



Work Autonomy,
Flexibility and
Work-Life Balance

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Flexible working and gender equality

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Today's talk

- How does flexible working and other family friendly policies can help women maintain their positions ... and increase gender diversity in top/leadership positions... and reduce the gender pay gap
- Limitations... stigma, access
- *Flexible working and family friendly policies can help – but introduction of policies alone is insufficient!*

Flexible working gender wage gap & gender equality

- *“We need to see a real step-change in the number of companies publishing their gender pay data and offering progression and flexibility for all employees.” (Teresa May, 2017)*

WORK LIFE

WHAT WILL CHANGE UNDER THE NEW RULES?

At least 10 working days of PATERNITY LEAVE around the time of birth

At least 4 months of PARENTAL LEAVE per parent, of which 2 months are non-transferable

5 working days of CARER'S LEAVE per year for workers providing care for relatives with serious medical conditions

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

MATERNITY LEAVE	PATERNITY LEAVE	PARENTAL LEAVE
Leave from work for mothers to be taken just before, during and immediately after birth	Short period of leave available to fathers, usually immediately after the child's birth	Period of leave to care for children in their first years of life

Sources: EPRS, European Commission

europarl.eu



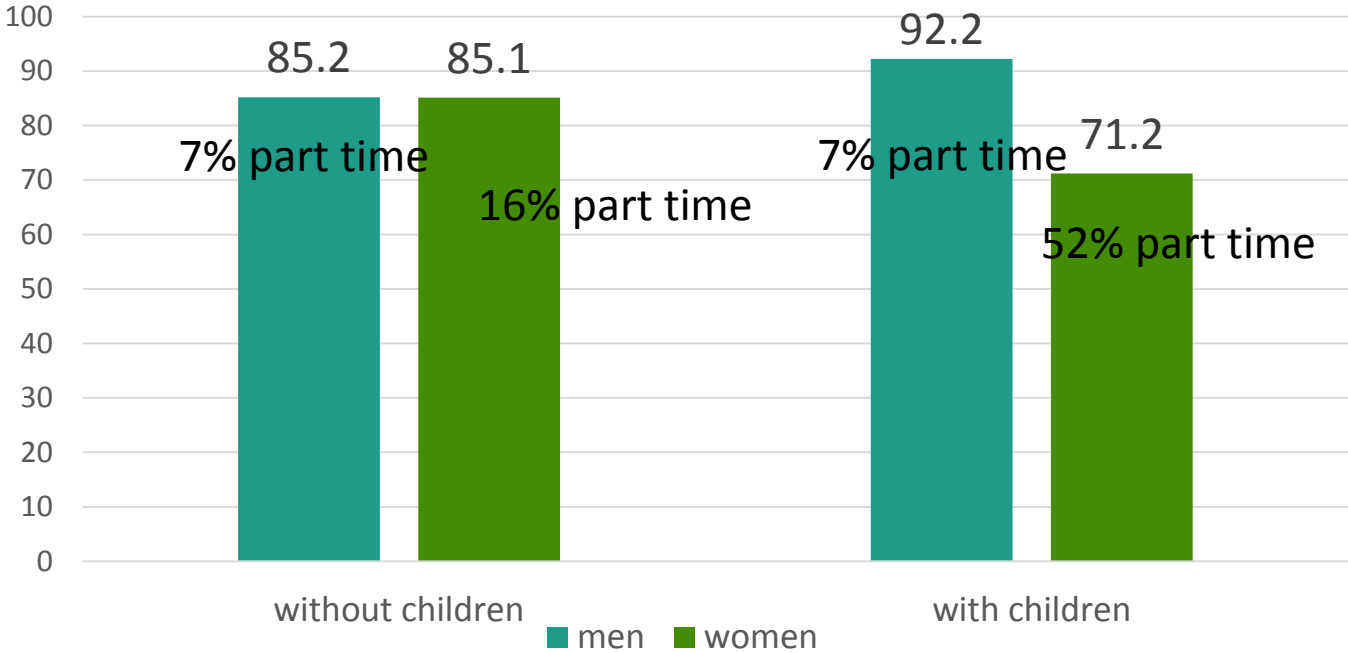
What is flexible working?

- Flexibility in the amount of time → part-time working, temporary reduction of hours, term time only work, job sharing (short term working)
- Flexibility in your schedules/when you work → flexitime (control over start/end times), working time autonomy (more/full control over when and how much you work), condensed hours, annualised hours
- Flexibility in where you work → teleworking, home working

Limitations of part-time work



Employment rate of 25-49 year old men and women with and without children in 2015 in the UK (source: Eurostat)



Drivers of the UK Gender Pay Gap

Occupational segregation 14%	<p>14% is a result of occupational segregation – that the types of job that women tend to do are less well paid than the types of jobs that men do.</p>
Industrial segregation 21%	<p>21% is a result of industrial segregation – that the sectors of the economy that women tend to work in are less well paid than the sectors that men work in.</p>
Unobserved factors 25%	<p>25% cannot be explained by the data we have – but factors could include discrimination, harassment, preferences and choices (constrained or otherwise).</p>
Labour market participation 40%	<p>40% is down to differences in the ways men and women participate in the labour market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 9% is accounted for by the fact that women tend to have more years spent out of the labour market and undertaking unpaid care work than men.– 31% is accounted for by the fact that women tend to have fewer years of full-time work experience than men.

Source: Olsen et al. 2018. These figures are taken from page 24 of that document, but reweighted so that the percentage figures relate only to the gap (i.e., protective factors are excluded).

Gender pay gap

+ Add to myFT

Part-time working plays crucial role in gender pay gap

IFS highlights lack of wage progression for those not in full-time work



Half of the additional gender pay gap that opens up after children are born can be attributed to differences in working patterns, according to researchers © FT Montage

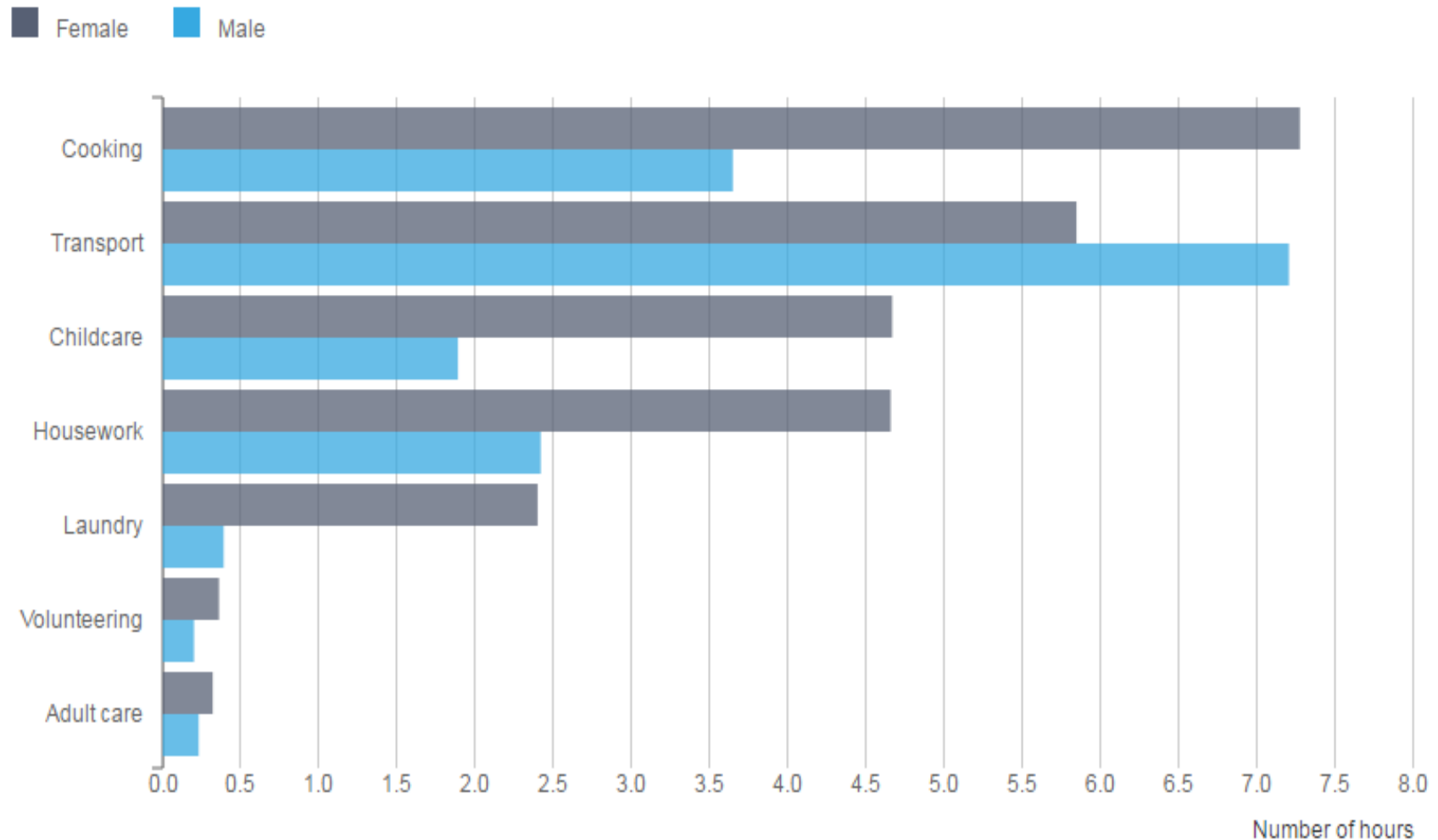
Gemma Tetlow, Economics Correspondent FEBRUARY 5, 2018



Part-time workers do not typically enjoy any progression in their wages, according to new research that attempts to pinpoint the factors behind the UK's gender pay gap.

Mothers' part-time working & Dropping out of the labour market key causes of gender pay gap & Lack of women in Top positions

Average hours of unpaid work done per week in each category for men and women, UK, 2015



Source: UK Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS), 2015

Flexible working allows women to stay in employment & maintain their full-time jobs



human relations

THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE

Women's employment patterns after childbirth and the perceived access to and use of flexitime and teleworking

human relations

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Flexible working and maintaining work after childbirth ([Chung & van der Horst, 2018](#))

- Working from home – reduce commuting(preparation) times, blending of the two activities
- Flexitime – tag-team parenting (shift work), adapting to other more stringent or unpredictable childcare availability/demands
- Example – me circa end April 2013



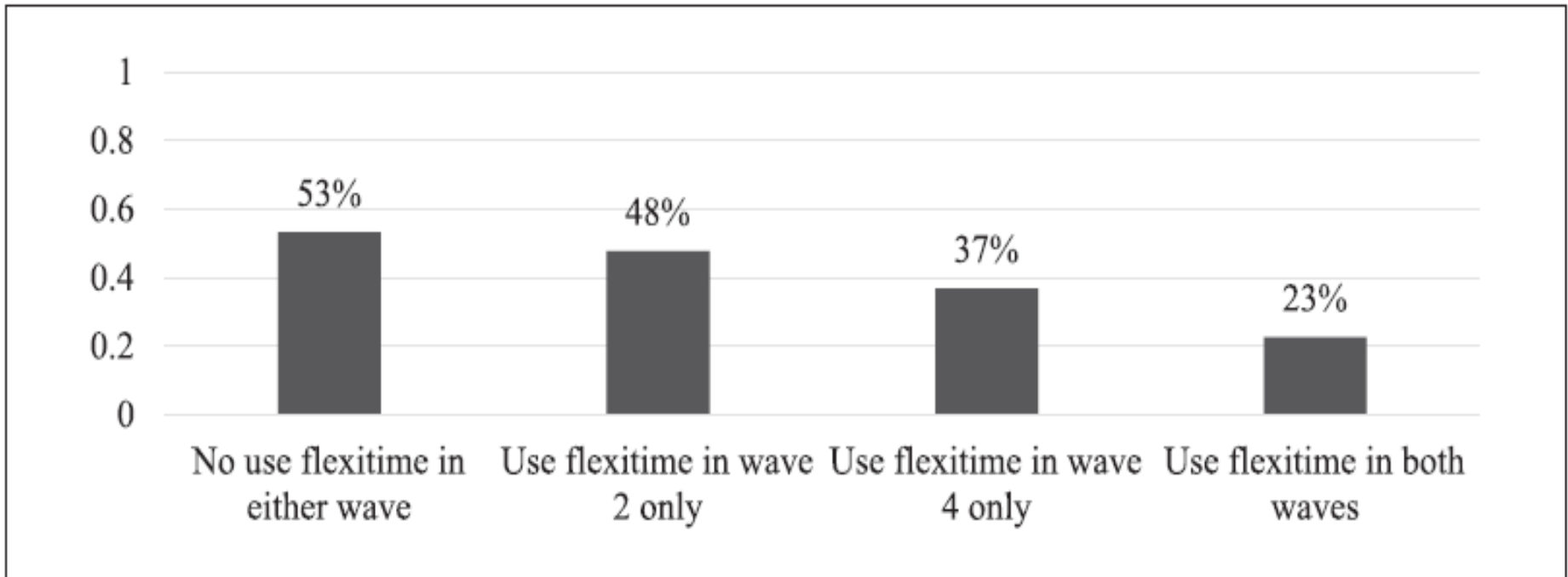
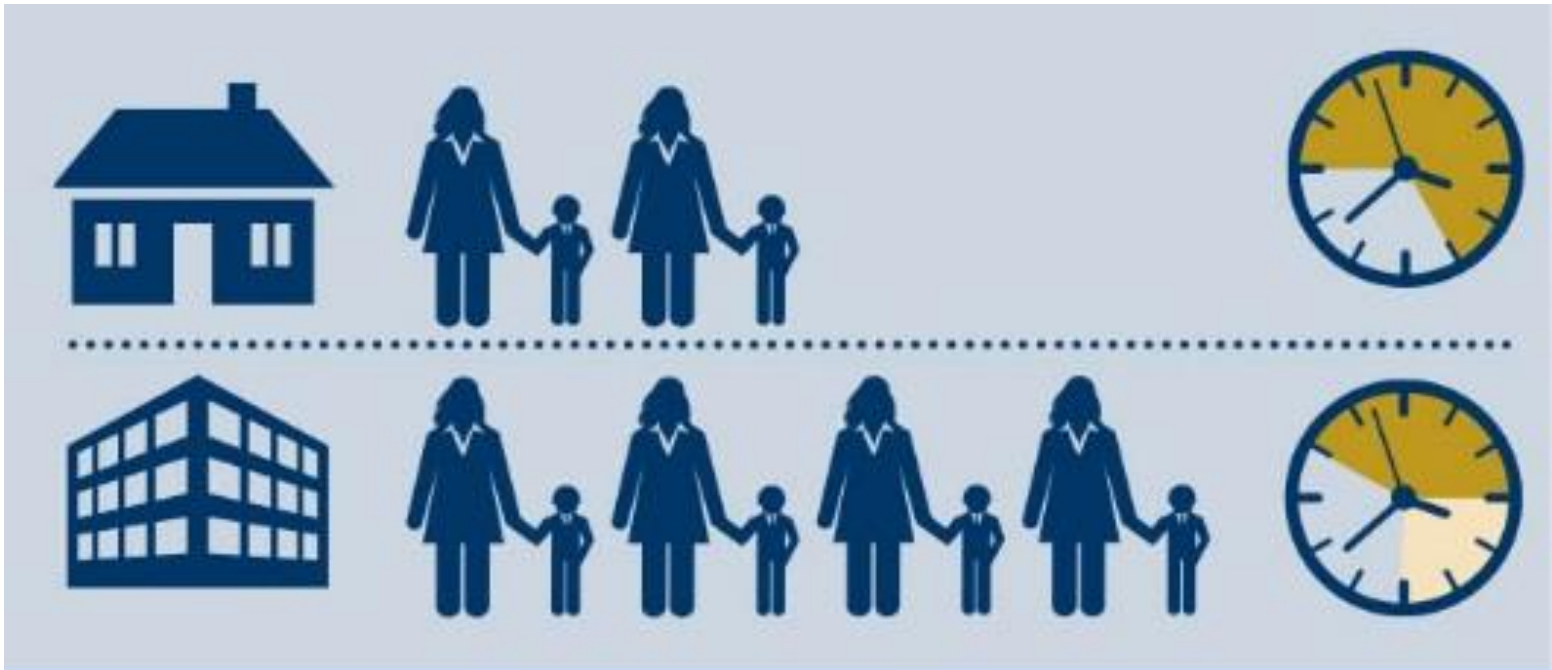


Figure 3. Predicted probabilities use flexitime.

Predicted probabilities based on logistic regression of the likelihood of reducing working hours on flexitime use.



Women who use flexitime were only half as likely as those who do not to reduce their working hours after childbirth

Women in top positions

- Fuller & Hirsch (2018) using US data: women are able to **stay in high paying jobs** with flexible working
- First time mums
 - Results for working hours reduction similar to the general model
 - Also some evidence to show that access to and use of flexible working arrangements **reduces likelihood of dropping out of the labour market** after the birth of their “first” child

Problems with access ([Chung, 2018](#))

- However, women and female dominated sectors/job posts are less likely to have access to control over their schedules → works part-time – worse career outcomes → increased gender pay gap
- Why? Employers are less likely to trust women/female dominated workplace workforce (Williams et al. 2013)
- Expects women to use it for family purposes, (while men not) – due to gender norms of whose responsibility it is to care...

Flexible working can lead to traditionalisation of gender roles?

- Due to social norms **women are expected to use flexible working to meet the household/family demands**
- Women/mothers increase their household work/childcare when working from home **but men do not** (able to keep stronger boundaries) – (Hilbrecht et al. 2008, Sullivan & Lewis, 2001; Kurowska, 2018) – men end up working longer overtime (Lott 2019)
- This may explain why women are more likely to not gain access to flexible working but also discriminated against when working flexibly (Chung, 2018)

Flexibility stigma

- Flexible working can lead to **negative career outcomes** due to the prevalence of **flexibility stigma** – the idea that flexible workers are not as productive
- This negative consequence is experienced by people who use flexible working for family purposes (Leslie et al., 2012)- i.e., women more ... But the **fear of stigma/prevalence** stronger for men ([Chung, 2018](#))
- Explains WHY men do not take up flexible working for family-friendly purposes

Contexts matter

- Depends on the gender role norms/practices – **Swedish men** increase household task similar to women – while this is not the case in Poland (Kurowska, 2018)
- Shared parental leave and having fathers involved from early years is important to change the idea whose job it is to care.
- Companies where flexible working is more prevalent may result in better outcomes for workers



Flexible working is not a panacea

- Flexible working can help retain female human resource in times of high demands
- But we need additional changes to ensure it does not lead to negative outcomes
- Encourage/Push men to take up flexible working – senior management role modelling
- Change in organisational culture also needed – tackling long hours work / challenging ideas of productivity and commitment

For more please visit the project website

<http://www.wafproject.org>



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