

Implementing flexible working to support all employees

Jane van Zyl, Chief Executive, Working Families

workingfamilies.org.uk



About Working Families

Our vision

We want to achieve a society in which everyone can fully meet their work and caring responsibilities, where all parents and carers have an equal opportunity to find and progress in secure, paid work.

Our mission

Our mission is to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace. We drive positive change by supporting and advocating for working parents and carers, collaborating with employers to build flexible and family-friendly cultures, and influencing government policy.



Our strategic approach



Employers in mid 2020

pre Covid-19

50% - 50% staff flexed their hours

25% - 50% staff partly remote

65%

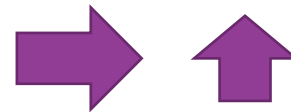
post Covid-19

85% - 50% staff flexed their hours

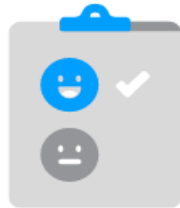
84% - 50% staff totally remote

100%

Productivity



Biggest challenges of COVID-19 for employers



Employee morale



Engagement



Communication



Avoiding burnout



Mental wellbeing



working families



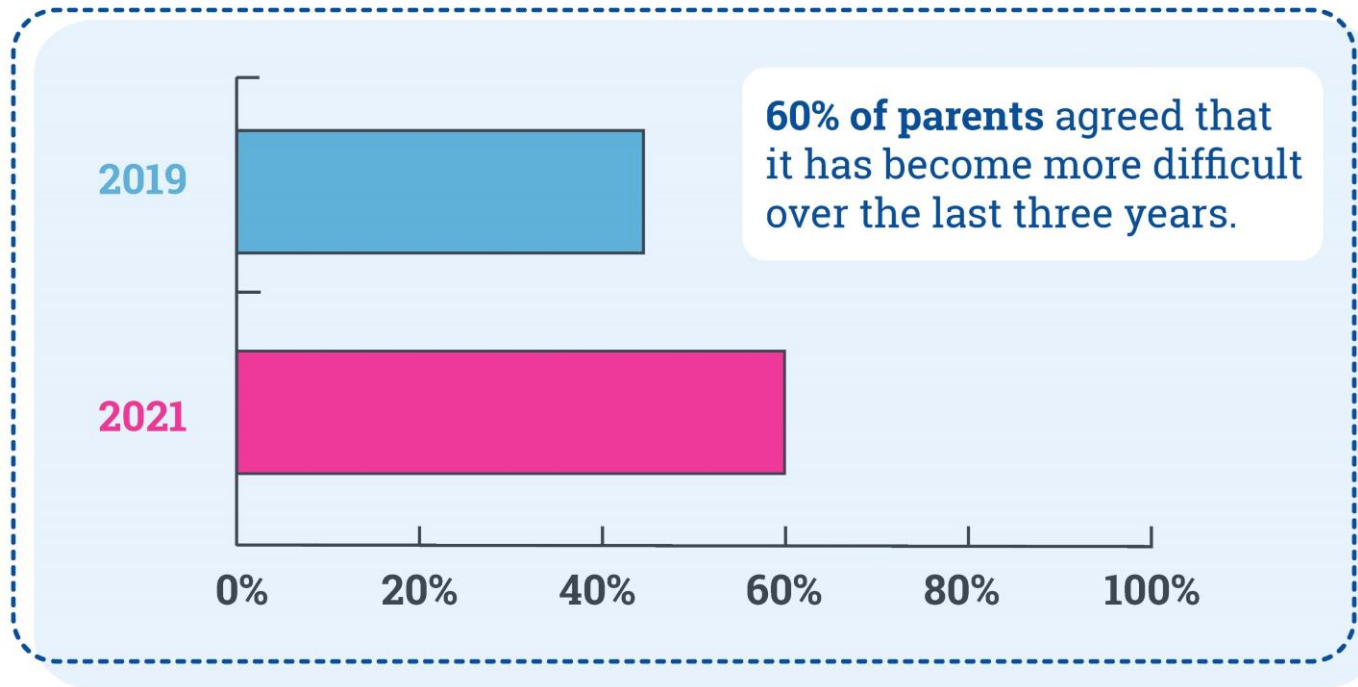
working families

What is the *Working Families Index*?

- The *Working Families Index* the most comprehensive survey of how parents and carers are managing the balance between work and family life in the UK
- Working Families and Talking Talent surveyed nearly 3,000 parents and carers about finances, working arrangements, managing and sharing childcare, and personal wellbeing



Parents are finding it financially tough to raise a family



Covid had a 'negative impact on my financial security'



81%

Parents with additional caring responsibilities



71%

Young families



70%

Self-employed



70%

Those from London



69%

Larger families



67%

Low earners



67%

Single Parents

Key finding: Families are struggling financially

Employer action plan

- **Look at the living wage:** Help employees at every level of your business meet rising costs by ensuring you offer the Living Wage with living hours, providing staff with a secure and regular income.
- **Support childcare costs:** Subsidies towards ongoing childcare, holiday club provision or loans to cover nursery deposits can facilitate working for many families.





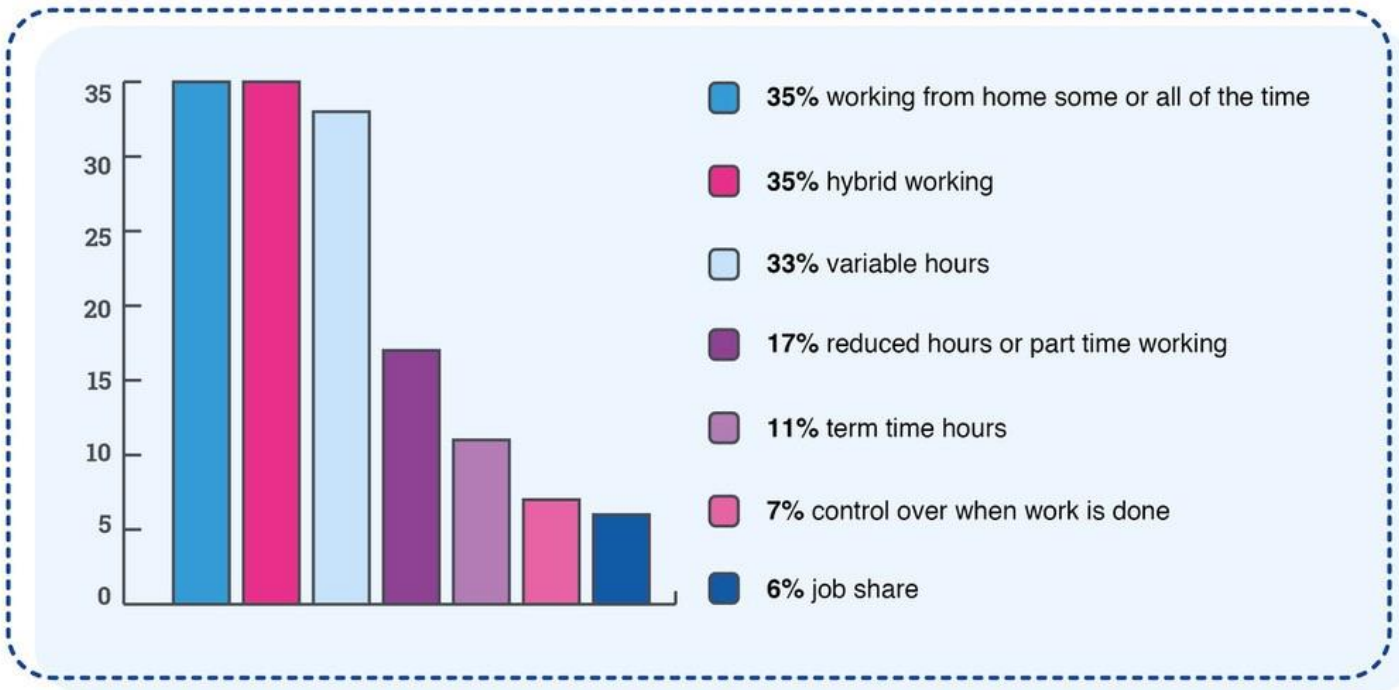
7/10

parents need to consider their **childcare options** before going for a new job or promotion.

This is particularly the case for **mothers**, over a third of whom agreed strongly with this compared to a quarter of **fathers**.



What types of flexible working are parents doing?



Key finding: Flex fosters loyalty

Employer action plan

- **Train managers:** Help managers appreciate the benefits of all types of flexible working through coaching or training.
- **Talk about flex:** Develop the channels of communication around flexible working, for example by making it part of the 1:1 process.
- **Lead from the top:** Leaders who put flexible working into action can change perception. 'Walking the talk' can be a powerful force in shifting attitudes.



The Best and Worst Sectors for Flexible Working

Over **80%** work flexibly



- Marketing, advertising, and PR
- Creative arts and design
- Business consulting and management
- Not for profit and charity work
- Accountancy, banking and finance

Less than **65%** work flexibly



- Retail
- Healthcare
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Teacher Training and Education
- Transport and logistics



Key finding: Flex isn't fair - yet

Employer action plan

- **Find the flex that fits:** Consult with employees who can't work from home. Do they have an alternative vision for flexibility? You may discover they have their own solutions.
- **Experiment:** Trial different working arrangements to see how they work. Many employees would be open to testing out an alternative to make sure it works in practice.





Thinking about their future intentions, **parents who felt their family lives were supported** and they were treated fairly by their employer **were twice as likely to consider staying with their employer** over the next two years than parents who didn't feel this way.



Key finding: Culture matters

- Three quarters of parents and carers surveyed reported regularly working extra hours, predominantly because of finances, workload, and expectations.

Employer action plan

- **Set the limits:** Agree 'ways of working' protocols that include employees taking breaks, not responding to emails outside working hours and alerting line managers when unable to deliver within working hours.
- **Pay attention to job design:** Be realistic with expectations. Can the tasks allocated in a role be completed within the given hours?



Key finding: Flex can be good for careers, but there's a part-time penalty

- Parents and carers with flexible working arrangements reported higher rates of progression than those without. However, people in part-time roles—largely women—are still at a disadvantage when it comes to career progression.

Employer action plan

- **Keep track:** Broaden your pay and career progression process to monitor working patterns as well as gender.
- **Celebrate flex success:** Signal that flex works by publicising the flexible working patterns of newly promoted staff.
- **Make it about output:** Measure performance by results, not where and when the work gets done.



Zurich Insurance, the GEO & the BI

6 words:

Part-time, job-share, full time & flexible

An inclusive sentence was included in the job advert e.g. 'this role is available part-time... because we want the best people for our roles and we recognise that sometimes those people aren't available full-time'

Zurich has seen a 16% rise in women applying for jobs and a near 20% jump in female applications for management roles.

Alongside an increase in applications, the number of women hired for senior roles as a direct result of the initiative has leapt by 33%.

The change has not only encouraged more applications but achieved a near 10% improvement in the feeling of 'belonging' among existing part-time employees across the UK business.



Support our work:

Visit workingfamilies.org.uk

Sign up to our newsletters

Get in touch to collaborate



Jane van Zyl, Chief Executive, Working Families

workingfamilies.org.uk

workingfamilies.org.uk

