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National Flexi-work Partnership

work-life balance project



Work-life Balance and Social Inclusion in Ireland:

Results of a Nationwide Survey



margret fine-davis • mary mccarthy
• grace edge • ciara o'dwyer

December 2005



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Trinity College Dublin



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Work-Life Balance Project

This report presents the results of a nationwide survey on work-life balance and related social issues carried out in the context of the Work-Life Balance Project. This project was carried out by a consortium of organisations, including:

- Centre for Gender Studies, Trinity College Dublin
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
- FÁS - the National Training Authority
- Age Action Ireland, a national advocacy agency for older people
- Aware, a national voluntary aging supporting people with depression

This consortium called itself the National Flexi-Work Partnership for the purposes of their collaboration during this project.

The aim of the Work-Life Balance project was both to promote and to examine flexible working as a mechanism to promote social inclusion and work-life balance. The project focused on three main target groups: working parents and carers, older people and people with mental health problems, for whom it believed flexible working would be of assistance in facilitating social inclusion in the workforce as well as work-life balance.

1.2 The Effects of Flexible Working on Work-Life Balance and Social Inclusion – Evaluation of a Series of Pilot Projects

In the course of this project over the period 2002-2005, several different activities were undertaken. The project began with a series of pilot projects in companies where various forms of flexible working were piloted and evaluated through research. Through a Working Party of Employers, including companies in the private sector, public sector and NGO/Community sector, pilots were designed for the various target groups of working parents and carers, older people, and people with mental health problems. The collaborating organisations are acknowledged in this

report for their valuable contribution. The results of this research, which were both qualitative and quantitative in nature, were published in a report entitled:

The Effects of Flexible Working on Work-life Balance and Social Inclusion: An evaluation of a series of pilot projects (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, O'Dwyer, Edge, and O'Sullivan, 2005). The evaluation of this series of pilot projects demonstrated, particularly in a qualitative way, the value of flexible working patterns to these particular target groups.

1.3 Men in Childcare

A second pilot project carried out by the project was in the area of childcare. Given the importance of childcare to facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life it was a natural area for the project to address. However the way that we addressed it was to focus on men in childcare. It is well known that most childcare workers, and indeed most primary teachers, are female. For this reason, most children do not have regular access to male role models except for their father. In cases of female headed households, children often have very little exposure to male role models. It is our belief that male role models can play a very important part in the development of gender role attitudes and behaviour in children. It is these gender role attitudes which lead to adult attitudes and behaviour which are the very things which are helping to create the work-life balance problems which we have today, including the lack of equal division of labour in the household and the attitudes concerning appropriate gender role behaviour in the workplace, including attitudes to flexible working.

The Project ran a pilot project to recruit more men into childcare, in collaboration with FÁS and a number of childcare providers in both the public and private sectors. This pilot aimed to promote non-stereotyped role models in the childcare sector in order to foster the development of egalitarian gender role attitudes and behaviour in children. It was hoped seeing men in caring roles at such an early stage would help to instil fundamental ideas of equality in children, including the notion that men can be carers. It is clear from our initial research that having male childcare workers is perceived as positive by centre managers, parents, and most importantly, children. This report, is entitled *Men in Childcare: Promoting Gender Equality in Children – Evaluation of a Pilot Project* (Fine-Davis, O'Dwyer, McCarthy, Edge, O'Sullivan and Wynne 2005).

This is a critical piece in the overall strategy to overcome traditional gender roles and the persisting dual burden which women carry. It is only through the development of ideas of

equality at an early age that male and female children will grow up with notions of sharing and equality in the workplace and the home. One of the main outcomes we have identified is that there are not enough men coming forward to pursue childcare as a career. It is clear that it will be necessary to target young men – probably in schools – to encourage them to go into childcare.

1.4 Mental Health and Employment: Promoting Social Inclusion in the Workforce

A third strand of the overall Work-Life Balance Project involved a study of people with mental health problems in relation to their issues surrounding employment. As this group was a special focus of the project, it was decided to devote a special survey to their particular experiences and needs in relation to social inclusion in the workplace and work-life balance. The research into Employment and Mental Health conducted mainly on people with depressive illnesses shows how important employment opportunities are for this group - therapeutically, economically and psychologically. Previous studies have shown that the highest rates of unemployment are among people with mental health difficulties. This study highlights the critical role of flexible working arrangements in helping this group remain in employment. Another important factor to emerge is that company policies and practices should be more explicit on what supports are available to employees. The most important factor is that nebulous thing – company ethos. If the overall culture of the company includes a positive and accepting attitude towards mental health problems, all the rest falls into place. The results of this study have been published in a report, entitled: *Mental Health and Employment: Promoting Social Inclusion in the Workforce:* (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, Edge, and O’Dwyer, 2005).

1.5 The Current Nationwide Study - Aims

All of these pieces of work, both action oriented and research oriented, both qualitative and quantitative, fed into the development of the study to be presented here. It was felt that in order to more fully understand the needs of people in relation to work-life balance and social inclusion in the labour force, it was necessary to carry out a broad spectrum survey of attitudes and experiences of the population as a whole. This would enable us to learn about the unique experiences of different groups in the population, as well as their particular needs. It would enable us to identify the needs of the currently employed in relation to work-life balance and also the needs of the non-employed in terms of barriers and facilitators to re-entry to the workforce. Given our focus on working parents and carers, as well as older people, it would enable us to

study the attitudes and experiences of these particular groups, as well as those of other groups in the population. It would also enable us to study the attitudes of the population as a whole to these various groups, including to people with mental health problems, which has been one of primary foci.

The aim of the survey was therefore to learn more about the work experiences and attitudes of various groups in the population and to examine these experiences and attitudes in terms of how they relate to people's work-life balance and well-being.

1.6 Review of Previous Research

1.6.1 Introduction

Policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working, can have benefits for different groups in different ways. These policies often allow groups of workers to remain or re-enter the work force by offering the requisite flexibility to combine work with outside pressures. Our project addresses the needs of three different target groups: working parents and carers, older people, and those with mental health problems. As the Irish labour market continues tightening, the inclusion of available trained workers is becoming more essential. Sixty-eight percent of public and private Irish employers surveyed recognise that work-life balance policies are important in the current competitive market and 57% feel their importance will increase over the next three years (O'Connell et al., 2005). Below we briefly describe the needs the three aforementioned groups in relation to work and work-life balance.

1.6.2 Needs of working parents and carers

1.6.2.1 Working parents & carers

Alongside the arrival of the Celtic Tiger, Ireland has experienced significant socio-economic changes over the last 20 years. There have been major alterations in the composition of the family, with the nuclear family no longer being classified as the norm. Esping-Andersen argues, "It is in large part the changing role of women that explains the new household structure, our altered demographic behaviour, the growth of the service economy and, as a consequence, the new dilemmas that the advanced society face." Most European countries, he claims, "have failed to adapt adequately to the novel challenges and the result is an increasingly serious disequilibrium (Esping-Andersen in Preface to Fine-Davis et al., 2004, p. v)." As a result, the issue of how to

combine employment and family responsibilities is a concern for most of the populace at some stage in their lives. The traditionally high levels of fertility in Ireland have also decreased, affected by the availability of contraception, the decreasing influence of the Catholic Church, and changing social norms. Co-habitation is increasingly common and lone parent families, usually headed by women, make up 16% of families in Ireland (NCPD, 2005).

The workforce participation rate of mothers is now 47.8% (CSO, 2004). The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' research has documented that women's labour market participation often depends on such factors as childcare arrangements, access to social and public service, and work organisation (Atkinson, 2000; Pillinger, 2000). These studies also found that women, despite their employment status, remain the major contributor to unpaid household labour (Bielenski & Hartmann, 2000). Almost 149,000 persons aged 15 years and over are carers, providing regular unpaid personal help to a friend or relative with a long-term illness, health problem or disability (CSO, 2002). While the European Foundation found that both men and women in the EU wish to work shorter hours in order to devote more time to other obligations, 61% of all carers are female and 85,000 carers are in paid employment (CSO, 2002). One in three people in today's workplace are working parents with a child under 15 (NCPD, 2005). The figures above highlight the large numbers of people with caring responsibilities who are either employees or potential employees.

1.6.2.2 Benefits of Flexible Working for Mothers

The total labour force in 2011 is likely to be of the order of 1,899,000, an increase of about 25 per cent [over the 1997 level]. A large share of this increase is projected to come from growth in the number of women, and especially married women, in the labour force. The female labour force is projected to grow by 218,000, an increase of 37 per cent, accounting for 58 per cent of the total increase (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 1998, p ii).

Since the Goodbody's projection was made in 1998, women's participation levels have significantly risen, comprising over 80% of the total increase in full-time employment in the first quarter of 2002 (CSO, 2002). The workforce participation rate for all women continues to rise as well with the participation rate for married women increasing from 7% in 1971 to 46% in 2001, while the 2004 rates of mothers' employment was 47.8% (CSO, 2002, 2004). Ireland continues to see high levels of female participation, exceeding the 2005 targets set by the EU Stockholm Council and Lisbon Agenda targets with a rate of 58% for all women (CSO, 2005a) which is well within reach of the Lisbon Agenda 60% target for female participation in 2010 (European Commission, 2004).

While participation rates do show a positive upward swing, it is clear that there is a serious underutilisation of women's high standards of education and skills. Fifty-eight per cent of all 2003 third-level graduates in Ireland were women (CSO, 2005a). Within the 25 – 34 age group, 43% of women hold a third-level qualification compared to 36% of men (CSO, 2003). However the workforce participation of women with third-level skills is 13% lower than that of their male counterparts (OECD, 2002).

Certain barriers, both to accessing and maintaining employment, must be removed if the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda are to be met. Workplace policy has not kept pace with nor is it adequately responding to the work-life balance difficulties facing its existing and potential employees. The availability of flexible working arrangements is of central importance to working mothers when trying to maintain or access employment. The Institute for Employment Research in the UK found, for example, that the majority of mothers returning from maternity leave preferred greater flexibility than longer maternity leave and that most women consequently switched to part-time work on their return (McKnight & Elias, 2001). Therefore, the availability of such arrangements can be a critical factor in working mothers' decisions to stay in or access employment and has potentially huge impacts the quality of their lives. It will also mean that employers will retain current staff and broaden the spectrum of potential employee *vis a vis* the availability of flexible working arrangements.

1.6.2.3 Benefits of Flexible Working for Fathers

Public policy should seek to create family-friendly measures, especially in the workplace, which maximise the choices men and women have to negotiate roles and responsibilities and will allow fathers as well as mothers the time and space for childcare (McKeown, Ferguson & Rooney, 1998, p. 472).

Similarly, fathers should not be ignored when discussing the benefits of flexibility in facilitating work-life balance. Fagan and Burchell's (2002) research found that, while a significant proportion of employed men and women report that their working time is relatively compatible with family life (34% for very compatible and 47% for fairly compatible), almost a quarter of men feel that their employment hours are incompatible with family life. This compatibility problem increased for those working more than 45 hours a week. Over 40% of Irish men work 40 or more hours a week compared to just over 16% of women. Overall, almost 80% of men work for 30 or more hours a week (ibid).

In Ireland, there are few flexible working arrangements and work-life balance policies that are specifically intended for fathers. McKeown, Ferguson & Rooney (1998), however, note that the international evidence on fathers' involvement suggests that there has been some participatory increase in childcare and domestic activities. Also increasing are policies in other EU countries aimed at raising father's participation in the family (Fine-Davis et al, 2004). Ireland is likely to continue to follow the lead of other countries more advanced in the area of family policy, as well as be influenced by trends in other member countries of the EU. Such policies should reverse some "workplace culture" which automatically expects male workers to prioritise work over family commitments. It would also facilitate a more egalitarian redistribution of childcare and domestic tasks in two parent households.

1.6.2.4 Barriers to Work Life Balance: Childcare & Commuting

The interaction between the workplace and life is becoming increasingly complex for working parents and carers as they endeavour to balance responsibilities. In the case of working parents, this is further aggravated by the fact that there is currently no statutory child-care policy in Ireland and public provision for the 0-3 age group is extremely limited (Fine-Davis, 2004). Working arrangements are still not sufficiently flexible to enable parents and carers to fulfil their roles as workers and as carers. Rigid nine-to-five working hours lead to myriad problems for these groups, including scheduling problems in dropping off and particularly in picking up children from crèches, childminders and schools, and in the case of carers, difficulty in scheduling meal times for the dependent.

While certain policies have appeared, Drew et al. (2002) found that the take up of available work-life balance policies in Ireland tends to be "highly gendered." The fact that certain policies are taken almost exclusively by women helps confirm and solidify the belief that work-life balance is only for mothers of young children and not applicable to all. On the other hand, workers from countries that offer public provision of childcare (e.g., Denmark and France) report that it is significantly easier to combine their jobs with their family lives and have a much higher level of gender equality in the workplace (Fine-Davis et al, 2004).

The fact that most of the workforce works the same hours also contributes to build up of traffic congestion and long frustrating commuting times. Fine-Davis et al.'s study in four European countries found that the length of one's partner's commuting time to be particularly important to the ability to combine work and family life (*ibid*). The longer the commuting time the less they

would be available to help with the family. The average commuting time for Irish workers are the highest reported the EU at 38 minutes (*ibid*).

1.6.3 Needs of older workers

1.6.3.1 Older workers and employment

Most of the research on work life balance in Ireland has focused on parents of young children and the need for the flexibility demanded by childrearing (Fisher, 2000). The central motivation is on the need to increase female participation rates in the labour force with little attention paid to other groups that would benefit from more flexible working arrangements.

The Celtic Tiger in the mid-1990's resulted in an overall shortage of qualified workers which led to a reversal of the earlier trend in the declining labour force participation of older people in Ireland. The dominant component in the upward trend was not a delay in retirement but the increase in formerly unemployed, mostly women, entering paid employment (Equality Authority, 2004). Indeed, Ireland is one of the few countries in Europe to have now reached the 2010 Stockholm target of 50% of older workers in employment compared to the EU average of 39% (NCPP, 2005). Ireland has the oldest exit age at 63.2 for men compared to the European average of 60.5, and 62.2 for Irish women, compared to 59.1 for the European average (CSO, 2003). While Ireland has taken the lead in Europe regarding older workers, its success probably has more to do with the success of the economy than any strategic objectives to increase their participations in the workforce (Age Action Ireland, 2004; Equality Authority, 2004).

In the context of the EU population as a whole, census reports show that Ireland has a relatively young population. However Ireland will nevertheless face the challenges presented by an ageing population over the next generation as the demographic profile falls into line with the EU average. The aging of the population (and as a result, the workforce) will present major issues, as increasing numbers of active older people will demand new social structures and opportunities. However this time lag affords a period in which we can create clear-cut and coherent practices based on the principle of equality in relation to the retention of older workers in the workplace.

In order to facilitate an increase in the labour force participation, certain barriers to employment faced by older workers must be removed. There is a perception that older workers have greater difficulty with change and adaptability which become barriers to their continued participation in

the labour market. The focus in past decades on early retirement has also fostered negative residual attitudes toward older workers by employers (NESF, 2003). While these issues have not yet sparked the same policy challenges in Ireland as in other EU countries, the need for a competitive and diverse workforce, in the long term, requires the specific needs of older workers to be considered. The employers' organization IBEC acknowledges the need for great workforce inclusion:

For Ireland to continue to build on its competitive success, it is clear that we need to make the best use of the talents of as many people as possible... managing this diversity, including family-friendly, work-life balance issues is a challenge and an opportunity for organizations (IBEC, 2002).

1.6.3.2 Age discrimination and stigmatisation

One of the most serious obstacles blocking older workers from taking up or maintaining their place in the workforce is age discrimination. A recent report in England found that age discrimination is the most commonly experienced prejudice across all age groups and that people over 55 are twice as likely to suffer from this in comparison to other forms of discrimination (Age Concern, 2005). A study by the Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) in Ireland identified the main barriers to older workers' participation as the result of negative attitudes existing among both workers and employers and found that, as a result of employers' negative attitudes, many had not made adjustments to their employment and recruitment practices in order to meet the needs of older workers (2000).

With regard to participation in training, evidence suggests that older workers have a lower participation level in training than the rest of the work force. The widely held assumptions that older workers are more difficult and time-consuming to train and are less productive in the workforce led to a subsequently negative effect on older workers' employment prospects (IBEC, 2003). EU data shows that, while almost half of older workers are in companies that provide training, only 15% take part and only 7% of those in lower skill levels (European Commission, 2001). A recent survey of Irish workers found that only 40% aged 55 years and over reported training activity in the previous two years compared to 50% of workers in the 25-39 years of age (Equality Authority, 2002). In fact, only 8% of companies in the National Economic and Social Forum's 2003 study indicated that they actively encourage older workers to participate in training, compared to the 33% that preferred younger workers (NESF, 2003).

Finally, it is too easy for policymakers to overlook the older unemployed. Discrimination at the level of policy creation takes the shape of active labour market interventions that concern themselves mainly with groups that are more numerous and seen as potentially more important for

employment growth (Equality Authority, 2004). Yet the circumstances of the older unemployed are just as serious as any other category of people not currently working.

1.6.3.3. Benefits for older workers, society and the economy from the increased participation of older workers in the labour force

Meaningful work . . . is a central aspect of society, and is essential to the dignity and well being of individuals. The choices that we, as a society make with regard to workplace development in the coming years will have a lasting impact on individuals, families, enterprises and the on-going success of our economy (NCCP, 2005).

This statement by the NCCP indicates the importance of increasing the participation of older workers in the labour force. The individual worker, society as a whole and the economy, at both a micro and macro level, all benefit from the employment of older people. Increasing participation amongst this group represents a society that values and embraces the experiences of its older citizens. From the point of view of the individual worker, increased participation allows for the utilisation of skills and knowledge which have been gained over the course of a lifetime.

At a demographic and economic level we must realise that, as numbers of young people entering the labour market declines, other sources of labour supply will have to be identified if labour shortages are not to become a critical constraint on growth (NCCP, 2005). The proportion of people in Ireland aged 65 or older is due to increase by 60% over the next 20 years, from 436,002 in 2002 to 698,000 in 2011 (Connell & Pringle, 2004) and the labour force is projected to reach 2 million by 2011 (CSO, 2004). With unemployment at record low levels, the inclusion of older workers into paid employment will become paramount.

1.6.4. Flexible work arrangements – a practical mechanism for facilitating employment for older workers

In order to make use of this valuable resource, working conditions need to be adapted in order to utilise and facilitate older workers. The National Flexi-work Partnership has identified the availability of flexible working arrangements to be a crucial factor in increasing the employment participation of older workers. According to the Forum on the Workplace of the Future, improved flexibility in working hours aimed at enabling older workers to combine work and personal life is an essential pre-condition for maximising labour force participation by older workers who otherwise may not be favourably disposed to, and/or physically capable of, working full-time beyond their mid-sixties (NCCP, 2005).

A number of recent studies have focused on the barriers facing those who want to participate in the labour market. A survey carried out by PACEC in 2000 found that 25% of those over 55 would participate in the labour market provided certain barriers were removed. These include the lack of flexibility and education or skills, low take home pay, concern about reduction in pension and other benefits and concerns of age discrimination. The Equality Authority's 2003 study found similar results but also located lack of self-confidence as a barrier. On the other hand, the National Council on Aging and Older People (NCAOP, 2001) study looked at older people's preferences and emphasised the need for choice on the part of the 55-69 age group. They found that health and financial incentives were the key triggers to older workers leaving or remaining in the labour market in terms of both push and pull factors.

1.6.5 Mental health issues and the workplace

1.6.5.1 Mental health and employment

Individuals with mental health difficulties are among the most socially excluded today (Curran et al, 2004). Employment rates for people in this group are extremely low and seem to be, in recent years, taking a further downward trend (Jeffreys et al., 1997; Marwaha & Johnson, 2004). In a UK study, unemployment rates for people with long-term mental health problems increased from 80% in 1990 to 92% in 1999 (Perkins & Rinaldi, 2002). Depression is the highest reported mental health difficulty and the fourth leading cause of disease worldwide (Usten et al., 2004). In Ireland, it has been estimated that over 300,000 people (one in fourteen) suffer from depression (McKeon et al., 2000). Fewer than 30% of depression sufferers are in full-time employment even though 90% express a desire to work (Perkins & Rinaldi, 2002).

In an article on work and mental health rehabilitation, Foster (1999) emphasises that "opportunities for employment are crucial to rehabilitation." Studies are only just beginning to examine why so few people with mental illness work and both internal and external barriers are being found. Among suggestions are that sufferers worry that work may be too stressful and lead to a relapse in the mental illness (Van Dongen, 1996); that they may lose disability payments (Rinaldi & Hill, 2000); and that social stigma and discrimination from employers may play a major barrier to employment (Manning & White, 1995).

Thus, while the ability to maintain employment is extremely important to people with mental health difficulties, the ability to access employment is likewise crucial. Rogers et al. (1993) has

examined the interaction between mental illness and the stresses arising from unemployment. Quite often, unemployment can exacerbate the difficulties faced by this group. The benefits of work, even for people with severe and persistent mental illness, has been examined by Auerbach and Richardson (2005) who reported work not only to be a contributor to the person's identity, but that "work was an antidote to the person's problem."

1.6.5.1 Stigmatisation and disclosure

The OPCS Psychiatry Morbidity Study in Great Britain in 1995/1996 discovered that mental health service users had the highest unemployment rates of any disabled group (Office for National Statistics, 1996). Furthermore, of the working UK population, only 17% of people with a diagnosis of serious mental illness are economically active (Office for National Statistics, 1998). The comparative figures for both of these statistics are, to date, unknown in Ireland, however we have no reason to believe that they are significantly different from those in the UK. According to recent studies of the long-term disabled, those with severe mental illnesses find it more difficult to locate employment than those with physical disabilities and only those with severe learning disabilities are less likely to be in paid employment (Boardman, 2003; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003). Given this, it is little wonder that disclosure, and the perception of the resulting stigmatisation disclosure may arouse, are of central importance in the employment of people with mental health problems. Despite increasing public education, mental illness still evokes anxiety and uncertainty in many members of the public and there remains a lingering perception that people with mental health problems are not capable of working satisfactorily.

People with mental health problems are often acutely aware of these negative attitudes towards their illness. Research shows that stigma frequently emerges as a factor for the mentally ill when discussing their prospects of locating employment and, in their Report on Aging and Labour Market Participation, Russell and Fahey (2004) identified disclosure as the most salient issue. Approximately two-thirds of the participants in Johnson et al.'s (2005) study said they wouldn't tell potential employers about their mental health problems because they feared discrimination even though about a one-third felt their situation would be improved if the employer were aware of and accepting of it. According to the preliminary results of a recent survey examining attitudes towards depression in the workplace, 87% of those with depression gave a fictitious diagnosis to their employer (McKeon, 2005). In a similar study carried out by the same group 10 years ago, 52% of those surveyed reported hiding their illness. Thus people are even more inclined to hide their illness now than they were 10 years ago.

Such research points towards a hardening of attitudes in the workplace towards people with mental health problems. Its outcome highlights the fact that stigma remains an ongoing issue and, combined with the increasing pressures of work today, adds to the difficulties which employees face in addressing mental health issues. These issues were addressed in a recent study carried out by the Work-Life Balance Project (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, Edge and O'Dwyer, 2005).

1.6.5.2 Benefits for people with the mental health problems from flexible working

The vast majority of people with mental illness say they want to work (Secker et al., 2001; Hatfield et al., 1992) and desire to work the same jobs as those without psychological problems (Shepherd et al., 1994). Yet work can present many paradoxes by providing the factors that can contribute to a person's recovery and reintegration into normal life while simultaneously holding the potential to exacerbate someone's fragility (Warr, 1987).

Employment has been associated with a reduction in symptoms and the number of times people are admitted into hospital (Bell et al., 1996; Reker & Eikelmann 1997); has had positive effects on quality of life and self esteem (Van Dongen, 1996); and correlates with greater satisfaction with life (Priebe et al 1998). The economic cost of unemployment in this group is high both to the state and the individuals concerned (Boardman et al., 2003; Huxley & Thornicroft, 2003). Despite the positive benefits, employment levels are only 8–20% in the UK (Kelly et al., 1998; UK700 Group, 1999) and 15–25% in the US (Lehman, 1995; Ridgeway & Rapp, 1998). While the overall shortage of qualified workers in Ireland has had a positive effect on the employment rates for the other groups in this study, the continued downward trend in employment for this group is all the more alarming.

For this pattern to change, Russell and Fahey (2004) argue that we need to examine the degree to which obstacles to employment arise from overt discriminatory attitudes by employers verses the constraints on workers functioning caused by mental or physical ailments. They maintain that employers' attitudes and the way jobs are structured raise strong questions of inequality and discrimination toward people with mental health problems. The provision of flexible working arrangements is a critical and proven step if the needs of people with mental health problems are to be adequately met (Cooper and Cartwright, 1996). On the practical side, it provides a continued opportunity to engage in the world of work with all the advantages of social inclusion, income continuance and personal fulfilment. More importantly, the employee derives social and psychological support through the mechanism of flexible working. The operation of these

schemes sends employees the message that the organisation values them, believes they will get better, and that, even at times when the person is not well, they can still make a contribution to the organisation

Many potential workers with mental illness reported the prospect of returning to full-time work too daunting but would consider gradual re-entry if it were available (Johnson et al, 2005). Without flexible working arrangements, the path faced by someone in this situation is infinitely more prohibitive. The ‘all or nothing’ approach can be very difficult, especially if someone has been ill for an extended period. Self-confidence and self-esteem are very fragile at times of ill health and the person’s physical condition may also be quite poor. For many, the choice of returning full-time or not at all can be overwhelming during episodes of ill health and, if the option of a phased workforce re-entry alongside flexible working arrangements is not available, people with mental health issues may be forced to abandon work as an option. However, it should be noted that a loss of benefit entitlement often serves as a barrier to many individuals who would otherwise consider workforce re-entree through part-time work and much consequently be examined as well.

Thus, the opportunity to continue in employment or return to work after a long absence on a flexible working arrangement is of great value to both the individual and the labour force in general. It not only allows employers to retain the skills of employees in an ever tightening labour market but also contributes to the person’s self-confidence and social inclusion.

1.6.6 Overall benefits for employers from flexible working

Flexible working is not only beneficial to workers; current research is also beginning to show the advantages of developing and implementing flexible working arrangements for employers. In a tightening, aging Irish labour market, human capital is an increasing valuable commodity. It is of central importance for both organisations and the economy in general to broaden the spectrum to identify potential employees and focus on maintaining skilled employees, while increasing individual productivity levels. Thus a balanced work-life organisational culture is vital to a healthy competitive business.

Stress is the leading cause of productivity loss in the workforce today and affects all groups of workers. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work found that between 50 and 60% of all lost work days are related to stress (Cox et al., 2000). In an article on Workplace Stress in

Ireland, Armstrong (2001) refers to the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) finding that "policies benefiting worker health also benefit the bottom line." Effective work-life balance arrangements in the workplace have been shown to have a positive effect on employee stress levels. O'Connell et al.'s (2003) research into stress determinants found increased working hours to be clearly linked to greater stress. The availability of flexi-time, on the other hand, was associated with lower stress along with the presence of family friendly policies. They locate giving greater control and discretion to employees over their jobs as a key way to reduce stress as well as regularly involving employees in decision making and information sharing.

This has been confirmed both nationally and internationally. Humphreys, Fleming and O'Donnell (2000) identify, in past research, this and other advantages for employers (Emmott and Hutchinson, 1998, Fynes et al., 1996). They found that employers who develop and implement flexible working arrangements obtained the following advantages:

- Ability to match work provisions more closely with customer/product demand
- Reduced fixed costs, e.g. by the use of tele-working
- improved recruitment and retention of employees
- increased productivity and efficiency
- improved staff morale and loyalty
- reduced stress and sick leave
- reduced absenteeism
- access to a wider pool of potential employees

Many of these advantages surfaced in the case studies in the Equality Authority's research (Fisher, 2000). Employers felt their programmes were effective "because the employees see us as reasonable and are more secure in their job because of this" and that "people really appreciate it when they see that the company treats them flexibly (p. 70)." Employers also reported unforeseen benefits, "people don't abuse them and the benefits are very much a two-way thing." "I find that employees more than pay you back (p 70)." Organizational commitment and employee satisfaction were both highly correlated with company practices in the area of flexibility and other work-life balance policies.

Every organisation has its own ethos. Organisations who respond to the work-life balance needs of their employees demonstrate a commitment to and appreciation of their workforce, as well as sending a positive image of the organisation to the wider public.

2. Method

2.1 Sampling and Final Sample

The sample used in the project was a random, statistical nationally representative sample of the adult population living in private households. This meant that the institutional population was excluded from the population frame.

The sample was selected by the Survey Unit in the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) using the ESRI's computerised random sampling procedure known as RANSAM (Whelan, 1977, 1979). This computer-based system is based on the Electoral Register as a sampling frame. Sample selection is on a so-called two staged clustered basis. At the initial stage of selection a set of Primary Sampling Units (or sampling points) were selected based on District Electoral Divisions or parts thereof. The primary sampling units were formed on the basis of a mini population criteria in this case 1,000 persons. When the primary sampling units were selected a random systematic sample of respondents was selected from within each for contact by the interviewer.

The specific respondent within household selected for interview was identified on the so-called next birthday rule basis. This was used as a simple (but highly effective) selection of respondent from all adults in the household. Quite simply, the target respondent is identified as the household member (from all adults in the household) who has the next birthday – regardless of age on the birthday. This provides a random sample of respondents within households.

A total of 2,200 names were issued to interviewers. Questionnaires were successfully completed with 1,218 respondents (a total of 6 of these were not included for analysis, however, due to missing information in important areas of the questionnaire). Response rates are outlined in the table below. From this one can see that the gross response rate for successfully completed surveys was 55 percent. When one focuses only on the households contacted in the course of fieldwork the figure rises to 67 per cent amount those successfully contacted.

Response rates in Work-Life Balance Survey

Questionnaire	No.	Per Cent Total	Per Cent Contacts
Completed and useable	1212	55%	67%
Completed but not used in analysis	6	0%	0%
Household Refused	163	7%	9%
Target Respondent Refused	192	9%	10%
Not available throughout fieldwork	200	9%	11%
Unable to Participate (ill/language barrier)	47	2%	3%
Total Contacted	1820	-	100%
Non contact/never at home despite call-backs	203	9%	-
Could not locate/demolished/vacant	135	6%	-
Other	42	2%	-
Total Non Contact	380	-	-
Grand Total	2,200	100%	-

2.2 Re-weighting the Data

The purpose of sample weighting is to compensate for any biases in the distributional characteristics in the completed sample as compared to the population of interest, in this case the population of all adult persons who are resident in private households in the Republic of Ireland. The weighting adjustment is used to account for biases that occur because of sampling error, from the nature of the frame or as a result of differential response rates within different groups of the population.

Regardless of the source of the discrepancy between the sample and population distributions we used the statistical adjustment or re-weighting procedure to adjust the distributional characteristics of the sample in terms of characteristics such as age, sex, economic status and so on in order to match the corresponding structures in the population. This is achieved by comparing sample characteristics to external population figures. These latter were principally derived from the *Census of Population 2002* supplemented with figures from the most recent record of the *Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)* – both conducted by the CSO.

The variables used in the weighting scheme in the current project were:

- number of adults in the household (5 categories);
- gender by age cohort (10 categories);
- gender by marital status by age (12 categories);
- gender by age by highest level of educational attainment (12 categories);
- gender by age by region (18 categories);
- gender by age by principle economic status (21 categories)

The weighting procedure involved constructing weights so that the marginal distributions of each of the characteristics of responding individuals was equal to the distribution of characteristics for the population. To achieve this we used a so-called minimum information loss (minimum distance) algorithm to adjust an initial weight so that the distribution of characteristics in the sample matches those of the set of control totals.

2.3 Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected on a face-to-face basis by experienced interviewers from the ESRI's standing panel of field staff. Approximately 60 interviewers were used in the Survey – both female and males, distributed throughout the country. All interviews took place in the respondent's home during the period September 2004 to January 2005.

Interviewers working on the project attended a dedicated training session in the ESRI's Offices in Dublin at which the survey, its design, protocols and implementation were explained by the Survey Unit staff and the research team from Trinity College.

Interviewers were allocated 20 names in each work assignment or cluster. The interviewer approached the household, presented his/her photo I.D card along with a brochure, explaining the survey. The 'next birthday rule' was explained and the target respondent identified for interviewers. The interview may have taken place on the first call or a visit arranged for a time convenient for the respondent.

A total of 4 calls were made to each household – the initial call plus 3 call-backs. The timing and day of the week of call-backs was changed on each attempt to visit the household. All questionnaires were completed on a paper and pencil basis with subsequent entry onto the ESRI's computer system by their data-entry staff. When interviewers completed their first two questionnaires these were returned to the ESRI for checking – with comments (as appropriate) being sent back to the interviewer. All questionnaires were extensively checked before data entry. Standard computer checking at point-of-entry (cross-variable consistency, range checks etc.) were also implemented. Questionnaires took approximately 45 minutes to complete.

2.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to explore people's experiences and attitudes as they related to work and work-life balance. Some sections were for all respondents, some were for the employed only and some were for people who were not currently in employment. In relation to attitudes to retirement, respondents 50 and over were asked various questions and these were put to both the currently employed and to the retired.

A literature review was carried out prior to designing the questionnaire and some of the questionnaire items were taken from various sources including Fine-Davis (1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1988), Davis & Fine-Davis (1991) and Fine-Davis, Fagnani, Giovannini, Hojgaard and Clarke (2004). Many of the items were newly developed, on the basis of the results of the pilot research (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, O'Dwyer, Edge and O'Sullivan, 2005; Fine-Davis, O'Dwyer, McCarthy, Edge, O'Sullivan and Wynne, 2005).

The sections in the questionnaire were as follows:

- Demographics and other Background Details
- Commuting
- Attitudes to Working Arrangements
- Caring Responsibilities
- Attitudes to Gender Roles
- Work and Work Arrangements (of the currently employed)
- Work History and Preferences (of the currently non-employed)
- Attitudes to Retirement (for respondents aged 50 and over, both employed and retired)
- Attitudes concerning Older People and Work
- Attitudes concerning People with Mental Health Problems and Work
- Work-Life Balance and Well-being

2.4.1 Demographics and other Background Details

The Demographic section included such variables as age, sex, and location of residence. It also included current and previous employment status, the current activity of the non-employed, type of employment, and nature of employing organisation.

2.4.1.1 Commuting

The next section obtained information from employed respondents on commuting behaviour and attitudes, including mode of transport used to get to work and preferred mode of transport. It also ascertained how easy/difficult and stressful the commute was. All respondents were asked what improvements they would like to see which would make people's commuting easier.

2.4.1.2 Attitudes to Working Arrangements

This set of 26 items were attitudinal statements designed to tap attitudes to flexible working, work-life balance, gender and caring, etc. These were presented in Likert format on 7-point scales, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). These items were developed on the basis of the research carried out in the pilot projects on flexible working, described above.

2.4.2 Caring Responsibilities

This section ascertained the household configuration, the numbers of children in the household and their ages and the extent of caring commitments for children. Those with children aged 0 – 5 years of age were asked about their child care arrangements, including who cares for them, how much it costs per week and level of satisfaction with these arrangements. All respondents were asked if they had responsibility for care for grandchildren, and for anyone elderly, ill or disabled and the extent of their day to day caring for these people.

The employed with care responsibilities were asked how they coped when their usual care commitments broke down and if their hours/schedule created problems with their childcare or other childcare arrangements. Attitudes of supervisor, employer and colleagues were ascertained concerning how well they took into account the respondent's caring commitments. Finally respondents were asked their opinions about paternity leave and parental leave.

2.4.3 Attitudes to Gender Roles

A set of Likert items measuring attitudes to gender roles was including in this section. These included attitudes to gender in relation to caring and also attitudes to child care. Attitudes to who should have responsibility for funding child care were also contained in this section.

2.4.4 Work and Work Arrangements (of the currently employed)

This section obtained information on the employee's working hours and working arrangement. It included their experience, if any, of different forms of flexible working arrangements; the rationale behind their choices; and their perceptions of its effect on their well-being, career, promotion opportunities and work effectiveness. It also elicited their satisfaction with their existing working arrangements and their ideal working arrangements.

2.4.5 Work History and Preferences (of the currently non-employed)

In relation to the non-employed, it focused on barriers to employment, respondents' assessment of their opportunities to rejoin the work force and factors which would facilitate access to employment.

2.4.6 Attitudes to Retirement (for respondents aged 50 and over, both employed and retired)

This section asked respondents about their preferences in relation to age of retirement. It also asked them about pension provision and opportunities for gradual retirement. Finally, it presented respondents with a set of four Likert items to which they were asked to agree or disagree on seven point scales. These concerned attitudes to retirement.

2.4.7 Attitudes concerning Older People and Work

This section contained eight attitudinal items presented in Likert format. It ascertained all respondent's attitudes to older people in relation to work, employment and retirement.

2.4.8 Attitudes concerning People with Mental Health Problems and Work

The next section consisted of seven Likert item also for the whole sample. These were designed to tap attitudes to issues related to mental health and the workplace and specifically attitudes to treatment in the workplace of people with mental health problems. This set of items was also administered to a sample of people with mental health problems and comparisons of the attitudes of the two samples will be presented. The complete results of that study, which was referred to earlier, are contained in Fine-Davis, McCarthy, Edge and O'Dwyer (2005).

2.4.9 Work-Life Balance and Well-being

The last section of the questionnaire focused on respondents' work-life balance and quality of life in various life domains. Specifically, respondents were asked how easy or difficult it was to combine their job with their family or personal life, how satisfied they were with their work-life balance and what changes they might like, e.g. more time with family, personal time, etc. The issue of stress was also explored, i.e., whether respondents felt under stress, and what were the main sources of stress. The issue of overall satisfaction with their life in general, together with items on their health, and satisfaction with relationships and financial situation were also assessed.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was carried out by the Survey Unit of the Economic and Social Research Institute in collaboration with the project's research team.

Cross-tabulations by gender, age, education and employment status were initially carried out and these are presented throughout the report, with particular emphasis on gender and age. In addition, factor analyses were carried out on four separate sets of Likert items measuring: 1) attitudes to working arrangements, 2) attitudes to gender roles, 3) attitudes to older workers, and 4) attitudes to mental health and the workplace, in order to examine the structure of attitudes in these areas. Composite scores were created based on the resulting factors and these were then examined as dependent variables in a 4-way analysis of variance design, which systematically varied four demographic variables as the independent variables. These were gender (male/female), employment status (employed/non-employed), socio-economic status (low/high)

and age (18-34/35-49/50+). Correlational analyses were also carried out between a range of variables. In particular we examined people's actual situations on the one hand and their well-being on the other.

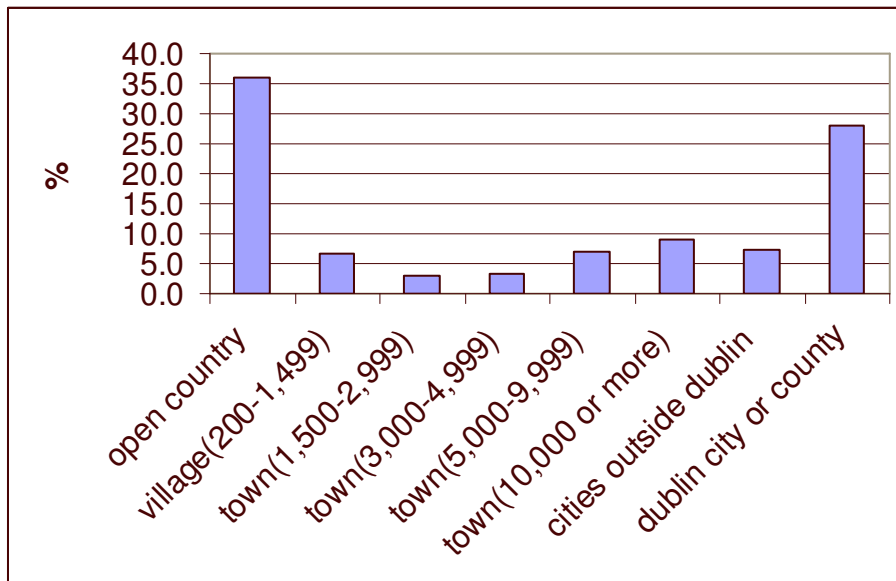
3. Results

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

3.1.1 Distribution of Respondents' Location

Thirty-six per cent of respondents lived in 'open country', just over a quarter (27.9%) in Dublin or Co. Dublin and the remaining thirty-six per cent in towns and cities of various sizes around Ireland (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Location – Rural v Urban



3.1.2 Gender and Age Profile of Respondents

A total of 49.3% of those interviewed were male, and 50.7% were female. There was almost no difference in the age profile of male and female respondents (see Table 3.1). The average age of all respondents was 43.6 years. The average age of female respondents was 44.3 years, while that of male respondents was 42.9.

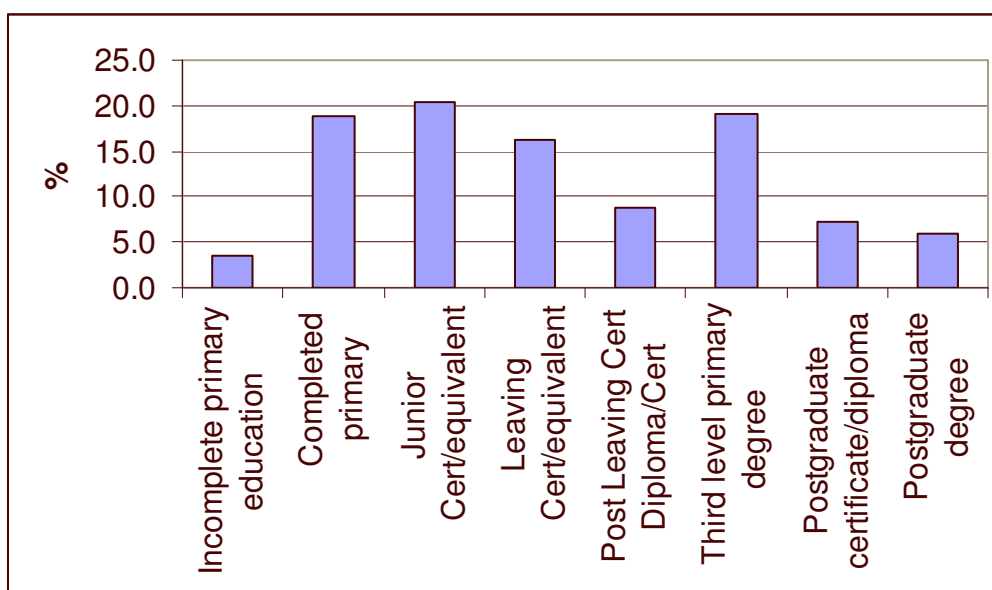
Table 3.1: Percentage of Male and Female Respondents by Age Group

	18 to 30 (n = 351) %	31 to 49 (n = 415) %	50 to 64 (n = 265) %	65+ (n = 180) %	Total (n = 1211) %
Male	51.0	48.9	51.3	43.9	49.3
Female	49.0	51.1	48.7	56.1	50.7
Total+	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.1.3 Highest Educational Achievement of Respondents

Twenty-two per cent of the sample had received no secondary education; 18.8% had completed primary school and 3.5% had not. The highest educational achievement of over a third of all respondents, 36.7%, was the completion of at least some secondary education; 20.4% of the sample had completed the Junior Certificate and 16.3% the Leaving Certificate (see Figure 3.2). In addition, 8.7% of all respondents had completed a Post Leaving Cert. course. A high proportion of the sample, thirty-two per cent, had completed some 3rd level education: 19.2% a third level degree and 13.1% of the sample had completed postgraduate courses.

Figure 3.2: Highest Educational Achievement of Respondents



Females were slightly more highly educated than males: 32.8% of all females in the sample had completed some third level education (i.e. a primary degree or higher), compared with 31.8% of all males (see Table 3.2). Also, a higher percentage of males, 43.9%, had primary education only, whereas just 41.5% of females had the same.

Table 3.2: Highest Educational Achievement of Males and Females

	Male (n = 597)	Female (n = 615)	Total (n = 1212)
	%	%	%
Primary	43.9	41.5	42.7
Secondary	24.3	25.7	25.0
Third Level	31.8	32.8	32.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2 Living Arrangements and Caring Responsibilities

3.2.1 Living Arrangements

Just over half (55.2%) of the total sample lived with a partner, husband or wife (see Table 3.3). Those aged between 31 and 64 were more likely to be living with a partner/spouse; three quarters were living with a partner or spouse, compared with just under half of those aged between 18 and 30 (21.0%) and those aged 65 and over (48.6%).

Most of the respondents who lived with their parents tended to be under 25. Almost 70% of those aged between 18 and 30 lived with their parents, compared with 12.8% of those aged 31-49.

Table 3.3: Percentage of Respondents living with various relatives and non-relatives, by age-group of respondent

	%				
	(N = 1212)				
	18-30	31-49	50-64	65+	Total
Partner/Husband/Wife	21.0	73.0	77.4	48.6	55.2
Children	15.9	74.5	54.7	23.8	45.6
Parents	69.2	12.8	4.9	1.7	25.8
Other Relatives	42.3	4.8	7.6	8.8	16.9
Other Non-relatives	10.8	2.2	0.4	1.7	4.2

Just under ten per cent of the sample (9.6%) lived alone. Of those living alone, 59% were women and 41% were men. Those most likely to be living alone were those 65 and over. Almost 60% of women aged 65 and over lived alone, compared with only 35.4% of men in this age group (see Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Percentage of Respondents Living Alone, by Gender and Age-group

	Male (n = 48) %	Female (n = 69) %	Total (N = 117) %
18 to 30 years	8.3	5.8	6.8
31 to 49 years	29.2	15.9	21.4
50 to 64 years	27.1	18.8	22.2
65 years and over	35.4	59.4	49.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.2 Childcare

Fifty-nine per cent of the total sample had at least one child; 71.9% of these had three or fewer children. Forty-six per cent of the sample lived with their children (or the children of their partner). The majority of those living with their children, or the children of their partner, had children younger than 18. Just 7.3% of the sample had children aged between 0 and 2, and a further 11.9% had children between 3 and 5 (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Percentage of the Total Sample Living with one or more children, by age-group of child

No. of Children	Age-group of child					Total (N = 555)
	0-2 (n = 89)	3-5 (n = 144)	6-12 (n = 219)	13-17 (n = 150)	18+ (n = 225)	
	(% of the Total Sample)					
1	6.6	10.1	10.1	8.3	9.2	14.3
2	0.7	1.8	6.4	3.6	5.2	15.8
3			1.2	0.5	3.1	10.0
4			0.3		0.7	3.8
5					0.3	1.2
6						0.3
7						0.6
10						0.1
Total	7.3	11.9	18.0	12.4	18.5	46.1

As can be seen in Table 3.6 below, women across all of the age-groups reported having more day-to-day caring responsibilities for their children than men. Those with the greatest childcare commitments were women aged 18-30, of whom 25.7% said that the extent of their day-to-day

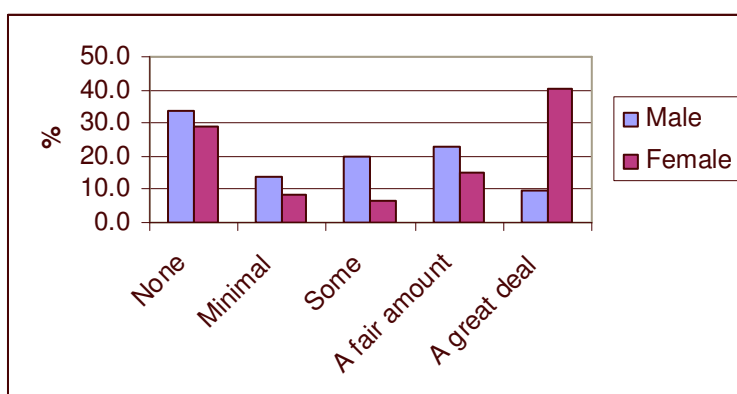
caring commitments for their children was “a fair amount,” and the vast majority (71.4%) said “a great deal.” Men in this age group who had children were much less likely to say “a great deal” (only 25%). They were more likely to say “some” (29.2%) or “a fair amount” (45.8%). Similarly, women in the age group 31-49 also reported that the extent of their childcare commitments were “a great deal” (68.8%) vs. only 11.2% of men who said the same.

Table 3.6: Extent of day-to-day care for children, by gender and age-group of respondent

	18 to 30 (n = 59) %		31 to 49 (n = 319) %		50 to 64 (n = 224) %		65+ (n = 121) %		Total (N = 723) %
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
None	0.0	0.0	5.6	4.0	51.8	44.6	88.2	82.9	31.3
Minimal	0.0	2.9	14.7	1.1	18.8	20.5	5.9	10.0	10.8
Some	29.2	0.0	32.2	5.7	10.7	11.6	2.0	4.3	12.7
A fair amount	45.8	25.7	36.4	20.5	11.6	11.6	2.0	1.4	18.8
A great deal	25.0	71.4	11.2	68.8	7.1	11.6	2.0	1.4	26.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ninety-eight per cent of those with children aged between 0 and 2 claimed that they had either ‘some’, ‘a fair amount’ or ‘a great deal’ of day-to-day caring activities, compared with 96.2% for parents of children aged 3-5, 93.9% for parents of children aged 6-12 and 68.2% for parents of children aged 13-17. Female respondents reported having a greater amount of caring responsibilities than males (see Figure 3.3).

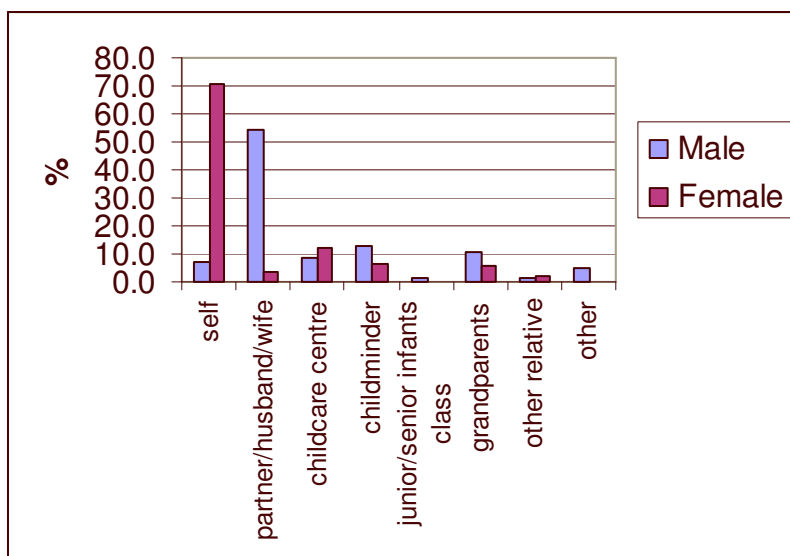
Figure 3.3: Extent of day-to-day care for children, by gender of Respondent



Overall, mothers were more likely to have primary responsibility for looking after young children than fathers. Seventy per cent of all female respondents with children had primary responsibility

for children aged 0-5 compared with just 7.1% of male respondents (see Figure 3.4). Also, 54.1% of male respondents stated that their partner or wife had primary responsibility.

Figure 3.4: Primary Carer of Children aged 0-5, by Gender of Respondent



Otherwise, 10% of respondents with children aged 0-5 stated that their children were minded in a childcare centre and 9.3% by a childminder. Nine per cent of respondents were looked after by a grandparent or other relative (see Table 3.7).

Although mothers were usually the primary carers, fathers were often the secondary carers of their young children. Forty per cent of male respondents with children were the secondary carer, and 34.3% of female respondents indicated their husband or partner was the secondary carer.

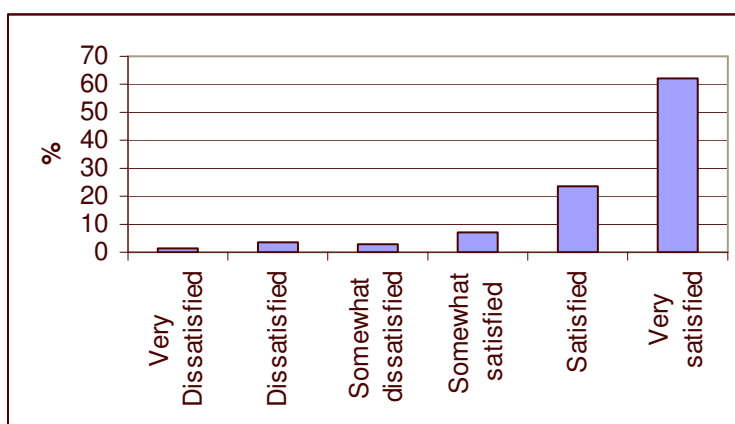
Grandparents and childminders were also popular secondary carers, 17.0% and 13.0% respectively. However, just 14.8% of respondents in the sample who were aged 50 or older had caring responsibilities for grandchildren. Of these, just 12.5% had a great deal of caring responsibilities and a further 26.4% a fair amount.

Table 3.7: Primary and Secondary Responsibility for Looking after Children aged 0-5

	Primary Carer (n = 193) %	Secondary Carer (n = 179) %
Self	43.2	23.0
Partner/husband/wife	25.7	27.7
Childcare centre	10.0	7.8
Childminder	9.3	13.0
Junior/senior infants class	0.6	1.8
Grandparents	7.7	17.0
Other relative	1.5	9.0
Other	2.0	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0

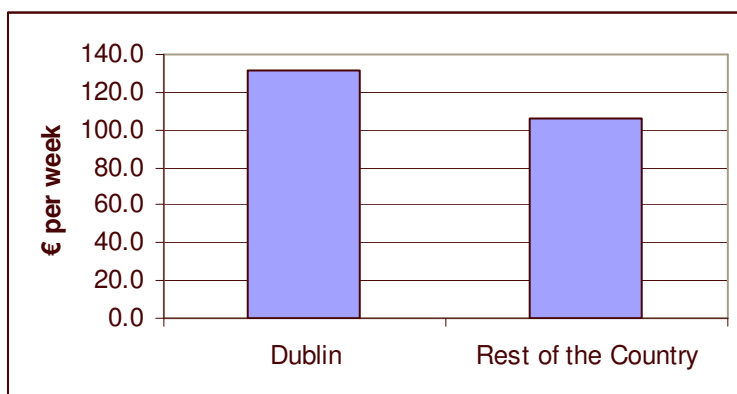
When respondents with children aged 0 to 5 were asked how satisfied they were with their childcare arrangements, the majority (62.1%) said they were very satisfied and a further 30.5% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied. Just a small percentage of respondents were dissatisfied to at least some extent (7.4%) with their childcare arrangements (See Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Extent of Satisfaction with Childcare Arrangements



Among those who paid for childcare for their children aged 5 and under on a regular basis, the average weekly spend in Dublin was €131, while that of the rest of the country was €106 (see Figure 3.6). This corresponds precisely to the figures obtained in the National Household Survey (CSO, 2003).

Figure 3.6: Average weekly spend on childcare, Dublin and Rest of the Country



Some 22% of respondents who were employed felt that their work hours or schedule created problems in relation to their childcare or other caring arrangements: 16.5% said they did “to some extent” and 5.4% said that they did “a great deal”(see Figure 3.7). However, 76.9% of employed respondents with caring commitments stated that their work hours created ‘no problems’ or ‘not very much’ difficulty. However, there were gender differences in this. Employed women were more likely to say that their hours created difficulty in their caring arrangements (28.4%) as compared with men (17.8%), which may reflect the fact that women are more likely to be doing the caring than men are.

Figure 3.7: Perception of whether work hours/schedule create problems with childcare and other caring arrangements, Employed Respondents



When the usual childcare or other care arrangements broke down, it was often the respondent (10.3%) or their partner (27.5%) who stepped in. Men were more likely to say it was their partner (34.5%) than were women (17.2%). Grandparents also often helped out in an emergency (17.2%).

In the few cases where the respondents themselves stepped in, a range of measures were used, including annual leave days (37.6%), sick leave (11.4%), flexi-time (18.1%) or through an informal arrangement with employer (25.2%) (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Method used when Respondent covers for emergency childcare or other care

	(N = 49) %
By using own sick leave	11.4
By using own annual leave	37.6
By using flexi-time	18.1
Informal arrangement with employer	25.2
Other	19.2
Total	111.4

NOTE: Percentages add up to more than 100% as respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

3.2.3 Childcare: Social Policy Issues

All respondents were asked about some topical issues on childcare: paternity leave, parental leave and who should fund childcare costs. The vast majority of respondents, 86.1%, felt paternity leave should be a legal entitlement (see Table 3.9). A slightly higher percentage of females than males thought so (88.2% and 83.8% respectively).

Table 3.9: Percentage of Respondents who agree/disagree that Paternity leave should be a legal entitlement by Gender of Respondents

	Male (n = 587) %	Female (n = 603) %	Total (N = 1190) %
Yes	83.8	88.2	86.1
No	9.0	7.8	8.4
Don't know	7.2	4.0	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of those who felt paternity leave should be a legal entitlement, 31.1% thought it should last from 1–2 weeks, 32.4% thought it should last from 3-4 weeks, 16.5% thought it should last from 5-6 weeks. A further 13.2% thought it should last anywhere from 2–6 months. Only 6% thought it should be less than one week. Thus, the vast majority of the nationwide sample (63.5%) thought there should be a legal entitlement to paternity leave which would last somewhere between 1-4

weeks (see Table 3.10). As may be seen in this Table, men and women had very similar views on this matter.

Table 3.10: Recommended duration of paternity leave, by gender of respondent

	Male (594) %	Female (611) %	Total (N = 1041) %
Less than 1 week	5.6	6.3	6.0
1-2 weeks	31.7	30.6	31.1
3-4 weeks	33.7	31.1	32.4
5-6 weeks	16.0	16.7	16.3
2-3 months	9.6	8.1	8.8
4-6 months	2.8	5.9	4.4
Other	0.6	1.3	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ninety-five per cent of respondents felt that at least some paternity leave should be paid - 60.5% stated that all paternity leave should be paid and 34.6% part of it (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Percentage of Respondents who believe all, some or none of paternity leave should be paid

	Male (n = 594) %	Female (n = 611) %	Total (N = 1205) %
No, none of leave paid	6.0	3.9	4.9
Yes, part of leave paid	32.0	36.9	34.6
Yes, all of leave paid	62.0	59.2	60.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A high proportion of the sample (85.1%) also felt that parental leave should be paid, at least in part; 46.6% thought part of it should be paid and 38.5% thought all of it should be paid (see Table 3.12). A similar proportion of men and women believed that some or all of paternity and parental leave should be paid.

Table 3.12: Percentage of Respondents who believe all, some or none of parental leave should be paid

	Male (n = 594) %	Female (n = 611) %	Total (N = 1205) %
No none of leave paid	18.9	11.0	14.9
Yes, part of leave paid	45.3	48.0	46.6
Yes, all of leave paid	35.9	41.1	38.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents were asked who they felt should assume primary responsibility for financing childcare facilities: the Government, employers, parents or a combination of these. The same question had been asked of a nationwide, representative sample in 1978 (Fine-Davis, 1983a). As can be seen from Table 3.13 below, perceptions have changed only slightly in the 26 years since these data were collected. The percentage of respondents who believe childcare centres should be financed solely by the Government dropped a small amount since 1978; this was favoured by 28.6% of respondents in 1978, but just 23.0% in 2004. In addition, fewer parents in 2004 felt that parents alone should foot the bill for childcare centres (4.7%), compared with in 1978 (13.2%). Few respondents in either 1978 or 2004 felt that employers alone should be expected to pay for childcare centres (2.1% and 1.5% respectively).

A substantially higher proportion of respondents in 2004 (31.5%) believed that a combination of the Government, employers and parents should fund childcare centres, compared to 1978, in which 19.3% favoured this tri-partite combination of funding. There was also an increase from 1978 to 2004 in the proportion favouring funding by a combination of Government and employers (7.4% in 1978 and 18.7% in 2004).

Table 3.13: Perceived Responsibility for Financing of Childcare Centres: Comparison of Nationwide, representative sample, 1978 and 2004/5

	1978* (N = 1,852) %	2004/5 (N = 1,204) %
The Government	28.6	23.0
Employers	2.1	1.5
Parents	13.2	4.7
Combination of Government & Employers	7.4	18.7
Combination of Government & Parents	11.3	11.8
Combination of Employers and Parents	5.6	4.3
Combination-Government, Employer & Parents	19.3	31.5
Not sure	7.4	4.3
Shouldn't be supported at all	5.1	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Fine-Davis, 1983a.

The same question was asked of a nationwide representative sample of 1,021 women with at least one child aged between 0 and 15 in 1981, and is compared in Table 3.14 below with all women in the present study with a child aged between 0 and 12. Over 40% of mothers with dependent children surveyed in 2004 felt that the Government, employers and parents together should finance childcare centres, while only 24.0% of those in 1981 recommended this option. A similar proportion of respondents (26%) in both studies felt that the Government alone should pay for childcare centres. The proportion of respondents who felt that parents alone should pay for childcare centres dropped substantially between 1981 and 2004 – while 9.7% of respondents in 1981 felt parents alone should pay for childcare centres, just 2.2% in 2004 felt this way.

The attitudes of mothers do not appear to differ a great deal from that of the whole population. Funding by a combination of the Government, employers and parents was the option given the most support by all respondents in 2004 (31.5%), the same was given the most support by all mothers with children aged 0-12, although by a bigger margin - 42.6%.

Table 3.14: Perceived Responsibility for Financing of Childcare Centres: Comparison of sample of women with at least one child aged 0-15 (1978) and 0-12 (2004/5)

	1981* (N = 1,020)	2004/5 (N = 136)
The Government	26.4	26.5
Employers	1.6	0.0
Parents	9.7	2.2
Combination of Government & Employers	8.7	13.2
Combination of Government & Parents	19.7	12.5
Combination of Employers and Parents	7.5	2.9
Combination-Government, Employer & Parents	24.0	42.6
Not sure	2.0	0.0
Shouldn't be supported at all	0.5	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

* SOURCE: Fine-Davis, 1983b

3.2.4 Care for Older, Ill or Disabled Relatives

Just 9.5% of the total sample had caring responsibilities for elderly, ill or disabled relatives. Older females tended to have more caring responsibilities than males: 43.8% of all female carers were aged 50 or older (see Figure 3.8). Also, 63.5% of all respondents caring for elderly, ill or disabled relatives were female. In addition, female respondents reported having a higher level of care for older, ill or disabled relatives, when compared with male respondents: 31.5% of female respondents indicated that they had a great deal of day-to-day caring responsibilities, compared with just 24.4% of male respondents (see Table 3.15).

Figure 3.8: Percentage of Respondents with Caring Responsibilities for Older, Ill or Disabled Relatives, by Gender and Age Group of Respondent

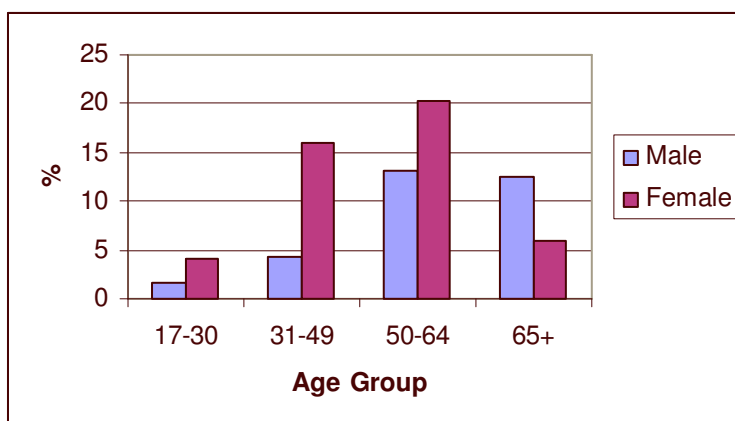


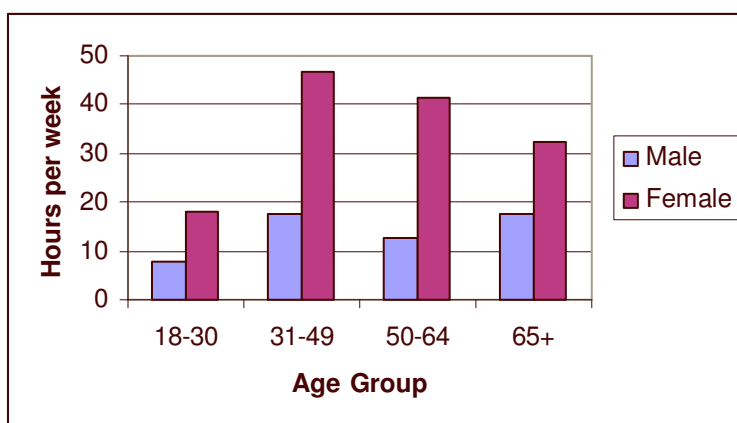
Table 3.15: Extent of Day-to-Day Caring Activities for Older, Ill or Disabled Relatives: Percentage Distribution by Gender

Extent of Care	Male (n = 41) %	Female (n= 73) %	Total (N = 114) %
Minimal	19.5	2.7	8.8
Some	24.4	42.5	36.0
A fair amount	31.7	23.3	26.3
A great deal	24.4	31.5	28.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.2.5 Overall Caring and Domestic Activities

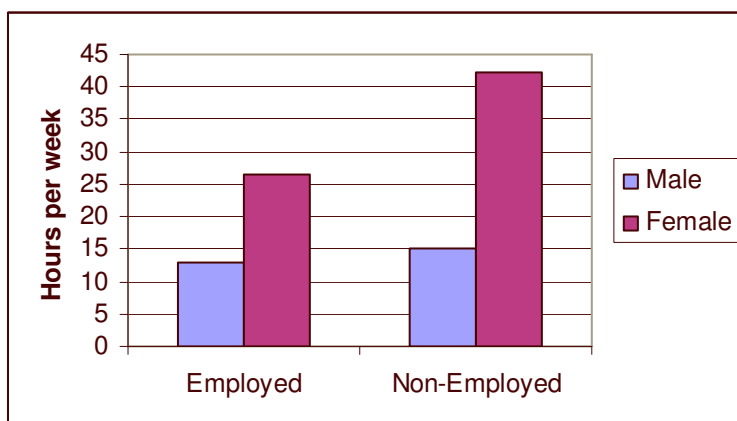
The extent of day-to-day caring activities appeared to be related to the gender and age of respondents. The average amount of time respondents spent on caring activities was 24.6 hours per week. However, this varied greatly, depending on the sex and age of respondents. As can be seen from Figure 3.9 below, women spent more time than men on domestic and caring responsibilities, with women aged between 31 and 49 spending the most amount of time (46 hours) and men aged 18-30 the least (7.9 hours).

Figure 3.9: Average number of hours respondents spent on caring and domestic tasks per week, by age group and gender of respondent



The time respondents spent on caring and domestic tasks also appeared to be related to their employment status, although both employed and non-employed women spent significantly longer than men in both categories. Employed men spent just 12.8 hours per week on caring and domestic tasks per week, while non-employed men spent 15.1 hours (see Figure 3.10). Employed women spent 26.6 hours, compared with the 42.3 hours reported by non-employed women.

Figure 3.10: Average number of hours respondents spent on caring and domestic tasks by employment status and gender of respondent



3.3 Attitudes to Gender Roles

3.3.1 Factor analysis of attitudes

As was evident from the above findings, women are significantly more involved in caring activities than men. In order to better understand the attitudes underpinning this behaviour, we asked the respondents a number of questions in the area of gender roles. Respondents responded to a set of 26 attitudinal items concerning gender roles. Most of these replicated items used in earlier studies going back to 1975 (Fine-Davis, 1983c, 1988). In addition new items were included which reflect more up to date concerns, such as the role of men in caring and the provision of child care. Table 3.16 presents the results of a factor analysis which included the previous items – many of which seem out of date today – as well as some newer items. Factor I, entitled Traditional Sex-Role Orientation with Perception of Females as Inferior combines two factors which have emerged in the earlier research. Factor II, Positive vs. Negative Attitude to Maternal Employment, also replicates a very solid factor which has appeared several time before in the earlier studies. Factor III, Belief that Men can be Carers, is a new factor emerging in the present study. Factor IV, Belief in Traditional Gender Roles, contains just two items which had loaded in the earlier studies on the factor, Traditional Sex-Role Orientation. Factor V, measuring attitudes to Support for Public Childcare, represents a new factor. It will be noted that the Cronbach alphas of Factors I and II are over .70, which indicates their reliability. The Cronbach alphas for the other three factors do not reach this level and hence cannot be considered reliable unidimensional measures. Nevertheless, they are more reliable that the individual items which comprise them. For this reason we will discuss the items in the context of the factor structure obtained. Further research would be needed to develop more robust measures of the newer constructs tapped by Factors III and V.

Table 3.16: Factor Analysis of Attitudes to Gender Roles
(N=1212)

Item No.		Varimax Rotated Loading
Factor 1 Traditional Sex-Role Orientation with Perception of Females as Inferior		
5.	Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large, the husband ought to have the main say in family matters	.69
7.	Female workers, even if qualified and experienced, are in some ways less reliable, less committed and less serious than men	.66
10.	Women are, by nature, too highly strung to hold certain jobs	.62
11.	A husband has the right to expect that his wife will be obliging and dutiful at all times	.70
13.	Equal job opportunities are opened to women, this will just take away jobs from men who need them more	.46
14.	The political and business leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men	.67
21.	Generally speaking, women think less clearly than men	.66
% Variance: 25.4%		Cumulative % Variance: 25.4%
Cronbach's Alpha: .80		

Factor II Positive vs. Negative Attitudes to Maternal Employment		
6.	It is bad for young children if their mothers go out and work, even if they are well taken care of by another adult	.58
17.	Women with children should not work outside the home if they don't need the money	.67
18.	When there is high unemployment, married women should be discouraged from working	.60
19.	*It is reasonable for women to expect to be able to be good mothers and have successful careers	-.57
20.	*A woman who has a job she enjoys is likely to be a better wife and mother because she has an interest and some fulfillment outside the home	-.56
22.	Women should be more concerned with housekeeping and bringing up their children than with desires and careers	.53
% Variance: 9.5%		Cumulative % Variance: 34.9%
Cronbach's Alpha: .75		

Factor III Belief that Men can be Carers		
4.	Men can be as likely to enjoy caring for children as women are	.77
8.	*Caring for children is best done by women	-.61
16.	It doesn't matter what the sex of a childcare worker is as long as they are competent	.56
% Variance: 6.6%		Cumulative % Variance: 41.5%
Cronbach's Alpha: .56		

Item No.		Varimax Rotated Loading
Factor IV Belief in Traditional Gender Roles		
1.	Most women need and want the kind of protection and support that men have traditionally given them	.78
2.	Being a wife and mother are the most fulfilling roles that any women could want	.81
% Variance: 5.4%		Cumulative % Variance: 47.0%
Cronbach's Alpha: .62		

Factor V Support for Public Child Care		
3.	There should be a national programme of childcare facilities for pre-school aged children	.60
9.	It is reasonable for men to expect to be able to be good fathers and have successful careers	.64
12.	There should be tax concessions for childcare costs	.68
% Variance: 6.5%		Cumulative % Variance: 51.4%
Cronbach's Alpha: .45		
*Reversed composite score		

3.3.2 Percentage Responses of the Sample to Individual Items, grouped by Factor: Comparisons with 1978 and 1986 data

Percentage responses to each of the items loading on these five factors are contained in Table 3.17, grouped by factor. It will be seen from the responses to the items in Factor I, Traditional Sex-Role Orientation, with Perception of Females as Inferior, are uniformly not traditional, nor are females seen as inferior. These data reflect change over time from the attitudes expressed in 1978 and 1986 to these same items. For example, in 1978 54% of a nationwide representative sample agreed with the statement "Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large the husband ought to have the main say in family matters." (Fine-Davis, 1988) This dropped to 27.7% in 1986 (Ibid) and in the present study the level of agreement is only 20.2%.

Similarly, perceptions of female inferiority have also decreased systematically over this period. In 1978, 27.6% agreed with the statement, "Female workers, even if qualified and experienced, are in some ways less reliable, less committed and less serious than men." This dropped to 14.4% in 1986

(Ibid.) and in 2004 the level of agreement was only 12%. Regarding the notion that “Women are, by nature, too highly strung to hold certain jobs, a rather high proportion of the population agreed in 1978 (41.8%); however this dropped to 24.9% in 1986 (Ibid.) and has dropped even further in the present study to 16%. The other items on this factor reflect similar trends.

Concerning Factor II, Positive vs. Negative Attitude to Maternal Employment, changes in attitude over time are also evident. In 1978 68.5% of a nationwide sample believed that “It is bad for young children if their mothers go out and work, even if they are well taken care of by another adult.” This dropped to 57.3% in 1986 (Ibid.). By 2004 the level of agreement was 39%. While this represents a huge change in attitude, it still shows that there is some ambivalence towards maternal employment. We will examine in the next section to what extent these attitudes vary according to the characteristics of the population.

Another item reflecting a major shift in attitude over the last 26 years is the attitude statement: “When there is high unemployment, married women should be discouraged from working.” In 1978 70.4% of the population agreed with this. It will be recalled that this was a time of high unemployment and married women were perceived as competing with men and school leavers for jobs. However, this was a misconception, as married women tended not to be competing for the same jobs at all. In 1986, when the economy was in somewhat better shape, the level of agreement dropped to 55.3% (Ibid.). In the present study the level of agreement was only 17.7%, a drop of 53 percentage points over 26 years. It is likely this attitude would have changed regardless of the economic situation, given overall trends in gender roles and gender role attitudes during this period. However, there is no doubt that the changing economic situation also affected it.

Factor III, Belief that Men can be Carers, is a new factor which emerged in the present study. The responses of the sample indicate that there is strong agreement (79%) that “men can be as likely to enjoy caring for children as women are.” In line with this, there is also support for the idea that “it doesn’t matter what the sex of a childcare worker is as long as they are competent,” with which 74.6% of the sample agreed. Nevertheless, a majority (55.2%) expressed the view that “caring for children is best done by women.” However, 44.4% disagreed with this.

Factor IV, Belief in Traditional Gender Roles, indicates that some attitudes are more resistant to change. The two items on this factor, both of which had loaded on the Traditional Sex Role Orientation Factor in the earlier research, actually reflect residual traditional attitudes in the current population. The first item is “Most women need and want the kind of protection and

support that men have traditionally given them.” A rather high 75.4% agreed with this in 1986. This item was not administered in 1978. In the current study, 69% agree. This shows that this attitude is still strongly held. The second item, “Being a wife and mother are the most fulfilling roles any woman could want” was endorsed by 77.6% of the 1978 sample. This dropped to 54.5% in 1986 (Ibid.). However, surprisingly 66% agreed with it in the present study, indicating again that some attitudes are strongly held and resistant to social change. It may be for this reason that these two items loaded on a separate factor in the current study.

Factor V, Support for Public Child Care, contains three new items relating to childcare. The first item indicates that a very large majority of the population (92%) believes that “there should be a national programme of childcare facilities for pre-school aged children.” In view of current national policy in this area, this attitude would seem to indicate that the public would like to see more in this area. There is also very strong public support for tax concessions for childcare costs (90.5% support this).

Finally, a very large majority (90.8%) believes that “It is reasonable for men to expect to be able to be good fathers and have successful careers.” A similar item for women, which did not load on the factor analysis, also obtained high agreement (86.2%), thus indicating that the population at large now thinks that it is a reasonable expectation on the part of both men and women that they should be able to have successful careers and be good parents. For this to be the case, it is necessary that there be supportive work-life balance policies at the level of the workplace and also at national level.

3.3.3 Demographic determinants of attitudes to gender roles: Analysis of variance

An analysis of variance was carried out to explore the demographic determinants of these attitudes. This technique enables one to examine the simultaneous effects of more than one demographic characteristic. In this analysis we examined the effects of gender, employment status, socio-economic status and age on the attitudes to see if there were significant differences between different groups in the population. These results are presented in Table 3.18.

On Factor I, Traditional Sex-Role Orientation with Perception of Female Inferiority, it may be seen that there are significant effects of all of the independent demographic variables. The largest effect was due to gender. While, in general, as we saw, most people no longer held traditional gender role attitudes nor did they think females were inferior, nevertheless men were significantly more likely to do so than were women. The non-employed were also more likely to hold

traditional sex-role attitudes and to see women as inferior, as were members of lower socio-economic status. Not surprisingly, older people (those 50 and over) were also more traditional.

On Factor II, Positive vs. Negative Attitude to Maternal Employment, similar trends are apparent. While all groups are generally positive about maternal employment, men are less so than women, the employed are more positive than the non-employed, members of lower socio-economic groups are less positive and older people (50+) are less positive. Those in the age groups 18-34 and 35 – 49 are equally positive.

Regarding Factor III, Belief that Men can be Carers, it was seen that there were moderately positive attitudes on average to this (mean scores in the range 4.5 to 5.0 out of a maximum of 7). The greatest difference was between the employed and the non-employed, with the employed being more supportive of this concept. Age was also a strong determinant of attitudes. Again the over 50 age group less likely to see men as carers than those 18-34 and 35 – 49. Those of higher socio-economic status were more likely to be supportive of the idea of men as carers, as were women. However, the gender difference was the smallest of all and the mean scores reflected the fact that men were not that far off the scores of women on this (4.58 vs. 4.84).

Factor IV, Belief in Traditional Gender Roles, revealed similar patterns to the other factors, with most conservative attitudes being expressed by those over 50, by those of lower socio-economic status, and by the non-employed. Interestingly, there was no significant effect of gender on this factor.

As noted earlier, the sample was generally very supportive of public support for childcare. As may be seen in relation to Factor V, there was a gender effect, with women being somewhat more supportive of public childcare than men and the younger age groups were also more supportive, with greatest support in the age group 35-49.

**Table 3.17: Attitudes to Gender Roles: Percentage Responses to Items grouped by Factor
(N= 1212)**

Factor I Traditional Sex-Role Orientation with Perception of Females as Inferior

1. Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large, the husband ought to have the main say in family matters	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	50.7	17	10.4		9.2	5.2	5.7
	----- 78% -----				1.7 %	----- 20.2 % -----	
2. Female workers, even if qualified and experienced, are in some ways less reliable, less committed and less serious than men	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	59.6	19	9		5	4	3.1
	----- 87.6% -----				.5 %	----- 12% -----	
3. Women are, by nature, too highly strung to hold certain jobs	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	58	15	10.1		8.7	3.7	3.7
	----- 83% -----				.9%	----- 16% -----	
4. A husband has the right to expect that his wife will be obliging and dutiful at all times	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	58.6	13	8.4		9	4.4	4.5
	----- 80% -----				2.2 %	----- 17.8% -----	

5. Equal job opportunities are opened to women, this will just take away jobs from men who need them more

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	51.8	22.7	12.3
	----- 86.8% -----		

	D. K, etc.			AGREE		
		Slight	Moderate	Strong		
		6.4	3.7	2.8		
	.3 %	----- 13% -----				

6. The political and business leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	62.2	18	10
	----- 90.2% -----		

	D. K, etc.			AGREE		
		Slight	Moderate	Strong		
		5	2.3	2		
	.5%	----- 9% -----				

7. Generally speaking, women think less clearly than men

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	64.6	16.2	10
	----- 90.8% -----		

	D. K, etc.			AGREE		
		Slight	Moderate	Strong		
		4.4	2.2	2.4		
	.4%	----- 8.8% -----				

Factor II Positive vs. Negative Attitudes to Maternal Employment

1. It is bad for young children if their mothers go out and work, even if they are well taken care of by another adult	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	28	18.4	14		18.6	9.4	11
	----- 60.4% -----				.7 %	----- 39 % -----	
2. Women with children should not work outside the home if they don't need the money	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	34.7	21	12		11.8	7.5	12.2
	----- 67.7% -----				.5 %	----- 31.8% -----	
3. When there is high unemployment, married women should be discouraged from working	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	47.7	22.3	12		9.3	4.5	3.7
	----- 82% -----				.3%	----- 17.7% -----	
4. It is reasonable for women to expect to be able to be good mothers and have successful careers	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	3.3	3.7	6.4		16.2	30	40
	----- 13.4% -----				.4 %	----- 86.2 % -----	
5. A woman who has a job she enjoys is likely to be a better wife and mother because she has an interest and some fulfilment outside the home	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	3.5	3.1	6		16.4	28.8	41
	----- 12.6% -----				1.2 %	----- 86.2% -----	

6. Women should be more concerned with housekeeping and bringing up their children than with desires and careers

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	52.5	18	10		9.6	4.2	4.7
	----- 80.5% -----			.9%	----- 18.6% -----		

Factor III Belief that Men can be Carers

1. Men can be as likely to enjoy caring for children as women are

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	4.7	6.4	9.5		16.2	23.8	39
	----- 20.6% -----			.3 %	----- 79% -----		

2. Caring for children is best done by women

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	21.4	12	11		15.7	17	22.6
	----- 44.4% -----			.4 %	----- 55.2% -----		

3. It doesn't matter what the sex of a childcare worker is as long as they are competent

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	7.2	8.4	9		18.5	21.6	34.4
	----- 24.6% -----			.8%	----- 74.6% -----		

Factor IV Belief in Traditional Gender Roles

1. Most women need and want the kind of protection and support that men have traditionally given them

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	11.7	10.3	10
	----- 32% -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	20	21.6	25.6
	----- 69% -----		

2. Being a wife and mother are the most fulfilling roles that any women could want

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	10.8	10.3	11.4
	----- 32.5% -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	19.3	20	26.8
	----- 66% -----		

Factor V Support for Public Child Care

1. There should be a national programme of childcare facilities for pre-school aged children

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	1.3	2.6	2.5
	----- 6.4% -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	14.7	22.5	54.6
	----- 92% -----		

2. It is reasonable for men to expect to be able to be good fathers and have successful careers

	DISAGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight
	2.1	3.1	3.5
	----- 8.7% -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	16	31	43.8
	----- 90.8% -----		

Table: 3.18 Analysis of Variance: Main Effects of Four Demographic Variables on Factors Measuring Attitudes to Gender Roles (N=1212)

	Gender		Employment Status		Socio-Economic Status		Age		
	Male (n=539)	Female (n=543)	Employed (n=619)	Not employed (n=463)	Low (n=748)	High (n=334)	18-34 (n=301)	35-49 (n=295)	50+ (n= 355)
Attitudes to Gender Roles									
1. Traditional Sex-Role Orientation with Perception of Females as Inferior	F=177.5*** 2.54 1.69		F=28.29*** 2.0 2.26		F=29.8*** 2.26 1.79		F=3.39* 2.0 1.89 2.31		
2. Positive vs. Negative Attitudes to Maternal Employment	F=67.7*** 2.95 2.38		F=81.97*** 2.42 2.99		F=23.4*** 2.81 2.32		F=16.66*** 2.36 2.36 3.03		
3. Belief that Men can be Carers	F=8.39** 4.58 4.84		F=31.37*** 4.91 4.45		F=15.77*** 4.57 5.04		F=21.63*** 5.08 5.02 4.3		
4. Belief in Traditional Gender Roles	F=2.53 ns 5.03 4.87		F=37.58*** 4.7 5.29		F=38*** 5.19 4.41		F=15.58*** 4.45 4.82 5.34		
5. Support for Public Child Care	F=8.27** 5.98 6.14		F=1.31 ns 6.08 6.03		F=0.002 ns 6.05 6.07		F=5.29** 6.05 6.23 5.97		

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

ns = Non-Significant

Range of Scores = 1 – 7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

3.4 Commuting

3.4.1 Mode of Transport

Fully two-thirds (66.7%) of all employed respondents travelled to work by car, while 12.4% walked, 6.5% took the bus and 5.8% went by train, Dart or Luas. Only 3.7% cycled and 1.1% used a motorbike. As can be seen from Table 3.19 below, fewer respondents in the 18-30 age group travelled to work by car, compared with older respondents, and a higher percentage in this age group either walked or used public transport. Overall, a higher proportion of females walked, across almost all age groups, a factor which may be related to their long-term health.

Table 3.19: Method used to Travel to Work by Age Group and Gender of Respondent

	18-30		31-49		50-64		65+		Total
	(n = 216)		(n = 274)		(n = 118)		(n = 11)		
	%		%		%		%		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Car	61.2	52.0	74.3	75.4	70.4	63.8	44.4	50.0	66.7
Train/ Dart/Luas	6.9	9.0	3.3	4.9	5.6	0.0	44.4	0.0	5.8
Bus	15.5	11.0	0.7	3.3	4.2	4.3	0.0	50.0	6.5
Bike	2.6	3.0	5.9	3.3	4.2	2.1	0.0	0.0	3.7
Motorbike	2.6	0.0	2.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Walking	6.9	24.0	5.9	11.5	9.9	29.8	11.1	0.0	12.4
Other	4.3	1.0	7.9	0.8	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It appears that respondents are happy overall with the method of transport they use to get to and from work; the majority already used the form of transport they indicated would be their preferred method. However, in most cases, a relatively high proportion would prefer the car as an alternative. For example, while 52.7% of bicycle users would prefer to continue to cycle to work, 44.5% would prefer to use a car (see Table 3.20). Similarly, 69.8% of those who currently walk to work stated that they would like to continue walking, while 21% would prefer to drive, and almost eight per cent would prefer to use public transport.

Table 3.20: Actual and Preferred Method of Transport

Preferred Method of Transport	Actual Method of Transport							Total (N = 613)
	Car (n = 411)	Train/Dart/Luas (n = 32)	Bus (n = 40)	Bicycle (n = 23)	Motor cycle (n = 7)	Walking (n = 78)	Other (n = 22)	
Car	81.5	20.3	23.3	44.5	0.0	21.0	41.9	69.7
Train/Dart/Luas	6.0	68.9	21.4	0.0	46.9	3.3	0.0	5.4
Bus	3.1	0.0	47.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	6.9
Bicycle	2.8	10.9	0.0	52.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Motorcycle	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.0	1.6	0.0	1.2
Walking	5.3	0.0	8.4	2.8	10.1	69.8	3.6	13.2
Other	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.6	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	103.7

When asked what facilities they would like to see improved, 38.9% of respondents said they would like local buses to be improved, and 34.4% would like existing roads to be improved (see Table 3.21). Few, just 5.6%, would like to see more roads built and just 6.6% would like conditions for cyclists and pedestrians improved.

Table 3.21: Travel Facilities Respondents would like to see improved, First and Second Mention

	First Mention (n = 1192)	Second Mention (n = 1142)
Improving Local Bus Services	38.9	23.7
Improving Local Rail Services	9.7	14.6
Improving Long Distance Rail Services	2.4	4.3
Improving Conditions for Cyclists and Pedestrians	6.6	14.1
Improving the Roads we already have	34.4	27.2
Building more Roads	5.6	14.2
Other	2.3	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0

No matter which form of transport respondents used to travel to work, a high proportion in each group recommended that local bus services be improved. For example, while 30.8% of car users recommended that existing roads be improved, 45.1% believed local bus services should be improved (see Table 3.22).

Table 3.22: Travel Facilities Respondents would like to see improved, by Actual Method of Transport used by respondent

	Actual Method of Transport							
	Car (n = 412) %	Train (n = 31) %	Bus (n = 40) %	Bicycle (n = 23) %	Motor Cycle (n = 7) %	Walking (n = 77) %	Other (n = 23) %	Total (N = 613) %
Improving Local Bus Services	30.8	45.2	72.5	39.1	42.9	39.0	30.4	38.9
Improving Local Rail Services	8.0	41.9	20.0	8.7	0.0	9.1	4.3	9.7
Improving Long Distance Rail Services	1.5	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	4.3	2.4
Improving Conditions for Cyclists and Pedestrians	2.7	3.2	0.0	39.1	0.0	20.8	0.0	6.6
Improving the Roads we already have	45.1	0.0	7.5	0.0	14.3	16.9	60.9	34.4
Building more Roads	9.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	28.6	3.9	0.0	5.6
Other	2.9	6.5	0.0	0.0	14.3	3.9	0.0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.4.2 Length of Commute

The average daily commute for respondents, i.e. travel to and from work, was 58.7 minutes. Those in urban areas tended to have a longer commute, when compared with those living in rural areas. In addition, younger people faced a longer commute than older people. Indeed, respondents aged 18-30 living in Dublin had a longer commute (85.6 minutes) than any other group of respondents (see Table 3.23). Those aged between 50 and 64 and living in big towns and cities excluding Dublin had the shortest commute (31.9 minutes).

Table 3.23: Average Commuting time of Respondents in Minutes, classified by Age Group and Location of Household

	<1,500 (n = 217)	1,500- 9,999 (n = 80)	Big towns/cities (excl. Dublin) (n = 92)	Dublin (n = 190)	Total (N = 579)
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
18-30	50.3	50.0	88.5	85.6	70.0
31-49	53.9	52.0	44.21	60.3	53.9
50-64	43.7	41.9	31.9	67.3	49.5
Total	50.6	49.2	57.8	72.4	58.7

Men had a higher average commute than women (64.7 minutes and 51.1 minutes respectively). This higher average was the same across all age groups, apart from those aged 65 and over, and areas in which respondents lived, apart from those living in small towns (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12).

Figure 3.11 Average Length of Time of Daily Commute, by Gender and Age Group of Respondent

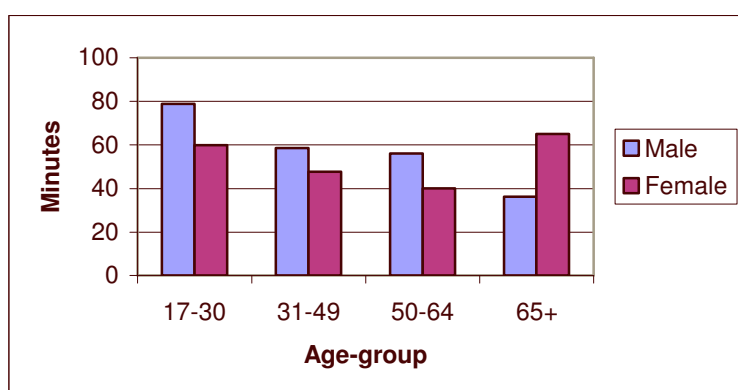
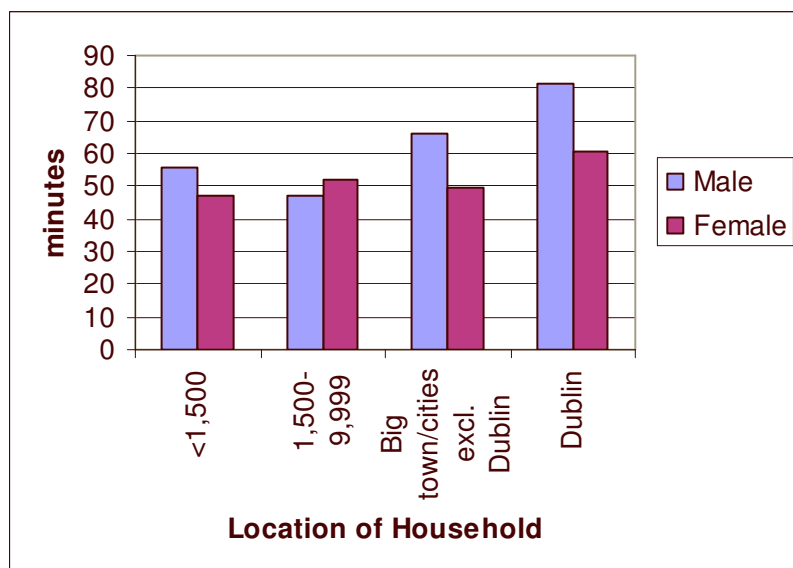


Figure 3.12: Average Length of Time of Daily Commute, by Gender and Location of Household of Respondent



3.4.3 Perception of Stressfulness of Commute

Overall, employed respondents indicated that they did not have a great deal of difficulty in getting to and from work: Approximately three-quarters of employed people (73%) found their commuting unstressful and approximately one-quarter (27%) found it stressful. Those most likely to find their commute stressful were men in the age group 18-30 (32.8%) and women in the age group 31-49 (33.6%).

Table 3.24: Perception of Whether Commute to and from work was stressful or unstressful, by gender and age group of respondent

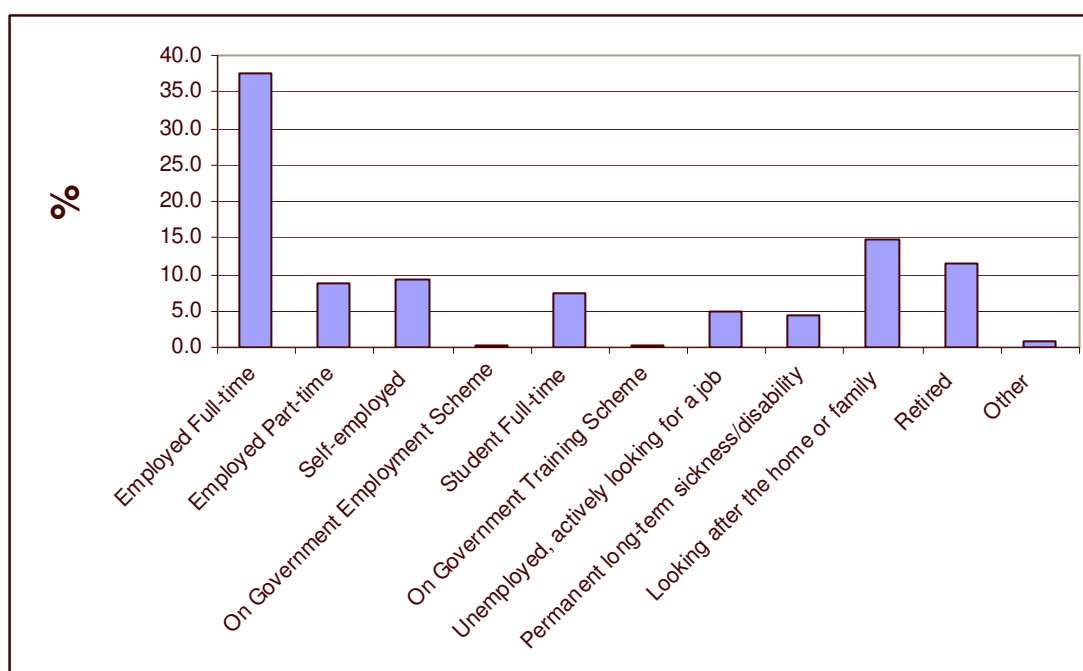
	18-30 (n = 211)		31-49 (n = 262)		50-64 (n = 113)		65+ (n = 5)		Total (n = 591)
	%		%		%		%		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Stressful	32.8	25.0	24.4	33.6	23.1	11.1	0.0	50.0	27.0
Unstressful	67.2	75.0	75.6	66.4	76.9	88.9	100.0	50.0	73.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.5 Work Characteristics of the Sample

3.5.1 Employment Status

Fifty-six per cent of all respondents were employed at the time of the study, and 44% were not. Almost 40% of all respondents were employed full-time, while 14.8% were at home full-time looking after their family and 11.8% were retired (see Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13: Employment Situation of All Respondents



The majority of men, 66% of those in the sample, were employed, and 33.4% were not (see Table 3.25). The majority of all females, 54.2%, were not employed, while 45.8% were.

Table 3.25: Percentage Distribution of Employment Status by Gender

Employment Status	Male (n = 597) %	Female (n = 615) %	Total (N = 1212) %
Employed	66.6	45.8	56.0
Not employed	33.4	54.2	44.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of the 56.0% of respondents who were in employment, 82.1% were employed full-time, while 18.0% were either working part-time or job-sharing. As can be seen in Table 3.26, a higher percentage of women worked part-time or job-shared.

Table 3.26: Percentage of Respondents who work full-time, part-time or job-share, by Gender of Respondent

	Male (n = 399) %	Female (n = 281) %	Total (N = 680) %
Full-time	93.7	65.5	82.1
Part-time	6.3	29.5	15.9
Job share	0.0	5.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A third (33.6%) of those not currently employed, looked after the home or family (see Table 3.27). The majority of this group, 97.2%, were women. Just over a quarter of all respondents (25.9%) were retired and 9.8% were long-term sick or had a disability. Seventeen per cent were studying full-time. Males were more likely to be students than females (22.5% vs. 13.5%). Just over ten per cent (11.3%) were unemployed and actively looking for a job.

Table 3.27: Current Activity of those not currently Employed, by Gender

	Male (n = 200) %	Female (n = 333) %	Total (N = 533) %
Full-time student	22.5	13.5	16.9
On government training scheme	1.5	0.3	.8
Unemployed, currently looking for work	17.5	7.5	11.3
Permanent /long-term sickness/disability	14.0	7.2	9.8
Looking after the home/family	2.5	52.3	33.6
Retired	39.5	17.7	25.9
Other	2.5	1.5	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.5.2 Employment Status and Highest Educational Achievement

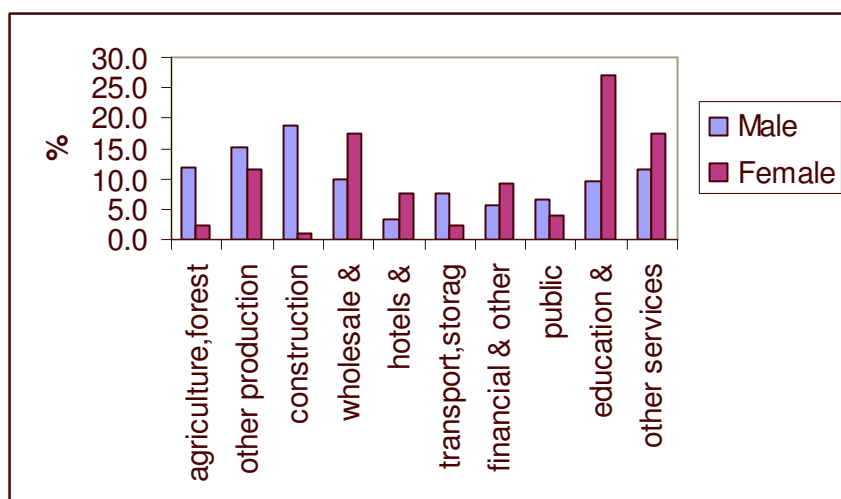
The results indicate that an individual's educational achievement was related to their employment status. Just over half, 52.0% of those who were employed, had third level education, compared with 27.4% of those who were not employed.

Table 3.28: Employment Status of Respondents, by Highest Level of Education

	Employed (n = 679) %	Not Employed (n = 533) %	Total (N = 1212) %
Primary	11.0	36.4	22.2
Secondary	37.0	36.2	36.7
Third Level	52.0	27.4	41.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents were asked what was the main activity of the organisation for which they worked. As can be seen in Figure 3.14 below, more men than women worked in production and construction. Over half (53.7%) of men worked in agriculture, production, construction and transport compared with just 17.5% of women.

Figure 3.14: Main Type of Business in which respondents who were employed, or previously employed worked, by Gender



3.5.3 Characteristics of Respondents with Supervisory Role

Just over a quarter of all respondents (28.3%) supervised or managed personnel. A slightly higher proportion of men than women supervised personnel (57.6% and 42.4% respectively). Men also tended to supervise more staff than their female counterparts; men supervised an average of 26.5 staff, compared to the average of 15.1 people that females supervised. A higher proportion of those educated to third level supervised personnel in their jobs (38.2%) compared to those with primary education (16.4%) and those with secondary education (22.2%). In addition, those with tertiary education supervised a greater number of people, on average, than those with primary or secondary education. Those with primary education supervised an average of 11.9 people, compared with those with secondary and tertiary education, who supervised an average of 17.3

and 25.7 people respectively. Indeed, males educated to third level education were the group most likely to be in a supervisory role (43.6%).

Table 3.29: Percentage of Respondents who Supervise other Workers, by Sex and Highest Educational Achievement of Respondent

	Primary (n=457)		Secondary (n = 271)		Tertiary (n = 386)		Total (N = 1114)
	%		%		%		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Supervisory Role	17.5	15.5	37.4	22.9	43.8	35.5	27.9
No Supervisory Role	82.1	84.5	62.6	77.1	56.4	65.5	72.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.6 Work and Work Arrangements

3.6.1 Employment Status of Respondents

Respondents who were employed were contracted to work an average of 36.2 hours per week, and actually worked 39.5 hours. While the majority of employed respondents worked additional hours, men tended to work a greater number of extra hours than women, with men contracted to work an average of 40.3 hours and actually working 44.3 and women contracted to work 30.6 and actually working 32.8. Respondents who were more highly educated also tended to work longer hours than they were contracted to work; those with third level education worked 4.6 hours extra per week, compared with those with primary education only (2.2 hours) or secondary education (1.9) (see Table 3.30).

However, those who were more highly educated tended to be contracted to work a shorter week.

Table 3.30: Average Number of Hours Contracted to Work, Actually Worked and Average Difference, by Employed Respondents

	Hours contracted to work per week (N = 664)	Hours actually worked per week (N = 667)	Difference (N = 670)
Primary	37.0	39.6	2.2
Secondary	37.0	39.1	1.9
Third Level	35.0	39.7	4.6
Total	36.2	39.5	3.1

Over half of all respondents who worked additional hours stated that their primary reason for doing so was because they had too much work to finish in their normal day (29.0%) or because of

the nature of the job (24.8%). Women were more likely to say there was too much to finish in a working day (43.2%) compared to men (22.6%) and men were more likely to say it was due to the nature of the job (27.2% vs. 19.5% of women). Twelve per cent worked extra hours to make more money and thirteen per cent because their employer expected it.

Table 3.31: Reasons for Working Additional Hours among Employed Respondents, by Gender

	Male (n = 261) %	Female (n = 118) %	Total (N = 379)
Too much work to finish in working day	22.6	43.2	29.0
To make more money (overtime)	14.6	6.8	12.1
Employer expects it	14.2	11.0	13.2
To make commute easier	1.5	1.7	1.6
Colleagues all work more hours	1.1	3.4	1.8
Organisation encourages it	0.4	0.8	0.5
Covering for staff absences	1.9	5.9	3.2
Like my job	2.7	0.0	1.8
Nature of the job	27.2	19.5	24.8
Not want to let down people I work with	1.5	0.8	1.3
To meet deadlines	8.0	1.7	6.1
Other	4.2	5.1	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.6.2 Availability and Take-up of Flexible Working

Just over a third (36.5%) of all respondents stated that they have ‘a fair amount’ or ‘a great deal’ of flexibility in their jobs. However, 27.1% have none at all, and a further 16.7% only have very little.

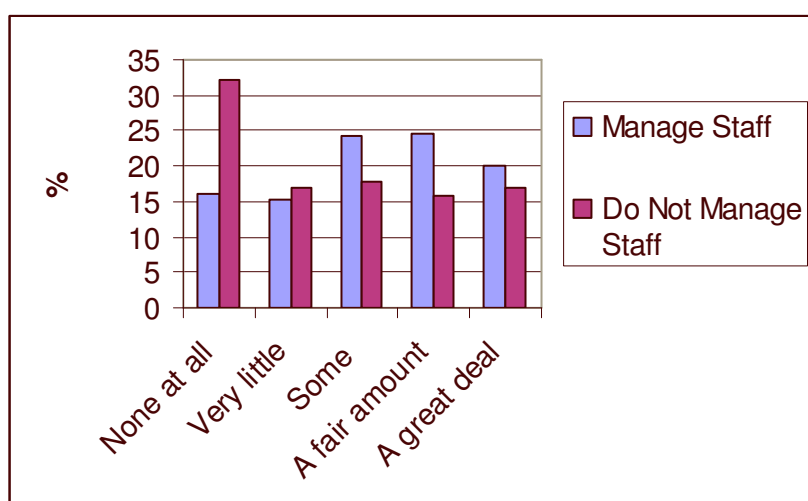
As can be seen in Table 3.32 below, respondents working in private companies were more likely to state that they had ‘a fair amount’ or ‘a great deal’ of individual flexibility in their job (42.0%), while only 20.0% of respondents working in the Community/NGO sector stated the same. Those working in the public sector fell somewhere in between, with 24.5% saying that they had either a fair amount or a great deal of flexibility.

Table 3.32: Perception of Extent of Individual Flexibility among Employed Respondents, by Type of Company

	Public (n = 196) %	Private (n = 457) %	Community/NG O (n = 10) %	Total (n = 663) %
None at all	39.3	21.7	40.0	27.1
Very little	16.8	16.4	30.0	16.7
Some	19.4	19.9	10.0	19.6
A fair amount	16.8	19.7	10.0	18.7
A great deal	7.7	22.3	10.0	17.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Those who managed staff were more likely to indicate that they had more flexibility than those who did not manage staff (see Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15: Perception of Extent of Individual Flexibility among Employed Respondents, by whether or not Respondent Manages Staff



A higher percentage among the non-employed, 57.3%, stated that they had had no flexibility in their work hours in their last job and 15.6% stated that they had had very little, while just 18.5% had a great deal or a fair amount of flexibility. Overall, respondents who had been out of the workforce longer reported that they had had less individual flexibility in their last job ($r = 0.14$, $N = 425$, $p = .004$).

Respondents were asked to indicate whether a variety of forms of flexible working were available to them in their workplaces, and whether or not they themselves availed of each one. These are

presented in Tables 3.33 to 3.45. As can be seen below, flexible working hours, including flexi-time and personalised hours, appeared to be the most popular form of flexible working among all employed respondents.

Part-time working, half time or less, was only available to a quarter of all employed respondents and was taken up by 31% of these. However it was much more likely to be available to women than to men (41.9% vs. 17.9%) and more women than men were likely to take it up (41.6% of women vs. 15.7% of men). Part-time work (half time or more) was also only available to about one quarter of the sample –though again it was more likely to be available to women (36% vs. 14.2% of men). However, roughly equal proportions of men and women availed of it (approximately one quarter of whom it was available to). Job-sharing was less popular than part-time working, being taken up by only 15% of people who were offered it. However, many more women job shared than men (22.4% of those to whom it was available vs. only 3.4% of men). Flexi-time was available to just a quarter of all employed respondents,

but was taken-up by 62.4% of those who had the opportunity to avail of it (56.6% of women and 67.9% of men). Similarly, personalised hours were available to just 18.5% of employed respondents, but taken up by 67%. (60% of women and 73% of men). Other forms of flexible hours were also popular – taken up by 60% of those who had the opportunity to avail of them. Tele-working/working from home was not widely available to respondents, being offered to 8.3% of respondents, although the level of take-up was high – about 60% (75% of men to whom it was available and 48.3% of women). Term-time was also available to very few (5.5%), but for those to whom it was available, a relatively high proportion availed of it: 25.9% of women and 44.4% of men. These figures suggest that when various modes of flexible working are made available to employees, they are in many cases likely to avail of them. The figures also reflect the variety of modes of flexible working which can meet needs of different employees. It is interesting that our study reinforces the results of Drew et al (2002) to the extent that women are more likely to avail of part-time working, whereas men are more likely to favour modes of flexible working which are not as intrusive in the normal full-time routine and presumably do not significantly affect their income or promotion prospects as directly, such as flexible hours and tele-working. While term time was not widely available, it is interesting to note the high take up by men, suggesting that this may be a mode which suits men and enables them to combine work with family life.

Table 3.33: Availability and Take-up of Part-time working (half time or less), among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male (n = 390) %	Female (n = 270) %	Total (N = 660) %
Yes	17.9	41.9	27.7
No	80.5	54.8	70.0
Don't know	1.5	3.3	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male (n = 70) %	Female (n = 113) %	Total (N = 183) %
Yes	15.7	41.6	31.7
No	84.3	58.4	68.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.34: Availability and Take-up of Part-time working (more than half time), among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male (n = 387) %	Female (n = 267) %	Total (N = 651) %
Yes	14.2	36.0	23.1
No	84.2	61.0	74.8
Don't know	1.6	3.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male (n = 56) %	Female (n = 96) %	Total (N = 152) %
Yes	23.2	24.0	23.7
No	76.8	76.0	76.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.35: Availability and Take-up of Job-sharing among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male (n = 389) %	Female (n = 264) %	Total (N = 653) %
Yes	15.2	32.2	22.1
No	82.3	63.6	74.7
Don't know	2.6	4.2	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male (n = 58) %	Female (n = 85) %	Total (N = 143) %
Yes	3.4	22.4	14.7
No	96.6	77.6	85.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.36: Availability and Take-up of Other Reduced Hours among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 384) %	(n = 266) %	(N = 650) %
Yes	7.6	19.9	12.6
No	89.3	73.3	82.8
Don't know	3.1	6.8	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 31) %	(n = 49) %	(N = 80) %
Yes	19.4	20.4	20.0
No	80.6	79.6	80.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.37: Availability and Take-up of Flexi-time among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 390) %	(n = 271) %	(n = 661) %
Yes	20.5	28.8	23.9
No	78.7	69.0	74.7
Don't know	0.8	2.2	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 81) %	(n = 76) %	(n = 157) %
Yes	67.9	56.6	62.4
No	32.1	43.4	37.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.38: Availability and Take-up of Personalised Hours among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 388) %	(n = 267) %	(N = 655) %
Yes	16.5	21.3	18.5
No	83.0	76.0	80.2
Don't know	0.5	2.6	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 63) %	(n = 55) %	(n = 118) %
Yes	73.0	60.0	66.9
No	27.0	40.0	33.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.39: Availability and Take-up of Compressed Working Week among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 389) %	(n = 268) %	(N = 657) %
Yes	8.0	11.9	9.6
No	91.3	85.1	88.7
Don't know	0.8	3.0	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 31) %	(n = 30) %	(N = 61) %
Yes	41.9	20.0	31.1
No	58.1	80.0	68.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.40: Availability and Take-up of other flexible hours among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 390) %	(n = 267) %	(N = 657) %
Yes	7.9	13.5	10.2
No	90.5	83.1	87.5
Don't know	1.5	3.4	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 30) %	(n = 35) %	(N = 65) %
Yes	66.7	54.3	60.0
No	33.3	45.7	40.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.41: Availability and Take-up of working from home (e-working, tele-working) among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 389) %	(n = 273) %	(N = 662) %
Yes	6.2	11.4	8.3
No	93.6	87.2	90.9
Don't know	0.3	1.5	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 24) %	(n = 29) %	(N = 53) %
Yes	75.0	48.3	60.4
No	25.0	51.7	39.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.42: Availability and Take-up of working from home (piece work) among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 388) %	(n = 266) %	(N = 654) %
Yes	3.1	4.5	3.7
No	96.6	94.0	95.6
Don't know	0.3	1.5	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 12) %	(n = 11) %	(N = 23) %
Yes	75.0	45.5	60.9
No	25.0	54.5	39.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.43: Availability and Take-up of other flexible place of work among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 389) %	(n = 265) %	(N = 654) %
Yes	3.3	3.0	3.2
No	96.4	95.5	96.0
Don't know	0.3	1.5	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 13) %	(n = 8) %	(N = 21) %
Yes	84.6	50.0	71.4
No	15.4	50.0	28.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.44: Availability and Take-up of term-time working among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 389) %	(n = 270) %	(n = 659) %
Yes	2.3	10.0	5.5
No	96.9	87.4	93.0
Don't know	0.8	2.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 9) %	(n = 27) %	(n = 36) %
Yes	44.4	25.9	30.6
No	55.6	74.1	69.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.45: Availability and Take-up of other forms of flexible working among Employed Respondents, by gender

Availability	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 389) %	(n = 267) %	(n = 656) %
Yes	2.6	1.5	2.1
No	96.7	95.5	96.2
Don't know	0.8	3.0	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondent Availing	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 11) %	(n = 4) %	(n = 15) %
Yes	72.7	100.0	80.0
No	27.3	0.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.6.3 Ideal Working Arrangement

Respondents were also asked to indicate what their ideal working arrangement would be. As can be seen from Table 3.46 below, 37.6% of all employed respondents would like to work full-time, fixed hours. While quite a number of respondents indicated that their ideal working arrangement would be to have flexi-time, part-time hours or personalised hours, this tended to be approximately the same number of respondents who were currently availing of these particular arrangements. In addition, respondents who were currently availing of a certain type of flexible working arrangement, such as tele-working, did not mention that this would be their ideal arrangement, which explains the drop between the actual and ideal working arrangements.

Table 3.46 Ideal Working Arrangement of Employed Respondents, First and Second Mention, by Gender

	First mention			Second mention		
	Male (n = 372) %	Female (n = 262) %	Total (N = 634) %	Male (n = 266)	Female (n = 189)	Total (N = 455) %
Full-time, fixed hours	46.2	25.6	37.7	5.6	3.7	4.8
Part-time, half-time or less	3.0	14.9	7.9	4.1	6.3	5.1
Part-time, more than half-time	4.6	9.5	6.6	5.6	7.4	6.4
Job-share	3.5	7.6	5.2	4.9	6.9	5.7
Other reduced hours	5.6	2.7	4.4	9.4	7.9	8.8
Flexitime	14.2	19.5	16.4	15.0	18.0	16.3
Personalised Hours	12.1	9.9	11.2	21.4	17.5	19.8
Compressed Working Week	3.0	3.1	3.0	14.3	13.2	13.8

Other flexible hours	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.8	2.6	1.5
Work from Home (e-working, teleworking)	2.2	3.8	2.8	7.9	7.9	7.9
Work from Home (piecework)	1.1	0.4	0.8	4.5	2.6	3.7
Other flexible place of work	0.3	0.0	0.2	2.3	0.0	1.3
Term-time working	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.1	3.7	2.2
Other forms of flexible working	1.9	0.4	1.3	3.0	2.1	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Overall, respondents appear to be happy with their current arrangement: of those who availed of full time work, 43% say it is their ideal arrangement, and 50% of those who work part-time (half time or less) say that this is their ideal arrangement.

However, of those who work full-time, 18% indicated that flexi-time would be their ideal work arrangement. Over a quarter of those currently working on a compressed working week would like to work flexi-time. Similarly, of those working from home, 36.8% indicated that they would like to avail of personalised hours and 25% of those on reduced hours would like to have personalised hours.

Many respondents not currently working full-time indicated that their ideal arrangement would be to work full-time – for example, twenty per cent of those currently who currently have flexible hours other than flexi-time, personalised hours or a compressed working week would like to work full-time. These responses are presented in Table 3.47, which compares the actual working arrangements of people with their ideal working arrangement.

Table 3.47 Comparison of Actual Working Arrangements with Ideal Working Arrangements (First Mention)

Avail of	Ideal Working Arrangement													
	Full time work fixed	Pt time (0.5 time/less)	Pt (more 0.5 time)	Job share	Other reduced hours	Flexi time	Personalised hours	Compressed work week	Other flexible hours	Work, home-tele-work	Work, home-piece work	Other flex place of work	Term time working	Other form, flexible working
Full time work fixed	43.1	2.7	4.6	3.9	4.6	17.7	11.7	3.1	0.8	2.9	1.0	0.2	2.1	1.6
Pt (0.5 time/less)	9.4	49.7	12.0	3.4	3.2	14.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pt (more 0.5 time)	5.0	21.1	41.9	0.0	2.7	16.7	12.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Job share	14.1	2.3	0.0	48.1	0.0	19.0	11.3	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other reduced hours	17.4	0.0	13.0	12.0	19.2	3.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Flexi time	14.3	2.9	6.7	4.8	0.8	36.4	5.5	11.9	0.8	11.1	3.2	0.0	0.0	1.7
Personalised hours	9.2	0.9	6.3	1.9	4.4	21.2	33.6	3.7	1.0	15.8	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Compressed work week	15.0	7.4	10.1	9.0	0.0	27.5	11.0	10.6	0.0	9.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other flexible hours	21.3	3.5	11.6	0.0	7.7	14.5	18.6	2.6	5.0	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Work, home-tele-work	7.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	2.9	22.7	36.8	0.0	0.0	24.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Work, home-piece work	7.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.8	27.4	35.5	0.0	0.0	12.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other flex place of work	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.8	27.2	0.0	0.0	29.5	0.0	6.3	0.0	5.7
Term time working	9.4	4.7	9.9	7.1	0.0	14.5	23.2	0.0	0.0	15.7	0.0	0.0	15.5	0.0
Other form flex working	12.9	0.0	17.7	0.0	0.0	14.8	31.0	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.4

Many respondents were working flexibly so that they could have more time for caring responsibilities. This was the most important reason given by 23.2%. Women were more likely to give this reason than men (32.8% vs. 13.7%). The next most important reason given for working flexibly was to spend more time with the family. This applied to 20.7% of female respondents and 17.1% of males. Some 14.2% said they worked flexibly in order to make their commute easier and 11.6% did so in order to have more free time for leisure.

Table 3.48: Most important and next most important Reason for availing of a flexible working arrangement, by gender of respondent

	Most important			Next most important		
	Male (n = 117)	Female (n = 116)	Total (N = 233)	Male (n = 116)	Female (n = 116)	Total (N = 232)
To have time for caring responsibilities	13.7	32.8	23.2	17.3	14.6	15.8
To spend more time with family	17.1	20.7	18.9	30.7	41.7	36.8
To make commute easier	17.1	11.2	14.2	10.7	9.4	9.9
To have more free time for leisure/hobby	13.7	9.5	11.6	14.7	8.3	11.1
Because of own illness/disability	1.7	0.9	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.6
To have time for education/training	8.5	5.2	6.9	8.0	7.3	7.6
Could only find part-time work	3.4	5.2	4.3	2.7	5.2	4.1
Other	24.8	14.7	19.7	14.7	13.5	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The majority of those who were working flexibly (68.3%) found it ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to get a flexible working arrangement in their job, and a further 17.1% found it ‘somewhat easy’. Just 14.6% found it difficult to some degree, of whom only 1.7% found it ‘very difficult’. As can be seen from Table 3.4.9, women tended to find it more difficult to get a flexible working arrangement, particularly those in the age groups 31-49 and 50-64. Given women’s greater caring responsibilities in these age groups, this finding is cause for some concern.

Table 3.49: Perception of ease/difficulty of getting a flexible working arrangement, by age group and gender of respondents

	Male (n = 114)			Female (n = 118)			Total (N = 232)
	%			%			%
	18-30	31-49	50-64	18-30	31-49	50-64	
Very easy	65.2	43.8	35.0	48.1	43.1	38.5	45.4
Easy	26.1	20.8	40.0	22.2	20.0	23.1	22.9
Somewhat easy	6.5	20.8	25.0	22.2	16.9	23.1	17.1
Somewhat difficult	0.0	10.4	0.0	7.4	12.3	3.8	9.6
Difficult	2.2	4.2	0.0	0.0	3.1	7.7	3.3
Very difficult	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	3.8	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The majority of employed respondents with children felt that the company that they were working for took their caring needs into account. Sixty-seven per cent thought their immediate supervisor took their caring needs into account ‘well’ or ‘very well’ and 61.0% answered the same in relation to their employer (see Tables 3.50 and 3.51). However, respondents seem to get greater support from the people they worked with. Three-quarters thought their colleagues took their caring needs into account well or very well (See Table 3.52).

Table 3.50: Perception of How Well Employed Respondents Feel their Supervisor takes their Caring Needs into Account

	Male (n = 106)	Female (n = 97)	Total (N = 203)
	%		
Not at all well	5.7	14.4	9.9
Not too well	5.7	4.1	4.9
So-So	22.6	13.4	18.2
Well	20.8	25.8	23.2
Very well	45.3	42.3	43.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.51: Perception of How Well Employed Respondents Feel their Employer Takes their Caring Needs into Account

	Male (n = 110) %	Female (103) %	Total (N = 213) %
Not at all well	11.8	11.7	11.7
Not too well	7.3	6.8	7.0
So-so	20.9	19.4	20.2
Well	24.5	18.4	21.6
Very well	35.5	43.7	39.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.52: Perception of How Well Employed Respondents Feel their Colleagues Takes their Caring Needs into Account

	Male (n = 122) %	Female (n = 105) %	Total (N = 227) %
Not at all well	3.3	6.7	4.8
Not too well	2.5	1.9	2.2
So-so	16.4	19.0	17.6
Well	27.9	21.0	24.7
Very well	50.0	51.4	50.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents were asked whether they felt flexible working had a positive or a negative effect on their career. The majority of those who had a flexible working arrangement (49.1%) felt that it had neither a negative nor a positive effect on their career. Forty-one per cent felt it had a ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ effect on their career, while just ten per cent thought it had a ‘negative’ or ‘very negative’ effect. Younger respondents were more likely to feel that it had neither a positive nor negative effect on their career, whereas female respondents were more likely to think it had a negative effect.

Among those who were not working flexibly, 38% stated that their primary reason for this was that they were content with their current working arrangements, and a further 12% did not think it was possible to do their job flexibly. However, 35.4% stated that primary reason they were not working flexibly was that flexible working arrangements were not available to them. Few respondents were concerned about the possible negative effects flexible working would have on their career: just one per cent were concerned it would affect their career progression and almost none (0.3%) felt that it would affect their job security. In total, half of non-flexible workers said

that the lack of availability of flexible working arrangements was the reason they were not working flexibly.

Table 3.53: Primary and Secondary Reasons for Not Working Flexibly among Employed Respondents

	First Response (N = 378) %	Second Response (N = 377) %
Content with current work arrangements	38.3	22.2
It is not available to me	35.4	18.2
Could not afford any reduction in my income	6.3	22.2
Don't think it is possible to do my job flexibly	12.1	22.5
Concerned it would affect my career progression	1.1	2.0
Concerned it would affect my job security	1.1	2.0
Concerned about the extra workload for my colleagues	0.3	1.7
Have requested flexible working, awaiting response	0.5	1.0
Concerned it would affect my pension	0.0	1.7
Other	5.0	6.6
Total	100.0	100.0

A higher proportion of females working flexibly, 94.9% were satisfied with their current work hours than females who were not working flexibly, 81.9%. However, there was almost no difference between males who had and did not have a flexible working arrangement in terms of satisfaction with their current working hours.

3.7 Attitudes and Experiences of Non-Employed Respondents

Respondents who were no longer in the workforce had stopped working for a number of reasons. Just under twenty per cent had retired, 21.6% had stopped work as a result of childbirth or caring for children or older, sick or disabled relatives, 14.2% had stopped working because of an illness or disability and 12.3% were studying or training. A small number of respondents, just 10% of those not currently employed, had stopped working because they were obliged to do so by their employer (i.e. as a result of redundancy, early retirement, business closure or dismissal), or had sold their own business or farm, and a further 4.6% were not working because they had reached

the end of their contract. A small proportion of respondents who were not employed, 10.3%, had stopped working after getting married, or as a result of the marriage bar.

Table 3.54: Reasons for Stopping Work among Previously Employed Respondents, by Gender

Reasons	Male	Female	Total
	(n = 176) %	(n = 255) %	(N = 431) %
Retirement	30.7	12.2	19.7
Obliged to stop by employer	12.5	5.5	8.4
Childbirth/caring for children	1.1	29.8	18.1
Caring for old/ sick/ disabled persons	1.7	4.7	3.5
Marriage	0.0	14.5	8.6
Marriage bar	0.0	3.1	1.9
End of contract/ temporary job	3.4	5.5	4.6
Sale/ closure of own/ family business/farm	2.3	0.8	1.4
Study/ training	18.2	8.2	12.3
To pursue other interests	1.1	0.4	0.7
Own illness/ disability	22.7	8.2	14.2
Other	6.3	7.1	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The majority of respondents were not working at present for the reasons listed above: 16.4%, the majority of whom were women, stated that they would prefer to stay at home and care for their children, while a further 2.6% had caring commitments, 23.2% were retired and 15.1% had health problems. Almost 20% of respondents stated that the reason they were not working at present was because they were studying. 9.8% indicated that there was a lack of suitable jobs. Just one per cent of all those who were not employed were not working at present as they did not have suitable childcare or flexible working.

Table 3.55: Reasons for Not Working at present, among Non- Employed Respondents, by Gender

	Most important			Next most important		
	Male (n = 198) %	Female (n = 333) %	Total (N =531) %	Male (n = 197) %	Female (n = 333) %	Total (N =530) %
Prefer stay at home & care for children	1.5	25.2	16.4	0.5	7.5	4.9
Care commitments- old/sick/disabled person	1.0	3.6	2.6	3.0	3.6	3.4
Retired	32.3	17.7	23.2	7.1	5.7	6.2
Have health problems/disability	20.2	12.0	15.1	5.6	6.0	5.8
Am too old	3.0	12.6	9.0	10.7	12.0	11.5
Don't need to work	0.0	0.9	0.6	11.7	11.1	11.3
Lack of suitable jobs	14.1	7.2	9.8	9.1	8.4	8.7

Lack of accessible, affordable childcare	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.0	3.6	2.3
Lack of flexible working arrangements	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	1.2	0.8
Lack of education or training	1.5	1.2	1.3	3.0	5.4	4.5
I am studying	23.2	15.0	18.1	11.2	5.1	7.4
Other	2.0	3.6	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

A substantial number of respondents, 52% of all non-employed respondents, would “definitely” or “probably” *like* to work (or return to work) at some point. However, just 42.1% thought that they “definitely” or “probably” *would* work at some point in the future.

Table 3.56: Percentage of Non-Employed Respondents who would like to work in the future and likelihood of working in the future, by Gender

	Like to Work			Likelihood of Working		
	Male (n =196) %	Female (n = 329) %	Total (N = 525) %	Male (n = 197) %	Female (n = 329) %	Total (N = 526) %
Definitely not	34.7	38.9	37.3	39.6	39.2	39.4
Probably not	8.2	6.1	6.9	8.1	9.7	9.1
Not sure	1.0	5.5	3.8	6.6	11.2	9.5
Probably yes	10.2	17.0	14.5	10.2	13.7	12.4
Definitely yes	45.9	32.5	37.5	35.5	26.1	29.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Thirty-five per cent of respondents who would like to return to work said that further training or education would enable them to do so. Almost thirty per cent (28.6%) indicated that the availability of work suited to their skills would help them to return to work.

Eight per cent stated that affordable childcare facilities would enable them to return to work and flexible working arrangements or part-time/reduced hours were mentioned by 15.6% as the most important factors that would facilitate their re-entry to the labour force. Women were more likely to mention childcare and flexible working arrangements than men. When most important and second most important factors were taken into account, a total of 62.6% of the sample mentioned child care and flexible working arrangements as facilitators to their re-entry.

Table 3.57: Factors that would enable Respondents to return to work, among non-employed respondents who wish to return to work, by Gender

	Most important			Next most important		
	Male (n = 112) %	Female (n = 182) %	Total (N = 294) %	Male (n = 89) %	Female (n = 164) %	Total (N = 253) %
Further training/education	38.4	33.0	35.0	18.0	12.8	14.6
Availability of work suited to my skills	38.4	22.5	28.6	36.0	32.9	34.0
Affordable childcare near my home	0.0	9.3	5.8	2.2	4.9	4.0
Affordable childcare in the workplace	0.0	1.1	0.7	0.0	2.4	1.6
After school care facilities for children	0.9	2.2	1.7	1.1	4.9	3.6
Availability of part time/reduced hours	3.6	14.3	10.2	15.7	14.6	15.0
Flexible working arrangements	3.6	6.6	5.4	13.5	15.2	14.6
Care/support-other dependent family members	0.0	3.8	2.4	1.1	1.8	1.6
Better workplace supports-disabled people	2.7	0.0	1.0	6.7	3.0	4.3
Other	12.5	7.1	9.2	5.6	7.3	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The number of non-employed respondents who stated that their ideal working arrangement would be to work part-time was much higher than employed respondents, 40.3% and 14.5% respectively. Thirty-eight per cent would like to work full-time fixed hours, a similar proportion to the employed group. A smaller proportion of the non-employed respondents mentioned flexi-time or personalised hours as their ideal arrangement.

However, when their second mentioned ideal arrangement is taken into account, it may be seen in Table 3.58 that flexi-time and other forms of flexible working are favoured by this groups, generally in combination with something else.

Thus, in order to meet the needs of a diverse workforce and to recruit people into the workforce, creative policies for multi-mode arrangements will have to be the order of the day.

Table 3.58: Ideal Working Arrangements among Non-Employed Respondents

	First Mention (N = 528) %	Second Mention (N = 329) %
Full-time, fixed Hours	38.0	2.9
Flexitime	10.5	23.9
Part-time Working	37.3	22.5
Personalised Hours	5.4	12.5
Job-Sharing	3.0	7.9
Compressed Working Week	0.6	1.8
Teleworking/Work from Home	3.0	14.3
Term-time working	1.2	0.7
Other reduced hours	0.6	8.9
Other forms of flexible working	0.3	2.5
Other flexible hours	0.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0

3.8 Attitudes to Working Arrangements

In the next section of the study, all respondents were asked their attitudes about various aspects of flexible working. This section contained 26 statements presented in Likert format, on seven point scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The responses to these statements were factor analysed to identify the underlying dimensions in the items. The resulting dimensions or factors are shown in Table 3.59.

As may be seen in this table, seven factors emerged. The first contains the dimension, Support for Family Friendly Workplaces. It contains items such as “Working hours should be more flexible so that men and women can better meet family needs,” “Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs of mothers of young children in balancing their work and family life.” It also includes items expressing support for fathers in meeting their needs for work-life balance, e.g., “Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs of fathers of young children in balancing their work and family life” and “Fathers should have a right to take paternity leave on the birth or adoption of a new baby.”

Factor II, expresses the view that flexible working is compatible with fatherhood, being a manager and with success of the company. Those who would be low on the factor would see flexible working as incompatible with these things. It includes such statements as: “Men who work flexible hours can be just as serious about their career as anyone else,” “Part-time working/job-sharing should be available to managers as well as to non-managers,” and “Employers benefit too if workers are enabled to balance work and family life through flexible working.”

Factor III expresses the view that flexible working hampers career success. It is characterised by items such as: “You put your career on hold when you work part-time/job share” and “The reality is that if men worked part-time or job shared, they would be seen as less serious about their careers.”

Factor IV expresses the view that flexible working is more suitable for women.

Factor V, expresses the view that people resent other colleagues who use maternity leave or flexible working.

Factor VI contains statements which express negative attitudes or reservations concerning flexible working, such as: “While certain forms of flexible working such as part-time or job-sharing are a good idea, the reality is that they are a luxury most people can’t afford,” and “Other employees often have to pick up the slack when their colleagues work flexibly.”

Factor VII expresses support for flexible working hours, e.g., disagreement with “Workplaces function best when everyone comes in at the same time and leaves at the same time” and “Rigid working hours (e.g. 9 to 5) are often unnecessary and can lead to considerable stress for some people.”

**Table 3.59: Factor Analysis of Attitudes to Working Arrangements
(N=1212)**

Factor I: Support for Family Friendly Workplaces

Item No.	Varimax Rotated Loading
5. There should be a certain amount of paid leave in the case of a child's illness, so that parents do not need to use their own sick leave/ leave time	.77
9. Working hours should be more flexible so that men and women can better meet family needs	.58
12. Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs mothers of young children face in balancing their work and family life	.69
20. Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs fathers of young children face in balancing their work and family life	.72
22. Fathers should have a right to take paternity leave on the birth or adoption of a new baby	.63
% Variance:	18.3%
Cronbach's Alpha:	.78
	Cumulative % Variance: 18.3%

Factor II Belief that Flexible Working is Compatible with Fatherhood, Management and Company Success

2. Employers benefit too if workers are enabled to balance work and family life through flexible working	.47
10. Men who work flexible hours can be just as serious about their career as anyone else	.55
11. People who have flexible working should be entitled to the same opportunities for promotion as those working more regular hours	.66
18. More men need to take on flexible working in order to spend more time caring for their families	.48
21. Women who work flexible hours can be just as serious about their careers as anyone else	.59
26. Part-time working/job-sharing should be available to managers as well as to non-managers	.60
% Variance:	10.6%
Cronbach's Alpha:	.70
	Cumulative % Variance: 28.9%

Factor III Belief that Flexibility hampers Career Success

15. Women who work part-time or job-share are usually less serious about their careers	.63
16. You put your career on hold when you work part-time/job share	.73
17. To get ahead, employees have to work over and above normal hours	.63
24. The reality is that if men worked part-time or job shared, they would be seen as less serious about their careers	.46
25. To be viewed favourably by management, employees have to put their job ahead of family or personal life	.56
% Variance:	5.8%
Cronbach's Alpha:	.65
	Cumulative % Variance: 34.6%

Item No.	Varimax	Rotated	Loading
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Factor IV Belief that Flexible Working is More Suited to Women

6.	Working flexible hours is a more suitable option for women than men	.82
13.	Working part-time/job sharing is a more suitable option for women than men	.83
% Variance: 5.3%		Cumulative % Variance: 39.9%
Cronbach's Alpha: .68		

Factor V Belief that Employees Resent Colleagues who take Maternity Leave/Use Flexible Time

7.	Many employees are resentful when women take maternity leave	.77
14.	Other staff often resent a colleague taking flexible time	.68
% Variance: 4.3%		Cumulative % Variance: 44.2%
Cronbach's Alpha: .49		

Factor VI Negative Perceptions of Flexible Working

1.	While certain forms of flexible working such as part-time or job-sharing are a good idea, the reality is that they are a luxury most people can't afford	.73
3.	Other employees often have to pick up the slack when their colleagues work flexibly	.52
8.	While employers might like to facilitate workers' needs for flexible working, the reality is that they have a business to run	.57
% Variance: 4.3%		Cumulative % Variance: 48.5%
Cronbach's Alpha: .44		

Factor VII Positive Attitudes to Flexible Working Hours

19.	*Workplaces function best when everyone comes in at the same time and leaves at the same time	-.59
23.	Rigid working hours (e.g. 9 to 5) are often unnecessary and can lead to considerable stress for some people	.52
% Variance: 4.0%		Cumulative % Variance: 52.6%
Cronbach's Alpha: .39		

* Reversed composite score

As may be seen in Table 3.60, there is very strong support in the nationwide sample for flexible working patterns. The vast majority (80-90%) supported the statements in Factor I (Support for Family Friendly Workplaces). A very large majority (70 – 90%) also endorsed the statements in Factor II (Belief that Flexible Working is Compatible with Fatherhood, Management and Company Success).

However, the attitudes expressed in relation to Factor III indicate that people think that flexible working can hamper career success. For example, 51.2% agreed with the statement that “You put your career on hold when you work part-time/job share.” Respondents were also likely to think that “To get ahead, employees have to work over and above normal hours” (72% of the sample agreed with this). However, only a minority (28.3%) felt that women who worked part-time or job shared were less serious about their career. In contrast, however, a majority (60%) felt that “the reality is that if men worked part-time or job shared, they would be seen as less serious about their careers.” This illustrates the fact that men are perceived to be at a disadvantage if they work part-time or job share, whereas women are not. These attitudes reflect the ambivalence which people have. On the one hand they are supportive of flexible working patterns, and as shown in the section on attitudes to gender roles, these have become much more egalitarian over the last 25 years. Yet, when it comes to part-time working, this is seen as hampering career success for all, but mostly for men.

Furthermore, the attitudes in Factor VI show that a majority have a negative attitude to flexible working for several other reasons. Firstly, while it is seen as a good idea, it is also seen as a “luxury that most people cannot afford” (73.5% agreed). A majority also endorsed the statement that “while employers might like to facilitate workers’ needs, the reality is that they have a business to run” (83.6% agreed with this). Finally almost 60% felt that “other employees often have to pick up the slack when their colleagues work flexibly.” So these are some of the countervailing attitudes which modify the overall positive attitudes to flexible working.

In spite of this, a majority (66.2%) feels that “rigid working hours (e.g.9 to 5) are often unnecessary and can lead to considerable stress for some people” and a majority (55.4%) do not believe that “workplaces function best when everyone comes in at the same time and leaves at the same time” (Factor VII), indicating a readiness to accept a more flexible working environment.

3.9 Demographic determinants of attitudes to flexible working

Table 3.61 presents the results of an analysis of variance of the effects of demographic variables on attitudes to flexible working. It may be seen that women were significantly more supportive of family friendly workplaces, though both men and women were quite supportive. Women were also more likely to think that flexible working was compatible with fatherhood, management and company success. Men, on the other hand, were somewhat more likely to think that flexibility hampered career success.

The employed were more supportive of flexible working in all its dimensions than were the non-employed. Socio-economic status (SES) did not have as strong an effect as gender and employment status. There were mixed results based on SES; on the one hand there was somewhat more support for family friendly workplaces from people of lower socio-economic status. However, this group also thought that flexible working was more suitable for women.

Age was a significant determinant of four of the seven factors in the direction of younger people being more supportive of flexibility. In some cases the middle age group (35-49) was the most supportive of flexibility.

**Table 3.60 Attitudes to Working Arrangements: Percentage Responses to Items grouped by Factor
(N= 1212)**

Factor 1: Support for Family Friendly Workplaces

1. There should be a certain amount of paid leave in the case of a child's illness, so that parents do not need to use their own sick leave/leave time	DISAGREE	D. K, etc.		AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	3.4	3.7	3.7	54	21	13
	----- 10.5% -----			1.3 %	----- 88% -----	
2. Working hours should be more flexible so that men and women can better meet family needs	DISAGREE	D. K, etc.		AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	4	3.6	2	44.2	27.2	18.5
	----- 10.1% -----			.7 %	----- 89.9% -----	
3. Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs mothers of young children face in balancing their work and family life	DISAGREE	D. K, etc.		AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2.7	3.2	2.4	46.7	28.4	15.8
	----- 8.3% -----			.7 %	----- 91% -----	
4. Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the needs fathers of young children face in balancing their work and family life	DISAGREE	D. K, etc.		AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Strong
	4.2	5	6.2	25	29.2	30
	----- 15.4% -----			.6 %	----- 84% -----	

5. Fathers should have a right to take paternity leave on the birth or adoption of a new baby	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	4	4.2	4.4		17	21.4	47.8
	----- 12.6% -----				1.2 %	----- 86.2% -----	

Factor II Belief that Flexible Working is Compatible with Fatherhood, Management and Company Success

1. Employers benefit too if workers are enabled to balance work and family life through flexible working	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2	3.2	3.3		16.3	29.6	44.4
	----- 8.5% -----				1.3 %	----- 90.2% -----	

2. Men who work flexible hours can be just as serious about their career as anyone else	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2	2.3	4.2		12.6	26	52
	----- 8.5% -----				1.1 %	----- 90.4% -----	

3. People who have flexible working should be entitled to the same opportunities for promotion as those working more regular hours	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	Total						
	5	4	6.1		15.3	25.2	43.8
----- 15.1% -----			.7%	----- 84.2% -----			

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
4. More men need to take on flexible working in order to spend more time caring for their families	6.3	7.8	14		25	25.4	19.3
	----- 28.1 % -----			2%	----- 71.7 % -----		

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
5. Women who work flexible hours can be just as serious about their careers as anyone else	1.1	3	4.4		15.6	26.6	49
	----- 5.8 % -----			.4 %	----- 93.8 % -----		

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
6. Part-time working/job-sharing should be available to managers as well as to non-managers	6	4.7	7.6		18.2	28.4	34
	----- 18.3 % -----			.7%	----- 81 % -----		

Factor III Belief that Flexibility hampers Career Success

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
1. Women who work part-time or job-share are usually less serious about their careers	31.6	20.3	18.7		12.5	11	5
	----- 70.6 % -----			1.1 %	----- 28.3 % -----		

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
2. You put your career on hold when you work part-time/job share	15.2	16	16		22.7	18.5	10
	----- 47.2 % -----			1.6%	----- 51.2 % -----		

3. To get ahead, employees have to work over and above normal hours	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	8.3	8	11		21.5	22.8	27.6
	-----27.3%-----				.8 %	-----72%-----	

4. The reality is that if men worked part-time or job shared, they would be seen as less serious about their careers	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	11.2	13.3	14.3		23	19.4	17.8
	-----38.8 %-----				1.2%	-----60%-----	

5. To be viewed favourably by management, employees have to put their job ahead of family or personal life	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	10.4	9	11.8		22.3	20	25.4
	-----31.2%-----				1.2%	-----67.6%-----	

Factor IV Belief that Flexible Working is More Suited to Women

1. Working flexible hours is a more suitable option for women than men	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	9.5	10	8.3		17.6	22.6	30.8
	-----27.8 %-----				1.3%	-----71%-----	

2. Working part-time/job sharing is a more suitable option for women than men	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	8	9	9.4		20.7	25	27.5
	-----26.4%-----				.7 %	-----73%-----	

Factor V Belief that Employees Resent Colleagues who take Maternity Leave/Use Flexible Time

1. Many employees are resentful when women take maternity leave	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	23	18	17	15.6	12	11.8	
	----- 58 % -----			2.7 %	----- 39.3% -----		
2. Other staff often resent a colleague taking flexible time	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	9	12.7	19.2	28.2	16.4	10.6	
	----- 39% -----			4.1 %	----- 57% -----		

Factor VI Negative Perceptions of Flexible Working

1. While certain forms of flexible working such as part-time or job- sharing are a good idea, the reality is that they are a luxury most people can't afford	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	7.2	9.6	8.4	19.2	29	25.2	
	----- 25.2% -----			1.3 %	----- 73.5% -----		
2. Other employees often have to pick up the slack when their colleagues work flexibly	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	9.3	15	14.8	20.8	21.4	17.2	
	----- 39% -----			1.6 %	----- 59.3% -----		

3. While employers might like to facilitate workers' needs for flexible working, the reality is that they have a business to run

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2.8	4.4	8		23.4	29.3	30.8
	----- 15.2% -----			1.2%	----- 83.6% -----		

Factor VII Positive Attitudes to Flexible Working Hours

1. Workplaces function best when everyone comes in at the same time and leaves at the same time

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	18.7	21	15.7		13	12.2	18.7
	----- 55.4% -----			.8 %	----- 43.8% -----		

2. Rigid working hours (e.g. 9 to 5) are often unnecessary and can lead to considerable stress for some people

	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	8.3	9	14.8		20.2	19.3	26.7
	----- 32% -----			1.7%	----- 66.2% -----		

Table 3.61: Analysis of Variance: Main Effects of Four Demographic Variables on Factors Measuring Attitudes to Working Arrangements (N=1212)

	Gender		Employment Status		Socio-Economic Status		Age		
	Male (n=538)	Female (n=547)	Employed (n=621)	Not employed (n=464)	Low (n=754)	High (n=331)	18-34 (n=299)	35-49 (n=300)	50+ (n=486)
	1.Support for Family Friendly Workplaces	F=29.68*** 5.63	5.99	F=13.25*** 5.9 5.7		F=15.67*** 5.88 5.66		6.02	F=26.53*** 6.1 5.5
2. Belief that Flexible Working is Compatible with Fatherhood, Management and Company Success	F=51.85*** 5.45	5.87	F=19.81*** 5.75 5.53		F=0.422 ns 5.63 5.73		5.71	F=15.16*** 5.96 5.44	
3. Belief that Flexibility hampers Career Success	F=14.09*** 4.36	4.07	F=8.35** 4.13 4.33		F=0.02 ns 4.23 4.17		4.16	F=0.09 ns 4.18 4.27	
4. Belief that Flexible Working is More Suited to Women	F=8.83** 5.01	5.3	F=31.41*** 4.9 5.5		F=7.77** 5.27 4.89		4.8	F=10.62*** 4.99 5.48	
5. Belief that Employees Resent Colleagues who take Maternity Leave/Use Flexible Time	F=3.01 ns 3.82	3.99	F=4.13* 3.81 4.03		F=1.01 ns 3.95 3.81		3.77	F=0.91 ns 3.9 3.99	
6. Negative Perceptions of Flexible Working	F=9.09** 5.13	4.9	F=0.162 ns 5.03 4.98		F=1.66 ns 5.05 4.94		5.09	F=2.5 ns 4.86 5.06	
7. Positive Attitudes to Flexible Working Hours	F=52.42*** 4.13	4.83	F=21.85*** 4.64 4.26		F=17.59*** 4.31 4.86		4.43	F=7.5** 4.63 4.08	

3.10 Older Workers and Retirement Issues

One of the main foci of the study was older workers and work-life balance. This section deals with issues of retirement, flexibility and gradual retirement. Questions were asked of all respondents aged 50 and over, both currently employed and retired, and the attitudes of both groups were compared.

The average age those aged between 50 and 64 expected to retire was 64, while those aged over 65 expected to retire at 74. The majority in both age groups were positive about retiring at their expected retirement age. Just 36% would prefer to retire at a different age, and of this group, 67.9% would prefer to retire earlier.

Approximately 1.6% of all employed respondents were aged 65 or over, which is the same proportion within the Irish workforce (CSO, 2005b). Approximately a quarter of employed respondents aged 50 and over stated that they would prefer to continue working beyond 65, for a variety of reasons. Sixty-five per cent of this group wanted to do so because they enjoyed their job or working in general. A further 16.2% wanted to keep their own business or farm running, and eight per cent would like to continue, or have continued working for financial reasons.

Table 3.62: Reasons for Working Beyond 65 among Employed Respondents aged 50 and over who expect to retire after 65

	50-64 (n = 27) %	65 and over (n = 10) %	Total (N = 37) %
Enjoy my job/working	59.3	80.0	64.9
Financial Reasons	11.1	0.0	8.1
Social contact at work is important to me	3.7	0.0	2.7
Sense of accomplishment/fulfilment	3.7	0.0	2.7
To keep active	0.0	20.0	5.4
Want to keep running own business/farm	22.2	0.0	16.2
Other reason	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A fifth, 20.1%, of all employed respondents aged 50 and over claimed that they were not entitled to a pension of any kind, compared to 23.6% of all non-employed respondents. Just under 40% of employed and 45.2% of non-employed respondents stated that they were entitled to a State pension only. Only 8.5% of non-employed respondents were entitled to a pension from their

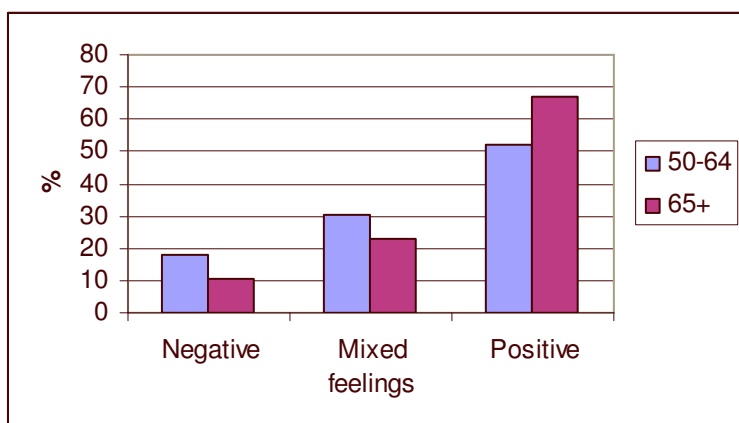
employer, compared to 16.8% of those employed, and 24.2% of employed respondents and 22.1% of non employed respondents indicated that they were entitled to both a State and employer’s pension.

Table 3.63: Pension Entitlements of Non-employed, retired respondents aged 50 and over

	% (N = 199)
No pension	23.8
State pension	45.3
Employers pension	8.8
Both State & Employers pension	22.1
Total	100.0

The average age at which non-employed respondents retired was 51.9 years. On average, women had retired at a much younger age than men, 43.5 and 61.1 respectively. Just over half of all retired respondents were ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ about retiring at the age they did. However, 66.7% of respondents who had retired at or over 65 indicated that they felt positive about retiring at the age they did, compared with just 56.8% of those who had retired at a younger age. Those who had retired before 65 were more likely to have negative or ‘mixed feelings’ about having retired when they did, compared to those who had waited until 65 or over to retire (see Figure 3.19).

Figure 3.19: Retired, non-employed respondents aged 50 and over: Feelings about retiring at the age they did, by age group



The average age at which respondents would have liked to have retired was 62.3, furthering indicating that a number of respondents would have preferred to have retired later than they actually did.

Twelve per cent of all non-employed respondents had retired later than 65. The reasons were broadly similar to those given by the employed group. However, half of this group indicated that the primary reason they had continued working was because they had enjoyed their job, and 25.7% had done so for financial reasons. Keeping active (42.8%) and to keep the respondent's own business running (19.7%) were among the most frequently mentioned among the secondary reasons.

Table 3.64: Reasons for Continuing Working after 65, Non-Employed Respondents

	Most important (N = 26) %	Next most important (N = 24) %
Enjoyed job/working	52.5	4.2
Financial reasons	25.7	16.0
Social contact at work	2.2	8.8
Sense of Accomplishment	0.0	2.1
To keep active	1.7	42.8
Wanted to keep own business/farm	15.8	19.7
Other reason	2.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Thirty-eight per cent of all non-employed respondents had retired. Of these, 21.6% had done so because it was the normal retirement age for their job, 17.1% had left as a result of caring responsibilities and 15% as a result of an illness or disability.

Just 40% of all respondents aged 50 and over stated that the organisation for which they worked had a mandatory retirement age. Of the companies that did have a mandatory retirement age, this age, in almost all cases (93.3%) was 65.

Of all the non-employed respondents who had retired before or at age 65, 21.3% had retired because it was the normal retirement age for their job, while almost twenty per cent had retired for caring or personal reasons - either to look after children or a dependent relative, to spend more time with their family or to pursue other interests. Eleven per cent found work too demanding or felt ready to retire and eight per cent had been made redundant, either voluntarily or involuntarily

Table 3.65: Reasons for Retiring among retired, non-employed respondents aged 50 and over

	Male (n = 94) %	Female (n = 101) %	Total (N = 195) %
Normal Retirement Age for my Job	33.0	10.9	21.5
Involuntary Redundancy	4.3	3.0	3.6
Offered good package to retire early	5.3	4.0	4.6
Work too demanding/stressful	4.3	5.0	4.6
Tired of working/ready to retire	12.8	2.0	7.2
Marriage	0.0	7.9	4.1
Marriage bar	0.0	16.8	8.7
Childbirth/caring for children	0.0	8.9	4.6
Care for family member/dependent persons	1.1	9.9	5.6
Spend more time with partner/family	7.4	5.9	6.7
To pursue other interests	1.1	3.0	2.1
Own illness/disability	20.2	11.9	15.9
Could afford to	8.5	5.9	7.2
Other reason	2.1	5.0	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

When asked if gradual retirement was available in their company (i.e. to work fewer hours or days in the years prior to retirement), only 17% said it was. Sixty-five per cent said that it wasn't and 17% did not know if it was available. Of those who had worked in the past, only 8% said that gradual retirement had been available to them.

Half of all respondents aged over 50 stated that gradual retirement would be something they would like to take advantage of, although just a quarter stated that they expected to take gradual retirement.

Table 3.66 compares the attitudes to retirement of the over 50s on the basis of their employment status. Four statements were presented in Likert format, ranging on a seven point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Just under half of the currently employed (48%) agreed with the statement: "I would prefer to continue working rather than retire at the normal retirement age" and 52% disagreed. A similar statement was put to the over 50s who are retired: "I would have preferred to continue working rather than retire when I did." To this 55.3% agreed and 44.7% disagreed. Thus, it would seem that the currently employed are more likely to want to retire earlier, but those who have retired would have preferred to work longer. Though, overall the differences are not great.

The second statement was: “I would like to retire at a different age if my pension arrangements were more flexible.” Approximately 40% of the employed agreed with this, approximately 24% disagreed and 33.6% said it was not applicable to them since they didn’t have a pension. Thus for those with pensions, approximately two-thirds would prefer a different retirement age if their pension arrangements would allow it. The retired were presented with a similar statement: “I would have retired at a different age if my pension arrangements were more flexible.” Nineteen per cent agreed with this, 38% disagreed and 41.6% said it was not applicable to them since they didn’t have a pension. This emphasises what has already been noted and that is that the retired were less likely than the currently employed to have pensions and hence the currently employed can entertain various ideas about flexible retirement more easily.

The third statement presented to the employed over 50 was: “I would like to retire more gradually (i.e. by reducing the number of hours/days before stopping completely).” To this a very large proportion agreed (69.8%). When the retired were presented with a similar statement (“I would like to have retired more gradually (i.e. reducing number of hours/days) before stopping immediately”) a majority (53.8%) also agreed.

Finally, the currently employed were asked if they would like to retire more gradually if their pension entitlements were not affected. Forty-two per cent agreed, 22% disagreed and 33.1% said this was non-applicable since they had no pension. The retired were asked a similar question and 21.3% said they would have liked to have retired if their pension entitlements were not affected, 32% disagreed and 45.2% said it was non-applicable since they had no pension. Thus, for those with pensions among the employed, about two thirds would favour gradual retirement if their pension entitlements were not affected.

**Table 3.66: Attitudes to Retirement: A Comparison of Over 50s Employed and Retired- Percentage Distributions
(N= 349)**

1a. I would prefer to continue working rather than retire at the normal retirement age	Over 50s who are employed: (N= 152)						
	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	34.9	10.5	6.6	0%	7.9	10.5	29.6
-----52%-----				-----48%-----			
1b. I would have preferred to continue working rather than retire when I did	Over 50s who are retired: (N= 197)						
	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	34.0	5.6	5.1	0%	9.6	10.2	35.5
-----44.7%-----				-----55.3%-----			
2a. I would like to retire at a different age if my pension arrangements were more flexible	Over 50s who are employed: (N= 152)						
	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	11.2	5.3	7.2		5.3	11.2	24.3
-----23.7%-----			2%	-----40.8 %-----			
Non-applicable (no pension) 33.6%							
2b. I would have retired at a different age if my pension arrangements were more flexible	Over 50s who are retired: (N= 197)						
	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	19.8	10.7	7.6		7.1	6.6	5.6
-----38.1%-----			1.0%	-----19.3%-----			
Non-applicable (no pension) 41.6%							

3a. I would like to retire more gradually (i.e. reducing number of hours/days) before stopping completely

Over 50s who are employed: (N= 152)

DISAGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight
10.1	11.4	7.4
----- 28.9 % -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

Slight	Moderate	Strong
11.4	19.5	38.9
----- 69.8 % -----		

3b. I would like to have retired more gradually (i.e. reducing number of hours/days) before stopping completely

Over 50s who are retired: (N= 197)

DISAGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight
29.2	6.7	8.2
----- 44.1 % -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

Slight	Moderate	Strong
11.3	14.9	27.7
----- 53.8 % -----		

4a. I would like to retire more gradually if my pension entitlements are not affected

Over 50s who are employed: (N= 152)

DISAGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight
9.1	5.2	7.8
----- 22.1 % -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

Slight	Moderate	Strong
3.9	9.7	28.6
----- 42.2 % -----		

Non-applicable (no pension) **33.1%**

Over 50s who are retired: (N= 197)

4b. I would like to have retired more gradually if my pension entitlements were not affected

DISAGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight
20.8	5.1	6.1
----- 32 % -----		

D. K, etc.

AGREE

Slight	Moderate	Strong
6.6	5.6	9.1
----- 21.3 % -----		

Non-applicable (no pension) **45.2%**

Attitudes of the entire nationwide sample were also elicited in relation to attitudes to older people, retirement and gradual retirement. Eight statements were presented to the sample and these were subjected to factor analysis to explore the underlying dimensions. Table 3.67 presents the results of this analysis. Three factors emerged, as follows:

Factor I: Positive Attitudes to Choice in Working beyond 65

Factor II: Perception of Older Workers as Adaptable to Change and able to Learn new Things

Factor III: Support for Gradual Retirement.

As may be seen in Table 3.68, which presents the percentage responses to the items loading on these three factors, a large majority of the sample (92.6%) expressed the view that “workers should have the choice to continue working beyond the usual retirement age.” A large majority (81%) also believed that “older workers should be encouraged to stay on in the workforce because they have valuable skills and experience.” A minority – only 33% - felt that “older workers should retire at 65 years to make way for the next generation.” The sample was more or less split on the ideal age to retire. Just over half (52.8%) said “I think it would be ideal to retire as early as possible and the remaining 45.6% disagreed. Thus it would seem that choice in terms of when one retires is very much favoured by the population, but people are split in terms of whether it’s best to retire early or later.

Concerning the attitude that older people are less able to adapt to changes in the workplace, 54.2% agreed and 44.6% disagreed. Yet, a majority (68.6%) felt that “older workers are as capable of learning new technology and ideas as any other workers. Concerning attitudes to gradual retirement, the vast majority (95%) felt that “people should be able to move into retirement gradually by working part-time or reduced hours, rather than stopping work abruptly.” Yet, 71% said that retirement is something they rarely think about. Thus many may not plan adequately for their retirement in terms of what would be ideal for them, and also existing retirement arrangements are not as flexible as people would like.

An analysis of how different groups in the population differ in their attitudes on these issues is presented in Table 3.69. This shows that older people themselves are most supportive of choice in working beyond 65. As people get older, they are more likely to favour choice in this area. In

relation to Factor II – Perception of Older Workers as Adaptable to Change and Able to Learn New Things – women were more in agreement with this than men and the employed were more in agreement than the non-employed. There were no differences by age group – young and old alike had similar attitudes. Regarding attitudes to gradual retirement, women were significantly more supportive than men and those of lower socio-economic status were also more supportive. Interestingly enough younger people (18 – 30) were the most supportive of gradual retirement than older people, though all groups were positive, as has already been observed.

**Table 3.67: Factor Analysis of Attitudes to Older Workers
(N=1212)**

Item No.	Varimax Rotated Loading	
Factor 1 Positive Attitudes to Choice in Working Beyond 65		
3.	Workers should have the choice to continue working beyond the usual retirement age	.68
5.	*I think it would be ideal to retire as early as possible	-.68
6.	Older workers should be encouraged to stay on in the workforce because they have valuable skills and experience	.60
7.	*Older workers should retire at 65 years to make way for the next generation	-.59
% Variance: 28.0%		Cumulative % Variance: 28.0%
Cronbach's Alpha: .54		

Factor II Perception of Older Workers as Adaptable to Change and Able to Learn New Things		
4.	*Older workers are less able to adapt to changes in the workplace	-.78
8.	Older workers are less capable of learning new technology and ideas as any other workers	.78
% Variance: 14.8%		Cumulative % Variance: 42.8%
Cronbach's Alpha: .58		

Factor III Support for Gradual Retirement		
1.	Retirement is something I rarely think about	.58
2.	People should be able to move into retirement gradually by working part-time or reduced hours, rather than stopping work abruptly	.76
% Variance: 13.0%		Cumulative % Variance: 55.8%
Cronbach's Alpha: .16		
*Reversed composite score		

Table 3.68 :

Attitudes to Older Workers: Percentage Responses to Items grouped by Factor
(N=1212)

Factor I Positive Attitudes to Choice in Working Beyond 65

1. Workers should have the choice to continue working beyond the usual retirement age	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2.3	2.3	2.2		13.7	26.3	52.6
	-----	6.8%	-----		.6%	-----	92.6%
2. I think it would be ideal to retire as early as possible	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	17	13.6	15		17.3	15.4	20.2
	-----	45.6%	-----		1.6 %	-----	52.8 %
3. Older workers should be encouraged to stay on in the workforce because they have valuable skills and experience	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	4.4	4.8	9.2		25	26.7	29.2
	-----	18.4%	-----		.7 %	-----	81%
4. Older workers should retire at 65 years to make way for the next generation	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	23.3	20.2	22.5		14.7	7.4	11
	-----	66%	-----		1.0%	-----	33%

Factor II Perception of Older Workers as Adaptable to Change and Able to Learn New Things

5. Older workers are less able to adapt to changes in the workplace	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	14.4	16	14.2		27.7	16	10.4
	-----44.6%-----				1.2 %	-----54.2%-----	

6. Older workers are as capable of learning new technology and ideas as any other workers	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	5	7.6	17.7		24	22.7	22
	-----30.3%-----				1.1%	-----68.6%-----	

Factor III Support for Gradual Retirement

1. Retirement is something I rarely think about	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	11.8	9.3	7.6		13	16.2	41.6
	-----28.7%-----				.4 %	-----71%-----	

2. People should be able to move into retirement gradually by working part-time or reduced hours, rather than stopping work abruptly	DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
	Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
	2.1	1.4	1.2		15.3	26	53.5
	-----4.7%-----				.4%	-----95%-----	

Table 3.69

Analysis of Variance: Main Effects of Four Demographic Variables on Factors Measuring Attitudes to Older Workers (N=1212)

	Gender		Employment Status		Socio-Economic Status		Age		
	Male (n=547)	Female (n=553)	Employed (n=631)	Not employed (n= 496)	Low (n=760)	High (n=340)	18-34 (n=301)	35-49 (n=304)	50+ (n=495)
	Attitudes to Older Workers								
1. Positive Attitudes to Choice in Working Beyond 65	F=3.79 ns 4.92	5.06	F=0.07 ns 4.97	5.01	F=1.72 ns 4.96	5.06	4.85	F=5.86** 4.93	5.11
2. Perception of Older Workers as Adaptable to change and able to learn new things	F=6.44* 4.33	4.58	F=4.55* 4.53	4.35	F=1.15 ns 4.4	4.56	4.48	F=0.7 ns 4.6	4.46
3. Support for Gradual Retirement	F=13.54*** 5.45	5.74	F=1.47 ns 5.54	5.66	F=17.89*** 5.7	5.34	5.87	F=11.09*** 5.52	5.46

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

ns = Non-Significant

Range of Scores = 1 – 7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

3.11 Attitudes to People with Mental Health Problems

Another major focus of the Project is mental health and the workplace. As noted earlier, we carried out a separate study of attitudes of people with mental health problems toward employment issues (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, Edge and O'Dwyer, 2005). In this section we present attitudes of the general population to issues concerning mental health and the workplace and specifically attitudes to people with mental health problems. The seven items presented to the sample were factor analysed and two dimensions emerged. These are presented in Table 3.70.

The first factor concerns attitudes to facilitating people with mental health problems in the workplace. A large majority of the sample is favourable to this. For example, 89% agreed that "If people with mental health problems need flexibility at work in order to stay in the workforce, their work colleagues should make allowances for this." A very large majority (93.6%) also expressed the view that "people should be able to be more open in the workplace about mental health issues." Similarly the vast majority (92%) felt that "mental health problems should be regarded in the same way as any other illness." There was also very strong support (90.3%) for the idea that "employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular needs of employees with mental health problems in the workforce." A large majority (92.7%) believed that "it was in the interest of employers to support people with mental health problems so as to retain their skills and experience."

In spite of these overall very supportive attitudes, a majority felt that "it is not in an employee's best interest to discuss/disclose mental health problems in the workplace." This undoubtedly reflects the fact that people are aware that there is a stigma attached to mental health problems and that at the moment it may not really be safe for people to disclose. However, there is a desire that this should change and that the workplace should be a more open and supportive place. It is encouraging to see that the vast majority (92.8%) did not endorse the statement that "people with depression aren't really ill – they should just pull themselves together," indicating that there is a growing recognition that depression is an illness like any other. Attitudes of the mental health sample are presented alongside the attitudes of the nationwide sample and a comparison reveals that attitudes of both groups are very similar. All of these results are contained in Table 3.71.

An examination of differences among groups in the population shows that women were significantly more in favour of facilitating people with mental health problems in the workplace (Factor I). However, both men and women were very positive to this. In relation to denial and concealment of mental health problems (Factor II), men were somewhat more into denial and

concealment than women, as were the non-employed and those of lower socio-economic background. However, it must be emphasised that attitudes of most groups were very supportive (Table 3.72).

Table 3.70: Factor Analysis of Attitudes to Mental Health and the Workplace
(N=1212)

Item No.		Varimax Rotated Loading
Factor I Positive Attitudes to Facilitating People with Mental Health Problems in the Workplace		
2.	If people with mental health problems need flexibility at work in order to stay in the workforce, their work colleagues should make allowances for this	.70
3.	People should be able to be more open in the workplace about mental health issues	.72
4.	Mental health problems should be regarded in the same way as any other illness	.65
5.	It is in the interest of employers to support people with mental health problems so as to retain their skills and experience	.79
7.	Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular needs of employees with mental health problems in the workplace	.74
% Variance: 39.2%		Cumulative % Variance 39.2%
Cronbach's Alpha: .77		

Factor II Denial and Concealment of Mental Health Problems		
1.	It is not in an employee's best interest to discuss/disclose mental health problems in the workplace	.86
6.	People with depression aren't really ill- they should just pull themselves together	.55
% Variance: 15.0%		Cumulative % Variance: 54.2%
Cronbach's Alpha: .12		

Table 3.71:

**Attitudes to Mental Health and the Workplace: A Comparison of the Nationwide and Mental Health Samples –
Percentage Responses to Items, Grouped by Factor**
(N=1345)

Factor 1: Positive Attitudes to Facilitating People with Mental Health Problems in the Workplace

1. If people with mental health problems need flexibility at work in order to stay in the workforce, their colleagues should make allowances for this

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
2.7	2.3	5		21.3	31	36.8
----- 10% -----			1%	----- 89% -----		

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
-	3.8	2.3		8.3	31.1	54.5
----- 6.1% -----			0%	----- 94% -----		

2. People should be able to be more open in the workplace about mental health issues

Nationwide (N= 1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
1.3	1.6	2.7		22.5	28.6	42.4
----- 5.6% -----			.8%	----- 93.6% -----		

3. Mental health problems should be regarded in the same way as any other illness

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
2.3	.8	1.5		.8	31.8	63
-----4.6%-----			0%	-----95.4%-----		

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
1.8	2.2	3.5		12.6	24.1	55.2
-----7.5%-----			.6%	-----92%-----		

4. It is in the interest of employers to support people with mental health problems so as to retain their skills and experience

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
-	.8	1.5		2.3	18.8	76.7
-----2.3%-----			0%	-----97.7%-----		

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
.8	2.3	3.5		19	29.7	44
-----6.6%-----			.7 %	-----92.7%-----		

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
-	-	-		1.5	27.3	71.2
-----0%-----			0%	-----100%-----		

5. Employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular needs of employees with mental health problems in the workplace

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
3.4	2.5	3.1		23.4	30.7	36.1
----- 9% -----			.7 %	----- 90.3% -----		

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
.8	1.5			6.8	35.6	55.3
----- 2.3% -----			0%	----- 97.7 % -----		

Factor II Denial and Concealment of Mental Health Problems

1. It is not in an employee's best interest to discuss/disclose mental health problems in the workplace

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
8.8	10	10		21	19.7	28
----- 28.8% -----			2.3 %	----- 69 % -----		

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
5.3	10.6	4.5		12	30.3	37.1---
----- 20.4% -----			0%	----- 79.6% -----		

2. People with depression aren't really ill- they should just pull themselves together

Nationwide (N=1212):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
65.5	19	8.3		2.8	1.7	2
----- 92.8% -----			.6 %	----- 6.6% -----		

Mental Health (N=133):

DISAGREE			D. K, etc.	AGREE		
Strong	Moderate	Slight		Slight	Moderate	Strong
85.7	10.5	.8	.8	1.5	.8	
----- 97% -----			0%	----- 3% -----		

Table: 3.72 Analysis of Variance: Main Effects of Four Demographic Variables on Factors Measuring Attitudes to Mental Health in the Workplace (N=1212)

	Gender		Employment Status		Socio-Economic Status		Age		
	Male (n=540)	Female (n=548)	Employed (n=625)	Not employed (n= 463)	Low (n= 749)	High (n=339)	18-34 (n=297)	35-49 (n=302)	50+ (n=489)
	Attitudes to Mental Health in the Workplace								
1. Positive Attitudes to Facilitating People with Mental Health Problems in the Workplace	F=11.91** 5.87	6.07	F=0.58 ns 5.98	5.96	F=1.24 ns 5.95	6.03	5.9	F=2.67 ns 6.09	5.94
2. Denial and Concealment of Mental Health Problems	F=9.86** 3.46	3.23	F=21.96*** 3.2	3.52	F=9.58** 3.44	3.13	3.25	F=0.59 ns 3.23	3.47

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

ns = Non-Significant

Range of Scores = 1 – 7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

3.12 Work-Life Balance and Well-Being

Three-quarters of all employed respondents found it somewhat easy, easy or very easy to combine their job and their family or personal life, while 15% found it somewhat difficult, 8.2% found it difficult and 2% found it very difficult.

Table 3.73: Perception of Ease/Difficulty of combining job and family/personal life, employed Respondents

	% (N = 674)
Very easy	26.5
Easy	30.3
Somewhat easy	18.0
Somewhat difficult	15.0
Difficult	8.2
Very difficult	2.0
Total	100.0

Similarly, a majority were satisfied with their work-life balance. Most people were “satisfied” (45.2%), the next most were “somewhat satisfied” (19.1%) and 18% were very satisfied. On the other hand, just under 18% were dissatisfied to one degree or another, as shown in Table 3.74

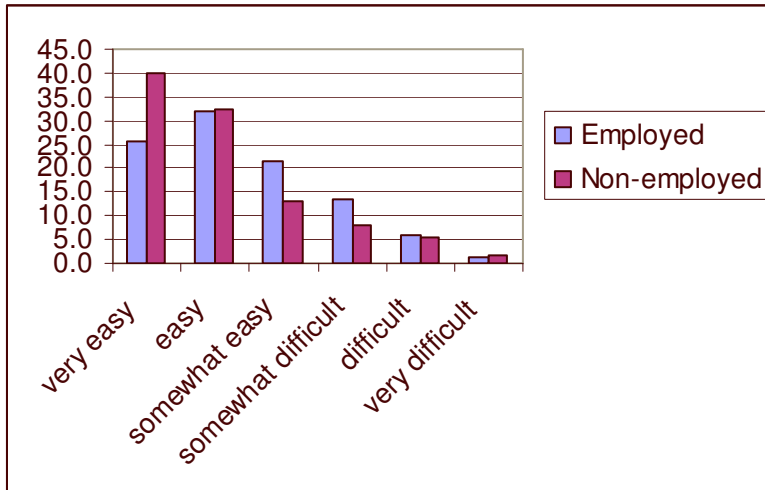
Table 3.74: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Work-Life Balance, Employed Respondents

	% (N = 675)
Very dissatisfied	2.2
Dissatisfied	4.9
Somewhat dissatisfied	10.7
Somewhat satisfied	19.1
Satisfied	45.2
Very satisfied	18.0
Total	100.0

Overall, a slightly higher percentage of non-employed respondents found it easy to balance their work in the home with their family or personal life than employed respondents did in balancing their job with their family/personal life proportion of

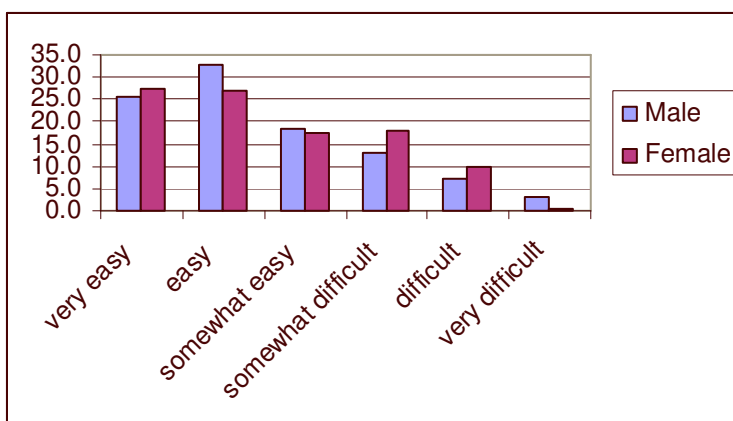
employed found it somewhat difficult, 13.6% compared to 7.8% of non-employed respondents. This is illustrated in Figure 3.20.

Figure 3.20: Perception of Ease/Difficulty of Combining Job/Work in the Home with Family/Personal Life



As can be seen in Figure 3.21 below, a slightly higher proportion of employed male respondents found it easier to combine their job and their family/personal life than their female counterparts.

Figure 3.21: Perception of Ease/Difficulty of Combining Work and Family/Personal Life among employed respondents, by Gender



A higher proportion of men, both employed and non-employed, found it easy to combine their job or work in the home and their family/personal life. Almost 60% of employed men found it easy or very easy to combine their job and their family/personal life compared to 54.4% of employed women. Similarly, 77% of non-employed men found it

easy or very easy to combine their work in the home with their family/personal life compared with just 69.4% of women.

Table 3.75: Perception of Ease/Difficulty in Combining Job/work in home and family/personal life, by Employment Status and Gender of Respondent

	Employed (n = 671)		Non-Employed (n = 396)		Total (N = 1067)
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Very easy	24.3	27.2	45.3	36.2	30.8
Easy	35.4	27.2	31.7	33.2	32.2
Somewhat easy	21.0	22.5	12.4	13.2	18.4
Somewhat difficult	11.4	16.7	6.8	8.1	11.3
Difficult	6.6	4.7	2.5	7.7	5.7
Very difficult	1.3	1.8	1.2	1.7	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Over half of all respondents were satisfied with both the amount of time they spent with their family, or others close to them (58.7%), and the amount of personal time they had (55.3%). More employed respondents wished to spend more time with their family or friends than those who were not employed (54.8% and 17.0% respectively). Similarly, more men than women wanted to spend more time with their family than women (43.3% and 33.8% respectively). However, a similar proportion of men wished to spend more time with their family as wanted more personal time, whereas more women wanted more personal time than family time (45.0% and 33.8% respectively).

Table 3.77: Percentage breakdown of whether respondents wish to spend more, less or the same amount of time with their family, by gender and employment status

	Male (n = 594) %		Female (n = 608) %		Total (N = 1202) %
	Employed	Non- employed	Employed	Non- employed	
	Much less time	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
Less time	1.3	3.1	0.4	5.4	0.9
About the same	44.5	75.0	43.7	78.9	44.1
Somewhat more time	35.4	11.7	41.9	10.6	38.1
Much more time	18.6	10.2	14.1	4.8	16.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.12.1 Presence and Causes of Stress

Just under ten per cent (8.6%) of all respondents reported to feel under stress ‘always’ or ‘very often’. A similar proportion of employed and non-employed respondents reported feeling under stress (8.3% and 9.2% respectively) (see Figure 3.22). Females tended to report that they felt under stress more frequently than men (see Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.22: Extent to which Employed and Non-employed Respondents reported feeling under stress

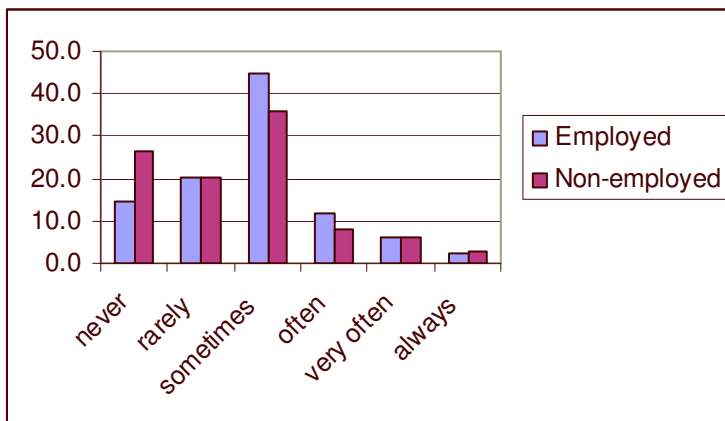
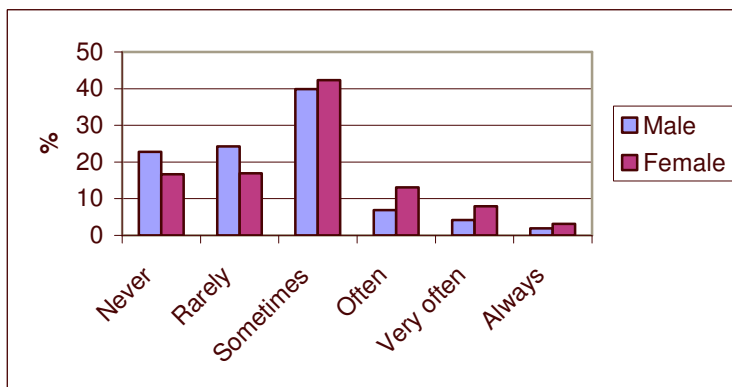
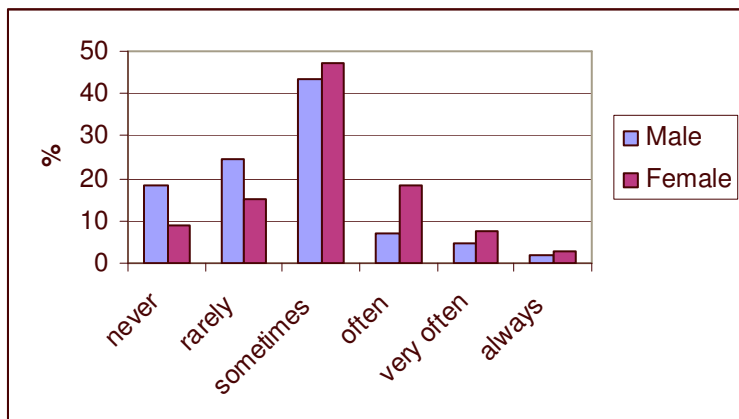


Figure 3.23: Extent to which Male and Female Respondents reported feeling under stress



As can be seen from Figure 3.24 below, the trend was similar among employed male and female respondents.

Figure 3.24: Extent to which Employed Male and Female Respondents reported feeling under stress



The main sources of stress for respondents were varied. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents mentioned that their job was their main source of stress, though a higher percentage of younger respondents than older respondents mentioned this; 41% of respondents aged between 18 and 30 indicated that their job was their primary source of stress, while only 28% of 31-49 year olds and 21.2% of 50-64 year olds did so. In addition, a higher percentage of men than women stated that their job was their main source of stress (40.1% and 18.9% respectively).

Less than one in five respondents (17.7%) felt that financial concerns were their main source of stress. A slightly higher percentage of men had financial concerns, 21.1%, compared to 15.0% of women mentioned this as their primary source of stress. Also, 21.1% of non-employed respondents felt that financial concerns were their main source of stress, compared with employed respondents (15.3%).

Many employed and non-employed women, 37.3% overall, also mentioned caring and domestic activities, as well juggling their job and caring activities. Caring/domestic activities and juggling a job and caring activities ranks as the main source of stress for a higher percentage of respondents aged 31-49 (41.5%) than respondents in any other age group – 28.0% respondents aged between 31-49 ranked their job as their main source of stress, along with 21.2% of 50-64 year olds and just 5.3% of those aged 65 and over.

Almost 18% of respondents aged 18-30 indicated that their school or education commitments were their main source of stress.

Table 3.78: Main source of stress among respondents who reported feeling stress, by employment status and gender

	Male (n = 317) %		Female (n = 407) %		Total (N = 724) %
	Employed	Non- employed	Employed	Non- employed	
My job	53.9	4.5	34.7	1.0	28.0
Caring/domestic activities	2.6	12.4	9.9	32.0	13.8
Juggling job & caring activities	8.3	1.1	29.6	3.1	12.1
Relationships	5.7	4.5	6.1	5.7	5.7
Financial concerns	18.4	28.1	12.2	18.0	17.6
Commuting	4.4	0.0	1.9	1.0	2.3
Physical health problems	2.6	23.6	1.9	19.6	9.6
Psychological problems	1.3	2.2	0.0	2.1	1.3
Own school/education commitments	1.3	19.1	1.9	11.3	6.3
Other	1.3	4.5	1.9	6.2	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.79: Percentage breakdown of main source of stress among respondents who reported feeling stress

	%(N = 1202)
My job	28.0
Caring/domestic activities	13.8
Juggling job & caring activities	12.1
Relationships	5.7
Financial concerns	17.6
Commuting	2.3
Physical health problems	9.6
Psychological problems	1.3
Own school/education commitments	6.3
Other	3.3
Total	100.0

Table 3.80: Main source of stress of Employed Respondents, by age-group and Gender of Respondent

	18 to 30 (n = 142) %		31 to 49 (n = 217) %		50 to 64 (n = 82) %		Total (n = 441) %
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Job	62.0	56.3	52.2	24.0	47.7	23.7	44.7
Caring/domestic activities	1.4	5.6	2.7	12.5	2.3	10.5	6.1
Juggling job & caring activities	0.0	11.3	13.3	44.2	9.1	23.7	18.5
Relationships	8.5	7.0	4.4	2.9	6.8	10.5	5.8
Financial concerns	18.3	15.5	15.9	7.7	25.0	21.1	15.4
Commuting	5.6	0.0	5.3	1.9	0.0	5.3	3.3
Physical health problems	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.9	4.5	5.3	2.2
Psychological problems	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.8
Own school/education commitments	4.2	1.4	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.5
Other	0.0	2.8	2.7	1.9	0.0	0.0	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.12.2 Measures of Well-being

Respondents were asked to assess their current state of health and to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with their health, family or personal life, relationship with partner/husband or wife, financial situation and life in general, as well as describe their present state of health. Overall, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the various aspects of their life, although almost thirty per cent of all respondents were dissatisfied with their financial situation.

Most people described their health as anywhere from good to excellent: 28.8% described it as good, 33.7% as very good and 21.7% as excellent. Only 12.4% said it was fair and 3.4% described it as poor. In line with this, most were satisfied with their health, though 13.1% of respondents were dissatisfied. However, this rose to 20.5% for people aged 65 or over. Just 7.4% of those aged between 18 and 30 were dissatisfied. Over a quarter (27.3%) of respondents who had received primary education only were dissatisfied with their health, compared to 9.4% of those who had received secondary education and 8.8% of those who had some third level education, illustrating the clear relationship between education – which is highly correlated with socio-economic status – and health.

Table 3.81: Self-Assessed Health

	% (N = 1208)
Poor	3.4
Fair	12.4
Good	28.8
Very good	33.7
Excellent	21.7
Total	100.0

Table 3.82: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Health

	% (N = 1209)
Very dissatisfied	2.5
Dissatisfied	4.5
Somewhat dissatisfied	6.1
Somewhat satisfied	10.8
Satisfied	40.0
Very satisfied	36.0
Total	100.0

Most people were satisfied with their family or personal life; 44% said they were satisfied and 42% said they were very satisfied. Only 5% said they were dissatisfied. Over one-third (38.3%) did not have a partner; however 38% of the sample expressed a high level of satisfaction with their partner and 19% said they were “satisfied.” Just 2% expressed dissatisfaction.

Table 3.83: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Family/personal Life

	% (N = 1206)
Very dissatisfied	1.0
Dissatisfied	0.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	3.2
Somewhat satisfied	8.5
Satisfied	44.1
Very satisfied	42.4
Total	100.0

Table 3.84: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Relationship with Partner

	% (N = 1206)
Very dissatisfied	1.1
Dissatisfied	0.2
Somewhat dissatisfied	0.9
Somewhat satisfied	1.9
Satisfied	19.0
Very satisfied	38.3
N/a	38.6
Total	100.0

People's financial situation was a source of less satisfaction. Overall, 28.6% expressed some level of dissatisfaction. Of the remainder, 25% were somewhat satisfied, 35% were satisfied and 11% were very satisfied.

Table 3.85: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Financial Situation

	% (N = 1207)
Very dissatisfied	4.9
Dissatisfied	9.6
Somewhat dissatisfied	14.1
Somewhat satisfied	25.0
Satisfied	35.4
Very satisfied	11.1
Total	100.0

A high proportion expressed overall life satisfaction – 92.7%. Most were either satisfied (50%) or very satisfied (30%). Just 7.3% expressed dissatisfaction.

Table 3.86: Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Life in General

	% (N = 1209)
Very dissatisfied	0.3
Dissatisfied	1.2
Somewhat dissatisfied	5.8
Somewhat satisfied	12.0
Satisfied	50.0
Very satisfied	30.7
Total	100.0

A systematic analysis of differences among groups in terms of their well-being was carried out using analysis of variance, which looked at the simultaneous effects of gender, employment status, socio-economic status (SES) and age on each of these measures of well-being. These results are presented in Table 3.87. It may be seen that women were significantly more likely to report feeling under stress than men. The employed were also more likely to report being under stress. Those in the higher socio-economic group were also, as were people in the age group 35-49.

Men were more likely to want to spend more time with their families, as were the employed and members of the higher SES group. Those 35-49 were most likely to express the wish to have more family time, followed by those 18-30. The employed were also more likely to want more personal time. There were no differences on this by gender. Again, those 18-30 and 31-49 were most in need of personal time – as opposed to those 50 and over.

Women were more likely to report better health, as were the employed. The effect of employment status was very strong. Not surprisingly, the young (18-30) reported the best health, followed by those 35-49. Those 50 and over reported the worst health. Results for satisfaction with health mirrored those for self-assessed health.

There were no differences among groups in the population in terms of their satisfaction with family or personal life or in terms of relationship with partner. However, these two measures may have elicited a social desirability response set. It is also possible that family were present in the room during the interview, which may have inhibited responses to these measures.

The employed were more satisfied with their financial situation than the non-employed, as were members of the higher socio-economic group. Satisfaction with financial situation increased with age, though there was a big difference between those 18-30 and those 31-49, with the youngest group expressing the least satisfaction with their finances.

The only significant effect on life satisfaction was for employment status, with the employed expressing greater life satisfaction.

Table: 3.87 Analysis of Variance: Main Effects of Four Demographic Variables on Measures of Well-Being(N=1212)

	Gender		Employment Status		Socio-Economic Status		Age		
	Male (n=545)	Female (n= 552)	Employed (n= 630)	Not employed (n= 467)	Low (n=758)	High (n=336)	18-34 (n=301)	35-49 (n=304)	50+ (n=495)
	Measures of Well-Being								
1. Ever feel under stress	F=54.22*** 2.41	2.91	F=19.29*** 2.77	2.52	F=4.3* 2.59	2.81	2.76	F=11.73*** 2.9	2.39
2. Want to spend more time w/ family	F=9.11** 3.51	3.39	F=98.34*** 3.63	3.20	F=4.57* 3.4	3.56	3.53	F=4.51* 3.60	3.31
3. Would like to have more personal time	F=3.56 ns 3.45	3.53	F=94.87*** 3.66	3.27	F=7.06** 3.43	3.62	3.67	F=18.71*** 3.67	3.28
4. Self-assessed health	F=6.76** 3.43	3.58	F=96.24*** 3.75	3.18	F=3.05 ns 3.44	3.65	3.95	F=34.74*** 3.64	3.15
5. Satisfaction with health	F=7.64** 4.76	4.95	F=61.28*** 5.09	4.55	F=2.12 4.79	5.01	5.26	F=15.74*** 4.91	4.57
6. Satisfaction with family /personal life	F=1.22 ns 5.17	5.23	F=2.78 ns 5.24	5.15	F=0.25 ns 5.19	5.24	5.23	F=0.25 ns 5.24	5.16
7. Satisfaction with relationship with partner	F=0.02 ns 5.49	5.50	F=0.65 ns 5.48	5.53	F=1.72 ns 5.47	5.55	5.54	F=0.91 ns 5.51	5.47
8. Satisfaction with financial situation	F=2.61 ns 4.28	4.16	F=6.86** 4.30	4.10	F=9.01** 4.13	4.40	3.86	F=25.67*** 4.28	4.39
9. Life Satisfaction	F=0.4 ns 5.02	5.06	F=7.64** 5.10	4.96	F=3.2 ns 5.00	5.13	5.05	F=0.32 ns 5.05	5.03

* p < .05

ns = Non-Significant

Range of Scores = 1 – 7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

** p < .01

*** p < .001

3.13 Relationships between work characteristics, work life balance and overall well-being

In this final section of the results we examine the relationship between work characteristics on the one hand and work-life balance on the other. We then examine work characteristics in relationship to overall well-being.

Table 3.88 presents data examining the relationship between commuting and work-life balance and well-being. We examine on the left hand side of the table three measures of commuting: 1) total commuting time in minutes, 2) the difficulty of the commute and 3) the stressfulness of the commute.

Across the top of the table we examine six measures of work-life balance and well-being. It may be seen that the length of the commute in minutes is significantly related to five of the six measures of well-being and work-life balance. The actual correlation coefficients are not that high, but the level of significance is high in four of the five cases. Firstly, the longer a person's commute the lower a person's satisfaction with working hours and working arrangements are likely to be. In addition, the longer the longer the commute, the greater the difficulty in combining work and family life. There is also a low but significant relationship with life satisfaction in the direction of longer commutes being related to lower life satisfaction.

In the same vein, the more difficult and stressful a person's commute is, the more likely they are to express dissatisfaction with their working hours and arrangements and the greater difficulty they have in combining work and family or personal life. In addition, difficulty and stressfulness of commute is also significantly related to lesser satisfaction with health and lesser life satisfaction.

3.13.1 Relationship between Working Arrangements and Work-Life Balance

Table 3.89 presents relationships between measures of a person's working arrangements and their level of satisfaction with their working arrangements on the one hand and their work-life balance on the other. It may be seen that the more individual flexibility a

person has in relation to their working hours the easier they find it to combine work and family/personal life. They are also more likely to express satisfaction with their work-life balance.

The greater the satisfaction with one's working hours and working arrangements, the greater the ease in combining work and family life and the greater the satisfaction with work-life balance. Those who express satisfaction with their working hours and working arrangements are less likely to express the wish to spend more time with their family or to need more personal time. Conversely, those who express dissatisfaction with their working hours and working arrangements are more likely to express a wish for more family time and more personal time. It is also interesting to note that those who are satisfied with their work overall are more likely to find it easy to combine work and family /personal life and much more likely to express satisfaction with their work life balance. This suggests that it is not only the working arrangements and commuting which affect a positive work-life balance, but that overall work satisfaction is also a contributor.

3.13.2 Relationships between work characteristics and measures of well-being

In Table 3.90 we present relationships between work characteristics on the one hand and measures of well-being on the other. It may be seen that the greater a person's individual flexibility in relationship to their working time, the less likely they are to report suffering from stress, and the more likely they are to report satisfaction with work and overall life satisfaction.

Satisfaction with one's working hours and one's working arrangements are also related to less stress, better self-assessed health, greater satisfaction with one's health. There are very strong relationships between satisfaction with current working hours and arrangements and overall work satisfaction and strong relationships with life satisfaction. Satisfaction with work is related to lower stress, better health and greater satisfaction with health. In addition, satisfaction with working hours, working arrangements and one's work in general are related to greater satisfaction with one's financial situation. Finally, satisfaction with work is significantly related to overall life satisfaction.

Table 3.88 Relationships between measures of commuting and work-life balance and well being: Employed respondents

(N=538)

	Satisfaction with working hours	Satisfaction with working arrangements	Ease vs. difficulty of combining work and family life	Like to spend more time with family	Satisfaction with health	Life satisfaction
Total commute in minutes	-.16***	-.15***	.11**	.17***	-.03 NS	-.10*
Difficulty of commute	-.18***	-.16***	.18***	.14***	-.15***	-.17***
Stressfulness of commute	-.15***	-.17***	.23***	.13**	-.11**	-.11**

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

NS Non significant

Table 3.89 Relationships between work characteristics and measures of work-life balance: Employed respondents

(N=623)

	Ease vs. difficulty of combining work and family life	Satisfaction with work-life balance	Like to spend more time with family	Like more personal time
Individual Flexibility	-.14***	.10*	-.02 NS	-.06 NS
Satisfaction with current working hours	-.26***	.34***	-.19***	-.22***
Satisfaction with current work arrangement	-.26***	.31***	-.17***	-.20***
Satisfaction with work	-.19***	.38***	-.07 NS	-.09*

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

NS Non significant

**Table 3.90 Relationships between work characteristics and measures of well-being: Employed respondents
(N=623)**

	Stress	Self assessed health	Satisfaction with health	Satisfaction with family/personal life	Satisfaction with relationship with partner	Satisfaction with financial situation	Satisfaction with work	Life Satisfaction
Individual Flexibility	-.13**	.11**	.07 NS	0.02 NS	-.05 NS	.05 NS	.20***	.010*
Satisfaction with current working hours	-.20***	.13**	.11**	.09*	-.08*	.16***	.38***	.20***
Satisfaction with current work arrangement	-.21***	.10*	.11**	.10**	-.06 NS	.15***	.41***	.20***
Satisfaction with work	-.16***	.20***	.21***	.14***	-0.5 NS	.18***	-	.23***

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

NS Non significant

4. Summary and Conclusions

Policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working, can have benefits for different groups in the population. These policies often allow groups of workers to remain in or re-enter the work force by offering the requisite flexibility to combine work with outside pressures. Our project addresses the needs of three different target groups: working parents and carers, older people, and those with mental health problems. As the Irish labour market continues tightening, the inclusion of available trained workers is becoming more essential.

4.1 Work-Life Balance of Working Parents and Carers

Alongside the arrival of the Celtic Tiger, Ireland has experienced significant socio-economic changes over the last 20 years. Since Goodbody's projection in 1998, women's participation levels have significantly risen, comprising over 80% of the total increase in full-time employment in the first quarter of 2002 (CSO, 2002). The workforce participation rate for all women continues to rise as well as the participation rate for married women which has increased from a very low base of 7% in 1971 to 46% in 2001, while the 2004 rates of mothers' employment was 47.8% (CSO, 2002, 2004). Ireland's high levels of female participation exceed the 2005 targets set by the EU Stockholm Council and Lisbon Agenda targets with a rate of 58% for all women (CSO, 2005a), which is well within reach of the Lisbon Agenda 60% target for female participation in 2010 (European Commission, 2004).

As a result, the issue of how to combine employment and family responsibilities is a concern for most women at some stage in their lives. In spite of their increasing prevalence in the labour force, women continue to also be the main contributors to unpaid household labour (Bielenski & Hartmann, 2000). In addition to caring for children, women are also the primary carers of people with an illness or disability. In Ireland 149,000 persons aged 15 years and over are carers and 61% of all carers are female; more than half of all carers (85,000) are in paid employment (CSO, 2002).

4.2 Extent of Caring: Differences between Mothers and Fathers

Results from the present study showed that women across all of the age-groups reported having more day-to-day caring responsibilities for their children than men. Those with the greatest childcare commitments were women aged 18-30, of whom 71.4% said the extent of

their day-to-day caring commitments for their children was “a great deal.” Men in this age group who had children were much less likely to say “a great deal” (only 25%). They were more likely to say “some” (29.2%) or “a fair amount” (45.8%). Similarly, women in the age group 31-49 also reported that the extent of their childcare commitments were “a great deal” (68.8%) vs. only 11.2% of men who said the same.

The time respondents spent on caring and domestic tasks also appeared to be related to their employment status, although both employed and non-employed women spent significantly longer than men in both categories. Employed men spent just 12.8 hours per week on caring and domestic tasks per week, while non-employed men spent 15.1 hours (see Figure 3.10). Employed women spent 26.6 hours, compared with the 42.3 hours reported by non-employed women.

While 76.9% of employed respondents with caring commitments stated that their work hours created ‘no problems’ or ‘not very much’ difficulty, some 22% felt that their work hours/schedule created problems in relation to their childcare or other caring arrangements: 16.5% said they did “to some extent” and 5.4% said that they did “a great deal”. However, there were gender differences in this. Employed women were more likely to say that their hours created difficulty in their caring arrangements (28.4%) as compared with men (17.8%), which may reflect the fact that women are more likely to be doing the caring than men are.

4.3 Changing Attitudes to Gender Roles

As is evident from these findings, women are significantly more involved in caring activities than men. In order to better understand the attitudes underpinning this behaviour, we asked the respondents a number of questions in the area of gender roles. We also compared these attitudes with attitudes of a nationwide representative sample in 1978 and a nationwide re-weighted sample in 1986 in order to see how attitudes have changed over the last quarter of a century.

Concerning Attitudes to Maternal Employment, changes in attitude over time are evident. In 1978, 68.5% of a nationwide sample believed that “It is bad for young children if their mothers go out and work, even if they are well taken care of by another adult.” This dropped to 57.3% in 1986 (Fine-Davis, 1988). By 2004 the level of agreement was 39%. While this represents a huge change in attitude, it still shows that there is some ambivalence towards maternal employment.

Belief that Men can be Carers, is a new factor which emerged in the present study. The responses of the sample indicate that there is strong agreement (79%) that “men can be as likely to enjoy caring for children as women are.” Nevertheless, a majority (55.2%) expressed the view that “caring for children is best done by women.” However, 44.4% disagreed with this.

A very large majority (90.8%) believed that “It is reasonable for men to expect to be able to be good fathers and have successful careers.” A similar item for women also obtained high agreement (86.2%), thus indicating that the population at large now thinks that it is a reasonable expectation on the part of both men and women that they should be able to have successful careers and be good parents. For this to be the case, it is necessary that there be supportive work-life balance policies at the level of the workplace and also at national level.

4.4 Attitudes to Social Policy Issues

All respondents were asked about some topical issues on childcare: paternity leave, parental leave and who should fund childcare costs.

4.4.1 Paternity Leave

The vast majority of respondents, 86.1%, felt paternity leave should be a legal entitlement. A slightly higher percentage of females than males thought so (88.2% and 83.8% respectively). Of those who felt paternity leave it should be a legal entitlement, 31.1% thought it should last from 1–2 weeks, 32.4% thought it should last from 3-4 weeks, and 16.5% thought it should last from 5-6 weeks. A further 13.2% thought it should last anywhere from 2–6 months. Only 6% thought it should be less than one week. Thus, the vast majority of the nationwide sample (63.5%) thought there should be a legal entitlement to paternity leave which would last somewhere between 1-4 weeks. Men and women had very similar views on this matter. Ninety-five per cent of respondents felt that at least some paternity leave should be paid - 60.5% stated that all paternity leave should be paid and 34.6% thought part of it should be.

4.4.2 Parental Leave

A high proportion of the sample (85.1%) also felt that parental leave should be paid, at least in part; 46.6% thought part of it should be paid and 38.5% thought all of it should be paid (see Table 3.12). A similar proportion of men and women believed that some or all of paternity and parental leave should be paid.

4.4.3 Childcare

The interaction between the workplace and life is becoming increasingly complex for working parents and carers as they endeavour to balance responsibilities. In the case of working parents, this is further aggravated by the fact that there is currently no statutory child-care policy in Ireland and public provision for the 0-3 age group is extremely limited (Fine-Davis, 2004).

Respondents were asked who they felt should assume primary responsibility for financing childcare facilities: the Government, employers, parents or a combination of these. The same question had been asked of a nationwide, representative sample in 1978 (Fine-Davis, 1983a). Attitudes on this issue have changed only slightly in the 26 years since these data were collected. A substantially higher proportion of respondents in 2004 (31.5%) believed that a combination of the Government, employers and parents should fund childcare centres, compared to 1978, in which 19.3% favoured this tri-partite combination of funding. There was also an increase from 1978 to 2004 in the proportion favouring funding by a combination of Government and employers (7.4% in 1978 and 18.7% in 2004).

The percentage of respondents who believe childcare centres should be financed solely by the Government dropped a small amount since 1978; this was favoured by 28.6% of respondents in 1978, but just 23.0% in 2004. In addition, fewer parents in 2004 felt that parents alone should foot the bill for childcare centres (4.7%), compared with in 1978 (13.2%). Few respondents in either 1978 or 2004 felt that employers alone should be expected to pay for childcare centres (2.1% and 1.5% respectively).

A very large majority of the population (92%) believed that “there should be a national programme of childcare facilities for pre-school aged children.” In view of current national policy in this area, this attitude would seem to indicate that the public would like to see more in this area. There is also very strong public support for tax concessions for childcare costs (90.5% support this).

Workplace policy has not kept pace with nor is it adequately responding to the work-life balance difficulties facing its existing and potential employees. The availability of flexible working arrangements is of central importance to working mothers when trying to maintain or access employment. The greater availability of such arrangements are thus a critical

factor in working mothers' decisions to stay in or access employment and can have a potentially major impact on the quality of their lives. Greater availability of flexible working arrangements also means that employers will be able to retain current staff and broaden the spectrum of their potential employees.

Similarly, fathers should not be ignored when discussing the benefits of flexibility in facilitating work-life balance. Fagan and Burchell's (2002) research found that, while a significant proportion of employed men and women reported that their working time was relatively compatible with family life, almost a quarter of men reported feeling that their employment hours were incompatible with family life. In Ireland, there are few flexible working arrangements and work-life balance policies that are specifically intended for fathers (McKeown, Ferguson & Rooney, 1998). This is in contrast to other EU countries in which policies are aimed at raising fathers' participation in the family (Fine-Davis et al, 2004). Ireland is likely to continue to be influenced by trends in other member countries of the EU and follow the lead of other countries more advanced in the area of family policies. .

4.5 Commuting

The fact that most of the workforce works the same hours also contributes to build up of traffic congestion and long frustrating commuting times. Fine-Davis et al.'s (2004) study in four European countries found that the length of one's partner's commuting time to be particularly important to the ability to combine work and family life (*ibid*). The longer the commuting time the less they would be available to help with the family.

Fully two-thirds (66.7%) of all employed respondents travelled to work by car, while 12.4% walked, 6.5% took the bus and 5.8% went by train, Dart or Luas. Only 3.7% cycled and 1.1% used a motorbike. It appears that respondents are happy overall with the method of transport they use to get to and from work; the majority already use the form of transport they indicated would be their preferred method. However, in most cases, a relatively high proportion would prefer the car as an alternative. For example, while 52.7% of bicycle users would prefer to continue to cycle to work, 44.5% would prefer to use a car. Similarly, 69.8% of those who currently walk to work stated that they would like to continue walking, while 21% would prefer to drive, and just eight per cent would prefer to use public transport.

When asked what facilities they would like to see improved, 38.9% of respondents said they would like local buses to be improved, and 34.4% would like existing roads to be improved

Few, just 5.6%, would like to see more roads built and just 6.6% would like conditions for cyclists and pedestrians improved.

The average daily commuting time for respondents, i.e. travel to and from work, was 58.7 minutes. Approximately three-quarters of employed people (73%) found their commuting nonstressful and approximately one-quarter (27%) found it stressful. Those most likely to find their commute stressful were men in the age group 18-30 (32.8%) and women in the age group 31-49 (33.6%).

4.6 Maximizing the Potential of Older Workers

Most of the research on work life balance in Ireland has focused on parents of young children and the need for the flexibility demanded by childrearing (Fisher, 2000). The central motivation has been on the need to increase female participation rates in the labour force, with little attention paid to other groups that would benefit from more flexible working arrangements.

Census reports show that Ireland has a relatively young population. However it will nevertheless face the challenges presented by an ageing population over the next generation as the demographic profile falls into line with the EU average. As numbers of young people entering the labour market declines, other sources of labour supply will have to be identified if labour shortages are not to become a critical constraint on growth (NCPP, 2005). The proportion of people in Ireland aged 65 or older is due to increase by 60% over the next 20 years, from 436,002 in 2002 to 698,000 in 2011 (Connell & Pringle, 2004) and the labour force is projected to reach 2 million by 2011 (CSO, 2004). With unemployment at record low levels, the inclusion of older workers into paid employment will become paramount.

The ageing of the population - and as a result, the workforce - will present major issues, as increasing numbers of active older people will demand new social structures and opportunities. However this time lag affords a period in which to create innovative and inclusive practices based on the principle of equality in relation to the retention of older workers in the workplace.

In order to facilitate an increase in labour force participation, certain barriers to employment faced by older workers must be removed. It has been observed that the focus in past decades on early retirement has also fostered negative residual attitudes toward older workers by employers (NESF, 2003). While these issues have not yet sparked the same policy challenges in Ireland as in other EU countries, the need for a competitive and diverse

workforce, in the long term, requires the specific needs of older workers to be considered. IBEC acknowledges the need for great workforce inclusion:

For Ireland to continue to build on its competitive success, it is clear that we need to make the best use of the talents of as many people as possible... managing this diversity, including family-friendly, work-life balance issues is a challenge and an opportunity for organizations (IBEC, 2002).

This statement by the NCPP indicates the importance of increasing the participation of older workers in the labour force. The individual worker, society as a whole and the economy, at both a micro and macro level, all benefit from the employment of older people. Increasing participation amongst this group represents a society that values and embraces the experiences of its older citizens. From the point of view of the individual worker, increased participation allows for the utilisation of skills and knowledge which have been gained over the course of a lifetime.

In order to make use of this valuable resource, working conditions need to be adapted in order to utilise and facilitate older workers. The National Flexi-work Partnership has identified the availability of flexible working arrangements to be a crucial factor in increasing the employment participation of older workers. According to the Forum on the Workplace of the Future, improved flexibility in working hours aimed at enabling older workers to combine work and personal life is an essential pre-condition for maximising labour force participation by older workers who otherwise may not be favourably disposed to, and/or physically capable of, working full-time beyond their mid-sixties (NCPP, 2005).

Approximately a quarter of employed respondents aged 50 in the present study and over stated that they would prefer to continue working beyond 65, for a variety of reasons. Sixty-five per cent of this group wanted to do so because they enjoyed their job or working in general. A further 16.2% wanted to keep their own business or farm running, and eight per cent would like to continue, or have continued working for financial reasons.

Just over half of all retired respondents were 'positive' or 'very positive' about retiring at the age they did. However, whereas 66.7% of respondents who had retired at or over 65 felt positive about retiring at the age they did, just 56.8% of those who had retired at a younger age felt this way. Those who had retired before 65 were more likely to have negative or 'mixed feelings' about having retired when they did, compared to those who had waited until 65 or over to retire.

A large majority of the sample (92.6%) expressed the view that “workers should have the choice to continue working beyond the usual retirement age.” A large majority (81%) also believed that “older workers should be encouraged to stay on in the workforce because they have valuable skills and experience.” A minority – only 33% - felt that “older workers should retire at 65 years to make way for the next generation.” The sample was more or less split on the ideal age to retire. Just over half (52.8%) said “I think it would be ideal to retire as early as possible and the remaining 45.6% disagreed. Thus it would seem that attitudes toward choice in terms of when one retires are very much favoured by the population, but people are split in terms of whether it’s best to retire early or later.

When asked if gradual retirement was available in their company (i.e. to work fewer hours or days in the years prior to retirement), only 17% said it was. Sixty-five per cent said that it wasn’t and 17% did not know if it was available. Of those who had worked in the past, only 8% said that gradual retirement had been available to them.

Half of all respondents aged over 50 stated that gradual retirement would be something they would like to take advantage of, although just a quarter stated that they expected to take gradual retirement. Just under half of the currently employed (48%) agreed with the statement: “I would prefer to continue working rather than retire at the normal retirement age” and 52% disagreed. A similar statement was put to the over 50s who are retired: “I would have preferred to continue working rather than retire when I did.” To this 55.3% agreed and 44.7% disagreed. Thus, it would seem that the currently employed are somewhat more likely to want to retire earlier, but those who have retired would have preferred to work longer. Though, overall the differences are not great.

For those employed persons over 50 with pensions, approximately two-thirds would prefer a different retirement age if their pension arrangements would allow it. Among the retired, 19% agreed with this, 38% disagreed and 41.6% said it was not applicable to them since they didn’t have a pension. This emphasises that the retired were less likely than the currently employed to have pensions and hence the currently employed can entertain various ideas about flexible retirement more easily.

When employed persons over 50 were asked if they would like to retire more gradually (i.e. by reducing the number of hours/days before stopping completely), a very large proportion

agreed (69.8%). A majority (53.8%) of the retired also concurred with a similar statement (“I would like to have retired more gradually (i.e. reducing number of hours/days) before stopping immediately”).

When the currently employed over 50 were asked if they would like to retire more gradually if their pension entitlements were not affected, 42% agreed, 22% disagreed and 33.1% said this was non-applicable since they had no pension. The retired were asked a similar question and 21.3% said they would have liked to have retired if their pension entitlements were not affected, 32% disagreed and 45.2% said it was non-applicable since they had no pension. Thus, for those with pensions among the employed, about two-thirds would favour gradual retirement if their pension entitlements were not affected.

Concerning the attitude that older people are less able to adapt to changes in the workplace, 54.2% agreed and 44.6% disagreed. Yet, a majority (68.6%) felt that “older workers are as capable of learning new technology and ideas as any other workers. Concerning attitudes to gradual retirement, the vast majority (95%) felt that “people should be able to move into retirement gradually by working part-time or reduced hours, rather than stopping work abruptly.” Yet, 71% said that retirement is something they rarely think about. Thus many may not plan adequately for their retirement in terms of what would be ideal for them, and also existing retirement arrangements are not as flexible as people would like.

4.7 Mental health and employment

Individuals with mental health difficulties are among the most socially excluded today (Curran et al, 2004). Employment rates for people in this group are extremely low and seem to be, in recent years, taking a further downward trend (Jeffreys et al., 1997; Marwaha & Johnson, 2004). In a UK study, unemployment rates for people with long-term mental health problems increased from 80% in 1990 to 92% in 1999 (Perkins & Rinaldi, 2002).

Depression is the highest reported mental health difficulty and the fourth leading cause of disease worldwide (Usten et al., 2004). In Ireland, it has been estimated that over 300,000 people (one in fourteen) suffer from depression (McKeon et al., 2000). Fewer than 30% of depression sufferers are in full-time employment even though 90% express a desire to work (Perkins & Rinaldi, 2002). The economic cost of unemployment in this group is high both to the state and the individuals concerned. Thus, while the ability to maintain employment is extremely important to people with mental health difficulties, the ability to access employment is likewise crucial.

Employment has been associated with a reduction in symptoms and the number of times people are admitted into hospital (Bell et al., 1996; Reker & Eikelmann 1997); has had positive effects on quality of life and self esteem (Van Dongen, 1996); and correlates with greater satisfaction with life (Priebe et al 1998). The benefits of work, even for people with severe and persistent mental illness, have been examined by Auerbach and Richardson (2005) who reported work not only contributed to the person's identity, but that it "was an antidote to the person's problem."

Meaningful work . . . is a central aspect of society, and is essential to the dignity and well being of individuals. The choices that we, as a society make with regard to workplace development in the coming years will have a lasting impact on individuals, families, enterprises and the on-going success of our economy (NCPP, 2005).

People with mental health problems are often acutely aware of the negative attitudes and stigma associated with their illness. Research shows that stigma frequently emerges as a factor for the mentally ill when discussing their prospects of locating employment and, in their Report on Aging and Labour Market Participation, Russell and Fahey (2004) identified disclosure as the most salient issue. For this pattern to change, these authors argue that we need to examine the degree to which obstacles to employment arise from overt discriminatory attitudes by employers verses the constraints on workers functioning caused by mental or physical ailments. They maintain that employers' attitudes and the way jobs are structured raise strong questions of inequality and discrimination toward people with mental health problems (Ibid.). The provision of flexible working arrangements is a critical and proven step if the needs of people with mental health problems are to be adequately met (Cooper and Cartwright, 1996). On the practical side, it provides a continued opportunity to engage in the world of work with all the advantages of social inclusion, income continuance and personal fulfilment. More importantly, the employee derives social and psychological support through the mechanism of flexible working. The operation of these schemes sends employees the message that the organisation values them, believes they will get better, and that, even at times when the person is not well, they can still make a contribution to the organisation.

Many potential workers with mental illness reported the prospect of returning to full-time work too daunting but would consider gradual re-entry if it were available (Johnson et al, 2005). Without flexible working arrangements, the path faced by someone in this situation is infinitely more prohibitive. The 'all or nothing' approach can be very difficult, especially if someone has been ill for an extended period. Self-confidence and self-esteem are very fragile at times of ill health. For many, the choice of returning full-time or not at all can be overwhelming during

episodes of ill health and, if the option of a phased workforce re-entry alongside flexible working arrangements is not available, people with mental health issues may be forced to abandon work as an option.

In the present study attitudes of the nationwide sample were elicited concerning attitudes to people with mental health problems in the workplace. Comparative data were presented from a survey carried out on a sample of people with mental health problems (Fine-Davis, McCarthy, Edge, and O'Dwyer, 2005). It was found that a large majority of the sample was favourable to facilitating people with mental health problems in the workplace. For example, 89% agreed that "If people with mental health problems need flexibility at work in order to stay in the workforce, their work colleagues should make allowances for this." A very large majority (93.6%) also expressed the view that "people should be able to be more open in the workplace about mental health issues." Similarly the vast majority (92%) felt that "mental health problems should be regarded in the same way as any other illness." There was also very strong support (90.3%) for the idea that "employers should make a special effort to accommodate the particular needs of employees with mental health problems in the workforce." A large majority (92.7%) believed that "it was in the interest of employers to support people with mental health problems so as to retain their skills and experience."

In spite of these overall very supportive attitudes, a majority felt that "it is not in an employee's best interest to discuss/disclose mental health problems in the workplace." This undoubtedly reflects the fact that people are aware that there is a stigma attached to mental health problems and that at the moment it may not really be safe for people to disclose. However, there is a desire that this should change and that the workplace should be a more open and supportive place. It is encouraging to see that the vast majority (92.8%) did not endorse the statement that "people with depression aren't really ill – they should just pull themselves together," indicating that there is a growing recognition that depression is an illness like any other. Comparisons with the attitudes of the mental health sample revealed that attitudes of both groups are very similar.

4.8 Barriers and Facilitators to Re-entry to Employment

A substantial proportion (52%) of all non-employed respondents, would "definitely" or "probably" like to work (or return to work) at some point. However, just 42.1% thought that they "definitely" or "probably" would work at some point in the future. Thirty-five per cent of respondents who would like to return to work said that further training or education would enable them to do so. Almost thirty per cent (28.6%) indicated that the availability of work suited to their skills would help them to return to work. Eight per cent stated that affordable childcare

facilities would enable them to return to work and flexible working arrangements or part-time/reduced hours were mentioned by 15.6% as the most important factors that would facilitate their re-entry to the labour force. Women were more likely to mention childcare and flexible working arrangements than men. When most important and second most important factors were taken into account, a total of 62.6% of the sample mentioned child care and flexible working arrangements as facilitators to their re-entry.

The proportion of non-employed respondents who stated that their ideal working arrangement would be to work part-time was much higher than that expressed by employed respondents, 40.3% and 14.5% respectively. Thirty-eight per cent would like to work full-time fixed hours, a similar proportion to the employed group. A smaller proportion of the non-employed respondents mentioned flexi-time or personalised hours as their ideal arrangement. However, when their second mentioned ideal arrangement is taken into account, flexi-time and other forms of flexible working were favoured by this groups, generally in combination with something else. Thus, in order to meet the needs of a diverse workforce and to recruit people into the workforce, creative policies for multi-mode arrangements will have to be the order of the day.

4.9 Availability of Flexible Working

Employed respondents were contracted to work an average of 36.2 hours per week, and actually worked 39.5 hours. While the majority of employed respondents worked additional hours, men tended to work a greater number of extra hours than women, with men contracted to work an average of 40.3 hours and actually working 44.3 and women contracted to work 30.6 and actually working 32.8. Respondents who were more highly educated also tended to work longer hours than they were contracted to work; those with third level education worked 4.6 hours extra per week, compared with those with primary education only (2.2 hours) or secondary education (1.9). Over half of all respondents who worked additional hours stated that their primary reason for doing so was because they had too much work to finish in their normal day (29.0%) or because of the nature of the job (24.8%). Women were more likely to say there was too much to finish in a working day (43.2%) compared to men (22.6%)

Just over a third (36.5%) of all respondents stated that they have 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal' of flexibility in their jobs. However, 27.1% have none at all, and a further 16.7% only have very little. Respondents working in private companies were more likely to state that they had 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal' of individual in their job (42.0%), while only 20.0% of respondents working in the Community/NGO sector stated the same. Those working in the public sector fell

somewhere in between, with 24.5% saying that they had either a fair amount or a great deal of flexibility.

Part-time working, half time or less, was only available to a quarter of all employed respondents and was taken up by 31% of these. However it was much more likely to be available to women than to men (41.9% vs. 17.9%) and more women than men were likely to take it up (41.6% of women vs. 15.7% of men). Part-time work (half time or more) was also only available to about one quarter of the sample –though again it was more likely to be available to women (36% vs. 14.2% of men). However, roughly equal proportions of men and women availed of it (approximately one quarter of whom it was available to). Job-sharing was less popular than part-time working, being taken up by only 15% of people who were offered it. However, many more women job shared than men (22.4% of those to whom it was available vs. only 3.4% of men). Flexi-time was available to just a quarter of all employed respondents, but was taken-up by 62.4% of those who had the opportunity to avail of it (56.6% of women and 67.9% of men). Similarly, personalised hours were available to just 18.5% of employed respondents, but taken up by 67% (60% of women and 73% of men). Other forms of flexible hours were also popular – taken up by 60% of those who had the opportunity to avail of them. Tele-working/working from home was not widely available to respondents, being offered to 8.3% of respondents, although the level of take-up was high – about 60% (75% of men to whom it was available and 48.3% of women). Term-time was also available to very few (5.5%), but for those to whom it was available, a relatively high proportion availed of it: 25.9% of women and 44.4% of men. These figures suggest that when various modes of flexible working are made available to employees, they are in many cases likely to avail of them. The figures also reflect the variety of modes of flexible working which can meet needs of different employees. It is interesting that our study reinforces the results of Drew et al. (2002) to the effect that women are more likely to avail of part-time working, whereas men are more likely to favour modes of flexible working which are not as intrusive in the normal full-time routine and presumably do not significantly affect their income or promotion prospects as directly, such as flexible hours and tele-working. While term time was not widely available, it is interesting to note the high take up by men, suggesting that this may be a mode which suits men and enables them to combine work with family life.

Many respondents were working flexibly so that they could have more time for caring responsibilities. This was the most important reason given by 23.2%. Women were more likely to give this reason than men (32.8% vs. 13.7%). The next most important reason given for working flexibly was to spend more time with the family. This applied to 20.7% of female

respondents and 17.1% of males. Some 14.2% said they worked flexibly in order to make their commute easier and 11.6% did so in order to have more free time for leisure.

The majority of those who were working flexibly (68.3%) found it 'easy' or 'very easy' to get a flexible working arrangement in their job, and a further 17.1% found it 'somewhat easy'. Just 14.6% found it difficult to some degree. Women tended to find it more difficult to get a flexible working arrangement, particularly those in the age groups 31-49 and 50-64. Given women's greater caring responsibilities in these age groups, this finding is cause for some concern.

Respondents were asked whether they felt flexible working had a positive or a negative effect on their career. The majority of those who had a flexible working arrangement (49.1%) felt that it had neither a negative nor a positive effect on their career. Forty-one per cent felt it had a 'positive' or 'very positive' effect on their career, while just ten per cent thought it had a 'negative' or 'very negative' effect. Younger respondents were more likely to feel that it had neither a positive nor negative effect on their career, whereas female respondents were more likely to think it had a negative effect. These findings debunk the myth that flexible working will have a negative effect on one's career.

4.10 Attitudes of the Nationwide Sample to Flexible Working

There was very strong support in the nationwide sample for flexible working patterns. The vast majority (80-90%) were supportive of family friendly workplaces. A very large majority (70 – 90%) also believed flexible working was compatible with fatherhood, being in management and also with successful business. However, respondent attitudes also indicated that people think that flexible working can hamper career success. For example, 51.2% agreed with the statement that "You put your career on hold when you work part-time/job share." Respondents were also likely to think that "To get ahead, employees have to work over and above normal hours" (72% of the sample agreed with this). However, only a minority (28.3%) felt that women who worked part-time or job shared were less serious about their career. In contrast, however, a majority (60%) felt that "the reality is that if men worked part-time or job shared, they would be seen as less serious about their careers." This illustrates the fact that men are perceived to be at a disadvantage if they work part-time or job share, whereas women are not. These attitudes reflect the ambivalence which people have. On the one hand they are supportive of flexible working patterns, and as shown in the section on attitudes to gender roles, these have become much more egalitarian over the last 25 years. Yet, when it comes to part-time working, this is seen as hampering career success for all, but mostly for men.

Furthermore, a majority have a negative attitude to flexible working for several other reasons. Firstly, while it is seen as a good idea, it is also seen as a “luxury that most people cannot afford” (73.5% agreed). A majority also endorsed the statement that “while employers might like to facilitate workers’ needs, the reality is that they have a business to run” (83.6% agreed with this). Finally almost 60% felt that “other employees often have to pick up the slack when their colleagues work flexibly.” So these are some of the countervailing attitudes which modify the overall positive attitudes to flexible working.

In spite of this, a majority (66.2%) feels that “rigid working hours (e.g. 9 to 5) are often unnecessary and can lead to considerable stress for some people” and a majority (55.4%) do not believe that “workplaces function best when everyone comes in at the same time and leaves at the same time,” indicating a readiness to accept a more flexible working environment. Women were significantly more supportive of family friendly workplaces, though both men and women were quite supportive. Women were also more likely to think that flexible working was compatible with fatherhood, management and company success. Men, on the other hand, were somewhat more likely to think that flexibility hampered career success.

4.11 Stress, Work-Life Balance and Well-being

Stress is the leading cause of productivity loss in the workforce today and affects all groups of workers. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work found that between 50 and 60% of all lost work days are related to stress (Cox et al., 2000).

In an article on Workplace Stress in Ireland, Armstrong (2001) refers to the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health’s (NIOSH) finding that “policies benefiting worker health also benefit the bottom line.” Effective work-life balance arrangements in the workplace have been shown to have a positive effect on employee stress levels. O’Connell et al.’s (2003) research into stress determinants found increased working hours to be clearly linked to greater stress. The availability of flexi-time, on the other hand, was associated with lower stress along with the presence of family friendly policies. They locate giving greater control and discretion to employees over their jobs as a key way to reduce stress.

The main sources of stress for respondents were varied. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents mentioned that their job was their main source of stress, though a higher percentage of younger respondents than older respondents mentioned this; 41% of respondents aged between 18 and 30 indicated that their job was their primary source of stress, while only 28% of 31-49 year olds and 21.2% of 50-64 year olds did so. In addition, a higher percentage of men than women stated that

their job was their main source of stress (40.1% and 18.9% respectively). Many employed and non-employed women, 37.3% overall, indicated that caring and domestic activities, as well as juggling their job and caring activities were sources of stress. Caring/domestic activities and juggling a job and caring activities ranked as the main source of stress for a higher percentage of respondents aged 31-49 (41.5%) than respondents in any other age group – 28.0% respondents aged between 31-49 ranked their job as their main source of stress, along with 21.2% of 50-64 year olds and just 5.3% of those aged 65 and over.

Three-quarters of all employed respondents found it somewhat easy, easy or very easy to combine their job and their family or personal life, while 15% found it somewhat difficult, 8.2% found it difficult and 2% found it very difficult.

A systematic analysis of differences among groups in terms of their well-being was carried out using analysis of variance, which looked at the simultaneous effects of gender, employment status, socio-economic status (SES) and age on each of several measures of well-being. It was found that women were significantly more likely to report feeling under stress than men. The employed were also more likely to report being under stress. Those in the higher socio-economic group were also, as were people in the age group 35-49.

Men were more likely to want to spend more time with their families, as were the employed and members of the higher SES group. Those 35-49 were most likely to express the wish to have more family time, followed by those 18-30. The employed were also more likely to want more personal time. There were no differences on this by gender. Again, those 18-30 and 31-49 were most in need of personal time – as opposed to those 50 and over.

Women were more likely to report better health, as were the employed. The effect of employment status was very strong. Not surprisingly, the young (18-30) reported the best health, followed by those 35-49. Those 50 and over reported the worst health. Results for satisfaction with health mirrored those for self-assessed health.

The employed were more satisfied with their financial situation than the non-employed, as were members of the higher socio-economic group. Satisfaction with financial situation increased with

age, though there was a big difference between those 18-30 and those 31-49, with the youngest group expressing the least satisfaction with their finances.

The only significant effect on life satisfaction was for employment status, with the employed expressing greater life satisfaction.

4.12 Relationship between commuting and work-life balance and well-being

It was found that the length of respondents' commuting time in minutes is significantly related to five of the six measures of well-being and work-life balance. Firstly, the longer a person's commute the lower a person's satisfaction with working hours and working arrangements are likely to be. In addition, the longer the longer the commute, the greater the difficulty in combining work and family life. There was also a low but significant relationship with life satisfaction in the direction of longer commutes being related to lower life satisfaction.

In the same vein, the more difficult and stressful a person's commute is, the more likely they are to express dissatisfaction with their working hours and arrangements and the greater difficulty they have in combining work and family or personal life. In addition, difficulty and stressfulness of commute is also significantly related to lesser satisfaction with health and lesser life satisfaction.

4.13 Relationship between Working Arrangements and Work-Life Balance

Relationships between measures of a person's working arrangements and their work-life balance were examined. It was found that the more individual flexibility a person has in relation to their working hours the easier they find it to combine work and family/personal life. They are also more likely to express satisfaction with their work-life balance.

The greater the satisfaction with one's working hours and working arrangements, the greater the ease in combining work and family life and the greater the satisfaction with work-life balance. Those who express satisfaction with their working hours and working arrangements are less likely to express the wish to spend more time with their family or to need more personal time. Conversely, those who express dissatisfaction with their working hours and working arrangements are more likely to express a wish for more family time and more personal time. It is also interesting to note that those who are satisfied with their work overall are more likely to find it easy to combine work and family /personal life and much more likely to express satisfaction with their work life balance. This suggests that it is not only the working

arrangements and commuting which affect a positive work-life balance, but that overall work satisfaction is also a contributor.

4.14 Relationships between work characteristics and measures of well-being

Confirming research by O'Connell et al. (2003), the greater a person's individual flexibility in relationship to their working time, the less likely they are to report suffering from stress, and the more likely they are to report satisfaction with work and overall life satisfaction.

Satisfaction with one's working hours and one's working arrangements are also related to less stress, better self-assessed health, greater satisfaction with one's health. There are very strong relationships between satisfaction with current working hours and arrangements and overall work satisfaction and strong relationships with life satisfaction. Satisfaction with work is related to lower stress, better health and greater satisfaction with health. In addition, satisfaction with working hours, working arrangements and one's work in general are related to greater satisfaction with one's financial situation. Finally, satisfaction with work is significantly related to overall life satisfaction.

4.15 Perceptions of Response of Employer to Caring Needs

The majority of employed respondents with children felt that the company that they were working for took their caring needs into account. Sixty-seven per cent thought their immediate supervisor took their caring needs into account 'well' or 'very well' and 61.0% answered the same in relation to their employer. However, respondents seem to get greater support from the people they worked with. Three-quarters thought their colleagues took their caring needs into account well or very well.

4.16 Advantages to Employers of Flexible Working

Flexible working is not only beneficial to workers; current research, both national and international, is also beginning to show the advantages of developing and implementing flexible working arrangements for employers. This research has shown that employers who develop and implement flexible working arrangements obtain the following advantages:

- Ability to match work provisions more closely with customer/product demand
- Reduced fixed costs, e.g. by the use of tele-working
- improved recruitment and retention of employees

- increased productivity and efficiency
- improved staff morale and loyalty
- reduced stress and sick leave
- reduced absenteeism
- access to a wider pool of potential employees

In a tightening, aging Irish labour market, human capital is an increasing valuable commodity. It is of central importance for both organisations and the economy in general to broaden the spectrum to identify potential employees and focus on maintaining skilled employees, while increasing individual productivity levels. Thus a balanced work-life organisational culture is vital not only to the well-being of workers, but it is also essential for a healthy business environment.

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