5	117	119
West Midlands	13	113	126
South West	19	158	142
Eastern	13	144	142
London	23	185	183
South East	24	228	223
Wales	14	76	75
Scotland	11	154	152
All workplaces	15	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 4.2: Provision of homeworking alongside other forms of flexible working time arrangements

		<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>
		Homeworking (%)
Part-time	Provided	17
	Not provided	11
Term-time	Provided	20
	Not provided	14
Job share	Provided	26
	Not provided	14
Flexitime	Provided	31
	Not provided	10
Compressed hours	Provided	31
	Not provided	14
Annualised hours	Provided	19
	Not provided	15
Reduced hours	Provided	30
	Not provided	13

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 4.3: Written policy covering homeworking, by workplace characteristics

					<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Written policy	Set procedure	Ad-hoc	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	11	3	83	3	79	56
10 to 24 employees	20	-	80	-	122	100
25 to 49 employees	27	4	69	*	59	58
50 to 99 employees	[19]	[-]	[81]	[-]	26	39
100 to 249 employees	33	2	64	1	28	72
250 to 499 employees	[39]	[11]	[51]	[-]	9	44
500 or more employees	48	12	40	-	10	85
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	10	1	87	1	166	125
100 to less than 1,000	18	1	81	-	66	115
1,000 to less than 10,000	45	5	49	*	38	98
10,000 or more	60	3	36	1	36	78
Ownership						
Private sector	15	2	83	1	259	308
Public sector	46	4	50	-	73	146
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	8	2	88	2	132	116
Part of a larger organisation	30	2	67	*	200	338
Union recognition						
No unions present	11	1	87	1	214	211
Unions present no recognition	[15]	[1]	[84]	[-]	11	22
Recognised unions	45	5	50	*	103	214
All workplaces	21	2	76	1	332	454

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where homeworking was provided irrespective of whether it has been used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 454 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 4.3 cont.: Written policy covering homeworking, by workplace characteristics

					<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Written policy	Set procedure	Ad-hoc	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[*]	[-]	[100]	[-]	8	12
Manufacturing	2	-	92	5	39	58
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[19]	[-]	[81]	[-]	3	12
Construction	[-]	[5]	[95]	[-]	17	22
Wholesale and Retail Trade	[13]	[1]	[86]	[-]	46	38
Hotels and Restaurants	[16]	[-]	[84]	[-]	4	6
Transport, Storage and Communication	[48]	[-]	[52]	[-]	12	18
Financial Intermediation	[35]	[9]	[55]	[2]	19	24
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	14	*	86	-	66	72
Public Administration and Defence	[77]	[1]	[22]	[-]	17	39
Education	29	5	65	-	36	57
Health and Social Work	22	4	74	-	45	70
Other Community	[39]	[1]	[60]	[-]	21	25
Government Office Region						
North East	[3]	[13]	[83]	[-]	7	15
North West and Merseyside	[23]	[-]	[77]	[-]	35	44
Yorkshire & Humber	[50]	[4]	[46]	[-]	21	28
East Midlands	[3]	[5]	[91]	[*]	18	29
West Midlands	[9]	[2]	[81]	[8]	25	38
South West	[17]	[6]	[77]	[-]	39	46
Eastern	[23]	[4]	[71]	[1]	27	43
London	29	*	71	-	51	67
South East	15	*	84	*	67	81
Wales	[24]	[-]	[76]	[-]	16	21
Scotland	[32]	[*]	[68]	[-]	27	42
All workplaces	21	2	76	1	332	454

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where homeworking was provided irrespective of whether it has been used in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 454 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 4.4: Take-up of homeworking, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Column percentages</i>				
	5-24 employees (%)	25+ employees (%)	Private sector (%)	Public sector (%)	All workplaces (%)
None	7	4	5	9	23
Less than 5%	2	37	16	22	33
5-9%	17	19	18	19	18
10-24%	42	20	37	15	17
25% or more	29	14	23	25	6
Don't know	2	5	1	11	3
Weighted base	136	94	187	43	231
Unweighted base	107	218	225	100	325

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided homeworking and at least some employees had used it in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 325 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

5

Changes in work status

Introduction

The opportunity for employees to approach their employers about making adjustments to their working patterns is an important component of work-life balance culture. It is not enough simply for employees to have the right to work flexibly and to vary by degree their number of working hours, as there also exists employee demand to make more fundamental and permanent changes to their working status, in response to changing personal or financial circumstances, for example. This chapter explores firstly how employers regard and respond to requests made by employees to permanently change their current working status or working patterns. Secondly, it aims to gain insight into both the circumstances in which these requests have been made, and the factors that underpin employer consideration of such requests.

Requests to change from part-time to full-time working

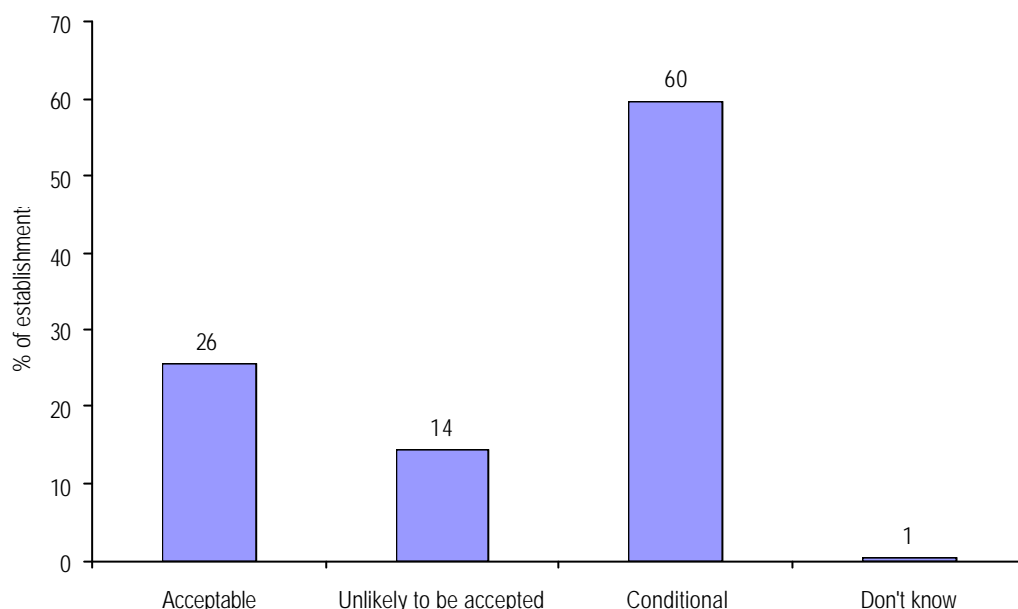
Employers were asked how they have dealt, or would deal, with requests from employees that wanted to change from working part-time to full-time hours²⁸. Approximately one quarter (26 per cent) of employers said that such requests would be acceptable and unconditional (see Figure 5.1). It was much more common, however, for acceptability to depend upon the circumstances under which the request was made. This would include situations where granting such a request goes against general procedure and is, therefore, an exception to the rule, or indeed where such requests would be directly related to the position or seniority of the employee. Only a small proportion of employers, less than a fifth, actually stated that such a request was unlikely to be accepted. Employer response to this hypothetical situation may be influenced by whether such a situation has arisen in the past and whether it was possible to accommodate the particular request.

Larger workplaces and those within the private sector were more likely to find requests to change from part-time to full-time working acceptable (see Table 5.1). It may be that larger workplaces are better equipped to accommodate part-time workers who want to make a transition into full-time work, perhaps because they have a fairly regular number of arising vacancies. It may also result from a workplace experiencing growth, or, from changes in the nature of

²⁸ This set of questions was asked of employers that had part-time employees where part-time was defined as less than 30 hours per week. However, the definition of transition from part-time to full-time was left to the discretion of the employer.

the business sector that enable workplaces to accommodate a higher ratio of full-time to part-time employees within their workforce.

Figure 5.1: Whether an employee could change from part-time to full-time working



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that had any part-time employees (where part-time working was defined as less than 30 hours per week).

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on the responses from 1,211 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Workplaces within the Hotels and Restaurants, and Transport, Storage and Communication industries were more likely than workplaces in all other industries to find requests by part-time employees to change to work full-time acceptable. The East Midlands and Eastern regions were most likely to find requests acceptable.

There was a strong (though not strictly linear) relationship between the proportion of part-time employees at the workplace and the acceptability of a request to change from part-time to full-time working. Workplaces where part-time employees form over half of the workforce²⁹ were the *less likely* to find requests to change from part-time to full-time working acceptable than those workplaces with a lower density of part-time employees in total employment (29 per cent and 20 per cent respectively). It may be that workplaces with a high concentration of part-time employees have chosen such a structure for sound business reasons and are, therefore, less likely to contemplate changing their mix of full- and part-time employees.

Comparing these results with those of the WLB1 survey, the proportion of employers that were unwilling to accept a request from an employee to change from part-time to full-time working appeared to have fallen. Whereas just under

²⁹ Around a quarter of all workplaces (26 per cent) had 50 per cent or more part-time employees in their total employment.

a fifth (19 per cent) reported that they would react in this way to such a request in the WLB1 study, this proportion had fallen to 14 per cent in 2003. The major change seems to have occurred in smaller workplaces. While larger workplaces were as likely to accept or consider these requests, those with 100 or fewer employees were significantly less likely to report that they were unwilling to accept such requests.

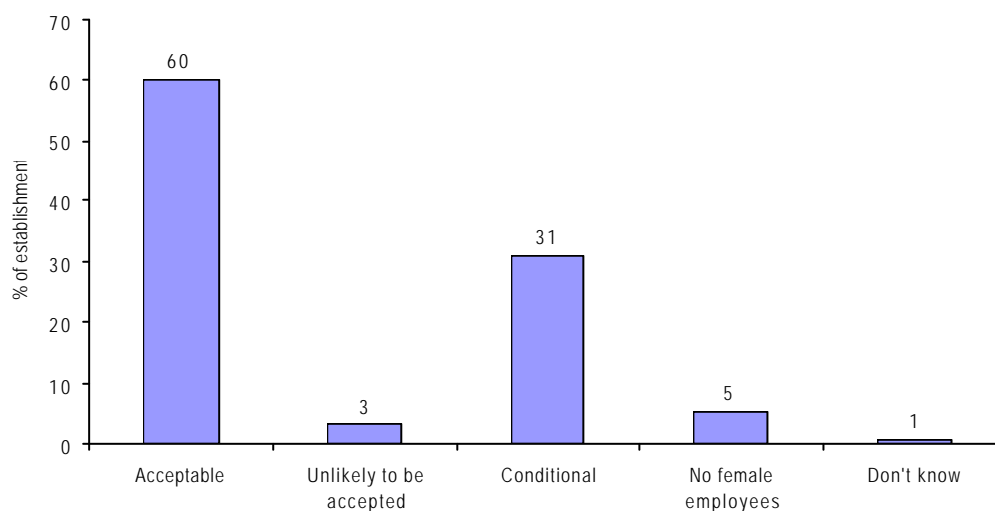
Requests to change from full-time to part-time working

For work-life balance considerations, the change from full- to part-time employment is probably more relevant. The most familiar example of employees likely to make this change are women returning from maternity leave. This section explores requests made by full-time employees to make such a change. It will look first at employer attitudes towards women returning from maternity leave who worked full-time prior to the birth of their child but want to work part-time on their return to work, and then at all other employee requests to make the transition from full- to part-time working.

Women returning from maternity leave

It was extremely rare to find an employer that would not at least consider a request to work part-time from a female employee returning from maternity leave. A majority of employers (60 per cent) said they would accept such requests in all or nearly all cases, while a third reported that they would at the very least consider them (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Whether female employees could change from full-time to part-time working



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Again, the larger the workplace or the organisation which the workplace was part of, the more likely it was to accept requests from women returning from maternity leave to change from full-time to part-time hours (see Table 5.2). Public sector workplaces were more likely than those in the private sector to consider such a change to be acceptable. However, this difference could be

partly explained by allowing for the fact that public sector workplaces tend to be larger. While smaller workplaces (with fewer than 25 employees) in each sector were just as likely to find such requests acceptable (57 and 63 per cent respectively), larger workplaces (with 25 or more employees) in the public sector (73 per cent) were more likely than those in the private sector (63 per cent) to find requests acceptable. There was some variation across industries, with the Construction industry having a particularly low proportion of workplaces reporting that they would accept such a request and, conversely, Hotels and Restaurants, Public Administration and Defence and Health and Social Work industries the opposite. The former of these findings was basically due to the low density of female employment in the construction industry. Once this was allowed for, the industry did not look particularly different from other industries. The latter finding was probably due to the extremely high density of part-time employment in these industries – particularly the Hotels and Restaurants and Health and Social Work industries, which would, therefore, place employers in a difficult situation if they were to reject a request to work part-time from a female returning from maternity leave.

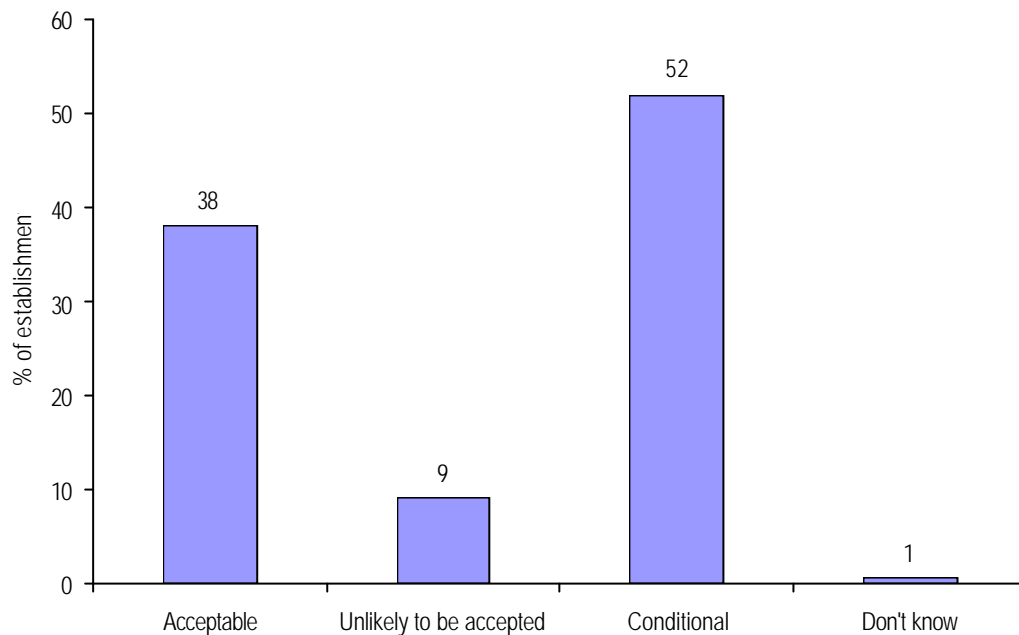
An important factor for a female employee considering whether or not to make the change from full- to part-time working is whether all the terms and conditions of the job they held prior to being on maternity leave would be maintained if they go back part-time. There are a number of criteria by which it is possible to measure whether terms and conditions have or would change, but, broadly speaking, these can be narrowed down to whether the employee goes back to the same job and whether they can keep their seniority. In a majority of workplaces where such a change was possible (65 per cent), employers reported that this would happen. Few (one per cent) said that females returning from maternity leave could change to work part-time but would have to do so in a different job or with some change to their level of seniority. It was more common for employers to report that the maintenance of terms and conditions depended on the job the employee was doing (19 per cent), their seniority (two per cent) or both of these factors (eight per cent).

Agreeing to the change and allowing terms and conditions to be maintained went hand-in-hand. Of those employers that said they would accept a request to work part-time from a female employee returning from maternity leave, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) said the employee could keep the same job and level of seniority. Where the change was in some respects conditional, significantly fewer (44 per cent) said the employee could keep the same job and level of seniority.

Other employees requesting to change from full-time to part-time working

Employers were less likely to accept in all or nearly all cases requests to change from full-time to part-time hours made by employees who were not returning from maternity leave. Just under two-fifths (38 per cent) of employers said that this type of request would be acceptable (see Figure 5.3). It was more common for this type of request to be dependent upon the particular circumstances surrounding the request or upon the individual position of the employee. One-in-ten (nine per cent) employers stated that this type of request was unlikely to be accepted.

Figure 5.3: Whether employees could change from full-time to part-time working (apart from females returning from maternity leave)



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Small workplaces and those that were not part of a larger organisation were least likely to accept a request from an employee to change from full-time to part-time work (see Table 5.3). This may be because these workplaces simply do not have the capacity to be flexible in this way – for example they have less employees to cover the additional work and may not be able to afford to recruit and train a new employee. Thus, business considerations may be put before the needs of the employee although they are not necessarily incompatible.

Public sector workplaces were more inclined than those in the private sector to report that they would find employee requests to change from full-time to part-time working acceptable (46 per cent compared with 36 per cent). This mirrors the pattern found for requests made by women returning from maternity leave. The variation between private and public sector held even when size was taken into account. There were some differences across industries. Workplaces in the Hotels and Restaurants (60 per cent) and Public Administration and Defence industries (51 per cent) were the most likely to accept such requests. In contrast, workplaces involved in Manufacturing, Real Estate and Construction were the least likely to accept such requests.

The WLB2 survey confirms the findings from the WLB1 survey, in that larger organisations and those within the public sector were most likely to find requests from full-time employees to work part-time acceptable.

In terms of what happens when an employee makes the change from full- to part-time working, almost half (48 per cent) of the employers that found this change either acceptable or that said the change would be conditional, stated

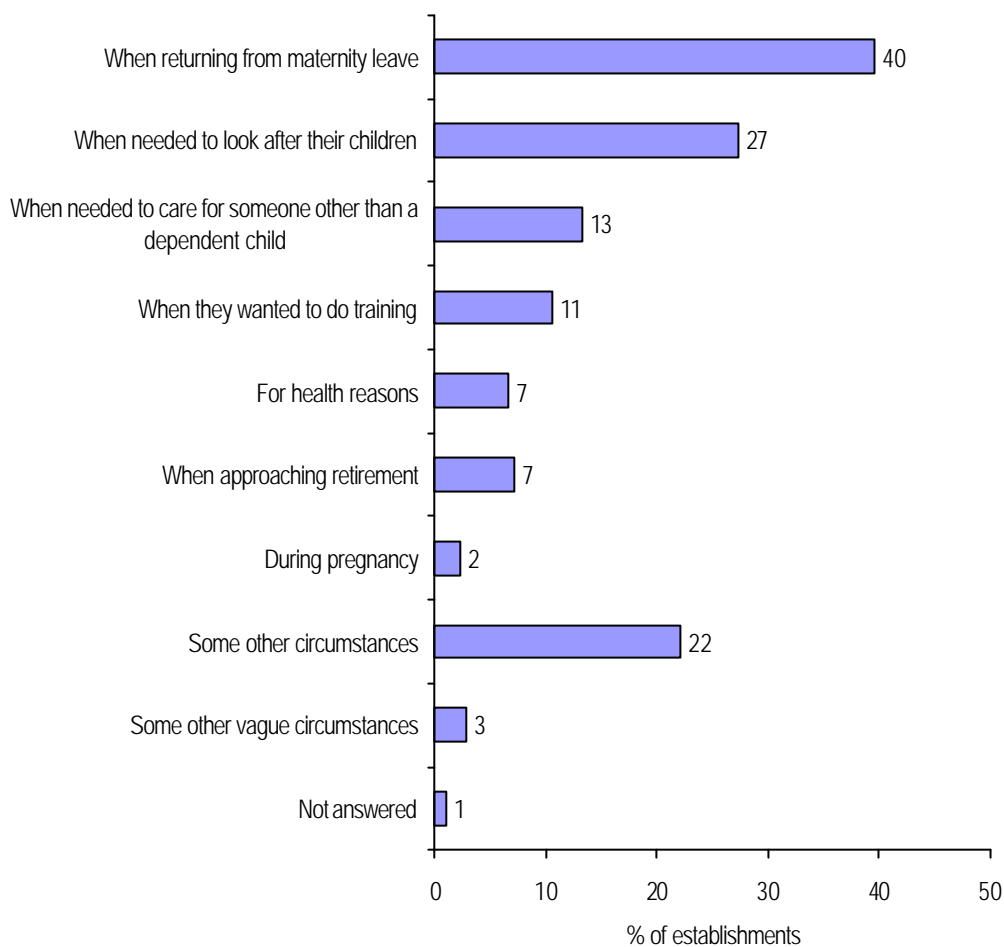
that it would be possible for employees to keep both their job and their level of seniority. Few employers reported that this would not be at all possible (four per cent). The remainder stated that decisions upon whether an employee could return to the same job and also the same seniority would be dependent upon the individual position of the employee (31 per cent), or the individual's level of seniority (three per cent), or indeed a consideration of both their position and their seniority (12 per cent). Other factors that would be taken into consideration included the number of hours the employee wanted to reduce their standard working hours to, and the individual merits of the employee (characteristics not necessarily directly related to the employee's position or seniority).

Incidence of requests to change from full-time to part-time working

One quarter (24 per cent) of all employers had received a request from at least one employee to change from full-time to part-time working hours over the previous 12-month period. Interestingly, the characteristics of the workplaces that had received such a request match those of the workplaces that reported that such requests were acceptable, that is, larger workplaces and larger organisations, those within the public sector and those with unions at the workplace (see Table 5.4). Larger workplaces were more likely to have received a request simply because of having a larger pool of employees that could make the request. Even after allowing for this, it appeared that workplaces that accepted such requests were more likely to have received requests. The causal basis of such a relationship was unclear.

The most common circumstance under which a request to change from full- to part-time working was made was when a female was returning from maternity leave (40 per cent, see Figure 5.4). Other commonly reported reasons supporting such requests included employees needing to look after their children (27 per cent), to look after someone other than a dependent child, such as a parent or partner (13 per cent) or to do training (11 per cent). Such a change was also requested by employees making a transition either into retirement or on to maternity leave.

Figure 5.4: Circumstances under which requests were made to change from full-time to part-time working



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that had received a request from an employee to change from full- to part-time working in the past 12 months.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on the responses from 541 managers. The columns show all the circumstances under which requests are made, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

An overwhelming majority of employers agreed that managers would generally be expected to give consideration to a request from an employee to change from full-time to part-time working. Of the employers that had received any requests in the past 12 months, almost all (98 per cent) reported that managers would be generally expected to give consideration to such requests. Where no requests had been received, employers were asked whether managers would generally consider such a request, if they were to receive one. Still a high proportion reported that managers would consider such requests, albeit a smaller proportion than of those that had actually received a request (85 per cent).

There was very little variation across workplaces as to whether consideration would be given to requests to change from full- to part-time working (see Table 5.5). In almost all workplaces consideration would be given, irrespective of the industry it was in or its size. The Construction and Other Community industries were the exceptions, with significantly lower proportions of employers in these

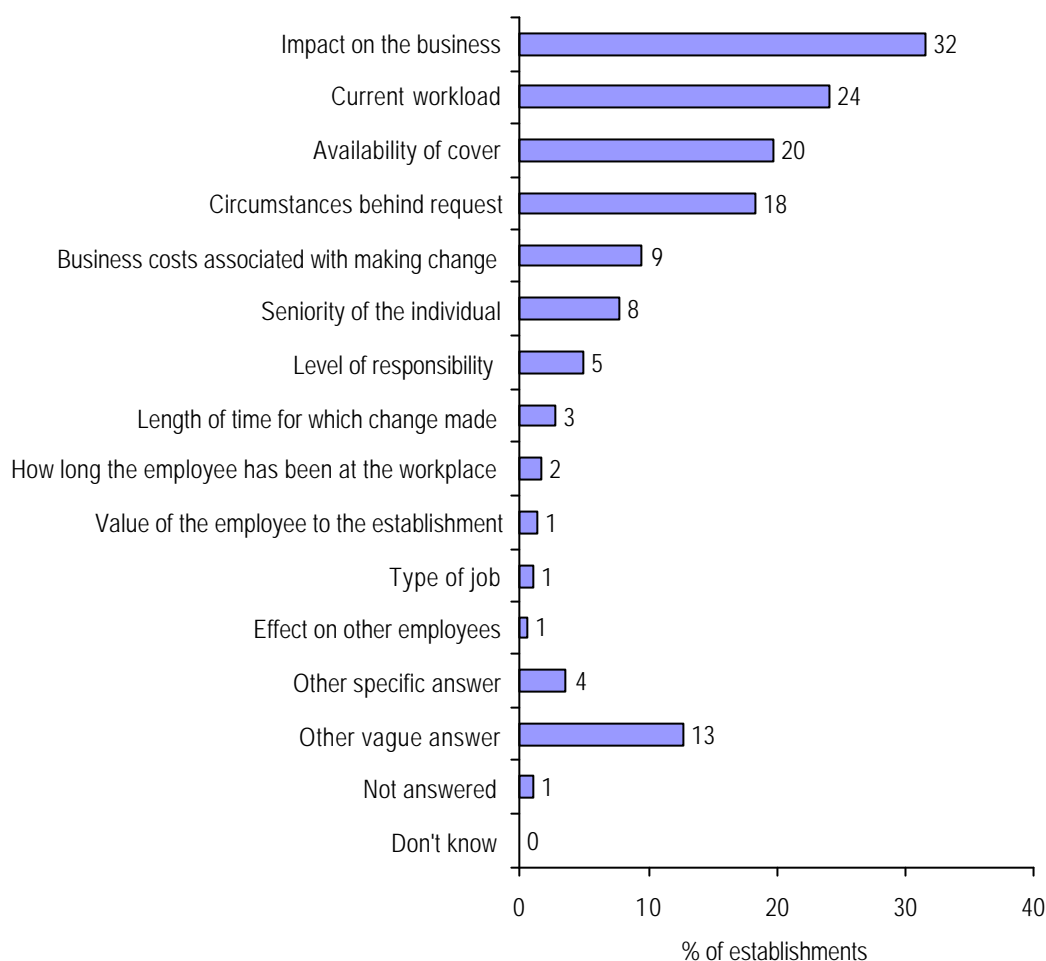
industries reporting that they had received and considered a request to change from full-time to part-time working. Where no requests had been received, there was more variation in response across workplaces. The larger the organisation of which the workplace was a part, the more likely they were to consider a request, as were public sector employers compared with private sector employers.

Practical business issues tended to dominate the factors taken into consideration by an employer when deciding whether to accept or reject a request from an employee to change to part-time employment (see Figure 5.5). In a fifth or more workplaces, managers reported that they would have to take into consideration the impact the change would have on the business, the availability of cover and how the change would fit in with current business demands, when deciding what to do with a request. Who it was that asked for the change was less important, with fewer than one-in-ten employers reporting that they would have to take into consideration who was making the request, their seniority and the type of job they do. The costs associated with the change were also rarely cited as an important factor. In just under a fifth of workplaces, managers said they took into consideration the reason behind the request. The wider impact of agreeing (or disagreeing) to the request of the individual employee upon their fellow employees was rarely mentioned by employers as a consideration.

The relatively high importance given to business considerations when deciding whether an employee could change from full- to part-time work suggested that there may be a difference in how public and private sector workplaces approach this issue. However, this appeared not to be the case, as both public and private sector employers were more likely to cite business factors over the particulars of the employee when deciding whether an employee could change the hours that they worked (see Table 5.6). However, there were some differences regarding which business factors public and private sector employers took into consideration. Public sector workplaces were more likely than their private sector counterparts to report considering the general 'impact on the business' (42 per cent compared to 29 per cent). Conversely, private sector employers were more likely than public sector employers to mention other specific business factors, such as availability of cover (21 per cent compared to 14 per cent) and business costs associated with making the change (11 per cent compared to four per cent).

Employers were also invited to report the reasons why a request would not be considered. The number reporting such a reason was too small to undertake any quantitative analysis.

Figure 5.5: Factors taken into consideration when deciding whether an employee can change from full- to part-time employment



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that reported they would consider a request from a full-time employee to work part-time.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,340 managers.

The columns show all the factors taken into consideration, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Comparable treatment of women returning from maternity leave and other employees

From the reports outlined in the sections on 'Women returning from maternity leave' and 'Other employees requesting to change from full-time to part-time working', it was clear that employers were more likely to unconditionally accept a request from women returning from maternity leave wanting to change from full-time to part-time working than those made by other employees. The extent of the difference was considerable, such that employers were approximately twice as likely to unconditionally accept a request from a woman returning from maternity leave to change their working pattern in comparison to any request from employees in different circumstances (60 per cent compared to 38 per cent). Not only was the request less likely to be unconditionally accepted, but these employees were also less likely to maintain their terms and conditions of employment than those employees not returning from maternity leave.

Across all workplaces, one quarter (24 per cent) reported that they treated women returning from maternity leave more favourably than other employees making the same request to change from full- to part-time work. Few (five per cent) treated employees not returning from maternity leave more favourably, while the remaining two-thirds (72 per cent) tended to treat the two groups the same. This last group was mainly made up of employers that said it was conditional in some way for either of these two groups of employees to make the change from full- to part-time working (51 per cent).

There was little variation across workplaces in the reporting of preferential treatment of women returning from maternity leave.

Requests to work flexibly

Employers may receive all manner of requests from employees to change how they regularly work for a *sustained* period of time, over and above those requests to change from full-time to part-time work and vice-versa. In chapters three and four some of the different types of flexible working arrangements available to employees were discussed. Allowing individuals to use such arrangements is clearly an important factor in enabling them to balance both their work and home commitments and is, therefore, crucial to the achievement of work-life balance.

Less than a fifth (17 per cent) of all workplaces had received a request from an employee to change how they regularly work for a sustained period of time over the 12 months prior to being interviewed. The receipt of requests, however, varied considerably across workplaces (see Table 5.7). It was greater the larger the workplace, although this was not surprising given that with more employees the chances (of receiving a request) would logically increase. After allowing for the impact of workplace size on the incidence of requests, many of the differences between sectors and industries disappeared or were reduced.

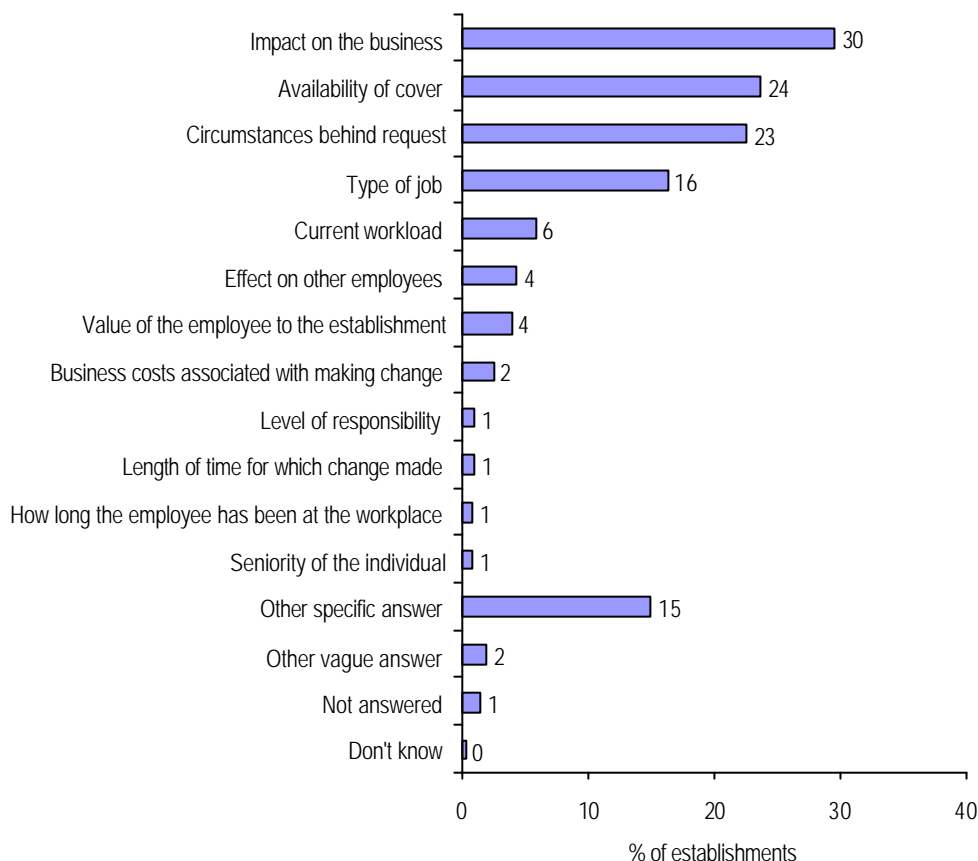
The most prevalent circumstances under which requests were made to employers were when employees needed to look after their children (31 per cent) or to care for someone other than a dependent child, such as a parent (17 per cent). Employees also made requests to change the way that they regularly worked when they wanted to undertake some sort of training (14 per cent) or as family or personal needs arose (14 per cent).

The overwhelming majority of workplaces that had received a request from an employee to change how they regularly work reported that their managers would be expected to give consideration to such requests (98 per cent). Perhaps unsurprisingly, amongst workplaces that had not received such a request over the last year, the proportion of workplaces that reported that they would give consideration to these requests should they arise was lower (87 per cent).

The factors taken into consideration by employers when deciding whether to accept a request to work flexibly tended to be related to business demands, although to a lesser extent than was evident with respect to requests to work part-time (see Figure 5.6). Again the impact on the business was the most

often cited factor, along with the availability of cover. However, the current workload at the workplace was less frequently mentioned, while the type of job that the person asking to make the change was doing was much more likely to be cited.

Figure 5.6: Factors taken into consideration when deciding whether an employee could change how they regularly work



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that reported they would consider a request from an employee to change how they regularly work.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 903 managers.

The columns show all the factors taken into consideration, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Awareness of legal duties

Since April 2003, employers have had a legal duty to give consideration to requests to work flexibly from parents of children under six or of disabled children under 18.

Over two-thirds (71 per cent) of employers covering 86 per cent of employees were aware of this forthcoming duty. Table 5.8 shows how this awareness varied across workplaces. Those workplaces that were most likely to be aware of the new legislation included: large workplaces; those in the public sector; those that were part of a larger organisation, and where there was a recognised trade union at the workplace. Awareness was highest amongst workplaces within the Public Administration and Defence industry and lowest in

Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail Trade and in Other Community Services. As with other reports of awareness of employment regulations, it was consistently higher where there was evidence of a personnel function at the workplace – in these circumstances awareness tended to be universal (90 per cent) compared with around two-thirds (66 per cent) where it appeared that there was no personnel function at the workplace.

Awareness was also higher among workplaces that had received a request from an employee to change how they regularly work for a sustained period, in comparison with workplaces that had not received any requests (76 per cent compared to 70 per cent).

Conclusion

Most employers were sensitive to employees who wanted to make transitions from one work status to another (i.e. from full-time to part-time and vice versa). There was a noticeable variation in the acceptability of the different types of transition. This was due to a host of factors associated with maintaining the balance between business needs, workforce composition and individual circumstance. The most acceptable transitions were those requests from full-time employees wanting to switch to part-time working on their return from maternity leave, whereas the least acceptable transitions were requests from part-time employees to switch to full-time working.

Some clear patterns emerged regarding the characteristics of workplaces most likely to be accepting of requests made by employees to change their work status and also of those experienced in dealing with such requests. These were most likely to be large workplaces and to be part of larger organisations. They were generally within the public sector (except in cases of employees wanting to make a transition from part-time to full-time) and were likely to have some union presence (in the case of employees wanting to make a transition from full-time to part-time).

The differential treatment of employees can be highlighted by reiterating the findings that not only were employers more likely to unconditionally accept a request from a women returning from maternity leave to change from full-time to part-time working in comparison with the same request made by any other employee, they were also more likely to allow them to keep their same job and the same level of seniority. Factors taken into consideration when deliberating whether employees could switch from full-time to part-time working focused on business considerations over the individual attributes of the employee and irrespective of whether the employer was located within the private or the public sector.

Employers' awareness of their legal duty to give consideration to requests to work flexibly from parents of children under six or of disabled children under 18 was reasonably high but variable (notably again by size and also presence of a personnel function). Smaller employers and single independent workplaces were the least aware of this legal duty, which may reflect specific practical difficulties these employers face when trying to accommodate flexible working.

Table 5.1: Whether someone could change from part-time to full-time working, by workplace characteristics

	Acceptable (%)	Unlikely to be accepted (%)	Conditional (%)	Don't know (%)	<i>Row percentages</i>	
					Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	22	19	58	*	336	204
10 to 24 employees	23	15	61	1	449	352
25 to 49 employees	27	13	60	-	215	197
50 to 99 employees	39	7	53	-	84	116
100 to 249 employees	36	4	59	2	53	150
250 to 499 employees	32	3	65	-	17	71
500 or more employees	36	-	63	*	11	121
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	27	19	53	1	546	406
100 to less than 1,000	23	8	69	*	184	241
1,000 to less than 10,000	21	9	70	*	181	250
10,000 or more	31	7	62	*	160	214
Ownership						
Private sector	28	13	59	*	898	844
Public sector	18	20	61	1	267	367
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	25	20	54	1	438	368
Part of a larger organisation	26	11	63	*	727	843
Union recognition						
No unions present	28	14	58	*	765	621
Unions present no recognition	18	14	68	-	46	66
Recognised unions	22	15	62	1	334	507
All workplaces	26	14	60	1	1,165	1,211

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that have any part-time employees (where part-time working was defined as less than 30 hours per week).

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,211 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.1 cont.: Whether someone could change from part-time to full-time working, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Acceptable (%)	Unlikely to be accepted (%)	Conditional (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[23]	[30]	[47]	[-]	25	40
Manufacturing	28	14	58	-	109	136
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[25]	[40]	[34]	[1]	3	18
Construction	[23]	[7]	[69]	[2]	47	42
Wholesale and Retail Trade	21	13	67	-	255	186
Hotels and Restaurants	36	14	50	-	104	71
Transport, Storage and Communication	44	6	50	-	46	56
Financial Intermediation	[33]	[-]	[67]	[-]	40	41
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	28	11	60	1	113	110
Public Administration and Defence	17	9	73	-	44	74
Education	21	20	57	2	128	171
Health and Social Work	27	16	57	*	161	192
Other Community	21	20	58	1	83	69
Government Office Region						
North East	23	31	44	2	46	51
North West and Merseyside	24	16	60	*	124	133
Yorkshire & Humber	14	16	70	-	91	100
East Midlands	31	15	52	2	92	94
West Midlands	22	15	62	-	85	102
South West	25	16	58	*	124	118
Eastern	32	13	53	1	122	123
London	28	8	63	1	134	133
South East	27	14	59	-	170	177
Wales	26	12	63	-	63	66
Scotland	24	12	64	-	113	114
All workplaces	26	14	60	1	1,165	1,211

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that have any part-time employees (where part-time working was defined as less than 30 hours per week).

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,211 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 5.2: Whether females returning from maternity leave could change from full-time to part-time working, by workplace characteristics

	Acceptable	Unlikely to be accepted	Conditional	No female employees	Don't know	<i>Row percentages</i>	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	53	5	34	8	-	486	295
10 to 24 employees	61	3	30	5	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	68	3	29	1	-	249	229
50 to 99 employees	65	2	30	1	1	107	143
100 to 249 employees	62	1	34	2		65	178
250 to 499 employees	64	-	36	-	-	19	80
500 or more employees	79	*	21	-	-	13	140
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	57	6	30	6	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	61	*	34	4	-	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	60	*	35	4	*	246	317
10,000 or more	73	1	22	3	1	176	232
Ownership							
Private sector	58	4	32	5	*	1,210	1,102
Public sector	68	2	27	3	1	299	407
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	56	7	30	7	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	63	1	32	3	*	922	1,033
Union recognition							
No unions present	58	4	32	6	1	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	65	2	30	3	-	64	83
Recognised unions	67	2	29	2	*	386	581
All workplaces	60	3	31	5	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.2 cont.: Whether females returning from maternity leave could change from full-time to part-time working, by workplace characteristics

	Acceptable	Unlikely to be accepted	Conditional	No female employees	Don't know	<i>Row percentages</i>	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification							
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	53	5	34	8	-	38	58
Manufacturing	53	3	38	5	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[33]	[-]	[11]	[48]	[8]	6	23
Construction	34	9	43	14	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	61	2	31	6	-	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	71	5	23	1	-	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	48	3	38	10	*	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[64]	[4]	[32]	[-]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	59	2	38	1	-	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	80	2	16	2	-	49	85
Education	62	1	35	-	2	136	182
Health and Social Work	73	3	22	1	1	187	220
Other Community	64	4	24	7	-	100	84
Government Office Region							
North East	53	4	34	9	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	63	3	31	3	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	60	6	31	3	-	121	126
East Midlands	65	6	22	5	2	117	119
West Midlands	48	8	38	6	-	113	126
South West	60	-	34	6	-	158	142
Eastern	68	3	28	2	-	144	142
London	53	3	38	5	*	185	183
South East	59	2	32	8	*	228	223
Wales	67	7	23	3	-	76	75
Scotland	67	*	28	3	1	154	152
All workplaces	60	3	31	5	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003)

Table 5.3: Whether an employee could change from full-time to part-time working (other than when returning from maternity leave), by workplace characteristics

	Acceptable (%)	Unlikely to be accepted (%)	Conditional (%)	Don't know (%)	<i>Row percentages</i>	
					Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	36	13	51	1	486	295
10 to 24 employees	39	7	54	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	41	9	50	1	249	229
50 to 99 employees	36	9	55	1	107	143
100 to 249 employees	40	5	54	1	65	178
250 to 499 employees	43	5	53	-	19	80
500 or more employees	32	5	63	-	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	33	13	53	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	34	7	59	*	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	44	5	52	*	246	317
10,000 or more	54	4	42	-	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	36	10	53	1	1,210	1,102
Public sector	46	4	50	-	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	33	15	50	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	41	5	54	*	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	37	11	51	1	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	36	6	58	-	64	83
Recognised unions	41	3	55	1	386	581
All workplaces	38	9	52	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.3 cont.: Whether an employee could change from full-time to part-time working (other than when returning from maternity leave), by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Acceptable	Unlikely to be accepted	Conditional	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	23	9	68	-	38	58
Manufacturing	25	20	55	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[16]	[21]	[63]	[-]	6	23
Construction	21	18	59	2	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	48	6	46	-	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	60	2	38	-	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	25	5	68	1	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[33]	[4]	[63]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	21	13	66	-	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	51	4	46	-	49	85
Education	40	5	54	2	136	182
Health and Social Work	47	7	44	1	187	220
Other Community	45	5	50	*	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	35	12	54	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	40	7	52	-	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	38	11	51	*	121	126
East Midlands	32	13	51	4	117	119
West Midlands	31	14	55	-	113	126
South West	38	9	53	*	158	142
Eastern	41	9	50	-	144	142
London	38	7	56	-	185	183
South East	36	9	54	1	228	223
Wales	43	9	45	3	76	75
Scotland	43	6	50	-	154	152
All workplaces	38	9	52	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.4: Whether an employer had received any requests from employees to change from full-time to part-time working, by workplace characteristics

	Requests to work part-time (%)	No requests (%)	Don't know (%)	<i>Row percentages</i>	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	12	84	4	486	295
10 to 24 employees	19	79	2	571	444
25 to 49 employees	33	65	2	249	229
50 to 99 employees	43	57	*	107	143
100 to 249 employees	54	43	3	65	178
250 to 499 employees	73	25	2	19	80
500 or more employees	89	11	-	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	16	83	*	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	33	66	1	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	26	66	9	246	317
10,000 or more	37	59	4	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	22	76	2	1,210	1,102
Public sector	33	65	2	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	19	81	*	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	27	69	4	922	1033
Union recognition					
No unions present	20	78	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	35	63	2	64	83
Recognised unions	34	64	3	386	581
All workplaces	24	74	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.4 cont.: Whether an employer had received any requests from employees to change from full-time to part-time working, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Requests to work part-time (%)	No requests (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	7	91	2	38	58
Manufacturing	19	80	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[11]	[57]	[32]	6	23
Construction	8	92	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	18	79	4	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	31	67	1	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	10	81	9	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[24]	[68]	[8]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	28	71	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	50	49	2	49	85
Education	34	66	-	136	182
Health and Social Work	33	66	1	187	220
Other Community	29	70	1	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	23	71	6	55	60
North West and Merseyside	26	71	2	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	24	75	2	121	126
East Midlands	15	84	1	117	119
West Midlands	26	71	3	113	126
South West	19	79	2	158	142
Eastern	25	74	2	144	142
London	32	66	3	185	183
South East	19	79	1	228	223
Wales	36	64	-	76	75
Scotland	23	73	5	154	152
All workplaces	24	74	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.5: Whether request to change from full-time to part-time working would be considered, by workplace characteristics

				<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	Received request and consideration given (%)	No requests, but would consider if received (%)	No requests, and would never get request (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	96	81	9	486	295
10 to 24 employees	98	85	10	571	444
25 to 49 employees	98	96	1	249	229
50 to 99 employees	100	83	9	107	143
100 to 249 employees	96	98	1	65	178
250 to 499 employees	100	99	1	19	80
500 or more employees	100	90	10	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	95	81	9	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	100	87	10	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	98	92	5	246	317
10,000 or more	100	95	4	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	97	84	8	1,210	1,102
Public sector	100	92	5	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	95	78	11	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	99	90	5	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	97	82	10	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	100	87	4	64	83
Recognised unions	99	93	3	386	581
All workplaces	98	85	8	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.5 cont.: Whether request to change from full-time to part-time working would be considered, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>				
	Received request and consideration given (%)	No requests but would consider if received (%)	No requests, and would never get request (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	100	88	9	38	58
Manufacturing	100	75	8	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[100]	[37]	[8]	6	23
Construction	73	78	10	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	100	88	7	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	100	93	7	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	100	80	15	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[100]	[97]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	96	85	7	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	100	81	9	49	85
Education	100	95	3	136	182
Health and Social Work	99	91	5	187	220
Other Community	92	78	15	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	100	70	16	55	60
North West and Merseyside	98	83	9	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	100	87	8	121	126
East Midlands	100	80	13	117	119
West Midlands	95	87	3	113	126
South West	100	86	6	158	142
Eastern	94	83	7	144	142
London	96	85	9	185	183
South East	98	84	8	228	223
Wales	100	87	10	76	75
Scotland	100	98	1	154	152
All workplaces	98	85	8	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.6: Factors considered when an employee requests to change from full-time to part-time work

	<i>Column percentages</i>		
	Ownership		All workplaces (%)
	Private sector (%)	Public sector (%)	
Impact on the business	29	42	32
Current workload	24	24	24
Availability of cover	21	14	20
Circumstances behind request	20	14	18
Business costs associated with making change	11	4	9
Seniority of the individual	9	4	8
Level of responsibility	6	2	5
Length of time for which change made	2	6	3
How long the employee has been at the workplace	2	*	2
Value of the employee to the workplace	1	3	1
Type of job	1	1	1
Effect on other employees	*	2	1
Other specific answer	3	5	4
Other vague answer	12	16	13
Not answered	1	2	1
Don't know	-	1	*
Weighted base	1,017	275	1,292
Unweighted base	959	381	1,340

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that reported they would consider a request from a full-time employee to work part-time.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,340 managers.

The columns show all the factors taken into consideration, therefore percentages add up to more than 100.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.7: Whether there had been any requests by employees to change how they regularly work, by workplace characteristics

				<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	9	88	3	486	295
10 to 24 employees	16	83	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	22	76	3	249	229
50 to 99 employees	30	70	*	107	143
100 to 249 employees	33	66	1	65	178
250 to 499 employees	41	55	5	19	80
500 or more employees	60	39	1	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	15	85	*	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	18	81	1	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	17	76	7	246	317
10,000 or more	23	71	6	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	16	82	2	1,210	1,102
Public sector	22	76	1	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	15	85	*	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	18	78	3	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	15	83	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	27	71	2	64	83
Recognised unions	23	76	2	386	581
All workplaces	17	81	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.7 cont.: Whether there had been any requests by employees to change how they regularly work, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	14	85	2	38	58
Manufacturing	14	84	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[10]	[58]	[32]	6	23
Construction	6	93	*	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	11	86	3	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	24	72	4	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	10	85	6	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[37]	[63]	[1]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	14	85	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	19	80	1	49	85
Education	21	79	*	136	182
Health and Social Work	28	70	2	187	220
Other Community	21	79	*	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	13	78	10	55	60
North West and Merseyside	20	79	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	27	71	2	121	126
East Midlands	10	88	2	117	119
West Midlands	18	80	2	113	126
South West	15	84	1	158	142
Eastern	17	82	1	144	142
London	18	79	3	185	183
South East	19	81	*	228	223
Wales	23	77	*	76	75
Scotland	9	86	5	154	152
All workplaces	17	81	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.8: Awareness of the right to work flexibly, by workplace characteristics

				<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Yes	No	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	66	33	*	486	295
10 to 24 employees	67	33	*	571	444
25 to 49 employees	76	24	*	249	229
50 to 99 employees	83	17	1	107	143
100 to 249 employees	92	8	-	65	178
250 to 499 employees	100	-	-	19	80
500 or more employees	98	2	-	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	65	35	*	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	79	21	*	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	81	19	1	246	317
10,000 or more	77	22	1	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	69	30	*	1,210	1,102
Public sector	77	22	1	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	65	35	*	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	75	25	*	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	67	33	*	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	72	28	-	64	83
Recognised unions	83	17	1	386	581
All workplaces	71	29	*	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 5.8 cont.: Awareness of the right to work flexibly, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	71	29	-	38	58
Manufacturing	67	33	-	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[89]	[11]	[-]	6	23
Construction	71	29	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	62	38	-	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	69	31	-	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	74	21	4	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[83]	[17]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	76	24	*	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	92	8	-	49	85
Education	77	23	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	75	25	-	187	220
Other Community	63	36	1	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	84	16	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	77	23	-	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	76	24	-	121	126
East Midlands	67	33	-	117	119
West Midlands	72	27	1	113	126
South West	67	32	*	158	142
Eastern	69	31	-	144	142
London	70	29	1	185	183
South East	67	33	-	228	223
Wales	73	27	-	76	75
Scotland	69	30	1	154	152
All workplaces	71	29	*	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

6

Time off from work – employer provision of leave entitlements, eligibility and take-up

Introduction

In April 2003 a number of new regulations were introduced governing employee rights to time off from work. These were first set out in the Employment Act 2002 and they covered employee rights to maternity, paternity and adoption leave, along with the right to request to work flexibly, and a duty on employers to consider such requests seriously. Details of these changes were summarised in Chapter 1.

Fieldwork for the WLB2 study took place just prior to the new regulations coming into force. This was intentional, as one of the primary purposes of this study was to act as a benchmark against which changes resulting from this legislation could be measured.

This chapter presents details of employers' provision of maternity, parental and paternity leave arrangements, as well as their procedures for dealing with requests for emergency time off. In addition, eligibility for, and take-up of these leave entitlements is also presented.

Maternity leave

Provision of maternity rights beyond statutory minimum

Employers were asked whether they provided for their employees' maternity rights to an extent that went beyond current statutory requirements (pre-April 2003). This was in respect to three aspects of the regulations, and these were:

- the provision of maternity leave arrangements and benefits that include more than the 18 weeks statutory minimum maternity leave provision during which all rights except pay are maintained regardless of length of service;
- the provision of maternity leave arrangements and benefits that include giving women the entitlement to return to their job beyond 29 weeks after the birth; and,

- the provision of maternity leave arrangements and benefits that include giving women more maternity pay than is required by the law.

With the impending introduction of new legislation it appeared that many employers had already begun to take on board these rights. Two-thirds (68 per cent) already had some maternity provisions that went beyond the pre-April 2003 regulations. The most common of these was the right to return beyond 29 weeks after giving birth with three-fifths (59 per cent) providing this entitlement. A quarter (27 per cent) granted more than 18 weeks maternity leave with full rights being maintained and a fifth (22 per cent) gave maternity pay in excess of what was required by law.

In a small minority of workplaces (around 10 per cent), the respondent was not aware of the details pertaining to maternity rights as they existed at their establishment. Where the respondent was a Human Resources or Personnel specialist they were around three times less likely to say they did not know these details (around four per cent compared with around 12 per cent for non-specialists for each of the three issues).

As for who was providing these additional benefits, a strong association was evident between a number of the standard workplace characteristics (see Table 6.1). The larger the workplace, the more likely it was to provide any of these additional benefits, with the association being particularly strong with respect to the provision of additional maternity pay. With regard to this additional benefit, workplaces with 500 or more employees were almost four times more likely than those with five to nine employees (76 per cent compared with 19 per cent) to pay women on maternity leave more than the statutory minimum of £75 per week.

Aside from the right to return beyond 29 weeks after the birth of a child, where there was no difference, public sector workplaces were significantly more likely to provide additional maternity benefits than were private sector establishments. This difference held even after taking into account the size of the workplace.

Union presence appeared to be associated with a higher prevalence of additional maternity benefits. In part this was explained by the higher incidence of unions in the public sector. Nevertheless, even in private sector workplaces trade union presence was associated with improved rights for women on maternity leave. For example, where there was a recognised union, almost three-quarters of private sector workplaces (73 per cent) gave women the right to return beyond 29 weeks after the birth of a child compared with just half (54 per cent) where there were no unions. Similar differences applied with respect to paying women on maternity leave more than the statutory minimum of £75 per week (32 and 14 per cent respectively) and granting more than 18 weeks maternity leave with full rights being maintained (30 and 20 per cent respectively).

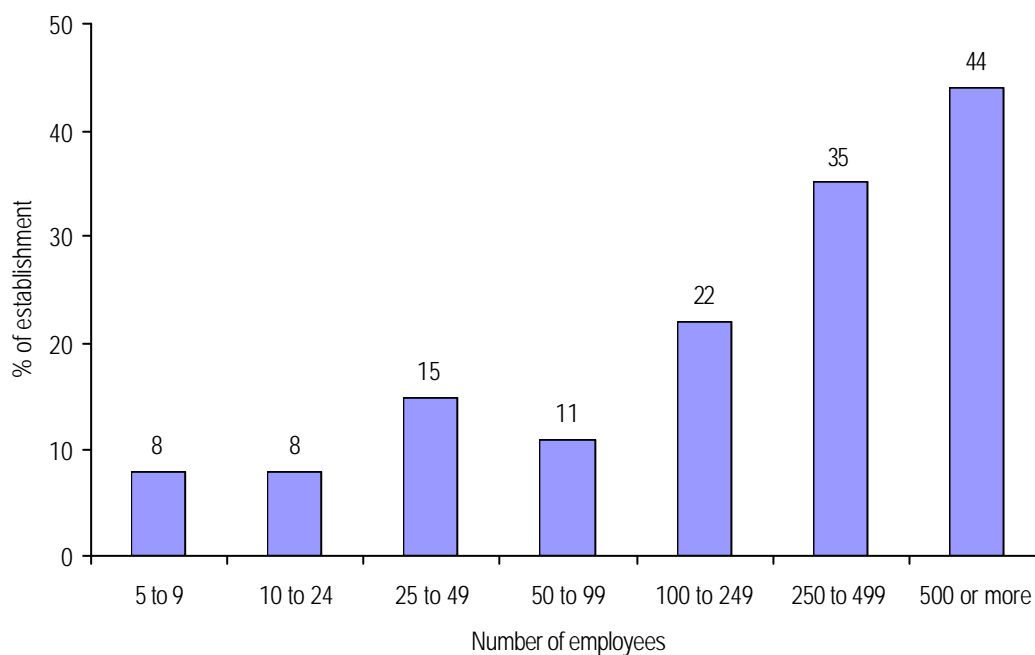
Both Manufacturing and Construction industries stand out for their lower than average provision of additional maternity rights. This did not necessarily come as a surprise, given that both are traditionally male dominated industries. However, even compared with other workplaces with similar gender structures,

these two industries had significantly lower levels of provision of these additional benefits.

Workplaces with a high density of female employees were not significantly more likely than other workplaces to provide additional maternity rights. Nor did there seem to be a relationship between the occupational structure at the establishment and these additional benefits. Only with respect to the provision of maternity pay beyond the statutory minimum were there differences according to the occupational structure at the workplace – workplaces with any professional or associate professional and technical employees were more likely than workplaces without employees in these occupations to provide this additional benefit. A quarter (27 per cent) of workplaces with either of these two occupations provided this additional benefit compared with under a fifth (17 per cent) that had neither of these types of employees.

Just one-in-ten (11 per cent) workplaces provided all three of these additional maternity benefits (see Table 6.1). As Figure 6.1 clearly illustrates, it was larger workplaces, particularly those with more than 100 employees that were significantly more likely to provide all three of these additional benefits. Public sector employers were three times more likely than private sector employers to provide all three, with the difference being slightly greater when comparing unionised with non-unionised workplaces. Fewer than one-in-twenty workplaces involved in Hotels and Restaurants, Construction and Manufacturing provided all three of these maternity benefits.

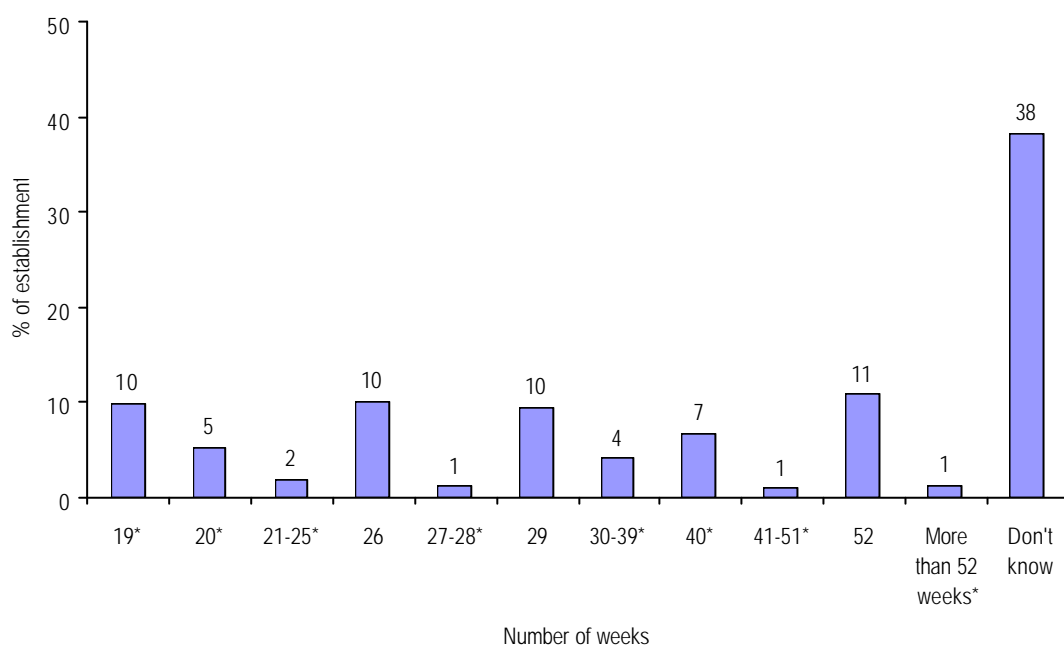
Figure 6.1: Provision of all three additional maternity benefits, by number of employees at the workplace



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Where it was reported that women could have additional maternity leave beyond the 18 weeks statutory requirement, employers were asked to say how many weeks were actually provided (Figure 6.2). A large proportion, around two-fifths (38 per cent), did not know how many were provided, and while it may be true that additional weeks were available to females, this casts some doubt as to whether additional benefits were actually available with respect to this issue. Similarly, around a tenth (10 per cent) reported that their additional benefits allowed for 19 weeks where full rights were maintained, which seems unlikely. Therefore, it is possible that the extent of additional maternity benefits with respect to this issue was overstated. In total, these problematic cases represented about half of the workplaces that reported having this additional benefit. It is likely, therefore, that the proportion of workplaces that provided more than 18 weeks leave where full rights were maintained was somewhere between 14 and 27 per cent.

Figure 6.2: Number of weeks maternity leave where full rights except pay were maintained regardless of length of service



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that provided more than 18 weeks maternity leave where full rights except pay were maintained.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 468 managers.

* The bases for these categories are small and the results should be interpreted with some caution.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Changes in the provision of maternity rights beyond statutory minimum

Other studies have estimated that somewhere around one-in-ten employers provided extended maternity rights³⁰. The 1996 Maternity Rights study (Callender *et al.*, 1997) found that 13 per cent of establishments that employed any women offered maternity provisions that went further than what was

³⁰ Compared to the WLB2 study, each of the studies referred to here asked slightly different questions to identify extended maternity rights, and asked different subsets of employers these questions. As a result any differences in estimates should be viewed with some caution.

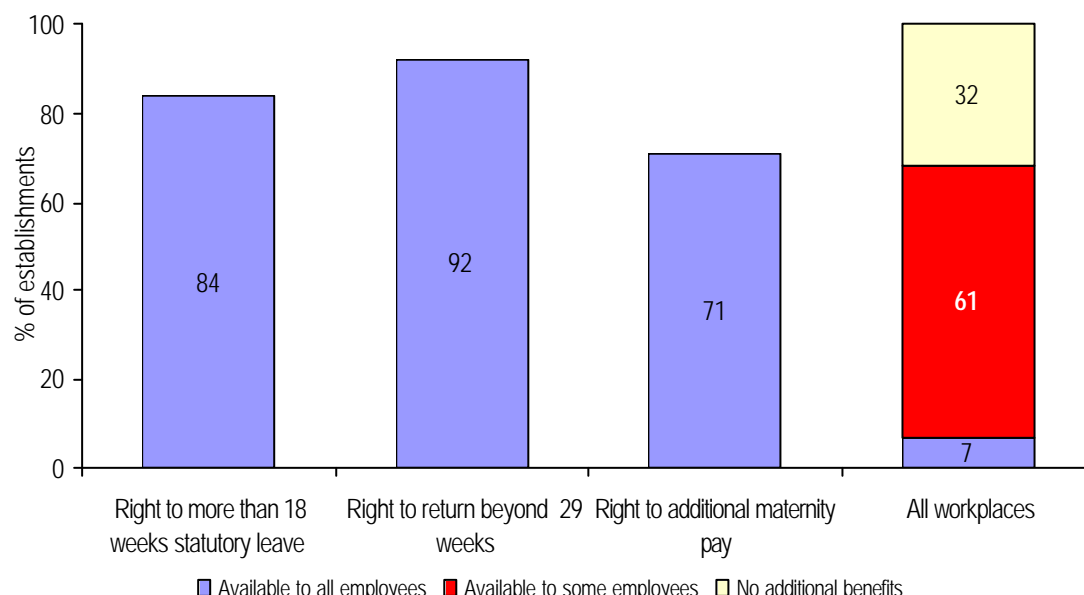
specified in the legislation at that time. A similar estimate (16 per cent) came from the WLB1 study, although it was thought that since this response was predicated on the respondent being aware of the exact details of maternity rights legislation, this underestimated the true extent of additional provision. The most recent comparable study, the DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000), provided a comparable figure to both these studies, with 14 per cent of establishments either having or intending to have arrangements that supplemented the minimum legal entitlements.

It appeared therefore that there had been a considerable increase in the provision of additional maternity rights over the past few years, from a little over one-in-ten workplaces providing any additional benefits to around two-thirds (68 per cent) of workplaces. Without any real evidence to suggest why this might be, it is probable that it reflects employers preparing themselves for the introduction of new maternity regulations that were to come into force from April 2003.

Eligibility for additional maternity entitlements

Where there were maternity benefits that went beyond statutory requirements, managers were asked whether these additional benefits applied equally to all employees. In a large majority of cases they did, as illustrated by Figure 6.3. The first three columns show the proportion of establishments where the mentioned additional benefit was available to *all* employees. The benefit most likely to be restricted to just some employees was the right to maternity pay that was more than the statutory minimum. Even here, less than a third (29 per cent) limited access to this entitlement.

Figure 6.3: Eligibility to receive additional maternity benefits



Base: For first three columns it is all establishments that provided the additional benefit mentioned. In column four it is all workplaces.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 465, 946, 450 and 1,509 managers for the respective columns.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

While it was rare to restrict eligibility, it was instructive to put these figures into some context. As a proportion of *all* workplaces³¹, fewer than one-in-ten (seven per cent) provided additional benefits that covered all three aspects and that were available to all their employees. A third (32 per cent) of all workplaces provided no additional maternity benefits, with the remainder (61 per cent) either placing some restrictions on the eligibility or providing either one or two of the benefits.

Where any employees were restricted from using any of these additional maternity benefits, employers were asked to describe the employees that were excluded. A large majority reported that it was employees who had only been at the establishment for a short period of time. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) gave this response. No other group of employees was mentioned by more than one-in-ten.

Take-up of additional maternity entitlements

Of the three-fifths (63 per cent) of workplaces that provided additional maternity leave beyond the statutory minimum (i.e. the right to more than 18 weeks leave with rights maintained except pay and/or the right to return beyond 29 weeks after the birth), just over a third (35 per cent or 22 per cent of all workplaces) reported that female employees usually took their full entitlement. Among the remaining workplaces, a third said that female employees would either not usually take this entitlement (14 per cent) or that it would depend (16 per cent). A further third (31 per cent or 20 per cent of all workplaces) reported that they currently had no female employees or that no females had been on maternity leave recently for them to make a judgement about what would happen³².

After excluding those workplaces with no recent experience of females on maternity leave or no female employees, there were very few differences across workplaces in terms of the take-up of this additional maternity leave. Small workplaces were just as likely as large workplaces to report that this leave was usually taken. Nor were there any significant variations between private and public sector workplaces or across industries.

Take-up of statutory maternity entitlements

With respect to the take-up of statutory maternity leave, very few workplaces reported that this leave was not usually taken in full. Assuming that employees in workplaces that provide additional maternity leave entitlements at least take their statutory leave, in just five per cent of workplaces did managers report that this leave was not usually taken³³.

Provision of maternity leave schemes

Employers were asked whether they provided either of the following arrangements which aim to support their employees when on maternity leave and on their return to work:

³¹ This includes workplaces that provided no additional maternity benefits.

³² Four per cent of managers said they did not know whether female employees took their full entitlement.

³³ This excludes workplaces with no female employees and those without recent experience of employees going on maternity leave.

- keep-in-touch schemes; or
- retraining schemes for when they return to work.

Fewer than half of workplaces provided either of these, with the keep-in-touch scheme the more popular of the two (Table 6.2). This scheme was more likely to be provided in larger workplaces, although the difference in provision between the smallest and largest workplaces (31 per cent and 47 per cent respectively) was somewhat smaller than one may have expected. This probably reflects the fact that keep-in-touch schemes can be operated relatively informally, which would suit smaller establishments. Public sector workplaces, those that were part of a larger organisation and those where unions were present, were all significantly more likely to have this scheme.

One-in-four (24 per cent) workplaces offered retraining for women returning from maternity leave (Table 6.2). This was more widespread among workplaces that were part of larger organisations compared with those that were single, standalone sites. And whereas there was no significant relationship between provision of this practice and workplace size, there was a strong (positive) relationship with organisational size. To illustrate this, workplaces that belonged to organisations with 1,000 or more employees were twice as likely as those with less than 100 employees to have provided such a scheme. This did not appear to be related to the sector the establishment was part of – private sector workplaces were as likely as their public sector equivalents to provide this arrangement.

Given their (relatively) low density of female employment, it was not surprising that these practices were rarely cited in the Construction and Manufacturing industries.

Paternity leave

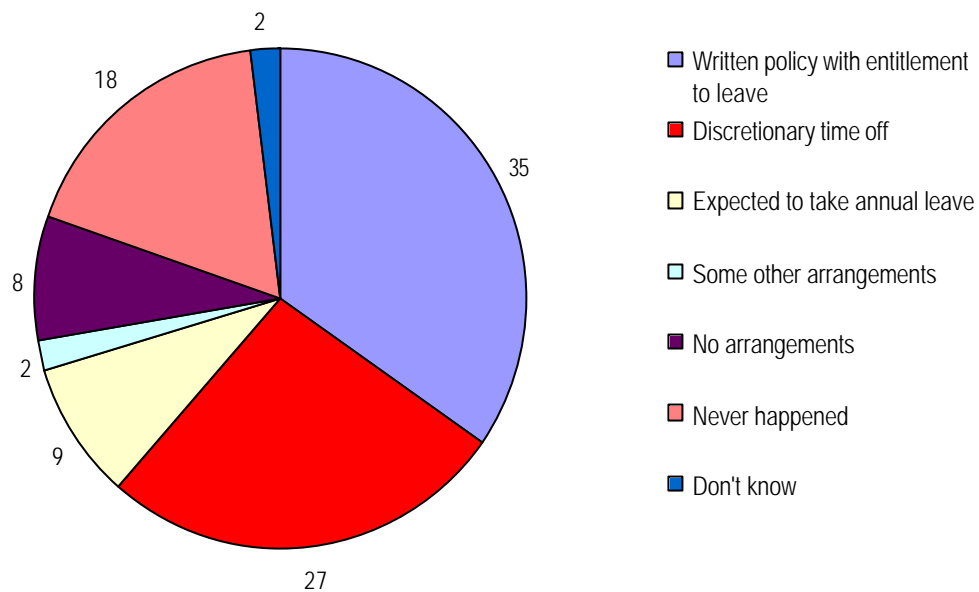
Provision of paternity leave

Prior to April 2003 there was no separate and specific legal entitlement to paternity leave; therefore policies in this area were at the discretion of the employer. To discover what arrangements were currently in place employers were asked the following:

‘What arrangements, if any, are presently available for fathers working at this establishment to take time off around the birth of a child? Is there a written policy giving entitlement to a specific period of leave or discretionary time off, are they expected to arrange to take annual leave, or is there some other arrangement?’

Figure 6.4 shows the distribution of these arrangements and reveals that the most common practice was for employers to set out their employees’ paternity leave arrangements in a written document. Around a third (35 per cent) dealt with this situation in this manner, with a further quarter (27 per cent) reporting that they allowed discretionary time off. Less than one-in-ten (eight per cent) said they had no arrangements, although this did not necessarily mean that they would refuse time off.

Figure 6.4: Arrangements to allow fathers to take time off after the birth of a child



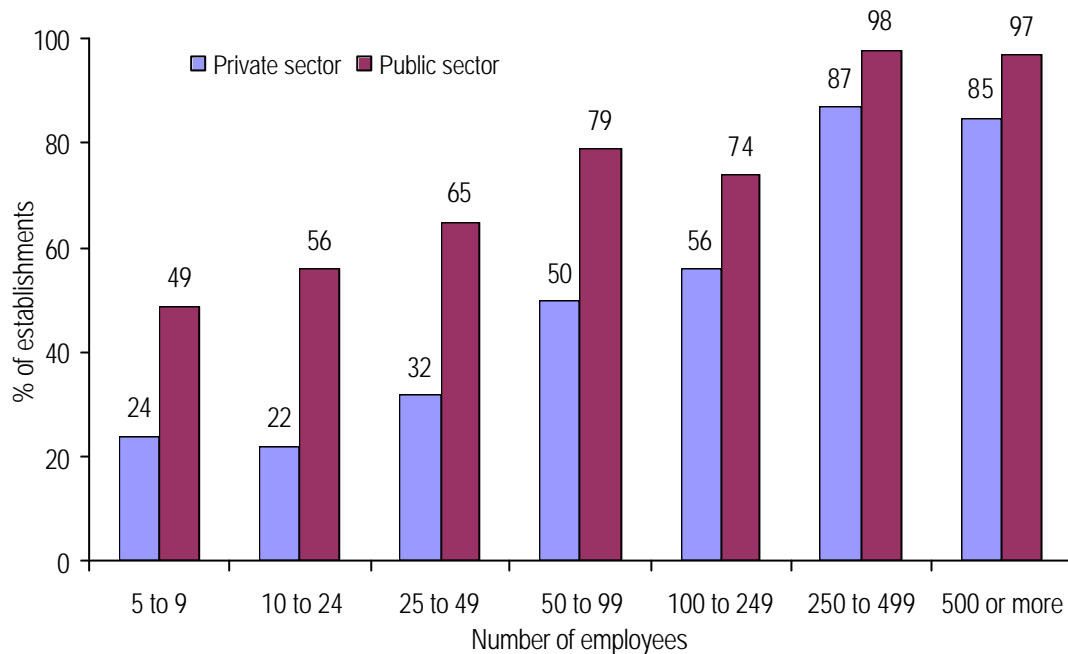
Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.3 shows the variation in employers' treatment of paternity leave across workplaces. Concentrating on the most formal of these arrangements – the written policy – this was much more likely to be found in larger workplaces. Indeed, workplaces with 250 or more employees were over three times more likely to have such an arrangement than those with fewer than 25 employees (91 and 27 per cent respectively). Some of this association was explained by the much higher incidence of written policies in the public sector (which tend to be larger establishments) compared with the private sector (62 and 28 per cent respectively).

Nevertheless, even among private sector workplaces, there were large discrepancies in the provision of this practice between small and large workplaces (see Figure 6.5). It appeared that it was small workplaces, with fewer than 25 employees, and that were not part of a larger organisation, that were the least likely to have such a formal arrangement, with just one-in-ten (nine per cent) of these having a written document that covers paternity leave. In the absence of this practice, either they tended to deal with the situation on a discretionary basis (36 per cent), or they reported that the situation had not occurred (28 per cent).

Hotels and Restaurants, Manufacturing and the Construction industry were the least likely to report having a written document covering paternity leave.

Figure 6.5: Provision of a written policy giving entitlement to a specific period of paternity leave, by number of employees at the workplace and by sector

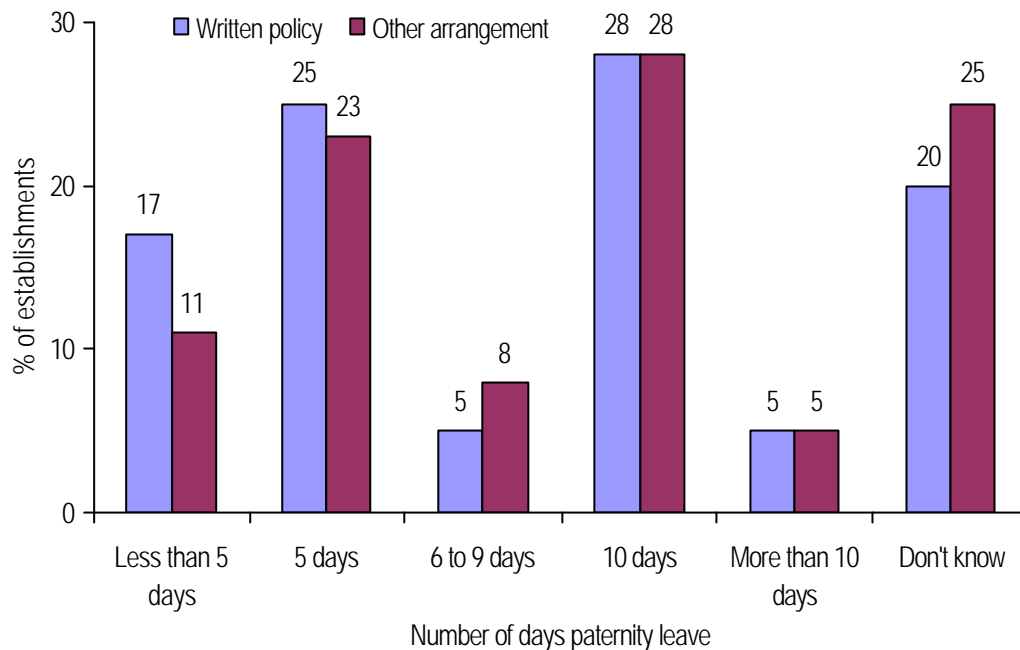


Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Where there was a written policy, employers were asked to report the number of days paternity leave specified by that policy. In the absence of such arrangements, employers were asked to give the 'typical' number of days leave they would expect a father of a new-born baby to take off. Figure 6.6 shows little difference according to whether the practice had been formalised. The median number of days was marginally higher in workplaces where arrangements other than a written policy covered this time off (seven days compared with five).

There was also little variation in the median number of days paternity leave across different types of workplaces (see Table 6.4).

Figure 6.6: Number of days paternity leave provided, by type of arrangement



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 711 managers that reported a written policy covering paternity leave and 798 managers who were asked how many days leave they would expect a father of a newborn would take off.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

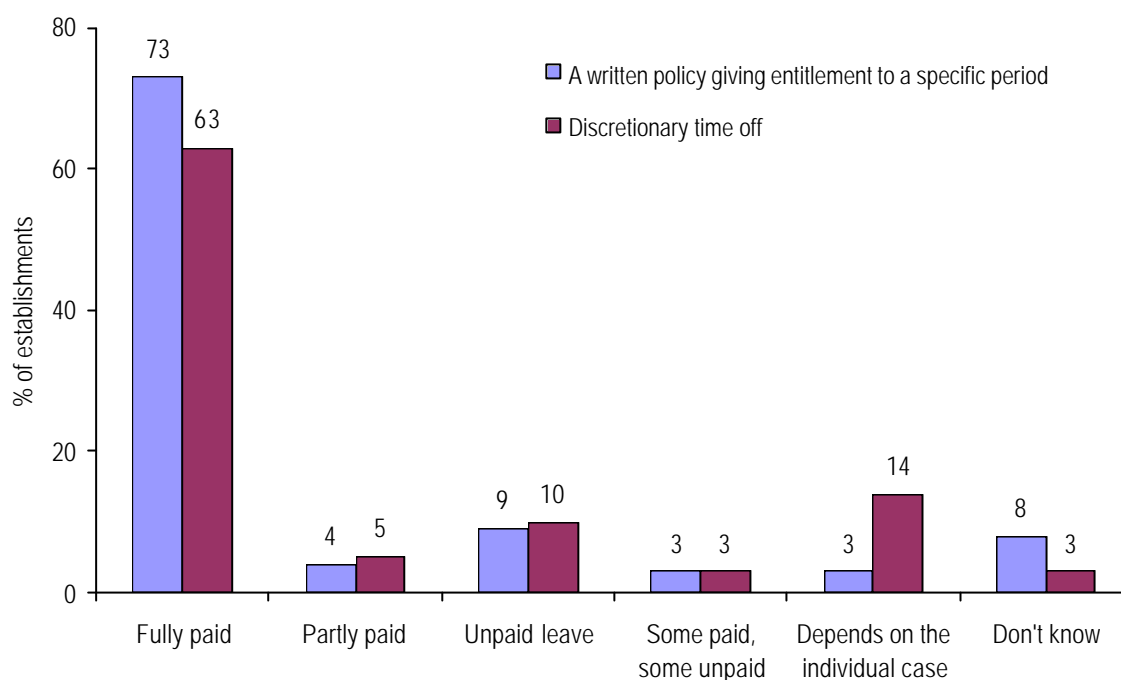
In a majority (69 per cent) of workplaces where there was either a written policy (73 per cent) or some discretionary arrangement (63 per cent), paternity leave was fully paid. It was unpaid in around a tenth (10 per cent) of these establishments, while in a further four per cent it was partly paid. Of the remaining establishments, whether or not the leave was paid was said to depend on the individual case (eight per cent) or some of the leave was paid while some was unpaid (three per cent). In a further six per cent of workplaces the respondent was unable to say what pay arrangements applied to this situation.

Paternity leave that was set out in a written policy was more likely to be fully paid than in circumstances where it was decided on a discretionary basis (see Figure 6.7). The use of discretion in operating this leave arrangement was also reflected in how it was paid, as these establishments were considerably more likely to report that decisions on the leave being paid would depend on the individual circumstances.

Fully paid leave was more common among public sector workplaces (85 per cent) than in the private sector (69 per cent).

Overall, a third of workplaces (30 per cent) provided fully paid paternity leave of five days or more.

Figure 6.7: Whether paternity leave was paid, by type of arrangement



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees where paternity leave was covered by a written policy or discretionary time off was granted. **Notes:** Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,052 managers. **Source:** WLB2 (2003).

Changes in the provision of paternity leave

Compared with the findings from earlier surveys there appeared to have been a significant increase in the provision of formal arrangements covering paternity leave. The most comparable results were from the DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000)³⁴ which estimated that nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of workplaces had a written policy, which means that the provision of this entitlement through a written policy had approximately doubled in three years. This increase was almost entirely accounted for by a fall in the incidence of discretionary arrangements (reduced from 36 to 27 per cent) and a reduction in the proportion of workplaces with no arrangements (reduced from 16 to eight per cent)³⁵.

There also appeared to have been a similar increase in the incidence of fully paid paternity leave. Where time off was allowed, the DTI Employers' Survey on Support for Working Parents (2000) estimated that it was fully paid in just over half of these cases (55 per cent), compared with current estimates of just over two-thirds (69 per cent).

³⁴ The 1996 PSI Maternity Rights Study found that 24 per cent of establishments had arrangements that approximated to formal paternity leave, while the WLB1 survey estimated the proportion to be 44 per cent. In both cases there were sufficient differences in the question wording to doubt the validity of any comparisons with these studies.

³⁵ It was not possible to carry out more detailed analysis of where the changes had occurred without access to the DTI survey.

Eligibility to take paternity leave

It was extremely rare for employers to restrict the employees who were eligible to take paternity leave. Just one-in-25 (four per cent) did and this proportion did not vary according to whether there were formal or discretionary arrangements covering this type of leave. This was similar to the estimates reported in the DTI Employers' Survey on Support for Working Parents (2000).

Take-up of paternity leave

One-in-five (22 per cent) workplaces had at least one male employees who had taken paternity leave in the 12 months prior to the interview. Table 6.5 shows that across most workplaces there were few significant differences in the take-up of this leave, aside from an obvious association with workplace size. Larger workplaces are understandably more likely than smaller workplaces to have at least one male employee whose partner is having a baby. Controlling for differences in the size of workplaces accounts for most of the variation in take-up across sectors, industries and regions.

Workplaces with a written policy covering paternity leave had similar take-up rates to all other workplaces, but only after allowing for the effects of workplace size.

In terms of the number of employees who took paternity leave, in most cases it was either one (63 per cent) or two (21 per cent) employees³⁶. Translating this into an aggregate figure for all workplaces, just seven per cent of workplaces reported having two or more employees on paternity leave in the past year.

Parental leave

Provision of parental leave

Presently and at the time of the fieldwork for this study employees with one year's continuous service are entitled to 13 weeks unpaid leave to look after each child up until the child's fifth birthday or 18 weeks until the child is 18 for parents of disabled children. This has to be taken in one-week blocks, unless there is a separate arrangement agreed between employers and employees.

Less than half (45 per cent) of establishments with five or more employees had a written policy covering parental leave. In the absence of such a policy, most employers reported that they dealt with requests for parental leave on an ad hoc basis (49 per cent), as opposed to having some set procedure for dealing with requests (four per cent).

Table 6.6 shows how the incidence of written policies covering parental leave varied across workplaces. Those that were more likely to have a written policy included:

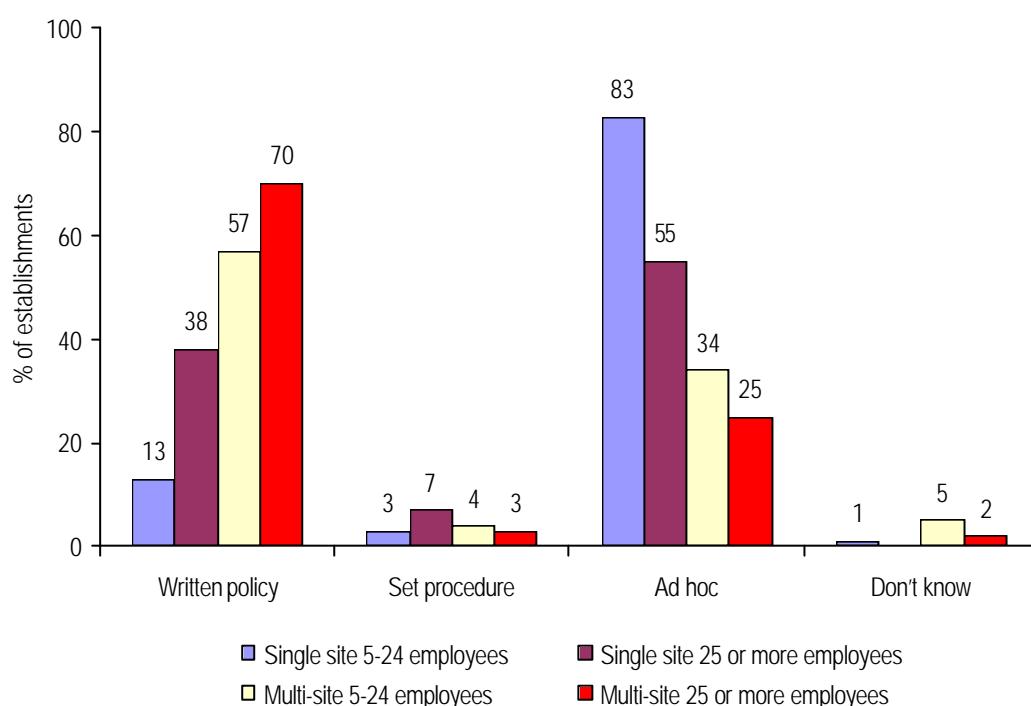
- larger workplaces, and those that belonged to large organisations;
- public sector workplaces; and
- workplaces with a recognised trade union.

³⁶ This is of workplaces that have at least some employees on paternity leave.

Small independent establishments stand out for not formalising their parental leave arrangements. Just over a tenth of these had a written policy compared with almost three-fifths of comparably sized workplaces that were part of larger organisations (see Figure 6.8).

Written policies were less frequently provided by workplaces in the Manufacturing and Construction industries.

Figure 6.8: Arrangements for dealing with parental leave, by workplace size and organisational structure



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

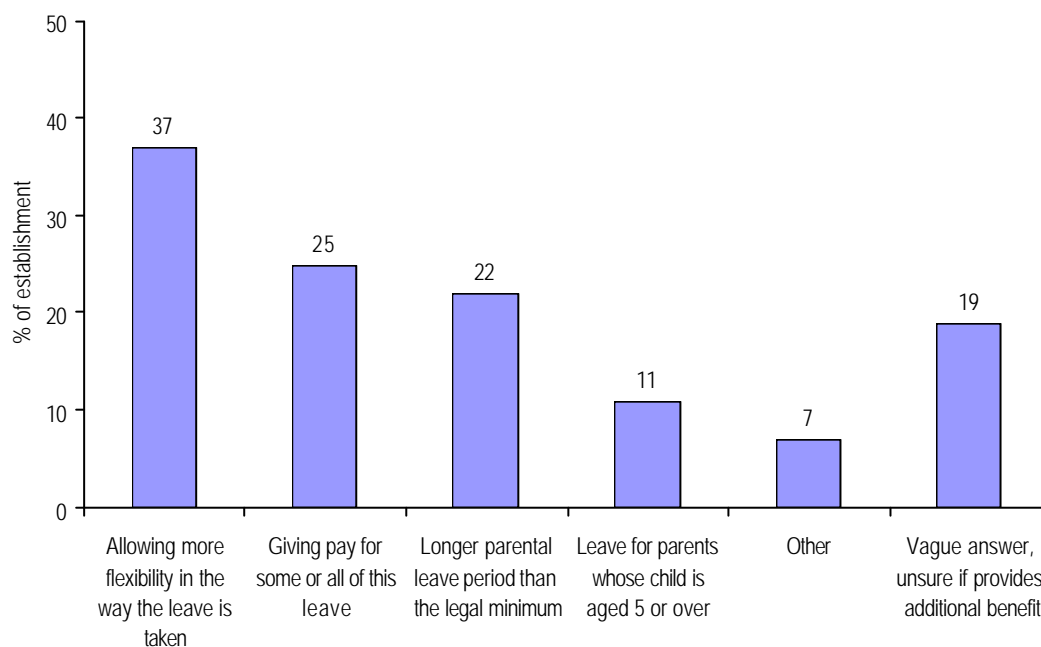
All employers were asked to state whether their parental leave arrangements went beyond statutory requirements, and just over one-in-ten (11 per cent) said that they did.

Table 6.7 shows how the provision of any additional entitlements varied across workplaces. There did not appear to be any clear relationship between the provision of parental leave beyond the statutory requirements and most of the usual defining characteristics of a workplace. Provision was marginally higher in the public sector and among workplaces that belonged to very large organisations. Whilst the largest workplaces had significantly higher levels of provision, there was no consistent (i.e. linear) relationship between the size of the workplace and whether additional parental leave rights were provided. Public Administration stands out among industries for having a higher proportion of workplaces providing this leave arrangement beyond the legal minimum.

Workplaces with a written policy covering parental leave were only marginally more likely than those that dealt with this leave either by using a set procedure or in some ad hoc manner to have any extension to the statutory minimum entitlements (15, three and nine per cent respectively)³⁷.

Where there were any additional parental leave entitlements employers were asked to describe what they were. Allowing greater flexibility in the way the leave was taken was the most common response, with almost two-fifths (37 per cent) reporting this additional entitlement (see Figure 6.9). Other ways in which extensions were being made to the statutory requirements included fully or partly paying the employee on parental leave (25 per cent), extending the length of the leave period (22 per cent) and allowing parents with children aged five or over to take parental leave (11 per cent).

Figure 6.9: Type of additional parental leave entitlements



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided parental leave beyond the statutory requirements.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 196 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Some of the responses to this description of the ways in which employers were extending parental leave entitlements suggested that the respondent did not know what parental leave was and that in all likelihood, there was no extension of the statutory rights. Almost a fifth of the responses did not appear to be related to parental leave. Often they would refer to other types of leave, with time off to deal with emergencies the most common response. Apart from saying something about employers' awareness of what parental leave is, this also suggested that the proportion of employers providing additional parental leave entitlements was somewhat lower than 11 per cent. Assuming all the

³⁷ This was based on the adjusted estimate of provision of additional parental leave beyond the statutory minimum (see below for explanation of this). Using the unadjusted response, the respective figures are 12, seven and three per cent.

employers that gave a vague response or one that was not related to parental leave did not in fact provide additional parental leave entitlements, the estimate falls to just under one-in-ten (nine per cent) employers. Using this new definition appeared to have no or little impact on how the provision of these additional benefits varied across different workplaces (see Table 6.7).

Changes in the provision of parental leave beyond statutory minimum

The WLB1 survey found that around 14 per cent of establishments had arrangements that went beyond the statutory minimum requirements for parental leave. As stated previously, this may have been an underestimate of the true figure, since only managers that were aware of the details of the regulations were asked whether they provided any additional entitlements. The DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000) provided a lower estimate, with five per cent of workplaces at that time having arrangements that went beyond the statutory minimum, with a further seven per cent stating that they intended to introduce additional benefits in the near future.

With the current survey estimating provision to be somewhere between nine and 11 per cent, it appeared that there had been no trend to increase parental leave entitlements from what was introduced in December 1999.

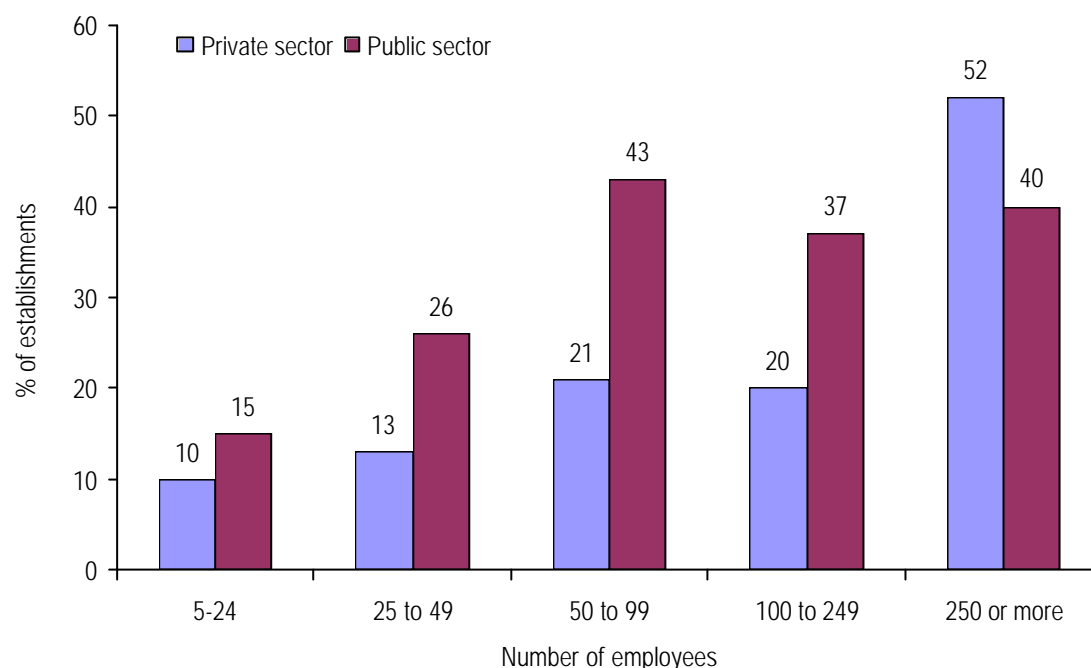
Eligibility to take up additional parental leave

Restrictions on eligibility to take up any additional parental leave arrangements were rare. Just four per cent of workplaces restricted eligibility. There was little to distinguish workplaces that restricted eligibility from all other workplaces.

Take-up of parental leave

One-in-seven (14 per cent) workplaces had at least one employee who had taken parental leave in the 12 months prior to the interview. Table 6.8 shows that two factors appear closely associated with take-up of this leave – workplace size and sector. As with paternity leave, it was not surprising that larger workplaces were more likely than smaller workplaces to have had at least one employee who took this leave, simply because of the weight of numbers. With respect to the public and private sectors, significant differences in take-up were evident even after controlling for the association between workplace size and take-up. As Figure 6.10 shows, in workplaces with less than 250 employees, public sector establishments were around twice as likely to have had any employees on parental leave compared with similar sized workplaces in the private sector. However, for larger workplaces, the take-up of parental leave was higher in the private sector.

Figure 6.10: Take-up of parental leave, by number of employees at the workplace and by sector



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Workplaces with a written policy covering parental leave had similar take-up rates to all other workplaces, and there did not appear to be an association between the density of females at the establishment and take-up rates.

In terms of the number of employees taking parental leave, as with paternity leave, it was mostly either one (40 per cent) or two (24 per cent) employees³⁸. A further 12 per cent had three employees take this leave, while in seven per cent of cases managers were unable to provide an estimate. Translating this into an aggregate figure for all workplaces, just nine per cent of workplaces reported having two or more employees on parental leave in the past year.

Time off for dependants

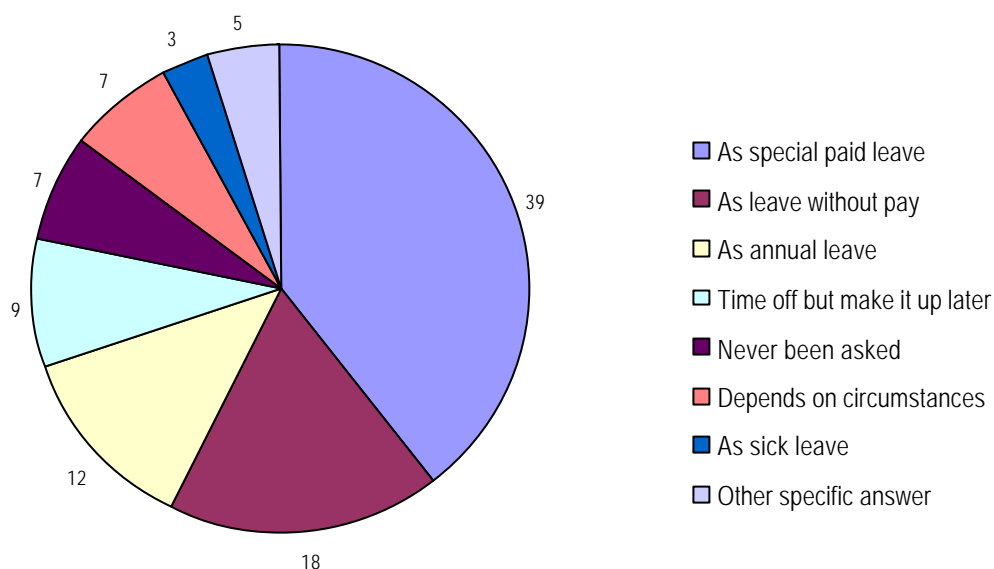
Provision of emergency time off for dependants

Under regulations introduced on the 15 December 1999, employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant. Even prior to this legislation, most employers allowed their employees to take this time off and in some cases the leave was paid for (Cully *et al.*, 1999). Current arrangements for dealing with this type of leave vary considerably. The most common way was through the provision of special paid leave, and around two-fifths (39 per cent) of employers had such an arrangement (see Figure 6.11). This arrangement covered approximately 50 per cent of all employees in workplaces with five or

³⁸ This was of workplaces that have at least some employees on parental leave.

more employees. Just under a fifth reported that this leave was provided unpaid, while just over a tenth said the employee would have to take annual leave to cover these situations.

Figure 6.11: Method of dealing with time off for emergencies



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

The frequency of special paid leave to cover time off for dependants varied considerably across workplaces (see Table 6.9). There were large differences across sectors, with public sector workplaces almost twice as likely as those in the private sector to provide paid leave. In the absence of this leave, employees in private sector workplaces tended to cover these situations either by taking annual leave or having leave without pay. Differences in the provision of paid leave were relatively small according to the size of the workplace – apart from comparisons between the smallest and largest workplaces – even after allowing for the sector the workplace was in.

Workplaces located in the Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade and Hotels and Restaurants industries were significantly less likely to provide special paid leave than were workplaces in other industries. The latter industry stands out for a particularly high incidence of employees having to take leave without pay to cover these situations. Approximately twice as many employers in the Hotels and Restaurants industry expected their employees to deal with emergencies in this way compared with the average for all workplaces.

Just over two-fifths (44 per cent) of workplaces had a written policy that covered emergency time off for dependants. Almost twice as many public sector workplaces had a written policy, compared with private sector workplaces (72 and 37 per cent respectively). Larger workplaces, as has been shown elsewhere, were much more likely to have formalised these arrangements – over nine-tenths (93 per cent) of workplaces with 500 or more employees had

a written policy compared with around a third (37 per cent) with less than 25 employees. However, among small workplaces with fewer than 25 employees, those that were part of much larger organisations were significantly more likely to have a written policy than those that were standalone workplaces (45 and 16 per cent respectively). Workplaces involved in Manufacturing (24 per cent), Construction (25 per cent) and Hotels and Restaurants (27 per cent) all were significantly less likely than were workplaces in other industries to have a written policy.

Having a written policy did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with the provision of special paid leave. Where there was a written policy, just under a half (46 per cent) of these workplaces had special paid leave. The incidence of paid leave was only marginally lower (34 per cent) where the arrangements had not been formalised in a written document.

In a large majority of cases (72 per cent) where there was provision for special paid leave, the leave was fully paid. Partly paid leave was rare (three per cent), with the remaining workplaces (23 per cent) reporting that payment would depend on the individual circumstances behind the request for emergency time off. These figures translate to just over a quarter (28 per cent) of all workplaces providing special leave that is fully paid to cover emergency time off for dependants. Table 6.10 shows how this varied across workplaces, and the pattern basically replicated the variation in the provision of the leave itself (irrespective of whether it was fully paid).

Changes in the provision of emergency time off for dependants³⁹

The WERS98 study (Cully *et al.*, 1999) reported that just under a quarter (24 per cent) of workplaces with 10 or more employees provided special paid leave. Excluding workplaces with fewer than 10 employees, the estimates from the WLB2 study were significantly higher at just over two-fifths (42 per cent).

Another estimate taken from the DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000) confirmed this change. That study estimated that a quarter (24 per cent) of workplaces with five or more employees provided paid leave for such emergencies, which is 15 percentage points below the WLB2 figure. As with the WLB2 study, the DTI survey found that in most cases the leave, where provided, was fully paid. In total just over a fifth (22 per cent) of all workplaces provided fully paid leave for emergency time off in 2000 compared with 28 per cent in 2003.

There also appeared to have been an increase in the formalisation of emergency time off for dependants. The DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000) estimated that under a third (30 per cent) of workplaces had a written policy covering this type of leave, whereas the WLB2 survey showed that just over two-fifths (44 per cent) had formalised their arrangements in this way.

³⁹ Comparisons with the WLB1 study were not made as differences in the method of collecting information about the provision of emergency time off for dependants were sufficient to invalidate any observed changes.

Eligibility to take up emergency time off for dependants

In workplaces where special paid leave was provided, it was extremely rare for there to be any restrictions on who was eligible to take up these arrangements. Just three per cent had eligibility criteria. It was also found in the DTI Survey of Employers' Support for Working Parents (2000) that paid time off was, in the majority of cases, available to all employees at the workplace.

Awareness of new and existing regulations covering time off from work⁴⁰

As of April 2003, a number of new regulations were introduced governing employee time off from work. Prior to their introduction, the sponsors of this study, the DTI, wished to gauge the extent to which employers were aware of these new regulations. With this knowledge they would be better placed to identify which groups, if any, needed to be targeted. Future campaigns to raise awareness could then be designed in a more strategic manner. Why is awareness important? Basically because there is a strongly held view that awareness is closely related to the take-up of employment rights.

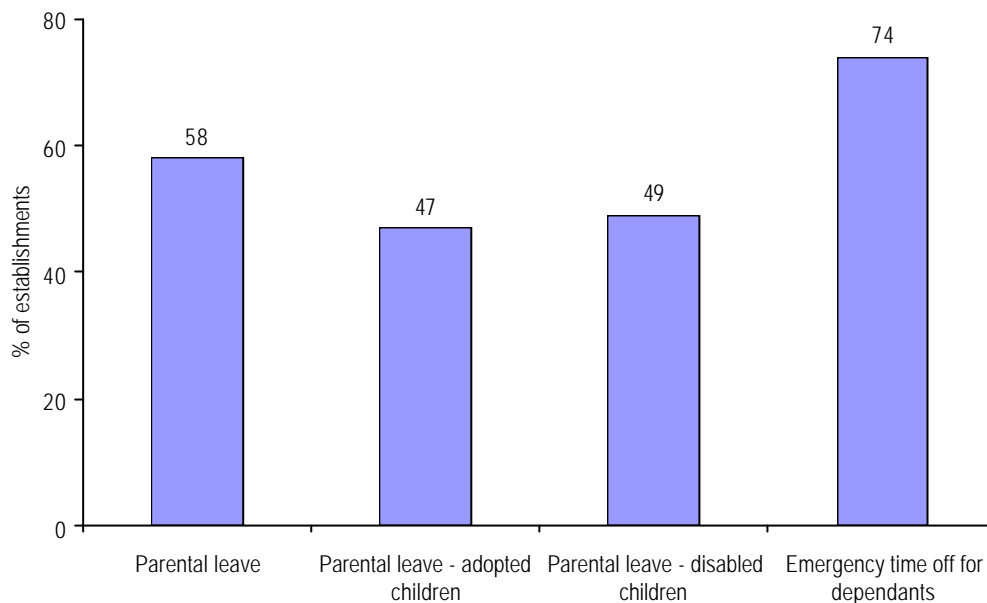
This study also presented the opportunity to assess awareness of existing regulations. Specifically there was an interest in measuring the extent to which employers were aware of existing regulations on the following:

- parental leave including that it covered parents with adopted children and disabled children; and,
- time off for dependants.

Somewhere between a half and three quarters of all employers were aware of these existing regulations (Figure 6.12). Awareness was highest with respect to the employee right to take time off to look after a dependant in an emergency situation (74 per cent). A majority of employers (58 per cent) were also aware of an employee's right to parental leave. However, they were less familiar with the extension of parental leave to cover parents of adopted children and to cover parents of disabled children. The higher awareness regarding the first two was probably associated with the higher frequency with which employers encounter these situations vis-à-vis parental leave to cover parents of adopted children and parents of disabled children.

⁴⁰ 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.

Figure 6.12: Awareness of existing regulations governing time off



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Across all four existing entitlements, larger workplaces and workplaces that were part of large organisations, those within the public sector and those workplaces with a union presence were the most likely to display higher levels of awareness regarding these regulations (see Table 6.11). It is the smaller, independent workplaces that represent a challenge with regard to awareness and consequently the take-up of employment rights. For each of the existing entitlements, significantly lower levels of awareness were reported in these establishments (the respective awareness figures being 39, 26, 32 and 63 per cent).

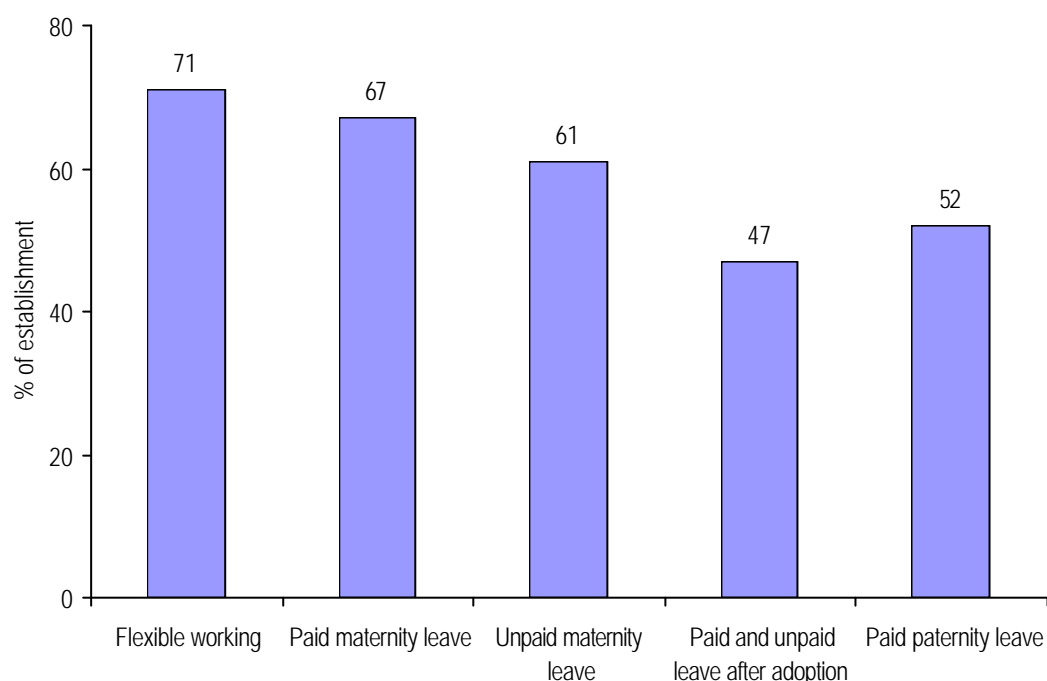
Awareness regarding emergency time off for dependants was universally high throughout industries. However, there was more variation in awareness regarding the other entitlements. Awareness was generally greatest in the Public Administration and Defence industry, and lowest in the Construction and Hotels and Restaurants industries.

In addition to awareness surrounding existing regulations, employers were also asked to indicate whether they were aware of the new employment rights that were to come into effect from April 2003. This new legislation covered the following rights:

- right to request to work flexibly;
- 26 weeks ordinary (paid) maternity leave for all women;
- additional 26 weeks unpaid maternity leave;
- paid and unpaid leave for parents of adopted children; and
- paid paternity leave.

Nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) of all employers were aware of the right to request to work flexibly (see Figure 6.13). More than six in ten employers were aware of the new regulations regarding both paid and unpaid maternity leave. Lower levels of awareness were reported for paid paternity leave (52 per cent) and paid and unpaid leave after adoption (47 per cent). Overall, nearly 90 per cent of employers were aware of at least one of the new regulations (86 per cent), while a third (33 per cent) were aware of all five new aspects of legislation.

Figure 6.13: Awareness of new regulations governing time off

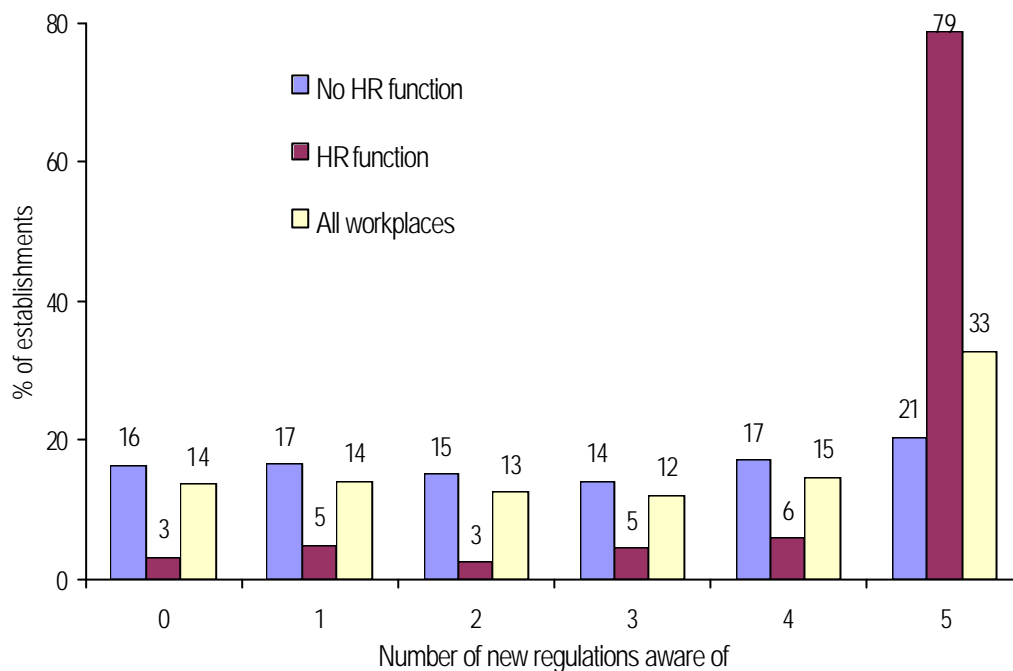


Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Workplaces displaying higher awareness of the forthcoming legislation shared similar characteristics to those with higher awareness of existing regulations (see Table 6.12). Again, it was larger workplaces and those that were part of a larger organisation, those in the public sector and those with union presence that showed the highest levels of awareness of the new employee entitlements. Across industries, it was workplaces involved in Public Administration and Defence that had the highest levels of awareness of the new rights.

Where there was evidence of a personnel or human resources specialist at the workplace, levels of awareness were significantly higher than in other workplaces (see Figure 6.14). In almost four-fifths (79 per cent) of workplaces with such a specialist, all five new regulations were known about compared with just a fifth (21 per cent) where there was no specialist human resources or personnel function. This clearly indicates where the gap in awareness was.

Figure 6.14: Awareness of new regulations governing time off and right to work flexibly by presence of a human resources function at the workplace



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Other leave arrangements

Provision of other types of leave arrangements

Aside from the leave arrangements already described, employers were also asked whether they provided any of the following: career breaks, bereavement leave or study leave. Bereavement leave was most common, with almost nine-tenths (88 per cent) providing this. Around half (52 per cent) provided study leave and a quarter (24 per cent) provided career breaks.

Across workplaces there were a number of differences in the provision of both careers breaks and study leave (see Table 6.13). Provision of both these leave arrangements tended to increase the larger the workplace and the larger the organisation which the workplace was part of. Public sector employers were twice as likely as their private sector counterparts to provide either career breaks or study leave.

Conclusion

In this chapter details were presented of employers' provision of maternity, parental and paternity leave arrangements, as well as their procedures for dealing with requests for emergency time off. In addition, it looked at employee eligibility and take-up of these leave entitlements. It also examined employers' levels of awareness of existing and forthcoming rights covering time off from work and flexible working.

There was some reporting of employers providing leave arrangements that went beyond statutory requirements. Around two-thirds of employers provided at least one additional maternity benefit, approximately one-in-ten extended their parental leave rights beyond statutory requirements and around a quarter gave fully paid time off to deal with emergencies involving dependants. In the case of maternity leave these extensions brought many workplaces at least in line with changes to employment rights that were to come into effect from 6 April 2003. This was reflected in the large changes that have been discovered between this study and other comparable studies.

In most cases the additional leave arrangements described by employers were available to all their employees. Only on the issue of maternity pay were there significant numbers of employers restricting eligibility.

Employers generally showed a high degree of awareness of the employment rights they were asked about. In most cases at least half of the employers knew of these rights, with awareness being slightly higher with respect to the new rights, which is encouraging. However, the seemingly high levels of reported awareness hid the fact that among non-human resources or personnel specialists, awareness was much lower. The importance of this depends on the relationship between awareness and take-up of rights.

Table 6.1: Provision of additional maternity rights, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>					
	Right to more than 18 weeks statutory leave (%)	Right to return beyond 29 weeks (%)	Right to additional maternity pay (%)	All three (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	23	51	19	8	486	295
10 to 24 employees	23	59	18	8	571	444
25 to 49 employees	34	69	26	15	249	229
50 to 99 employees	30	68	28	11	107	143
100 to 249 employees	37	69	38	22	65	178
250 to 499 employees	57	81	56	35	19	80
500 or more employees	52	73	76	44	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	21	56	16	5	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	23	60	23	12	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	34	56	32	16	246	317
10,000 or more	40	71	39	25	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	22	58	17	7	1,210	1,102
Public sector	46	66	44	24	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	19	55	14	5	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	31	62	27	14	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	20	55	14	5	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	43	81	38	29	64	83
Recognised unions	42	68	42	22	386	581
All workplaces	27	59	22	11	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.1 cont.: Provision of additional maternity rights, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>					
	Right to more than 18 weeks statutory leave (%)	Right to return beyond 29 weeks (%)	Right to additional maternity pay (%)	All three (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	14	50	21	6	38	58
Manufacturing	16	54	15	5	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[26]	[60]	[38]	[12]	6	23
Construction	15	48	6	3	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	26	61	13	7	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	18	59	10	2	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	40	66	42	26	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[30]	[67]	[37]	[16]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	23	57	22	11	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	51	68	62	38	49	85
Education	48	61	36	19	136	182
Health and Social Work	28	65	27	12	187	220
Other Community	23	58	22	12	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	24	57	12	10	55	60
North West and Merseyside	27	70	27	14	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	33	58	29	10	121	126
East Midlands	27	59	13	6	117	119
West Midlands	29	60	17	7	113	126
South West	25	56	18	9	158	142
Eastern	29	64	22	10	144	142
London	25	57	27	15	185	183
South East	20	55	16	7	228	223
Wales	36	60	23	13	76	75
Scotland	25	59	34	15	154	152
All workplaces	27	59	22	11	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.2: Provision of other maternity arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Keep in touch scheme (%)	Retraining scheme (%)	None of these (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	31	20	58	4	486	295
10 to 24 employees	31	24	56	4	571	444
25 to 49 employees	43	27	49	2	249	229
50 to 99 employees	42	21	53	3	107	143
100 to 249 employees	49	34	42	-	65	178
250 to 499 employees	53	26	42	*	19	80
500 or more employees	47	46	38	-	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	26	18	66	2	741	541
100 to less than 1000	33	22	52	6	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	50	29	35	5	246	317
10,000 or more	47	39	40	4	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	32	23	57	4	1,210	1,102
Public sector	46	27	46	2	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	27	17	66	2	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	40	28	47	4	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	29	20	61	3	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	49	22	42	3	64	83
Recognised unions	48	33	40	3	386	581
All workplaces	35	24	54	3	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.2 cont.: Provision of other maternity arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Keep in touch scheme (%)	Retraining scheme (%)	None of these (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	24	4	66	9	38	58
Manufacturing	20	10	75	2	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[56]	[16]	[26]	[8]	6	23
Construction	18	10	71	6	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	34	25	51	3	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	40	33	48	1	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	33	29	52	6	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[65]	[53]	[22]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	37	23	56	4	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	45	30	51	-	49	85
Education	47	25	47	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	42	27	47	3	187	220
Other Community	27	24	59	7	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	33	18	54	6	55	60
North West and Merseyside	42	27	51	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	40	25	48	2	121	126
East Midlands	34	28	50	5	117	119
West Midlands	30	13	64	2	113	126
South West	41	30	50	3	158	142
Eastern	27	24	62	2	144	142
London	41	26	49	3	185	183
South East	33	19	55	5	228	223
Wales	32	26	51	4	76	75
Scotland	27	21	64	4	154	152
All workplaces	35	24	54	3	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.3: Arrangements to allow fathers to take time off after the birth of a child, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>								
	Written policy giving entitlement to a specific period (%)	Discretionary time off (%)	Expected to arrange to take annual leave (%)	Some other arrangement (%)	No arrangements (%)	Never happened (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment									
5 to 9 employees	28	27	11	2	9	20	3	486	295
10 to 24 employees	27	31	8	2	8	22	2	571	444
25 to 49 employees	43	26	11	1	5	14	1	249	229
50 to 99 employees	57	23	5	6	6	3	1	107	143
100 to 249 employees	61	20	7	1	4	5	2	65	178
250 to 499 employees	92	4	3	-	1	-	*	19	80
500 or more employees	91	2	3	4	*	-	-	13	140
Size of organisation									
Less than 100	13	38	11	2	11	24	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	44	22	12	4	6	10	2	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	65	13	8	*	3	5	5	246	317
10,000 or more	70	13	2	2	-	11	2	176	232
Ownership									
Private sector	28	31	11	2	9	17	2	1,210	1,102
Public sector	62	13	1	1	3	18	2	299	407
Single or multi									
Single independent establishment	14	37	12	2	12	24	*	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	49	21	7	2	5	13	3	922	1,033
Union recognition									
No unions present	22	33	12	2	10	19	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	49	26	4	3	9	9		64	83
Recognised unions	68	11	3	1	2	13	2	386	581
All workplaces	35	27	9	2	8	18	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.3 cont.: Arrangements to allow fathers to take time off after the birth of a child, by workplace characteristics

								<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Written policy giving entitlement to a specific period (%)	Discretionary time off (%)	Expected to arrange to take annual leave (%)	Some other arrangement (%)	No arrangements (%)	Never happened (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification									
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	34	55	3	-	1	7	-	38	58
Manufacturing	16	37	15	6	9	17	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[37]	[1]	[21]	[32]	[-]	[-]	[8]	6	23
Construction	19	37	6	1	11	26	2	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	34	27	13	1	7	18	1	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	19	42	8	1	13	15	1	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	46	22	9	1	6	12	3	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[49]	[20]	[8]	[3]	[7]	[9]	[5]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	34	31	12	2	7	10	4	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	86	2	-	*	-	8	4	49	85
Education	47	21	*	3	3	24	2	136	182
Health and Social Work	41	17	9	1	8	22	1	187	220
Other Community	40	21	2	*	11	24	1	100	84
Government Office Region									
North East	30	21	8	7	6	26	2	55	60
North West and Merseyside	39	30	9	2	11	8	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	46	23	6	1	9	13	2	121	126
East Midlands	30	22	7	3	9	27	2	117	119
West Midlands	29	31	14	2	7	15	2	113	126
South West	31	32	10	2	4	20	1	158	142
Eastern	28	29	6	2	9	24	2	144	142
London	38	33	8	2	6	10	3	185	183
South East	32	30	9	1	11	17	1	228	223
Wales	35	23	10	1	4	23	4	76	75
Scotland	44	16	11	2	4	21	2	154	152
All workplaces	35	27	9	2	8	18	2	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.4: Median number of days paternity leave, by workplace characteristics

	Written policy (days)	Unweighted count	Some other arrangement (days)	<i>Median days</i> Unweighted count
Size of establishment				
5 to 9 employees	5	84	7	211
10 to 24 employees	5	138	7	306
25 to 49 employees	5	97	7	132
50 to 99 employees	7	87	5	56
100 to 249 employees	5	115	5	63
250 to 499 employees	5	66	[-]	14
500 or more employees	5	124	[9]	16
Size of organisation				
Less than 100	10	86	7	455
100 to less than 1,000	5	158	5	145
1,000 to less than 10,000	5	231	5	86
10,000 or more	6	178	9	54
Ownership				
Private sector	5	421	7	681
Public sector	5	290	10	117
Single or multi				
Single independent establishment	5	103	7	373
Part of a larger organisation	5	608	7	425
Union recognition				
No unions present	5	232	7	586
Unions present no recognition	[9]	49	[7]	34
Recognised unions	5	420	5	161
All workplaces	5	711	7	798

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 711 managers that reported a written policy covering paternity leave and 798 managers who were asked how many days leave they would expect a father of a newborn would take off.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.4 cont.: Median number of days paternity leave, by workplace characteristics

	Written policy	Unweighted	Some other	<i>Median days</i>
	(days)	count	arrangement (days)	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification				
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[3]	20	[7]	38
Manufacturing	5	62	7	124
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[9]	17	[4]	6
Construction	[5]	21	5	59
Wholesale and Retail Trade	5	91	5	136
Hotels and Restaurants	[7]	22	7	53
Transport, Storage and Communication	[7]	49	[5]	30
Financial Intermediation	[3]	29	[10]	20
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	5	67	10	88
Public Administration and Defence	5	80	[5]	5
Education	5	93	7	89
Health and Social Work	7	117	10	103
Other Community	[10]	40	[10]	44
Government Office Region				
North East	[5]	27	[5]	33
North West and Merseyside	7	77	10	84
Yorkshire & Humber	9	74	5	52
East Midlands	7	55	7	64
West Midlands	5	51	7	75
South West	8	62	10	80
Eastern	5	55	10	87
London	7	97	5	86
South East	7	98	6	125
Wales	[5]	39	[5]	36
Scotland	5	76	5	76
All workplaces	5	711	7	798

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 711 managers that reported a written policy covering paternity leave and 798 managers who were asked how many days leave they would expect a father of a newborn would take off.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.5: Take-up of paternity leave, by workplace characteristics

	Paternity leave taken in past year (%)	None taken (%)	Don't know (%)	<i>Row percentages</i>	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	14	81	5	486	295
10 to 24 employees	14	83	3	571	444
25 to 49 employees	24	72	4	249	229
50 to 99 employees	43	50	7	107	143
100 to 249 employees	71	25	4	65	178
250 to 499 employees	76	13	10	19	80
500 or more employees	92	5	3	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	19	81	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	35	63	2	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	21	66	12	246	317
10,000 or more	21	69	9	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	21	75	4	1,210	1,102
Public sector	23	70	7	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	20	80	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	23	71	6	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	19	79	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	37	59	4	64	83
Recognised unions	27	65	7	386	581
All workplaces	22	74	4	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.5 cont.: Take-up of paternity leave, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Paternity leave taken in past year (%)	None taken (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	20	69	11	38	58
Manufacturing	34	64	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[24]	[75]	[1]	6	23
Construction	25	74	1	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16	79	5	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	18	82	-	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	23	68	10	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[20]	[65]	[15]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	21	77	2	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	40	55	4	49	85
Education	16	80	4	136	182
Health and Social Work	19	75	6	187	220
Other Community	22	75	2	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	13	75	12	55	60
North West and Merseyside	20	78	3	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	21	72	7	121	126
East Midlands	23	74	3	117	119
West Midlands	23	72	5	113	126
South West	24	71	5	158	142
Eastern	26	71	3	144	142
London	25	71	4	185	183
South East	20	78	2	228	223
Wales	19	81	*	76	75
Scotland	18	76	7	154	152
All workplaces	22	74	4	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.6: Arrangements for dealing with parental leave, by workplace characteristics

					<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Written policy	Set procedure	Ad hoc basis	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	41	4	51	3	486	295
10 to 24 employees	34	4	59	3	571	444
25 to 49 employees	55	4	40	2	249	229
50 to 99 employees	65	3	28	4	107	143
100 to 249 employees	63	5	31	-	65	178
250 to 499 employees	89	2	9	-	19	80
500 or more employees	87	8	5	-	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	19	4	76	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	57	6	33	5	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	78	1	15	5	246	317
10,000 or more	83	2	13	2	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	39	4	54	3	1,210	1,102
Public sector	67	5	26	2	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	18	4	77	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	61	4	31	4	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	32	4	61	3	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	49	6	45		64	83
Recognised unions	77	4	18	2	386	581
All workplaces	45	4	49	3	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.6 cont.: Arrangements for dealing with parental leave, by workplace characteristics

					<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Written policy (%)	Set procedure (%)	Ad hoc basis (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	37	7	55	2	38	58
Manufacturing	27	4	69	-	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[39]	[34]	[28]	[-]	6	23
Construction	26	1	73	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	44	1	47	7	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	37	5	55	3	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	48	6	43	3	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[70]	[6]	[25]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	44	4	49	3	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	84	3	7	6	49	85
Education	55	10	33	3	136	182
Health and Social Work	51	1	47	1	187	220
Other Community	48	7	46	-	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	48	7	40	6	55	60
North West and Merseyside	46	0	50	4	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	63	2	34	2	121	126
East Midlands	34	4	62	1	117	119
West Midlands	42	4	53	1	113	126
South West	32	7	57	4	158	142
Eastern	45	3	48	4	144	142
London	44	5	45	5	185	183
South East	41	2	55	2	228	223
Wales	48	7	42	3	76	75
Scotland	54	5	39	2	154	152
All workplaces	45	4	49	3	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.7: Provision of parental leave beyond statutory minimum, by workplace characteristics

	Parental leave provisions beyond statutory minimum (% of workplaces)	Adjusted estimate of additional parental leave (% of workplaces)	Per cent of workplaces	
			Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment				
5 to 9 employees	10	9	486	295
10 to 24 employees	11	8	571	444
25 to 49 employees	11	9	249	229
50 to 99 employees	14	12	107	143
100 to 249 employees	20	15	65	178
250 to 499 employees	9	5	19	80
500 or more employees	19	16	13	140
Size of organisation				
Less than 100	10	9	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	8	5	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	13	9	246	317
10,000 or more	19	16	176	232
Ownership				
Private sector	10	8	1,210	1,102
Public sector	15	13	299	407
Single or multi				
Single independent establishment	10	8	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	12	10	922	1,033
Union recognition				
No unions present	9	8	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	21	15	64	83
Recognised unions	16	13	386	581
All workplaces	11	9	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.7 cont.: Provision of parental leave beyond statutory minimum, by workplace characteristics

	Parental leave provisions beyond statutory minimum (%)	Adjusted estimate of additional parental leave (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
			Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification				
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	15	11	38	58
Manufacturing	5	5	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[6]	[6]	6	23
Construction	8	6	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	13	9	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	7	7	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	18	16	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[20]	[18]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	4	4	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	20	16	49	85
Education	14	13	136	182
Health and Social Work	14	10	187	220
Other Community	14	14	100	84
Government Office Region				
North East	8	8	55	60
North West and Merseyside	14	10	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	15	14	121	126
East Midlands	14	11	117	119
West Midlands	14	12	113	126
South West	6	5	158	142
Eastern	12	9	144	142
London	13	10	185	183
South East	10	8	228	223
Wales	11	9	76	75
Scotland	9	7	154	152
All workplaces	11	9	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.8: Take-up of parental leave, by workplace characteristics

	Parental leave taken in past year (%)	None taken (%)	Don't know (%)	<i>Row percentages</i>	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	10	87	3	486	295
10 to 24 employees	12	85	3	571	444
25 to 49 employees	17	79	4	249	229
50 to 99 employees	27	69	5	107	143
100 to 249 employees	24	68	8	65	178
250 to 499 employees	45	45	10	19	80
500 or more employees	48	46	6	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	15	84	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	13	85	3	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	13	77	10	246	317
10,000 or more	17	75	8	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	12	84	3	1,210	1,102
Public sector	23	72	6	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	15	84	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	14	80	5	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	12	86	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	22	75	2	64	83
Recognised unions	21	72	7	386	581
All workplaces	14	82	4	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.8 cont.: Take-up of parental leave, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Parental leave taken in past year (%)	None taken (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	18	74	8	38	58
Manufacturing	17	81	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[3]	[95]	[2]	6	23
Construction	3	97	1	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	7	89	4	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	12	85	3	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	11	78	11	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[19]	[71]	[9]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	13	86	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	16	79	5	49	85
Education	33	64	3	136	182
Health and Social Work	16	81	4	187	220
Other Community	23	76	1	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	7	86	8	55	60
North West and Merseyside	15	82	3	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	17	77	6	121	126
East Midlands	9	89	2	117	119
West Midlands	22	73	5	113	126
South West	19	76	5	158	142
Eastern	19	80	1	144	142
London	12	83	5	185	183
South East	15	83	2	228	223
Wales	11	89	*	76	75
Scotland	10	86	4	154	152
All workplaces	14	82	4	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.9: Arrangements for dealing with time off for dependants

	As special paid leave	As sick leave	As leave without pay	As annual leave	Time off but make it up later	Never been asked	Depends on circumstances	Other specific answer	<i>Row percentages</i>	
									Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment										
5 to 9 employees	33	4	20	11	10	10	9	2	486	295
10 to 24 employees	40	4	14	14	9	7	7	4	571	444
25 to 49 employees	45	3	19	11	9	4	2	7	249	229
50 to 99 employees	37	2	28	12	5	4	6	6	107	143
100 to 249 employees	47	1	18	11	5	3	4	10	65	178
250 to 499 employees	42	-	19	16	2	-	12	10	19	80
500 or more employees	64	*	6	20	3	*	5	1	13	140
Size of organisation										
Less than 100	36	3	16	14	10	8	8	4	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	41	2	17	12	6	10	6	5	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	38	4	23	9	7	4	9	5	246	317
10,000 or more	47	4	21	10	7	2	3	7	176	232
Ownership										
Private sector	33	3	20	14	9	8	7	4	1,210	1,102
Public sector	62	2	8	7	7	4	4	5	299	407
Single or multi										
Single independent establishment	35	3	17	12	11	8	9	4	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	42	4	18	12	7	6	5	5	922	1,033
Union recognition										
No unions present	34	3	19	14	10	8	8	4	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	45	5	17	9	3	10	8	3	64	83
Recognised unions	54	2	14	10	7	2	4	6	386	581
All workplaces	39	3	18	12	9	7	7	5	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.9 cont.: Arrangements for dealing with time off for dependants

	<i>Row percentages</i>									
	As special paid leave	As sick leave	As leave without pay	As annual leave	Time off but make it up later	Never been asked	Depends on circumstances	Other specific answer	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification										
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	45	-	13	17	10	7	7	1	38	58
Manufacturing	32	1	20	14	9	9	10	3	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[38]	[-]	[13]	[5]	[*]	[-]	[34]	[11]	6	23
Construction	28	6	15	19	9	4	10	9	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	30	7	23	14	7	7	9	3	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	18	-	40	12	9	7	5	5	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	37	3	12	18	8	5	8	5	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[61]	[-]	[11]	[5]	[9]	[7]	[6]	[*]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	43	1	9	18	14	5	7	4	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	72	-	11	3	8	-	*	4	49	85
Education	63	3	6	4	6	2	5	9	136	182
Health and Social Work	42	3	16	12	10	10	2	4	187	220
Other Community	39	6	21	4	6	15	4	4	100	84
Government Office Region										
North East	41	6	29	9	1	2	5	6	55	60
North West and Merseyside	33	1	20	20	10	4	8	4	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	48	3	12	14	6	3	6	5	121	126
East Midlands	41	2	20	7	6	12	7	3	117	119
West Midlands	30	4	31	12	11	2	4	3	113	126
South West	35	6	15	12	12	5	9	3	158	142
Eastern	44	3	15	11	7	7	8	4	144	142
London	42	3	11	11	6	11	8	5	185	183
South East	37	1	14	16	12	10	7	3	228	223
Wales	28	6	35	8	12	-	*	11	76	75
Scotland	44	4	16	8	6	9	5	7	154	152
All workplaces	39	3	18	12	9	7	7	5	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.10: Provision of special paid leave covering emergency time off for dependants, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Fully paid	Special leave Partly paid	Would depend on the individual case	Some other arrangement/Never been asked	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	27	1	5	67	*	486	295
10 to 24 employees	27	1	11	60	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	31	2	11	55	1	249	229
50 to 99 employees	24	5	9	63	-	107	143
100 to 249 employees	32	1	14	53	*	65	178
250 to 499 employees	36		6	58	-	19	80
500 or more employees	50	1	12	36	-	13	140
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	29	1	6	64	1	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	25	2	15	59	-	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	27	2	9	62	1	246	317
10,000 or more	33	3	10	53	*	176	232
Ownership							
Private sector	24	1	8	67	*	1,210	1,102
Public sector	43	3	14	38	2	299	407
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	27	1	6	65	1	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	29	2	11	58	*	922	1,033
Union recognition							
No unions present	25	1	8	66	*	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	27	4	12	55	2	64	83
Recognised unions	39	2	12	46	1	386	581
All workplaces	28	1	9	61	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.10 cont.: Provision of special paid leave covering emergency time off for dependants, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Special leave					Weighted count	Unweighted count
	Fully paid	Partly paid	Would depend on the individual case	Some other arrangement/ Never been asked	Don't know		
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification							
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	39	1	6	55	-	38	58
Manufacturing	23	1	6	68	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[31]	[-]	[7]	[62]	[-]	6	23
Construction	18	1	7	72	1	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	23	*	6	70	-	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	10	3	5	82	-	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	22	7	8	63	-	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[44]	[*]	[17]	[39]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	32	-	10	57	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	53	2	14	28	4	49	85
Education	42	1	19	37	1	136	182
Health and Social Work	31	1	9	58	1	187	220
Other Community	31	-	7	61	1	100	84
Government Office Region							
North East	27	-	14	59	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	25	1	8	67	-	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	30	6	11	52	2	121	126
East Midlands	30	1	10	59	1	117	119
West Midlands	24	-	6	70	-	113	126
South West	27	1	7	65	-	158	142
Eastern	31	1	11	56	1	144	142
London	31	*	11	58	-	185	183
South East	27	1	8	63	2	228	223
Wales	21	-	8	72	-	76	75
Scotland	32	2	8	56	2	154	152
All workplaces	28	1	9	61	1	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.11: Awareness of existing regulation on time off, by workplace characteristics

					<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
	Parental leave (%)	Parental leave – adopted children (%)	Parental leave – children with disabilities (%)	Emergency time off for dependants (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	52	40	43	68	486	295
10 to 24 employees	50	39	42	70	571	444
25 to 49 employees	62	54	53	82	249	229
50 to 99 employees	83	73	70	87	107	143
100 to 249 employees	89	78	77	89	65	178
250 to 499 employees	98	97	93	98	19	80
500 or more employees	97	96	93	98	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	46	33	36	66	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	64	59	56	81	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	77	71	70	80	246	317
10,000 or more	75	69	68	86	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	56	45	47	71	1,210	1,102
Public sector	66	57	55	85	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	46	33	37	67	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	65	56	56	78	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	51	39	42	68	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	63	61	55	86	64	83
Recognised unions	73	66	63	87	386	581
All workplaces	58	47	49	74	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.11 cont.: Awareness of existing regulation on time off, by workplace characteristics

	Parental leave (%)	Parental leave – adopted children (%)	Parental leave – children with disabilities (%)	Emergency time off for dependants (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
					Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	64	43	46	75	38	58
Manufacturing	53	43	46	66	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[26]	[19]	[19]	[65]	6	23
Construction	49	34	36	69	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	54	43	47	65	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	37	24	32	78	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	65	61	58	84	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[80]	[75]	[76]	[91]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	62	48	44	71	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	86	83	76	83	49	85
Education	55	44	44	85	136	182
Health and Social Work	63	56	58	76	187	220
Other Community	62	54	53	81	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	54	49	44	69	55	60
North West and Merseyside	58	51	49	74	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	71	60	65	80	121	126
East Midlands	56	30	40	69	117	119
West Midlands	52	44	53	81	113	126
South West	53	42	40	75	158	142
Eastern	59	49	50	73	144	142
London	60	51	52	75	185	183
South East	50	41	41	70	228	223
Wales	58	51	50	73	76	75
Scotland	63	55	55	74	154	152
All workplaces	58	47	49	74	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.12: Awareness of new regulations on time off, by workplace characteristics

	Flexible working	Paid maternity leave	Unpaid maternity leave	Paid and unpaid leave after adoption	Paid paternity leave	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
						(%)	(%)
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	66	61	53	42	46	486	295
10 to 24 employees	67	63	57	39	45	571	444
25 to 49 employees	76	72	67	52	58	249	229
50 to 99 employees	83	88	84	70	74	107	143
100 to 249 employees	92	88	86	74	79	65	178
250 to 499 employees	100	98	98	94	93	19	80
500 or more employees	98	99	98	97	94	13	140
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	65	60	54	35	44	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	79	76	70	60	65	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	81	79	73	66	64	246	317
10,000 or more	77	80	76	60	64	176	232
Ownership							
Private sector	69	66	61	44	52	1,210	1,102
Public sector	77	72	65	57	53	299	407
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	65	60	54	36	44	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	75	72	66	54	57	922	1,033
Union recognition							
No unions present	67	64	57	41	49	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	72	70	67	55	55	64	83
Recognised unions	83	78	74	64	61	386	581
All workplaces	71	67	61	47	52	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.12 cont.: Awareness of new regulations on time off, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>						Weighted count	Unweighted count
	Flexible working (%)	Paid maternity leave (%)	Unpaid maternity leave (%)	Paid and unpaid leave after adoption (%)	Paid paternity leave (%)			
Standard Industrial Classification								
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	71	61	53	36	48	38	58	
Manufacturing	67	61	58	47	55	164	186	
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[89]	[90]	[78]	[49]	[70]	6	23	
Construction	71	58	54	40	44	103	80	
Wholesale and Retail Trade	62	69	57	42	51	317	227	
Hotels and Restaurants	69	57	54	28	40	111	75	
Transport, Storage and Communication	74	69	66	55	61	76	79	
Financial Intermediation	[83]	[77]	[88]	[75]	[62]	51	49	
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	76	74	62	50	56	165	155	
Public Administration and Defence	92	78	80	78	68	49	85	
Education	77	66	61	47	50	136	182	
Health and Social Work	75	70	66	50	51	187	220	
Other Community	63	68	66	53	52	100	84	
Government Office Region								
North East	84	64	63	51	48	55	60	
North West and Merseyside	77	76	74	50	56	159	161	
Yorkshire & Humber	76	69	64	59	57	121	126	
East Midlands	67	69	62	37	43	117	119	
West Midlands	72	75	68	48	62	113	126	
South West	67	63	56	41	48	158	142	
Eastern	69	62	59	44	51	144	142	
London	70	64	61	49	52	185	183	
South East	67	67	57	42	51	228	223	
Wales	73	59	53	46	44	76	75	
Scotland	69	69	61	54	56	154	152	
All workplaces	71	67	61	47	52	1,509	1,509	

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.13: Provision of other types of leave arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	Career breaks (%)	Bereavement leave (%)	Study leave (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	21	85	45	486	295
10 to 24 employees	22	85	48	571	444
25 to 49 employees	30	93	60	249	229
50 to 99 employees	21	96	64	107	143
100 to 249 employees	31	97	79	65	178
250 to 499 employees	53	97	87	19	80
500 or more employees	70	89	87	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	13	82	42	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	22	90	58	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	36	96	66	246	317
10,000 or more	56	96	73	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	20	86	47	1,210	1,102
Public sector	42	95	74	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	12	82	42	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	32	92	59	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	16	85	43	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	24	90	74	64	83
Recognised unions	46	96	76	386	581
All workplaces	24	88	52	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 6.13 cont.: Provision of other types of leave arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	Career breaks (%)	Bereavement leave (%)	Study leave (%)	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	18	79	51	38	58
Manufacturing	6	84	27	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[13]	[100]	[23]	6	23
Construction	9	83	44	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	23	90	37	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	20	79	46	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	28	90	47	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[53]	[95]	[84]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	29	90	72	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	52	95	85	49	85
Education	31	91	63	136	182
Health and Social Work	27	91	73	187	220
Other Community	24	82	46	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	25	88	63	55	60
North West and Merseyside	25	86	60	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	34	89	56	121	126
East Midlands	15	85	45	117	119
West Midlands	24	93	52	113	126
South West	25	80	51	158	142
Eastern	24	93	46	144	142
London	27	90	55	185	183
South East	19	90	47	228	223
Wales	19	83	42	76	75
Scotland	28	90	62	154	152
All workplaces	24	88	52	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

7

Employer support for working parents

Introduction

Aside from providing flexibility in how employees can organise their work, a more direct way in which employers can support the out-of-work activities of their employees is through the provision of services and facilities, as well as financial support. This support can take many forms, from workplace crèches to information about local childcare services. It can often be expensive for the employer, who ultimately must decide whether the support is cost-effective, given that not all employees will necessarily benefit from its provision. This latter point – that not all employees benefit from the provision of this support – can potentially cause problems at the workplace on the grounds of uneven treatment of all employees. This is more the case than in respect of the less direct means of supporting working parents, as the flexible working time arrangements are less obviously designed to impact just upon working parents. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that flexible working time practices apply equally to all employees, not just those with dependent children.

This chapter looks at the range of workplace facilities provided to assist employees with childcare responsibilities. It also describes the types of benefits employers see arising from their provision. Finally, those employers who did not provide any support facilities for working parents were asked to describe ways in which they could be encouraged to provide such arrangements, and their responses are considered here.

Provision of support facilities for working parents

All employers were asked the following:

'Does this employer provide any childcare facilities or arrangements which help working parents combine work with family commitments?'

Provision of such support facilities was rare, with less than one-in-ten (eight per cent) doing so. Those that did covered around a quarter (25 per cent) of all employees in workplaces with five or more employees, which reflects the fact that provision was greater in larger workplaces.

Table 7.1 shows how the provision of support facilities varied across workplaces. There was clearly a very strong association between the size of

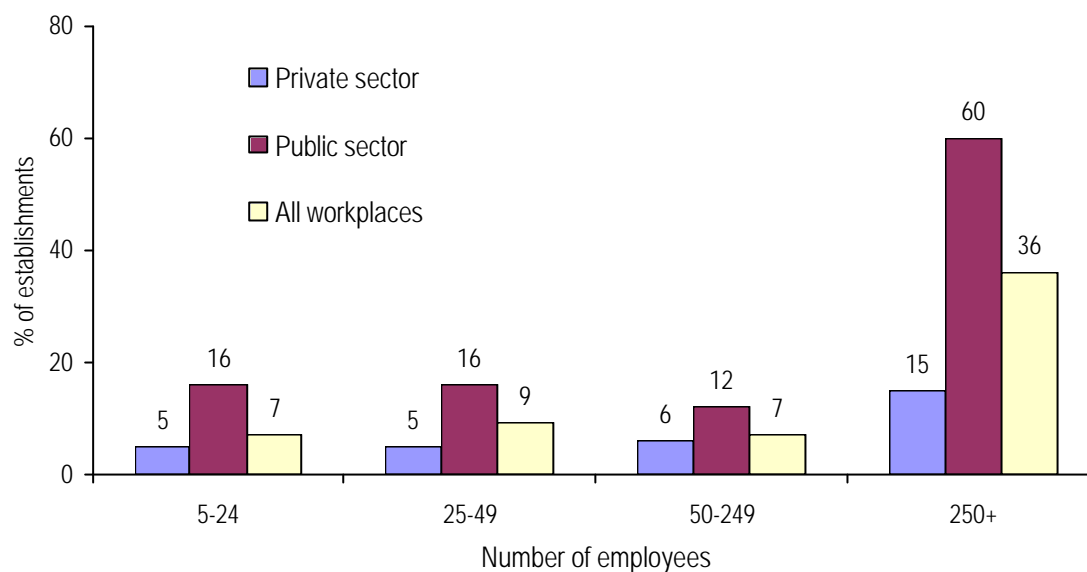
the workplace and the provision of any support facilities for working parents. Large workplaces, with 250 or more employees, were upwards of three times more likely than smaller workplaces to provide some support; all workplaces with less than 250 employees, whatever the size, had about the same likelihood of providing such support (between six and 10 per cent). This was not at all surprising, given that only larger establishments were likely to have the resources to provide services, at the same time as having sufficient employees using them to make the provision economically viable.

The size of the workplace appeared to be a more important factor than that of the organisation to which the workplace belonged, in determining the likelihood of any support facilities for working parents. Even after allowing for differences in the size of the organisation, provision was always higher in larger workplaces.

Large differences in the provision of support facilities for working parents were apparent across sectors. Public sector workplaces were almost four times more likely to report some help for working parents than were private sector workplaces. Even after allowing for differences in the size of public and private sector workplaces, the public sector had a much higher level of provision (see Figure 7.1). In large public sector workplaces, provision of support facilities was extremely high, with around three-fifths (60 per cent) of these workplaces providing facilities or arrangements that help working parents combine work with family commitments. Large private sector workplaces (with 250 or more employees) were similarly more likely to provide support facilities for working parents than smaller, private sector workplaces (with less than 250 employees – 15 per cent compared with five per cent), however the difference according to workplace size was less apparent than that which applied in the public sector.

Provision of support facilities for working parents was higher at those establishments where a recognised union was present. Almost a fifth (18 per cent) of these workplaces reported provision of support facilities for working parents, and this was reduced to nine per cent where a union was present but not recognised. However, where no unions were present, only four per cent of establishments reported provision of support facilities for working parents. Most of these differences can be explained away once allowances are made for workplace size and sector, given that recognised unions are more likely to be found in the public sector and in large workplaces, both of which are more likely to provide some support. However, even after allowing for this, some differences still remain and are probably reflective of unions' success in lobbying for better conditions.

Figure 7.1: Provision of support facilities for working parents, by number of employees at the workplace and by sector



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1,508 managers⁴¹.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Support facilities for working parents differed in workplaces with either a modest or high⁴² proportion of female employees from other workplaces. Those workplaces with a modest proportion of female employees (less than 25 per cent) were amongst the least likely to have support facilities for working parents (three per cent), whilst the opposite was true for those with a high proportion (more than 75 per cent) of female employees (12 per cent). It is possible that the proportion of women in total employment (female density) was a good proxy of demand for support facilities for working parents.

There was also some evidence to suggest that the presence of certain occupations at the workplace was associated with the provision of support facilities for working parents. Across all workplaces those with employees in professional occupations were more likely to provide support facilities than other workplaces (11 per cent). Workplaces with operative employees were the least likely to provide support facilities (four per cent).

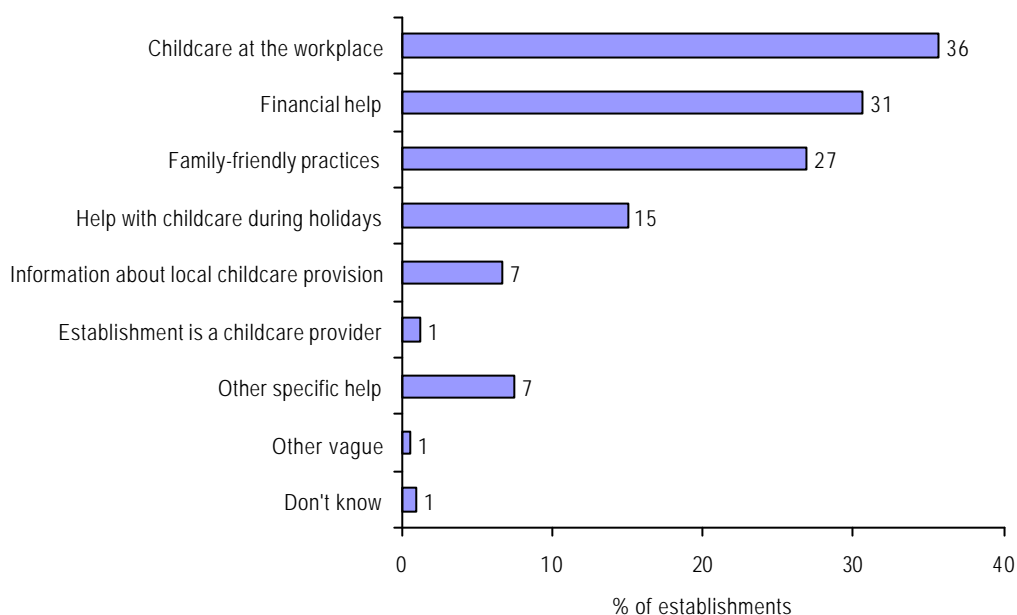
⁴¹ While interviewing managers there were a few instances where the interview was not completed. This usually occurred when the interview was longer than had been expected or when some circumstance arose and the manager had to terminate the call. These cases have been included in all the analyses in the report where they have given responses. Where the interview was terminated all remaining questions have been reported as a non-response. As a result the bases which appear in figures and tables from this point onwards may vary from the expected total – in this instance from 1,509.

⁴² Modest was defined as 10 to 24 per cent of total employment and high was 75 per cent or more.

Methods of supporting working parents

Focusing on the eight per cent of workplaces which provided help with childcare, 36 per cent provided childcare situated at the workplace (three per cent of all workplaces), 31 per cent provided financial help with childcare (two per cent of all workplaces) and 27 per cent provided family-friendly practices (two per cent of all workplaces). The first two types of support facilities are relatively costly due to set up and ongoing costs. Providing information about local childcare is probably less so, and therefore it was surprising that it was not more widely provided. Only seven per cent of employers provided this facility.

Figure 7.2: Methods of supporting working parents



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that had any support facilities for working parents.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 208 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

It was thought that the proportion of workplaces providing support facilities for working parents via family-friendly work practices may have been underestimated. As shown elsewhere in this report, around 81 per cent of workplaces provided some form of flexible working time arrangement that had been used by employees in the past 12 months and 15 per cent provided homeworking arrangements that had been used by employees in the past 12 months. While employers generally stated that the flexible working time arrangements were not directed specifically at parents, nevertheless, they could be construed as being 'family-friendly'. Of the workplaces that had any of these flexible working arrangements and that said they supported working parents, nine per cent said they provided some type of family-friendly practice in support of parents. Therefore, not only is it possible that the extent of this form of support has been under-estimated, it is probable that the overall estimate of the proportion of employers that support working parents may be higher than the eight per cent reported here.

Further detailed analysis of the methods used by employers to support working parents was not possible since the number of workplaces with these facilities was too small to generate reliable statistical estimates.

Changes in the provision of support facilities for working parents

Differences in the methods used to collect data on the support facilities available to working parents made comparisons with other survey data somewhat problematic. In the WLB1 survey employers were asked about provision of specific workplace facilities, including some childcare arrangements, whereas the WLB2 survey asked generally whether employers provided any childcare arrangements at all. Therefore, it was not possible to compare the two surveys directly.

The only study with a comparable question was the 1996 DfEE survey of family-friendly working arrangements (Forth *et al.*, 1996). This survey estimated that nine per cent of workplaces provided childcare assistance which was the same as the WLB2 estimates. On the basis of this, albeit limited, evidence, it would appear that the provision of facilities supporting working parents has remained stable for almost a decade whilst the provision of general flexible working arrangements – such as flexitime, reduced hours working and homeworking – has been increasing.

Eligibility to use support facilities for working parents

Instances of employers restricting the use of their facilities that support working parents were rare. Where some support facilities were provided, nine out of ten employers (90 per cent) reported that there were no restrictions on which employees could use them. It did not seem to matter what type of support facility was available.

Impact of providing support facilities for working parents on workplace performance

Where employers reported that they supported working parents, they were asked to evaluate that support in terms of its effect on various aspects of workplace performance. Specifically, they were asked whether these facilities or arrangements were having a positive, negative or no effect on the following:

- employee relations at the establishment;
- productivity;
- absenteeism;
- labour turnover (including the retention of female employees);
- recruitment;
- employee motivation and commitment; and
- overall costs of the business.

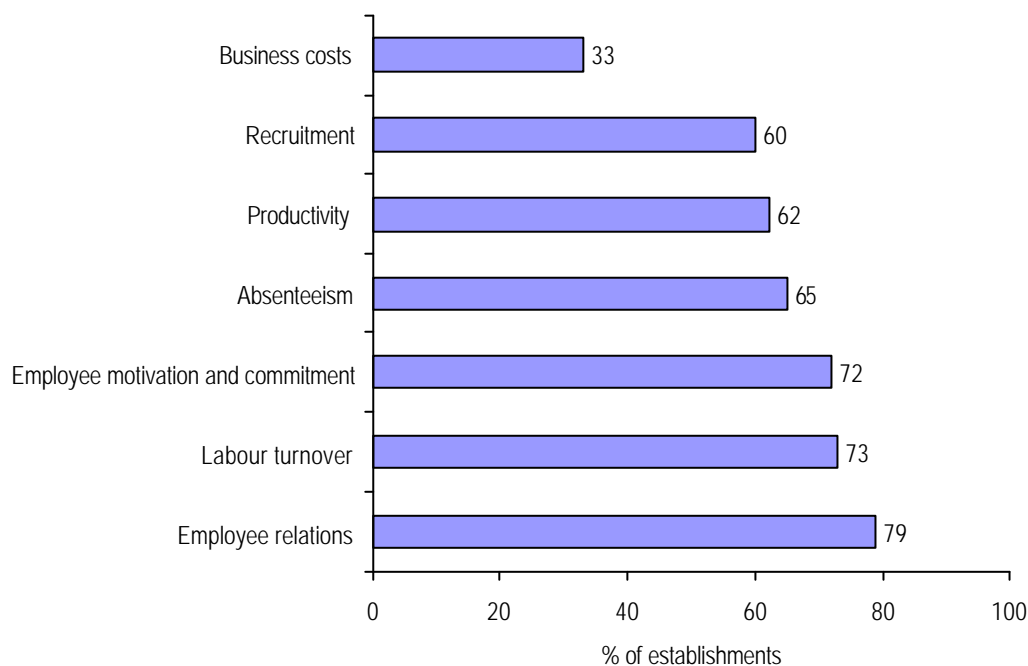
It was not surprising that a high proportion of employers reported a positive effect from supporting their working parents on each of these outcomes. This

was expected, since the support mechanisms would have been unlikely to be introduced or maintained if they were not perceived to have a positive effect on performance. On all aspects of performance, apart from overall costs of the business, upwards of three-fifths of workplaces reported a positive effect.

What was of interest was the extent to which the reporting of positive effects varied across the seven aspects of performance. It was not possible to say whether the methods used by employers to support working parents had a larger impact on one aspect or another of performance since no information was collected on the magnitude of the effects. Nevertheless, these data gave some indication of where employers could expect to see a benefit to performance if they were to introduce measures to help working parents.

Employee relations, labour turnover and employee motivation and commitment were most likely to see an improvement as a result of employers providing support facilities (see Figure 7.3). Around three-quarters or more employers reported a positive effect on these aspects of performance. For the remaining three performance indicators, while somewhat fewer reported a positive effect, there was still a significant majority – between three-fifths and two-thirds – that reported a positive impact.

Figure 7.3: Positive impact of support facilities for working parents on workplace performance



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that provided any support facilities for working parents.

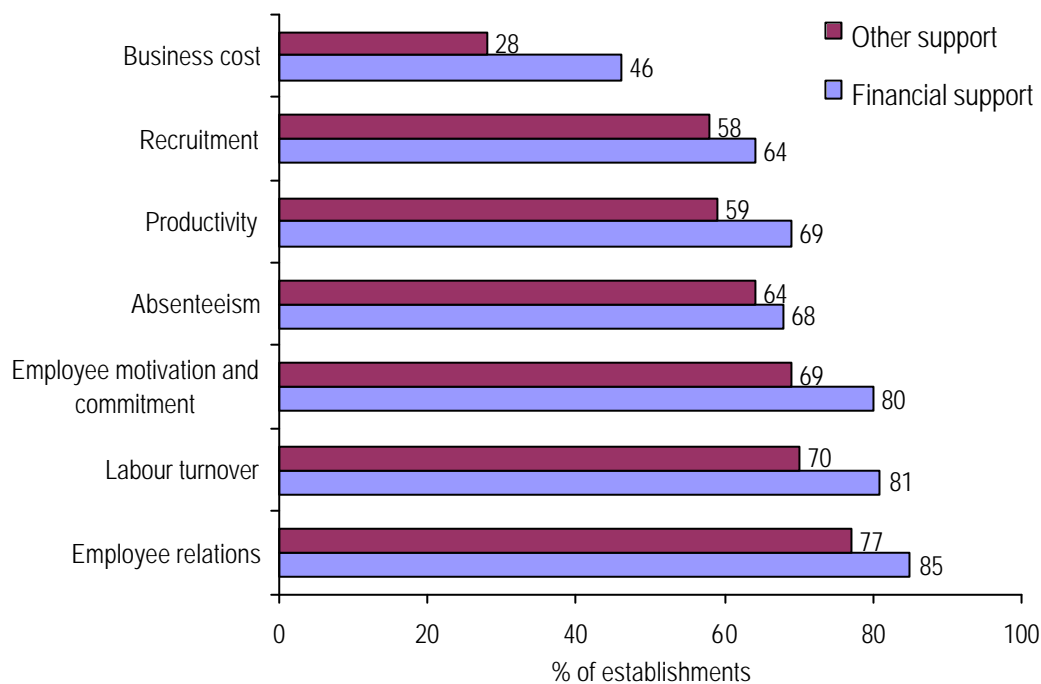
Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 208 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Because only a small number of employers were identified as providing support facilities for working parents, analysis of which form of support facility – crèches, childcare information, financial support etc. – was more likely to yield positive performance effects was limited. It was only possible to make

comparisons between workplaces that provided on-site childcare or financial assistance and any other means of supporting working parents. The evidence suggested that workplace based childcare was no different from other means of support in its effect on performance. Similar proportions of employers reported positive effects, regardless of whether they had any on-site childcare or some other type of support facility for working parents. In comparison, workplaces that financially assisted their employees with their childcare costs were significantly more likely to report a positive impact on overall costs of the business compared with workplaces that provided other types of support facilities (see Figure 7.4). This probably reflects the fact that, due to the costs of providing on-site childcare, employers may have to limit the availability of on-site childcare places. Whereas, providing financial assistance may be slightly less expensive, which enables the employer to offer it to more employees. If this is true, it suggests that the more inclusive a childcare facility is, the greater the impact on workplace performance.

Figure 7.4: Positive impact of support facilities for working parents on workplace performance, by type of support provided



Base: All establishments with 5 or more employees that provided any support facilities for working parents.

Notes: Figures are weighted and based on responses from 208 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Methods of encouraging employers to introduce support facilities for working parents

In order to gauge what might be done to encourage employers to introduce support facilities for working parents, the following question was asked of all employers who were currently not providing any of these facilities or arrangements:

'What would be the best way to encourage employers like yourself to provide help with childcare and family commitments for their employees?'

Interviewers were able to record responses to a number of pre-arranged options but also had the facility to capture answers that went beyond these. The options available were:

- tax breaks;
- government guidance;
- financial incentives;
- positive experience of other employers/word of mouth;
- helpline/advice and support; and
- employer network.

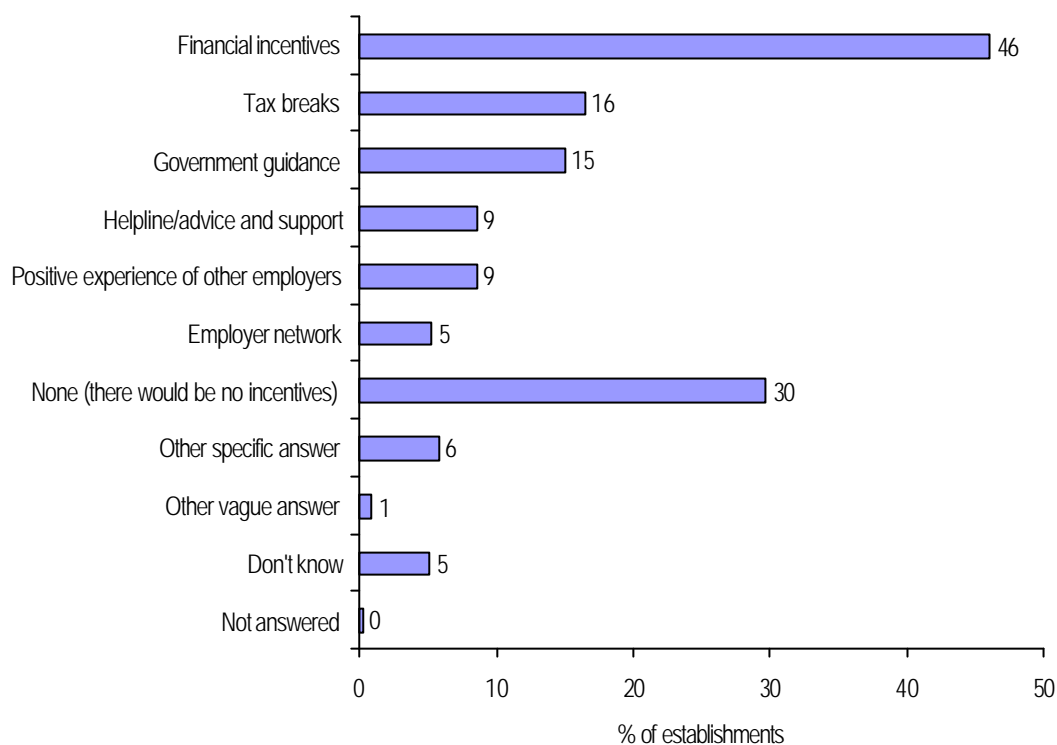
Overall, the majority of employers (70 per cent) indicated that they could be encouraged to provide support facilities for working parents, and Figure 7.5 shows the distribution of responses. Almost half thought that some kind of financial incentive would be necessary, and this was, by a factor of almost three, the most common response, aside from those that thought there was no way in which they (the employer) could be encouraged to help working parents. If tax breaks are considered as an alternative way of delivering financial support, around half (52 per cent) of the workplaces, which count for almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of employees employed in workplaces with five or more employees, stated that encouragement to provide childcare would have to be financial. There could be several reasons why financial incentives and tax breaks were so popular. One explanation is that these two methods enable the employer to provide childcare provision, whilst at the same time recovering some of the financial costs from an independent source. Alternatively, employers may feel that they are entitled to receive a 'reward' for providing the facility.

Less than ten per cent of employers considered that helpline/advice and support, positive experience of other employers or an employer network would encourage them to provide help with childcare. Compare this to government guidance, where 15 per cent of employers considered that they would be encouraged by this method. If these four methods were regarded as having a similar purpose (i.e. providing advice), then this suggested that employers were slightly more likely to be encouraged if the guidance came from the government. The preference for government guidance could be that it was perceived as coming from a reputable source and higher authority, than for example an employer network where the advice comes from an employer's peers.

On the whole it appeared that the majority of employers may be encouraged to provide childcare if two criteria were satisfied. Firstly, they should be able to evaluate the benefits of providing help with childcare in advance. For example, with financial incentives and tax breaks, the employer can essentially calculate the outcome for themselves in advance (i.e. that they will receive a certain amount of money or a specific tax break). However, with the other methods, the outcome for the employer is somewhat less certain. Secondly, it seems that employers considered that they would be encouraged to provide childcare if

'concrete' methods such as financial incentives, tax breaks and government guidance were available.

Figure 7.5: Ways in which employers could be encouraged to provide help with childcare and family commitments for their employees



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that did not provide any support facilities for working parents.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,291 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

The preferred methods of encouraging employers to introduce support facilities for working parents varied considerably across the standard workplace characteristics (Table 7.2). Notable differences included:

- Larger workplaces were much more likely than smaller ones to think that financial assistance and government guidance would encourage the provision of childcare support;
- Private sector workplaces were more likely than public sector workplaces to suggest tax breaks. However, public sector workplaces were more likely to think government guidance might be helpful; and
- Employers in London were much more likely than those elsewhere to mention tax breaks. Employers in the Yorkshire and Humber region were more likely to suggest financial assistance.

Conclusion

Reports of direct support facilities for working parents were relatively sparse. Less than one-in-ten (eight per cent) employers reported that they provided childcare facilities or arrangements which enabled working parents to combine work with family commitments.

The most common means of providing help was through childcare situated at the workplace (36 per cent), financial help with childcare (31 per cent), and family-friendly working practices (27 per cent), although the way in which employers were asked about this may have under-estimated the latter.

Where childcare support was provided, a majority of employers thought that it had a positive effect on a number of measures of workplace performance. Where it was not provided, a majority of employers (70 per cent) thought that they might be inclined to do so if they were to receive some help.

Table 7.1: Provision of support facilities for working parents, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Facilities supporting working parents (%)	No facilities (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	6	93	1	484	294
10 to 24 employees	7	92	*	571	444
25 to 49 employees	9	91	*	249	229
50 to 99 employees	6	94	-	107	143
100 to 249 employees	10	90	-	65	178
250 to 499 employees	32	68	-	19	80
500 or more employees	41	59	-	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	5	95	*	739	540
100 to less than 1,000	4	95	1	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	12	87	1	246	317
10,000 or more	17	83	1	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	5	94	1	1,208	1,101
Public sector	18	82	-	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	5	94	*	584	475
Part of a larger organisation	9	90	1	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	4	96	*	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	9	91	-	64	83
Recognised unions	18	82	-	386	581
All workplaces	8	92	1	1,507	1,508

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,508 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 7.1 cont.: Provision of support facilities for working parents, by workplace characteristics

	Facilities supporting working parents (%)	No facilities (%)	Don't know (%)	Row percentages	
				Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	13	87	-	38	58
Manufacturing	3	97	-	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[11]	[89]	[-]	6	23
Construction	1	99	-	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	2	98	-	315	226
Hotels and Restaurants	6	91	3	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	8	89	3	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[24]	[76]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	3	95	2	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	17	83	-	49	85
Education	21	79	-	136	182
Health and Social Work	11	89	-	187	220
Other Community	10	90	-	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	3	97	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	5	94	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	16	84	-	119	125
East Midlands	5	95	-	117	119
West Midlands	12	88	-	113	126
South West	8	90	2	158	142
Eastern	11	89	-	144	142
London	8	91	1	185	183
South East	5	94	1	228	223
Wales	4	96	-	76	75
Scotland	7	93	-	154	152
All workplaces	8	92	1	1,507	1,508

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,508 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 7.2: Ways in which employers could be encouraged to provide help with childcare and family commitments for their employees

	<i>Row percentages</i>									
	Tax breaks (%)	Government guidance (%)	Financial assistance (%)	Word of mouth (%)	Helplines (%)	Employer networks (%)	Other (%)	No assistance (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment										
5 to 9 employees	14	14	43	7	8	4	5	36	447	271
10 to 24 employees	18	15	44	9	10	7	5	31	527	403
25 to 49 employees	15	14	44	8	6	3	9	25	225	204
50 to 99 employees	18	18	58	9	14	5	5	18	100	127
100 to 249 employees	16	18	67	13	6	8	8	16	58	154
250 to 499 employees	20	25	49	11	21	8	17	8	13	59
500 or more employees	22	24	80	2	6	7	9	5	8	73
Size of organisation										
Less than 100	17	13	43	8	7	5	5	33	700	506
100 to less than 1,000	19	15	44	13	13	8	7	30	225	272
1,000 to less than 10,000	19	20	57	6	9	5	8	18	214	248
10,000 or more	12	17	46	7	7	1	6	27	146	173
Ownership										
Private sector	18	14	45	9	8	5	5	31	1,133	1,005
Public sector	11	21	51	7	9	6	10	22	246	286
Single or multi										
Single independent establishment	16	13	41	8	7	5	4	35	550	431
Part of a larger organisation	17	17	49	9	10	6	7	26	829	860
Union recognition										
No unions present	17	13	44	8	8	5	4	32	976	768
Unions present no recognition	21	18	51	13	9	3	4	24	59	72
Recognised unions	15	21	51	10	10	7	11	23	317	430
All workplaces	16	15	46	9	9	5	6	30	1,379	1,291

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that did not provide any support facilities for working parents.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,291 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 7.2 cont.: Ways in which employers could be encouraged to provide help with childcare and family commitments for their employees

									<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Tax breaks (%)	Government guidance (%)	Financial assistance (%)	Word of mouth (%)	Helplines (%)	Employer networks (%)	Other (%)	No assistance (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification										
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	5	16	34	6	8	2	12	38	33	50
Manufacturing	16	11	44	8	11	6	9	28	158	173
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[5]	[-]	[56]	[1]	[-]	[*]	[*]	[25]	6	16
Construction	13	20	43	11	8	7	3	38	102	78
Wholesale and Retail Trade	17	14	42	10	7	4	3	33	309	221
Hotels and Restaurants	18	9	53	11	11	3	3	31	100	67
Transport, Storage and Communication	15	12	39	1	7	1	6	43	68	66
Financial Intermediation	[18]	[12]	[46]	[3]	[3]	[*]	[9]	[30]	39	37
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	28	18	51	8	7	7	5	23	157	143
Public Administration and Defence	20	40	43	13	13	10	17	9	41	56
Education	7	13	52	10	10	5	11	24	107	130
Health and Social Work	13	16	51	6	9	8	7	28	166	177
Other Community	18	17	47	13	10	7	1	28	90	74
Government Office Region										
North East	10	16	49	5	7	4	4	23	53	55
North West and Merseyside	17	16	42	13	13	6	8	31	147	141
Yorkshire & Humber	17	20	61	10	9	5	*	19	99	100
East Midlands	10	13	39	3	3	2	7	42	111	103
West Midlands	14	12	45	5	7	4	4	34	100	102
South West	15	11	43	7	10	6	9	27	142	120
Eastern	11	9	39	12	10	5	5	34	128	120
London	26	18	52	11	8	5	7	24	168	157
South East	17	15	44	8	10	6	4	36	214	193
Wales	18	14	57	7	5	4	12	20	73	67
Scotland	18	21	44	9	6	10	5	28	143	133
All workplaces	16	15	46	9	9	5	6	30	1,379	1,291

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that did not provide any support facilities for working parents.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,291 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

8

Promoting work-life balance at the workplace

Introduction

The availability of work-life balance practices is an important feature of the modern workplace, but the creation of a work-life balance culture is not achieved simply by a systems introduction. It is crucial that employees are made aware of what *exactly* is available to them and what their entitlements are. This section looks at whether employers actively promoted these practices and also examines the ways in which employers **inform** their employees about available practices and **consult** their employees in decisions regarding whether to introduce such practices.

This chapter goes some way to exploring the nature of the employer-employee relationship that is core to any system of work-life balance. Promotion, information and consultation can be seen as indicative of whether an interactive, participatory relationship exists between employer and employee with respect to work-life balance issues (although it can not alert us to the detail of such a relationship).

To give a fuller picture of how seriously employers take such work-life balance issues, this chapter also explores the extent to which employers monitor the take-up of various leave arrangements. Chapters 3, 4 and 6, which look at the relationship between particular work-life balance practices and employee eligibility, are particularly complementary to the substance of this chapter.

Promoting work-life balance at the workplace

To measure the extent to which managers promote their work-life balance practices, they were asked the following:

'Would you say that managers at this establishment actively promote flexible working and the leave arrangements available to employees at this establishment?'

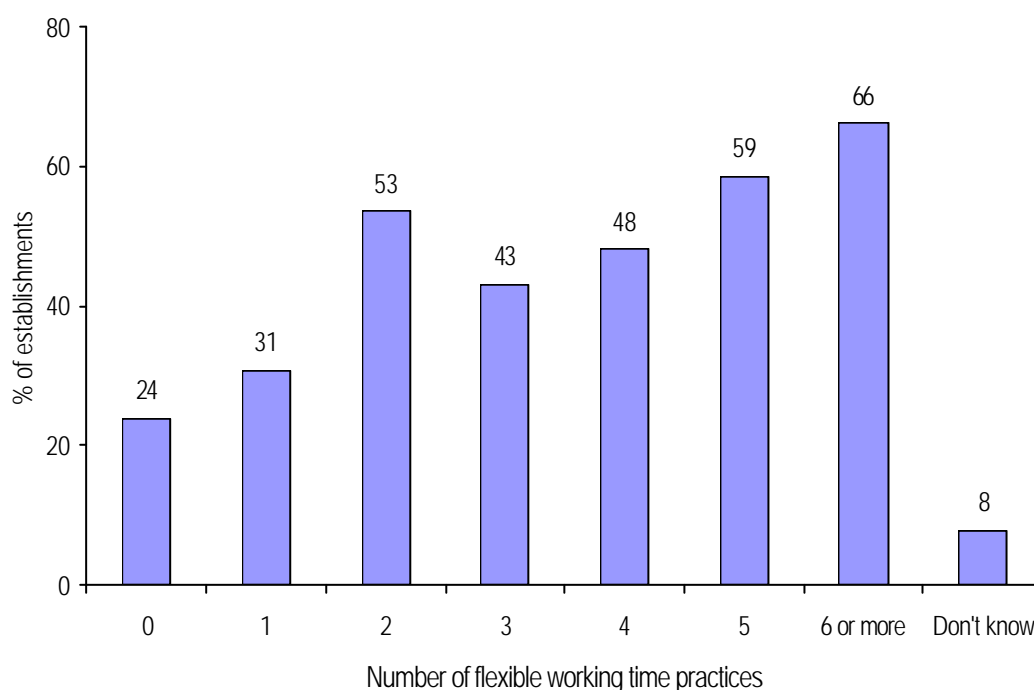
Around four out of ten employers (38 per cent) reported that managers promoted these practices; however, this proportion varied considerably across a number of basic workplace characteristics (see Table 8.1). Most likely to promote these practices were larger workplaces and, in particular, managers in

workplaces that were part of very large organisations. Indeed, the proportion of workplaces whose managers were said to promote these practices was almost twice as high in workplaces where there were 10,000 or more employees in the organisation compared with those with 100 or fewer employees (58 per cent compared to 31 per cent).

Employers in the public sector compared with those in the private sector were considerably more likely to report that flexible working was promoted. Similarly, union recognition appeared to be associated with a greater encouragement of these practices. Several industries – Construction, Manufacturing and Transport and Communication – stand out for having appreciably lower levels of managers promoting flexible working among their employees.

It is of no surprise that those workplaces that provided a greater number of different flexible working time practices were more likely to report that managers promoted their use (see Figure 8.1). While the relationship between the two was not linear (i.e. for each extra practice provided, promotion did not increase uniformly), there was nevertheless a strong positive association between the extent of provision of flexible working time practices and whether or not managers actively promoted them to employees.

Figure 8.1: Whether managers actively promoted flexible working and the leave arrangements available to employees at this establishment, by number of flexible working time arrangements provided



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,503 managers. Provision relates to both the practice being provided and at least some employees having used the practice in the past 12 months.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

The presence of a specialist personnel function at the workplace was expected to be related to the promotion of these practices; however, this was not found to be the case. Where there was a Human Resources specialist, two-fifths (40 per cent) reported that flexible working practices were actively promoted, compared with only marginally (and not significantly) fewer (37 per cent) where there was no evidence of a personnel function at the workplace.

While some workplaces may actively promote their flexible working practices and leave arrangements more than others, whether or not this matters is probably best determined by whether it has any impact on the level of employees making use (take-up) of these practices. In most cases it appeared that take-up of flexible working time practices was higher where managers actively promoted flexible working and leave arrangements compared with those that did not, although it did vary according to which practice was being referred to (see Table 8.2). For example, around a fifth of workplaces (21 per cent) that provided compressed hours working had a take-up rate of 50 per cent or more where managers were actively promoting flexible practices (although not necessarily this practice). Where managers were not promoting flexible practices, just one-in-ten (nine per cent) had a take-up rate of 50 per cent or higher. Similar findings were evident in relation to part-time working and flexitime. For the other practices, aside from term-time working, any differences in the take-up rate were not significant. The take-up of term-time working was actually reported to be somewhat lower where flexible practices were being actively encouraged, and there appeared to be no clear reason for this.

The above association between take-up and active promotion may prove to be just that, an association. Further analysis would be required to see whether the association remains after allowing for other factors that contribute to the take-up of flexible working time practices. This, however, goes beyond the scope of this report.

Informing employees

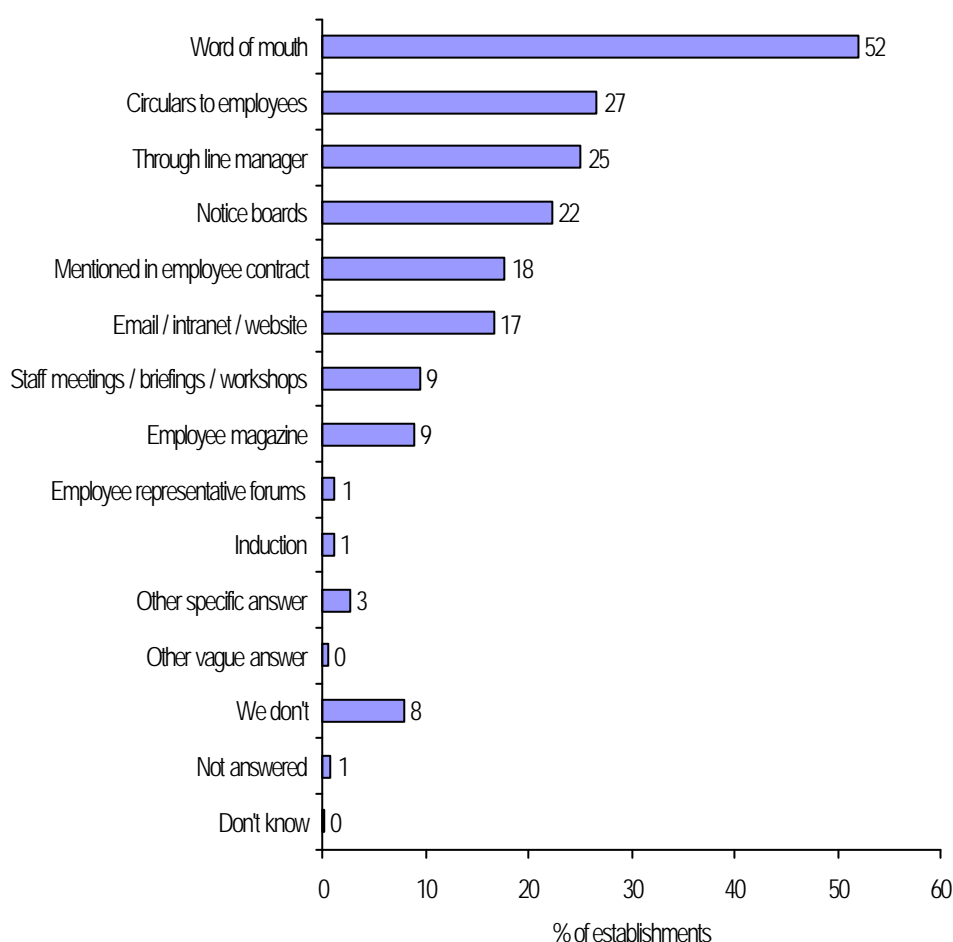
There are a vast number of methods that could be used by management to promote their work-life balance practices. Other studies (Cully *et al.*, 1999, Marchington *et al.*, 1992) have suggested that it is usual for a variety of methods to be used to communicate such information. These can be either formal arrangements where all employees are addressed – such as ‘town hall’ meetings, magazines and circulars through which the management speaks to the entire workforce, or informal arrangements – such as by word of mouth or by utilising notice boards.

In most workplaces (92 per cent) there was at least one mechanism in place for informing employees about the types of working patterns, leave arrangements and facilities that were available to help them balance their work and their life outside of work. Because the prevalence of channels for informing employees about their work-life balance practices was so high amongst employers, variation across different types of workplaces was small and mostly not significant. Of note, however, was the variation in the informing of employee across industries. Workplaces in the Construction (83 per cent) and Transport, Storage and Communications (86 per cent) industries were significantly less

likely than other industries to report any mechanisms for communicating their work-life balance practices to their employees.

The most common method used to convey information about work-life balance practices was an informal one – word of mouth – and this was used in approximately half (52 per cent) of all workplaces. This was, by a considerable margin, the most widespread means of communicating this information (see Figure 8.2). Around a quarter used circulars sent to employees (27 per cent) or conveyed this information via employees’ line managers or supervisors (25 per cent). Notice boards (22 per cent) and email or an intranet (17 per cent) were used in approximately a fifth of workplaces, while a similar proportion reported that any information on such practices would appear in an employee’s employment contract. More formal methods of communicating, such as by staff magazines or staff meetings were less frequently mentioned – around one-in-ten reported using either of these.

Figure 8.2: Methods of communicating to employees about available working patterns, leave arrangements or facilities that can help them balance their work and their life outside



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

The types of method used to communicate this information to employees varied considerably according to the size of the workplace (see Table 8.3). More formal mechanisms, such as employee magazines and staff meetings, were more widespread the larger the workplace. In contrast, word of mouth was at least twice as likely to be used in the smallest of workplaces compared with those with 500 or more employees. Whereas almost half of the workplaces with 250 or more employees used an electronic means of communicating, such as email, the comparable figure in workplaces with fewer than 250 employees was between one-in-ten and a quarter.

Just under half of employers (47 per cent or 43 per cent of all workplaces) that had a method in place to communicate with their employees recognised the need to use multiple methods of communication. Where only one method was used, it tended to be an informal one, usually word of mouth (49 per cent).

Almost three-fifths (58 per cent or 53 per cent of all workplaces) of small workplaces (with fewer than 25 employees) that had a method in place to communicate with their employees used a single method of communicating, compared with a third of workplaces (31 per cent or 30 per cent of all workplaces) with at least 250 employees.

In workplaces where it was reported that managers actively promoted flexible working, they were more likely to use most of the different methods of communicating information compared with workplaces where there was no active promotion (see Table 8.5). The difference is most apparent with respect to more formal methods of communicating information. For example, those that promoted their practices were twice as likely to use an employee magazine to communicate information to their employees than those that did not promote (13 and six per cent respectively).

Consulting employees

Another indicator of how seriously employers take the issue of work-life balance can be gleaned from the extent to which they involve their employees in decisions to introduce, or to make changes to, work-life balance practices. Whether or not employees are consulted may also indicate the extent to which these practices are designed to help employees with the work-life balance, rather than being tools for management to increase the flexibility in how they deploy their employees.

Most employers (85 per cent) agreed that management would consult employees (or employee representatives) about the introduction of flexible working practices and leave arrangements. Table 8.6 shows how this varied across workplaces and, in the main, differences were small. Large workplaces and those that were part of larger organisations were more likely to consult their employees concerning the introduction of flexible work and leave arrangements. Workplaces within the public sector were also more likely to consult employees than their private sector counterparts. As would be expected, consultation was more likely in the presence of a trade union.

Given that consultation took place in most workplaces, it was therefore not a very good predictor of the take-up of flexible working. It was thought that greater consultation could possibly result in employees having greater ownership of the flexible working arrangements, and in these circumstances take-up may be higher. This may still be the case, since it was probable that the measure used here to identify ownership through consultation was not strong enough. For example, the measure said nothing about the quality or quantity of consultation, which are likely to be key factors.

Records of take-up

Another indicator of how seriously employers take the issue of work-life balance might be taken from their monitoring of the use of these practices.

Employers were asked to report whether they kept records on the following types of leave: maternity; paternity; parental and time off to deal with emergencies involving dependants. In most cases they did: almost four-fifths (78 per cent) kept records on the take-up of maternity leave; while around seven-tenths kept records on the take-up of paternity leave (70 per cent), parental leave (70 per cent) and time off for emergencies (71 per cent).

In most cases, workplaces that belonged to a larger organisation and those in the public sector were more likely to have kept records (see Table 8.7). There was little evidence to suggest that the take-up of the practices they were associated with was higher where records were kept.

Conclusion

Although less than half of all employers actively promoted work-life balance practices (38 per cent), the vast majority of employers informed their employees in some way or another about the work-life balance practices available to them (92 per cent) and/or consulted them about the introduction of such practices (85 per cent).

Those workplaces that already provided a greater number of flexible working time practices were more likely to report that they promoted these practices. An area that perhaps warrants further investigation is the three-way interaction between active promotion of practices, type of available work-life balance practices and take-up. Such an analysis could go some way to illuminating whether some types of work-life balance practice are promoted over others, and whether this impacts upon the take-up of such a practice.

There was variation across workplaces with regard to whether employers actively promoted work-life balance, particularly in some industries. There was comparably less variation by information and consultation issues. That being said, less variability should not be taken as a sign that information and consultation mechanisms amongst employers were ideal but could instead be viewed as symptomatic of the need for generic cross-workplace improvement with regard to the delivery and quality of these processes. Indeed, although high proportions of employers kept their employees informed about the available

work-life balance practices, many were reliant upon informal channels, such as word of mouth, and could consolidate the process by making firm formal commitments to communicating with their employees.

The proportion of employers keeping records on take-up was also high, with between seven-in-ten and eight-in-ten employers monitoring the take-up of maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and time off for emergencies.

In summary, despite the positive steps that have been taken in the area of employer-employee communication, there is some distance yet to travel before arriving at a formal *work-life balance system* where employees are consulted regarding its implementation, informed about its availability and actively encouraged to make use of it.

Table 8.1: Whether employers promoted the use of flexible working and the leave arrangements available to employees at this establishment, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know / Not answered	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	37	59	5	478	291
10 to 24 employees	38	60	2	571	444
25 to 49 employees	39	60	1	248	228
50 to 99 employees	37	63	*	107	143
100 to 249 employees	33	66	1	65	177
250 to 499 employees	59	40	1	19	80
500 or more employees	53	47	*	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	31	67	2	733	537
100 to less than 1,000	36	62	2	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	43	52	4	246	317
10,000 or more	58	42	1	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	34	63	3	1,200	1,097
Public sector	52	47	*	299	406
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	31	67	2	578	472
Part of a larger organisation	42	55	3	922	1,031
Union recognition					
No unions present	34	65	2	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	40	60		64	83
Recognised unions	51	48	1	386	581
All workplaces	38	60	2	1,500	1,503

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,503 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.1 cont.: Whether employers promoted the use of flexible working and the leave arrangements available to employees at this establishment, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes	No	Don't know / Not answered	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	30	65	5	38	58
Manufacturing	24	74	1	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[9]	[59]	[32]	6	23
Construction	10	89	2	100	79
Wholesale and Retail Trade	36	61	3	315	226
Hotels and Restaurants	59	40	1	107	73
Transport, Storage and Communication	26	68	6	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[29]	[64]	[7]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	33	64	3	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	70	30	-	49	85
Education	38	61	1	136	181
Health and Social Work	55	42	2	186	219
Other Community	45	55	-	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	34	59	8	55	60
North West and Merseyside	44	55	1	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	41	59	-	119	125
East Midlands	27	67	6	115	117
West Midlands	34	64	2	113	126
South West	26	68	5	155	141
Eastern	46	52	2	144	142
London	40	58	3	185	183
South East	35	65	1	228	223
Wales	46	50	4	73	74
Scotland	44	54	2	154	151
All workplaces	38	60	2	1,500	1,503

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,503 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.2: Take-up of flexible working time arrangements, by whether these practices were promoted

	Whether practices actively promoted			Column percentages
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	All workplaces (%)
Part-time				
50% or more	42	30	[30]	35
25-49%	18	18	[7]	18
10-24%	24	29	[13]	27
5-9%	9	10	[19]	10
Less than 5%	5	10	[7]	8
None	*	1	[6]	1
Don't know	2	2	[19]	2
Weighted count	459	636	20	1,115
Unweighted count	496	672	18	1,186
Term-time				
50% or more	26	42	[-]	35
25-49%	12	5	[-]	8
10-24%	14	15	[-]	15
5-9%	15	10	[-]	12
Less than 5%	14	11	[-]	12
None	14	11	[40]	13
Don't know	5	5	[60]	5
Weighted count	99	139	3	240
Unweighted count	154	179	4	337
Job share				
50% or more	6	4	[-]	5
25-49%	8	8	[-]	8
10-24%	27	23	[38]	25
5-9%	20	21	[52]	21
Less than 5%	29	23	[-]	26
None	7	13	[-]	10
Don't know	3	8	[10]	6
Weighted count	95	107	2	205
Unweighted count	173	174	3	350
Flexitime				
50% or more	52	25	[37]	41
25-49%	13	6	[17]	10
10-24%	13	20	[29]	16
5-9%	5	14	[-]	9
Less than 5%	4	15	[-]	8
None	9	18	[1]	12
Don't know	4	3	[17]	4
Weighted count	203	150	10	362
Unweighted count	261	195	10	466

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided any of the named practices.

Notes: Figures are weighted.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.2 cont.: Take-up of flexible working time arrangements, by whether these practices were promoted

	Whether practices actively promoted			Column percentages
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	All workplaces (%)
Compressed hours				
50% or more	21	9	-	15
25-49%	13	3	-	8
10-24%	9	23	-	16
5-9%	12	21	-	16
Less than 5%	18	14	-	16
None	15	24	-	20
Don't know	12	6	-	9
Weighted count	53	57	-	110
Unweighted count	103	86	-	189
Annualised hours				
50% or more	33	35	[98]	35
25-49%	7	23	[-]	15
10-24%	18	9	[2]	13
5-9%	10	6	[-]	8
Less than 5%	16	12	[-]	13
None	14	12	[-]	13
Don't know	1	3	[-]	2
Weighted count	55	65	2	123
Unweighted count	83	81	2	166
Reduced hours				
50% or more	4	2	[-]	3
25-49%	1	8	[-]	4
10-24%	28	25	[41]	27
5-9%	22	13	[-]	17
Less than 5%	23	34	[9]	28
None	19	13	[-]	16
Don't know	3	6	[51]	5
Weighted count	117	105	3	225
Unweighted count	177	181	6	364

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that provided any of the named practices.

Notes: Figures are weighted.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.3: Methods of communicating with employees, by size of establishment

	Size of establishment							Per cent of workplaces
	5 to 9 employees (%)	10 to 24 employees (%)	25 to 49 employees (%)	50 to 99 employees (%)	100 to 249 employees (%)	250 to 499 employees (%)	500 or more employees (%)	All workplaces (%)
Employee magazine	6	9	8	14	20	24	29	9
Circulars to employees	21	24	37	37	30	31	47	27
Email / intranet / website	16	13	14	29	29	49	47	17
Mentioned in employee contract	13	19	21	26	18	26	26	18
Through line manager	21	23	31	40	31	26	21	25
Word of mouth	59	56	40	42	38	45	26	52
Notice boards	13	23	28	38	31	38	20	22
Induction	*	1	2	1	5	6	2	1
Staff meetings / briefings / workshops	8	10	11	8	9	11	23	9
Employee representative forums	1	*	2	3	4	4	6	1
Other specific answer	1	2	5	2	6	2	1	3
Other vague answer	*	*	-	1	1	-	-	*
We don't	10	7	6	6	11	2	4	8
Not answered	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	1
Don't know	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	*
Weighted count	480	571	248	107	65	19	13	1502
Unweighted count	292	444	228	143	177	80	140	1504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.4: Number of methods used to communicate to employees, by workplace characteristics

						<i>Row percentages</i>	
	None (%)	One (%)	Two (%)	Three (%)	Four or more (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment							
5 to 9 employees	12	51	21	8	9	480	292
10 to 24 employees	7	54	18	7	14	571	444
25 to 49 employees	6	41	28	11	15	248	228
50 to 99 employees	5	37	22	12	24	107	143
100 to 249 employees	11	35	22	10	21	65	177
250 to 499 employees	4	29	16	30	21	19	80
500 or more employees	3	31	29	18	19	13	140
Size of organisation							
Less than 100	10	60	16	7	8	735	538
100 to less than 1,000	11	35	26	9	18	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	4	39	26	14	18	246	317
10,000 or more	4	29	32	12	24	176	232
Ownership							
Private sector	10	50	21	8	11	1,203	1,098
Public sector	4	39	22	12	22	299	406
Single or multi							
Single independent establishment	10	58	15	8	9	580	473
Part of a larger organisation	8	42	24	10	16	922	1,031
Union recognition							
No unions present	9	54	19	8	10	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	2	36	28	13	21	64	83
Recognised unions	3	37	25	11	23	386	581
All workplaces	8	48	21	9	13	1,502	1,504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.4 cont.: Number of methods used to communicate to employees, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>							
	None	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Weighted count	Unweighted count	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
Standard Industrial Classification								
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	10	48	16	10	17	38	58	
Manufacturing	10	56	15	11	9	164	186	
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[20]	[12]	[6]	[3]	[58]	6	23	
Construction	17	58	13	3	9	100	79	
Wholesale and Retail Trade	9	50	24	7	10	315	226	
Hotels and Restaurants	8	49	19	12	12	109	74	
Transport, Storage and Communication	14	43	21	12	10	76	79	
Financial Intermediation	[9]	[28]	[37]	[13]	[12]	51	49	
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	7	53	16	10	14	165	155	
Public Administration and Defence	-	31	22	13	34	49	85	
Education	7	43	25	9	16	136	181	
Health and Social Work	4	44	24	9	19	186	219	
Other Community	8	52	19	7	13	100	84	
Government Office Region								
North East	5	51	21	5	18	55	60	
North West and Merseyside	5	44	21	7	23	159	161	
Yorkshire & Humber	6	50	20	14	10	119	125	
East Midlands	8	62	17	6	8	115	117	
West Midlands	9	42	33	4	11	113	126	
South West	12	44	19	12	12	158	142	
Eastern	10	49	19	9	13	144	142	
London	11	45	27	4	13	185	183	
South East	8	51	14	15	12	228	223	
Wales	9	50	24	5	13	73	74	
Scotland	7	48	21	9	15	154	151	
All workplaces	8	48	21	9	13	1,502	1,504	

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.5: Methods of communicating with employees, by whether practices were actively promoted

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>		
	Whether practices actively promoted		All workplaces
	Yes (%)	No (%)	(%)
Employee magazine	13	6	9
Circulars to employees	33	23	27
Email / intranet / website	21	13	17
Mentioned in employee contract	19	17	18
Through line manager	30	21	25
Word of mouth	57	50	52
Notice boards	29	19	22
Induction	1	1	1
Staff meetings / briefings / workshops	11	8	9
Employee representative forums	2	1	1
Other specific answer	3	3	3
Other vague answer	1	*	*
We don't	3	11	8
Not answered	-	*	1
Don't know	-	-	*
Weighted count	566	896	1500
Unweighted count	590	883	1503

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,503 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.6: Whether employers consulted employees before work-life balance practices were introduced, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know / Not answered (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	83	13	4	480	292
10 to 24 employees	86	13	1	571	444
25 to 49 employees	85	13	2	248	228
50 to 99 employees	87	11	2	107	143
100 to 249 employees	84	15	1	65	177
250 to 499 employees	91	8	1	19	80
500 or more employees	93	6	*	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	82	16	2	735	538
100 to less than 1,000	82	14	4	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	89	11	*	246	317
10,000 or more	91	9	1	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	83	15	2	1,203	1,098
Public sector	93	6	2	299	406
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	82	16	2	580	473
Part of a larger organisation	87	11	2	922	1,031
Union recognition					
No unions present	82	16	1	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	92	8		64	83
Recognised unions	93	5	2	386	581
All workplaces	85	13	2	1,502	1,504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.6 cont.: Whether employers consulted employees before work-life balance practices were introduced, by workplace characteristics

				<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know / Not answered (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	87	9	4	38	58
Manufacturing	82	15	3	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[100]	[-]	[-]	6	23
Construction	72	25	2	100	79
Wholesale and Retail Trade	87	10	3	315	226
Hotels and Restaurants	81	15	4	109	74
Transport, Storage and Communication	77	23	*	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[89]	[11]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	78	21	1	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	99	1	-	49	85
Education	88	9	4	136	181
Health and Social Work	92	8	1	186	219
Other Community	87	10	3	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	87	11	2	55	60
North West and Merseyside	87	10	3	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	90	8	3	119	125
East Midlands	88	8	4	115	117
West Midlands	80	20	1	113	126
South West	87	10	4	158	142
Eastern	86	13	1	144	142
London	83	14	3	185	183
South East	78	19	2	228	223
Wales	89	10	1	73	74
Scotland	86	13	1	154	151
All workplaces	85	13	2	1,502	1,504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.7: Whether records were kept on the take-up of leave arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Emergency time off for dependants	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	71	69	65	68	484	294
10 to 24 employees	76	67	67	68	571	444
25 to 49 employees	88	67	76	81	249	229
50 to 99 employees	88	77	82	77	107	143
100 to 249 employees	95	84	82	73	65	178
250 to 499 employees	95	80	80	69	19	80
500 or more employees	83	68	83	69	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	71	63	60	65	739	540
100 to less than 1,000	85	80	76	77	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	83	73	83	75	246	317
10,000 or more	90	73	85	84	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	76	68	68	69	1,208	1,101
Public sector	89	75	77	81	299	407
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	69	63	61	62	584	475
Part of a larger organisation	84	73	75	77	922	1,033
Union recognition						
No unions present	73	65	65	67	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	88	69	61	70	64	83
Recognised unions	90	78	83	82	386	581
All workplaces	78	70	70	71	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers in columns one and three, 1,170 in column two and 1,241 managers in column four.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 8.7 cont.: Whether records were kept on the take-up of leave arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Maternity leave (%)	Paternity leave (%)	Parental leave (%)	Emergency time off for dependants (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	69	71	71	49	38	58
Manufacturing	67	54	52	61	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[93]	[92]	[56]	[44]	6	23
Construction	58	69	57	55	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	78	66	72	74	315	226
Hotels and Restaurants	76	73	69	67	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	78	68	73	66	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[88]	[75]	[90]	[66]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	81	73	72	68	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	90	83	87	89	49	85
Education	87	69	72	83	136	182
Health and Social Work	89	73	75	80	187	220
Other Community	78	77	72	76	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	73	59	67	76	55	60
North West and Merseyside	86	69	72	72	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	81	80	79	70	119	125
East Midlands	68	71	66	65	117	119
West Midlands	82	62	67	69	113	126
South West	78	72	69	66	158	142
Eastern	71	70	67	73	144	142
London	82	72	72	80	185	183
South East	75	64	67	63	228	223
Wales	90	81	78	88	76	75
Scotland	77	67	66	73	154	152
All workplaces	78	70	70	71	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers in columns one and three, 1,170 in column two and 1,241 managers in column four.

Source: WLB2 (2003)

9

Managerial discretion

Introduction

Up to this point in the report, little has been mentioned about the process of managing flexible working arrangements. Aside from references being made to whether or not a particular practice or arrangement is set out in a written document, few details have been provided. Yet it is of interest, since the way in which flexible working is managed would be expected to affect the take-up of practices and, ultimately, the performance of the workplace. Detailed analysis of the process of managing flexible working arrangements would require a more in-depth, qualitative study. Since this was not possible (nor the purpose of the WLB2 study), it was decided to measure one aspect of the process – whether managers have any discretion when operating flexible working arrangements. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to examine the extent to which line managers and supervisors in the workplace are able to make decisions about the implementation of flexible working practices.

The chapter starts by looking at whether managers and supervisors generally have to follow set procedures or can apply their own judgement in relation to flexible working practices. It then moves on to examine the impact that having written policies about flexible work practices has on managerial discretion. In turn the chapter looks at how where the policy is set – perhaps at head office or on the site of the establishment – impacts on managerial discretion. There is then a brief examination of whether managers themselves have the authority to make decisions about flexible working on a day-to-day basis. Finally the chapter looks briefly at the possible impacts of managerial discretion on workplace performance and employee relations.

The key questions it seeks to answer are:

- to what extent do managers and supervisors have discretion about flexible working for their employees;
- in what types of workplace do managers have greater discretion – smaller establishment or larger organisation, public or private, union presence or none; and
- does managerial discretion about flexible working have any impact upon relations between employer and employees?

As this study is based on a survey of employers it is worth noting that managers can tend to overstate their own authority when dealing with certain issues (Edwards and Marginson, 1988), and this may have some bearing on these findings. Furthermore, supervisors have always had some responsibility for the

performance of their subordinates, and the key issue in Human Resource Management literature has always been the degree of autonomy held, rather than whether it exists at all (Cully *et al.*, 1999).

Evidence of discretion when operating flexible working practices and leave arrangements

To measure how much discretion managers and in particular line managers and supervisors yield when operating flexible working practices and leave arrangements, the following question was asked:

'Which of the following statements best applies to how line managers and supervisors at this establishment operate the types of flexible working practices and leave arrangements that we have been talking about?

'Would you say they ... generally have to follow a set procedure, or are they allowed to apply their own judgement?'

Note that when answers are referred to from this question during this chapter, they will be described as general discretion. This indicates discretion on most, if not all, of the flexible work practices available at the establishment where the manager works.

Setting aside the workplaces that reported that they did not have any line managers⁴³, there was a roughly equal split in regards to general discretion. Around half said their line managers and supervisors generally had to follow a set procedure (49 per cent), with similar numbers saying managers and supervisors could apply their own judgement (50 per cent).

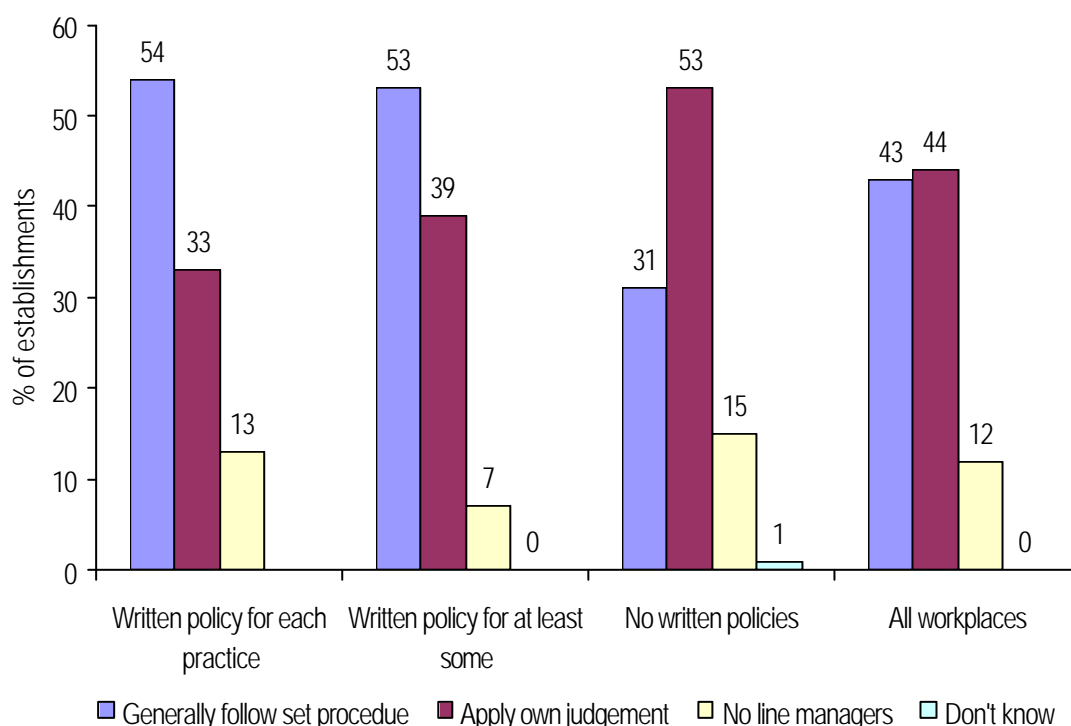
The option of applying one's own judgement in regards to general discretion was strongly associated with a number of basic workplace characteristics (see Table 9.1). In general, it was line managers and supervisors in workplaces of over 50 employees, those in the public sector and those that were part of larger organisations that were the most likely to generally have to follow a set procedure. Larger organisations are in general likely to have more layers of management than smaller ones, suggesting that the greater the layers of management, the more likely it is that set procedures have to be followed.

In Chapters 3 and 4 details were presented on whether the various flexible working arrangements were set out in written documents. This varied considerably across the practices, ranging from one-in-five (19 per cent) workplaces that provided compressed working hours having a written policy covering this practice, up to just under half (45 per cent) with respect to part-time working. It was within this range that there were reports of workplaces having written policies covering their leave arrangements, such as paternity and parental leave (see Chapter 6).

⁴³ Just over one-in-ten (13 per cent) workplaces reported that there were no line managers or supervisors. This was much more common in small workplaces, particularly those with fewer than 25 employees. This is consistent with the results from WERS98 (Cully *et al.*, 1999:85).

The question is whether having such a policy makes any difference to the level of discretion managers can show when implementing these practices. To investigate this, a summary measure was derived that classified workplaces according to whether there was a written policy for each of the flexible working arrangements they had in place. Of the almost nine-tenths of employers (88 per cent) that provided at least one flexible working practice (including homeworking), just a fifth (21 per cent) had all their practices covered by a written policy(s). Where this was the case, line managers and supervisors were significantly less likely to be able to use their own judgement than in circumstances where just some or none of the practices were covered by a written policy (see Figure 9.1). The difference was marked, with just a third (33 per cent) reporting that managers could show any general discretion where all flexible working practices were covered by a written policy, compared with just over a half (53 per cent) where none were covered by a written policy. It also appeared that, where there was any evidence of flexible working arrangements being formalised in this way, general managerial discretion was lower. Even when just some practices were set out in a written document, the proportion reporting that managers could exercise general discretion was significantly lower than in workplaces where there were no written policies.

Figure 9.1: Whether managers could show discretion when operating policy, by provision of written policies covering flexible working



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees and provided flexible working practices.

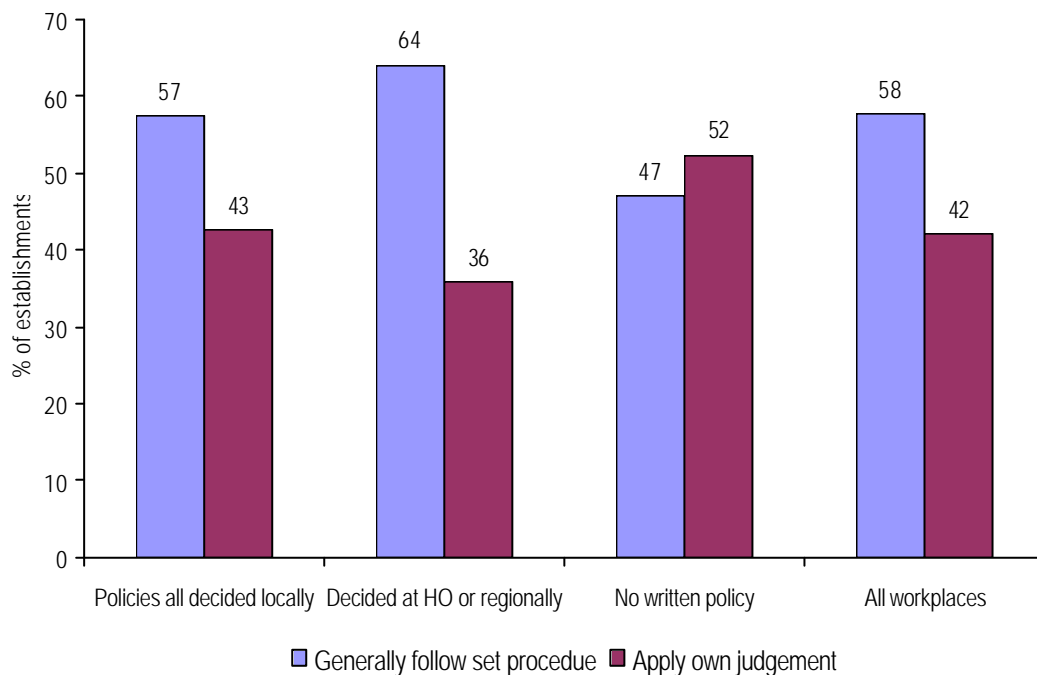
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,374 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Where the control is coming from is also likely to be an important factor influencing the discretion managers can show in the operation of flexible working practices and arrangements. In workplaces that were part of a larger

organisation, there was always the option of control being held at the top (i.e. head office), being devolved to local managers, or there being some mix between these two. To indicate where control may be held, managers were asked to describe where written policies had been set, the three options being: the head office, at the establishment where they were working or somewhere else. Where policy making was devolved down to the workplace, it was thought that this may be associated with local managers having greater discretion in the operation of policy. This was generally found to be true, although differences according to where the policy was set were only small. As Figure 9.2 illustrates, just over two-fifths (43 per cent) of workplaces that were part of a larger organisation and where written policies were all set at the workplace, usually gave their line managers discretion in how they operated policy. Where policy was always set outside of the workplace, just over a third (36 per cent) reported giving managers some discretion.

Figure 9.2: Whether managers could show discretion when operating policy, by provision of written policies covering flexible working and by where policy set



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that were part of a larger organisation and provided some flexible working practices.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 903 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Authority to make decisions

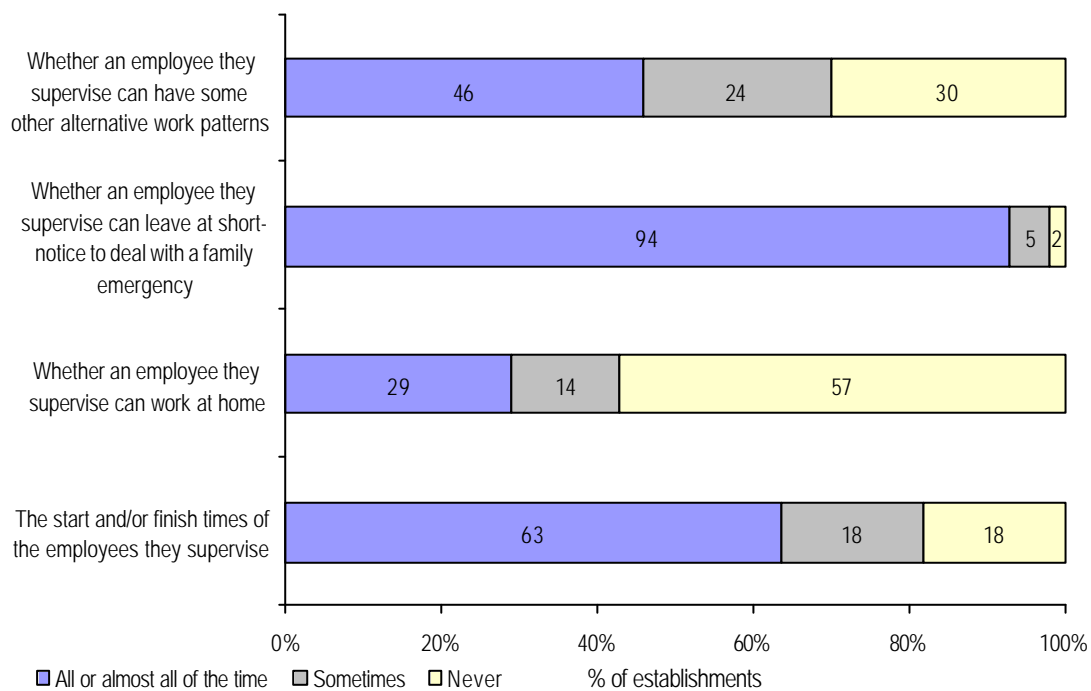
Another aspect of the decision making process is whether managers have the authority to make decisions. This may or may not be related to whether they have discretionary powers, as it is possible that a formalised policy may set out how decision-making authority is devolved down from senior managers to other employees, including line managers and supervisors. To measure the extent to which the authority to make decisions has been devolved, managers were asked

whether line managers had the authority to make decisions on the following issues:

- the start and/or finish times of the employees they supervise;
- whether an employee they supervise can work at home;
- whether an employee they supervise can leave at short notice to deal with a family emergency; and
- whether an employee they supervise can have some other alternative work patterns.

Across these four issues there was considerable variation in the degree of authority reported upon (see Figure 9.3). While in most workplaces line managers and supervisors had the authority to make decisions on whether an employee they supervised could leave at short notice to deal with an emergency, less than half had the same authority to make decisions about homeworking⁴⁴.

Figure 9.3: Whether line managers and supervisors have the authority to make decisions



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees and had line managers / supervisors and where the type of decision being discussed applies to the establishment.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,288, 1,345, 895 and 1,317 managers respectively from the top bar onwards. Differences in the base reflect that some of the issues were not relevant to the establishment.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

⁴⁴ The analysis excludes cases where managers reported that homeworking was not applicable.

It was unsurprising, perhaps, that managers had discretion where there was likely to be only a minimal impact on the working of the business. For example, allowing employees to leave in an emergency is likely to have only a short term impact, whilst varying start and finish times could mean simply starting work half an hour later to allow children to be dropped off at school. However, homeworking and the range of practices that come under 'other alternative work patterns' could have more significant impact on the business and the employee concerned, perhaps explaining why managerial discretion was lower.

Tables 9.2 to 9.5 break down each of these areas of managerial authority by workplace characteristics.

With a legal obligation on employers to grant emergency leave to employees with a family emergency there were few differences in managerial authority in this area. In over 90 per cent of workplaces of all types a decision that needs to be taken on the spot was in the hands of managers and supervisors, not human resources or personnel departments.

There was slightly greater authority for managers in larger establishments to grant permission to work from home, which was in line with the greater availability of homeworking in larger workplaces. Managers in the largest workplaces were the least likely to say that managers and supervisors never had authority on start and finish times but the differences in general were fairly small. There were no clear patterns in relation to 'other alternative work patterns'.

Workplaces that were part of the largest organisations (10,000 or more employees) were the most likely (72 per cent) to have line managers and supervisors with the authority to alter start and finish times (this compares to just 60 per cent of workplace managers in the smallest organisations). These workplaces were also more likely to have managers who could 'all or almost all of the time' authorise alternative work patterns. Those workplaces that were part of the smallest organisations were marginally more likely to have discretion on homeworking.

Across public and private sector workplaces there were no significant differences in terms of managerial discretion with respect to homeworking and start and finish times. However, private sector workplaces (47 per cent) were a little more likely to report that managers had the authority 'all or almost all of the time' to facilitate other alternative work patterns than those in the public sector (38 per cent). This perhaps reflects a greater freedom in the private sector to use different work practices, whereas managers in the public sector are more limited by having to follow set procedures.

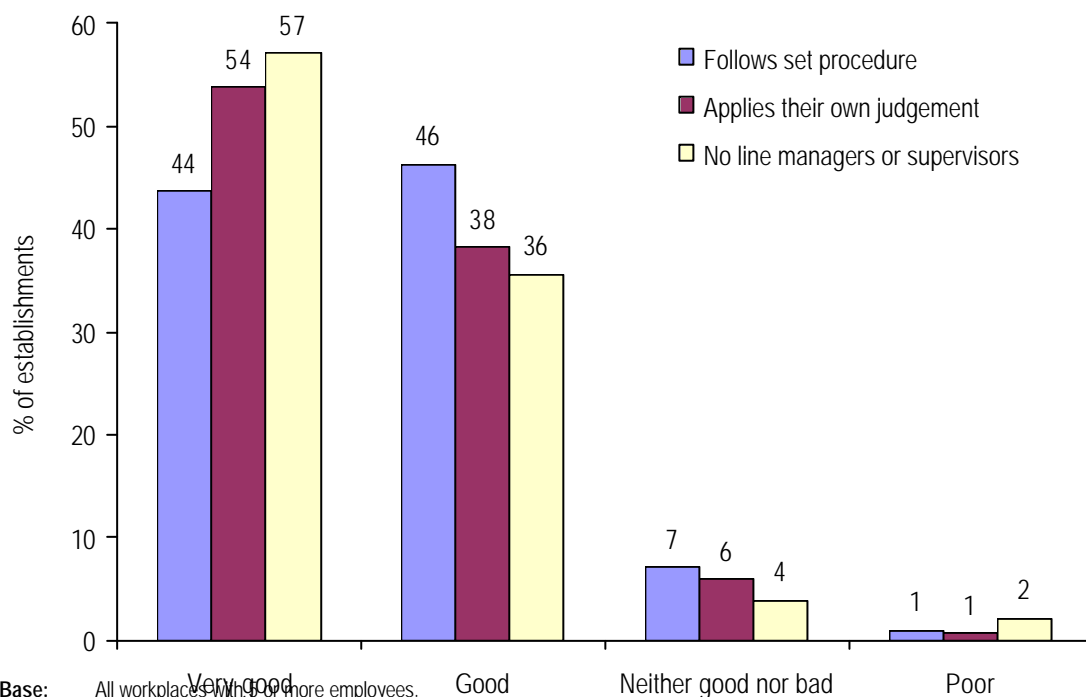
In terms of the start and finish times of employees, it was managers in workplaces that were part of a larger organisation (65 per cent) who were more likely to have this discretion than those in single independent establishments (60 per cent). Workplaces that were part of a larger organisation (25 per cent) were less likely to grant their managers the authority to authorise homeworking all or almost all of the time, than those which were single independent establishments (36 per cent).

There were few differences between industries in relation to managerial authority, reflecting the small sample sizes within each sector in the survey. However, in terms of homeworking, managers in Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities (45 per cent) as well as those in Public Administration and Defence (44 per cent) were more likely than those in all workplaces (29 per cent) to say that managers and supervisors had this discretion 'all or almost all of the time'. Additionally, in terms of discretion on 'other alternative working' managers and supervisors in Hotels and Restaurants (66 per cent), Other Community (61 per cent) and Health and Social Work (58 per cent) were more likely than all other workplaces to have this discretion 'all or almost all of the time'.

Impact of managerial discretion

A key question is whether managerial discretion about flexible work practices actually has an impact on the work-life balance that employees can achieve. Questions it would be interesting to answer include whether employees prefer set procedures because they are unambiguous, or a less bureaucratic approach that might be more adaptable. One possible way to do this is to use workplace performance as a proxy for employee satisfaction. One might expect, for instance, that if an approach was preferred it would manifest itself in better relations between management and employees.

Figure 9.4: Whether managers could show discretion when operating policy, by climate of employee relations



Base: All workplaces with 500 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,501 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Managers were asked to rate the general relationship between management and employees at their establishment. Figure 9.4 looks at the relationship between

employee relations and whether managers had general managerial discretion (see section 'Evidence of discretion when operating flexible working practices and leave arrangements' above) in relation to flexible working. In workplaces where managers were 'generally allowed to apply their own judgement' when operating flexible work practices, just over half (54 per cent) reported that relations were very good, compared to a little under half (44 per cent) in workplaces where managers had to 'follow a set procedure'. There was no difference in the proportions saying that workplace relations were poor between workplaces with different levels of general managerial discretion.

The same analysis was conducted, this time controlling for the size of workplace. In small workplaces, where managers were allowed to apply their own judgement, employee relations were a little more likely to be rated as very good (60 per cent) than where a set procedure had to be followed (50 per cent). However, there was no difference in larger workplaces, perhaps because even when managers had discretion they were constrained by written policies or stronger organisational cultures.

Figure 9.5 shows the proportions that stated that work-life balance practices had a positive impact on workplace performance by managerial discretion⁴⁵. In general the differences were small. However there was some evidence that where line managers and supervisors had to generally follow a set procedure, rather than generally applying their own judgement, managers were more likely to say these practices had a positive affect on their business. This was perhaps because where there was a written policy there was a higher take-up of flexible work practices (see Chapter 3). The largest differences in impact were observed in relation to absenteeism (five per cent), employee motivation (five per cent) and employee relations (five per cent).

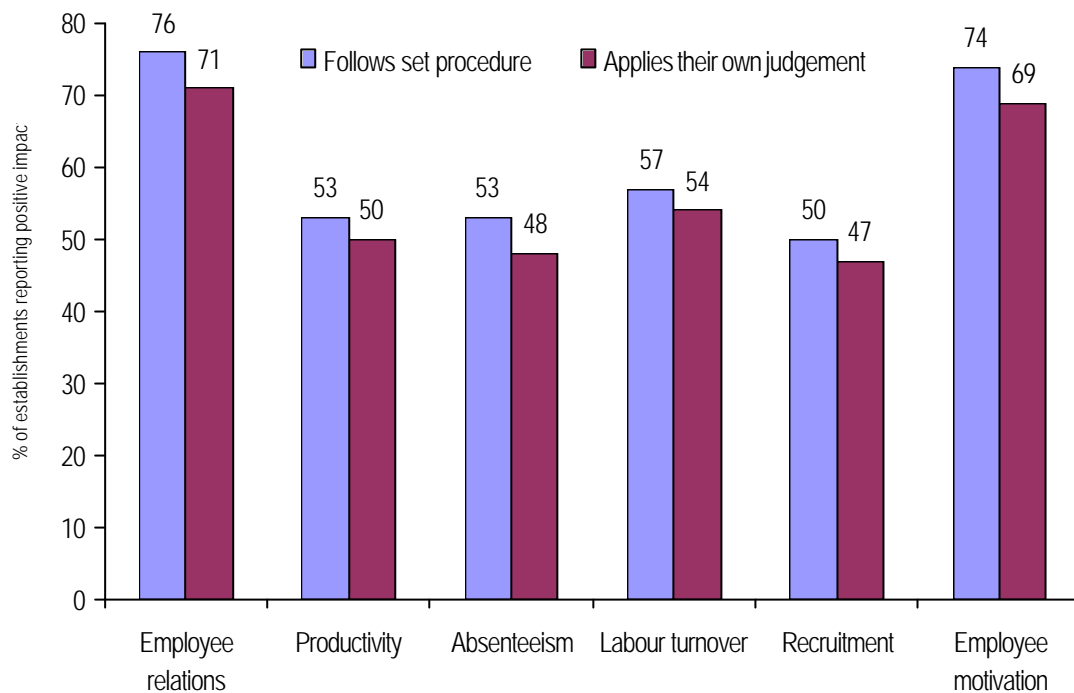
Conclusion

In the final analysis some very clear evidence was found by this study in relation to managerial discretion. At the start of the chapter a number of key questions were posed that can now be answered.

Firstly the chapter wanted to identify the extent to which line managers and supervisors had discretion about flexible working for their employees. On the basic measure of general discretion, managers were split down the middle on whether line managers and supervisors generally followed set procedures or applied their own judgement in operating flexible working practices and leave arrangements. Managerial discretion was lower in workplaces that had written policies formalising one or more of their flexible work practices. Looking at managerial authority, that is the ability to make decisions about the implementation of flexible working, it was found that it was highest on issues

⁴⁵ The measure of managerial discretion used here was from the summary question asking if managers and supervisors 'generally have to follow a set procedure', or are they allowed to apply their own judgement.'

Figure 9.5: Positive impact of work-life balance practices on workplace performance, by managerial discretion



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,505 managers, except for employee motivation which are based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

likely to have a short term impact on the business, such as taking leave in a family emergency, and lower on policies more likely to have a more significant impact, such as homeworking.

The second question was in what types of workplaces do managers have the most discretion? The following of set procedures was highest in workplaces with 50 or more employees, in the public sector and in workplaces that were part of larger organisations. General discretion was found to be slightly higher in workplaces where policy making about flexible work practices was devolved to workplaces rather than when policy was set elsewhere. Managerial authority varied depending on the practice and between different types of workplaces with a few overall patterns.

The final question was what was the impact of managerial discretion? Where line managers and supervisors could exercise general discretion, managers were a little more likely to rate employee relations as 'very good' but this was limited to smaller workplaces. However, where line managers and supervisors had to follow set procedures, managers were a little more likely to report that these practices had a positive effect on their business. This might be because where there were written policies, there was a higher take-up of flexible work practices.

Table 9.1: Whether any managerial discretion, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Generally follow set procedure (%)	Apply own judgement (%)	No flexible practices (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	42	56	1	1	393	241
10 to 24 employees	43	57	*	*	478	377
25 to 49 employees	55	45	-	*	236	216
50 to 99 employees	70	29	2	-	103	137
100 to 249 employees	69	31	-	-	64	176
250 to 499 employees	53	46	-	1	19	80
500 or more employees	83	17	-	-	13	139
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	33	65	1	1	595	444
100 to less than 1,000	51	48	1	*	227	294
1,000 to less than 10,000	67	32	1	-	231	306
10,000 or more	75	25	-	-	156	219
Ownership						
Private sector	42	56	1	*	1,037	983
Public sector	74	26	-	-	269	383
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	34	65	1	1	473	399
Part of a larger organisation	57	42	*	*	833	967
Union recognition						
No unions present	37	62	1	*	864	712
Unions present no recognition	65	35	-	-	58	76
Recognised unions	73	27	-	*	355	555
All workplaces	49	50	1	*	1,306	1,366

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that have line managers/supervisors.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,366 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.1 cont.: Whether any managerial discretion, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Generally follow set procedure (%)	Apply own judgement (%)	No flexible practices (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[27]	[71]	[2]	[-]	32	49
Manufacturing	40	57	2	-	139	170
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[66]	[34]	[-]	[-]	6	23
Construction	44	54	2	-	87	72
Wholesale and Retail Trade	47	53	-	-	276	202
Hotels and Restaurants	43	54	-	3	97	66
Transport, Storage and Communication	53	44	3	-	62	72
Financial Intermediation	[54]	[46]	[-]	[-]	46	45
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	48	51	-	1	147	142
Public Administration and Defence	74	25	-	*	47	84
Education	73	27	-	-	117	161
Health and Social Work	46	54	-	-	162	201
Other Community	43	57	-	-	84	74
Government Office Region						
North East	54	46	-	-	43	53
North West and Merseyside	52	46	2	-	137	148
Yorkshire & Humber	56	42	1	*	110	119
East Midlands	43	57	-	-	99	105
West Midlands	40	60	-	-	97	113
South West	45	53	-	2	140	128
Eastern	53	46	1	1	117	123
London	51	49	-	-	166	172
South East	45	54	1	*	200	202
Wales	41	59	-	-	66	67
Scotland	56	42	2	-	131	136
All workplaces	49	50	1	*	1,306	1,366

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that have line managers/supervisors.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,366 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.2: Whether any managerial discretion on start / finish times, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>							
	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Not Answered (%)	Don't Know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count	
Size of establishment								
5 to 9 employees	65	17	17	1	-	370	228	
10 to 24 employees	65	16	18	-	1	462	361	
25 to 49 employees	62	19	19	-	-	223	205	
50 to 99 employees	58	23	18	-	-	99	133	
100 to 249 employees	56	22	22	-	-	63	174	
250 to 499 employees	50	38	12	-	-	18	78	
500 or more employees	66	23	11	-	-	13	138	
Size of organisation								
Less than 100	60	18	22	*	-	560	421	
100 to less than 1,000	60	21	18	-	1	220	284	
1,000 to less than 10,000	69	19	12	-	-	224	300	
10,000 or more	72	15	13	-	-	154	217	
Ownership								
Private sector	64	18	17	*	*	996	954	
Public sector	59	21	21	-	-	252	363	
Single or multi								
Single independent establishment	60	19	21	*	-	448	383	
Part of a larger organisation	65	18	17	-	*	801	934	
Union recognition								
No unions present	64	17	19	-	*	826	685	
Unions present no recognition	57	18	24	-	-	56	73	
Recognised unions	63	21	16	-	-	342	538	
All workplaces	63	18	18	*	*	1,249	1,317	

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where it was relevant to alter start/finish times.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,317 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.2 cont.: Whether any managerial discretion on start / finish times, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>							
	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Not Answered (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count	
Standard Industrial Classification								
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[67]	[20]	[14]	[-]	[-]	28	45	
Manufacturing	52	20	28	-	-	133	166	
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[60]	[16]	[24]	[-]	[-]	6	22	
Construction	57	18	25	-	-	84	70	
Wholesale and Retail Trade	69	16	14	1	-	268	197	
Hotels and Restaurants	79	12	9	-	-	95	65	
Transport, Storage and Communication	66	15	19	-	-	58	70	
Financial Intermediation	[68]	[15]	[17]	[-]	[-]	46	45	
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	54	22	22	-	1	142	136	
Public Administration and Defence	67	23	11	-	-	44	80	
Education	47	20	32	-	-	106	149	
Health and Social Work	68	20	11	-	1	154	195	
Other Community	71	19	11	-	-	82	72	
Government Office Region								
North East	63	21	16	-	-	41	51	
North West and Merseyside	63	15	22	-	-	129	140	
Yorkshire & Humber	62	21	15	2	-	108	117	
East Midlands	62	19	19	-	-	97	104	
West Midlands	54	26	20	-	-	95	110	
South West	69	19	12	-	-	129	121	
Eastern	58	19	23	-	-	110	117	
London	65	16	19	-	-	163	169	
South East	67	16	16	-	1	189	193	
Wales	75	9	16	-	-	63	64	
Scotland	58	22	21	-	-	124	131	
All workplaces	63	18	18	*	*	1249	1317	

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where it was relevant to alter start/finish times.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,317 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.3: Whether any managerial discretion on homeworking, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	27	13	60	-	197	126
10 to 24 employees	28	13	59	*	277	226
25 to 49 employees	32	15	53	-	150	135
50 to 99 employees	31	12	57	-	68	92
100 to 249 employees	26	17	57	-	48	131
250 to 499 employees	39	28	34	-	16	69
500 or more employees	51	20	29	-	12	116
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	33	12	54	-	351	268
100 to less than 1,000	26	12	61	1	146	216
1,000 to less than 10,000	28	17	56	-	116	194
10,000 or more	23	15	61	-	90	143
Ownership						
Private sector	29	12	59	*	593	607
Public sector	31	20	49	-	175	288
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	36	13	51	-	268	241
Part of a larger organisation	25	14	60	*	500	654
Union recognition						
No unions present	28	12	60	*	504	438
Unions present no recognition	[24]	[21]	[55]	[-]	30	47
Recognised unions	31	17	51	-	218	395
All workplaces	29	14	57	*	769	895

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where it was relevant to work from home.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 895 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.3 cont.: Whether any managerial discretion on homeworking, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[16]	[10]	[74]	[-]	18	25
Manufacturing	25	8	67	-	85	118
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[25]	[6]	[70]	[-]	3	16
Construction	[34]	[24]	[42]	[-]	49	47
Wholesale and Retail Trade	15	15	70	-	135	105
Hotels and Restaurants	[12]	[1]	[87]	[-]	39	27
Transport, Storage and Communication	[26]	[14]	[60]	[-]	35	41
Financial Intermediation	[31]	[10]	[59]	[-]	28	33
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	45	15	40	1	123	119
Public Administration and Defence	44	9	47	-	37	70
Education	24	24	52	-	81	123
Health and Social Work	40	12	48	-	89	121
Other Community	[30]	[14]	[55]	[-]	46	46
Government Office Region						
North East	[36]	[6]	[58]	[-]	25	36
North West and Merseyside	25	12	64	-	80	98
Yorkshire & Humber	25	10	65	-	60	77
East Midlands	21	23	57	-	56	67
West Midlands	30	13	57	-	50	67
South West	28	6	66	-	67	73
Eastern	27	14	59	-	78	86
London	41	15	43	-	114	125
South East	30	15	53	1	133	138
Wales	[21]	[15]	[64]	[-]	35	42
Scotland	26	17	56	-	71	86
All workplaces	29	14	57	*	769	895

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where it was relevant to work from home.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 895 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.4: Whether any managerial discretion on emergency leave, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>				
	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	92	6	1	378	233
10 to 24 employees	94	4	1	472	372
25 to 49 employees	94	3	3	231	211
50 to 99 employees	95	2	3	101	136
100 to 249 employees	94	5	1	64	176
250 to 499 employees	89	9	1	18	78
500 or more employees	98	2	*	13	139
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	92	6	2	574	432
100 to less than 1,000	95	4	1	224	291
1,000 to less than 10,000	96	3	1	229	303
10,000 or more	96	2	3	156	219
Ownership					
Private sector	93	5	1	1012	965
Public sector	95	3	3	266	380
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	91	7	2	455	389
Part of a larger organisation	95	4	1	822	956
Union recognition					
No unions present	93	5	2	842	697
Unions present no recognition	97	1	2	58	76
Recognised unions	96	2	2	353	551
All workplaces	94	5	2	1,278	1,345

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where emergency discretion leave was relevant to the workplace.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,345 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.4 cont.: Whether any managerial discretion on emergency leave, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[91]	[9]	[-]	30	47
Manufacturing	91	6	3	136	167
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[97]	[3]	[-]	6	23
Construction	91	8	1	84	70
Wholesale and Retail Trade	90	9	1	270	199
Hotels and Restaurants	96	3	2	95	65
Transport, Storage and Communication	98	2	*	60	71
Financial Intermediation	95	5	-	46	45
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	96	2	2	143	138
Public Administration and Defence	97	*	3	47	83
Education	93	3	5	115	159
Health and Social Work	97	2	1	159	199
Other Community	97	3	-	84	74
Government Office Region					
North East	97	3	-	42	52
North West and Merseyside	97	3	1	135	147
Yorkshire & Humber	94	3	3	106	116
East Midlands	92	8	-	99	105
West Midlands	92	8	*	94	111
South West	94	3	3	138	127
Eastern	91	5	4	113	120
London	92	6	3	163	170
South East	91	8	2	193	197
Wales	98	-	2	66	66
Scotland	98	2	-	128	134
All workplaces	94	5	2	1,278	1,345

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where emergency discretion leave was relevant to the workplace.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,345 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.5: Whether any managerial discretion on operating 'other alternative working' arrangements, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	45	29	25	1	349	215
10 to 24 employees	49	22	28	*	439	345
25 to 49 employees	43	21	35	-	222	203
50 to 99 employees	38	23	39	-	101	135
100 to 249 employees	42	22	36	*	62	173
250 to 499 employees	45	36	18	-	18	79
500 or more employees	52	23	25	-	13	138
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	42	22	36	-	528	399
100 to less than 1,000	40	30	28	2	217	285
1,000 to less than 10,000	51	25	24	-	223	298
10,000 or more	59	20	21	*	147	211
Ownership						
Private sector	47	23	29	*	953	921
Public sector	38	30	32	-	251	367
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	42	20	38	-	416	360
Part of a larger organisation	47	27	26	*	788	928
Union recognition						
No unions present	46	25	29	*	790	658
Unions present no recognition	45	8	47	-	54	73
Recognised unions	46	26	28	*	340	539
All workplaces	46	24	30	*	1,204	1,288

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where other alternative methods of working were relevant to the workplace.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,288 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 9.5 cont.: Whether any managerial discretion on operating 'other alternative working' arrangements, by workplace characteristics

	<i>Row percentages</i>					
	Yes, all or most of time (%)	Only sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)	Weighted Count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	[45]	[18]	[37]	[-]	26	41
Manufacturing	40	19	41	-	123	159
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[23]	[36]	[42]	[-]	6	22
Construction	24	21	55	*	75	65
Wholesale and Retail Trade	49	25	25	-	261	192
Hotels and Restaurants	66	24	11	-	88	61
Transport, Storage and Communication	56	31	13	-	53	66
Financial Intermediation	[42]	[28]	[30]	[-]	46	45
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	36	28	35	1	141	137
Public Administration and Defence	29	32	39	-	45	82
Education	30	30	41	-	108	153
Health and Social Work	58	21	21	-	146	187
Other Community	61	18	18	3	82	73
Government Office Region						
North East	[45]	[27]	[29]	[-]	39	49
North West and Merseyside	44	23	32	-	132	145
Yorkshire & Humber	40	20	40	-	97	109
East Midlands	44	22	34	-	97	102
West Midlands	47	20	33	-	87	105
South West	42	32	26	-	127	120
Eastern	48	26	25	-	110	117
London	47	26	27	-	155	163
South East	45	22	31	2	187	191
Wales	59	14	27	-	58	62
Scotland	45	30	24	-	114	125
All workplaces	46	24	30	*	1,204	1,288

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees with line managers/supervisors where other alternative methods of working were relevant to the workplace.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,288 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

10

Attitudes to, and the advantages, disadvantages and impact of, work-life balance

Introduction

There is a considerable amount of research – both quantitative and qualitative (e.g. Dex and Scheibl, 1999 and Bevan *et al.*, 1999) – that has attempted to identify the costs and benefits that accrue from flexible working. Most of this research has highlighted the positive effects that can be derived from implementing these practices, and they include increased productivity, lower labour turnover, reduced absenteeism and happier staff.

This chapter attempts to validate the results from these previous studies. Evidence is presented that shows the extent to which employers benefit from implementing the various work-life balance practices which have been covered in this study. It also presents a summary of employers' attitudes towards work-life balance and looks at possible relationships between attitudes and practice.

The chapter begins by looking at employer attitudes to a number of key statements about work-life balance and seeks to identify if they have become more or less positive since WLB1. It then moves on to look at whether attitudes towards work-life balance are positively correlated with having a greater number of practices in place at the employer's workplace. The chapter then turns to how employers perceive the main advantages and disadvantages of these practices, as well as their assessment of the impacts of implementing them at their workplace. Finally it looks at how employers perceive the costs of setting up and running work-life balance practices.

Attitudes to work-life balance

To identify employers' attitudes towards work-life balance, they were presented with a set of statements covering various aspects of work-life balance. They were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements and their responses revealed, in general, a high level of support for the concept of work-life balance (see Table 10.1).

Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of employers recognised that 'everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want.' They also acknowledged that they had a role, with just over half (53 per cent) disagreeing

that the employer did not have a 'responsibility to help people balance their work with other aspects of their life.' A much larger proportion (84 per cent) also agreed that 'employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties facing parents of young and disabled children in balancing their work and family life'. Furthermore, most employers could see that there would be benefits to the workplace from assisting employees. Almost all employers (94 per cent) agreed that 'people work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives', with a large proportion (39 per cent) strongly agreeing with this.

However, employers were also clear that business considerations should still come first. Just over three-fifths (62 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that employees should be aware that they should not 'change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business'. In addition, a majority (65 per cent) of employers recognised that the process of achieving work-life balance for their employees was not a straightforward task, having agreed or strongly agreed that 'it's not easy trying to accommodate employees with different patterns of working'. There were, however, a significant number of employers – a quarter (23 per cent) – that rejected this notion, implying that they thought that managing flexible working practices was not too difficult.

Employers were fairly evenly split on the issue of whether the provision of work-life balance practices unfairly benefits just some employees, an issue that has received some attention recently⁴⁶. They did, however, largely reject the notion that flexible working can have an adverse impact on an employee's chances of promotion. Just one-in-ten employers (10 per cent) thought it could affect their chances.

Overall, it appeared therefore that employers were generally supportive of and acknowledged the benefits of work-life balance practices, but were also aware that these practices needed to be balanced against the needs of the business.

As a means of summarising the opinions of employers and how they differed across workplaces, a score was derived, taking the value of five if an employer strongly agreed with a statement, down to one if they strongly disagreed. Higher values were, therefore, indicative of stronger support for, or a higher level of agreement with, a particular statement. The results are summarised in Table 10.2 and they generally show that across workplaces there was only minimal variation in the level of support for work-life balance, which was generally not significant. What they perhaps suggested was that:

- Employers in the largest workplaces (500 or more employees) were likely to have a slightly higher mean score on the statements that were supportive of the work-life balance concept.
- Employers in larger organisations were more likely to have a higher mean score on four favourable statements.

⁴⁶ For example, *The job, the baby and me*. The Guardian, 7 April, 2003 and *Workers' playtime*, The Observer, 14 May, 2003.

- There were very small differences in relation to the public and private sectors. The private sector scores slightly higher on all of the less favourable statements and the public sector on three of the four positive statements.
- Employers in workplaces forming part of a larger organisation scored higher on the favourable statements and lower on the less favourable statements than those in single standalone workplaces.
- Employers with a recognised union presence at their workplace were scored higher on the positive statements and lower on the negative statements than where there was no union.
- In the following industrial sectors employers scored above the mean for all workplaces on at least two of the favourable statements: Hotels and Restaurants (3)⁴⁷, Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities (2), Public Administration and Defence (4), Education as well as the Other Community services (2).

An indication of how support for work-life balance has changed can be identified by comparing the results from this study with those from the WLB1 employer survey which ran a number of the same attitudinal questions. Table 10.3 summarises the changes, which were in most cases small and generally not significant. Two changes do, however, stand out. First, while the overall proportion of employers that agreed that 'people work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives' remained almost the same (94 per cent expressed this view in 2003 compared with 91 per cent in 2000), there was a significant increase in the number that strongly support this view. This difference (39 per cent expressed this view in 2003 compared with 31 per cent in 2000) remains even after allowing for any changes in the composition of workplaces between the two surveys⁴⁸. The conclusion to draw from this may be that the work-life balance message is getting through to employers, with more now seeing the benefits that can result from supporting their employees. The other change identified was in the proportion of employers that strongly agreed with the statement that 'employees should not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business'. However, this change – from 12 to 17 per cent – was not statistically significant.

Attitudes to work-life balance and the provision of flexible working practices and leave arrangements

While the above suggests that employers are generally supportive of the principles behind work-life balance, it does not necessarily follow that they have the practices in place to support these views. To measure the degree to which attitudes and practices converge, an attempt has been made to summarise each workplace. This was done by counting the number of flexible working practices

⁴⁷ The figures in parentheses show the number of statements above the mean for all workplaces.

⁴⁸ For example, if there were more larger workplaces in the 2003 survey, it would be expected that the level of 'strongly agree' would increase. This change would be a product of a change in the composition of the sample rather than indicating a change in the attitudes of employers.

that had been provided as well as counting the number of arrangements for which the workplace had provisions that went beyond statutory requirements. It is reasonable to expect that the number of practices and arrangements provided and the employers' attitudes would be positively associated.

The work-life balance practices over which the score was measured include the following⁴⁹:

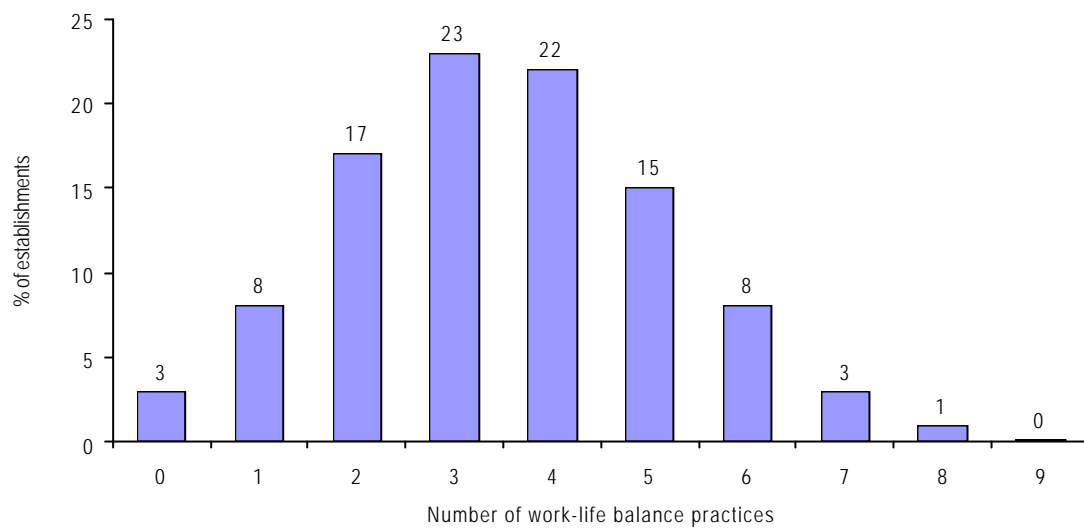
- Whether employees can vary their hours of work;
- The provision of flexible working time practices, excluding part-time working, that were used by at least some employees in the past 12 months;
- The provision of homeworking that was used by at least some employees in the past 12 months;
- Allowing employees to unconditionally change from full-time to part-time working;
- Provision of additional maternity benefits beyond the statutory minimum requirements;
- Provision of paid paternity leave;
- Provision of additional parental leave beyond the statutory minimum requirements;
- Provision of paid time off to deal with emergencies involving dependants; and
- Some support for working parents.

Figure 10.1 shows the distribution of the number of these work-life balance practices that were provided by workplaces. A small proportion (11 per cent) had none or just one practice, around two-fifths (40 per cent) have two or three, with nearly half of workplaces providing four or more practices (49 per cent).

It appeared, therefore, that most employers provided 'bundles' of these practices. There were a number of ways to measure that practices tended to go together, one of which was to look at inter-item correlations. This made it possible to identify whether the provision of a single practice was associated with higher levels of provision of other practices. Table 10.4 shows the results of this exercise. Of note is the finding that childcare support was more likely to be present in workplaces that also offered homeworking or additional parental leave rights. In turn these practices were some of the least common, suggesting that childcare support was most likely to be found in the most progressive family-friendly workplaces.

⁴⁹ Those workplaces with 'none' of these practices may meet the legal minimum for providing leave arrangements (for example, providing statutory maternity and parental leave, and *unpaid* time off for dependants). 'No practices' here means that a workplace did not provide those specific practices listed above.

Figure 10.1: Number of work-life balance practices



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003)

Across workplaces there was considerable variation in the number of practices provided (see Table 10.5). Some of the main associations found were:

- Small workplaces (with less than 25 employees) and, in particular, those that were not part of a larger organisation, were much more likely than other workplaces to provide either none or just one of these practices (17 per cent compared with 11 per cent overall);
- Most large workplaces provided four or more of these practices, which probably reflects greater diversity of employment in these workplaces as well as their greater ability to make such provisions. For example, large workplaces might more easily facilitate flexitime by ensuring basic cover from among a larger workforce;
- Provision was significantly higher in the public sector. Whereas over two-thirds (70 per cent) of public sector workplaces provided four or more practices, under half (44 per cent) of workplaces in the private sector did likewise;
- Construction, Manufacturing and Transport, Storage and Communication stand out as industries where provision of work-life balance practices was very low; and
- Employers in the North East were the most likely to just provide either none or just one of these practices.

In terms of the relationship between the provision of these practices and the level of support employers showed for work-life balance through the attitudinal statements, it was generally found that support was greater, the more practices there were at the workplace (see Table 10.6). For example, employers who offered a bundle of at least four work-life practices were more likely to have

agreed that 'people work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives'. They were less likely to agree that 'it's not the employer's responsibility to help people balance their work with other aspects of their life'. Such employers were also less likely to agree with the 'negative' practical statements such as 'it is not easy trying to accommodate employees with different patterns of working'. Employers with less than four work-life balance practices were more likely to agree that 'policies that help balance work and other interests are often unfair to some employees'.

It, therefore, appeared that the more flexible working practices and leave arrangements were provided was (positively) correlated with increased support for the basic principles and concepts of work-life balance.

Advantages and disadvantages of work-life balance

All employers were asked to describe the advantages and disadvantages they saw arising from the provision of work-life balance practices⁵⁰. The two questions were open-ended, which meant employers were not prompted for a response and, therefore, could give whatever answer they wanted, including that there were no advantages or disadvantages.

Benefits from providing work-life balance practices

Employers were asked the following question:

'The flexible working practices and leave arrangements we have been discussing may all enable employees to better balance their work and personal lives.

What, if any, are the benefits for this establishment from providing flexible working and leave practices?'

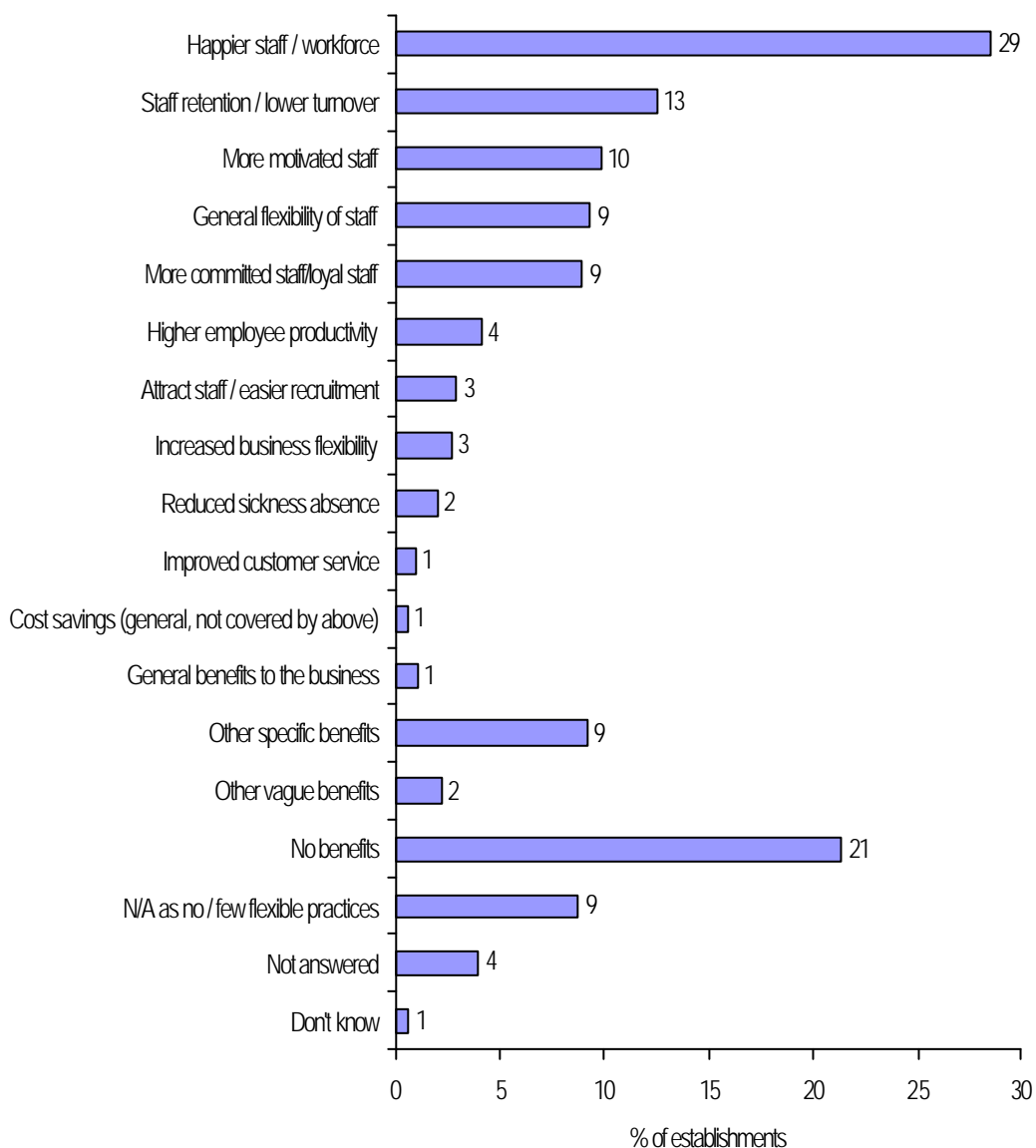
Figure 10.2 shows the advantages of providing flexible working and leave practices cited by employers. The most often reported benefit was a 'happier staff/workforce, with just under a third (29 per cent) mentioning this. Benefits more closely associated with the productivity of the workforce such as 'greater staff retention' and 'greater staff motivation' were mentioned by approximately one tenth of all employers (13 and 10 per cent respectively). Actual references to productivity were rare (four per cent reported this benefit), as were benefits accruing from lower absenteeism (two per cent), which is often cited as a key area where performance gains can be achieved from assisting in work-life balance.

While most employers were able to cite some benefits from providing practices that aided employee work-life balance, nevertheless, around a fifth (21 per cent) saw no benefits.

⁵⁰ This question was not restricted to employers who provided the practices listed above. It was asked of all employers, some of which reported that they considered there to be no work-life balance practices at the workplace.

It was of no surprise that where the number of work-life balance practices provided (see those listed in the section 'Attitudes to work-life balance and the provision of flexible working practices and leave arrangements') was either none or just one, these workplaces were significantly more likely to report no benefits (see Table 10.7). Workplaces with a bundle of four or more work-life balance practices were more likely to report any benefits. In addition, a higher proportion in this group reported any of the specific benefits in comparison with workplaces that had two or three of these practices. For example, a little over a third (37 per cent) of the workplaces with four or more practices cited a happier workforce, compared with just over a fifth (21 per cent) of those workplaces that had two or three practices.

Figure 10.2: Benefits from having work-life balance practices



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,507 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003)

Interestingly when an Industrial Society survey asked the same question of human resources and personnel specialists the results were very different – 44 per cent said flexible work practices reduced absenteeism and only one per cent said there were no advantages (Industrial Society, 2001)⁵¹.

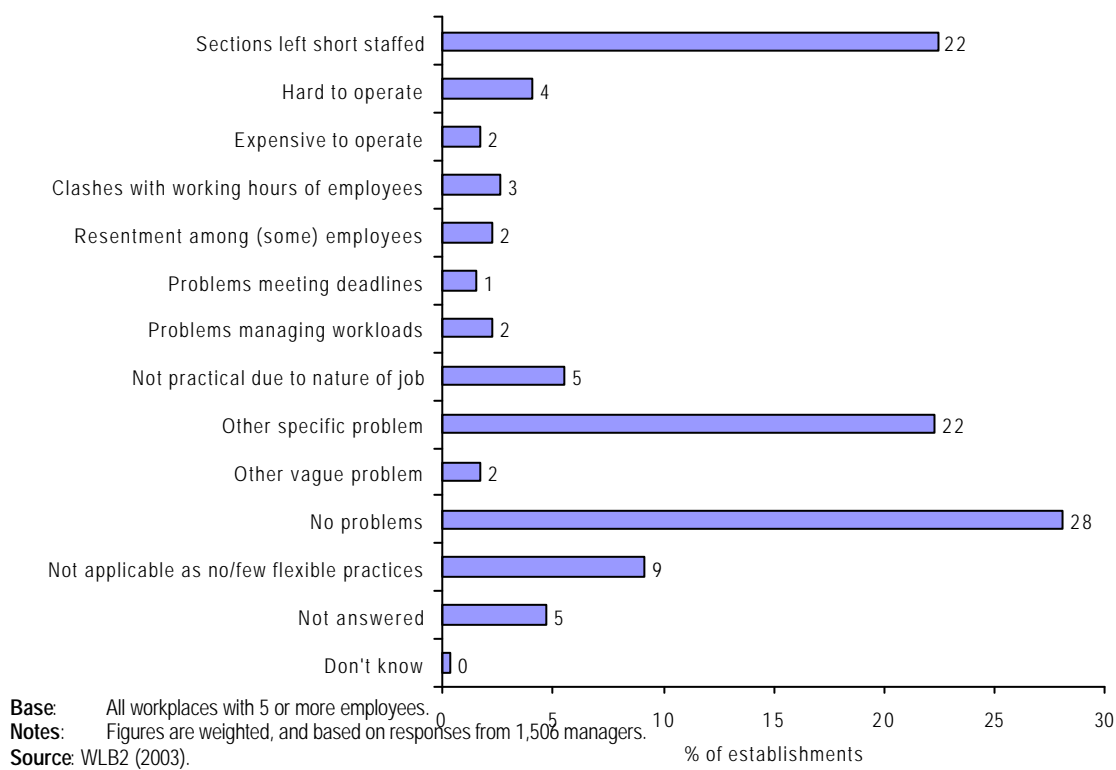
Disadvantages from providing work-life balance practices

Employers were asked the following question:

‘And what, if any, are the disadvantages, or what problems or difficulties have they created?’

Figure 10.3 highlights the main disadvantages from having work-life balance practices from the employer perspective. The most commonly cited problem was that sections get left short-staffed (22 per cent). Otherwise, a myriad of problems was mentioned, most of which were specific to the workplace rather than applicable to all or many workplaces. Once again comparisons with the views of human resources and personnel specialists are worth mentioning. In another study (Industrial Society, 2001), this group saw the main problems as communication (43 per cent), difficulties co-ordinating a variety of practices (31 per cent) and resentment from staff on standard hours (27 per cent). Sections being left short staffed, however, was not an area which this group mentioned in large numbers.

Figure 10.3: Main disadvantages from having work-life balance practices



⁵¹ Caution must be taken in comparing these results with the WLB2 survey because of the small sample size, low response rate and sample used. The survey was based on 516 replies drawn from the Industrial Society's database and the response rate was only 9.2 per cent.

Just over a quarter (28 per cent) of employers reported that they had 'no problems' arising from providing flexible working and leave arrangements.

Advantages and disadvantages from providing work-life balance practices

Putting the results from this and the previous section together it was possible to conclude that there were more advantages than disadvantages from providing flexible working and leave arrangements. While almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of employers mentioned one or more benefits, a slightly smaller proportion (56 per cent) mentioned any disadvantages. However, this was a somewhat simplistic approach as it did not take into account the weighting that employers might apply to both advantages and disadvantages.

Table 10.8 shows that employers with four or more work-life balance practices (see those listed above) were more likely to mention only advantages than those with two or three, or just one or no practices (29, 22 and 14 per cent respectively). Also, those with larger bundles of practices were significantly less likely to have mentioned only disadvantages. However, just under half (48 per cent) of those with four or more practices considered that there were both advantages and disadvantages, which suggested that the greater complexity of the arrangements did carry some additional burdens.

Comparisons with WLB1 show some important differences in the perceived advantages and disadvantages of providing flexible working and leave arrangements; again, this was not restricted to employers who only provided the practices listed above. The proportion of employers stating that there were no benefits at all from providing work-life balance practices rose from 12 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2003. A possible explanation for this is that legislative changes have forced reluctant employers to take work-life balance on board, with either little or no effect. At the same time, comparisons between the two studies showed that the proportion of employers stating that there were no disadvantages from work-life balance practices remained stable (29 per cent in 2000 and 28 per cent in 2003), while the reporting of any advantages increased from 55 to 63 per cent.

Happier staff / workforce remained the most frequently cited advantage of providing work-life balance practices, although the proportion of employers mentioning this had fallen from 43 per cent to just 29 per cent. Retention in WLB2 was the second most cited advantage compared to greater flexibility for staff in WLB1. It is also worth noting a significant increase in the proportion mentioning as the key disadvantage that sections of the business can be left short staffed, from 10 per cent in the WLB1 survey up to 22 per cent in 2003. However, this may simply reflect an improvement in employers' ability to elaborate on the advantages and disadvantages, rather than indicating any real change.

Impact of work-life balance practices on workplace performance

Two methods were used to measure the impact of work-life balance practices on workplace performance. First was a direct approach, where employers were asked to assess whether flexible working and leave arrangements had a positive, negative or no effect on a number of dimensions of workplace performance. These included the following: productivity; absenteeism; labour turnover; recruitment; employee motivation and commitment and the state of employee relations at the workplace. The second approach relied on collecting workplace performance data – all of which were subjective judgements of the workplace respondent – and testing how these measures were associated with the provision of flexible working practices and leave arrangements. The results from both these exercises are described in turn.

Table 10.9 shows the results of the first exercise. Employers were most likely to say that the provision of work-life balance practices had a positive impact on management-employee relations (71 per cent), employee motivation and commitment (69 per cent) and labour turnover (54 per cent). Work-life balance practices were less likely to be associated with positive impact upon productivity (49 per cent), absenteeism (48 per cent) and recruitment (47 per cent), although they were still mentioned by nearly under half of all employers. Furthermore, it was rarely considered that the practices had a negative effect on these performance measures, with those not saying it was positive saying there was no impact at all. The exceptions were productivity, where just over one-in-ten workplaces (12 per cent) reported a negative effect from having these practices as well as a tenth (10 per cent) citing absenteeism. Presumably this arises from the staff shortages that employers mentioned as the main disadvantage from having these practices.

On each of the measures of workplace performance, employers in workplaces offering a bundle of four or more practices (see those listed above) were more likely to say that they had a positive effect (see Table 10.9). For most of the measures, they were at least twice as likely as workplaces with only one or no practices to report positive benefits. For example, just over four-fifths (85 per cent) of employers in workplaces with four or more practices said these practices had a positive effect on management-employee relations compared to just over two fifths (43 per cent) where there were none or just one of these practices. However, it should be noted that even where there were just a few practices, positive effects were still evident and, in most cases, a greater proportion of employers cited such effects than negative ones.

Further confirmation that the provision of flexible working and leave arrangements was associated with higher workplace performance was found when comparing estimates of financial performance and labour turnover (see Table 10.10). In terms of financial performance, almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of workplaces that had four or more flexible practices and leave arrangements perceived that it was at least better than that of other similar workplaces in the same industry. Workplaces with two or three or fewer practices were significantly less likely to perceive financial performance to be above average

relative to their competitors (35 per cent and 30 per cent respectively). With respect to labour turnover, there was no suggestion of any boost to this aspect of performance, with workplaces that provided four or more of these practices only marginally – but not significantly – more likely to report being above average. The same was true in terms of the state of employee–management relations at the workplace (Table 10.11). Differences in this measure of well-being according to the provision of work-life balance practices were small, and not significant.

A more objective measure of performance was the absenteeism rate. Because of the way this data was collected, it was necessary to create a summary statistic that allocated workplaces into one of three groups – high, medium or low absenteeism rate. The allocation was done by observing the distribution of absenteeism. Workplaces in the bottom and top quartiles were assigned respectively into the low and high absenteeism groups, and this was done separately for both private and public sectors workplaces, so as to allow for the previously observed much higher absenteeism rate in the public sector. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 10.12. Counter to the evidence reported above, it was found that in workplaces that provided more work-life practices, a higher proportion of these workplaces reported having high absenteeism rates than among workplaces where only a few were provided. However, while not wanting to cast doubt on this evidence, a large proportion – almost one-in-three – of workplaces were unable to provide absenteeism data. With such a high level of non-response, some caution must be taken when interpreting this result. An alternative explanation might be that employers have recently introduced work-life balance practices to try and counter an already existing problem.

Costs of work-life balance

One reason why the provision of work-life balance practices was not more widespread than it might otherwise have been, was that these practices were perceived as costly to implement although this view was not held by those who had actually implemented these practices (see below). However, costs can accrue not only from operating the practices but also at the time when the practices are being set up. These set-up costs may be sunk costs that are irrecoverable, which may be off-putting to an employer faced with the risk of introducing a new flexible working practice or leave arrangement.

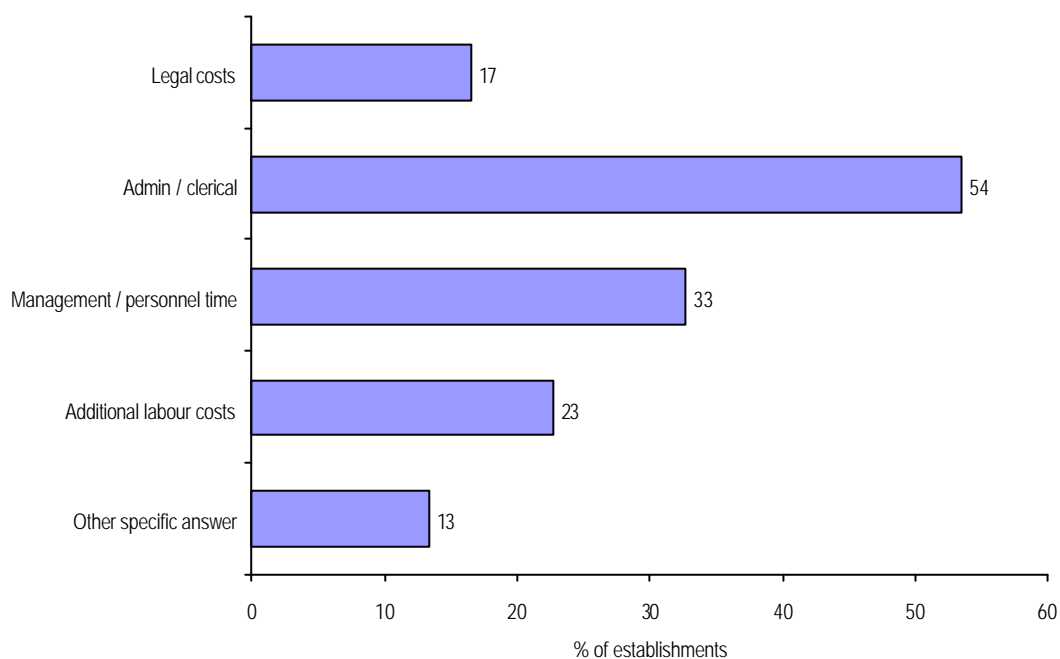
Employers were asked to describe the costs incurred when setting-up flexible working practices or leave arrangements as well the ongoing costs; this was not restricted to employers who only provided the practices listed above. Starting with set up costs, just under a third (30 per cent) of workplaces reported having introduced some type of practice in the past three years⁵². Table 10.13 shows that new practices were more likely to have been introduced into larger workplaces than smaller workplaces, and workplaces that were part of a larger organisation rather than single independent workplaces. New practices were also more likely to be introduced in workplaces where there was a union presence, a finding which demonstrates the unions known support for these

⁵² Details of the type of practice introduced were not recorded.

policies and challenges notions that unions oppose change. Furthermore, managers from workplaces with four or more practices were more likely to say that some practices had been implemented in the last three years (37 per cent) than those with two or three practices (24 per cent) and none or one (17 per cent).

Where a new practice or practices had been introduced, a large majority of employers (76 per cent) reported that there had been no set-up costs. Where there were costs (24 per cent), these were most likely to have been administrative or clerical costs (see Figure 10.4). Other costs that were reported included management and personnel time (33 per cent), additional labour costs (23 per cent) and legal costs (17 per cent). When asked about their size, very few (seven per cent) said they were substantial. They were far more likely to report that the set up costs were either moderate (50 per cent) or minimal (36 per cent).

Figure 10.4: Costs associated with setting up work-life balance practices



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that introduced flexible working practices and leave arrangements in the past 3 years and had incurred set-up costs.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 144 managers.

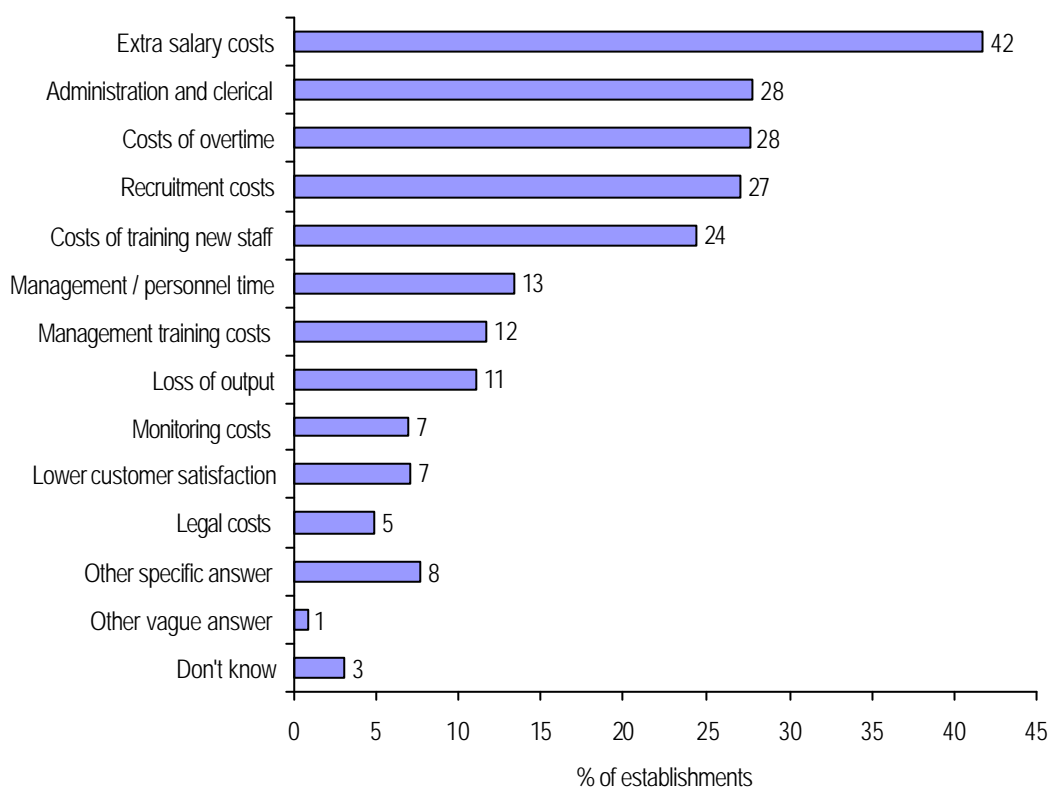
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Employers were also asked about ongoing costs resulting from the provision of flexible working practices and leave arrangements. Perhaps surprisingly, just under three-quarters of employers (71 per cent) said there were no ongoing costs associated with flexible working. That so few managers reported ongoing costs (13 per cent) might suggest that one of the possible disadvantages about flexible working – that sections are left short staffed – probably holds some weight. The most common costs cited by managers were extra salary (42 per cent), administration (28 per cent), overtime (28 per cent) and recruitment (27 per cent) (see Figure 10.5).

Again reports of the size of the ongoing costs were fairly modest. Of those that reported any costs, just 14 per cent said they were substantial. The remainder was equally split between those that reported moderate (41 per cent) or minimal (40 per cent) costs. Translating this into a figure for all workplaces, less than one-in-ten (seven per cent) managers that thought there were some flexible working practices and leave arrangements at the workplace reported substantial or moderate ongoing costs.

The general consensus among employers was that these practices were cost effective. In over half (54 per cent) of all workplaces, managers considered that the provision of work-life balance practices was cost effective. Limiting this to just employers that considered themselves to have any practices, the figure rose to two-thirds (66 per cent) of workplaces. This is pretty conclusive evidence in support of the economic case for the provision of these practices and arrangements, irrespective of the wider social implications supporting their provision.

Figure 10.5: Costs associated with running work-life balance practices



Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees that reported ongoing costs associated with flexible working.
Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 279 managers.
Source: WLB2 (2003).

Conclusion

Attitudes towards work-life balance were generally very positive. However, there was clear evidence that employers understood that other business priorities also had to be considered. Perhaps the employer jury is 'still out' as flexible working continues to embed itself in British workplaces. There did appear to be a clear association between attitudes to work-life balance and actual practice – with a positive outlook towards work-life balance and greater density of practices going hand in hand. Now that employers have to at least consider parental requests for flexible working, provision would be expected to continue to increase in the future.

Most employers were aware of some advantages (63 per cent) and disadvantages (58 per cent) in relation to providing and running work-life balance practices. The key advantages were a happier staff / workforce (29 per cent) and better staff retention (13 per cent), whilst the key disadvantage was sections being left short staffed (22 per cent).

In general employers were more positive about the benefits than negative about the disadvantages of work-life balance practices. In most cases a majority of employers considered that work-life balance practices had a positive impact on employee relations (71 per cent), employee motivation and commitment (69 per cent) and labour turnover (54 per cent), and nearly a half thought that they had a positive impact on productivity (49 per cent), absenteeism (48 per cent) and recruitment (47 per cent). Most stated that there were no costs associated with setting up and running work-life balance practices. Most employers that cited these costs considered them to be marginal. However, when less direct measures were looked at – such as absenteeism – without making reference to the impact of work-life balance, the benefit of having a number of work-life balance practices was less clear.

Despite legislative changes and the likelihood of increased awareness in this area, most employer attitudes have changed only marginally and there has been no 'sea change' in employer attitudes since 2000. However, this report reinforces the strong support of the provision of work-life balance practices among employers. There appears to be a clear business case for employers to provide these practices with the benefits seemingly outweighing the costs based on the evidence of employers that already make such provisions.

Table 10.1: Employers' attitudes towards work-life balance

		<i>Row percentages</i>					
		Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree or disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Don't know (%)
Everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want	(1)	2	17	14	51	14	1
Employees should not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business	(2)	3	20	13	45	17	2
It is not easy trying to accommodate employees with different patterns of working	(3)	1	22	11	50	15	2
Its not employers' responsibility to help people balance their work with other aspects of their life	(4)	8	45	16	25	4	1
People work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives	(5)	*	1	3	55	39	1
Policies that help balance work and other interests are often unfair to some employees	(6)	2	34	20	38	4	2
Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties parents of young and disabled children face in balancing their work and family life	(7)	1	4	9	63	21	1
People who work flexibly are just as likely to be promoted as those who don't	(8)	1	9	13	57	17	2

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.2: Employers' attitude towards work-life balance, by workplace characteristics

	Attitudinal statements regarding work-life balance*							
	(1) Mean score	(2) Mean score	(3) Mean score	(4) Mean score	(5) Mean score	(6) Mean score	(7) Mean score	(8) Mean score
Size of establishment								
5 to 9 employees	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.0	4.5	3.3	4.1	3.8
10 thru 24 employees	3.6	3.7	3.6	2.8	4.4	3.2	4.1	4.0
25 to 49 employees	3.6	3.5	3.7	2.6	4.4	3.0	4.1	3.9
50 to 99 employees	3.6	3.5	3.7	2.7	4.2	3.1	4.0	4.0
100 to 249 employees	3.7	3.4	3.8	2.5	4.3	3.2	4.1	4.0
250 to 499 employees	3.8	3.3	3.6	2.3	4.5	2.9	4.2	4.3
500 or more employees	4.0	3.3	3.5	2.0	4.6	2.8	4.2	3.9
Size of organisation								
Less than 100	3.5	3.9	3.8	3.0	4.3	3.3	4.0	3.8
100 to less than 1,000	3.6	3.5	3.5	2.8	4.4	3.1	4.0	3.9
1,000 to less than 10,000	3.7	3.3	3.5	2.5	4.4	2.9	4.1	3.9
10,000 or more	3.8	3.3	3.5	2.4	4.5	3.0	4.2	4.0
Ownership								
Private sector	3.6	3.7	3.7	2.9	4.4	3.2	4.1	3.9
Public sector	3.7	3.5	3.6	2.5	4.5	3.0	4.2	4.0
Single or multi								
Single independent establishment	3.5	3.9	3.8	2.9	4.3	3.3	4.0	3.8
Part of a larger organisation	3.7	3.5	3.6	2.7	4.4	3.1	4.1	4.0
Union recognition								
No unions present	3.5	3.7	3.6	2.8	4.3	3.2	4.0	3.8
Unions present no recognition	3.4	3.6	3.6	2.6	4.3	3.0	4.1	3.8
Recognised unions	3.8	3.4	3.5	2.5	4.5	2.9	4.1	4.0
All workplaces	3.7	3.6	3.6	2.8	4.4	3.2	4.1	3.9

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from a maximum of 1,504 managers for each statement (the base varies for each statement because it excludes any non-response).

* For key to each statement see Table 10.1.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.2 cont.: Employers' attitude towards work-life balance, by workplace characteristics

	Attitudinal statements regarding work-life balance*							
	(1) Mean score	(2) Mean score	(3) Mean score	(4) Mean score	(5) Mean score	(6) Mean score	(7) Mean score	(8) Mean score
Standard Industrial Classification								
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	3.8	3.9	3.8	2.9	4.2	3.2	4.1	3.7
Manufacturing	3.3	4.0	3.7	2.9	4.2	3.3	3.9	3.8
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[3.1]	[4.1]	[3.8]	[3.4]	[4.1]	[3.1]	[3.8]	[4.0]
Construction	3.4	3.9	3.8	3.1	4.3	3.4	4.1	3.7
Wholesale and Retail Trade	3.8	3.6	3.6	2.8	4.4	3.4	4.1	3.9
Hotels and Restaurants	4.0	3.6	3.5	2.9	4.6	3.3	4.3	4.0
Transport, Storage and Communication	3.2	3.4	4.0	2.8	4.4	3.1	4.0	3.8
Financial Intermediation	[4.0]	[3.4]	[3.9]	[2.5]	[4.4]	[2.9]	[4.1]	[3.9]
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	3.6	3.5	3.5	2.8	4.4	3.0	4.1	4.0
Public Administration and Defence	4.1	3.6	3.2	2.4	4.6	3.0	4.3	4.2
Education	3.7	3.5	3.7	2.5	4.5	3.0	4.2	3.9
Health and Social Work	3.6	3.8	3.8	2.7	4.4	3.0	4.0	4.0
Other Community	3.7	3.2	3.2	2.7	4.3	3.1	4.0	3.9
Government Office Region								
North East	3.8	3.5	3.6	2.9	4.3	3.4	3.8	3.6
North West and Merseyside	3.7	3.5	3.6	2.5	4.3	3.0	4.1	4.0
Yorkshire & Humber	3.6	3.6	3.8	2.6	4.3	3.1	4.2	4.1
East Midlands	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.1	4.6	3.5	4.2	4.1
West Midlands	3.7	3.6	3.5	2.8	4.3	3.2	4.0	3.8
South West	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.2	4.5	3.5	4.1	4.0
Eastern	3.7	3.5	3.6	2.9	4.2	3.1	4.0	3.8
London	3.6	3.6	3.7	2.8	4.4	3.2	4.1	3.9
South East	3.5	3.6	3.5	2.7	4.4	3.0	3.9	3.8
Wales	4.1	4.0	3.7	2.7	4.4	3.3	4.1	4.0
Scotland	3.5	3.6	3.7	2.6	4.4	3.0	4.2	3.8
All workplaces	3.7	3.6	3.6	2.8	4.4	3.2	4.1	3.9

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from a maximum of 1,504 managers for each statement (the base varies for each statement because it excludes any non-response).

* For key to each statement see Table 10.1.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.3: Employers' attitudes towards work-life balance, by year.

		<i>Row percentages</i>					
		Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree or disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Don't know (%)
Everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want	2003	2	17	14	51	14	1
	2000	2	22	12	49	13	2
Employees should not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business	2003	3	20	13	45	17	2
	2000	1	23	15	47	12	3
Its not employers' responsibility to help people balance their work with other aspects of their life	2003	8	45	16	25	4	1
	2000	9	50	14	21	4	3
People work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives	2003	*	1	3	55	39	1
	2000	*	2	5	60	31	3
Policies that help balance work and other interests are often unfair to some employees	2003	2	34	20	38	4	2
	2000	3	31	19	39	5	5

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,504 managers in WLB2 and 2,500 managers in WLB1

Source: WLB1 (2000), WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.4: Combinations of work-life balance practices

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>									
	Provision of work-life balance practices									
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	All workplaces (%)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Provision of work-life balance practices										
(1) Employees can vary working hours	-	73	84	70	66	71	69	73	68	67
(2) Flexible working time arrangements	52	-	74	55	51	56	55	56	71	49
(3) Employees can work from home	19	23	-	16	16	19	15	19	25	15
(4) Employees allowed to change from full- to part-time working	70	77	72	-	73	75	78	72	82	68
(5) Additional maternity leave benefits	67	71	69	73	-	75	79	73	80	68
(6) Fully paid paternity leave	45	49	53	47	47	-	61	62	56	43
(7) Additional parental leave benefits	9	13	11	13	13	17	-	16	21	12
(8) Fully paid special leave for emergencies	30	33	34	30	30	41	38	-	41	28
(9) Childcare support	8	11	13	9	9	10	14	11	-	8
Weighted base	1,016	1,229	231	1,020	1,024	643	175	424	117	1,509
Unweighted base	1,013	1,295	325	1,054	1,100	759	199	462	209	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses for the total number of managers listed in the last row and for all workplaces from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.5: Number of work-life balance practices, by workplace characteristics

	Number of work-life balance practices			<i>Row percentages</i>	
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Size of establishment					
5 to 9 employees	15	47	38	486	295
10 to 24 employees	11	39	50	571	444
25 to 49 employees	7	37	56	249	229
50 to 99 employees	7	34	59	107	143
100 to 249 employees	5	27	68	65	178
250 to 499 employees	2	11	87	19	80
500 or more employees	*	4	96	13	140
Size of organisation					
Less than 100	14	43	43	741	541
100 to less than 1,000	11	43	46	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	10	37	53	246	317
10,000 or more	1	27	72	176	232
Ownership					
Private sector	13	43	44	1,210	1,102
Public sector	2	28	70	299	407
Single or multi					
Single independent establishment	15	42	44	587	476
Part of a larger organisation	8	38	53	922	1,033
Union recognition					
No unions present	14	44	42	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	5	28	67	64	83
Recognised unions	3	28	69	386	581
All workplaces	11	40	49	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.5 cont.: Number of work-life balance practices, by workplace characteristics

	Number of work-life balance practices			<i>Row percentages</i>	
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
Standard Industrial Classification					
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	4	44	51	38	58
Manufacturing	19	44	37	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[32]	[28]	[39]	6	23
Construction	31	40	31	103	80
Wholesale and Retail Trade	11	45	44	317	227
Hotels and Restaurants	10	45	46	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	17	39	45	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[2]	[24]	[74]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	9	35	56	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	-	20	80	49	85
Education	1	30	69	136	182
Health and Social Work	6	40	53	187	220
Other Community	6	48	46	100	84
Government Office Region					
North East	20	36	44	55	60
North West and Merseyside	7	34	57	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	15	31	55	121	126
East Midlands	9	51	41	117	119
West Midlands	15	39	46	113	126
South West	9	47	44	158	142
Eastern	8	42	52	144	142
London	12	39	49	185	183
South East	11	40	48	228	223
Wales	8	48	43	76	75
Scotland	9	34	57	154	152
All workplaces	11	40	49	1,509	1,509

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,509 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.6: Employers' attitude towards work-life balance, by number of work-life balance practices

	Number of work-life balance practices			All workplaces Mean score
	None or one Mean score	2 or 3 Mean score	4 or more Mean score	
Everyone should be able to balance their work and home lives in the way they want	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.7
Employees should not expect to be able to change their working pattern if to do so would disrupt the business	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.6
It is not easy trying to accommodate employees with different patterns of working	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.6
It's not employers' responsibility to help people balance their work with other aspects of their life	3.3	2.9	2.6	2.8
People work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.4
Policies that help balance work and other interests are often unfair to some employees	3.4	3.3	3.0	3.2
Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular difficulties parents of young and disabled children face in balancing their work and family life	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.1
People who work flexibly are just as likely to be promoted as those who don't	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.9
Weighted base	160	596	746	1,502
Unweighted base	122	500	882	1,504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from a maximum of 1,504 managers for each statement (the base varies for each statement because it excludes any non-response).

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.7: Main advantages of work-life balance practices, by number of work-life balance practices

	<i>Per cent of workplaces</i>			
	Number of work-life balance practices			
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	All workplaces (%)
Happier staff / workforce	19	21	37	29
Staff retention / lower turnover	6	11	15	13
More motivated staff	5	7	13	10
More committed staff/loyal staff	4	7	12	9
General flexibility of staff	5	8	12	9
Higher employee productivity	2	2	6	4
Attract staff / easier recruitment	1	2	4	3
Increased business flexibility	2	2	3	3
Reduced sickness absence	-	1	3	2
Cost savings (general, not covered by above)	-	-	1	1
Improved customer service	-	-	2	1
General benefits to the business	*	1	1	1
Other specific benefits	7	9	9	9
Other vague benefits	1	2	2	2
No benefits	37	28	12	21
Not applicable as no/few flexible practices	20	11	5	9
Not answered	5	5	3	4
Don't know	-	1	*	1
Weighted count	163	597	747	1,507
Unweighted count	123	501	883	1,507

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,507 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.8: Advantages and disadvantages of work-life balance practices, by number of work-life balance practices

Column percentages

	Number of practices			All workplaces (%)	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)			
Only advantages	14	22	29	25	378	351
Only disadvantages	32	23	11	18	268	222
Both ads and disadvantages	22	31	48	38	579	710
Other e.g. no practices, don't know	31	24	12	19	279	223
All workplaces	100	100	100	100	1,504	1,506

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,506 managers

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.9: Effect of work-life balance practices on workplace performance, by number of work-life balance practices

	<i>Column percentages</i>			
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	All workplaces (%)
Employee relations				
Positive effect	43	62	85	71
Negative effect	10	5	2	4
No effect	21	16	7	12
Not applicable	27	16	5	12
Don't know	-	1	*	*
Productivity				
Positive effect	26	42	60	49
Negative effect	18	13	10	12
No effect	26	23	21	23
Not applicable	29	18	8	14
Don't know	1	1	*	*
Absenteeism				
Positive effect	34	41	57	48
Negative effect	15	9	9	10
No effect	25	30	27	28
Not applicable	26	16	5	12
Don't know	-	1	*	1
Labour turnover				
Positive effect	35	44	65	54
Negative effect	13	6	4	6
No effect	23	30	25	27
Not applicable	27	17	4	12
Don't know	1	1	*	1
Recruitment				
Positive effect	26	39	57	47
Negative effect	7	5	4	5
No effect	34	35	31	33
Not applicable	29	18	8	14
Don't know	1	1	*	1
Employee motivation and commitment				
Positive effect	47	61	80	69
Negative effect	12	3	2	3
No effect	19	20	13	17
Not applicable	20	14	4	10
Don't know	1	1	*	1
Weighted count	160	596	746	1,502
Unweighted count	122	500	882	1,504

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,505 managers, except for employee motivation and commitment which are based on responses from 1,504 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.10: Measures of workplace performance, by the provision of work-life balance practices

	Number of work-life balance practices			Column percentages
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	All workplaces (%)
Financial performance				
A lot better than average	4	8	10	8
Better than average	26	27	29	28
About average for the industry	41	43	36	39
Below average	4	4	4	4
A lot below average?	-	*	*	*
No comparison	15	11	12	12
Relevant data not available	4	4	4	4
Not answered	-	1	1	1
Don't know	6	4	4	4
Turnover of employees				
A lot better than average	18	18	23	20
Better than average	35	34	34	34
About average for the industry	27	30	26	27
Below average	6	5	7	6
A lot below average	*	2	1	1
No comparison	7	5	4	5
Relevant data not available	2	2	3	2
Not answered	-	1	*	1
Don't know	4	3	3	3
Weighted count	158	593	746	1,498
Unweighted count	121	499	882	1,502

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,502 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.11: Climate of employee relations, by the provision of work-life balance practices

Column percentages

	Number of work-life balance practices			All workplaces (%)
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	
Employee relations				
Very good	55	51	48	50
Good	38	39	43	41
Neither good nor bad	7	6	6	6
Poor	-	1	1	1
Not answered	-	1	*	1
Don't know	-	1	2	1
Weighted count	158	593	746	1,497
Unweighted count	121	499	881	1,501

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,501 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.12: Provision of work-life balance practices, by workplace performance - absenteeism

	<i>Column percentages</i>			
	None or one (%)	Two or three (%)	Four or more (%)	All workplaces (%)
Level of absenteeism				
High absence rate	12	21	21	20
Moderate	31	28	32	30
Low absence rate	20	20	19	19
Don't know	36	31	28	30
Weighted count	158	593	746	1,497
Unweighted count	121	499	881	1,501

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,501 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.13: Whether any work-life balance practices introduced in past three years, by workplace characteristics

Row percentages

	Practices introduced in past 3 years				Weighted count	Unweighted count
	Yes	No	No practices	Don't know/ not answered		
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Size of establishment						
5 to 9 employees	25	57	13	5	482	293
10 to 24 employees	29	54	14	3	571	444
25 to 49 employees	32	58	6	4	249	229
50 to 99 employees	39	50	7	3	107	143
100 to 249 employees	41	50	6	-	65	177
250 to 499 employees	46	45	2	6	19	80
500 or more employees	67	24	3	-	13	140
Size of organisation						
Less than 100	23	61	14	2	737	539
100 to less than 1,000	33	52	13	-	236	303
1,000 to less than 10,000	44	41	5	10	246	317
10,000 or more	36	52	7	5	176	232
Ownership						
Private sector	29	54	12	4	1,205	1,100
Public sector	33	57	8	2	299	406
Single or multi						
Single independent establishment	23	61	14	2	582	474
Part of a larger organisation	34	51	9	6	922	1,032
Union recognition						
No unions present	27	56	14	3	1,023	818
Unions present no recognition	41	51	8	-	64	83
Recognised unions	37	53	5	4	386	581
All workplaces	30	55	11	4	1,504	1,506

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,506 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

Table 10.13 cont.: Whether any work-life balance practices introduced in past three years, by workplace characteristics

	Practices introduced in past 3 years				<i>Row percentages</i>	
	Yes	No	No practices	Don't know	Weighted count	Unweighted count
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Standard Industrial Classification						
Agriculture, Fishing and Mining	27	56	14	3	38	58
Manufacturing	16	64	18	2	164	186
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	[46]	[39]	[16]	[-]	6	23
Construction	22	54	22	3	100	79
Wholesale and Retail Trade	29	53	12	6	315	226
Hotels and Restaurants	24	55	13	8	111	75
Transport, Storage and Communication	44	37	11	-	76	79
Financial Intermediation	[41]	[44]	[5]	[-]	51	49
Real Estate, Renting and Business Acts.	37	56	6	-	165	155
Public Administration and Defence	30	63	5	2	49	85
Education	33	57	9	-	136	181
Health and Social Work	35	51	11	3	187	220
Other Community	26	62	7	-	100	84
Government Office Region						
North East	42	45	9	-	55	60
North West and Merseyside	29	53	15	-	159	161
Yorkshire & Humber	30	57	8	5	119	125
East Midlands	23	59	13	5	117	119
West Midlands	37	53	7	-	113	126
South West	30	54	11	5	158	142
Eastern	26	53	18	-	144	142
London	33	57	7	-	185	183
South East	26	56	14	4	228	223
Wales	26	58	12	-	73	74
Scotland	34	52	9	4	154	151
All workplaces	30	55	11	4	1,504	1,506

Base: All workplaces with 5 or more employees.

Notes: Figures are weighted, and based on responses from 1,506 managers.

Source: WLB2 (2003).

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