



Equality  
Research  
Series

# Equality at Work?

Workplace Equality Policies, Flexible Working  
Arrangements and the Quality of Work

*Philip J.O'Connell and Helen Russell*



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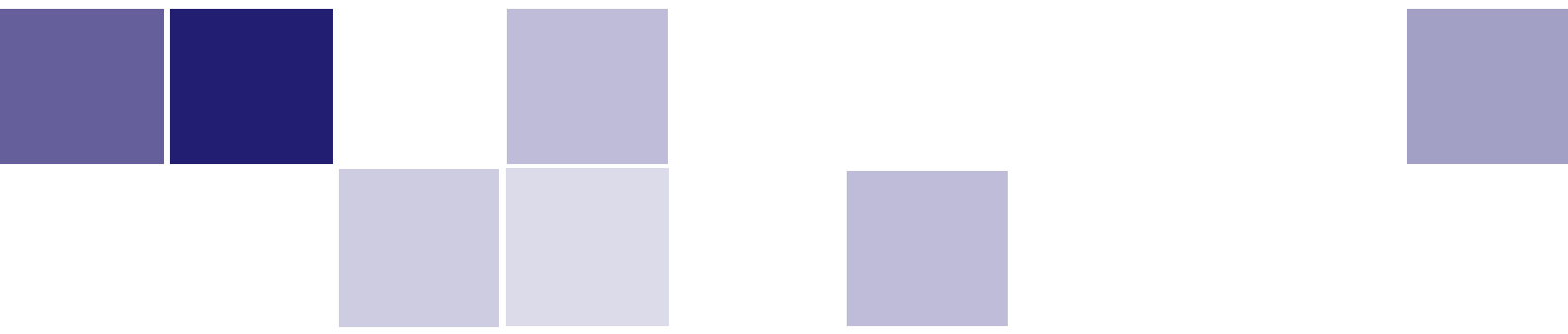


# Equality at Work?

Workplace Equality Policies, Flexible Working Arrangements and the Quality of Work

*Philip J.O'Connell and Helen Russell*

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# FOREWORD

This report draws on data collected from over 5000 employees in a nationwide survey commissioned by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance and conducted by the ESRI. By analysing the equality aspects of what is a unique and comprehensive picture of the experiences of Irish workers, it establishes a strong and convincing business case for workplace equality strategies.

The case for equality can be made in societal terms. Equality enhances economic growth by including the contribution of all groups. It contributes to democratic legitimacy by reflecting a commitment to all groups. It enhances social life by embracing the creativity and perspective of all groups. The case for equality can also be made in moral terms. Equality flows from a particular value base – a value base that has a particular emphasis on the shared humanity of all in society and the implications of this. This report reinforces and further develops another case for equality – the business case.

The recognition that equality is good for business has an important contribution to make in mobilising a constituency of key economic actors in society behind the goal of equality in the workplace. It is not in any way novel to restate the business case for equality. What is ground breaking in this report is that it sets out quantitative data in support of this business case for the first time in an Irish context.

The report examines the extent of formal policies to promote equality in the Irish workplace and the availability and use of flexible working arrangements. It analyses whether and to what extent these policies and arrangements have an impact on a range of workers' attitudes and experiences. It finds that the presence of a formal policy on equality is strongly associated with lower levels of work stress and higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Research elsewhere has established that such employee attitudes and experiences impact on organisational performance. As such a strong business case for equality is established in this report.

Flexible working arrangements are more likely to be available where an equality policy is being implemented. Overall this report confirms that flexible arrangements help employees to achieve a better work-life balance. Use of flexible hours reduces work pressure and increases autonomy and part-time working significantly reduces pressure and work stress. However, part-time workers have lower earnings and part-time workers and job sharers experience lower autonomy than comparable employees. This is because these arrangements tend to be segregated in certain types of jobs, sectors and organisations. This finding underlines the need to open up flexible working practices at all levels and sectors of the economy. The report also finds that those involved in working from home report increased autonomy but also increased pressure and stress. Thus this arrangement, which men are more likely to avail of, has at least the potential to undermine work-life balance.

This report's analysis of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements underpins the wider work of the Equality Authority in supporting workplace equality. This has emphasised the importance of a planned and systematic approach to equality at work. This requires an equality infrastructure within the workplace. The foundation for this infrastructure rests on formal equality policies that set out the commitment to equality and how this is to be pursued.

However it is important that commitment is turned into practice. As such another key part of this equality infrastructure is the provision of equality and diversity training to develop staff capacity to contribute to equality objectives. Such training however cannot take place in a vacuum and it is important to create a context for staff to put into practice new awareness and new skills developed as part of this training. Putting in place an equality action plan assists in creating this context and forms

another part of the equality infrastructure. An equality action plan sets out practical steps to be taken to achieve equality objectives in the workplace and is based on a review of workplace policies, procedures and practices for their impact on equality. This report reinforces the business case for this wider planned and systematic approach to equality.

The wider work of the Equality Authority has posed workplace equality in terms of non discrimination and the prevention of discrimination, of valuing diversity and making adjustments for the practical implications of this diversity and of the proactive pursuit of full equality in practice. Flexible working arrangements are central to this perspective on workplace equality. This report reinforces the importance of this broad perspective.

We are grateful to the authors of this report – Philip O’Connell and Helen Russell of the ESRI. This report reflects their impressive capacity and marks another significant research contribution on their part. We are also grateful to the National Centre for Partnership and Performance and the ESRI for access to the data from their nationwide survey.



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Niall Crowley  
Chief Executive Officer  
Equality Authority  
April 2005

# Legislative Context

## Equality Legislation

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 contain provisions that may be relevant to workplace equality practices, flexible working arrangements and the quality of work.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004:

- promote equality and prohibit discrimination (with some exceptions) across nine grounds
- prohibit sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation
- require appropriate measures for people with disabilities
- allow positive action measures to ensure full equality in practice across the nine grounds

Aspects of employment that are covered include advertising, equal pay, access to employment, vocational training and work experience, terms and conditions of employment, promotion or re-grading, classification of posts, dismissal and collective agreements. The Acts apply to a wide range of employees including full-time, part-time and temporary employees, public and private sector employment, vocational training bodies, employment agencies, trade unions, professional and trade bodies (they also extend to the self-employed, partnerships and people employed in another person's home).

The nine discriminatory grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. The family status ground is defined to include a parent or someone acting in loco parentis of a person under 18 or the parent or resident primary carer of a person with a disability who requires care or support on a continuing, regular or frequent basis. The disability ground is broadly defined to include people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.

Discrimination is described as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds which exists, existed, may exist in the future or is imputed to the person concerned. There are different types of discrimination covered including indirect discrimination, discrimination by imputation and association.

Sexual harassment and harassment of an employee is prohibited in the workplace or in the course of employment (by another employee, the employer or clients, customers or other business contacts of an employer) and the circumstances of the harassment are such that the employer ought reasonably to have taken steps to control it. Sexual harassment or harassment of an employee constitutes discrimination by the employer. It is a defence for an employer to prove that the employer took reasonably practicable steps to prevent the person harassing or sexually harassing the victim or (where relevant) prevent the employee from being treated differently in the workplace or in the course of employment (and to reverse its effects if it has occurred). The Equality Authority has published a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment in the Workplace.

Employers are liable for anything done by an employee in the course of his or her employment, unless the employer can prove that he or she took reasonably practicable steps to prevent the discrimination. It is therefore vital that an employer have comprehensive anti-discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment policies in place and that these are properly applied.

Employers are required to take appropriate measures to enable a person with disabilities to have access to employment, to participate or advance in employment or to undertake training unless the measures would impose a disproportionate burden. Appropriate measures are effective and practical measures to adapt the employer's place of business including the adaptation of premises and equipment, patterns of working time, distribution of tasks or the provision of training or integration resources.

The prohibition on discrimination is subject to a number of general and specific exemptions. Some of the exemptions apply to particular types of employment, some apply to all kinds of employments and some apply to provisions in other legislation.

The Act allows employers to provide certain benefits in respect of an employee's families and family events and in relation to the provision of child care or other care provision. There is also an exemption on the gender and marital status ground in relation to treatment which confers benefits on women in connection with pregnancy and maternity including breastfeeding. Anything done in compliance with any provisions of the maternity protection and adoptive leave legislation is not discrimination on the marital status ground.

### **Other Relevant Legislation**

There are a number of 'family friendly' acts – The Maternity Protection Act 1994 – 2004, The Parental Leave Act 1998 and the Adoptive Leave Act 1995. The Equality Authority provides information on the operation of those acts. These set out minimum entitlements.

### **Equality Authority**

The Equality Authority has the statutory mandate of working towards the elimination of discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in employment and in matters covered by the Equal Status Act, 2000. It is also given a public information function in regard to the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2004, the Adoptive Leave Act 1995 and the Parental Leave Act 1998. The Equality Authority may prepare Codes of Practice which, if approved by the Minister, are admissible in evidence in proceedings. The Equality Authority also has a power to undertake or sponsor research. The Equality Authority also has a power to conduct an inquiry. The Equality Authority may invite particular businesses to voluntarily carry out an equality review and prepare an action plan or may itself carry out an equality review and prepare action plans (in relation to businesses with more than 50 employees). An equality review is an audit of the level of equality of opportunity and an examination of the policies, practices and procedures to determine whether these are conducive to the promotion of equality. An action plan is a programme of actions to be undertaken to further the promotion of equality of opportunity. A number of equality reviews have been commenced on a voluntary basis.

Any person who considers that s/he has been discriminated against can apply to the Equality Authority for assistance in bringing proceedings under the Employment Equality Act and the Equal Status Act and the Intoxicating Liquor Act, 2003. The Equality Authority has a broad discretion to grant assistance if it is satisfied that the case raises an important point of principle or it appears to the Equality Authority that it is not reasonable to expect the person to adequately present the case without assistance. The Equality Authority can also initiate proceedings in its own name where there is a general practice of discrimination, or where an individual has not referred a complaint and where it is not reasonable to expect the person to refer a claim, or where there is discriminatory advertising.

# AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The survey data upon which the analysis for this study was based was originally collected on behalf of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. We wish to thank the staff of the Survey Unit at the ESRI particularly James Williams and Sylvia Blackwell, for their work on the survey.





# CONTENTS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>   | 13   |
| <b>Chapter</b>   |      |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>   | 17   |
| 1.1 Aims and Structure of this Study   | 17   |
| 1.2 Data   | 18   |
| <b>2. Labour Market Context and Review of Research</b>   | 20   |
| 2.1 Increasing Diversity at Work in Ireland  | 20   |
| 2.2 Research on the Adoption and Incidence of Work-Life Balance Arrangements   | 21   |
| 2.3 The Effects of Flexible Working Arrangements for Employers and Employees   | 24   |
| 2.4 Research on the Distribution and Impact of Equality Policies in the Workplace  | 25   |
| <b>3. The Incidence of Equality Policies and Employees' Perceptions of Fairness</b>  | 27   |
| 3.1 Introduction   | 27   |
| 3.2 How Widespread are Equality Policies?  | 27   |
| 3.3 Modelling the Distribution of Equality Policies  | 30   |
| 3.4 Subjective Perceptions of Equality   | 32   |
| 3.5 Summary  | 33   |
| <b>4. How Widespread are Flexible Working Arrangements?</b>  | 35   |
| 4.1 Introduction   | 35   |
| 4.2 Distribution of Flexible Working Arrangements  | 35   |
| 4.3 Multivariate Models of Flexible Working Arrangements   | 39   |
| 4.4 Summary  | 40   |
| <b>5. The Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working Arrangements on Work Pressure and Stress</b>                                  | 42   |
| 5.1 Introduction   | 42   |
| 5.2 Measures of Work Pressure and Stress   | 42   |
| 5.3 Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working   | 45   |
| 5.4 Multivariate Models of Impact  | 46   |
| 5.5 Summary  | 49   |
| <b>6. The Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working Arrangements on Employees' Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment</b> | 50   |
| 6.1 Introduction   | 50   |
| 6.2 Measures of Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment   | 50   |
| 6.3 Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working Arrangements  | 53   |

|           |   |           |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| 6.4       | Multivariate Models of Impact   | 54        |
| 6.5       | Summary   | 56        |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>The Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working Arrangements on Earnings and Autonomy</b>   | <b>57</b> |
| 7.1       | Introduction  | 57        |
| 7.2       | Measures of Earnings and Autonomy   | 57        |
| 7.3       | Factors Influencing Earnings and Autonomy   | 59        |
| 7.4       | Models of Earnings  | 60        |
| 7.5       | Models of Autonomy  | 61        |
| 7.6       | Summary   | 62        |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Conclusions</b>  | <b>63</b> |
|           | <b>Bibliography</b>   | <b>66</b> |
|           | <b>Appendix Tables</b>  | <b>69</b> |
|           | <b>List of Tables</b>   |           |
| 3.1       | Presence of Formal, Explicit Equality Policy in the Public, Private and Commercial Semi-State Sectors                                     | 28        |
| 3.2       | Presence of Formal, Explicit Equality Policy by Organisational Characteristics  | 28        |
| 3.3       | Presence of Formal Equality Policies in the Private Sector  | 29        |
| 3.4       | Presence of Formal Equality Policy by Job Characteristics   | 30        |
| 3.5       | Presence of Formal Equality Policy by Personal Characteristics  | 30        |
| 3.6       | Logistic Regression Model of Factors Influencing Equality Policy  | 31        |
| 3.7       | Perceptions of Equality in the Workplace  | 33        |
| 3.8       | Relationship between Perceptions of Equality in the Workplace and Presence of Formal Equality Policies                                    | 33        |
| 3.9       | Regression Models of the Effects of Equality Policy on Perceptions of Fairness and Equality   | 33        |
| 4.1       | Extent of Flexible Working Arrangements   | 36        |
| 4.2       | Flexible Working Arrangements Used in Workplace by Sector   | 36        |
| 4.3       | Flexible Working Arrangements Used in Workplace by Size of Organisation   | 36        |
| 4.4       | Flexible Working Arrangements by Hours and Type of Contract   | 37        |
| 4.5       | Flexible Working Arrangements by Gender   | 37        |
| 4.6       | Flexible Working Arrangements by Household and Gender   | 37        |
| 4.7       | Logistic Regression Models of Use of Flexible Working Arrangements in the Workplace   | 38        |
| 4.8       | Logistic Regression Models of Personal Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements - Where such Arrangements are in use in the Workplace | 40        |
| 5.1       | Work Pressure and Stress by Presence of Formal Equality Policy  | 45        |
| 5.2       | Work Pressure and Stress by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements  | 45        |
| 5.3       | Regression Models of Work Pressure  | 47        |
| 5.4       | Regression Models of Work Stress  | 47        |
| 6.1       | Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment by Presence of Formal Equality Policy  | 53        |
| 6.2       | Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements                        | 53        |
| 6.3       | Regression Models of Job Satisfaction   | 55        |
| 6.4       | Regression Models of Organisational Commitment  | 55        |
| 7.1       | Earnings and Autonomy by Presence of Formal Equality Policy   | 59        |
| 7.2       | Hourly Earnings and Level of Autonomy by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements                                 | 59        |

|     |                                   |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 7.3 | OLS Models of Net Hourly Earnings | 61 |
| 7.4 | OLS Models of Autonomy            | 61 |

### **List of Figures**

|     |  |    |
|-----|--|----|
| 5.1 | Measures of Work Pressure                        | 44 |
| 5.2 | Measures of Work Stress and Family/Work Conflict | 44 |
| 6.1 | Satisfaction with Current Job                    | 51 |
| 6.2 | Organisational Commitment                        | 52 |
| 7.1 | Measures of Autonomy                             | 58 |





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Research Aims and Approach

Given the growing diversity of the Irish labour force, policies to promote equality and work-life balance are of increasing importance. *'Equality at Work'* examines the extent of formal workplace policies to promote equality in the workplace and of flexible working arrangements, specifically part-time working, flexible hours, job-sharing and working from home.

It examines the impact of equality policies on employees' perceptions of fairness and equality of treatment and practice in their employing organisations. It also examines the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on aspects of workers well being (work pressure and stress), on their attitudes to their jobs and employers (job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and on job quality (earnings and autonomy).

The study addresses these issues using the data collected in a recent nationally representative survey of over 5000 employees in Ireland conducted by the ESRI for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPPE).

## Equality Policies: Key Findings

About three quarters of all employees work in organisations where there is a formal explicit policy on equal opportunities. Equality policies are much more common in the public sector than in the private sector. They are also more common in larger organisations and in organisations that recognise a trade union or staff association.

Equality policies and flexible working arrangements are related: in workplaces where an equality policy has been implemented there is a greater likelihood that flexible working arrangements are also available at that workplace.

This study finds that the presence of a formal equality policy in a workplace impacts positively on employees' perceptions of workplace fairness, on workers' well being and on their attitudes to their jobs and employers but finds no discernable impact on job quality.

- Employees who work in organisations that have implemented formal equality policies are much more likely to consider that opportunities for recruitment, pay and conditions and opportunities for advancement and career development are fair and equal in their organisations, even when other factors that could influence such perceptions are controlled for.

- The presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly and unambiguously associated with lower levels of work stress even when a wide range of personal, job and organisational characteristics are controlled.
- This study found no discernable impact of equality policies on work pressure. This is not surprising as there is no *a priori* reason why the presence of an equality policy would influence the pace and intensity of work.
- The presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly associated with higher levels of both job satisfaction and organisational commitment, even when all other relevant variables are taken into account.
- One important mechanism by which the implementation of equality policies leads to increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment is through their positive impact on employees' perceptions of fairness and equality in their employing organisations.
- There is no discernable impact of the presence of a formal equality policy in the workplace on individual earnings, and no evidence to suggest that the male-female wage gap differs between workplaces with and without formal equality policies.
- It also appears that equality policies have no significant impact on autonomy at work.

## **Flexible Working Arrangements: Key Findings**

The study examines personal involvement in flexible working arrangements and patterns of their use by organisations. Almost one in four employees is involved in flexible working and one in five works part-time. However just 8.4% of employees are involved in home working and 6.5% job-share.

Involvement in flexible working arrangements is highly gendered. Women are much more likely to use part-time hours and job sharing and somewhat more likely to use flexitime, while men are much more likely to report working from home.

The organisational use of flexible working arrangements varies widely across economic sectors and types of workplace. Home working is more common in business and financial services and in small organisations. Other forms of flexibility are more likely to be found in larger organisations and in organisations that recognise trade unions.

In this study none of the flexible working arrangements examined was found to have any impact on employees' job satisfaction or organisational commitment, when other relevant factors are taken into account. Flexible working arrangements do impact on employees' wellbeing and on job quality but their effects are not all in the same direction and differ with the type of flexibility.

## **Part-time Working**

- Involvement in part-time working significantly reduces both work stress and work pressure levels.
- There also appears to be a wider benefit on levels of stress and pressure for employees not involved personally but working in an organisation which uses part-time working.
- However those involved in part-time working have lower hourly earnings and report lower levels of autonomy at work even when compared with other employees with similar personal and human capital characteristics.
- These negative effects on work quality do not persist when job and organisational controls are added. This means that the lower earnings and autonomy observed among part-timers are due to the nature of the occupations, organisations and sectors in which part-time working occurs.

## Flexible Hours

- Involvement in flexible hours significantly reduces work pressure but does not affect work stress when other factors are controlled.
- While employees using flexitime have above average earnings, this is simply due to factors such as the higher educational levels and longer job tenures of those involved in this practice.
- Employees involved in flexible hours report higher levels of autonomy even when a range of personal, occupational and organisational factors are controlled.

## Job Sharing

- Involvement in job sharing is associated with greater levels of work stress for men while no effect was found for women.
- Personal involvement in job sharing does not impact on work pressure but there appears to be some increase in pressure for other employees in organisations which use job-sharing.
- Involvement in job sharing has no discernable effect on earnings but the employees involved report lower autonomy at work compared to other workers with similar personal and human capital characteristics.
- These negative effects on work quality do not persist when job and organisational controls are added.

## Home Working

- Employees personally involved in home working experience significantly higher levels of stress and greater work pressure compared to workers with similar jobs and working conditions who do not work at home.
- While employees involved in home working have higher earnings, this is due to factors such as the higher educational levels and longer job tenures of those involved rather than due to working from home per se.
- Home working allows employees greater personal control over their working hours, and is associated with greater levels of autonomy even when a range of personal, occupational and organisational factors are controlled.

## Conclusion

The proactive pursuit of equality in the workplace and the implementation of flexible working arrangements are valuable in themselves in promoting equality objectives and in accommodating diversity as well as in facilitating the achievement of work-life balance.

This study shows that not only do equality policies entail direct benefits for employees, such as reduced work-related stress; they can also lead to increased job satisfaction and greater organisational commitment. To the extent that they do have these effects then equality policies are likely to also have a positive impact on organisational performance and hence be of benefit to employers.

The effects of flexible working arrangements are more complex. Use of flexitime has generally positive outcomes as it reduces work pressure while increasing autonomy. However in most other cases there appear to be trade-offs involved.

Part-time work reduces work pressure and stress but those involved experience lower earnings and autonomy than comparable full-timers. Job sharers also experience lower autonomy than other comparable employees, while men involved in job sharing experience increased stress. Employees involved in home working have greater autonomy but experience much greater work pressure and stress.



The negative effects on work quality of part-time work and job sharing indicate an underlying process of segregation in the types of jobs and organisations where these workers are located. The negative effects on worker well being of home working and, to a lesser extent job sharing, suggest that attempts to integrate work and family commitments may lead to the erosion of boundaries between work and home to the detriment of family life. From a gender equality perspective it is interesting to note that the only form of flexible work in which men predominate is more likely to undermine than to promote work-life balance.

Overall, these findings serve to remind us that flexible working arrangements are often implemented in response to organisational imperatives rather than to accommodate the needs of individual workers and that they are not always to the advantage of the employee. They also serve to underline the need for further research into the organisation of work and its impact on both individual employees and their families.

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aims and Structure of this Study

The past decade has witnessed major changes in the size and composition of the workforce in Ireland. Rapid growth in economic output and in employment was accompanied by a strong surge in the number of women at work, as well as by an increase in inward migration. Over the same period the working population has begun to age and there has been a growing recognition of the employment aspirations of people with disabilities and other under-represented or marginalised groups. Accommodating diversity and promoting equality in the workplace thus represents a substantial challenge both now and in the future.

The surge in women's employment has also been accompanied by far-reaching changes in household structures and in the relationship between work and family. These shifts in household composition and in the relationship between work and family responsibilities have given rise to increased concern with flexible working arrangements that facilitate maintaining labour force participation while caring for children and other, usually elderly, dependent relatives, as well as pursuing other life choices.

This study looks at how workplaces in Ireland have responded to these challenges by examining the extent of adoption of formal policies to promote equality in the workplace as well as working arrangements that support work-life balance. The report also looks at the impact of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements on aspects of worker well-being – work pressure and stress – as well as on employee attitudes to their jobs and their employers.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 looks at the labour market context and provides a brief review of previous research on equality policies and flexible working arrangements. Chapter 3 looks at how the incidence of equality policies varies across different organisations, in different types of jobs, and by the personal characteristics of individual employees. It also examines the impact of equality policies on employees' perceptions of fairness and equality of treatment and practice in their employing organisations. Chapter 4 looks, in a similar manner, at the distribution of flexible working arrangements.

Having examined the presence of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements, the report turns in the next three chapters to a systematic analysis of whether and to what extent these policies and arrangements have an impact on a range of workers' attitudes and experiences. Chapter 5 examines the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on levels of work pressure and stress. Chapter 6 looks at their impact on employees' attitudes to their jobs, focusing on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and in this way, examining subjective aspects of the business case for equality policies and flexible working arrangements. Chapter 7 looks at the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on aspects of job quality, focussing in particular on earnings and autonomy. Chapter 8 draws conclusions from the study.

## 1.2 Data

The report addresses these issues by drawing on the data collected in a recent nation-wide survey of employees in Ireland commissioned by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance and conducted by the ESRI. The results of the survey are published as *The Changing Workplace: A Survey of Employees' Views and Experiences* (O'Connell, Russell, Williams and Blackwell, 2004). The survey consists of a representative sample of over 5000 employees and therefore offers a unique and comprehensive picture of the experiences of Irish workers.

The fieldwork for the survey was carried out between June and early September 2003 using a telephone methodology. The sample was selected on a random basis from a total of 300 sampling points throughout the country. A set of 100 random telephone numbers was generated in each sampling point and these were used to generate a targeted 20 completed questionnaires from each cluster point. The sampling resulted in 11,716 phone-calls to private households. A total of 5509 questionnaires were completed in the course of the survey. Of these 320 were unusable due to incomplete information and so were not included in the analysis. The current report is based on the analysis of 5,198 questionnaires, a response rate of 47%. The resulting data were reweighted by national population parameters to render them representative of the national population of employees at work in Summer 2003.

The survey questionnaire contained eight sections as follows:

- A. Details on respondents' current labour market situation such as occupation; industrial sector; size of local unit and enterprise; number of hours worked; status of tenure; trade union membership.
- B. Attitudes to job, intensity and autonomy of the work. This section recorded level of agreement with a series of statements on job satisfaction, pressure, commitment, stress, autonomy etc. It also included questions on the presence of different work practices including the availability and use of flexible working arrangements.
- C. Change in the workplace – this section asked about the incidence of structural changes in the organisation, introduction of new work practices and changes in the individual's own job. It also questioned employees about their willingness to accept such change if it were to continue into the future.
- D. Skill levels and training provided by the employer over the 2 years preceding the survey.
- E. Communications – this section included sources of information; perceptions on the adequacy or otherwise of information received from management and prior consultation regarding changes in areas affecting the respondent's job.
- F. Employee/employer relations – this section dealt with relations between different groups of employees and also between management and employees. It included questions on the presence of an equality policy in the workplace and on perceptions of equality in the workplace.
- G. Partnership and involvement – this section considered the extent of direct and also indirect participation by employees in decisions as to how the work is carried out.
- H. Background or classificatory variables. This included the standard set of classificatory variables used in analysis of the data. These include age, sex, marital status, number of dependent children, level of educational attainment etc.

It should be emphasised that the survey is of employees rather than workplaces. Therefore the estimate of the incidence of equality policies or flexible working arrangements will not be the same as one based on a sample of employers/firms.<sup>1</sup> In addition, asking employees about firm level policies is also likely to produce some error, insofar as employees do not have full information on these issues. Analysis of a matched sample of employers and employees in the UK shows that the level of disagreement between the responses of the two groups was greatest for leave arrangements (not considered in the current study), was moderate for job-sharing and flexitime and was lowest in the case of working from home and childcare provision (Dex, McCulloch & Smith, 2002). The questions on flexible working arrangements in the survey were asked both in relation to the organisational use of the practice and personal involvement (see Chapter 4 for further details). It is expected that the error surrounding responses on personal involvement will be lower than for organisational use. The question on equality policy refers solely to the organisation. Respondents are asked '*Is there a formal explicit policy on equal opportunities in your workplace?*' A relatively high number of respondents (9%) said that they did not know whether such a policy existed. These respondents are excluded from the analysis of equality policies as discussed in Chapter 3.

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<sup>1</sup> However an incidence figure from a nationally representative sample of firms weighted by the number of employees covered in each firm should produce an estimate close to that taken from a sample of employees.

# LABOUR MARKET CONTEXT AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH

## 2.1 Increasing Diversity at Work in Ireland

The past decade has witnessed major changes in the size and composition of the workforce in Ireland. Total employment in Ireland grew by over 50% in the nine years from 1993 to 2002, and, during the same period, unemployment plummeted from almost 16% of the labour force to just over 4%. The overall growth in employment has been underpinned by a very significant increase in the number of women at work and also an increase in the number of returned Irish migrants and non-Irish immigrants. This makes for a much more diverse labour force than even a decade ago.

One of the striking features of recent developments in the Irish labour market has been the sharp and sustained increase in women's labour force participation and employment. Women's share of total employment increased from 37% in 1993 to almost 42% in 2002. This represents the continuation of a trend from the 1980s: the female share of total employment was only 29% in 1981 and less than 33% in 1988 (O'Connell, 2000). The trend is, moreover, expected to continue, so that women are expected to account for almost 45% of total employment by the year 2015 (Sexton, Hughes and Finn, 2002).

The tightening of the labour market has attracted increasing numbers of Irish migrants to return as well as a substantial number of non-Irish immigrants. In 2002 it is estimated that citizens of other EU states accounted for 3.2% of all labour force participants in Ireland, and nationals of non-EU countries accounted for another 2.2%. Immigrants thus represent a small but growing part of the workforce and, assuming these trends will continue, the workforce will become increasingly diverse over the coming decades.

Changing demographics have resulted in ageing populations in many European countries. While Ireland has a relatively young population, compared to the EU average, the proportion of older people in the population is rising. The share of those aged 45-64 amongst the working age population (i.e. of those aged 15-64) was 31% in 2001 and is projected to approach 40% by the year 2016 (NESF, 2003). Older workers, already represent an increasing share of total employment (ibid, p19). The growth in employment among those aged over 50 has been particularly strong among women (Russell & Fahey, 2004).

Recent research on the labour force participation of disabled people suggests that the number of disabled people in employment lies somewhere between 43,000 and 194,000, depending on the definition of disability and the survey questions used (Gannon and Nolan, 2004). The employment rate among people with disabilities falls with age, but as the population and labour force age, the number of people with disabilities can be expected to increase.

The surge in women's employment has also been accompanied by far-reaching changes in the relationship between work and family. In part, this reflects a shift away from a traditional male breadwinner model in which males were expected to work full-time and without interruption from labour market entry to retirement, and women were expected to take principal responsibility for childrearing and to participate in the labour market only on an intermittent basis. Contemporary patterns of work and family are more complex, with a greater number of dual earner couples, and more single person and single parent households.

The dramatic increase in the number of women at work, noted above, has also been accompanied by a sharp increase in the proportion of families where both parents are at work. The number of households headed by a working single parent has also increased. (Russell, Layte, Maitre, O'Connell and Whelan, 2004). Moreover a recent study of those caring for ill, disabled or elderly dependents, found that the proportion of carers combining their care commitments with employment has grown significantly (Cullen et al, 2004). These changes have brought the issue of reconciliation between work and care commitments to the fore. Given that women have traditionally assumed responsibility for the family, work-life balance issues are also linked to issues of gender equality in the workplace.

Flexible working arrangements are also important for allowing other groups to participate in the labour market. Many older workers favour a gradual approach to retirement which would involve shorter working hours (Fahey and Russell, 2001). There is also an increasing recognition that achieving work-life balance is important for all workers' well-being and not just those with caring responsibilities. Some forms of work-life balance arrangements, for example, study leave, are aimed at those pursuing other life interests.

Increasing diversity of the workforce in terms of gender, nationality, ethnicity, age and disability, as well as other aspects of diversity, suggest that policies to accommodate diversity and promote equality of opportunity are becoming increasingly important both to the welfare of workers as well as to the performance of firms and of the wider economy. Equality policies and flexible working arrangements are, of course, closely related since the development of flexible working arrangements may be adopted precisely in order to promote the objective of gender equality, and both types of policy are responsive to the increase in women's labour force participation (Drew, Evans and Murphy, 2003; Evans, 2001).

Employment policies to promote work-life balance, equality and diversity, can carry benefits for business as well as workers and the wider community (Equality Authority, 2004). In recent years there has been growing interest in employment policies and practices to promote work-life balance and equality. However, research has tended to focus more on issues of work-life balance and family-friendly working arrangements than on formal equality policies.

## **2.2 Research on the Adoption and Incidence of Work-Life Balance Arrangements**

The literature on flexible working arrangements covers a wide range of policies only some of which might be deemed to support work-life balance. For example temporary employment is often considered alongside part-time work. However, while temporary employment provides employers with a form of numerical flexibility, it is not a measure that facilitates work-life balance for employees. We are concerned here with arrangements introduced voluntarily by firms, which facilitate the combination of work and family or other responsibilities. These operate alongside the range of statutory provisions for reconciling work and family life such as statutory leave arrangements, which should be available to all employees.

There are a number of factors which may encourage employers to adopt policies to promote work-life balance. These include the business case for such policies, as well as changes in human resource management and changes in technology that enhance opportunities for working from home. Another key factor is increasing demand for greater flexibility from employees. Our recent survey of public sector managers found that almost all (98%) were experiencing pressure for change from employees' needs and preferences for greater flexibility in the workplace, while 18% said this pressure was intense (Williams et al, 2004).

We have documented the key demographic changes above: over the past decade there have been marked increases in the number of women in paid employment and in the proportion of households where both partners work, and the number of single and single-parent households has increased. Because of these trends employers have begun to pay greater attention to the needs of employees with caring responsibilities. Women tend to suffer more than men from the tensions between work and family responsibilities, so there is a strong link between flexible arrangements and the pursuit of gender equality. However, the increasing diversity of household types and increased multiple earners also mean that employers need to implement flexible policies to accommodate a wider group of potential carers. In Ireland in recent years, the need to promote flexible working arrangements is driven by the need to retain female employees with children and to attract women returning from full-time child-rearing in a context of tight labour demand (Drew et al, 2003). Adoption of arrangements to promote work-life balance entail costs for implementing organisations, so it is important from an employer's point of view that these costs be offset by gains in organisational performance. Drew et al (2003) provide a useful summary of the business case arguments in support of family friendly working arrangements:

- Lower staff turnover and consequently reduction in time and expenditure on recruitment, induction and training of staff, as well as retention of key experienced personnel
- Reduced casual sickness absence occasioned by employees' caring responsibilities, as staff can avail instead of flexible work arrangements
- Improved morale, commitment and productivity: Family friendly working arrangements are believed to reduce stress and increase loyalty and work effort
- Employer reputation: Enhanced capacity to attract staff and increase the range of diversity, experience and interests of staff
- Enhanced public image of the organisation

The development of human resource management (HRM) practices may play a role in the adoption of both equality and flexible policies. In recent years there has been increased emphasis on various forms of 'high trust', 'high commitment' or 'high performance' working arrangements involving greater mutual cooperation and commitment between employers and employees in order to support more complex jobs involving greater employee discretion and involvement (OECD, 1999). Adoption of such HRM practices may also give rise to both formal equality and family friendly policies in order to promote the development of trust relationships and organisational commitment (Evans, 2001), but also to support retention of key staff upon which such organisational strategies are based (Drew et al, 2003). The spread of HRM practices, entailing a professionalisation of the personnel function and development of codified personnel rules may in itself promote the adoption of equality policies. However, it should be noted that HRM practices may also be used to pursue flexibility in working arrangements, such as, for example, zero hours working, where employees are required to be 'on-call' for work at very short notice, that entail little or no positive effects for those seeking to meet both work and family responsibilities.

Developments in information technology, including improved, faster and cheaper internet access, may allow more work to be undertaken at home rather than in the office. These developments may facilitate reconciling work-family responsibilities (Drew et al, 2003). However, they also entail the danger that work will intrude into family time and lead to greater work pressure and stress.

International evidence on the incidence of flexible working arrangements is limited and tends to come from national surveys, which, because they are not harmonized, may not be directly comparable. However, Evans (2001) reports comparative data in relation to non-statutory leave provided by employers, employer provided/subsidised childcare, the percentage of employees working flexitime and the percentage of women working part-time on a voluntary basis. On these comparisons Ireland ranks second last (of the EU15) in relation to extra-statutory sick-child leave and parental leave despite the fact that statutory provision is also low. Ireland ranks somewhat higher on employer

additions to maternity leave (fifth from bottom). However three of the countries below Ireland, i.e. Denmark, Finland and Sweden, have very generous state maternity leave systems which reduces the need for employer provision (Evans, 2001). The rate of flexitime reported for employees in Ireland is 19% compared to an unweighted average for the EU15 of 25%.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the rate of voluntary part-time work among women in Ireland is reported to be slightly lower than the EU average.

Evans (2001) also provides more detailed analysis for four countries – Australia, Japan, UK and US. This analysis found that at the organisational level availability of family-friendly arrangements is influenced by sector (public versus private) and size. At the individual level the study found that highly skilled workers and those with longer tenures had a greater opportunity to avail of these arrangements. Evans also found that these arrangements were more common in firms with a formal equal opportunities policy, and firms adopting 'high commitment' practices. Berg, Kalleberg and Appelbaum (2003) found that workers in organisations adopting high-performance work practices were more likely to perceive their employers as helping them to achieve balance between work and family life.

In the United Kingdom, Dex and Smith (2002) found that employers in large organisations, in the public sector and with recognised unions were more likely to offer flexible working arrangements to their employees. Dex and Smith (2001) also found that flexible working arrangements tend to co-exist with high commitment management practices and with being a 'good employer': these included stronger implementation of equal opportunities policies, and practices aimed at producing high commitment among employees, including team working, briefing, consultation and communication. 'Good employers' were also found to be associated with better performance outcomes. Dex and Scheibl (2002) found that while smaller establishments may be less family friendly in a formal sense, (and in ways that can be measured by survey instruments) case studies suggest that smaller organisations may be more innovative in developing flexible working arrangements to meet key employee needs.

Prior to *The Changing Workplace* survey of employees there have been a number of surveys of flexible working arrangements in Ireland. Fynes et al (1996) looked at the availability of flexi-time, annualised hours, job-sharing and extended/non-statutory leave options. They found that these options were much more widely available in the public than in the private sector. These arrangements were also more common in large organisations in the services sector, and principally among white collar workers. For example, 82 per cent of public sector organisations provided extended leave options, and approximately 12 per cent of public sector employees sampled in the survey had taken career breaks at some stage in their career. However, less than 10 per cent of private sector employers provided the facility for extended career breaks, and only 2 per cent of such firms actually had an employee on extended leave during the survey. It was also found that these options were used primarily by female employees.

More recently Drew et al (2003) conducted a survey of employers (n=912) and a separate survey of employees in five large firms (2003). The employer survey revealed that flexi-time was available to some staff in 52% of organisations, part-time hours was available in 66% of organisations, term-time working was available in 23% of firms surveyed, and 26% of firms allowed some staff the option of working from home for part of the week. The proportion of workers within organisations for whom these options were available was highly variable. Term-time working and working from home was available to less than 5% of workers in the great majority of the firms where it was used. Flexitime and part-time working were more widely offered within organisations but even so in 45-47% of firms this option was available to less than 5% of employees. Other family-friendly arrangements such as work-sharing, teleworking, condensed working weeks, personalised hours were available in less than 7% of firms and were again limited to a small percentage of employees within these firms. The availability of these arrangements is significantly higher in the public sector than the private sector. Family-friendly arrangements were also more prevalent in the services sector than in manufacturing.

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<sup>2</sup> Authors calculations based on Table 11 in Evans (2001).



## 2.3 The Effects of Flexible Working Arrangements for Employers and Employees

In Ireland, Drew et al (2003) found in their survey of employers, that employers considered that flexible working arrangements entailed the following benefits: increased employee satisfaction, allowed recruitment from a wider labour pool, improved staff retention and reduced turnover; increased employee productivity and enhanced organisational reputation. While employers thus considered that flexible working arrangements contribute indirectly to enhanced organisational performance, they also acknowledged costs (including complexity of implementation) as well as barriers (including take-up by employees, competing organisational priorities and size-related organisational capacities).

Rutherford and Ollerearnshaw (2002) argue that equality and diversity are becoming increasingly important in the UK, particularly for attracting talent, encouraging creativity and improving service delivery. Dex and Smith (2001b) provide a useful review of the literature on the effects of family-friendly working arrangements in the UK. They found that the provision of family-friendly policies relating to child care and working at home were associated with greater employee commitment in the private sector, when other relevant variables were controlled for in a multivariate analysis of data from the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey in Britain. Dex and Smith (2002) found that 90% of establishments with experience of family-friendly arrangements considered that they were cost effective. Increases in performance were also found to be associated with family friendly arrangements, although the effects were small. More direct evidence relating to the business case for flexible working arrangements is available in the work of Shepard et al (1996). Their analysis of panel data relating to US pharmaceutical firms found that flexible working arrangements led to a 19% increase in productivity, controlling for inputs and firm effects.

The literature on flexible working arrangements has considered their impact on objective working conditions such as pay, promotion opportunities and on subjective work experiences such as job satisfaction and employee commitment. The most extensive literature concerns the objective conditions faced by part-time workers. There are clear differences across countries in the extent to which part-time employment is precarious or stable. In Sweden and Germany, part-time employment generally remains highly protected (except for marginal part-timers in Germany) (Scherer, 2003). In contrast, much part-time work in the UK is of a precarious nature (Cousins, 1999). Bruegel and Perrons (1996) report evidence that the deregulation and introduction of flexible working practices in the UK led to increasing wage polarisation and an expansion of the working poor, especially women.

There is relatively little empirical research on the conditions experienced by part-time workers and others availing of flexible work options in Ireland. There has been some research into the pay levels of part-timers compared to full-time workers. Recent research on the gender pay gap shows that there is a relatively small difference in the *mean* pay levels of part-time and full-time female workers. However there is a wider difference at the median (Russell and Gannon, 2002). Research on low pay suggests that part-timers are over-represented among those earning less than two-thirds of the median income (Nolan, 1997). This suggests there is considerable variability in the pay levels of part-timers, and there may be a well-paid group of part-time professionals that are raising the average pay level. O'Connell and Gash (2003) found that, controlling for education and age, marginal part-timers (<15 hours) earn about 26 per cent less than full-timers and those working 15-29 hours earn 17 per cent less. The authors found that these differences could largely be accounted for by differences in occupational location, so the concentration of part-time workers into certain occupational groupings plays a large role in wage differences.

In Ireland, there is little research on the objective effects of flexible working on promotion opportunities and longer-term mobility. However there is clearly a perception among a minority of workers availing of these options that they had a negative impact on their career because they were taken less seriously, their commitment was questioned and they lost out on promotion as a result (Drew et al, 2003, p85, p90).<sup>3</sup> In her study of Irish Health Boards, O'Connor (1995) also concluded that when women availed of job-sharing or career breaks this was seen to indicate lower levels of commitment and thereby reduced women's promotion possibilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Research based on respondents in five large organisations.

## 2.4 Research on the Distribution and Impact of Equality Policies in the Workplace

Workplace policies to promote equality of opportunity and to accommodate diversity play an important part in mobilising the increasingly diverse labour supply and in enhancing the opportunities available to all current and potential labour market participants. Equality in employment and the labour market is critical to the promotion of a more equal society. This fact is recognised in both national and EU legislation and in the work of the Equality Authority under the theme of *contributing to a more accessible workplace and labour market*. The continuing need to focus on issues of equality in the workplace is illustrated by the substantial number of discrimination claims under the Employment Equality Act, and factors such as the persistent pay gap between male and female employees (Russell and Gannon, 2002) and the high levels of unemployment experienced by those with disabilities (Gannon and Nolan, 2004).

Research on the distribution and impact of equality policies in the workplace is limited. A recent survey of employers conducted on behalf of the Equality Authority (2002) found that 40% of private sector organisations and 63% of public sector organisations have formal written, equality policies.<sup>4</sup> The ESRI/NCPP Survey of Employers found that 41% of private sector firms had an explicit policy on equality/diversity in the workplace. Within the private sector the presence of an equality policy is strongly correlated with organisation size. For example, the ESRI/NCPP survey found 39% of small firms (less than ten employees) had such a policy, compared with 61% of large organisations (50+ employees). The Equality Authority found that in the majority of cases, organisations had just one policy to cover all aspects of equality, but a minority had separate policies on anti-harassment, employment and equal status issues. In a comparative study of retail companies in Dublin and Paris, McGauran (2001) found that 87% of the Dublin stores (N=25) had an equal opportunities policy compared to only 20% of the Parisian outlets (N=22). In the UK, the national Workplace Employee Relations Survey (1998) found that 65% of firms in the private (traded) sector had an equal opportunities policy.

The evidence suggests that equality policies and flexible working arrangements are often part of the same Human Resource Management package. In the UK Dex & Smith (2001) found a positive association between the presence of equality policies and work-life balance policies. Similarly, Evans (2001) cites empirical research showing that formal equality policies are more common in organisations that have also introduced family-friendly work policies in the EU, the US and in Australia. Where family friendly policies are implemented in the absence of equality policies, there is a danger that women who avail of family friendly arrangements such as career breaks or reduced working time may suffer poorer career prospects (Bergmann, 1997; Lommerod and Vagstad, 2000). Equality policies are also found to be more common in firms that adopt employee participation practices (Pérotin & Robinson, 2000). However Monks (1998) argues companies that adopt HRM strategies rather than personnel strategies tend to put increased emphasis on the shared interests of employers and that this philosophy can be at odds with equal opportunities, which recognises that employees have independent rights and interests which may be infringed by employers. This highlights the fact that the implementation of equality policies cannot rest on the business case alone.

The literature suggests that equality policies and other anti-discriminatory practices can have a positive effect on employee satisfaction and on organisational productivity. Périton & Robinson (2000) argue that anti-discrimination practices can operate in a number of ways. First, general efficiency and productivity can be improved by hiring and promoting from a wider pool, and by creating a better match between individuals and jobs. Secondly, improving the individual incentives for discriminated groups should increase their productivity, while increased opportunities for these groups should improve their job satisfaction. Thirdly, creating a greater sense of fairness may improve the general morale of employees.

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<sup>4</sup> Survey of 300 private sector and 100 public sector organisations.

Studies on the impact of equality policies on workers' wellbeing, satisfaction or commitment are relatively rare. Dex and Smith (2001:27) studies the impact of such policies on employee commitment in the UK using a three category typology of workplace equality policies:

- none – organisations with no written or informal equality policy
- medium – organisations with unwritten policy
- and high – workplaces with a written or unwritten policy that have taken some additional monitoring or review action

They found that irrespective of the level of implementation (medium or high) equal opportunity policies were associated with lower commitment in the public sector, however high levels of implementation were associated with increased commitment in the private sector. McGauran's study (2001) also suggests that the effectiveness of such policies depends upon how they are implemented.

At the organisational level, both Pérotin & Robinson (2000) and Dex et al (2001) found that equality policies have a positive impact on productivity in UK companies. Furthermore, it was found that the impact on productivity increases with the share of female and ethnic minority employees and with the level of implementation (Pérotin and Robinson, 2000). However, even simply having a statement of policy had a positive significant impact on productivity (ibid, p574).

In the remainder of this report we fill some of the gaps in existing research on the incidence and effects of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements in Ireland.

# THE INCIDENCE OF EQUALITY POLICIES AND EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the incidence of formal explicit equality policies among employees in Irish workplaces. It looks at how the incidence of equality policies varies across different organisations, in different types of jobs, and by the personal characteristics of individual employees. It also examines the impact of equality policies on employees' perceptions of fairness in their employing organisations.

## 3.2 How Widespread are Equality Policies?

In our survey of employees we asked respondents *'Is there a formal explicit policy on equal opportunities in your workplace?'* Overall 68% of employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on equal opportunities at their workplace. Another 23% respond that there is no such policy and a further 9% say that they do not know whether such a policy exists at their workplace. Those who respond that they 'Don't know' present us with something of a dilemma since we have no information of whether they do not know because there is no such policy, or simply because they are unaware of such a policy. Under such circumstances it is conventional to exclude those who 'Don't know' from the analysis. When we do this, as in Table 3.1 and throughout the remainder of the report, about three quarters of all employees work in workplaces where there is a formal explicit policy on equality, whereas about one quarter work in workplaces where there is no such policy. As discussed in Chapter 1, it should be emphasised that these findings relate to the population of employees, and cannot be taken to indicate the proportion of workplaces in which equality policies are implemented.

Almost 90% of those working in public sector organisations, and in the commercial semi-state sector, say that there is a formal equality policy in their organisation, compared to only 70% of those employed in the private sector.

Table 3.2 shows the presence of equality policies by organisational characteristics. Well over 90% of those working in Public Administration and Defence report the existence of an equality policy, compared to about 58% of those in Construction and 65% of those in Other Services.

Size is important: the larger the organisation, the greater the likelihood that an employee will report the existence of a formal equality policy. For example, about 43% of those working in organisations with less than 5 employees report that there is an equality policy, compared to almost 90% of those working in organisations with 500 or more employees.

**Table 3.1: Presence of Formal, Explicit Equality Policy in the Public, Private and Commercial Semi-State Sectors**

|                   | Yes<br>% | No<br>% | Total<br>% |
|-------------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Public Sector     | 89.8     | 10.2    | 100.0      |
| Semi-state sector | 88.7     | 11.3    | 100.0      |
| Private Sector    | 70.7     | 29.3    | 100.0      |
| All               | 75.1     | 24.9    | 100.0      |

Excludes those who answer “don’t know” to question on equality policy.

**Table 3.2: Presence of Formal, Explicit Equality Policy by Organisational Characteristics**

| Sector                                 | Yes<br>% | No<br>% | Total<br>% |
|--|----------|---------|------------|
| All                                    | 75.1     | 24.9    | 100.0      |
| <b>Industrial Sector</b>               |          |         |            |
| Manufacturing & Primary                | 75.6     | 24.4    | 100.0      |
| Construction                           | 57.5     | 42.5    | 100.0      |
| Wholesale Retail                       | 73.5     | 26.5    | 100.0      |
| Hospitality                            | 58.8     | 41.2    | 100.0      |
| Transport & Communications             | 80.7     | 19.3    | 100.0      |
| Finance & Other Business Services      | 78.7     | 21.3    | 100.0      |
| Public Admin/Defence                   | 93.0     | 7.0     | 100.0      |
| Education                              | 85.4     | 14.6    | 100.0      |
| Health                                 | 81.5     | 18.5    | 100.0      |
| Other Services                         | 64.9     | 35.1    | 100.0      |
| <b>Organisational Size<sup>1</sup></b> |          |         |            |
| Less than 5                            | 43.1     | 56.9    | 100.0      |
| 5-19                                   | 51.2     | 48.8    | 100.0      |
| 20-99                                  | 67.6     | 32.4    | 100.0      |
| 10-499                                 | 77.9     | 22.1    | 100.0      |
| 500 plus                               | 89.8     | 10.2    | 100.0      |
| <b>Trade Union in Workplace</b>        |          |         |            |
| Yes                                    | 86.4     | 13.6    | 100.0      |
| No                                     | 63.4     | 36.6    | 100.0      |

Excludes those who answer “don’t know” to question on equality policy.

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the size of the total enterprise/organisation rather than local unit where respondent works.

Employees in organisations that recognise trades unions are substantially more likely to respond that their workplace has implemented a formal policy on equality of opportunity.

Given that formal equality policies are substantially less common in the private sector, it is useful to examine patterns within that sector. In fact, the patterns in the private sector are very similar to those found for the entire economy. The larger the organisation the greater the likelihood of a formal equality policy. Union members are much more likely to report the existence of an equality policy. Those working in Construction and Other Services are least likely to report the presence of an equality policy.

**Table 3.3: Presence of Formal Equality Policies in the Private Sector**

|  | Yes<br>% | No<br>% | Total<br>% |
|--|----------|---------|------------|
| All                                    | 70.7     | 29.3    | 100.0      |
| <b>Industrial Sector</b>               |          |         |            |
| Manufacturing & Primary                | 67.8     | 32.2    | 100.0      |
| Construction                           | 53.0     | 47.0    | 100.0      |
| Wholesale Retail                       | 66.1     | 33.9    | 100.0      |
| Hospitality                            | 52.9     | 47.1    | 100.0      |
| Transport & Communications             | 75.1     | 24.9    | 100.0      |
| Finance & Other Business Services      | 72.7     | 27.3    | 100.0      |
| Education                              | 78.9     | 21.1    | 100.0      |
| Health                                 | 73.0     | 27.0    | 100.0      |
| Other Services                         | 56.8     | 43.2    | 100.0      |
| <b>Organisational Size<sup>1</sup></b> |          |         |            |
| Less than 5                            | 43.0     | 57.0    | 100.0      |
| 5-19                                   | 50.4     | 49.6    | 100.0      |
| 20-99                                  | 65.7     | 34.3    | 100.0      |
| 100-499                                | 75.7     | 24.3    | 100.0      |
| 500 plus                               | 87.6     | 12.4    | 100.0      |
| <b>Trade Union in Workplace</b>        |          |         |            |
| Yes                                    | 79.6     | 20.4    | 100.0      |
| No                                     | 57.0     | 43.0    | 100.0      |

Note: The sectoral breakdown excludes Public Administration and Defence because almost all organisations in these sectors are in the public sector.

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the size of the total enterprise/organisation rather than local unit where respondent works.

There is little to distinguish between full-time versus part-time workers in terms of whether they are employed in a workplace with a formal equality policy.<sup>5</sup> However, workers with permanent contracts are more likely than those with temporary contracts to report such policies. Those with longer tenure in the job are more likely to be employed in a workplace that has a formal equality policy. Professional and managerial classes are much more likely to report the existence of formal equality policies in their workplaces.

There are no significant gender differences in reporting the existence of equality policies. Neither is there a clear pattern in relation to age, although those in the 40-54 year age group are somewhat more likely to be employed in a workplace with a formal equality policy. There is a clear educational pattern: the higher the level of education the greater the likelihood that an individual will be employed in a workplace with an explicit equality policy. Household type and marital status of the individual does not appear to be related to the presence of equality policies.

<sup>5</sup> Part-time workers are defined throughout this report as those who indicate that they work less than 30 hours per week.

**Table 3.4: Presence of Formal Equality Policy by Job Characteristics**

|                                   | %    |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| All                               | 75.1 |
| Part-time                         | 73.0 |
| Full-time                         | 75.6 |
| Permanent                         | 76.6 |
| Temporary                         | 67.3 |
| <1 Year in the Job                | 67.2 |
| 1-5 Years in the Job              | 74.4 |
| 5+ Years in the Job               | 78.0 |
| Higher Professionals and Managers | 83.9 |
| Lower Professional                | 83.4 |
| Other Non-manual                  | 78.0 |
| Skilled Manual                    | 65.4 |
| Semi-skilled Manual               | 72.9 |
| Unskilled Manual                  | 62.0 |

**Table 3.5: Presence of Formal Equality Policy by Personal Characteristics**

|                                     | %    |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| All                                 | 75.1 |
| Men                                 | 74.5 |
| Women                               | 75.8 |
| ≤ 24 years of age                   | 70.3 |
| 25-39 years of age                  | 74.4 |
| 40-54 years of age                  | 79.0 |
| ≥ 55 years of age                   | 75.6 |
| No Qualification                    | 65.0 |
| Junior Certificate                  | 72.6 |
| Leaving Certificate                 | 75.3 |
| Third Level                         | 81.3 |
| Couple with Dependent Child(ren)    | 78.6 |
| Couple with no Dependent Child(ren) | 76.4 |
| Single with Dependent Child(ren)    | 75.6 |
| Single with no Dependent Child(ren) | 71.3 |
| No Dependent Children               | 73.2 |
| Youngest Child ≤ 5yrs               | 78.8 |
| Youngest Child 6-17yrs              | 77.6 |

### 3.3 Modelling the Distribution of Equality Policies

Up to this point we have examined some of the organisational, job and personal characteristics that may be associated with equality policy. However, these relationships were examined at the bi-variate level, that is one at a time. While that analysis highlighted a number of important associations it could not take into account the complex inter-relationships between the explanatory variables. For example, the effect of trade union recognition could not be separated from the effect of organisational size.

Therefore in this section we employ multivariate modelling techniques that allow us to test the impact of these factors simultaneously. This means that the independent impact of each characteristic can be identified more clearly, while taking account of the influence of other relevant factors.

**Table 3.6 Logistic Regression Model of Factors Influencing Equality Policy**

|  | Public and Private Sectors | Private Sector Only |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Public Sector  | .563**                     |                     |
| <b>Industrial Sector (Ref. Manufacturing)</b>        |                            |                     |
| Construction   | -.212                      | -.179               |
| Retail   | -.043                      | -.002               |
| Hotel  | -.349**                    | -.305               |
| Transport  | .181                       | .209                |
| Business & Finance                                   | .217                       | .216                |
| Public Admin & Defence                               | .742*                      | -- --               |
| Education  | .275                       | .710*               |
| Health   | .033                       | .091                |
| Other services                                       | -.048                      | .025                |
| <b>Firm Size (Ref. 1-4 Employees)</b>                |                            |                     |
| 5-19 employees                                       | .265*                      | .325*               |
| 20-99 employees                                      | .637**                     | .732**              |
| 100 + employees                                      | 1.359**                    | 1.585**             |
| <b>Occupational Category (Ref. Unskilled Manual)</b> |                            |                     |
| Higher Professionals & Managers                      | .222                       | .240                |
| Lower Professionals                                  | .157                       | .192                |
| Other Non-manual                                     | .112                       | .107                |
| Skilled Manual                                       | -.115                      | -.115               |
| Semi-skilled Manual                                  | .187                       | .194                |
| Executive  | .493*                      | .526*               |
| Middle Management                                    | .208                       | .185                |
| Supervisor   | .126                       | .041                |
| <b>Other</b>   |                            |                     |
| Union Recognised                                     | .672**                     | .650**              |
| Temporary Contract                                   | -.265*                     | -.322*              |
| Home Working Used                                    | .113                       | .094                |
| Flexible Hours Used                                  | .242**                     | .265**              |
| Work Sharing Used                                    | .458**                     | .454**              |
| Part-time Used                                       | .065                       | .025                |
| Constant   | -.305                      | -.383               |
| N of Cases   | 5189                       | 3118                |
| -2 Log likelihood                                    | 4207.32                    | 3338.23             |
| Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup>                           | .145                       | .128                |
| Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>                            | .220                       | .182                |

\* P < .05; \*\* P < .005



Table 3.6 shows a logistic regression model of the relationship between organisational and job characteristics and the presence of a formal equality policy at the employee's workplace. We use a logistic model because the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if an equality policy has been implemented in the respondent's workplace, 0 if not.

In interpreting the results of the model we focus in particular on three issues: statistical significance and the sign and size of the coefficient. In these models we have set two levels of significance: a significance level of .005, designated by \*\* in the table, indicates that the probability of this coefficient occurring by chance is less than 1 in 200 (or 5 in 1000). A significance level of .05, designated by a single \* in the table, indicates that the probability of this coefficient occurring is less than .5, or less than 1 in 20, a somewhat lower level of significance. A positive coefficient indicates that this variable is associated with a greater probability that the value of the dependent variables is 1, rather than 0 (i.e. it increases the probability of equality policy). In these models, where all of the independent variables are also dichotomous variables, the greater the size of the coefficient, the greater the impact on the dependent variable.

The first model in Table 3.6 is estimated for the entire sample. Here the first coefficient is positive and significant, indicating that employees in the public sector are much more likely than their counterparts in the private sector to report that a formal explicit equality policy has been implemented at their workplace. This result is consistent with our understanding of the spread of equality policies in Ireland, and, of course, is also consistent with the bivariate finding reported in Table 3.1. In order to take account of other possible differences between the public and private sectors we estimated a second model confined to private sector workers only. In fact, however, the pattern of effects in both models are very similar, suggesting that while public sector workers are more likely to find equality policies in their workplaces, the factors influencing the adoption of equality policies are very similar in both the public and private sectors. Thus, for example, the larger the size of the organisation, the greater the likelihood of an equality policy in both the public and private sectors.

Senior managers and executives are more likely than other employees to report that their organisation has a formal equality policy. This is unlikely to be an organisational effect, and may be due either to a higher probability that senior managers may be more aware of such policies, where they are implemented. However, it could also be that senior managers might consider that their organisation should have such a policy and that its absence would reflect badly on them.

Organisations which recognise a trade union or staff association are more likely to have implemented an equality policy. This may be due to a type of "selection effect": more progressive employers are more likely to both recognise unions and to see the value of an equality policy. However, it could also represent the effects of union demands for the implementation of such a policy.

Employees on temporary contracts are less likely to report the existence of an equality policy. This may reflect the lower level of commitment on the part of the employers to temporary workers.

### **3.4 Subjective Perceptions of Equality**

Our survey also asked a series of questions about respondents' subjective perceptions of fairness and equality of treatment and practice in their employing organisations. Table 3.7 summarises the questions and responses.

Table 3.7 suggests that there is widespread belief in the fairness of recruitment and promotion. However, only about three quarters of respondents considered that pay and conditions were equally and fairly distributed. How are these perceptions related to equality policies?

The presence of equality policy appears to matter for perceptions of equality. In organisations with formal equality policies, workers are much more likely to consider that recruitment, pay and conditions and career development prospects are fair and equal than in organisations without such policies.

**Table 3.7: Perceptions of Equality in the Workplace**

|   | Yes % |
|---|-------|
| Would you say that everyone applying to your organisation has an equal opportunity of recruitment regardless of their age, gender, ethnic origin etc? | 85.3  |
| Regardless of their age, gender, ethnic origin etc., does everyone in your organisation have:   |       |
| (a) The same pay and conditions for doing the same job?   | 76.0  |
| (b) The same opportunities for career development and advancement?  | 85.0  |

**Table 3.8: Relationship between Perceptions of Equality in the Workplace and Presence of Formal Equality Policies**

|                                | Formal Equality Policy | No Formal Equality Policy |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                | % saying yes           |                           |
| Equality in Recruitment        | 79.6                   | 62.3                      |
| Equal Pay and Conditions       | 90.4                   | 66.3                      |
| Equality in Career Development | 89.6                   | 71.8                      |

**Table 3.9: Regression Models of the Effects of Equality Policy on Perceptions of Fairness and Equality**

|                                | Equality in Recruitment | Equal Pay and Conditions | Equality Career Development |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Formal Equality Policy Present | .881**                  | .511**                   | .974**                      |

\* P < .05, \*\* P < .005

Each model controls for: age, gender, contract status (temporary/ permanent), part-time/ full-time, education level, trade union membership, occupation, managerial/supervisory level, sector and firm size. Full model results are presented in Appendix Table A.1

In order to examine whether the effects of equality policies are due to some other factors, such as presence of equality policies in public sector and in larger organisations, we estimated a series of logistic regression models – one for each of the dimensions of perceived fairness outlined in Table 3.8 above. Each model controls for the effects of a wide range of personal, job and organisational characteristics that might influence perceived fairness.

In Table 3.9 we simply report the effects of the presence of equality policy, the full results are presented in Appendix Table A.1. The results of the analysis show that employees who work in organisations that have implemented formal policies on equality of opportunity are more likely to perceive that recruitment, pay and conditions and career development are equal and fair in the organisations in which they work. Such perceived benefits of equality policy are likely to reinforce the higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment found to be associated with equality policies in Chapter 6 of this report.

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter has examined the incidence of formal explicit equality policies in Irish workplaces. About three quarters of all employees work in workplaces where there is a formal explicit policy on equality. Equality policies are more common in the public sector than in the private sector and in larger organisations. Organisations that recognise a trade union or staff association are more likely to have implemented an equality policy. Senior managers are more likely to report that their organisation has adopted an equality policy than other employees. Workers on temporary contracts are less likely to report an equality policy in their workplace, reflecting a lower level of commitment on the part of their employers.

We also examined the relationship between the presence of equality policies in workplaces and employees' perceptions of equality and fairness in recruitment, pay and promotion. We found that there is a strong and robust relationship: employees who work in organisations that have implemented formal policies to promote equality of opportunity are more likely to consider that recruitment, pay and conditions and career development are more fair and equal in their organisations, even when other factors that could influence such perceptions are controlled for.

# HOW WIDESPREAD ARE FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS?

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the incidence of flexible working arrangements in Irish workplaces. Detailed descriptive information on the distribution of flexible working arrangements among employees in Ireland is presented in the main report on the survey published by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (O'Connell et al, 2004), and we first present a summary of those results. We then apply statistical modelling techniques to systematically examine how the incidence of flexible working arrangements varies across different organisations, in different types of jobs, and by the personal characteristics of individual employees.

## 4.2 Distribution of Flexible Working Arrangements

The survey collected information on several non-traditional flexible working arrangements that could contribute to a more favourable work-life balance. These included: Working from home; Flexible hours or Flexitime; Job-sharing or 'Week-on-week-off'; and Part-time hours. In relation to each of these the respondent was asked: (a) whether the working arrangement was used in their workplace; and (b) whether or not the respondent was personally involved in or covered by the practice.

Part-time working is most common, with 53% of respondents' reporting that it is used in their workplaces and with 22% of all employees personally involved. 'Flexible hours' is also a common working arrangement, with 43% of respondents reporting that it is used in their workplaces and 24% reporting that they are personally involved. About 30% of respondents reported that job-sharing is used at their workplace and only 6.5% are involved in the practice. Working from home is least common, used in 14% of respondents' workplaces and availed of by 8%. About 28% of workers in the Finance and Business Services say that working from home is used in their organisation, but in no other sector does the proportion rise to 20% (O'Connell et al, 2004).

Flexible hours or Flexitime is a good deal more widespread, and is encountered in the workplace by half or more employees in both the Public Sector and the Commercial Semi-state sector. It is most common in Public Administration and Defence, and Hotels and Restaurants.

Job-sharing is substantially more common in the Public Sector and the Commercial Semi-state Sector than in the private sector and is used quite frequently in Health and in Public Administration and Defence. Part-time hours are most common in the public sector (61%), but are also common in the private sector (ibid, p53)

**Table 4.1: Extent of Flexible Working Arrangements**

|                                | Working from Home<br>% | Flexible Hours /Flexitime<br>% | Job-sharing /Week on-off<br>% | Part-time Hours<br>% |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Used in the Workplace          | 13.6                   | 42.9                           | 29.5                          | 53.4                 |
| Respondent Personally Involved | 8.4                    | 24.4                           | 6.5                           | 21.5                 |

**Table 4.2: Flexible Working Arrangements Used in Workplace by Sector**

|                       | Working from Home<br>% | Flexible Hours /Flexitime<br>% | Job-sharing /Week on-off<br>% | Part-time Hours<br>% |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Public Sector         | 15.0                   | 47.7                           | 58.0                          | 61.3                 |
| Commercial Semi-state | 18.1                   | 44.3                           | 49.5                          | 45.3                 |
| Private Sector        | 13.1                   | 41.6                           | 21.3                          | 51.8                 |
| All Sectors           | 13.6                   | 42.9                           | 29.5                          | 53.4                 |

**Table 4.3: Flexible Working Arrangements Used in Workplace by Size of Organisation**

|                   | Working from Home<br>% | Flexible Hours /Flexitime<br>% | Job-sharing /Week on-off<br>% | Part-time Hours<br>% |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1-4 Employees     | 19.1                   | 36.3                           | 11.3                          | 41.3                 |
| 5-19 Employees    | 8.9                    | 32.8                           | 10.8                          | 46.9                 |
| 20-99 Employees   | 15.6                   | 39.9                           | 24.1                          | 52.8                 |
| 100-499 Employees | 15.9                   | 41.8                           | 32.5                          | 54.5                 |
| 500+              | 17.7                   | 53.2                           | 47.8                          | 61.5                 |
| All               | 13.6                   | 42.9                           | 29.5                          | 53.4                 |

Employees in very small organisations are most likely to report that their workplace allows or uses working from home (19%), about twice the proportion of employees in organisations with 5-19 employees. Use of flexible hours increases somewhat with organisational size, although the proportion of those in the very smallest firms (36%) is somewhat higher than in the 5-19 employee-size category. The incidence of job-sharing availability also appears to increase with organisational size, although again, the very smallest firms show a slightly higher percentage than the next size category. Organisations' use of part-time hours clearly increases with size: from 41% in the case of employees in organisations with 1-4 employees, to 62% among workers in organisations with 500 or more employees.

In examining flexible working arrangements by job and personal characteristics, we look at both the usage of each practice in the organisation as well as the extent to which the respondents are actually involved in or covered by the practice. Full-time and permanent workers are more likely than part-timers or temporary workers to report that their workplaces utilise working from home (Table 4.4). However, among those who do report that their workplace uses home-working, and they are also somewhat more likely to be personally involved in home-working.

Part-time workers are more likely than full-timers to report that their workplace uses flexible working hours, although there is no significant difference between temporary and permanent employees. As might be expected, part-time employees are also more likely than their full-time counterparts to say that they themselves are involved in flexible working hours.

Part-time workers are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use job-sharing, and substantially more likely than their full-time counterparts to be engaged in job sharing. There are no differences between permanent and temporary employees in the use of job-sharing in their workplaces.

**Table 4.4: Flexible Working Arrangements by Hours and Type of Contract**

|                                       | Working from Home<br>% | Flexible Hours /Flexitime<br>% | Job-sharing /Week on-off<br>% | Part-time Hours<br>% |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Available in Workplace</b>         |                        |                                |                               |                      |
| Part-time                             | 10.8                   | 47.7                           | 37.0                          | 85.8                 |
| Full-time                             | 14.3                   | 41.8                           | 27.8                          | 46.1                 |
| Permanent                             | 14.3                   | 43.0                           | 29.6                          | 50.7                 |
| Temporary                             | 10.3                   | 42.4                           | 28.7                          | 66.9                 |
| All                                   | 13.6                   | 42.9                           | 29.5                          | 53.4                 |
| <b>Respondent Personally Involved</b> |                        |                                |                               |                      |
| Part-time                             | 7.4                    | 35.4                           | 16.7                          | 73.5                 |
| Full-time                             | 8.7                    | 21.9                           | 4.3                           | 9.7                  |
| Permanent                             | 8.6                    | 24.2                           | 5.9                           | 16.7                 |
| Temporary                             | 7.3                    | 25.6                           | 9.5                           | 45.9                 |
| All                                   | 8.4                    | 24.4                           | 6.5                           | 21.5                 |

**Table 4.5: Flexible Working Arrangements by Gender**

|                                       | Working from Home<br>% | Flexible Hours /Flexitime<br>% | Job-sharing /Week on-off<br>% | Part-time Hours<br>% |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Used in Workplace</b>              |                        |                                |                               |                      |
| Men                                   | 16.0                   | 38.5                           | 21.7                          | 39.0                 |
| Women                                 | 10.9                   | 48.0                           | 38.4                          | 69.6                 |
| <b>Respondent Personally Involved</b> |                        |                                |                               |                      |
| Men                                   | 10.8                   | 21.7                           | 3.5                           | 9.4                  |
| Women                                 | 5.7                    | 27.6                           | 9.9                           | 35.1                 |

**Table 4.6: Flexible Working Arrangements by Household and Gender**

|                                  | Working from Home |            | Flexible Hours /Flexitime |            | Job-sharing /Week on-off |            | Part-time Hours |            |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|                                  | Men<br>%          | Women<br>% | Men<br>%                  | Women<br>% | Men<br>%                 | Women<br>% | Men<br>%        | Women<br>% |
| <b>Used in Workplace</b>         |                   |            |                           |            |                          |            |                 |            |
| Couple with Dependent Child(ren) | 22.0              | 11.3       | 42.0                      | 51.1       | 25.5                     | 40.7       | 41.2            | 76.9       |
| Couple no Dependent Child(ren)   | 17.7              | 9.7        | 39.3                      | 45.6       | 22.3                     | 38.5       | 36.8            | 67.3       |
| Single with Dependent Child(ren) | 10.8              | 5.6        | 41.9                      | 46.9       | 33.1                     | 37.8       | 43.5            | 73.4       |
| Single no Dependent Child(ren)   | 10.6              | 12.4       | 34.8                      | 46.9       | 17.2                     | 36.4       | 38.2            | 64.0       |
| All                              | 16.0              | 10.9       | 38.5                      | 48.0       | 21.7                     | 38.4       | 39.0            | 69.6       |
| <b>Personally Involved</b>       |                   |            |                           |            |                          |            |                 |            |
| Couple with Dependent Child(ren) | 14.3              | 7.0        | 23.7                      | 31.9       | 3.0                      | 15.1       | 6.6             | 44.9       |
| Couple no Dependent Child(ren)   | 13.0              | 5.2        | 22.7                      | 22.7       | 3.3                      | 7.9        | 8.7             | 31.1       |
| Single with Dependent Child(ren) | 7.8               | 2.4        | 18.7                      | 27.0       | 2.3                      | 8.3        | 8.5             | 44.3       |
| Single no Dependent Child(ren)   | 6.9               | 5.2        | 19.5                      | 26.5       | 4.3                      | 7.2        | 12.2            | 27.3       |
| All                              | 10.8              | 5.7        | 21.7                      | 27.6       | 3.5                      | 9.9        | 9.4             | 35.1       |

Part-time workers are very substantially more likely than full-timers to be employed in workplaces that use part-time hours (86% versus 46%), and, obviously there is a very high incidence of personal involvement. Indeed, the fact that not all part-time workers report that they are personally involved in part-time working arrangements may be due to a discrepancy between employees' own subjective interpretation of their full- or part-time status and the objective definition, based simply on the number of hours worked (i.e. 30 hours). Temporary workers are also more likely than permanent workers to report that their workplace uses part-time working, and are also more likely to be personally engaged in part-time work.

Men are more likely than women to report that their workplace uses working from home. About 11% of men are personally involved in homeworking, compared to less than 6% of women. Women are more likely than men to be employed in workplaces with flexible hours.

Women (38%) are much more likely than men (22%) to report that their workplace uses job-sharing and to be personally involved in the practice (10% of women, 3.5% of men). Women (70%) are much more likely than men (39%) to report that their work place uses part-time working, and to be personally involved.

Table 4.6 shows flexible working arrangements by household type and gender. Overall, men are more likely than women to report that their workplace uses home working, but women are more likely to report workplace use of the other three flexible working arrangements.

When we look at actual involvement patterns, we find that, men who are members of a couple are more likely to be involved in home-working. Women with young children are more likely to be involved in flexible hours and in part-time working. Women who are both members of a couple and who have young children are most likely to be involved in job-sharing.

### **4.3 Multivariate Models of Flexible Working Arrangements**

#### **Used in the Workplace**

Table 4.7 turns to an analysis of the use of flexible working arrangements in workplaces. We noted in chapter 2 that previous research has suggested that flexible working arrangements may be more common in organisations which have also demonstrated a commitment to equality policies (Dex and Smith, 2002). Table 4.7 shows positive and significant associations between formal equality policies and the use in the workplace of both flexible hours and work sharing. It should be noted that these associations tell us nothing about causality, just that in organisations where one such practice is implemented there is a higher probability that the others will also be encountered.

Public sector workers are more likely to report that their workplace uses job-sharing, while private sector workers are more likely to respond that their workplace uses part-time working. There is substantial variation across economic sectors in the use of flexible working arrangements. Compared to manufacturing, the reference category for these models, flexible working arrangements appear to be particularly rare in the construction sector - with statistically significant negative coefficients in respect of each of the four working arrangements analysed. In contrast, public administration and health are substantially more innovative, and more likely than manufacturing to use flexible hours, job sharing and part-time working. The health sector is less likely to use home working – presumably due to the nature of the activity.

Small firms are more likely than large organisations to use home working. Professionals are much more likely than elementary occupations to work in organisations that use home-working. Executives and middle managers are also more likely than employees to report working in organisations that use home working. This may be due to greater awareness of such policies.

Higher professionals and other non-manual workers are more likely to report that flexible hours are used in their workplace. Job-sharing is more frequently found in larger organisations, Professionals, other non-manual and semi-skilled workers are more likely to report that job-sharing is used at their

workplaces. Those working in larger organisations are more likely to report that part-time work is used in their workplace, while skilled manual workers are less likely to do so.

The presence of a formal equality policy is positively associated with each of the flexible working arrangements. Organisations that recognise trade unions and staff associations are more likely to employ flexible hours, job-sharing and part-time working.

**Table 4.7: Logistic Regression Models of use of Flexible Working Arrangements in the Workplace**

|  | Home-working<br>Used | Flexible Hours<br>Used | Job-sharing<br>Used | Part-time Working<br>Used |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Public Sector  | .084                 | .052                   | .338*               | -.419**                   |
| <b>Industrial Sector (Ref. Manufacturing)</b>        |                      |                        |                     |                           |
| Construction   | -.655*               | -.743**                | -1.682**            | -1.152**                  |
| Retail   | -.598*               | .211                   | -.096               | .847**                    |
| Hotel  | -.973*               | .564**                 | .248                | 1.671**                   |
| Transport  | .216                 | .195                   | .238                | .225                      |
| Business & Finance                                   | .349*                | .180                   | .648**              | .589**                    |
| Public Admin & Defence                               | .007                 | .656**                 | .951**              | .461*                     |
| Education  | -.079                | -.801**                | .249                | .809**                    |
| Health   | -.774*               | .488**                 | 1.391**             | 1.459**                   |
| Other services                                       | .523                 | .171                   | .386                | .446*                     |
| <b>Firm Size (Ref. 1-4 Employees)</b>                |                      |                        |                     |                           |
| 5-19 Employees                                       | -.839**              | -.116                  | .398**              | .294*                     |
| 20-99 Employees                                      | -.591**              | -.041                  | .738**              | .345**                    |
| 100 + Employees                                      | -.533**              | .297**                 | .895**              | .491**                    |
| <b>Occupational Category (Ref. Unskilled Manual)</b> |                      |                        |                     |                           |
| High & Professional Managers                         | 1.687**              | .577**                 | .533*               | .068                      |
| Lower Professionals                                  | 1.111**              | .232                   | .790**              | .181                      |
| Other Non-manual                                     | .949**               | .357*                  | .678**              | .202                      |
| Skilled Manual                                       | .348                 | -.162                  | -.192               | -.877**                   |
| Semi-skilled Manual                                  | -.349                | .118                   | .472*               | .168                      |
| <b>Occupational level (Ref. Employee)</b>            |                      |                        |                     |                           |
| Executive  | .637**               | -.025                  | .007                | -.096                     |
| Middle Management                                    | .537**               | -.130                  | .030                | -.080                     |
| Supervisor   | .156                 | .117                   | -.220               | -.076                     |
| <b>Other</b>   |                      |                        |                     |                           |
| Union Recognised                                     | -.062                | .209**                 | 1.018**             | .200*                     |
| Temporary Contract                                   | .210                 | .199**                 | .076                | .729**                    |
| Equality Policy                                      | .256*                | .348**                 | .542**              | .198*                     |
| Constant   | -2.235               | -1.042                 | -3.405              | -.894                     |
| N of Cases   | 5189                 | 5189                   | 5189                | 5189                      |
| -2 Log likelihood                                    | 3543.98              | 6003.68                | 4841.49             | 5674.30                   |
| Cox & Snell R Square                                 | .099                 | .076                   | .224                | .134                      |
| Nagelkerke R Square                                  | .171                 | .102                   | .308                | .179                      |

\* P < .05, \*\* P < .005



## Personal Involvement

We noted in Chapter 1 that there is an important difference between the availability of flexible working arrangements in a workplace and their use by eligible employees. Table 4.8 allows us to examine this in greater depth by examining the effects of personal and job characteristics on workers' personal involvement in flexible working arrangements in workplaces where such arrangements are available.

Older workers tend to avail of home working where it is available, but workers in the 25-54 year age range are less likely to be involved in part-time working. While there are substantial gender differences in the overall take-up of flexible working arrangements as shown in Table 4.5, there is no statistically significant effect of gender in availing of flexible working arrangements within organisations where they are provided. This may be due to a clustering effect within organisations. For example, women seeking to work part-time tend to work in sectors and organisations where part-time working is common. Employees with young children under the age of 5 are more likely to be involved in flexible hours and in job-sharing.

Those who work longer hours are more likely to be personally involved in home-working. This effect may reflect the downside of homeworking, which appears to facilitate the intrusion of working time into family time at home. Working hours are negatively associated with flexible hours, and, obviously, with both job-sharing and part-time working. Weekly earnings are similarly negatively associated with flexible hours as well as job-sharing and part-time working.

**Table 4.8: Logistic Regression Models of Personal Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements – Where such Arrangements are in Use in the Workplace**

|                          | Home-working | Flexible Hours | Job-sharing | Part-time Working |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Age 25-39                | .435         | .248           | -.154       | -.474**           |
| Age 40-54                | .894*        | .295           | -.119       | -.404*            |
| Age 55+                  | 1.440**      | .324           | -.443       | -.195             |
| Female                   | -.220        | -.110          | .232        | .096              |
| Single                   | -.290        | .068           | -.096       | -.060             |
| Youngest Child ≤ 5 yrs   | .090         | .304*          | .416*       | .291              |
| Youngest Child 6-17 yrs  | .005         | .099           | .163        | .051              |
| Intermediate/Junior Cert | -.276        | .010           | .019        | .111              |
| Leaving Certificate      | -.431        | .167           | .335        | .139              |
| 3rd Level                | -.179        | .287           | .010        | -.116             |
| Hours Worked Per Week    | .015*        | -.010*         | -.033**     | -.101**           |
| Earnings Per Week        | .000         | -.001**        | -.002**     | -.003**           |
| Constant                 | -.338        | .477           | .428        | 3.924             |
| N of Cases               | 742          | 2120           | 1659        | 2726              |
| -2 Log likelihood        | 948.21       | 2871.24        | 1513.48     | 2566.04           |
| Cox & Snell R Square     | .061         | .017           | .096        | .313              |
| Nagelkerke R Square      | .082         | .023           | .150        | .427              |

\* P < .05, \*\* P < .005

## 4.4 Summary

This chapter has examined the extent of flexible working arrangements among employees in Irish workplaces. Part-time working and flexible hours are widely available in Irish workplaces. Job-sharing is less common, and working from home is used in less than 14% of all workplaces. The extent to which workers actually avail of these arrangements is much lower.

There is also substantial variation in the availability of flexible working arrangements across economic sectors and in different workplaces. Home working is more common in business and financial services, in small organisations and among professionals and managers. Other forms of flexibility, including flexible hours, job sharing and part-time working are more likely to be found in larger organisations and in organisations that recognise trade unions.

We also found that equality policies and flexible working arrangements are related: there is a positive association between the presence of a formal equality policy and the availability in the workplace of flexible working arrangements.

# THE IMPACT OF EQUALITY POLICIES AND FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS ON WORK PRESSURE AND STRESS

## 5.1 Introduction

Having examined the presence of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements in the last two chapters, we turn in the next three chapters to an analysis of whether and to what extent these policies and arrangements have an impact on a range of workers' attitudes and experiences. In this chapter we look at the impact on work pressure and stress. In the next chapter we look at job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In Chapter 7 we turn to issues of pay and autonomy, which can be considered as measures of job quality.

The current chapter focuses on the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on employees' experiences of stress and work intensity. It is hypothesised that flexible working arrangements will have a direct impact on work stress insofar as they facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Such arrangements might also be expected to reduce work pressure if they ease time pressures and insofar as they represent a more planned approach to meeting work demands within an organisation. However more ad hoc arrangements may have the opposite effect, for example those on reduced hours may find that their workload is not reduced proportionately. Equality policies might have an indirect impact on work stress in that the presence of such a policy may indicate a more general ethos that recognises the diverse needs of the workforce. No link between equality policies and work intensity is hypothesised.

In Section 5.2 we describe the measures of work pressure and stress used in the study. In Section 5.3 we explore the link between work pressure/stress and the presence of equality policies in the workplace and involvement in flexible working arrangements. In Section 5.4 we model the impact of equality policies and work-life balance arrangements on these two outcomes controlling for a range of personal, job and organisational level factors.

## 5.2 Measures of Work Pressure and Stress

### Work Pressure

Work pressure refers to the intensity of work demands, both physical and mental, experienced by workers, and degree of work effort demanded in employment. We included four questions in the survey to tap into this experience. Two address the general level of work pressure, which can capture

both mental and physical pressures. Respondents were asked to signal their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements - 'My job requires that I work very hard' and 'I work under a great deal of pressure'. A further two items address the issue of time pressure: whether or not people felt they had enough time to get everything done on the job and whether they had to work extra time in order to complete their work. The responses to these four questions are outlined in Figure 5.1.

From this graph we can see that a significant proportion of Irish employees report experiences of work pressure:

- 82% agree or strongly agree that their job requires them to work very hard
- 51% agree or strongly agree that they work under a great deal of pressure
- 38% agree or strongly agree that they never have enough time to get everything done in their job
- 47% agree or strongly agree that they often have to work extra time over and above their formal hours to get through the job or help out

## Work Stress

We then turn to the separate but related issue of work stress. Work pressure may well lead to stress for individual employees but it is not identical to work stress and other factors may also influence stress levels. In measuring stress we focus in particular on the issue of work-life balance and the extent to which the effects of work spill over into people's home and family life.

Respondents were asked how often they experienced the following:

- Find your work stressful
- Come home from work exhausted
- Find that your job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family
- Feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home
- Find that your partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of your job

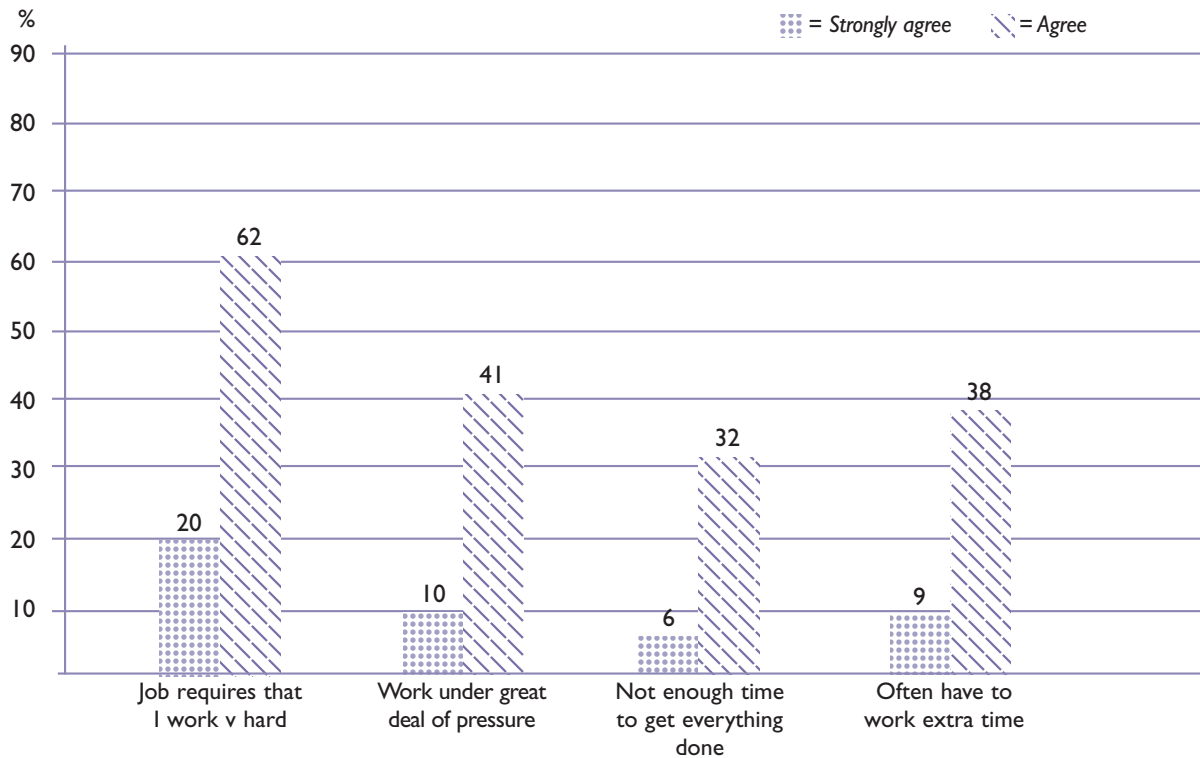
The response set allowed was 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever', 'never' (scored from 4 to 0). The overall results on these five items are reported in Figure 5.2. We see that a quarter of employees always or often find their work stressful, and a higher proportion (31%) frequently come home from work exhausted, 18% are often or always too tired to enjoy things outside work which suggests there is a work/life balance problem for significant minority of workers. On the two work/family conflict items, we see that between 10% and 15% of respondents record such problems on a regular basis, while a further 22% to 27% experience these difficulties on an occasional basis.

These results are similar to the EU wide findings from the 2001 Eurobarometer surveys. Gallie & Paugam (2002) report that 31 per cent of respondents across the EU always/often found their work stressful, 25 per cent of workers regularly came home from work exhausted, 19 per cent reported that their job always/often prevented them from giving the time they want to their family, 20% were often/always too tired after work to enjoy the things they would like to do at home, and 10% reported that their partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of the respondent's job.

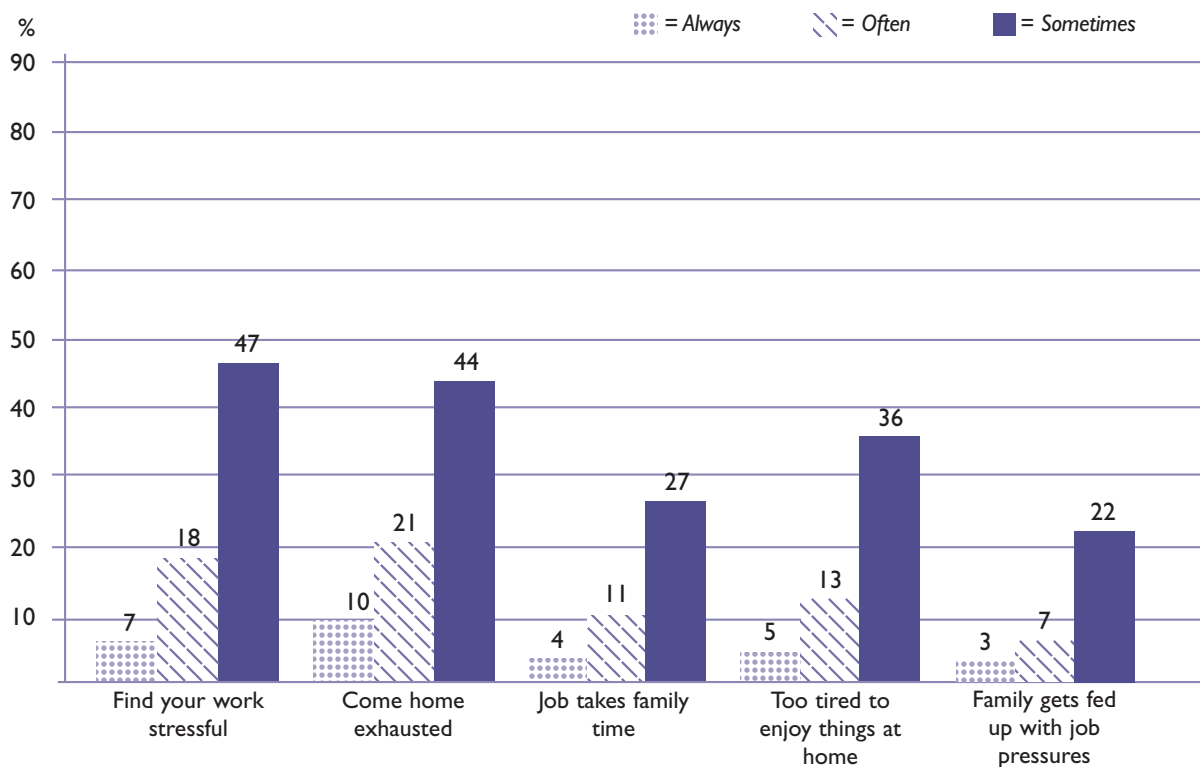
Composite scales for both work pressure and stress can be constructed from the components outlined above. The four items measuring aspects of work pressure can be combined to form a single work pressure scale with higher scores indicating greater pressure. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 and the average score for all employees is 0.17. As the average composite pressure score is positive this indicates that the average worker experiences some work pressure.

A composite scale was also constructed from the five items on stress. This scale calculates respondents' mean score over the five items.<sup>6</sup> The stress scale could range from 0 to 4, with higher scores indicating greater stress. The average composite stress score is 1.61.

**Figure 5.1: Measures of Work Pressure**



**Figure 5.2: Measures of Work Stress and Family/Work Conflict**



<sup>6</sup> Some of those not living with a partner or family did not respond to the last two items, therefore, where there was missing information we averaged respondents' scores on the items that they did answer.

### 5.3 Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working

We now turn to the key question of whether equality policies and flexible working arrangements reduce the levels of stress and pressure. Table 5.1 shows average pressure and stress scores by the presence or absence of an equality policy at a simple bi-variate level. Despite the predicted lack of relationship between pressure and equality policy, those working in organisations with formal equality policies are found to have higher pressure scores.<sup>7</sup> It is likely that this positive association is due to the characteristics of the organisations that have equality policies rather than any direct relationship, this will be examined in the models below.

**Table 5.1: Work Pressure and Stress by Presence of Formal Equality Policy**

|                    | Work Pressure Score | Work Stress Score |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| No Equality Policy | .10                 | 1.66              |
| Equality Policy    | .20                 | 1.60              |

**Table 5.2: Work Pressure and Stress by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements**

|  | Work Pressure Score | Work Stress Score |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Home-working</b>                        |                     |                   |
| Home-working not Available                 | .13                 | 1.59              |
| Home-working Available but Not Involved    | .26                 | 1.57              |
| Personally Involved                        | .57                 | 1.78              |
| <b>Flexible Hours</b>                      |                     |                   |
| Flexible Hours not Available               | .19                 | 1.64              |
| Flexible Hours Available but Not Involved  | .17                 | 1.57              |
| Personally Involved                        | .15                 | 1.53              |
| <b>Job-sharing</b>                         |                     |                   |
| Job-sharing Not Available                  | .16                 | 1.60              |
| Job-sharing Available but Not Involved     | .24                 | 1.64              |
| Personally Involved                        | .11                 | 1.61              |
| <b>Part-time Hours</b>                     |                     |                   |
| Part-time Hours not Available              | .23                 | 1.66              |
| Part-time Hours Available but Not Involved | .22                 | 1.65              |
| Personally Involved                        | -.02                | 1.40              |

The relationship between work stress and equality policies is in the direction predicted in that stress scores are lower for employees in organisations with equality policies. This may occur because equality policy is acting as a proxy for flexible working arrangements (because the two practices tend to co-exist) or may reflect a more employee-centred approach in organisations with such policies. The multivariate models will demonstrate whether there is any net effect of equality when other workplace variables have been controlled.

Table 5.2 shows pressure and stress scores by availability of and personal involvement in each of the four potentially family-friendly working arrangements for which we collected information in the survey. Personal involvement in home working appears to be associated with greater work pressure and higher stress levels. In addition, there appears to be an organisational level effect of home-working

<sup>7</sup> Significant at .001 level

on work pressure, in that those working in companies where the practice is used experience higher work pressure even if they are not involved themselves. The association between homeworking and work pressure at both the individual and organisational level suggests that it is a form of work intensification rather than a method of balancing work and other life interests. In this context homeworking may often mean people doing extra work in their 'non-work' hours. This interpretation fits with the 'time pressure' elements of the pressure measure e.g. 'I often have to work extra hours over and above the formal hours of my job to get through the job or help out' and 'I never seem to have enough time to get everything done'.

The patterns differ in relation to other working arrangements however. Temporal flexibility is associated with lower levels of pressure and stress. For both flexible hours and part-time hours, work pressure and stress scores are highest in respect of workers who are employed in organisations that do not use the practice, and lowest in respect of those who are personally involved in the working arrangements. There appears to be no positive or detrimental effect for full-timers who work in organisations that use part-time employees.

Job sharing differs. Pressure and stress are highest among individuals who work in organisations that use the practice but who are not personally involved. However, pressure is lowest, by a substantial margin, among individuals who are personally involved in job-sharing, although stress levels are very similar to those not involved.

## 5.4 Multivariate Models of Impact

Up to this point we have examined the association of equality policies and flexible working arrangements with work pressure and stress among employees at the bi-variate level, that is one at a time. While that analysis highlighted a number of important associations it could not take into account the complex inter-relationships between the explanatory variables. For example, the effect of equality policy could not be separated from the distribution of these policies across different types of organisations. Therefore in this section we employ multivariate modelling techniques that allow us to test the impact of these factors simultaneously. This means that the independent impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements can be identified more clearly. The models also help to clarify the relative importance of different factors in explaining work pressure and stress. The key variables are categorical or dummy variables so the relative importance of these factors can be assessed from the size of the coefficients and their significance levels.<sup>8</sup>

Table 5.3 shows two different specifications of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model of work pressure. In the first model we examine the impact of the presence of equality policy and flexible working arrangements while controlling for personal and job characteristics known to influence work pressure levels. These controls are age, sex, education, occupation, managerial level (senior, middle, supervisor, employee), and autonomy. In the second model we add organisational controls such as firm size and sector in order to clarify whether the effects of flexible working arrangements and equality policies occur simply because they co-exist with some other influential organisational characteristic. Table 5.4 outlines the results of the same two-step modelling process for work stress. The work stress models contain additional controls for marital status and children. The tables only report the coefficients relating to equality policies and flexible working that are statistically significant. The full set of results for the work pressure models can be found in appendix Table A.2 and for the work stress models in Table A.3.

### Equality Policy Results

The results of the models in Table 5.3 show that the presence of a formal equality policy in the workplace has no significant impact on work pressure when other potentially influential variables are

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<sup>8</sup> The same cannot be said for some of the control variables that are measured on interval or ordinal scales, for example income and autonomy score. In these cases the size of the coefficient will be influenced by the number of points in the scale. To assess the relative importance of these variables one would need to compare standardised coefficients.

**Table 5.3: Regression Models of Work Pressure**

|                                  | Individual & Job Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | With Organisational Controls <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Equality Policy                  |   |   |
| Home-working in Organisation     |   |   |
| Home-working Personally Involved | .244**                                      | .247**                                    |
| Flexitime in Organisation        |   |   |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    | -.072*                                      | -.070*                                    |
| Job-sharing in Organisation      | .101**                                      | .082*                                     |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  |   |   |
| Part-timers in Organisation      |   | -.076*                                    |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -.105*                                      | -.135**                                   |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

1 Individual controls - age, sex, contract status (temp/permanent), education level, earnings, trade union membership, level of autonomy, occupation and managerial level.

2 Organisational controls - sector, firm size, consultation practices, and organisational change. Partnership and participation controls were excluded because they were insignificant, access to information was excluded because of colinearity with consultation measures.

**Table 5.4: Regression Models of Work Stress**

|                                  | Individual & Job Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | With Organisational Controls <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Equality Policy                  | -.122**                                     | -.099**                                   |
| Home-working in Organisation     |   |   |
| Home-working Personally Involved | .174**                                      | .191**                                    |
| Flexitime in Organisation        |   |   |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    |   |   |
| Job-sharing in Organisation      |   |   |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  | .100*                                       | .097*                                     |
| Part-timers in Organisation      |   | -.058*                                    |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -.144**                                     | -.172**                                   |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

1 Individual controls -age, sex, marital status, children, contract status (temp/permanent), educational level, trade union membership, earnings, level of autonomy, occupation and managerial level.

2 Organisational Controls are sector, firm size, consultation practices, and organisational change. Partnership and participation controls were excluded because they were insignificant, access to information was excluded because of colinearity with consultation measures.

controlled for. The association found at the bivariate level was therefore simply due to confounding factors such as other characteristics of such organisations or of those working in them. These results are not surprising since there is no *a priori* reason why the presence of an equality policy would influence the pace and intensity of work.

Table 5.4 shows that the presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly and unambiguously associated with lower levels of work stress even when a very wide range of individual and organisational level characteristics are held constant. Therefore equality policies have an independent effect, perhaps because such policies signal greater recognition of employees' rights.

### Flexible Working Arrangements Results

The models of work pressure found that personal involvement in flexitime or in part-time work significantly reduces the level of work pressure experienced even when other job characteristics, personal characteristics and organisational factors are controlled. The relationship is somewhat



stronger for part-time involvement than flexi-time. These practices may reduce pressure because they provide a better way of managing workload or because these workers are put under less pressure (compared to others working full-time in the same types of jobs). The second model shows that full-timers in organisations using part-time hours also experience reduced work pressure, which suggests that there may be wider benefits for all employees when this arrangement is adopted in an organisation.

Personal involvement in job-sharing has no significant impact on work pressure when other factors are taken into account. However, it does seem to have a negative impact on others in the organisation, in that it increases their work pressure, perhaps indicating that this arrangement needs better management to ensure others are not left with an unreasonable workload. The lack of such negative side-effects for flexi-time and part-time suggests that this is a problem that can be resolved.

The association between home-working and increased work pressure found earlier persists even when a wide range of controls are introduced. Those who work from home or have to take work home with them, experience greater pressure – an effect of this form of flexibility that is likely to undermine rather than promote work-life balance.

Similar results for home-working emerge from the models of work stress (Table 5.4). Those personally involved in this practice experience significantly higher levels of stress compared to workers with similar jobs and working conditions who do not work at home. Home-working therefore appears to exacerbate tensions between work and family life rather than resolving them.

Personal involvement in part-time work is found to reduce stress levels considerably. Once again there is an organisational effect in that part-timers' co-workers also experience less stress (when other organisational characteristics are controlled). There is no reduction in stress associated with working flexitime once individual and job controls are introduced - which suggests that the bivariate relationship found earlier, was due to the types of jobs in which flexitime is permitted.

An unanticipated result is that personal involvement in job sharing is found to increase work stress. This is surprising since it is usually offered as a means of accommodating caring or other commitments, and would be expected to have a similar impact to part-time working. Further investigation found that this effect was confined to men involved in job-share, for women there was no association between job-sharing and stress.

## **Control Variables<sup>9</sup>**

The work pressure models shows that women experience greater work pressure than men while the over 55s experience less pressure than those under 25 who constitute the reference group. Those with higher weekly earnings also experience greater pressure, while temporary workers experience lower work intensity. Professional and managerial workers experience more pressure than other social classes. Those in managerial and supervisory functions experience greater pressure than other workers, and the degree of pressure increases as one ascends the hierarchy of authority from supervisor through middle management to executive. Other things being equal, those with more autonomy experience less work pressure, probably due to having greater control over the pace and organisation of work. Those in Education, Health and the Hospitality sector experience the highest levels of work pressure. Greater consultation with workers reduces work pressure while organisational change increases it.

The pattern of results for the control variables in the stress models are very similar to those described in O'Connell et al (2004) and are discussed in greater detail there. The stress models show that women experience more stress than men, that single people experience less stress than those in couples, and people with young children experience more stress than those with no dependent children. This reflects the additional family commitments of these groups. Union members experience more stress than non-members. Workers in the Health sector and in the Hospitality industry report higher stress levels as do those in larger firms. At the occupational level the further up the managerial hierarchy, the greater

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<sup>9</sup> Details on the construction of the control variables are available in O'Connell et al, 2004.

the stress, however once this is controlled class has little impact. Higher levels of autonomy are found to reduce stress as does greater consultation. Organisational change increases stress.

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter we examine the influence of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on two key measures of subjective work experience: pressure and stress. Flexible working arrangements are often heralded as a crucial means of balancing work and other life interests, therefore we anticipated that these practices would reduce pressure and stress. Equality policies were expected to have only an indirect impact on these outcomes.

Our analysis found that the presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly associated with lower levels of work stress even when a wide range of personal, job and organisational characteristics are controlled. We speculate that this may be because the presence of such policies reflect an employee-centred ethos within organisations. However there is no discernable impact of equality policies on work pressure.

The relationships between flexible working arrangements and work pressure and work stress are stronger, however not all the effects are in the direction anticipated. Involvement in working from home is associated with greater levels of both work pressure and stress. Therefore home-working cannot be considered a work-life balance arrangement. On the contrary it appears to cause greater intrusion of work into family time and may be justifiably considered as a form of work intensification. This is particularly worrying since we saw in Chapter 3 that men with children are most likely to be involved in this practice. Job-sharing also has unanticipated results. It is found to be associated with increased work pressure at the organisational level and with greater levels of stress among men who job-share.

Involvement in part-time working operates in the manner anticipated reducing both pressure levels and work stress. There also appears to be a wider benefit for employees not involved personally but working in an organisation with part-timers. It is possible that using part-time workers leads to a more efficient time management within the workplace so that employees do not experience such high levels of stress and work pressure, however it is not possible to establish the precise mechanism behind this relationship in the current research.

Involvement in flexible hours is associated with lower levels of work pressure but does not have a significant effect on work stress when other factors are controlled (however the effect is in the expected direction and is significant at the 10% level). Therefore on the basis of the current research it appears that of the four types of working arrangements studied part-time working hours offer the greatest opportunity for work-life balance followed by flexitime, but neither home-working nor job-sharing have such an effect at least in terms of reducing stress and pressure.

# THE IMPACT OF EQUALITY POLICIES AND FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS ON EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

## 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we examine the extent to which employee attitudes to their jobs and their employers are influenced by formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements. As such, the chapter investigates the business case for the adoption of such policies. Various aspects of employees' attitudes to their jobs have been found to be related to organisational performance. These include job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In the UK, Guest et al (2000) found that job satisfaction was associated with increased productivity in the private sector and with improved quality performance in both the public and private sector. In the US a study by Thomas and Ganster (1995) found a positive relationship between flexitime policies and job satisfaction. In another US study Rogers (1992) found that policies that addressed employees' needs for reduced hours were associated with reduced staff turnover and increased productivity.

We expect that the presence of formal policies on equality of opportunity should increase both work satisfaction as well as organisational commitment, since employees experiencing such policies consider that their employer is more committed to fairness and equality in the employment relationship as shown in Chapter 3. The likely impact of flexible working arrangements is less straightforward. Certain forms of flexibility might increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment, but this could depend on the impact of flexible policies on other aspects of the job, including job-related pressure/stress, pay levels and other working conditions.

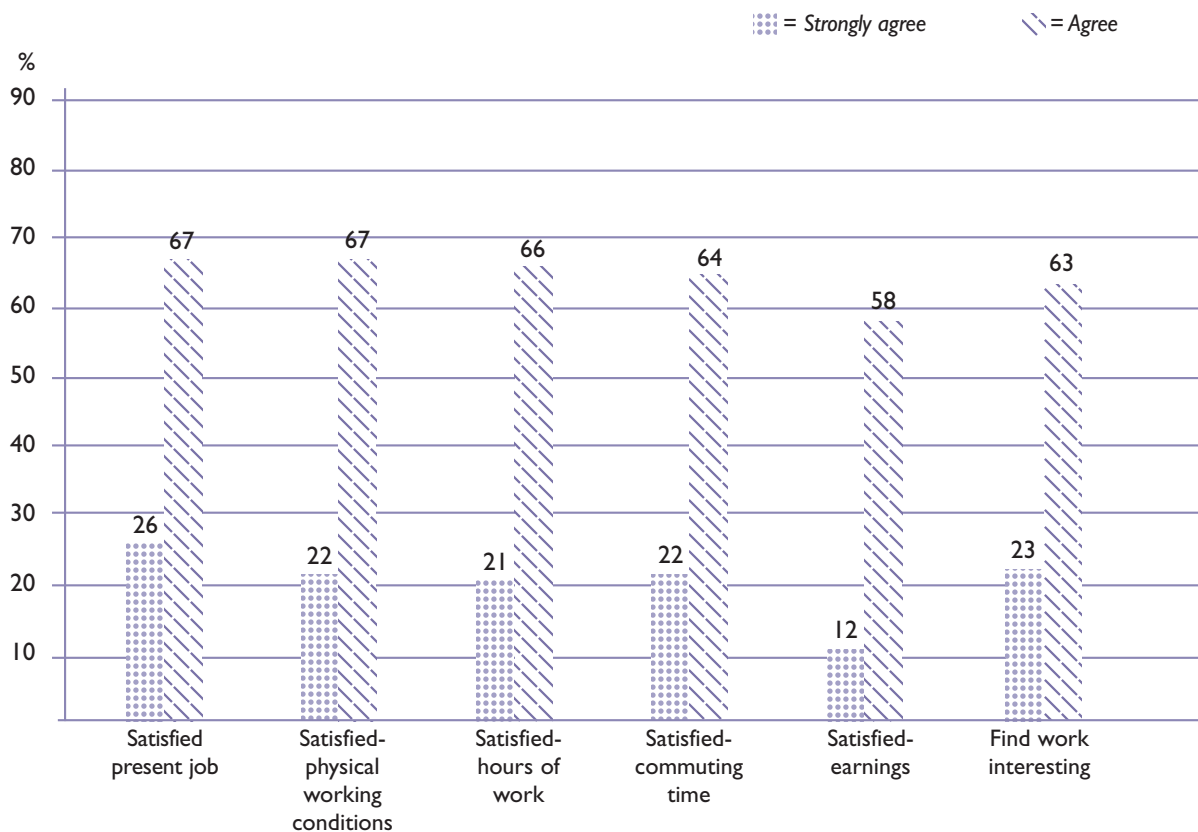
## 6.2 Measures of Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

### Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured in a variety of ways. First respondents were asked about their overall job satisfaction, and then we focused on satisfaction with a number of important aspects of employment. These were mainly extrinsic factors such as the physical working conditions, hours of work, commuting time and earnings but included an item on intrinsic job interest. In general, we see

that Irish employees express a high level of satisfaction with their current job (see Figure 6.1). Over 90 per cent of respondents say that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that ‘in general’ they are satisfied with their job.<sup>10</sup> When we move from this global measure to more detailed job components we see that satisfaction levels decline marginally but remain very high, between 86 per cent and 89 per cent of employees express satisfaction with physical working conditions, hours of work and commuting time. While 86% also agree or strongly agree that their job is interesting. The lowest satisfaction levels are recorded on earnings where 30% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they are satisfied with their earnings. The high overall satisfaction levels expressed on these type of measure means that it is often more meaningful to examine the relativities between groups rather than concentrating on the overall scores.

**Figure 6.1: Satisfaction with Current Job**



## Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment involves a person’s loyalty to a particular organisation and the extent to which he or she shares its goals and values (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990). To assess organisational commitment respondents were asked to agree or disagree with six statements:

*I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed*

*I am proud to be working for this organisation*

*I would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with this organisation*

*My values and the organisations values are very similar*

*I feel little loyalty to the organisation that I work for*

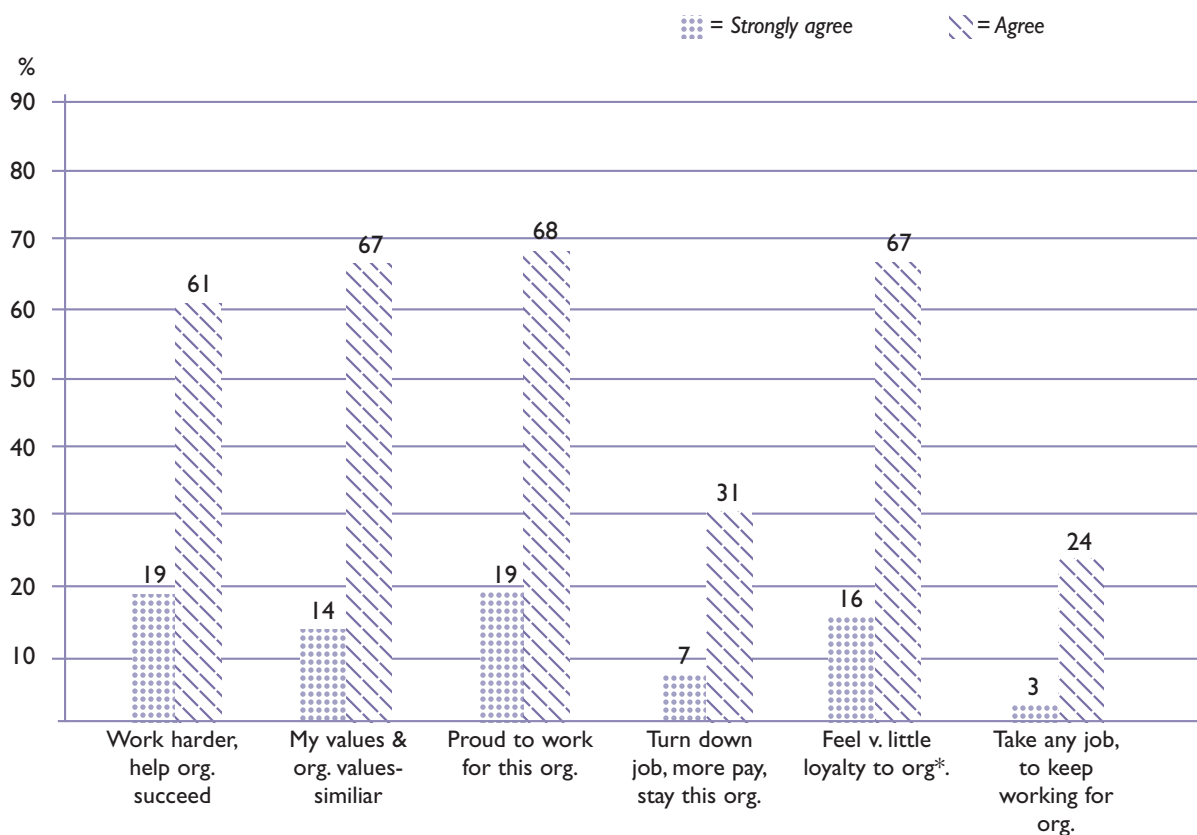
*I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation*

<sup>10</sup> The response categories for each of these questions were strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

Figure 6.2 shows that there is greater variation in respect of different aspects of organisational commitment than was found in respect of job satisfaction (in Figure 6.1 above). Over 80% of workers agree or strongly agree that they are willing to work harder, that they share the organisation's values and that they are proud to work for their organisation. Over 80% also disagree / strongly disagree that they feel very little loyalty. However, the responses to these questions are quite nuanced. Only 38% agree that they would turn down a better job to stay with their organisation, and only 27% would take any job to keep working for the organisation.

Composite scales for both job satisfaction and organisational commitment were constructed based on respondents' average scores on each of the constituent items relating to satisfaction and commitment. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction or commitment.<sup>11</sup> Job satisfaction and organisational commitment are positively related to each other with a bivariate correlation coefficient of .59 between the two composite scales for the entire sample.

**Figure 6.2: Organisational Commitment**



\*The response categories for this variable are 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' as the statement is phrased negatively.

### Results of Previous Research Using the Changing Workplace Survey

O'Connell et al (2004) present extensive analysis of the patterns of variation in job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The report examined the impact of organisational, job and personal characteristics on both satisfaction and commitment. The report found that both job satisfaction and organisational commitment were higher in the public than the private sector. The highest levels of job satisfaction were found in Education and Health, while the highest levels of organisational commitment occurred in Education and Public Administration and Defence. Both job satisfaction and employee commitment were found to be higher in the smallest workplaces and to decline as the number of employees in the establishment increased. Both job satisfaction and organisational commitment are higher in workplaces where unions are recognized.

<sup>11</sup> The responses were scored 2 for "strongly agree", 1 for "agree", -1 for "disagree" and -2 for "strongly disagree", and the scales therefore range from minus 2 to plus 2. The scores on several of the items in the commitment scale were inverted to ensure that higher values reflected greater commitment. Those recorded as missing on any item were excluded from the final indices.

Part-time workers were found to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction than full-timers. Further analysis revealed that this effect was confined to female employees: women working part-time had much higher levels of job satisfaction than their full-time colleagues, whereas there was no significant differences in satisfaction levels between full- versus part-time male employees. Employees with permanent contracts scored higher on both satisfaction and commitment scales than those on temporary contracts.

Job satisfaction and organisational commitment were also related to social class: professionals and managers scored high on both scales, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers scored low on both.

### 6.3 Impact of Equality Policies and Flexible Working Arrangements

We turn now to the question of whether the presence of formal policies on equality of opportunity and flexible working arrangements has any impact on job satisfaction or organisational commitment. Table 6.1 shows average satisfaction and commitment scores by the presence or absence of an equality policy. Employees who report the presence of formal equality policies show substantially higher average job satisfaction and organisational commitment than those who report no such policies in the workplace.

Table 6.2 shows the relationship between flexible working arrangement and job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Those who work in workplaces where home-working is available report substantially higher levels of job satisfaction than those who work in workplaces without the practice. They also exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment. Those who are personally involved in home-working show even higher levels of both satisfaction and commitment.

**Table 6.1: Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment by Presence of Formal Equality Policy**

|                    | Job Satisfaction Score | Organisational Commitment Score |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No Equality Policy | .78                    | .25                             |
| Equality Policy    | .95                    | .48                             |

**Table 6.2: Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements**

|                               | Job Satisfaction Score | Organisational Commitment Score |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Home-working</b>           |                        |                                 |
| Home-working Not Available    | .87                    | .37                             |
| Home-working Available        | 1.02                   | .59                             |
| Personally Involved           | 1.08                   | .67                             |
| <b>Flexible Hours</b>         |                        |                                 |
| Flexible Hours Not Available  | .84                    | .35                             |
| Flexible Hours Available      | .97                    | .48                             |
| Personally Involved           | 1.01                   | .54                             |
| <b>Job-sharing</b>            |                        |                                 |
| Job-sharing Not Available     | .86                    | .38                             |
| Job-sharing Available         | .97                    | .46                             |
| Personally Involved           | 1.02                   | .55                             |
| <b>Part-time Hours</b>        |                        |                                 |
| Part-time Hours Not Available | .88                    | .40                             |
| Part-time Hours Available     | .91                    | .40                             |
| Personally Involved           | .94                    | .43                             |

This pattern, whereby satisfaction and commitment are higher in workplaces where a practice is available, and higher still where the respondent is personally involved, is repeated in respect of both flexible hours and job-sharing. The pattern also characterises the effect of part-time working. There are very slight, if any differences, in organisational commitment between workers on the basis of availability or involvement in part-time working.

## 6.4 Multivariate Models of Impact

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the results of a series of OLS models of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, respectively. The first model in each table examines the impact of the presence of equality policy and flexible working arrangements while controlling for personal and job characteristics known to influence job satisfaction. These include: age, gender, education, occupation, managerial level and level of autonomy in the job. In the second model we add organisational controls such as economic sector and firm size as well as aspects of employee involvement in decisions about work. These employee involvement variables include the extent of direct participation in deciding how work tasks are organised, the extent of consultation on changes in work practices and the extent of employee access to information concerning their jobs and workplaces.<sup>12</sup> The third model adds employee perceptions of fairness and equality in their workplace. These dimensions of perceived fairness, in relation to recruitment, pay and promotion, were explored earlier in Chapter 3, and are added to the multivariate models here in order to explore the mechanisms by which equality policies lead to increased satisfaction and organisational commitment. Tables 6.3 and 6.4 report only statistically significant coefficients relating to equality policies, flexible working, and perceptions. The full set of results, including those for the control variables, is presented in Appendix Tables A.4 and A.5.

### Determinants of Job Satisfaction

The first two models in Table 6.3 show that the presence of a formal policy on equality of opportunity in the workplace has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on job satisfaction. So those who work in organisations with formal equality policies show higher levels of job satisfaction. It is important to emphasize here that this positive effect of equality policies is observed even when we control for a wide range of other organisational and personal factors that could influence job satisfaction, such as organisational size, employment practices, economic sector, individual occupation and earnings.

In the third model the addition of perceptions of inequality eliminates the effects of equality policy, and the effects of perceptions in relation to recruitment, pay and promotion are all negative and significant. So this pattern of effects suggests that one important mechanism by which the implementation of equality policies leads to increased job satisfaction is by increasing employees' perceptions of fairness and equality in relation to key aspects of the employment relationship – recruitment, pay and conditions and promotion prospects. Employees who do not have confidence that these important aspects of the employment relationship are fair and equal show lower levels of job satisfaction.

Using the multivariate models we found no evidence that any of the flexible working arrangements had any impact of job satisfaction. The association found at the bivariate level, displayed in Table 6.2, was therefore due to confounding factors such as the characteristics of the workplace or of those working in them. The control variables in the model suggest that women show higher levels of job satisfaction than men, even when other variables are taken into account, but that satisfaction does not vary by age, by contract type, by earnings or gender when other relevant variables are taken into account. Job satisfaction declines with increasing organisational size, and it is higher in organisations that encourage employee participation and consultation, and that provide information to employees about their work.

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<sup>12</sup> See O'Connell et al. (2004) for an extended discussion of employee involvement and its impact.

## Determinants of Organisational Commitment

All three models in Table 6.4 show that the presence of a formal policy on equality of opportunity in the workplace has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on organisational commitment. So employees who work in organisations with formal equality policies show higher levels of commitment to their organisations, even when we control for a wide range of other potentially influential organisational and personal factors, such as organisational size, employment practices, economic sector, individual occupation and earnings.

**Table 6.3: Regression Models of Job Satisfaction**

|                                  | Individual &<br>Job Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | With Organisational<br>Controls <sup>2</sup> | Adding Perceptions<br>of Inequality |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Equality Policy                  | .115**   | .057**                                       |                                     |
| Home-working in Organisation     |  |  |                                     |
| Home-working Personally Involved |  |  |                                     |
| Flexitime in Organisation        |  |  |                                     |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    |  |  |                                     |
| Job-sharing in Organisation      |  |  |                                     |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  |  |  |                                     |
| Part-timers in Organisation      |  |  |                                     |
| Part-time Personally Involved    |  |  |                                     |
| Inequality in Recruitment        |  |  | -.066*                              |
| Unequal Pay and Conditions       |  |  | -.070**                             |
| Inequality in Career Development |  |  | -.115**                             |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

<sup>1</sup> Individual controls - age, sex, contract status (temp/permanent), education level, earnings, trade union membership, level of autonomy, occupation and managerial level.

<sup>2</sup> Organisational controls - sector, firm size, and consultation practices.

**Table 6.4: Regression Models of Organisational Commitment**

|                                  | Individual &<br>Job Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | With Organisational<br>Controls <sup>2</sup> | Adding Perceptions<br>of Inequality |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Equality Policy                  | .173**   | .104**                                       | .075**                              |
| Home-working in Organisation     |  |  |                                     |
| Home-working Personally Involved |  |  | .072*                               |
| Flexitime in Organisation        |  |  |                                     |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    | .056*  |  |                                     |
| Job-sharing in Organisation      |  |  |                                     |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  |  |  |                                     |
| Part-timers in Organisation      |  |  |                                     |
| Part-time Personally Involved    |  |  |                                     |
| Inequality in Recruitment        |  |  | -.118**                             |
| Unequal Pay and Conditions       |  |  |                                     |
| Inequality in Career Development |  |  | -.090**                             |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

<sup>1</sup> Individual controls - age, sex, contract status (temp/permanent), education level, earnings, trade union membership, level of autonomy, occupation and managerial level.

<sup>2</sup> Organisational controls - sector, firm size and consultation practices.



The addition of perceptions of inequality in the third model reduces the size of the effect of equality policy, but does not eliminate it. The effects of perceptions in relation to recruitment and promotion are negative and significant, the effect of perceived inequality in pay and conditions is non-significant. So this pattern of effects suggests that one important mechanism by which the implementation of equality policies leads to increased organisational commitment is by increasing employees' perceptions of fairness and equality in relation to key aspects of the employment relationship – recruitment and promotion. However, the maintenance of a positive coefficient in respect of the presence of equality policy when perceptions are controlled, indicates that implementation of a formal equality policy also has a direct effect in increasing employees' commitment to their organisations.

We found little evidence of effects of flexible working arrangements on organisational commitment. The positive effect of personal involvement in flexi-time or flexible working hours was eliminated when organisational characteristics were taken into account. We can surmise that all other associations found at bivariate level were due to confounding factors, as when individual and organisational characteristics are controlled for the associations disappear.

The control variables in the model suggest that women show higher levels of organisational commitment than men, although not when organisational characteristics are controlled. As might be expected, organisational commitment is lower among temporary than permanent workers. More highly educated workers show lower levels of organisational commitment. Commitment also declines with increasing organisational size, and it is higher in organisations that encourage employee participation and consultation, and that provide information to employees about their work (See Appendix Table A.5).

## **6.5 Summary**

In this chapter we examined the influence of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on two key measures of employees' attitudes to their jobs: job satisfaction and organisational commitment. We expected to find that equality policies have a positive impact on both satisfaction and commitment, but we were uncertain as to the likely impact of flexible working.

We found that the presence of a formal policy on equality of opportunity in the workplace is strongly and unambiguously associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, even when all other relevant variables are taken into account. We also found that one important mechanism by which the implementation of equality policies leads to increased job satisfaction is by increasing employees' perceptions of fairness and equality in relation to key aspects of the employment relationship – recruitment, pay and conditions and promotion prospects. Employees who have confidence that recruitment, pay and conditions and promotion prospects are fair and equal show higher levels of job satisfaction. Employees who consider that recruitment and promotion prospects are fair and equal show higher levels of organisational commitment, although the presence of an equality policy also has an additional independent positive impact on organisational commitment. We found little evidence to suggest that flexible working arrangements have much impact on either job satisfaction or organisational commitment, when other relevant factors are taken into account.

# THE IMPACT OF EQUALITY POLICIES AND FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS ON EARNINGS AND AUTONOMY

## 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we look at whether equality policies and flexible working arrangements impact on two aspects of job quality – earnings and autonomy. Earnings represent, arguably, the most fundamental objective measure of job quality. Autonomy represents a subjective measure of job quality and reflects the extent to which workers exercise discretion and control in their jobs. Previous research outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2, suggests that some forms of flexible working can have a negative impact on job quality. For example, part-time work has been linked with lower average levels of pay and reduced promotion opportunities, however the relationship between part-time work and job quality tends to vary across countries (e.g. Gornich and Meyers, 2003). We do not however examine some of the other disadvantages that research has suggested part-timers experience such as access to training, non-cash benefits or reduced pension incomes. The literature also posits a possible link between equality policies and job quality. Where such policies are introduced as a part of a ‘high commitment’ human resource strategy, greater employee autonomy and higher wages may also be a part of that approach. Therefore the expected relationship between equality policies and pay/autonomy, is not a causal one.

In this chapter we first outline the nature of our measures of pay and autonomy. We then consider the factors that influence these outcomes, focusing in particular on flexible working arrangements and equality policies. We go on to develop models of pay and autonomy, which allow us to consider the independent effect of flexible working and equality policies.

## 7.2 Measures of Earnings and Autonomy

The measure of pay used in the study refers to hourly earnings in order to take account of differences in number of hours worked (e.g. between full- and part-time workers). The measure refers to net or take-home pay.<sup>13</sup> The use of net pay is likely to reduce any pay gap between full-time and part-time workers because of the progressive nature of the tax system.

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<sup>13</sup> Studies of earnings differentials between men and women (e.g. Barrett et al. 2000, Russell & Gannon. 2001) use gross hourly pay before deductions for tax and social insurance which means the results are not directly comparable.

In measuring autonomy, we include six questions that have been widely used and validated in previous surveys:

*You decide how much work you do or how fast you work during the day*

*Your manager decides the specific tasks you will do from day to day*

*You decide when you can take a break during the working day*

*Your manager monitors your work performance*

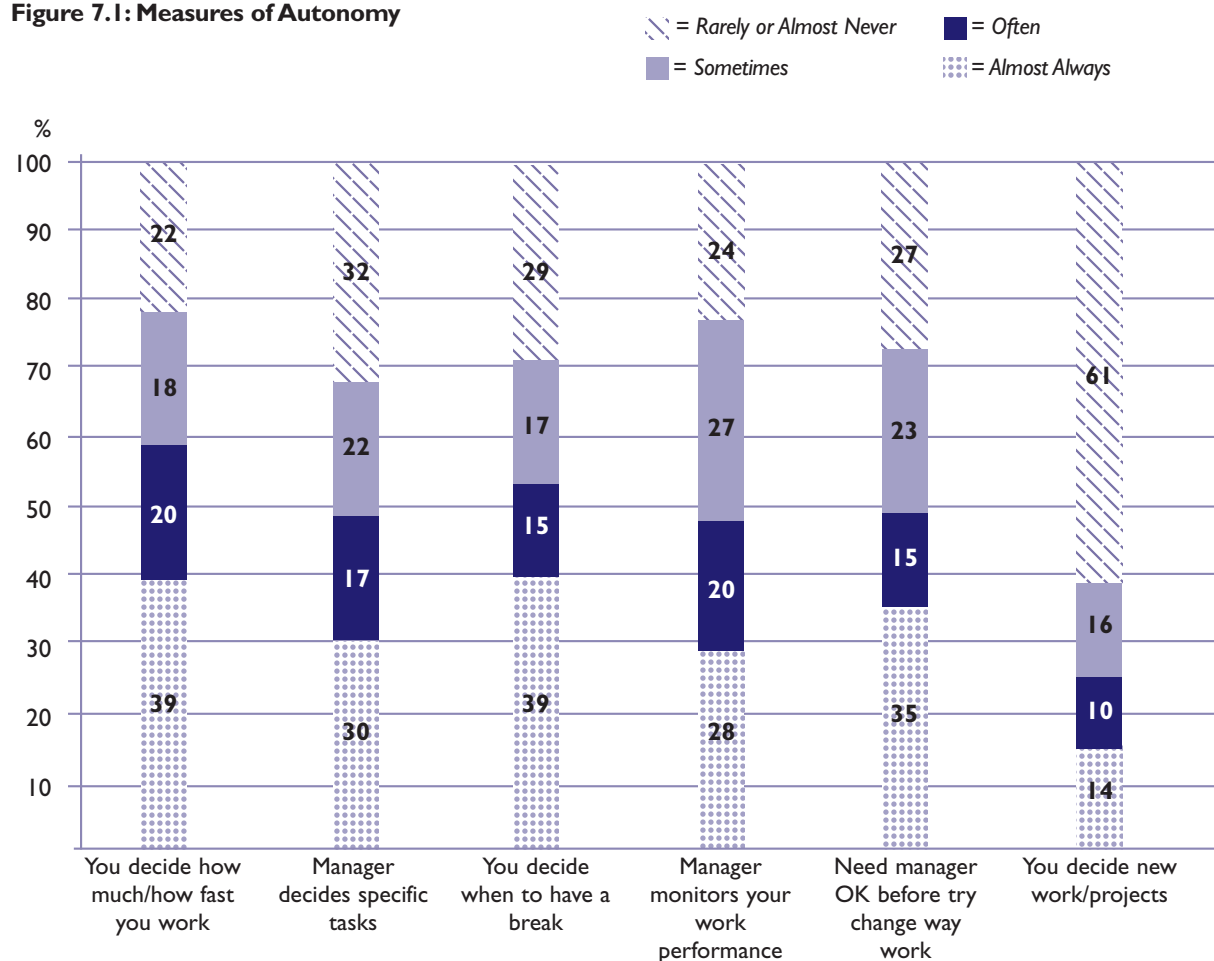
*You have to get your manager's OK before you try to change anything with the way you do your work*

*You can decide to take on new work or new contracts or initiate new projects*

The response set was 'almost always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely/almost never'. We can see from the responses in Figure 7.1 that discretion on these items is quite variable. Almost 40% of workers almost always control their pace of work and the timing of breaks, but less than 30% control the tasks they do (i.e. manager never decides) but only 24% never have their performance monitored and only 14% can 'almost always' initiate new work/contracts.

The autonomy scale was constructed using responses to these six items. For positively worded statements i.e. those that 'You decide....' a score of 0 is given for 'rarely/never', 1 for 'sometimes', 2 for 'often' and 3 for 'almost always'. The scoring was reversed for the other three items, which means that greater autonomy leads to higher scores. Scores on the six items were then averaged for each respondent. The scale therefore ranges from 0 to 3 and the average score was 1.44.

**Figure 7.1: Measures of Autonomy**



### 7.3 Factors Influencing Earnings and Autonomy

Previous research using the *Changing Workplace Survey* and the wider research literature has outlined a wide range of factors associated with pay levels and degree of autonomy. O’Connell et al (2004:37) show that employee autonomy increases with age, education, job tenure and position in the occupational hierarchy. Male workers enjoy higher levels of discretion than female workers, as do those on permanent contracts compared to non-permanent employees. At the organisational level it was found those in very small firms (<5 employees) experienced the highest level of autonomy and those in the largest firms had least autonomy. This result may influence the effect of equality policy, since we know equality policies are more common in large firms.

There is a very large economic, industrial relations and sociological literature on the determinants of pay and pay inequality. Individual characteristics found to be most influential include: education, age/work experience, training, gender, and trade union membership. Earnings also differ markedly by occupation, sector, firm size and across regions.

**Table 7.1: Earnings and Autonomy by Presence of Formal Equality Policy**

|                    | Hourly Earning (€) | Autonomy Score |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| No Equality Policy | 10.68              | 1.43           |
| Equality Policy    | 12.37              | 1.45           |
| All                | 11.95              | 1.44           |

**Table 7.2: Hourly Earnings and Level of Autonomy by Availability of and Involvement in Flexible Working Arrangements**

|   | Hourly Earning (€) | Autonomy Score |
|---|--------------------|----------------|
| All   | 11.88              | 1.43           |
| <b>Home-working</b>                                 |                    |                |
| Home-working Not Available                          | 11.45              | 1.36           |
| Home-working Available to Others in Organisation    | 13.83              | 1.78           |
| Personally Involved                                 | 14.96              | 2.04           |
| <b>Flexible Hours</b>                               |                    |                |
| Flexible Hours Not Available                        | 11.62              | 1.34           |
| Flexible Hours Available to Others in Organisation  | 12.28              | 1.49           |
| Personally Involved                                 | 12.16              | 1.63           |
| <b>Job-sharing</b>                                  |                    |                |
| Job-sharing Not Available                           | 11.37              | 1.42           |
| Job-sharing Available to Others in Organisation     | 13.33              | 1.48           |
| Personally Involved                                 | 11.71              | 1.40           |
| <b>Part-time Hours</b>                              |                    |                |
| Part-time Hours Not Available                       | 11.95              | 1.40           |
| Part-time Hours Available to Others in Organisation | 12.50              | 1.53           |
| Personally Involved                                 | 10.64              | 1.36           |

Our models below control for many of these influences, here we simply describe the mean rates of pay and levels of autonomy across flexible working arrangements and among those who are covered by equality policies and those not covered. Table 7.1 shows that employees who report the presence of formal equality policies show higher average earnings than those who report no such policies in the

workplace. There is no significant difference in the autonomy scores of the two groups.

Table 7.2 shows the influence of flexible working arrangements on earnings and autonomy. The earnings figures show contrasting effects for different forms of flexibility. Those who are personally involved in job-sharing and part-time work have lower than average hourly earnings, while earnings for those involved in home-working and flexitime are higher than the average.

Taking each form of flexibility in turn we see that those who work in workplaces where home-working is available report substantially higher earnings than those in workplaces without the practice, even when they are not involved. Those personally involved record the highest earning levels. A somewhat different pattern emerges for flexitime and job sharing. In both cases employees in workplaces without these practices have the lowest hourly earnings and those in workplaces with these practices but not personally involved have the highest earnings. Employees who use these arrangements fall in between.

The contrasting influence of different forms of flexibility persists when we look at employee autonomy. Those involved in home-working and flexitime enjoy higher than average levels of autonomy, while the scores of part-timers and those involved in job-share are below average. The positive effect of home-working and flexitime is not surprising because these arrangements allow employees greater personal control over their working time, and so represent another form of autonomy.

While those who are personally involved in job-share and part-time hours have lower levels of autonomy, there appears to be a positive effect at an organisational level, in that those not personally involved enjoy higher levels of autonomy than employees in workplaces where these arrangements are not available.

## 7.4 Models of Earnings

In this section we model earnings in order to establish the independent effect of flexible working arrangements and equality policy when other factors are held constant. We adopt the conventional practice of specifying the logged value of earnings in order to minimize the impact of extreme outlying values. The models here, and in the discussion of autonomy below, differ from those in earlier chapters as there is a particular focus on personal involvement in flexible arrangements. We adopt this strategy because the contrast between flexible workers and all other workers is the most important for investigating the issue of job quality and this strategy is consistent with the research literature in this area.

The first model in Table 7.3 looks at the impact of personal involvement in flexible working arrangements, controlling only for human capital characteristics i.e. education, tenure, time out of the labour market and personal characteristics such as age, sex and marital status. The literature suggests that part-time workers experience vertical and horizontal segregation and may be concentrated in certain parts of the labour market. By excluding job and organisational factors this model shows the impact of flexible working, including any disadvantage that might result from this type of segregation. It shows that, when personal and human capital variables alone are controlled, only involvement in part-time hours has a significant impact, and is found to reduce earnings. Part-timers are found to earn 5% less per hour.

The second model tests the impact of equality policies and personal involvement in flexible working arrangements on earnings in models with a full set of organisational and occupational controls. The presence of an equality policy has no effect on earnings and none of the flexible practices has a significant impact (see Appendix Table A7 for the detailed results). The negative effect of part-time involvement disappears, which suggests that the effect is due to the concentration of part-timers in certain occupations, levels and sectors of the labour market.

In other respects the earnings equations show familiar results (see Table A.7). Women earn about 10% less than men. Earnings increase with age, education and job tenure and decrease with the length of time spent outside the labour market. Single people earn less. Union members earn more than non-members. Those in the hospitality sector and in 'other services', earn less than those in manufacturing, those in financial and business services, education and construction earn more. Earnings are positively associated with organisational size, with higher social class and with seniority in organisational structures.

A final set of earnings models were constructed to investigate another potential influence of equality policies. We saw earlier that such policies had no direct impact on increasing or reducing earnings. However it is possible that these policies affect the distribution of earnings rather than the overall level. In particular we might expect to find a weaker link between gender and earnings where such policies are in place. We therefore looked at whether the gender differences observed above differ across organisations with formal equality policies and those without. The coefficients for Female in both equations are very similar (-.16), so the male wage premium does not appear to be affected by the presence of equality policies (See Table A.8).

**Table 7.3: OLS Models of Net Hourly Earnings**

|                                  | With Personal Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | Personal, Job & Organisational Controls <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Equality Policy                  | Not Applicable                           |  |
| Home-working Personally Involved |  |  |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    |  |  |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  |  |  |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -.051*                                   |  |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

<sup>1</sup> Controlling for age, sex, marital status, time out of labour market, tenure and education level. Equality policy is excluded because it is an organisational factor.

<sup>2</sup> Controls for age, sex, marital status, education level, contract status, tenure, time out of labour market, trade union membership, industrial sector, firm size, occupation and managerial level.

## 7.5 Models of Autonomy

We now turn to the models of autonomy. The first model in Table 7.4 indicates that the contrasting impact of flexible working arrangements on levels of employee discretion identified in the bivariate analysis persists when we control for human capital characteristics such as education and on-the-job experience. It shows that involvement in flexitime and home-working is associated with higher levels of autonomy while involvement in part-time work or job-share is associated with lower levels of control. In the second model, where additional occupational and organisational factors are held constant, the positive impacts of home-working and flexitime remain but the negative impact of job-sharing and part-time working disappears. This suggests that the lower autonomy of part-timers and job-sharers is due to the types of jobs and organisations in which they are located. As we found in the earlier descriptive analysis (Table 7.1) there appears to be little relationship between autonomy and the presence of equality policies.

**Table 7.4: OLS Models of Autonomy**

|                                  | With Personal Controls Only <sup>1</sup> | Personal, Job & Organisational Controls <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Equality Policy                  | Not Applicable                           |  |
| Home-working Personally Involved | .364**                                   | .186**   |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    | .147**                                   | .140**   |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved  | -.105*                                   |  |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -.052*                                   |  |

\* P < .05 \*\* P < .005

<sup>1</sup> Controlling for age, sex, marital status, tenure and educational level. Equality policy is excluded because it is an organisational factor

<sup>2</sup> Controls for age, sex, marital status, education level, contract status, tenure, time out of labour market, trade union membership, industrial sector, firm size, occupation and managerial level.

The control variables largely operate in the manner expected (see Table A.10). Autonomy is positively associated with age, earnings and with organisational size. Those in professional, managerial and non-manual classes have higher autonomy, as do those with executive or managerial responsibility. Those with shorter job tenures and those on non-permanent contracts have less control over their work.

## 7.6 Summary

In this chapter we investigated whether there was a relationship between equality policies, flexible working arrangements and two aspects of job quality – earnings and autonomy. Based on previous research it was hypothesised that involvement in certain types of flexibility, in particular reduced hours, would have a negative impact on job quality. No causal relationship between job quality and equality policies was predicted, however it was suggested that a positive relationship could exist if higher earnings, worker autonomy and equality policies all formed part of a high commitment human resource strategy. It was also argued that equality policies might have a more direct influence on the distribution of earnings, particularly between men and women.

The presence of a formal equality policy in the workplace has no significant impact on individual hourly earnings. Moreover, when we estimate separate equations for workplaces with and without formal equality policies, there is no evidence to suggest that the male-female wage gap differs between the two different organisational contexts. Previous research on equality policies suggests that the effectiveness of such policies in reducing gender inequality depends upon the extent to which they are followed through with actions (McGauran, 2001). It appears that equality policies have no significant impact on autonomy either.

Flexible working arrangements do influence job quality, however the nature of this influence depends on the type of flexibility. Where they arise, the effects of part-time work and job-sharing are negative, while home-working and flexi-time have a positive impact on one of the job quality outcomes. Part-time working is associated with lower hourly earnings and lower levels of autonomy, even when personal and human capital characteristics are taken into account. Similarly, job-sharing has a negative effect on autonomy with these controls in place. However these effects disappear when occupational and organisational controls are introduced. These results demonstrate that the negative effects observed are due to the types of jobs (including occupational level) and organisations where these workers are located, and are not due to any deficit in the human capital of these workers compared to full-timers. This suggests that there is a process of segregation underlying these results.

The positive association between both home-working and flexitime and earnings disappears when personal and human capital characteristics are controlled. This suggests that the initial higher earnings rates were due to factors such as the higher educational levels and longer job tenures of those involved in these two practices (see Chapter 4 above). Home-working and flexible hours are both associated with greater levels of autonomy even when a range of personal, occupational and organisational factors are controlled. These practices allow employees greater personal control over their working hours and therefore represent a form of autonomy in themselves.

## CONCLUSIONS

The past decade has witnessed major changes in the size and composition of the workforce in Ireland. Rapid growth in economic output and in employment was accompanied by a strong surge in the number of women at work, as well as by an increase in inward migration. Over the same period there has been a growth in the presence of people with disabilities in the workplace and the working population has begun to age. Accommodating diversity and promoting equality in the workplace thus represents a substantial challenge both now and in the future.

The growth in women's employment has also been accompanied by far-reaching changes in household structures and in the relationship between work and family. For example there has been a sharp increase in the proportion of families where both parents are at work. The number of households headed by a working single parent has also increased. These shifts in household composition and in the relationship between work and family responsibilities have given rise to increased concern with flexible working arrangements that facilitate maintaining labour force participation while caring for children and other, usually elderly, dependent relatives, as well as pursuing other life choices.

Increasing diversity of the workforce in terms of gender, nationality, age and disability, as well as other aspects of diversity, suggest that policies to accommodate diversity and promote equality of opportunity are becoming increasingly important both to the welfare of workers as well as to the performance of workplaces. Furthermore, given that women have traditionally assumed responsibility for the family, work-life balance issues are also linked to issues of gender equality in the workplace.

This study has looked at how workplaces in Ireland have responded to the challenges of equality and diversity by examining the extent of adoption of formal policies to promote equality in the workplace as well as of flexible working arrangements. The report also looks at the impact of formal equality policies and flexible working arrangements on aspects of worker well-being (work pressure and stress) on their attitudes to their jobs and their employers (job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and on job quality (earnings and autonomy).

About three-quarters of all employees work in workplaces where there is a formal explicit policy on equality of opportunity. Such policies are much more common in the public than the private sector: about 90% of employees in the public sector and in semi-state organisations report the presence of such policies in their workplaces, compared to about 70% of private sector workers. Equality policies are also more common in larger organisations and in organisations in which a trade union or staff association is recognised. Senior managers are more likely to report that their organisation has implemented an equality policy than other employees. Workers on temporary contracts are less likely to report an equality policy at their workplace, reflecting a lower level of commitment on the part of their employers.



Part-time working and flexible hours/flexitime are widely available in Irish workplaces. Job-sharing is less common. Less than 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace. The extent to which workers actually avail of these arrangements is much lower. Almost one in four employees is involved in flexible working and one in five work part-time. However, just 84% of employees are involved in home-working and 65% job-share. There is also substantial variation in the organisational use of flexible working arrangements across economic sectors and in different workplaces. Home-working is more common in business and financial services, in small organisations and among professionals and managers. Other forms of flexibility, including flexible hours, job sharing and part-time working are more likely to be found in larger organisations and in organisations that recognise trade unions.

Equality policies and flexible working arrangements are related: in workplaces where an equality policy has been implemented there is a greater likelihood that flexible working arrangements are also available at that workplace.

We examined the effects of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on two aspects of workers' well being: work-related stress and pressure. These variables come closest to measuring issues of work-life balance as they are concerned directly with issues of time-pressure and of tensions between work and family life. We found that the presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly and unambiguously associated with lower levels of work-related stress, even when other potentially influential factors are taken into account in a multivariate statistical model. The statistical model does not enable us to unpack the causality behind this pattern, but the findings do suggest that workers in more progressive workplaces experience measurably lower levels of job-related stress. This is important because it suggests that equality policies, in addition to promoting the equality objective, can also yield gains in the health of employees at work.

We found no discernable impact of equality policies on work pressure. This latter effect is not surprising as there is no *a priori* reason why the presence of an equality policy would influence the pace and intensity of work.

Involvement in flexible working arrangements is associated with both work pressure and stress, but the effect is not always in the direction anticipated. Involvement in part-time working has the expected influence, considerably reducing both pressure levels and work stress. There also appears to be a reduction in pressure for full-time employees working in organisations with part-timers. Of the four types of flexibility examined, part-time work appears to do most to promote work-life balance. Flexitime/flexible hours produce the next best outcome in terms of worker well-being – involvement in this practice reduces work pressure but has no effect on stress when personal, job and workplace characteristics are controlled.

In contrast, involvement in working from home is associated with greater levels of both work pressure and stress, suggesting that this form of flexibility may undermine rather than promote work-life balance. Work sharing also has unanticipated results. It is found to be associated with increased work pressure at the organisational level and with greater levels of stress among men who job-share.

The study also looked at the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on employees' attitudes to their jobs. Various aspects of employees' attitudes to their jobs, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment, may influence organisational performance. This relates to the 'business case' for the adoption of equality policies or flexible working arrangements: if such policies are associated with greater job satisfaction or organisational commitment, then they may give rise to enhanced organisational performance and thus be justified in terms of organisational objectives, in addition to their beneficial impact on employees and the quality and equality of employment.

We found that the presence of a formal policy on equality in the workplace is strongly associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, even when all other relevant variables are taken into account. These are important findings. Job satisfaction and organisational commitment are both potentially linked to organisational performance, so our findings provide empirical support

for the business case for equality policies. We found little evidence to suggest that flexible working arrangements have much impact on either job satisfaction or organisational commitment, when other relevant factors are taken in to account.

Implementation of a formal equality policy also influences workers' subjective perceptions of fairness in their organisations. In organisations with formal equality policies, workers are much more likely to consider that recruitment, pay and conditions and career development prospects are fair and equal than in organisations without such policies. This helps us to understand the positive effects of equality policies on job satisfaction and commitment since workers who consider that their employer is treating them fairly may be expected to show higher job satisfaction and greater commitment to that employer.

Finally, the study looked at the impact of equality policies and flexible working arrangements on the quality of work. We focussed on two aspects of job quality: earnings and autonomy. We found that the presence of a formal equality policy had no significant impact on individual hourly earnings. Moreover, when we estimated separate wage equations for workplaces with and without equality policies, we found no evidence to suggest that the male-female wage gap differs between the two organisational contexts: women earned about 16% less than their male counterparts in both organisational contexts, when other relevant factors were controlled for. Equality policies also appear to have no discernible impact on reported autonomy on the job.

Flexible working arrangements do appear to influence job quality. We found that part-time working is associated with lower hourly earnings, and both part-time and job-sharing are associated with lower autonomy, even when human capital levels are taken into account. These disadvantages are found to be associated with the types of jobs, sectors and organisations in which part-timers are located. The pay gap between part-timers and full-timers found in the current study is relatively small (5% when personal characteristics are held constant), and this may be partly due to the effect of using net rather than gross pay. Home-working and flexible hours are both associated with greater levels of autonomy even when a wide range of personal, job and workplace factors are taken into account.

The proactive pursuit of equality in the workplace and the implementation of flexible working arrangements are valuable in themselves in promoting equality objectives and in accommodating to diversity as well as in facilitating the achievement of work-life balance. This study shows that not only do equality policies entail benefits for employees, such as reduced work-related stress, they can also lead to increased job satisfaction and greater organisational commitment. To the extent that they do have these effects then equality policies may also have a positive impact on organisational performance and hence be of benefit to employers.

The effects of flexible working arrangements are more complex. On the one hand, we found that part-time work and flexible working hours, or flexi-time, are associated with lower job related pressure and therefore appear to be particularly conducive to balancing work and family commitments. On the other hand, both job sharing and working from home were found to be associated with higher levels of job-related stress and pressure.

These findings serve to remind us that flexible working arrangements are often implemented in response to organisational imperatives rather than to accommodate the needs of individual workers and that they are not always to the advantage of the employee. The negative findings on the effects of working from home may suggest that attempts to integrate work and family commitments, far from promoting greater work-life balance, may lead to the erosion of boundaries between work and leisure to the detriment of family life, although here it should be acknowledged that home-working was also linked to higher levels of autonomy. The effects of part-time working are also mixed: while it has a positive impact on employee wellbeing by reducing pressure and stress, there appear to be some trade-offs in terms of lower average earnings and reduced autonomy. These findings of course also serve to underline the need for further research into the organisation of work and its impact on both individual employees and their families.



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## APPENDIX TABLES

**Table A.1: Logistic Regression Models of Perceived Equality and Fairness**

|                             | Equality in Recruitment |       | Equal Pay and Conditions |       | Equality in Career Development |       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
|                             | B                       | Sig.  | B                        | Sig.  | B                              | Sig.  |
| (Constant)                  | 1.488                   | 0.000 | 1.672                    | 0.000 | 1.714                          | 0.000 |
| Age 25-39                   | 0.025                   | 0.854 | -0.147                   | 0.183 | -0.194                         | 0.159 |
| Age 40-54                   | 0.226                   | 0.126 | 0.111                    | 0.362 | -0.189                         | 0.204 |
| Age 55+                     | 0.266                   | 0.158 | 0.164                    | 0.306 | -0.042                         | 0.828 |
| Female                      | 0.210                   | 0.033 | -0.154                   | 0.065 | -0.044                         | 0.667 |
| Part-time                   | 0.210                   | 0.073 | 0.179                    | 0.066 | 0.300                          | 0.012 |
| Temp. Contract              | -0.151                  | 0.235 | 0.000                    | 1.000 | -0.214                         | 0.091 |
| Less than 1 year in Job     | 0.334                   | 0.025 | -0.042                   | 0.724 | 0.158                          | 0.287 |
| Less than 5 years in Job    | 0.176                   | 0.098 | -0.190                   | 0.029 | -0.086                         | 0.417 |
| Inter/Group Certificate     | -0.323                  | 0.067 | -0.350                   | 0.025 | -0.062                         | 0.727 |
| Leaving Certificate         | 0.012                   | 0.943 | -0.184                   | 0.213 | 0.047                          | 0.778 |
| Third Level                 | -0.214                  | 0.239 | -0.280                   | 0.077 | -0.189                         | 0.296 |
| TU Member                   | -0.209                  | 0.044 | 0.055                    | 0.526 | 0.103                          | 0.333 |
| Higher Prof. / Manager      | 0.234                   | 0.308 | 0.264                    | 0.173 | 0.505                          | 0.028 |
| Lower Professional          | -0.043                  | 0.836 | -0.019                   | 0.916 | 0.189                          | 0.356 |
| Other Non-manual            | 0.027                   | 0.886 | -0.065                   | 0.687 | 0.104                          | 0.577 |
| Skilled Manual              | -0.230                  | 0.253 | -0.198                   | 0.258 | -0.113                         | 0.574 |
| Semi-skilled Manual         | -0.047                  | 0.812 | 0.017                    | 0.922 | 0.120                          | 0.536 |
| Executive/Senior Management | 0.048                   | 0.804 | -0.065                   | 0.688 | -0.047                         | 0.810 |
| Middle Management           | -0.025                  | 0.858 | -0.191                   | 0.100 | -0.052                         | 0.714 |
| Supervisor                  | -0.118                  | 0.351 | -0.238                   | 0.026 | 0.034                          | 0.801 |
| Equality Policy             | 0.881                   | 0.000 | 0.511                    | 0.000 | 0.974                          | 0.000 |
| Public Sector               | -0.081                  | 0.642 | -0.005                   | 0.971 | 0.044                          | 0.806 |
| Construction                | 0.082                   | 0.695 | 0.037                    | 0.832 | 0.264                          | 0.231 |
| Retail                      | -0.234                  | 0.135 | -0.213                   | 0.093 | -0.078                         | 0.616 |
| Hospitality                 | -0.597                  | 0.002 | -0.349                   | 0.033 | -0.476                         | 0.012 |
| Transport & Communication   | 0.019                   | 0.923 | -0.154                   | 0.329 | 0.020                          | 0.919 |
| Finance & Bus. Services     | 0.000                   | 0.999 | -0.194                   | 0.124 | -0.003                         | 0.985 |
| Public Admin. & Defence     | -0.145                  | 0.534 | 0.665                    | 0.002 | 0.358                          | 0.157 |
| Education                   | -0.265                  | 0.256 | 0.193                    | 0.337 | -0.131                         | 0.579 |
| Health                      | -0.070                  | 0.736 | 0.369                    | 0.038 | 0.075                          | 0.719 |
| Other Services              | -0.292                  | 0.225 | 0.143                    | 0.499 | -0.145                         | 0.545 |
| 5-19 Employees              | -0.248                  | 0.085 | -0.398                   | 0.001 | -0.386                         | 0.011 |
| 20-99 Employees             | -0.296                  | 0.039 | -0.632                   | 0.000 | -0.601                         | 0.000 |
| 100+ Employees              | -0.151                  | 0.343 | -0.355                   | 0.009 | -0.539                         | 0.001 |
| N of cases                  | 5124                    |       | 5010                     |       | 5025                           |       |
| -2 log likelihood           | 3965.70                 |       | 5156.97                  |       | 3833.22                        |       |
| Nagelkerke R                | 0.058                   |       | 0.064                    |       | 0.069                          |       |

Reference groups: under 25, male, permanent, no qualifications, unskilled, employee, private sector, manufacturing, < 5 employees.

**Table A.2: OLS Regression Models of Work Pressure**

|                                 | Individual & Job Controls Only |      | With Organisational Controls |      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
|                                 | B                              | Sig. | B                            | Sig. |
| (Constant)                      | -.029                          | .689 | -.128                        | .135 |
| Age 25-39                       | .018                           | .625 | .020                         | .602 |
| Age 40-54                       | -.017                          | .664 | -.020                        | .610 |
| Age 55+                         | -.131                          | .009 | -.138                        | .006 |
| Female                          | .122                           | .000 | .110                         | .000 |
| Temp. Contract                  | -.090                          | .010 | -.104                        | .003 |
| Inter/Group Certificate         | .008                           | .869 | -.006                        | .911 |
| Leaving Certificate             | .018                           | .698 | .019                         | .681 |
| Third Level                     | .112                           | .029 | .085                         | .097 |
| Weekly Earnings                 | .000                           | .000 | .000                         | .000 |
| TU Member                       | .017                           | .517 | -.025                        | .371 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers         | .111                           | .076 | .126                         | .047 |
| Lower Professionals             | .212                           | .000 | .195                         | .001 |
| Other Non-manual                | -.044                          | .401 | -.033                        | .536 |
| Skilled Manual                  | .037                           | .527 | .084                         | .152 |
| Semi-skilled Manual             | -.102                          | .053 | -.089                        | .107 |
| Executive/Senior Management     | .405                           | .000 | .402                         | .000 |
| Middle Management               | .303                           | .000 | .291                         | .000 |
| Supervisor                      | .182                           | .000 | .170                         | .000 |
| Autonomy Score                  | -.069                          | .000 | -.047                        | .013 |
| Construction                    |                                |      | .145                         | .018 |
| Retail                          |                                |      | .053                         | .230 |
| Hospitality                     |                                |      | .364                         | .000 |
| Transport & Communication       |                                |      | .079                         | .142 |
| Finance & Bus. Services         |                                |      | .103                         | .018 |
| Public Admin & Defence          |                                |      | .032                         | .507 |
| Education                       |                                |      | .190                         | .000 |
| Health                          |                                |      | .234                         | .000 |
| Other Services                  |                                |      | .019                         | .791 |
| 5-19 Employees                  |                                |      | .008                         | .842 |
| 20-99 Employees                 |                                |      | .021                         | .603 |
| 100+ Employees                  |                                |      | .041                         | .350 |
| Consultation Score              |                                |      | -.035                        | .001 |
| Org. Change in last 2yrs        |                                |      | .078                         | .000 |
| Equality Policy                 | -.005                          | .863 | -.011                        | .682 |
| Home-work in Organisation       | .007                           | .890 | .008                         | .882 |
| Home-work Personally Involved   | .244                           | .000 | .247                         | .000 |
| Flexitime in Organisation       | -.054                          | .097 | -.059                        | .068 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved   | -.072                          | .018 | -.070                        | .022 |
| Job-sharing in Organisation     | .101                           | .001 | .082                         | .008 |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved | .087                           | .075 | .074                         | .131 |
| Part-time in Organisation       | -.049                          | .088 | -.076                        | .008 |
| Part-time Personally Involved   | -.105                          | .004 | -.135                        | .000 |
| No. of Cases                    | 4383                           |      | 4362                         |      |
| Adjusted R2                     | 0.147                          |      | 0.166                        |      |

Reference groups: under 25, male, permanent, no qualifications, unskilled, employee, manufacturing, < 5 employees.



**Table A.3: OLS Models of Work Stress**

|                                 | Individual & Job Controls Only |      | With Organisational Controls |      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
|                                 | B                              | Sig. | B                            | Sig. |
| (Constant)                      | 1.614                          | .000 | 1.716                        | .000 |
| Age 25-39                       | .080                           | .054 | .060                         | .143 |
| Age 40-54                       | .065                           | .155 | .046                         | .306 |
| Age 55+                         | -.062                          | .270 | -.081                        | .141 |
| Female                          | .106                           | .000 | .107                         | .000 |
| Single                          | -.073                          | .025 | -.083                        | .008 |
| Youngest Child ≤ 5yrs           | .106                           | .008 | .104                         | .007 |
| Youngest Child 6-17yrs          | -.008                          | .804 | .001                         | .971 |
| Temp. Contract                  | -.080                          | .028 | -.087                        | .015 |
| Inter/Group Certificate         | -.057                          | .276 | -.066                        | .196 |
| Leaving Certificate             | .007                           | .883 | .024                         | .611 |
| Third Level                     | .061                           | .251 | .067                         | .200 |
| Weekly Earnings                 | .000                           | .000 | .000                         | .000 |
| TU Member                       | .049                           | .081 | .000                         | .991 |
| Higher Prof & Managers          | .043                           | .510 | .060                         | .357 |
| Lower Professional              | .136                           | .021 | .152                         | .009 |
| Other Non-manual                | .005                           | .921 | .008                         | .884 |
| Skilled Manual                  | .058                           | .334 | .103                         | .081 |
| Semi-skilled Manual             | .083                           | .127 | .060                         | .287 |
| Executive/Senior Management     | .373                           | .000 | .401                         | .000 |
| Middle Management               | .224                           | .000 | .225                         | .000 |
| Supervisor                      | .155                           | .000 | .152                         | .000 |
| Autonomy Score                  | -.197                          | .000 | -.138                        | .000 |
| Construction                    |                                |      | -.012                        | .850 |
| Retail                          |                                |      | -.023                        | .604 |
| Hospitality                     |                                |      | .330                         | .000 |
| Transport & Communication       |                                |      | .032                         | .562 |
| Finance & Bus. Services         |                                |      | .001                         | .975 |
| Public Admin. & Defence         |                                |      | -.124                        | .013 |
| Education                       |                                |      | -.030                        | .567 |
| Health                          |                                |      | .154                         | .001 |
| Other Services                  |                                |      | .062                         | .385 |
| 5-19 Employees                  |                                |      | .054                         | .186 |
| 20-99 Employees                 |                                |      | .065                         | .110 |
| 100+ Employees                  |                                |      | .108                         | .015 |
| Consultation Score              |                                |      | -.140                        | .000 |
| Org. Change in last 2yrs        |                                |      | .087                         | .000 |
| Equality Policy                 | -.122                          | .000 | -.099                        | .000 |
| Homework in Organisation        | -.039                          | .454 | -.049                        | .331 |
| Homework Personally Involved    | .174                           | .000 | .191                         | .000 |
| Flexitime in Organisation       | -.003                          | .935 | -.032                        | .331 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved   | -.054                          | .089 | -.051                        | .105 |
| Job-sharing in Organisation     | .054                           | .092 | .042                         | .183 |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved | .100                           | .048 | .097                         | .051 |
| Part-timers in Organisation     | -.022                          | .471 | -.058                        | .049 |
| Part-time Personally Involved   | -.144                          | .000 | -.172                        | .000 |
| N of cases                      | 4524                           |      | 4503                         |      |
| Adjusted R2                     | 0.09                           |      | 0.15                         |      |

Reference groups: <25, male, permanent, no quals, unskilled, employee, manufacturing, < 5 employees, married/cohabiting, no children < 18yrs.

**Table A.4: Regression Models of Job Satisfaction**

|                                 | Individual & Job Controls Only |      | With Organisational Controls |      | Adding Perceptions of Inequality |      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
|                                 | B                              | Sig. | B                            | Sig. | B                                | Sig. |
| (Constant)                      | .577                           | .000 | .425                         | .000 | .505                             | .000 |
| Age 25-39                       | -.033                          | .216 | -.029                        | .283 | -.025                            | .356 |
| Age 40-54                       | -.034                          | .234 | -.037                        | .190 | -.038                            | .178 |
| Age 55+                         | .016                           | .665 | .017                         | .648 | .012                             | .743 |
| Female                          | .058                           | .004 | .037                         | .073 | .039                             | .057 |
| Temp. Contract                  | -.033                          | .200 | -.036                        | .163 | -.036                            | .157 |
| Inter/Group Cert.               | .035                           | .333 | .024                         | .504 | .034                             | .355 |
| Leaving Cert                    | .009                           | .788 | -.021                        | .539 | -.015                            | .666 |
| Third Level                     | .007                           | .846 | -.019                        | .606 | -.007                            | .840 |
| Weekly Earnings                 | .000                           | .254 | .000                         | .930 | .000                             | .939 |
| TU Member                       | .003                           | .872 | .015                         | .459 | .011                             | .582 |
| Higher Prof & Managers          | -.005                          | .904 | -.060                        | .194 | -.069                            | .134 |
| Lower Professional              | .006                           | .888 | -.060                        | .153 | -.058                            | .162 |
| Other non-Manual                | -.022                          | .560 | -.035                        | .365 | -.034                            | .375 |
| Skilled Manual                  | .041                           | .328 | .004                         | .922 | .011                             | .798 |
| Semi-skilled Manual             | -.049                          | .194 | -.018                        | .649 | -.022                            | .589 |
| Executive/Senior Management     | .030                           | .446 | -.038                        | .330 | -.029                            | .464 |
| Middle Management               | .002                           | .937 | -.028                        | .325 | -.020                            | .482 |
| Supervisor                      | -.030                          | .251 | -.050                        | .058 | -.043                            | .098 |
| Autonomy Score                  | .143                           | .000 | .095                         | .000 | .095                             | .000 |
| Construction                    |                                |      | .101                         | .024 | .099                             | .026 |
| Retail                          |                                |      | -.003                        | .913 | .002                             | .947 |
| Hospitality                     |                                |      | -.080                        | .065 | -.060                            | .159 |
| Transport & Communication       |                                |      | -.030                        | .468 | -.037                            | .368 |
| Finance & Bus. Services         |                                |      | .010                         | .755 | .009                             | .774 |
| Public Admin. & Defence         |                                |      | .067                         | .057 | .054                             | .125 |
| Education                       |                                |      | .132                         | .000 | .132                             | .000 |
| Health                          |                                |      | .013                         | .701 | .008                             | .817 |
| Other Services                  |                                |      | .039                         | .446 | .044                             | .390 |
| 5-19 Employees                  |                                |      | -.053                        | .074 | -.047                            | .112 |
| 20-99 Employees                 |                                |      | -.043                        | .146 | -.033                            | .264 |
| 100+ Employees                  |                                |      | -.082                        | .011 | -.080                            | .013 |
| Employee Participation          |                                |      | .058                         | .002 | .061                             | .001 |
| Consultation Score              |                                |      | .126                         | .000 | .111                             | .000 |
| Scale on Access to Information  |                                |      | .065                         | .000 | .059                             | .000 |
| Org. Change in last 2yrs        |                                |      | -.024                        | .007 | -.018                            | .042 |
| Inequality in Pay/Conditions    |                                |      |                              |      | -.070                            | .002 |
| Inequality in Career Develop.   |                                |      |                              |      | -.115                            | .000 |
| Inequality in Recruitment       |                                |      |                              |      | -.066                            | .010 |
| Equality Policy                 | .115                           | .000 | .057                         | .004 | .031                             | .125 |
| Homeworking in Organisation     | -.064                          | .077 | -.053                        | .138 | -.047                            | .186 |
| Homeworking Personally Involved | .041                           | .198 | .039                         | .216 | .051                             | .108 |
| Flexitime in Organisation       | .017                           | .472 | .030                         | .208 | .033                             | .163 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved   | .027                           | .218 | .013                         | .570 | .012                             | .594 |
| Job-sharing in Organisation     | .023                           | .295 | .023                         | .312 | .022                             | .334 |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved | .059                           | .096 | .050                         | .160 | .048                             | .173 |
| Part-timers in Organisation     | -.011                          | .593 | .002                         | .922 | -.002                            | .936 |
| Part-time Personally Involved   | .041                           | .120 | .043                         | .105 | .038                             | .154 |
| No. of Cases                    | 4425                           |      | 4103                         |      | 4103                             |      |
| Adjusted R2                     | .052                           |      | .143                         |      | .157                             |      |

Reference groups: <25, male, permanent, no quals, unskilled, employee, manufacturing, < 5 employees.

**Table A.5: OLS Models of Organisational Commitment**

|                                 | Individual & Job Controls Only |      | With Organisational Controls |      | Adding Perceptions of Inequality |      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
|                                 | B                              | Sig. | B                            | Sig. | B                                | Sig. |
| (Constant)                      | .031                           | .608 | -.218                        | .002 | -.142                            | .041 |
| Age 25-39                       | -.028                          | .359 | -.036                        | .231 | -.034                            | .249 |
| Age 40-54                       | -.024                          | .457 | -.047                        | .135 | -.050                            | .113 |
| Age 55+                         | .008                           | .853 | -.022                        | .594 | -.029                            | .475 |
| Female                          | .074                           | .001 | .042                         | .065 | .040                             | .077 |
| Temp. Contract                  | -.066                          | .024 | -.078                        | .006 | -.079                            | .005 |
| Inter/Group Certificate         | -.060                          | .149 | -.065                        | .109 | -.056                            | .165 |
| Leaving Certificate             | -.097                          | .013 | -.138                        | .000 | -.132                            | .001 |
| Third Level                     | -.112                          | .008 | -.164                        | .000 | -.154                            | .000 |
| Weekly Earnings                 | .000                           | .338 | .000                         | .844 | .000                             | .778 |
| TU Member                       | -.012                          | .574 | -.002                        | .947 | .000                             | .986 |
| Higher Prof & Managers          | .019                           | .713 | -.003                        | .951 | -.011                            | .824 |
| Lower Professional              | .092                           | .050 | .015                         | .747 | .018                             | .704 |
| Other Non-manual                | .047                           | .272 | .052                         | .231 | .052                             | .229 |
| Skilled Manual                  | .048                           | .318 | .042                         | .375 | .046                             | .330 |
| Semi-skilled Manual             | .000                           | .999 | .051                         | .254 | .046                             | .299 |
| Executive/Senior Management     | .083                           | .065 | -.010                        | .821 | -.002                            | .964 |
| Middle Management               | -.020                          | .523 | -.062                        | .047 | -.055                            | .076 |
| Supervisor                      | -.030                          | .306 | -.063                        | .030 | -.059                            | .042 |
| Autonomy Score                  | .187                           | .000 | .113                         | .000 | .116                             | .000 |
| Construction                    |                                |      | .069                         | .163 | .066                             | .181 |
| Retail                          |                                |      | .021                         | .545 | .025                             | .469 |
| Hospitality                     |                                |      | -.066                        | .162 | -.048                            | .303 |
| Transport & Communication       |                                |      | -.017                        | .707 | -.021                            | .629 |
| Finance & Bus. Services         |                                |      | .005                         | .888 | .003                             | .936 |
| Public Admin. & Defence         |                                |      | .151                         | .000 | .147                             | .000 |
| Education                       |                                |      | .226                         | .000 | .230                             | .000 |
| Health                          |                                |      | .115                         | .003 | .115                             | .002 |
| Other Services                  |                                |      | .108                         | .059 | .115                             | .042 |
| 5-19 Employees                  |                                |      | -.044                        | .179 | -.038                            | .249 |
| 20-99 Employees                 |                                |      | -.078                        | .018 | -.069                            | .035 |
| 100+ Employees                  |                                |      | -.110                        | .002 | -.105                            | .003 |
| Employee Participation          |                                |      | .060                         | .004 | .062                             | .003 |
| Consultation Score              |                                |      | .175                         | .000 | .161                             | .000 |
| Scale on Access to Information  |                                |      | .066                         | .000 | .062                             | .000 |
| Equality Policy                 | .173                           | .000 | .101                         | .000 | .075                             | .001 |
| Homeworking in Organisation     | -.042                          | .319 | -.014                        | .736 | -.012                            | .776 |
| Homeworking Personally Involved | .065                           | .070 | .064                         | .069 | .072                             | .039 |
| Flexitime in Organisation       | .009                           | .735 | .016                         | .555 | .017                             | .522 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved   | .056                           | .025 | .028                         | .251 | .027                             | .269 |
| Job-sharing in Organisation     | .006                           | .807 | -.018                        | .483 | -.020                            | .429 |
| Job-sharing Personally Involved | .031                           | .448 | -.001                        | .976 | -.002                            | .955 |
| Part-timers in Organisation     | -.035                          | .145 | -.020                        | .391 | -.023                            | .317 |
| Part-time Personally Involved   | .006                           | .840 | .015                         | .604 | .012                             | .672 |
| Inequality in Pay/Conditions    |                                |      |                              |      | -.018                            | .481 |
| Inequality in Career Develop.   |                                |      |                              |      | -.090                            | .004 |
| Inequality in recruitment       |                                |      |                              |      | -.118                            | .000 |
| No. of Cases                    | 4172                           |      | 3884                         |      | 3884                             |      |
| Adjusted R2                     | 0.078                          |      | .206                         |      | .215                             |      |

Reference groups: <25, male, permanent, no qualifications, unskilled, employee, manufacturing, < 5 employees.

**Table A.6: OLS Model of Earnings with Personal & Human Capital Variables Only**

|                                  | B      | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| (Constant)                       | 2.081  | .000 |
| Age 25-39                        | 0.227  | .000 |
| Age 40-54                        | 0.316  | .000 |
| Age 55+                          | 0.352  | .000 |
| Female                           | -0.120 | .000 |
| Single                           | -0.082 | .000 |
| Job Tenure <1year                | -0.180 | .000 |
| Job Tenure 1-5 years             | -0.110 | .000 |
| Inter/Group Certificate          | 0.115  | .000 |
| Leaving Certificate              | 0.235  | .000 |
| Third Level                      | 0.490  | .000 |
| Time out of Labour Market        | -0.009 | .000 |
| Home-working Personally Involved | 0.032  | .127 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    | -0.010 | .491 |
| Job-share Personally Involved    | 0.032  | .169 |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -0.051 | .001 |
| N of Cases                       | 4566   |      |
| Adjusted R2                      | .301   |      |

*Dependent variable is the log of earnings*

*Reference groups: under 25yrs, male, married/cohabiting, job tenure > 5 years, no qualifications.*

*Equality policy not included as this is a feature of the employing organisation.*

**Table A.7: Models of Earnings with Personal, Job and Organisational Characteristics**

|                             | Personal Involvement<br>in Flexible Arrangement |      | Flexible Arrangements<br>Available in Workplace |      |
|-----------------------------|---|------|---|------|
|                             | B   | Sig  | B   | Sig  |
| (Constant)                  | 1.894   | .000 | 1.891   | .000 |
| Age 25-39                   | 0.157   | .000 | 0.159   | .000 |
| Age 40-54                   | 0.197   | .000 | 0.197   | .000 |
| Age 55+                     | 0.219   | .000 | 0.223   | .000 |
| Female                      | -0.095  | .000 | -0.097  | .000 |
| Single                      | -0.046  | .000 | -0.044  | .001 |
| Non-permanent Contract      | -0.027  | .122 | -0.028  | .092 |
| Job Tenure <1 year          | -0.081  | .000 | -0.080  | .000 |
| Job Tenure 1-5 years        | -0.045  | .001 | -0.044  | .001 |
| Inter/Group Certificate     | 0.073   | .002 | 0.071   | .003 |
| Leaving Certificate         | 0.146   | .000 | 0.141   | .000 |
| Third Level                 | 0.234   | .000 | 0.228   | .000 |
| Time out of Labour Market   | -0.005  | .000 | -0.005  | .000 |
| TU Member                   | 0.106   | .000 | 0.097   | .000 |
| Construction                | 0.090   | .002 | 0.098   | .001 |
| Retail                      | -0.059  | .004 | -0.060  | .004 |
| Hospitality                 | -0.089  | .001 | -0.092  | .001 |
| Transport & Communication   | 0.008   | .751 | 0.005   | .836 |
| Finance & Bus. Services     | 0.055   | .007 | 0.049   | .017 |
| Public Admin. & Defence     | 0.020   | .372 | 0.010   | .662 |
| Education                   | 0.200   | .000 | 0.194   | .000 |
| Health                      | 0.010   | .635 | -0.006  | .779 |
| Other Services              | -0.089  | .007 | -0.092  | .005 |
| 5-19 Employees              | 0.043   | .022 | 0.042   | .023 |
| 20-99 Employees             | 0.069   | .000 | 0.064   | .001 |
| 100+ Employees              | 0.073   | .000 | 0.067   | .001 |
| Higher Prof & Managers      | 0.318   | .000 | 0.308   | .000 |
| Lower Professional          | 0.260   | .000 | 0.250   | .000 |
| Other Non-manual            | 0.126   | .000 | 0.118   | .000 |
| Skilled Manual              | 0.136   | .000 | 0.137   | .000 |
| Semi-skilled Manual         | 0.042   | .112 | 0.040   | .129 |
| Executive/Senior Management | 0.212   | .000 | 0.208   | .000 |
| Middle Management           | 0.132   | .000 | 0.129   | .000 |
| Supervisor                  | 0.076   | .000 | 0.077   | .000 |
| Equality Policy             | 0.020   | .115 | 0.015   | .239 |
| Home-working                | -0.031  | .114 | 0.003   | .847 |
| Flexitime/Flexible Hours    | 0.006   | .641 | 0.005   | .679 |
| Job-share                   | -0.020  | .356 | 0.039   | .004 |
| Part-time Hours             | 0.022   | .152 | 0.024   | .057 |
| N of Cases                  | 4518  |      | 4515  |      |
| Adj R2                      | .41   |      | .41   |      |

Reference groups: under 25, male, permanent, job tenure > 5 years, no qualifications, unskilled, employee (no supervisory responsibilities), manufacturing, < 5 employees.

Dependent variable is log of earnings.

**Table A.8: Earnings Models in Firms with and without Equality Policies**

|                             | No Equality Policy |      | Equality Policy |      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                             | B                  | sig  | B               | sig  |
| (Constant)                  | 2.331              | .000 | 2.430           | .000 |
| Age 25-39                   | 0.180              | .000 | 0.143           | .000 |
| Age 40-54                   | 0.235              | .000 | 0.170           | .000 |
| Age 55+                     | 0.189              | .000 | 0.189           | .000 |
| Female                      | -0.161             | .000 | -0.166          | .000 |
| Single                      | -0.037             | .113 | -0.028          | .057 |
| Temp. Contract              | -0.027             | .327 | -0.098          | .000 |
| Tenure < 1yr                | -0.050             | .119 | -0.093          | .000 |
| Tenure 1-5 yrs              | -0.024             | .346 | -0.053          | .001 |
| Inter/Group Certificate     | 0.032              | .409 | 0.075           | .007 |
| Leaving Certificate         | 0.127              | .000 | 0.138           | .000 |
| Third Level                 | 0.220              | .000 | 0.240           | .000 |
| Hours Worked per Week       | -0.011             | .000 | -0.012          | .000 |
| Time Out of Labour Market   | -0.007             | .001 | -0.009          | .000 |
| Trade Union Member          | 0.109              | .000 | 0.091           | .000 |
| Construction                | 0.109              | .010 | 0.103           | .005 |
| Retail                      | -0.037             | .283 | -0.099          | .000 |
| Hospitality                 | -0.083             | .055 | -0.150          | .000 |
| Transport & Communications  | -0.012             | .810 | 0.019           | .490 |
| Finance & Business Services | 0.017              | .647 | 0.039           | .087 |
| Public Admin. & Defence     | 0.040              | .469 | -0.008          | .723 |
| Education                   | 0.167              | .001 | 0.102           | .000 |
| Health                      | -0.013             | .752 | -0.005          | .829 |
| Other Services              | -0.124             | .013 | -0.080          | .045 |
| 5-19 Employees              | 0.026              | .341 | 0.039           | .088 |
| 20-99 Employees             | 0.051              | .079 | 0.072           | .001 |
| 100+ Employees              | 0.097              | .009 | 0.084           | .000 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers     | 0.371              | .000 | 0.364           | .000 |
| Lower Professional          | 0.259              | .000 | 0.286           | .000 |
| Other Non-manual            | 0.108              | .006 | 0.156           | .000 |
| Skilled Manual              | 0.139              | .001 | 0.209           | .000 |
| Semi-skilled Manual         | 0.029              | .484 | 0.059           | .056 |
| Executive/Senior Management | 0.248              | .000 | 0.295           | .000 |
| Middle Management           | 0.204              | .000 | 0.153           | .000 |
| Supervisor                  | 0.098              | .002 | 0.097           | .000 |

Reference groups: under 25, male, permanent, job tenure > 5years, no qualifications, manufacturing, < 5 employees, unskilled, employee.

**Table A.9: OLS Model of Autonomy with Personal Characteristics Only**

|                                  | B      | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| (Constant)                       | 1.055  | .000 |
| Age 25-39                        | 0.250  | .000 |
| Age 40-54                        | 0.345  | .000 |
| Age 55+                          | 0.475  | .000 |
| Female                           | -0.040 | .053 |
| Single                           | -0.069 | .003 |
| Inter/Group Certificate          | -0.003 | .937 |
| Leaving Certificate              | 0.192  | .000 |
| Third Level                      | 0.381  | .000 |
| Job Tenure < 1 year              | -0.150 | .000 |
| Job Tenure 1-5 years             | -0.043 | .071 |
| Home-working Personally Involved | 0.364  | .000 |
| Flexitime Personally Involved    | 0.147  | .000 |
| Job-share Personally Involved    | -0.105 | .008 |
| Part-time Personally Involved    | -0.052 | .050 |
| Cases                            | 4793   |      |
| Adjusted R2                      | 0.151  |      |

*Reference categories: under 25yrs, male, married/cohabiting, job tenure > 5 years, no qualifications.*

*Equality policy not included as this is a feature of the organisation, time out of labour market was excluded because it was insignificant.*

**Table A.10: Models of Autonomy with Personal, Job and Organisational Characteristics**

|                             | Personal Involvement<br>in Flexible Arrangement |      | Flexible Arrangements<br>Available in Workplace |      |
|-----------------------------|---|------|---|------|
|                             | B   | Sig  | B   | Sig  |
| (Constant)                  | 1.158   | .000 | 1.138   | .000 |
| Age 25-39                   | 0.169   | .000 | 0.174   | .000 |
| Age 40-54                   | 0.249   | .000 | 0.253   | .000 |
| Age 55+                     | 0.334   | .000 | 0.345   | .000 |
| Female                      | 0.025   | .278 | 0.017   | .459 |
| Single                      | -0.033  | .148 | -0.033  | .147 |
| Inter/Group Certificate     | -0.034  | .412 | -0.036  | .384 |
| Leaving Certificate         | 0.044   | .250 | 0.041   | .282 |
| Third Level                 | 0.099   | .017 | 0.097   | .019 |
| Non-permanent Contract      | -0.087  | .003 | -0.091  | .002 |
| Job Tenure < 1 year         | -0.107  | .001 | -0.108  | .001 |
| Job Tenure 1-5 years        | -0.021  | .377 | -0.019  | .425 |
| Weekly Earnings             | 0.000   | .000 | 0.000   | .000 |
| Trade Union Member          | -0.158  | .000 | -0.161  | .000 |
| Public Sector               | -0.058  | .135 | -0.058  | .132 |
| Construction                | -0.073  | .142 | -0.052  | .294 |
| Retail                      | 0.146   | .000 | 0.153   | .000 |
| Hospitality                 | 0.055   | .253 | 0.049   | .313 |
| Transport & Communication   | 0.039   | .379 | 0.032   | .465 |
| Finance & Bus Services      | 0.036   | .303 | 0.021   | .546 |
| Public Admin & Defence      | -0.016  | .760 | -0.018  | .732 |
| Education                   | 0.003   | .948 | 0.021   | .692 |
| Health                      | 0.034   | .458 | 0.023   | .624 |
| Other Services              | 0.152   | .008 | 0.150   | .009 |
| 5-19 Employees              | -0.166  | .000 | -0.170  | .000 |
| 20-99 Employees             | -0.252  | .000 | -0.260  | .000 |
| 100+ Employees              | -0.309  | .000 | -0.325  | .000 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers     | 0.287   | .000 | 0.262   | .000 |
| Lower Prof. & Technical     | 0.210   | .000 | 0.191   | .000 |
| Other Non-manual            | 0.167   | .000 | 0.148   | .001 |
| Skilled Manual              | -0.020  | .680 | -0.023  | .627 |
| Semi-skilled Manual         | -0.038  | .399 | -0.050  | .267 |
| Executive/Senior Management | 0.473   | .000 | 0.468   | .000 |
| Middle Management           | 0.312   | .000 | 0.309   | .000 |
| Supervisor                  | 0.207   | .000 | 0.211   | .000 |
| Equality Policy             | -0.041  | .063 | -0.047  | .031 |
| Home-working                | 0.186   | .000 | 0.198   | .000 |
| Flexitime/Flexible Hours    | 0.140   | .000 | 0.126   | .000 |
| Job-share                   | -0.056  | .140 | -0.013  | .584 |
| Part-time Hours             | 0.007   | .796 | 0.042   | .052 |
| No of Cases                 | 4450  |      | 4447  |      |
| Adjusted R2                 | 0.288   |      | 0.295   |      |

Reference categories: under 25, male, permanent, job tenure > 5years, no qualifications, private sector, manufacturing, < 5 employees, unskilled, employee (no supervisory responsibilities).





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