



families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

> Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

RESEARCH REPORT NO 4/08
SEPTEMBER 2008

give and take

FAMILIES' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF FLEXIBLE WORK IN NEW ZEALAND

A FAMILIES COMMISSION REPORT

The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and commenced operations on 1 July 2004. Under the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Commission is designated as an autonomous Crown entity.

Our main role is to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally (rather than individual families).

Our specific functions under the Families Commission Act 2003 are to:

- > encourage and facilitate informed debate about families
- > increase public awareness and promote better understanding of matters affecting families
- > encourage and facilitate the development and provision of government policies that promote and serve the interests of families
- > consider any matter relating to the interests of families referred to us by any Minister of the Crown
- > stimulate and promote research into families, for example by funding and undertaking research
- > consult with, or refer matters to, other official bodies or statutory agencies.

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NITA ZODGEKAR
FAMILIES COMMISSION

LINDY FURSMAN

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PREFACE

Social, economic and demographic changes mean people today are looking for more flexibility in their work to help them meet the challenges of family responsibilities. There is growing understanding that people do not make decisions about paid and unpaid work in isolation from their family. There is also increasing acceptance of the need for using 'family lens' when trying to understand and address these challenges.

For instance, a recent law change enables employees with caring responsibilities to ask for flexible work arrangements and requires employers to give reasonable consideration to the request.

But what do families understand about these arrangements? How do they use them, and what are the benefits? This research report *Give and Take* is a significant milestone toward helping address some of these information gaps. It shows that the ability to take up flexible work is vital to the quality of life of many families with caring responsibilities. It provides complementary information to the recent Department of Labour work-life balance surveys of employers and employees by offering an evidence base of the perceptions and experiences of families.

This research strongly supports the notion that quality time together is one of the family's most significant resources, enabling family members to care for one another and to nurture relationships. Families told us that lack of time together is one of the most significant challenges to family life. This is especially the case when paid work fails to provide flexibility. On other hand, this research also shows that people with flexible work arrangements often feel it has come at the cost of their job quality, pay and security. Advocacy to overcome these barriers, to improve access to quality flexible work will be a focus for the Commission over the coming months.

We look forward to working with stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of quality flexible work and bringing a family perspective to work in this area. We also hope this report will be helpful in encouraging people to initiate discussions on flexible work options with their employer



Sharron Cole
Deputy Chief Commissioner

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

This report summarises the findings of a research project conducted by the Families Commission, exploring families' experiences of flexible work arrangements, and their impact on family life.

Flexible work allows people to make changes to the hours or times they work, and where they work. It helps people to organise their careers to accommodate their other commitments, and to manage transitions in and out of the workforce. For flexible work to be described as 'quality', these changes must not adversely affect income, career progression, availability of scheduled leave or access to high-quality work for those who take it up. In addition, quality flexible work confers benefits on both employees and employers.

Major changes to the labour market, as well as social and demographic changes, are driving an increased demand for flexible work in New Zealand and internationally. This trend is likely to increase as more people engage in further education and training, more women take up paid work, skill shortages grow and the population ages.

The Families Commission commissioned this project to explore families' experiences of flexible work arrangements and their impact on family life. The key aims for the project were to gather information on:

- > the types of flexible work arrangements that support families, and factors influencing take-up of these arrangements
- > the current barriers to access to and take-up of flexible work and what will remove them.

In particular, the project focuses on the following questions:

1. What flexible work arrangements do adult family members have available to them, which arrangements are used, and why?
2. What is the impact on the family of different degrees and types of workplace flexibility?
3. What flexible work arrangements would family members like to be available, both now and in future, and why?
4. What are the barriers to accessing or taking up flexible work arrangements?
5. What might improve access to and take-up of quality flexible work arrangements?

In order to answer these questions, the Commission contracted UMR Research to conduct 11 focus groups and 15 case-study interviews with members of various families, and then to test some of the findings with a focus group and three interviews with employers. The final step of the project was a national survey (n=1,000) to explore the prevalence of the findings of the qualitative research across the population. The primary emphasis of the project was the qualitative research which focussed on families experiences of flexible working arrangements and their impact on family life. The quantitative stage was a much smaller part of the research project and was undertaken to provide some population estimates of trends found in the qualitative stage. This work was also designed to not duplicate quantitative research undertaken by the Department of Labour. This report describes the key findings of the research.

1.2 KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from the research were:

- > Flexible work arrangements had various positive effects on families, including: increased opportunities for families to spend quality time together; enabling them to meet their care responsibilities while maintaining their participation in the paid workforce; and reducing stress.
- > The survey asked respondents in paid work whether they had access to various flexible work arrangements. Some 88 percent could take time off occasionally to attend special events, while 71 percent said they could do this regularly. Seventy-eight percent could leave work early to pick up family members, and 73 percent could start late in order to drop family members off. More than three-quarters of respondents (77 percent) could move their lunch break in order to attend a family commitment, and 77 percent could take time off during school holidays. In order to have extra time off at another time, 69 percent could work longer hours, and 44 percent could work from home.
- > Three-quarters of respondents rated their work as having ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ of flexibility. Of those respondents who reported a lot of flexibility, 88 percent declared that they were satisfied with their work-life balance, compared with 52 percent of those who said that they had little or no flexibility. Of those who worked 20 or fewer hours per week, 91 percent were satisfied with their work-life balance, compared with 58 percent of those working more than 50 hours.
- > Perceptions of what constituted flexible work were sometimes different from the definitions of quality flexible work used in this study. Some people’s understanding of ‘flexible work’ included arrangements which were actually statutory entitlements (such as sick or bereavement leave) or were different from standard arrangements (such as a later, but fixed, starting time), but did not provide them with much true flexibility.
- > For some families, flexible arrangements such as working from home came at a cost. There was some evidence of tension between the benefits of using such arrangements and disadvantages such as the extension of the work day, spill-over of work into home life and a constant feeling of juggling work and family responsibilities. While individual respondents clearly believed the benefits of their chosen arrangements outweighed any disadvantages, for some families it came at a cost.
- > Those without access to flexible work arrangements found it more difficult to spend time with their families, and parents were often unable to attend family events, resulting in disappointment for both them and their children. Families in the qualitative research described feeling pressured and stressed, with little time to complete everyday tasks. The quantitative research supported these findings, with those lacking access to flexible work more likely to report feeling as if they were juggling priorities, that they had missed out on family activities and that their family time was under pressure.
- > Respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative research often assumed that flexible work arrangements would involve a cut in their income. For this reason, many respondents said they could not afford to take up flexible work arrangements, even if they had been available.

- > 'Decisions' about flexible work arrangements were not often formally discussed within the family. More general work arrangements were typically decided jointly, often when a first child was expected. A key finding was that many people chose their work to fit around their family responsibilities, with the perceptions of the flexibility of possible jobs having a significant influence over the occupations chosen.
- > Respondents showed commitment and dedication to their work, and a strong sense of obligation to 'pull their weight' and fulfil the expectations of managers and colleagues. Many respondents indicated that they felt guilty about taking time away from work. Flexible work was viewed as a give-and-take arrangement between employers and employees, both parties seeing such work arrangements as signifying a healthy and trusting relationship.
- > Many family members indicated that, in addition to their current flexible arrangements, they also wanted more flexibility in working hours, and the ability to take leave to look after children during school holidays and to work from home. Most respondents were realistic about the drawbacks of these arrangements and whether they would 'fit' with the needs of the businesses that employed them. The arrangements people wanted and needed changed as the profile of their family changed (for example, as children reached school age).
- > Barriers to the use of flexible work arrangements included their unavailability in particular workplaces; workplace cultures that did not support their use (for example, perceived and anticipated negative attitudes from employers, managers and co-workers); concerns that using such work arrangements would hamper career progression; the perception that flexible work involved a reduction in income; the perception that flexible work arrangements were available only to highly valued employees; and perception that flexible work arrangements were not suitable or possible in particular occupations or industries.
- > Almost half of respondents in the survey (49 percent) agreed with the statement 'people who use flexible work arrangements progress more slowly in their careers', with 19 percent of respondents strongly agreeing.
- > There was evidence that respondents' experiences varied depending on their incomes. The survey indicated that perceptions of flexibility at work were inversely related to personal income. However, this is likely to be due to the influence of part-time work, with two-thirds (66 percent) of those who worked 20 or fewer hours per week reporting a lot of flexibility. The trend reversed for those in the highest income categories, with 38 percent of those with household incomes over \$100,000 saying that they had a lot of flexibility.
- > Those reporting lower personal income were more likely to report choosing their particular career or putting their career on hold to look after family, and less likely to report that they had missed family occasions because of work commitments.
- > There were differences in the work experiences of New Zealand European, Māori and Pasifika workers, especially regarding working patterns and employers' reactions to requests for flexible work. However, because of the small numbers involved (n=150 for both Māori and Pasifika respondents), care should be taken with these results, as confounding factors such as occupation and type of workplace could also be at play here, and so findings that look like a pattern of difference by ethnicity may in fact be a result of other factors.

- > Employed Māori and Pasifika men were more likely to be working long hours, while employed Māori men were also more likely to be working 20 or fewer hours a week, suggesting a polarisation of hours. Pasifika respondents were less likely than other respondents to work 20 or fewer hours a week, and more likely to be working shifts. Employed Māori and Pasifika respondents were more likely to have encountered negative reactions from employers about flexible work arrangements, and more of these respondents reported that they would be nervous about asking their employer for flexible work.
- > There were significant gender differences in work patterns and perceptions of flexible work. A third (32 percent) of women who were in paid employment reported that they worked 20 or fewer hours per week, compared with just two percent of men; and women were more likely to agree with statements that involved putting family needs before personal or work responsibilities. Gender also had a small impact on access to flexible working arrangements, with women less likely to have access to flexible work arrangements with the exception of 'taking time off occasionally to go to special events involving family'.
- > In general, employees caring for children were slightly more likely to have access to most of the flexible work arrangements than employees caring for sick, disabled or elderly people.





2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

Work in the modern world affects every aspect of our lives. This is particularly true for family members who are balancing caring responsibilities with earning an income, spending quality time with children and partners and finding time for themselves. Quality flexible work is one tool to reduce stress, help family members to achieve a satisfactory balance and increase the wellbeing of families.

Quality flexible work is an area of growing importance to policymakers, communities, employers and families. It can enhance families' wellbeing and help families to:

- > maintain an adequate standard of living and advance economically; deal with periods of transition, adversity and change
- > balance work, time for themselves and time for each other
- > maintain and strengthen family relationships and responsibilities across households and generations
- > provide care for family members.

Quality flexible work is a key sub-area in the Families Commission's programme for supporting parents and caregivers in balancing family responsibilities and work. This area co-ordinates a number of strands, with the overall objective of ensuring that families have real choice in how they balance their caring responsibilities and paid work.

Access to and take-up of quality flexible work is one of the measures that help family members to achieve better work-life balance. Access to paid parental leave, affordable quality early childhood education and out-of-school services are also important for supporting family members through periods of transition into paid work. The Families Commission has already completed key pieces of work in these areas:

- > a position paper recommending improvements to current parental leave provisions: *It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families real choice*
- > consultation with families on out-of-school services: *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services.*

The Families Commission wants to support families in their effort to secure the working arrangements they need. This research is a significant milestone in this process, and will direct the Commission's investment in raising public awareness on these issues. It will provide advice on the needs and preferences of families for the implementation of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007, which came into force on 1 July 2008.

2.2 WHAT IS FLEXIBLE WORK?

Flexible work allows people to make changes to the hours or times they work and where they work. It helps people to organise their careers to accommodate their other commitments and to manage transitions in and out of the workforce. For flexible work to be described as 'quality', these changes should not have major negative impacts on income, career progression, the availability of scheduled leave or access to quality work. In addition, quality flexible work entails benefits for both employees and employers.

In this report, the term 'flexible work' refers to various arrangements. Such arrangements include flexible start and finish times; time off for special events or occasions; working from home; time off during school holidays; flexible lunch-breaks; the ability to make up work time later or in advance (time-in-lieu); and variable working hours. A key element of these arrangements is that the employee should be able to change or alter the arrangement (within reasonable boundaries) with varying degrees of notice – in this report, this is termed 'flexibility'. For an arrangement to be considered truly 'flexible', it must provide the employee with the means to manage his or her work while also managing other commitments, in such a way that avoids ill-effects on the business.

2.3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN THIS AREA

Flexible working arrangements have become increasingly important to New Zealand families, employees and employers. Significant changes to the labour market, as well as social and demographic changes, have meant that flexible work has received growing attention over the past few years, both in New Zealand and internationally, with many social and government agencies undertaking research and consultation in this area.

Previous New Zealand research in this area, and in the related area of work-life balance, has included work by the Families Commission, the Department of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development and the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust. Research by these organisations has included various findings relevant to families. For example, the Department of Labour report *Work-Life Balance in New Zealand* (2006a) includes nationally representative survey data on the working arrangements New Zealand employees have access to, and which of these arrangements carers of young children, for example, are most likely to use. The Ministry of Social Development's Work, Family and Parenting study (2006) used both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the relationship between paid work and family life, including the preferences of families regarding work and managing paid work and family life. However, little of this research focused on the impact of flexible working arrangements on families.

The Families Commission consultations with families, *Focus on Families: Reinforcing the importance of family* (2005); *What Makes Your Family Tick* (2006) and *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services* (2007b), raised some issues about the quality flexible working conditions to families in New Zealand, and the difficulty of making optimal employment-related decisions for their own benefit and the wellbeing of their families. This research attempts to explore some of these issues further, and examine the effects of flexible work arrangements on family life.

2.4 CONTEXT FOR THIS PROJECT

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 has drawn attention to this issue, and indicates the importance of flexible work for government, employers and employees. As a result of the Act, from 1 July 2008, employees who have been working for their employer for six months or more are able to request a flexible working arrangement if they have the care of another person. Employers will have a duty to consider such requests and respond to them within three months. Since 2003, some workers in the United Kingdom have had such a right.¹ The New Zealand Government is already helping to increase the profile of flexible work issues with the development of practical tools and resources to help employers provide quality flexible work arrangements.

This research project was undertaken to look at the ways families use and would like to use flexible work arrangements, and to fill knowledge gaps. While many businesses in New Zealand have invested in providing flexible work arrangements to help their employees balance work and life commitments, knowledge of the relationship between the provision of the various flexible work arrangements by employers and the reasons employees decide whether or not to take them up was limited. Nor were there data on the family factors that influence the amount or type of flexibility needed to support families in different circumstances, or on the impact of flexible work arrangements on family life. Further information was also required on the needs and preferences of various groups (including Māori and Pasifika) and on the nature of people's working arrangements and how they fit with their caring responsibilities. This research aimed to address these information gaps by gathering a strong evidence base of experiences that are rooted in the stories of many different kinds of families.

The overarching objectives for the project were to gather information on:

- > the types of flexible work arrangements that support family wellbeing, and factors influencing take-up of them
- > the current barriers to access to and take-up of quality flexible work, and what will remove them.

In particular, the project was designed to gather information to answer the following research questions:

1. What flexible work arrangements do adult family members have available to them, which arrangements are successfully used, and why?
2. What is the impact on the family of varying degrees of workplace flexibility?
3. What flexible work arrangements would family members like to be available, both now and for future use, and why are these arrangements desired?
4. What are the barriers to accessing and taking up flexible work arrangements?
5. What might improve genuine access and take-up of, and remove barriers to, quality flexible work arrangements that support family wellbeing?

¹ The UK legislation began by covering parents only. Since April 2007, it has been amended to include other carers.

2.5 TRENDS DRIVING THE DEMAND FOR FLEXIBLE WORK

People from various backgrounds are looking for more flexibility in the way they work, to help improve the quality of their lives, reduce stress and meet their caring responsibilities. This trend is likely to increase as more people engage in further education and training, more women take up paid work, numbers of sole-parent families increase, skill shortages grow, the population ages and retirement is extended. Social trends and changes to family life and workforce participation are having a major impact on the need for flexible working conditions.

- > There are more one-parent families, three-quarters of which are headed by women, and more single parents are in the workforce than before. This results both in pressure for the custodial parent in the workforce (juggling work, parenting and household chores, and arranging childcare) as well as challenges for non-custodial parents arranging time to spend with their children (Department of Labour 2007)
- > There has been an increase in dual-career couples, one-career or one-job couples and two-job couples. In addition, workers have more opportunities to enter other labour markets, such as Australia and the United Kingdom.
- > Despite greater participation of women in paid employment, their caring responsibilities for parents and other family members continue. In many families there are individuals – young or old – who need care. Over 40 percent of employees regularly provide care for someone – 38 percent for children, five percent for an elderly or sick relative and three percent for a sick spouse or partner (Department of Labour, 2006a).
- > An increasing number of older workers are willing and able to remain in the workforce. Flexible work, particularly part-time work, can make for a better transition to retirement by encouraging older workers to stay in employment for longer (McPherson, 2005). Older workers may need or want to continue in paid work, and more flexible conditions may suit them better as they approach retirement. The retention of older workers will become an increasing priority for employers as skill shortages intensify. The number of workers over 45 continues to increase as the population ages and the proportion of younger workers continues to decline.
- > While in many cases women remain primarily responsible for household tasks and caring for family, social trends reveal that many fathers are now playing a larger role in childcare and their families, as well as earning an income.

New Zealand's labour-market trends are one reason that employers are introducing flexible work. A combination of employers' need, demand from employees and government policy settings and legislation, has contributed to the development of a New Zealand labour market that is often sympathetic to flexible working conditions. In New Zealand, there are skill shortages in many sectors, leading to difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled employees (Department of Labour, 2008). Low birth rates will contribute to future skill shortages.

Some employers respond to skill shortages with an intensification of work. Significant proportions of New Zealand employees are working long hours, with the 2006 Census data indicating that 23 percent of all employees worked more than 50 hours per week. Furthermore, new technologies (for example, cellphones, laptops and PCs) are making it easy for work to spill over into personal time. Along with the intensification of work, there has been growth in non-standard employment – that is, employment that is not permanent and full-time, such as part-time work and work undertaken by the self-

employed, contractors or portfolio workers (Department of Labour, 2006b). The proportion of the workforce that works part-time has increased (Census 2006) together with the number of temporary and casual workers.

The labour force is also more varied now than ever before. Migrants with diverse cultural backgrounds constitute an increasing proportion of the New Zealand population and workforce and, to some extent, recent net migration gains are helping to mitigate skill shortages. Migrants are likely to have similar needs to those of other New Zealand families in respect of maintaining family wellbeing through a balance of income provision and quality family time.

New Zealand's demographic and labour-market composition (and the needs of the economy) now require quality flexible working arrangements for family members. More people want such working arrangements to meet family needs. Skill shortages mean that employers would benefit by having a wider pool of skilled workers available if they implemented good flexible working conditions.

There is a growing trend across OECD countries to introduce policies which allow workers, particularly those with children, to adjust their working hours. Flexible work is an increasingly important issue in many industrialised countries. Germany and the Netherlands are examples of 'regulated' regimes in which the combination of domestic legislation and European Union Directives provides workers with the opportunity to adjust their working arrangements.² In contrast, United Kingdom legislation on the right to request flexible work arrangements is relatively 'soft', and, as in New Zealand, the emphasis is on improving work-life balance through campaigns, promotional activities and workers' voluntary involvement in programmes.

2.6 HOW THIS REPORT IS ORGANISED

Section 3 of this report describes the methodology for this research, and presents a diagram illustrating how the various stages of the research fit together.

Section 4 outlines respondents' perceptions of flexible work, and describes the flexible work arrangements respondents had access to and used. It also discusses the family types that tended to use each arrangement, and the proportions who did not have access to them. Finally, this section compares the prevalence of flexible work arrangements in this study to those in previous New Zealand research.

Section 5 explores the effects of flexible work arrangements, and the lack of them, on families.

Section 6 describes the research findings on the considerations behind families' decisions about flexible work, including the impact of family responsibilities on choosing occupations, and perceptions of flexibility in various roles. Section 7 reports the flexible work arrangements that families prefer. It examines the reasons for their preferences, and compares the arrangements families want with those wanted by families in previous research. The section notes the importance of changing circumstances in shaping what families want and need in flexible work arrangements.

Section 8 describes the perceived barriers to using flexible work arrangements; and the report draws conclusions in section 9.

² The EU promotes work-life balance through several directives, including the 1993 Working Time Directive, which provides employees with the right not to work more than 48 hours per week, averaged over a set reference period, together with other rights regarding frequency and length of breaks.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research involved four stages:

1. eleven focus groups with people in various types of families
2. fifteen case studies with several different families
3. one focus group and three in-depth interviews with employers
4. a telephone survey of people who are members of families.

The sample was mainly focused on families with children.

UMR Research were contracted to collect these data on families' experiences of flexible work arrangements and their impact on family life.

This mixed-method approach was adopted to produce the range of data required to answer the research questions. The primary emphasis of the work was on the qualitative research, specifically the focus groups and case studies. These helped clarify the impact that varying degrees of workplace flexibility can have on family functioning, and explore how this differs across family types. The use of focus groups and case-study narratives helped explore the attitudes, behaviours and influences that affected people's decisions to take up flexible work arrangements. They also helped establish the issues that are important to families as they balance paid work and family responsibilities.

The results of the qualitative research informed the design of the quantitative research. The quantitative stage provided estimates of current access to and take-up of flexible work arrangements across the whole population, and explored the reasons that family members use, or would like to use, these arrangements. This strengthened the qualitative findings by allowing us to give population estimates of some of the trends found in the qualitative work.



3.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Eleven focus groups were held between 26 November and 4 December 2007, with the aim of understanding families' experiences and how they influenced flexible work arrangements, and exploring the trade-offs they had made to get flexible work, or would be prepared to make. Focus-group participants were recruited from UMR's focus-group database. The eligibility criteria for participation included having someone in the household in paid work and the respondent providing regular care for a child, older person or sick or disabled relative. Those caring for the sick, disabled and elderly were all caring for relatives in an unpaid capacity, with the exception of one person who was caring for an elderly man on an unpaid basis and had been made the man's legal guardian, and another person who had given up other work to be a paid carer for his wife. The groups were designed as follows:

FOCUS GROUPS (N=11)		
NUMBER	CRITERIA	LOCATION
1	Parents of mainly pre-school children	Auckland
2	Parents of mainly primary school children	Whakatane
3	Parents of mainly secondary school children	Whakatane
4	Sole parents responsible for children	Christchurch
5	Pasifika family members	Auckland
6	Māori family members	Auckland
7	Caregivers of the elderly (mini-group)	Auckland
8	Caregivers of the sick/disabled (mini-group)	Auckland
9	Couples and non-coupled individuals with no children of their own but with other care responsibilities	Auckland
10	Low socio family with school-aged children	Auckland
11	High socio family with school-aged children	Christchurch

Each focus group lasted for almost two hours and contained seven or eight respondents, with the exception of two mini-groups (carers of the elderly and the sick and disabled, which had four participants in each). All respondents completed a questionnaire at the end of the group which collected basic information on their family.

3.2 CASE STUDIES

The second stage of the research consisted of 15 case studies with families, in January 2008. The studies consisted of a qualitative interview with either both members of a couple or (where specified in the recruitment criteria) one respondent, held in the respondents' homes. Each interview lasted for 60–90 minutes. The approach in the case studies was to allow respondents to tell their own story in their own way, with follow-up questions to ensure that the discussion remained focused on the key research issues.

In some case studies, respondents were recruited from those participating in the focus groups, meaning that some people (five of the 15 case studies) participated in both the first and second stages of the research. This enabled a further exploration of the experiences of particular families who had interesting stories to tell about their experiences with flexible work. Respondents in the case studies completed the same final questionnaire as the one completed by focus-group respondents, unless they had also participated in a focus group. Summary write-ups of some of the illustrative case studies are provided in this report.

3.3 EMPLOYER RESEARCH

The case studies were followed by research amongst employers. This stage of the research was simply to provide a counterpoint to the views of employees (who made up the bulk of respondents in the other stages of the research). Testing some of the findings from the employee research with a small group of employers made it more likely that recommendations from the findings of the employee research would be relevant to employers, and to some degree confirmed observations made by employees (for example, employees identified their perceived value to their employer as a key determinant of the extent to which flexible work arrangements were offered, and employers confirmed that this was often the case).

The employer research consisted of one focus group and three in-depth interviews, held in February 2008, with eligible employers recruited from UMR's employer network. This part of the research should be seen as an adjunct to research conducted by the Department of Labour (2006a) on what types of flexible work arrangements New Zealand workplaces provide to their employees to help them balance their paid work.

3.4 NATIONAL SURVEY

The final stage of the research was a quantitative survey of n=1,000 'family representatives' aged 18 years or older. The survey oversampled Māori and Pasifika respondents to ensure there were adequate numbers in the sample (n=150 for both Māori and Pasifika). Of the 1,000 survey respondents, 77 percent were New Zealand European, 15 percent were Māori, 15 percent were Pasifika and seven percent were Asian.

The definition of 'family representative' used was a person who said that they regularly looked after at least one of:

- > their own children under the age of 18
- > other children under the age of 18 who were related to the respondent, such as grandchildren, nieces or nephews
- > children under the age of 18 who were not directly related to them
- > sick, elderly or disabled relatives.

All respondents had to either be in paid work or have a partner who lived with them who was in paid work (they could be both). In addition, those who said that they looked after children under the age of 18 who were related to them but who were not their own children needed to look after them at least once a week, while those who looked after children who were not directly related to them could not be paid to do so (in order to exclude teachers and childcare workers). Quotas for age and gender were added to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

Fieldwork was conducted by telephone from UMR's national interview facility in Auckland in February and March 2008. The survey achieved a response rate of 46.2 percent.

The representativeness of this sample was enhanced by weighting the sample to match the demographic characteristics of people who were 'family representatives' in the UMR Omnibus survey, a survey which is nationally representative of all New Zealanders aged

18 years or older through quotas and weights for gender, age, location and household size, and is based on results from the 2006 Census.

It is possible that there are differences between the participants in the survey and those who chose not to take part. For example, there is no way to assess whether or not non-respondents had access to the same degree of flexibility in their work as those who did take part, or whether a lack of flexibility or long working hours contributed to this group's declining to answer the survey questions.

The margin of error for a sample of $n=1,000$ for a 50 percent figure at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 3.1 percent. The margin of error for the booster samples of $n=150$ for Māori and Pasifika respondents is ± 8 percent.

3.4.1 Characteristics of the sample

Of the total sample, 45 percent were male and 55 percent female. The age breakdown was as follows:

AGE GROUP	% OF TOTAL SAMPLE
18–24	2
25–34	17
35–39	22
40–44	21
45–49	21
50–59	13
60 plus	4

Of the sample, 86 percent were employed. Of these, 15 percent worked 20 hours or less per week, 34 percent worked 21–40 hours, 25 percent worked 41–50 hours per week and 12 percent worked more than 50 hours per week.

The survey showed differences in the hours worked by men and women. Women were more likely than men to be in part-time work, with 32 percent of women who were in paid employment reporting that they worked 20 or fewer hours per week, compared with just two percent of men. Asked how many hours their partner worked, 23 percent of men said that their partner worked 20 or fewer hours, compared with two percent of women.

Men were more likely to work longer hours, with 67 percent of men reporting that they worked more than 40 hours a week, compared with 20 percent of women. These differences were compounded by the fact that 78 percent of the women in the survey were in paid work, compared with 96 percent of the men. Of women who were in paid work, 82 percent said that they were employees, compared with 70 percent of the men.

An analysis of working hours across the sample shows that employed Māori and Pasifika male respondents were more likely to be working long hours than the total employed sample, with 29 percent of employed Māori men and 33 percent of employed Pasifika men working more than 50 hours a week, compared with 25 percent of the total sample of employed men. Employed Māori men were also more likely to work 20 or fewer hours a week (eight percent compared with two percent of all employed men), suggesting a trend towards a polarisation of working hours.

Pasifika respondents were less likely than other respondents to work 20 or fewer hours a week (10 percent compared with 17 percent of the total sample), and this tendency was

particularly pronounced for Pasifika women – 15 percent of employed Pasifika women worked 20 or fewer hours a week, compared with 32 percent of all employed women.

Of the sample, 65 percent were employees, while four percent were employers and 21 percent were self-employed. Māori and Pasifika respondents were more likely to be employees (83 percent of Māori and 88 percent of Pasifika respondents were employees, compared with 76 percent of all respondents), and Māori respondents were more likely to be working both week- and weekend-days. Forty-eight percent of Māori worked both week- and week-end days, compared with 34 percent of the total sample and 32 percent of New Zealand European and Asian employed respondents, and this was particularly the case for Māori men, 59 percent of whom worked both week- and weekend-days, compared with 41 percent of all male respondents.

Pasifika respondents were more likely to work shifts, with 11 percent of this group doing shift-work, compared with six percent of the total sample. Again, this trend was pronounced amongst men, with twice the proportion of male Pasifika respondents reporting shift-work relative to the total employed male sample (15 percent, compared with seven percent of all employed male respondents).

More than a third of those in paid work (38 percent) had been in their current job for more than five years, while 24 percent had been in their job for two to five years. Of those in paid work, 13 percent had been in their current position for one to two years, and 11 percent for less than a year.

Those with personal incomes over \$70,000 were more likely to have been in their current job for a longer period of time (59 percent of respondents with personal incomes over \$70,000 had been in their job for more than five years, compared with 22–50 percent of those with lower personal incomes; only seven percent of respondents with personal incomes over \$70,000 had been in their current position for less than a year, compared with 27 percent of those with the lowest personal income).

3.4.2 Income, ethnicity and the role of other confounding factors in the sample

Responses to some of the survey questions differed with income and ethnicity. However, when these differences are discussed in this report, it is important to consider the influence of other characteristics that also shape responses. Two of these characteristics are the number of hours worked, and the kind of job the respondent holds. Both factors are important as they may confound the effects of both income and ethnicity. For example, a respondent who works 20 hours a week and earns an annual salary of \$40,000 for these hours is likely to have a different experience of work from a respondent who works full-time and also earns \$40,000 a year for those hours. Similarly, differences in the responses of low- and higher-income workers may be attributable to the kinds of work those workers do, rather than the income they receive.

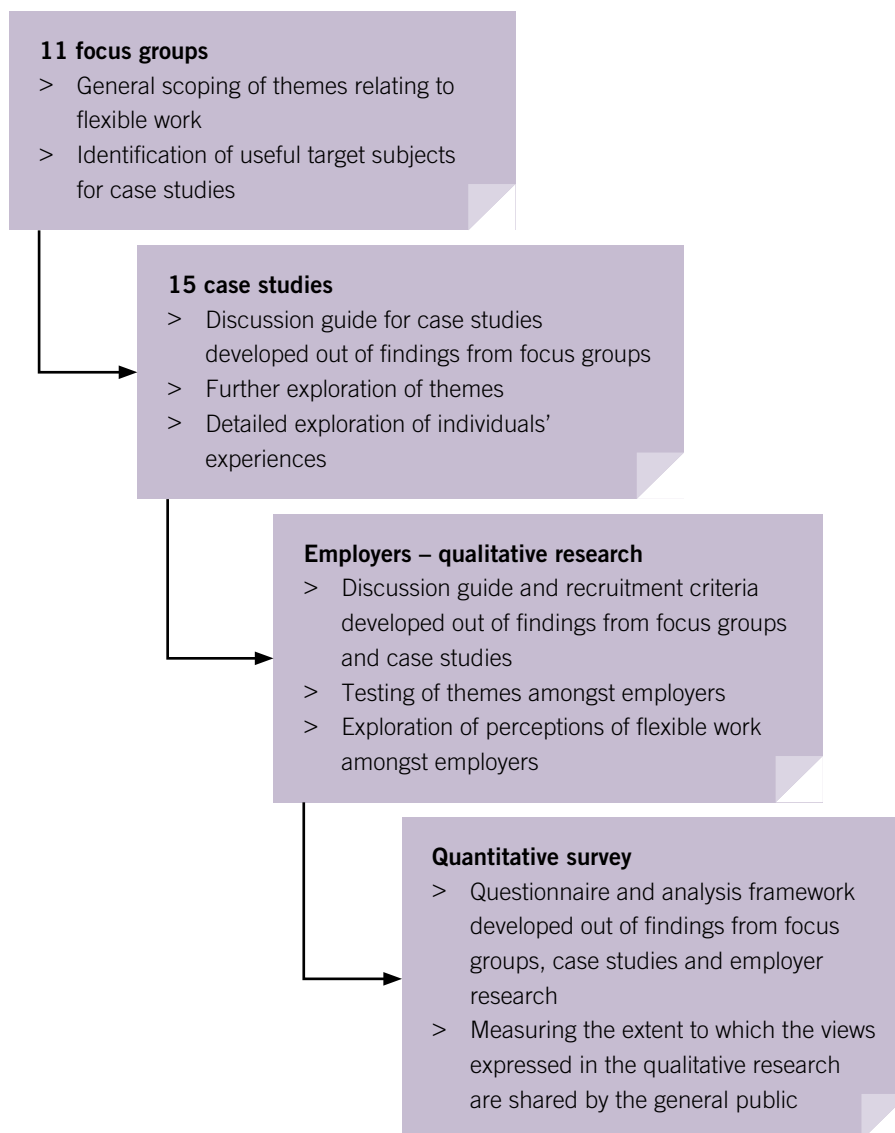
A similar situation exists with findings that vary by ethnicity. For example, if respondents of a particular ethnicity tend to be clustered in particular kinds of jobs, what looks like a pattern of responses that varies by ethnicity may in fact be a result of the characteristics of particular kinds of work.

With the sample sizes in this project, and because the survey did not return reliable data on industry, it is not possible to determine the full influence of this confounding factor, nor can these factors be statistically controlled. Therefore, results exhibiting variations by ethnicity and income should be treated with caution.

3.5 RESEARCH PROCESS

The methodology was designed with the aim of each stage building on information gathered in the previous stage. The focus groups involved a general scoping of key themes relating to flexible work. They also allowed us to identify useful target audiences for case studies. The case studies were selected to illustrate themes that arose in the focus groups, and were therefore conducted after the focus-group data had been analysed. They explored the relevance of some of the findings of the focus groups. Employers' perceptions of flexible work were also explored. The quantitative survey provided a benchmark against which the findings of the qualitative dimensions were set against the wider population.

The questionnaires and discussion content for each new stage of the research were therefore strongly influenced by the findings of the preceding stages. The following diagram illustrates how the various stages of the research fit together.





4. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS: PERCEPTIONS, AVAILABILITY AND USE

4.1 PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES FLEXIBLE WORK

Before considering the availability of different flexible work arrangements, the research explored respondents' perceptions of flexible work.

A key finding from the qualitative stages of the research is that respondents' views of flexible work sometimes included initiatives that fell outside the definition of quality flexible work used in this project. Many respondents cited sick and bereavement leave as examples of flexibility they had access to, despite these being statutory entitlements. Other respondents described reduced hours or part-time work arrangements which, while offering the possibility of flexible work, were in actuality very rigid and unable to be altered. These employees, who had little or no ability to vary their working hours to accommodate non-work commitments or to leave the workplace to attend other events, enjoyed less flexibility than those working longer hours, even though they defined themselves as having access to flexible work.



4.2 AVAILABILITY OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

4.2.1 Perceptions of flexibility at work

The quantitative survey asked people about the amount of flexibility they had in their work. Table 1 shows that more than three-quarters of the sample described their work as flexible. Interestingly, fewer respondents described their partner's work as flexible, with women less likely to say their partners had a lot of flexibility (15 percent, compared with 25 percent of men reporting their partners had a lot of flexibility) and more likely to report their partners had no flexibility (11 percent, compared with five percent of men).

TABLE 1: AMOUNT OF FLEXIBILITY TO FIT WORK AROUND FAMILY COMMITMENTS

PERCEIVED FLEXIBILITY OF WORK		
Thinking about the paid work that you do, would you say that your job has a lot of flexibility to fit around family commitments, a fair amount of flexibility, not that much flexibility or no flexibility at all?		
Thinking now about the paid work that your partner does, would you say that their job has a lot of flexibility to fit around family commitments, a fair amount of flexibility, not that much flexibility or no flexibility at all?		
	RESPONDENT'S OWN WORK*	PARTNER'S WORK**
	(N=858)	(N=710)
	%	%
A lot	35	19
A fair amount	42	42
TOTAL FLEXIBLE	77	61
Not that much	17	29
No flexibility	6	9
TOTAL INFLEXIBLE	23	38
Unsure	–	1

* Base: Those who do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation
 ** Base: Those whose partner undertakes paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation

In line with the large numbers of respondents saying that they had a lot of flexibility in their work, three-quarters of respondents declared that they were satisfied with their work-life balance. Of those who said that they had a lot of flexibility in their work, 88 percent declared that they were satisfied with their work-life balance, compared with 52 percent of those who said that they had little or no flexibility. Ninety-one percent of those who worked 20 or fewer hours per week were satisfied with their work-life balance, compared with 58 percent of those working more than 50 hours.

The survey indicated that perceptions of flexibility at work were inversely related to personal income: as income rose, perceptions of flexibility declined. More than half (57 percent) of those with personal incomes of \$25,000 or below felt that they had a lot of flexibility, compared with 22 percent of those with personal incomes of \$50–\$70,000. However, this is likely to be due to the influence of part-time work: 64 percent of those with personal incomes below \$15,000 worked twenty or fewer hours per week, with this percentage sharply decreasing as income rose, to a mere two percent of those with personal incomes over \$70,000. Two-thirds (66 percent) of those who worked 20 or fewer hours per week said that they had a lot of flexibility. Furthermore, this trend reversed for those in the highest income categories, with 27 percent of those with

personal incomes over \$70,000 and 38 percent of those with household incomes over \$100,000 saying that they had a lot of flexibility.

Those reporting a lot of flexibility at work were less likely to report that they were under financial pressure, with 38 percent of those with a lot of flexibility indicating that the statement 'I am under financial pressure' applied to them, compared with 44 percent of those with some flexibility, 51 percent of those with 'not that much flexibility' and 61 percent of those with no flexibility. It is likely that this is due to the confounding factors of part-time hours and level of occupation, as well as the presence of more flexibility amongst those in the highest income categories.

4.2.2 Access to, and use of, flexible work arrangements

The survey asked respondents whether they had access to a variety of work arrangements, and whether they used them. Table 2 shows the proportions of respondents in paid work who had access to various flexible work arrangements, and how many of them used each arrangement.

The table shows that 88 percent said that they could take time off occasionally to go to special events while 77 percent said that they did do this. Varying start and finish times were amongst the most common flexible work arrangements. Seventy-eight percent of respondents said that they were able to leave work early to pick up family members, with 65 percent of respondents using this arrangement. Slightly fewer survey respondents (73 percent) could start work late in order to be able to drop other family members off, with 60 percent of respondents doing this. The figures for parents who had these arrangements available were 79 percent and 74 percent respectively.

More than three-quarters of survey respondents (77 percent) could move their lunch-break in order to attend to a family commitment, and 77 percent of those with school-aged children indicated that they could take time off during school holidays, although it is unclear whether this referred to the scheduling of their annual leave entitlement. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of the survey respondents could work longer hours so they could take time off at a later date, while 71 percent could change their working hours to enable attendance at regular activities such as sports practices.

The flexible arrangement that fewest respondents had access to was working from home, with 44 percent saying that they could do this, and only 36 percent using this arrangement. In addition, a number of respondents did not have access to 'time-banking' their hours (sometimes working longer hours in order to have more time off at other times). Respondents in industries such as transport and storage and education were more likely to report that this was not offered in their job.

There was no clear relationship between personal income and access to particular flexible work arrangements, although working from home tended to be associated with higher-paying jobs. Similarly, analysis of the availability and use of flexible work arrangements did not indicate any significant differences by ethnicity. However, it appears that both Māori and Pasifika men were more likely to say that they had a lot of flexibility than the total sample of men (31 percent and 33 percent respectively, compared with 28 percent of all men), while Māori and Pasifika women were less likely than the total sample of women to rate their amount of flexibility as 'a lot' (38 percent and 32 percent respectively, compared with 42 percent of all women).

TABLE 2: CURRENT ACCESS TO, AND USE OF, FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

CURRENT FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS				
For each of the following flexible work arrangements, please tell me whether they are A) an option you use, B) an option your job offers that you do not use or C) an option your job does not offer.				
	N=858			
	%			
	OPTION YOU USE	JOB OFFERS BUT DO NOT USE	JOB DOES NOT OFFER	UNSURE
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	77	11	10	2
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	65	13	19	3
Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours	65	12	20	3
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	60	13	24	3
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children*	60	17	19	4
Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times	55	14	29	2
Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices	54	17	26	3
Working from home so you can look after family at the same time	36	8	53	3
Able to take time off to attend funerals and tangi	86	11	2	1
Able to take time off if another family member is sick or in hospital	82	12	4	2

Base: Those who do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation
* Only asked of those who regularly care for children who are in primary, intermediate or secondary school AND do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation (n=692)

Use of flexible work arrangements did not significantly differ by gender, with small gender differences in the use of only two arrangements. Men were slightly more likely to use 'working longer in exchange for time off when they need it' (nine percent higher) or working from home (six percent higher). However, as Table 3 shows, access to particular arrangements did show some small differences by gender, with women less likely to have access to all flexible work arrangements with the exception of 'taking time off occasionally to go to special events involving family'. However, the greater use of part-time work by women may mean that women are less likely to need some other types of flexible work arrangements.

TABLE 3: ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS BY GENDER; RESPONDENTS IN PAID WORK		
	PROPORTIONS OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE JOB DID NOT OFFER ARRANGEMENT	
	MEN (%) N=430	WOMEN (%) N=428
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	11	9
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children*	18	19
Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices	25	28
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	17	21
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	23	25
Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times	25	33
Working from home so you can look after family at the same time	49	57
Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours	16	23

Base: Those who do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation
 * Only asked of those who regularly care for children who are in primary, intermediate or secondary school AND do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation (n=692)

Despite having less access, women were more likely to report that their jobs had a lot of flexibility (42 percent, compared with 28 percent of men) and less likely to say they had no flexibility (three percent compared with eight percent of men). In addition, when rating the amount of flexibility their partners had in their jobs, women were less likely to say their partners had a lot of flexibility and more likely to report partners having no flexibility than men.

Respondents in the quantitative survey were also asked to specify any other flexible work arrangements that they had access to, and 19 percent of the sample came up with at least one example. Amongst the more common options mentioned were the ability to swap shifts with colleagues (three percent of respondents), and the ability to bring children to work when necessary (one percent). These are unprompted figures. The qualitative research suggests that if we had asked respondents directly whether they could do these things, many more of them would have said that these options were available to them.

The findings of the qualitative research mirrored the levels of availability of flexible work arrangements evident in the survey. A significant number of respondents in the qualitative research felt that they had a good deal of flexibility in their work arrangements, while a reasonable proportion also had what might be termed 'unrealised' flexibility, in that they had flexible work options open to them that they had never taken advantage of (usually because they had not needed them). Similarly, between eight

percent and 17 percent (depending on the arrangement) in the quantitative research had access to arrangements they did not use.

Varying start and finish times was one of the most common flexible work arrangements cited by respondents in the qualitative research. Seven of the 15 case studies, for example, involved couples who had school-aged children and who both worked full-time hours (or near full-time) during the day. Every one of the seven reported that they staggered their start and finish times to either pick up or drop off their children, or so that they could be there when they got home.

Part of the negotiation [when applying for new job] was I want to do these hours and it suited them and it was better for me. It's core hours of 40 hours but it's just I start at 7.00am, don't have much of a lunch and finish at 3.30pm. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

When I was working, my husband was working full-time, I was working two-and-a-half days a week and my children were in pre-school, and we were fortunate that my husband works five minutes from home and I worked in the same building, so he would drop off the children to pre-school and/or school and I would start before him and I would come home early and pick up the kids and he would work later. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)



4.2.3 Access to, and use of, flexible work arrangements by care responsibilities

Table 4 presents data from the survey, showing the proportions of respondents who had access to the range of flexible work arrangements, by the various caring responsibilities. The table shows that about three-quarters of those with caring responsibilities for children had access to starting late (73 percent) and finishing early (78 percent), while these arrangements were available to slightly fewer respondents who cared for someone who was sick, elderly or disabled (70 percent and 66 percent respectively). Over three-quarters of the sample (77 percent) were able to take time off during school holiday periods, and 88 percent were able to take time off occasionally to attend a special event.

The profile of this table suggests that there are no significant differences between the groups relative to the total sample, and that the age of children was not a major predictor of access to and use of arrangements.

TABLE 4: ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS BY CARE RESPONSIBILITIES					
JOB OFFERS ACCESS TO (BOTH THOSE WHO USE AND THOSE WHO DON'T USE) %	CARE RESPONSIBILITIES				ALL
	PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN	PRIMARY/ INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL CHILDREN	SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN	SICK, ELDERLY OR DISABLED	
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	73	76	71	70	73
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	80	80	75	66	78
Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours	77	77	79	80	77
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	85	89	89	84	88
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children	79	81	77	70	77
Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times	70	71	64	60	69
Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices	70	73	68	68	71
Working from home so you can look after family at the same time	51	43	40	47	44

4.2.4 Those with little or no access to flexible work arrangements

Table 2 shows that approximately one in five respondents in the quantitative research did not have access to flexible work arrangements such as starting late or finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work, changing their lunch-break to go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours or taking time off during school holidays. A quarter (26 percent) of respondents were unable to change their hours to attend regular events, while 29 percent did not have access to working longer hours in order to take time off at other times. As is evident in Table 1, 23 percent of the quantitative sample reported little or no flexibility in their work.

Similarly, in the qualitative stages of the research, there were a number of respondents who had little or no access to flexible work arrangements.

I work one-on-one with a disabled child so I can't just say 'I want to change my lunch hour' or something like that. She needs constant care... As far as leaving halfway through the day [to attend to family], it's not really an option at all. It means someone else has got to come from what they're doing to look after this child that can't be left alone. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

Respondents in the qualitative research who had little or no access to flexible work arrangements included three who either worked in the transport industry (such as truck drivers) or had a partner who did so, and reported that these jobs had virtually no flexibility and involved very long hours.

I haven't really got a lot of flexibility. The major problem there is the fact that the tourist season in New Zealand has extended out now and it starts about the first week in October ... and runs pretty hard until the middle of June, in which case a lot of the time you're driving maximum up on your log ... and a lot of the time that you do [have off] is kind of recovering from driving 2,600kms in four days... That's unfortunately just the way it is and that is basically because my earning capacity in the season is basically four times my earning capacity on salary in the off, so that's why every tour driver kind of goes hard. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

I think [partner] almost got to 70 last week. It's big, big hours, but he loves doing it so I won't stop him. [So he's not home so often?] He's not home much. I mean there are times where he'll be home for about three nights but then he's off again. (Christchurch, blended family, female)

Several other respondents described companies where flexible work arrangements seemed to be regarded as anathema to good business.

He works really long hours and if he wants time off it's quite hard. If I ring up sick for him, it's like 'Why is he sick?' and it's like 'because he is, there's nothing I can do about it', so they're quite demanding in that way. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

[Partner] said one time he came out of the toilet and [employer] said 'how long were you in there for?' (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

4.3 COMPARISON WITH THE FINDINGS OF OTHER NEW ZEALAND RESEARCH

These findings suggest that slightly more of the respondents in this survey had access to flexible start and finish times in their work than those surveyed in previous research. The Department of Labour Work-Life Balance survey (2006a) examined the working arrangements New Zealand employees had access to, and found that 62 percent of employees had access to flexible start and finish times, compared with between 73 percent and 78 percent in this study. However, this variation could be attributed to the effects of response rates in both surveys, or to differences in the ways the questions were worded in each study. The Department of Labour study separated out flexible start and finish times (available to 62 percent of respondents) and occasional variations in start and finish times to cope with a problem (available to 87 percent of respondents). In contrast, this study asked about 'finishing early' or 'starting work late', and therefore includes respondents who were using these arrangements as a one-off as well as those with fixed and routine start and finish times that were co-ordinated to allow drop-offs and pick-ups to be managed.

Summary

Perceptions of what constitutes flexible work were sometimes different from the definitions of quality flexible work used in this study. For some people, 'flexible work' arrangements included statutory entitlements (such as sick or bereavement leave) and arrangements which had the potential to be flexible but, because of the way they were implemented, did not provide employees with true flexibility (such as a later, but fixed, starting time).

About three-quarters of respondents described their own work as flexible, although fewer (60 percent) rate their partner's work as flexible, with women more likely than men to report their partners having little flexibility. The most common flexible work arrangement was the ability to vary start and finish times. The least common arrangement was working from home.

In general, employees caring for children were slightly more likely to have access to most of the flexible work arrangements than employees caring for sick, disabled or elderly people. The exceptions were being able to take time off at lunchtime to go to family commitments and working from home, which were available to slightly more of those caring for the sick, disabled or elderly.

Of those who reported having a lot of flexibility, nearly 80 percent said they were satisfied with their work-life balance. In contrast, only 52 percent of those with little or no flexibility were satisfied with theirs.

There was evidence of some 'unrealised flexibility', with more employees reporting that flexible work arrangements were available to them than actually using them. The qualitative research indicated that, where flexible arrangements were not available, this was sometimes because of the nature of the job and sometimes because of employers' inflexible attitudes.

5. THE IMPACT OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 GENERAL EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY OF ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

5.1.1 Quality family time

It's just really cool to do stuff together. (Auckland, Māori female)

Respondents in the qualitative research found it easy to come up with examples of benefits of flexible work arrangements. Many of them were instances of flexible work enhancing family life by making it easier for families to spend time together. The importance of quality time was confirmed in the quantitative research, 98 percent of respondents in the survey agreeing that it was the most important thing they could give their families.

The qualitative stages of the research highlighted a number of benefits for families conferred by quality time, including:

- > **Getting to know children better:** Spending more time with children meant having a better idea of what was important to them and what they were interested in, and that parents would generally feel closer to them.

We know what our children are doing, we know their activities, we know what they're doing within those activities... (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

Benefits like going on excursions like a class trip or something, it makes the kids really happy and I enjoy it too and it's not normally a problem for me to get out of work to do that... Going to like an award performance or stuff like that helps to feel connected with the kids, so I understand what they're actually talking about too. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

- > **Making family members feel valued:**

I think that the kids are happy, that they feel that they've got their parents there when they need them. They don't necessarily always want them around but they want them to be there when they need them... And if there's something on at school, we can go instead of always saying 'We can't because we've got work' or whatever, and that they've got time to be at home and not to be shifted from pillar to post in childcare or whatever. (Auckland, parents with mainly primary school children, using flexible arrangements, female)

[The children] know we know [what is important to them] too so they feel valued and important to us. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

- > **Better relationships, between partners and between parents and children:** Having access to flexible work could mean spending more time with partners and children, with benefits for the quality of these relationships. One caregiver for an elderly person reported, for example, that she arranged her caring responsibilities around a quiz night that she attended with her husband, as this was the only quality time they knew that they could regularly spend together.

[Having flexible work] creates a strong father/daughter relationship within our family. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

[If people had more access to flexible work arrangements] I guarantee you there'd be less divorces. Better relationships. People would communicate better. They'd

come home happy. They wouldn't spend half their night bitching to their spouses.
(Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

Enrichment of the relationships really. Bonding for dad and children and also when mum gets a rest it means that things are a little bit better for her, takes the pressure off my wife. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

Some of the precious little things ... for instance, if the Mrs come home [early] she might say 'come for an hour's walk with me' ... I mean, that seems small but it's actually quite precious because you've got time and those are the sort of times when you do a lot of talking. (Auckland, Māori family member, male)

- > **Children developing into better adults:** Some participants in the focus groups argued that not having a parent at home means children are more likely to 'go off the rails'. A number of respondents in these groups felt that if flexible work allowed parents to spend more time with their children, the children would end up better off in the long run and would learn family values.

The children feel more secure knowing their parents will be there. That contributes to their self-esteem... Hopefully we can also spot any problems so going into the schools, we know who those kids are, or the kindy, that they're talking about and if there's a problem with any kids or teachers or whatever, we can hopefully pick up things quickly. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

It would affect society as a whole. Children would be different. I reckon a lot of the misbehaving children in schools now is because the families are not there. Especially the teenage ones. They're coming home after school and there's no-one there. They've got a problem, they've had an argument or something at school, instead of coming home and saying 'I've had a prick of a day', they go home, there's no-one there, they go out. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

I could remember being sick as a kid and, you know, having mum or dad fussing over you, there's nothing better. [Does that help them in any way as they grow up?] I think so as far as sort of seeing what support should look like and family values. (Auckland, gay parents, male)

- > **Taking advantage of limited remaining time:** This was particularly relevant for caregivers of the elderly and the terminally ill, who knew that the time remaining with the elderly or sick person was limited and wanted to spend as much time with the person as possible. This helped them feel closer to the person.

The benefits were to actually be able to spend the time caring for Mum. If I'd had a nine-to-five, five-day-a-week job, I wouldn't probably have been able to do that... (Auckland, caregivers for elderly family, female)

- > **Having time to do things as a family:** Numerous respondents in the qualitative research emphasised the importance of having dinner together as a family, while others spoke about other kinds of family activities, many arranging their work so they could do these things together. For some, the activity itself was not particularly important, and the emphasis was on simply spending time together.

I would say that more often than not I will go in early and I make sure that I leave at 5.00pm at the latest, sometimes 4.30pm, sometimes 4.00pm or whenever, but certainly a reasonable hour, not eight or nine o'clock, so that I'm getting home for dinner... From a family point of view, during a Monday to Friday when you consider how many hours there are in a week and you've got kids in daycare for X amount

and they're asleep for the rest of the time, you've got this little window... It's nice to get some of that extra time in the evening with them. It's kind of like stolen time for me. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

I've got a friend who, the other day, picked her daughter up from school and it was a beautiful day and so she took her and her little brother down to the beach and they spent three hours on the beach. That's flexibility... It was just being able to say 'Right, today I'm taking them to the beach'. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

> **Feeling like a good parent:**

You get to see your kids do important things like the shows and their sports days, and so you can actually see how they're going against their environment, whoever they have lunch with and how they're going with their sports and their plays and their musicals and things like that. If you don't see it you're getting it second-hand and you just don't appreciate it... If you're not there for any of it then I don't think you're much of a parent. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

Respondents in the qualitative research also reported that flexible work arrangements could make it easier to have holidays together as a family, as they could choose when to take annual leave, rather than taking it when the employer required. This was important for both practical and emotional reasons, such as helping the family feel closer and relieving stress.

Some respondents reported that flexible work arrangements enabled them to be there for the children whilst earning enough money to provide their children with better opportunities.



The Chens stagger their hours so that somebody is always there for the children and so that they earn enough to afford out-of-school activities for them.

Meet the Chen family

Lim and Zhong Chen* are of Chinese ethnicity and grew up in Indonesia, but have lived in New Zealand for 20 years. They have two boys aged nine and 10.

Zhong works night shift for a large company, starting at 12.30am and finishing at 7.30am. He also runs an importing business, making deliveries to retailers of the products he brings in every three months.

Lim can drop the children at school every morning as she works for an export quality-control firm on the other side of town from 9.00am to 4.30pm.

They have good support networks through Lim's parents and brother and sister, as well as several neighbours.

Their story

The Chens have chosen to work staggered hours so that somebody is always there for the children. "When you're married and have the kids you have to sacrifice something," says Zhong.

They accept that there are pros and cons to their arrangement. "The good thing is lifestyle is still good. The wife can look after the kids and we don't have to pay extra for childcare. We don't have to ask for money from the government. The bad thing is probably the hours."

The money the Chens earn from their working lifestyle enables them to provide for their children in the way they want. "We try to make the future better and good. Better than us."

"Our thinking is when children are young you need to feed them a lot of things. Feed them well so they remember when they are big. It's a good time to give them input as much as you can," says Lim.

"At the moment it works quite well if he works night time because at least someone is here to take them around. We have swimming activities, soccer, netball, Tae Kwan Do."

"Because they are underage we cannot leave them alone at all," says Zhong.

"After they get older it's probably a different story so maybe I can look for another job no problem."

The Chens take turns looking after the children if they are sick, using up their sick leave if they need to. Sometimes Zhong will take time off work to go on school trips in order to feel involved and experience how school life works in New Zealand. "If you are doing something for family then [my boss] understands. No problem for this one. Always ready to listen."

Lim has stayed at her work for 11 years because they are good employers. "I have a lot of annual leave that I can use... I can use it any time. It's quite flexible. My boss is quite good."

*Not their real names



Lim has the option of starting work earlier during school holidays so she can be home before 6.00pm. The children often go to Lim's mother in the holidays so that Zhong can sleep after work. "Sometimes they stay here and the good thing though is our neighbours have a lot of children so they can play around. They can play here."

During school terms Lim's boss allows her to attend parents' assemblies twice every term at her children's school. "Normally they say 'Yeah, okay, go ahead, just take longer lunch break'... The boss doesn't mind if it's for your family, for children's sake. They quite understand.

"... I think the boss depends on us as well. If you are good to them they understand. They are good to us as well. That's my experience."

5.1.2 Fulfilling care responsibilities while maintaining participation in the labour force

Flexible work arrangements made it easier for workers to fulfil their care responsibilities while also maintaining their participation in the workforce.

I think for me it's completely the hours... I just saw an ad in the paper for my workplace and they were advertising full-time/part-time and family-friendly hours so I just applied for the family-friendly ones ... and I got it. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

...the benefits are the family. We can drop off at school, the after-school activities, all the other little things, the sports. It's good that my wife can be there. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

Some respondents in the qualitative research indicated that they would have left the workforce if they had not been able to find flexible work. Others reported that they had considered resigning because of the impact of work on their family, but decided not to do so because their employer had offered them flexible arrangements which they had not expected to be available to them.

[So if you didn't have that flexibility in your work, would you be working?] Probably not. If I had to work to their time schedule, and being retired, I probably wouldn't do it as enthusiastically as I do it. (Bay of Plenty, couple aged over 60 years with no children at home, male)

...I said [to employer] "I'm thinking of giving up work to look after my mother in [place] some of the time" and they said "we don't want to lose you, how about we alter your work schedule" ... "we're prepared to alter your work hours a bit, lessen them a little bit, give you more work in [place] so that you can both fit in going up there to look after your mother and being in Auckland to work for us". (Auckland, caregivers for elderly family, female)

The importance of flexible work arrangements in facilitating participation in paid work for those with care responsibilities was also evident in the quantitative research. This research asked those who were not currently in paid employment, 85 percent of whom were women, whether the availability of specific flexible work arrangements would make them more likely to move into paid work. Of those who were not currently in paid work, 78 percent said they would be more likely to enter or return to the workforce if they were able to take time off occasionally for special events, while 77 percent said that they would be likely to move into paid work if they could finish early and pick up family members from school or elsewhere. Over three-quarters (77 percent) thought that they would be more likely to move into paid work if they could take time during school

holidays, while 70 percent felt that they would be more likely to do this if they could have time off to attend regular events.

While the majority of those not in paid work were women, women in this group were also more likely than men who were not in paid employment, to report that access to these arrangements would make them more likely to move into paid work. This may indicate that access to flexible work arrangements would be particularly valuable in helping women with care responsibilities who are currently not working but would like to, to move into paid work. Similarly, a lack of flexible work arrangements, or the perception of such a lack, appears to be a more significant barrier for women's labour-force participation than men's.

5.1.3 Less stress

Respondents in the qualitative research said that having flexible work arrangements made it easier to cover for changing circumstances. In cases of sickness and accidents, parents and caregivers felt that there were times when they really needed to be able to 'drop everything and go'. Flexible work allowed them to do this without worrying about repercussions at work. This also applied in less urgent situations, such as school holidays and when the usual childcare was not available.

I guess the best thing about flexible work is knowing that if anything happens it's not a big deal. You're not going to be fired, you're not going to lose your job, you're not going to be penalised financially... It's a type of security. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

I don't need to worry about what time I've got to be back or what time he has to be back at school... I've got to admit my bosses are really good and they understand. Always my family comes first. (Auckland, caregivers for sick and disabled family, male)

I guess the big thing is stress, reducing the stress... It's just less stress and a happier lifestyle... (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

WORKING AROUND DISABILITY

The Lanes have negotiated flexibility in their jobs in order to look after their two boys, in particular their eldest son who has multiple disabilities.

Meet the Lane family

Denise and Darryl Lane* have two boys aged 12 and 14. The eldest boy has multiple disabilities, including spastic dysplasia and Asperger's Syndrome. Darryl works in grounds-keeping and maintenance, and Denise works in the office of a car dealership.

The Lanes receive assistance for their disabled child through a support service. Denise's parents often look after the children. Darryl's parents sometimes provide assistance, but are now getting quite elderly.

Their story

The Lanes both have fairly flexible jobs. Of her current job Denise says, "I start at 7.30am which is an hour earlier than everybody else. [My employer] actually asked the other people in my department would it be okay if I started early before they took me on to make sure it caused no hard feelings and it didn't disrupt the department. Because basically I do my own work, I'm not reliant on other people, it was no problem. They've been really flexible and they're very understanding that some people need to slightly tweak their hours."





Darryl switched from being self-employed to being an employee in order to enjoy more family time. “If you’re a sole trader it’s not just the hours that you do, say seven until five, you’ve also got the accounts, the books, everything.

“It’s like swings and roundabouts as they say, like you lose the money [not] being self-employed but you also gain holiday pay and you also gain sick pay... In the 10 years I was self-employed I would say we had three holidays if that, so that was it, whereas if you’re an employee you get a holiday every year.”

Denise is happy with the change. “Yes, it’s nice to have spare money but at the end of the day what’s the spare money if you don’t have a relationship with your husband or your family?

“It takes a lot of stress, a lot of pressure off me. It feels like we’re sharing the parenting role as opposed to just me doing it since Darryl was never there really to be the father because he was always working to support us.”

As their eldest son in particular has frequent health issues the Lanes need to be careful with their sick leave. “I only get five days a year sick leave,” says Denise, “so basically I save those unless I’m really sick. I would actually go into work feeling unwell and just put up with it so that I have days available to spend with the boys when they need me.”

Denise also gets around it by making appointments later in the day. “If it’s a three o’clock appointment I’ll go to work earlier than what I normally would. That way it doesn’t seem like I’m taking too much time off work.”

Denise is always careful to show that she values the flexibility her employer is offering. “They know that further down the track I always make up the time one way or another. I’m not taking them for a ride because there are busy times in the month when I need to be there and put the extra time in. It works really well. You have a good feeling because you know that you’re paying them back for the time you’ve taken off and it works well for both of us really.”

Darryl’s work offers more sick days and some flexibility about when they can be taken. “When something does happen ... I just go straight to my boss and I just explain the situation to him.”

Having holidays together is important to them. “It just brings us closer together I think. It’s a learning experience for the kids too. They see things that they wouldn’t see around here, and I think it gives us the incentive and motivation to work. Apart from just working to pay the bills, we’re actually working to save some money to do something that we actually all benefit from.”

The Lanes put the success of their work arrangements down to their partnership. “You’ve got to have an understanding there. You’ve got to also have understandings with your employer and if your employer knows if you’re good at your job and there’s the flexibility, then I can’t really see any issues.”

Although staggering their schedules has given them less time together as a couple they don’t see it as an issue. “I really think we were just looking out for the kids’ best interests to be honest. I don’t really think it’s had any impact on us as such. It’s just something we had to do to get around that particular problem at the time. It’s just what we did.”

*Not their real names

5.2 THE IMPACT OF SPECIFIC FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS ON THE FAMILY

5.2.1 Flexible start and finish times

A substantial number of respondents in the qualitative research had either chosen a job because it allowed them to have flexible start and finish times or had requested such arrangements from their employer. The most common reason given for wanting this kind of flexibility was to allow parents with dependent children to start late enough to be able to drop children off at school, or finish early enough to be able to pick them up. Some had flexible start and finish times not because of pick-ups and drop-offs, but simply so they could be at home when the children were there. Parents with dependent children were the group most likely to use this arrangement.

Being able to adjust start and finish times could have financial benefits, as it meant there was less need for paid childcare. This was particularly important where the parent's normal hours would have them finishing outside the closing time for a childcare centre, and several parents noted that the childcare centre they used charged them substantial fees if they were late.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

The Johnsons have the best of both worlds – jobs they love and work hours that allow them to spend quality time with the kids. So how do they do it?

Meet the Johnson family

Mary and Jamie Johnson* are both full-time employees. They live in Auckland with two pre-school children, a dog and a mortgage. Mary is a manager for a well-known company and Jamie is self-employed as a landscaper. Mary commutes every day to the North Shore, while Jamie works close to home.

They pay for their children to be in full-time daycare. Other than Jamie's mother (who recently moved from the United Kingdom to New Zealand after being widowed) they have no family support in Auckland.

Their story

The Johnsons have tried to fit their working lives around their family life. Jamie decided to become self-employed so that he could choose his own hours, and Mary has arranged with her employer to start early and finish early, so that the children don't have to spend too much time in daycare.

"Now that Jamie is self-employed he can arrange it that he doesn't start until 9.00am and that means that if I know I've got loads on, I'll go to work at 6.00/6.30am but I can still be home to make sure we have dinner together as a family," says Mary.

"As parents ... I think we realise that it's important and it's good and it's healthy for kids to actually see their parents together as well."

Mary feels she has the best of both worlds, being able to start work early and finish early. "I love being a Mum, but I love my job and I have to work, financially I have to. I don't have a choice about that. So it's nice to get some of that extra time in the evening with them. It's kind of like stolen time for me."

*Not their real names





Mary tried working from home in the past but found it stressful. “You kind of feel you’ve got to prove to yourself that you’re working as hard as you’d work if you were in the office and yet you’re not having someone come to your desk and talk to you, and you’re not taking phone calls all the time.”

The decisions the Johnsons have made have been about quality time with the children rather than money and career advancement, yet they still make enough to pay for the mortgage. They enjoy their work and believe that having jobs they love has benefits for the family. They also say that giving something back to their employers makes the situation work.

“It’s not just ‘find a good employer’,” says Jamie. “You’ve got to do your end of the bargain. It’s a two-way street and you do right by your employer, but find an employer that’s going to do right by you.”

Dropping children off and picking them up from school or daycare also offered parents the opportunity to see their school environment and meet their teachers, which meant that they had a better understanding of their children’s lives and could keep tabs on situations at school.

That’s the environment that they’re in for a long number of hours each week and it allows us to be with them in their space... They get so much pleasure going in in the morning: ‘Mum, look at my painting I did’. For them to show me their world that I haven’t seen, they love it. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

A particular benefit of being able to finish work soon after school was that it could make it easier for children to participate in extra-curricular activities. Many parents regarded this as important because it helped children develop different skills and find their niche in life.

[My working in the afternoons] doesn’t stop her but it makes it a lot harder for her to do the ballet and the gymnastics and the piano. I don’t know if she’s going to want to do all those things. At the moment she’s into gymnastics but we want to be able to give our kids choice... I think the thing is that by having them in the after-school care you become limited with kind of letting them explore their avenues. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

One case study reported that being home after school meant it was easier to help children with their homework, which they regarded as very important.

I have to teach them. If not the parent look after, who will? [Who else? (Interjection.)] Who’s going to teach them? Because out of school I think that’s not enough from the teacher and teacher asks the parent to help as well. So it is important for the teacher and family have to work together to teach the children. (Wellington, Chinese family member, male)

Some had chosen to finish earlier because they had found finishing later difficult in the past.

[If you’re getting home at six o’clock, what does that do for a family?] Well you get home, the kids have already got home, they’ve having tea or had tea, and honestly I’m quite tired by the end and I’m thinking of having tea myself and having a shower or whatever, and really sort of not in the mood for kids then you know, and as soon as you get home they want attention. [They want the attention. Five minutes, give me five minutes. (Interjection.)] (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, male)

Truly flexible start and finish times reduced the stress of needing to get to work at a particular time.

I know every day I leave here at 7.10am and I drop them at daycare at 7.30am and I plan to be at work by 8.00am but I use the word 'plan'. I never ever set a meeting before 9.00am unless it's critical for the reason that if I get to daycare at 7.30am and the kids want me to draw pictures with them or read them a story or whatever, I can and if I get to work at 7.45am because they've said 'see you later' I've just earned myself an extra 15 minutes at work that I hadn't counted on and no-one can bother me with. But if I don't turn up until 8.30am nobody's going to bat an eyelid because that's just how it is. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

Several employers talked about allowing their employees truly flexible start and finish times, and the trust that this involved. Some were more comfortable offering flexibility when the employee in question did work which produced a measurable output, which could then be used to check whether the employee had actually worked the necessary hours.

We had a staff member whose wife went back to study and he did most of our layout and design and that sort of thing. He'd come in at 8.00/8.30am and leave about 2.00/2.30pm three or four days a week and then he just happened to have a computer at home because he did freelance stuff so then he would go home and do a couple of hours' work from home. There's a fair bit of trust involved when you get into those sorts of areas, but the sort of work we do, there's tangible evidence of whether or not he did the work that he was supposed to when he went home. (Auckland, employer, male)

5.2.2 Flexible leave arrangements

Flexible leave encompasses various arrangements which involve being absent from the workplace, including taking a few hours off work to attend a special event as well as taking leave for regular events or for school holidays. Because flexible leave arrangements could be used to cover various situations, they were used by many respondents with different family and caring situations (for example, Table 4).

Most respondents indicated that they wanted access to flexible leave arrangements so they could attend (usually) one-off events involving family members. Taking time off work to attend a special event was the most common flexible work arrangement in the quantitative research, with 88 percent of respondents reporting that they were able to take time to attend special events involving family members such as school concerts, and 77 percent saying that they had actually done so. Of those who worked more than 50 hours per week, 84 percent declared that this was an option available to them.

Taking time off work and then working longer hours at another time to make up the time is an arrangement that can either be thought of as a flexible leave arrangement or as a variant of flexible start and finish times. This arrangement was common amongst respondents in the qualitative research. For example, a respondent would work a few extra hours one day because they had left work early to deal with a family commitment the previous day. Fewer respondents worked extra hours prospectively, to cover subsequent absences, though a reasonable number did so regularly. Similarly, some respondents reported taking time off in lieu of extra hours already worked.

If I don't work one day I'll go to work eight hours on a different day instead of four hours. So swapping days, or I won't work a day or two and then I'll go and work a whole Saturday or something. (Auckland, caregivers for sick and disabled family, female)

If I did three or four hours' work tonight for some reason ... I could perhaps take the kids for breakfast in the morning and go to work late, and that's nice, because the kids – that's like a real treat for them because it's something that doesn't happen... If they've been really good I'll just say I'm going to go into work a little bit later and I'll take them for a fluffy on a Friday morning or something. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

Despite solid majorities in the quantitative research claiming that they were able to take time off to attend special and ongoing events if they wanted to, 52 percent of respondents declared that they had missed out on home or family activities that they would have liked to have taken part in because of their work responsibilities. Only 37 percent of those who claimed that they had a lot of flexibility in their work arrangements reported that they had missed out in this way, compared with 79 percent of those who felt they had little or no flexibility.

A number of respondents in the qualitative research said they were able to take extended lunch-breaks in order to be able to attend to family commitments. This could cover events such as medical appointments as well as occasions such as school concerts. Many would, however, be expected to make this time up later. In the quantitative research, 77 percent of respondents said they could take a flexible lunch hour to attend to family commitments, and 65 percent stated that they had taken advantage of this.

Like truly flexible start and finish times, these arrangements were often based on informal understandings rather than on specific agreements. While there were those who had to clock in and clock out and have the exact time they had missed recorded, many operated on what might be termed a 'good faith' basis. Most employees operating under this kind of informal system felt a moral obligation to make up time that they took off, even where this was not recorded or even particularly noted by their employer.



5.2.3 Reduced hours and part-time work

While arrangements such as flexible start and finish times and permission to attend events and activities do not necessarily mean reduced hours, the fact for many people in the qualitative research was that it did. As a result, many of their experiences of part-time work relate to their experiences with other forms of flexible work arrangements, and have been covered in the relevant previous sections.

A substantial proportion of respondents in the qualitative research did part-time work, including those who worked:

- > almost full-time but reduced their hours slightly in order to be able to drop children off at school and be there soon after they got home (eg 9.00am to 4.00pm)
- > eight-hour days on two or three days a week
- > a few hours each day (eg 10.00am to 2.00pm)
- > on a 'very' casual basis, where they only came in when required.

Some of these respondents had job-sharing arrangements, where their job was paired with that of another part-time employee. Others had experienced these arrangements in the past.

I job-shared because I wanted to do the kindergarten thing and keep up with the Plunket group mothers I'd met and the ante-natal group mothers, but I also didn't want to get right out of teaching because if I got right out of it I could see it was going to be difficult to get back in again. So it kind of kept my place in there, plus I enjoyed it and I liked going to work and being Mrs [name] because the children actually did what I asked whereas they don't at home. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

Respondents in the qualitative research who were in part-time work were mostly women, and most gave having time to look after children as their reason for working these hours. Similarly, in the quantitative research, 95 percent of those working 20 or fewer hours were women.

The age of the children was a key factor in determining the likelihood of working part-time. The survey showed that 23 percent of parents of pre-schoolers did 20 or fewer hours of paid work per week, compared with 18 percent of those whose children were at primary or intermediate school and 13 percent of those whose children were at secondary school. There were also a number of respondents in the qualitative research who reported that they or their partner had worked part-time when their children were pre-schoolers, and had gradually increased their hours as their children got older.

The impact of part-time work was similar to that of flexible start and finish times, and a number of those who had flexible start and finish times were in fact working part-time. Part-time work was useful for people who wanted to balance multiple jobs or work and study.

I've decided to study anyway so casual work is going to work in good with study. I'll be able to be at home doing all my study that I want to do and I'll only go to work two or three times a week so it's not going to cut into any of my study or anything. And then I still get out of the house, I still get some money. (Christchurch, blended family, female)

Like other flexible work arrangements, part-time work helped to deliver quality time and reduce stress.

I can in my job work full-time but I choose not to because of children and because [of] my husband's shift-work, and just all those other things. I want to also have a wee bit of life myself so it's a choice. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

The main drawback of part-time work was that reduced hours inherently meant reduced incomes. Many felt, however, that the financial impact of doing this was lessened by a reduced need to pay for childcare (particularly before and after school care, as daycare centres typically did not offer discounts for picking up children early or dropping them off late).

Some also felt that part-time work could limit careers, which, as noted previously, could have longer-term financial implications. They feared that they would look less committed at work, and perceived a belief that part-time workers would not be able to do a good job because they were not at work as much.

There are promotions but to get them I have to go full-time which is a bit of a bummer because there was one, just last year, to become a team leader. The position came up and I asked can I part-time do it and they said no. You know, big long email and if you just read between the lines it'd be casually just written no... They said that for the amount of people that are going to be employed or thereabouts, it would be more beneficial for a full-timer to work with these. Because to be a team leader you have I think there's four or five people underneath you, and I could see that but I thought to myself you know, I can still do what I had to do in the six hours but no, they just wanted a full-timer. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, female)

Several employers had similar concerns about appointing a part-time person to a management or supervisory role.

What they've got to understand is that once you start moving up the ladder in a business then yes, you have to do a little bit – there are more responsibilities that come with it. So I sort of think that if you put your name out there and say 'Well jeez, I want to be the supervisor of the shift but then I want to go home early every single day for the next 20 weeks, or the rest of my shifts I want to leave an hour early', you've sort of got to say 'well is that leading by example?' as well so you've got to take that into consideration. (Waikato, Operations Manager, male)

Part-time work could also have financial benefits, however, because it allowed people to return to the workforce when they might otherwise have chosen not to. Respondents who felt that part-time work had allowed them to get back into the workforce believed that it had helped them to keep their minds fresh, their skills up-to-date and their self-esteem high.

It's going to build my confidence up. I'll feel better about myself and I know that once the kids don't need me anymore I've still got something for myself. (Christchurch, blended family, female)

As with full-time employees who felt that they had to work longer hours than they were formally contracted to, the fact that a person was theoretically part-time did not always guarantee that they could limit their work to a certain number of hours.

I get home from school after picking my daughter up at 3.30pm and I get a phone call to say we've got this problem, and sometimes they're saying 'Oh, I forgot to tell you, I need you to do this today' and the expectation is that somehow or other I'm going to get back in there and do it. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

5.2.4 Working from home

In the quantitative research, 44 percent stated that they could work from home in order to look after their family if they wished, and 36 percent said that they actually did this. Unsurprisingly, self-employed respondents in the quantitative research were substantially more likely to say that they worked from home in order to be able to look after their family (73 percent, compared with 24 percent of employees who used this option).

Individual respondents in the qualitative research reported that they could work from home occasionally to look after family members. This clearly was not practical for many occupations, and this is probably one reason why it was less common than many other forms of flexible work.

Some respondents were able to work from home regularly, and a few reported that they had actually chosen their profession because it allowed them to work from home. Others only worked from home occasionally, such as when their children were sick.

My office is at home but then I'm in the IT business ... I can be involved in conference calls that have people in the United Kingdom and the [United] States [of America] and Australia and Thailand all meet. I think if your employers will in fact embrace that sort of concept that can be done from home, particularly as they could supply tie numbers that you can phone in on so you don't have the employees picking up the phone bill. If you're in that sort of business or in a business that is international, then there's no difference in being onsite or at home. (Auckland, Māori family member, male)

In the qualitative research, working from home tended to be associated with higher-paying white-collar jobs. The quantitative survey confirmed the income trend, with 62 percent of those with personal incomes over \$70,000 saying that they could work from home, compared with 37 percent of those with personal incomes of \$40–\$70,000.

Those who could work from home when children were sick, or during school holidays, generally thought that this was beneficial. It meant they did not need to rely on others to provide care, and could be there when their family members needed them.

The ability to work from home has been excellent. It means I've spent so much time with our daughter and also it's helped her health. She's had a hole in her heart from when she was born and fortunately it's been fine. I guess the advantage of not going to daycare for her is that she hasn't been exposed to constant viruses and stuff like that... For my husband, just having that email access means that he comes home at night and we have our dinner together, he gives our daughter her bath and so it's his way of spending time with her. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

Working from home could, however, erode family quality time, particularly when it involved taking home work that could not be completed at the office. Self-employed respondents and employers in the qualitative research often felt that they were forced to work from home because they needed to complete their paperwork and did not have time to do this at their worksite. Many were working from home because they felt they had too much work to complete in their normal work hours, rather than because they were choosing to do so. However, if there was a choice between working late at the office or taking work home, they felt the latter option was more beneficial for the family.

Because I can't get all my work done in an eight- or nine-hour day, I can get home, have dinner with them, and once I've put them to bed and read them their stories I can work again. I can work until whenever... It actually means that I have quality time with my kids... In my job before the one I'm in now, I had to keep working in the office until the

job was done. Now I can go home at five o'clock, have that time with my children, and then if I've still got work I can do it in the evenings so as much as I probably shouldn't be doing it in the first place, that flexibility has been a huge bonus for the family because we get to sit and eat dinner together and be a family for part of the day. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

I said 'I don't mind you working from home, I just want you home' so we got that set up and it was good so he can sit up until whatever he wants, midnight or whatever doing his emails... It's just more so to have somebody at home... Trying to feed my daughter and bathe her and do all that in the evening is quite a busy time. So I said I'd rather have you home, you can set up after dinner and do what you want. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

Working from home typically meant that the boundaries between work and home were blurred. As a result, the appeal of working from home depended very much on an individual's ability to cope with this blurring. Some found it reasonably easy to separate the two, although this did mean that clear boundaries had to be set within the home.

You'd have to have a place that's very separate. If you physically are able to go to a room and that's the room where you do the work, so you physically don't let it come into the rest of your life. (Auckland, caregivers for sick and disabled family, female)

Others had found the blurring of the boundaries between work and home too stressful.

I've tried to work from home but it just doesn't work for me anyway. The office is always a mess. I can remember I was at home at one time doing emails and stuff like that and my wife came in vacuuming. 'What the hell are you doing, I'm trying to work here', and she said I'm invading her space... I've got to go into a workplace to be focused. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

Working from home could also mean that mobile phones might ring at any time, which would interrupt time with family.

My phone is only ever turned off when I'm in the movies basically because I'm on call 24 hours a day but that's just the industry I'm in and that's what's expected from us... My wife wishes I didn't have a [mobile] telephone. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

5.3 NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FAMILY

While flexible work arrangements can confer many benefits, respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research also noted that flexible work could have negative consequences for the family. A key finding from the qualitative research was that there was tension between the benefits of flexible work arrangements and the negative consequences such arrangements could have for families. While individual respondents clearly believed the benefits of their chosen arrangements outweighed any negative consequences, it was apparent that the use of such arrangements came at a cost for some families.

Many of these negative impacts were associated with working at home, for both those who made up time off work by working at home later in the day, and those whose day extended into 'family time' at home.

One common negative consequence was the extension of the work day into leisure time that some arrangements demanded. For example, while being able to leave work to attend a special family event was useful and allowed family members to feel supported and cared for, in many cases the worker was required to work in the evening or to make the time up at home. This meant that, in many instances, the working day extended long into the evening.

Again with school camps and stuff like that, like if they've got athletics on I can turn up in the middle of the day and watch them but it might mean that I'm working at 10 o'clock at night when they've gone to bed, rather than watching telly. (Auckland, Māori family member, male)

In the afternoon I come [home from work] 15 minutes after [my son] but I'm coming home with my load of work ... sometimes [working in] the evening is not possible, and I could be waking up at one o'clock in the morning and going until four. That is my regular way of catching up with work and [still having] time for my family. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, female)

A related negative consequence was spill-over between work and home, particularly for respondents who worked at home. Respondents who took work home in the evenings, made up missed hours at home or routinely worked from home, found that work threatened to encroach on family time too much. This was particularly the case if they were dealing with work emails or phone calls during time spent with family.

I promised my daughter we'd go for a bush walk. My wife told me I had to turn the phone off ... after half an hour as soon as I got back in the car again, turned it back on again, three missed calls. But now I've got used to putting my phone on vibrate only so during dinner my phone doesn't ring and I can see who it is... My phone's going to be quiet in my pocket but I still know it's there and I'll look at it while my wife's not watching. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

It means it would be channelled to only ring in the hours they're supposed to ring, instead of having it ringing in the weekends or after five o'clock at night. It would be less calls during family time. [And what difference would that make?] More time with the family. Less stress, instead of having the phone ring during the middle of dinner. My husband wouldn't get wound up so much. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

The quantitative research showed that the negative impact of emails and cellphones was greater for those with higher personal incomes. Those with personal incomes greater than \$70,000 were more likely to agree with the statement 'technology such as email and mobile phones make it harder to separate work time from family time' than those on lower incomes (58 percent of respondents, compared with 38–50 percent of those with lower personal incomes).

However, the quantitative research also found that respondents who used flexible work arrangements, including those who worked from home, were less likely to report that they would like a greater separation between work and home, perhaps indicating that those who worked from home found the separation of home and work less problematic. Of the total sample, 22 percent strongly agreed that they would like a greater separation between work and home, compared with only 14 percent of those who sometimes worked from home. There were also differences by ethnicity in the proportions of respondents who indicated they would like greater separation, with 73 percent of the small sub-sample of Asian respondents (n=66) agreeing with this statement, compared with 63 percent of Māori, 59 percent of Pasifika and 49 percent of New Zealand Europeans.

A third negative consequence was the feeling that families were constantly juggling work with family arrangements. While there were benefits of having flexible work arrangements (such as not having to rely on childcare and being able to attend special family events), the general impression was that the situation was often teetering on the brink, and it would take only a small unexpected event (such as a parent being sick) to throw things completely out of control.

We have a very complicated way of having to sort out where we slot everything in. And so he just does his shifts and then I look at his roster for a month out and I slot in when I can fit in my shifts ... it's the swapping information in the car park at work and he might be coming off his shift and I'm going onto mine and it's 'Right, I've made the bed and hung out the washing, can you get dinner and the kids are going here', da-da-da-da... Things crop up and then I get it and it's like oh, oh, damn, this day it's just too hard and I can't. I've got 20 balls in the air and I can't do it... (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

[My husband] ... would drop off the children to pre-school and/or school and I would start before him and I would come home early and pick up the kids and he would work later, and because we were close to home I could come home, pick up the kids from pre-school and take them to kindy or pick them up from kindy and take them back to pre-school in the afternoon, and it was a juggling act. (Christchurch, high socio with pre-school children, female)

There was evidence of tension between the positive and negative effects of flexible work arrangements for some families. Respondents were clearly choosing to use such arrangements, and found them extremely valuable, but for some families, the arrangements were a double-edged sword. While they were happy that they had attended special family events, this made for a more complicated life than simply working standard hours and missing these occasions.

The qualitative research provided many examples of the potential for negative consequences of flexible working arrangements for families. There was less evidence of this in the quantitative research, where those with little or no access to flexible work arrangements were more likely to indicate that they were juggling work and family, or experiencing spill-over between work and home.

5.4 CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

While there was some evidence of the potential for negative consequences for the family resulting from using particular kinds of flexible work arrangements, respondents in the qualitative research who did not have access to flexible work arrangements reported that, for them, not having access to flexible work was overwhelmingly negative. Respondents reported problems such as:

- > It was difficult to spend time as a family.

When was our last family holiday? Camping, no you [partner] weren't with us... You had to work the next day... We went camping and he just came over for days after work for a couple of hours, had tea and off he went again. (Bay of Plenty, parents with mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, female)

- > Families were not as close as they would like to be.

The kids sort of miss not having their dad there too, you know. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-age children, not using flexible arrangements, male)

I mean at the moment we never sort of see each other. He generally sleeps on the couch or when free time comes up it's normally I'm going or he's staying or we never actually do anything together. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, female)

- > It was more difficult to attend events and activities, and sometimes children were disappointed by this.

It's really hard when your six-year-old says 'Oh my mum won't go to that, she never comes'. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

And [daughter] has just started saying 'I want you to come on the camp', it's like 'But I can't take the time off'. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, female)

- > Family life was pressured and stressful.

It impacts on the mothers and you end up tired, you have no life, you have no time alone or whatever. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

I think probably my kids have missed out. Lack of attention, I think they don't get enough attention. Just because my mind is constantly pulled in so many different directions. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

- > It was hard to complete everyday family tasks.

It's even down to simple things, like being able to go to a doctor, have a doctor's appointment... You have to make it in the hours that you're not working and of course if you're working on the weekend or if you're working during the week and they're closed on the weekend, so there's lots of those sorts of things...

And because we work such long hours, by the time we do get home and then you've got rubbish to see to, house to clean, washing to get done, meal to cook, the night is gone and you're too buggered to enjoy anything else. (Bay of Plenty, Māori family member, female)



CHANGING JOBS NOT ALWAYS FOR BETTER

The Kahurangis changed jobs a couple of years ago, as their children had left home and they didn't need to work around school hours. However, they are working quite separate hours and are missing the quality time they had together and with wider family.

Meet the Kahurangi family

George and Marama Kahurangi* are a couple with an 18-year-old daughter who is currently living with them along with her boyfriend. They also have a 34-year-old daughter with two children who lives locally. They have previously been Child, Youth and Family caregivers, but are unable to do this now because of the hours they work.

Marama is a trained teacher, but decided on a career change and has been working for a major retailer. George also changed his job as a school caretaker, and now works for a road construction company every weekday and Saturday mornings, but lately his hours have been getting longer.

Their story

George describes a typical working day: "I leave at somewhere around six o'clock in the morning. I can arrive home somewhere between 6.00pm and 7.00pm. And then we find we have to cook a meal some time, clean the house, get half the washing done, watch a bit of TV, have a talk, make lunch for the next day, watch a little bit of TV and go to bed – between 7.00pm and midnight."

George says that there's no choice about hours in his job. His employer's attitude is 'You took the job. These are the hours. This is the workload we've got. If you don't like it look for another job'.

It's the same with Marama's job. "I'm on the manager's roster and basically the manager puts you where you are and you do those hours whether you like it or not." She thinks that if she said she was unavailable at certain times her hours would get cut.

Marama says her life and George's have become quite separate. "He works during the day; I'm sleeping at home here all day. I go and work all night and he's sleeping at home."

When their daughter was a teenager the Kahurangis both worked during the day, and Marama was home by 3.30pm. She looks back fondly on those days. They used to go down to the beach at five o'clock every night in summer. "We were both home, all the kids were home, and it was just throw some sausages or throw something into – sometimes it was only apples and sandwiches – but we'd throw something together and we'd head off to the beach and swim and play and do everything until about nine o'clock at night every night and we haven't done that this year at all, not once."

She would love more time with her grandchildren. "I always wanted to do things with them like take them over to the wharf with bloody old chop bones and catch crabs and go damming up the river with rocks. I just wanted to do stuff with the boys and be a part of their lives and I'm not because I have to work just to keep the house going. But then how do you tell a grandchild that you can't spend time with them because you've got to work to keep the house going?"

George says that his workplace is accommodating in emergencies. "I generally don't take any days off and so they know that if there's a problem ... it's genuine, and if it's genuine they will help you out."

In one instance, their daughter required ongoing medical care, and George's employer allowed him to take her there and drop her off or go for meetings in a neighbouring city.

Recently their daughter and her partner had an argument and she didn't turn up at home. Marama was worried and wanted to go looking for her to make sure she was safe. When she was a teacher she was able to call in sick because they could get a reliever in, and she didn't have to justify her sick leave. In her current job it's harder to get leave for emergencies. Marama says: "What I'd do [in emergencies] is when I rang work I wouldn't ring the boss because they'd put a guilt trip on. But whoever answered the phone I'll tell them to tell the boss that that is what the story was..."

Marama has decided to go back to teaching, because her current work hours don't agree with her. She thinks she has already found a new job, although it isn't confirmed yet.

When Marama starts her new job she is going to be studying six teaching papers as well, in order to qualify for a higher salary. Although she will be working from 10.00am to 3.30pm, as well as studying, she still expects to have a lot more family time.

"It's going to give me more time to be able to see my grandkids and stuff like that... I'll have more hours to be able to do those things that are important to me, but George's hours are still the same so it's still only going to be a Sunday that we're going to be together, and whatever time he gets home on a Saturday.

"If we got a choice, I would like [George] to negotiate with his bosses for perhaps every second Saturday off, because there's all different gangs and for each gang there's a foreman... If I know that every second Saturday George and I had a whole weekend from Friday night through to Monday morning it would be a lot better. And my second suggestion would be for him to look for another job."

*Not their real names

The quantitative data also provided evidence of the negative consequences on families of the lack of flexible work arrangements. The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with three statements about work and family. Significantly more respondents who did not have access to flexible work arrangements agreed that they felt they were constantly juggling work and family, their family time was pressured and less enjoyable because of work commitments and they had missed out on family activities because of work responsibilities.

Table 5 compares responses to the statements of those who used flexible work arrangements with the responses of those who did not have access to them. The table shows that around half of those who used flexible work arrangements agreed that they missed out on home or family activities because of work responsibilities, but three-quarters of those without access to the various arrangements felt they had missed out at home. Access to flexible work arrangements had the least impact on whether the respondent felt they were 'juggling', but had more impact on whether the respondent reported that work meant their family time was pressured and less enjoyable. More than half of the respondents who could not start late or finish early agreed that work increased pressure on family time, while only 38 percent of those using these arrangements agreed with this statement.

TABLE 5: RESPONDENTS AGREEING TO STATEMENTS, BY USE OF OR ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

	I FEEL LIKE MY FAMILY IS CONSTANTLY JUGGLING WORK AND FAMILY COMMITMENTS % AGREE		WORK COMMITMENTS MEAN MY FAMILY TIME IS MORE PRESSURED AND LESS ENJOYABLE % AGREE		BECAUSE OF MY WORK RESPONSIBILITIES, I HAVE MISSED OUT ON HOME OR FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE TAKEN PART IN % AGREE	
	USE ARRANGEMENT	JOB DOESN'T OFFER ARRANGEMENT	USE ARRANGEMENT	JOB DOESN'T OFFER ARRANGEMENT	USE ARRANGEMENT	JOB DOESN'T OFFER ARRANGEMENT
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	58	67	38	58	49	74
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	58	69	39	59	50	74
Sometimes working longer hours to have more time to spend with family at other times	57	69	39	53	49	70
Working from home to look after family at the same time	54	64	34	49	41	62
Taking time off for special events involving family, such as school concerts	58	74	40	61	52	76
Changing hours to regularly attend activities involving family members, such as sports practices	56	70	36	59	46	73
Able to change lunchtime to go to family commitments during ordinary work hours	58	69	40	61	49	74
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children	58	76	41	59	51	76

Summary

Almost all of the survey respondents agreed that the most important thing they could give their family was quality time, and in the qualitative research, many of the stated benefits of flexible work related to enhancing family life by making it easier for families to spend time together. This had a number of benefits, including getting to know each other better, making family members feel valued, helping children develop into better adults and (in the case of caregivers of the elderly or terminally ill) making the most of limited time left.

Flexible work allowed those with caring responsibilities to stay involved in the labour force. Some would have left paid employment if flexible work had not been available, while others would enter paid employment if flexible work were available. Part-time work, despite the drawbacks of reduced income and possible career limitation (especially in supervisory roles), enabled some people to participate in paid work who would otherwise have left the labour market altogether.

The most common arrangement – flexible start and finish times – was used mainly by parents. As well as having financial benefits (avoiding using paid childcare before and after school), it allowed parents to be more involved in their children's lives, maintain contact with their child's school, crèche and circle of friends, and made it easier for children to participate in after-school activities.

There were some drawbacks to flexible work, with employees sometimes catching up with work at less convenient times, juggling work and family arrangements and reporting feeling that small events could throw arrangements out of control. Nevertheless, feelings of 'teetering on the brink' were much more common amongst those without access to flexible work. The effects of not having access to flexible work were overwhelmingly negative, with employees finding it difficult to spend time with their families, not feeling as close to family members as they would like, finding it hard to attend events (and therefore disappointing their children), finding family life pressured and finding it hard to complete family tasks.



6. DECISION-MAKING: CONSIDERATIONS WHEN THINKING ABOUT FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE?

Information on decision-making is important for understanding what factors and questions members of family units consider when taking up flexible work. For most families in the qualitative research, 'decisions' about whether or not to use flexible work arrangements were not discussed in any formal sense. Families did not have formal meetings where they sat down and worked out what the impact of work arrangements would be on the family. Instead, decisions were largely based on a combination of assumptions, understandings and incremental decisions.

I think it's not even a decision. I think it's something that just happens... It's the sad fact of life that men do tend to still earn more so it's usually the man who goes to work and it has to be a conscious decision to do it the other way around. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

This was true even for one case study (gay parents), where the fact that there were four parents involved might have made formal discussions and arrangements more likely. Instead, they also made decisions primarily on the basis of informal understandings and convenience.

We were pretty good at leaving each other up to it really, having your own career sort of thing so if there was a huge impact financially or time wise, yeah it would have been slightly different but we've been pretty balanced in that. (Auckland, gay parents bringing up children, male)

A person's particular career often influenced their perception of the types of flexible work arrangements that were available to them, and many respondents spoke about this in terms of "it's just the way it is in my work". However, a number of participants had sat down at some point and made fundamental decisions about how they would combine work and family responsibilities. This commonly took place when expectant parents discussed how work and looking after the baby would be handled (for example, whether one should work full-time while the other worked a small number of hours, or whether both should work slightly reduced hours). Once this fundamental decision was made, each partner then made decisions on the details of their work on the basis of this (for example, if the decision was that one parent would work part-time, they might decide what those part-time hours would be). However, this typically had more to do with who would work, and how much, than with the kinds of flexible work arrangements each partner would try to access.

Partners were often the only people consulted in these decisions, even though their involvement was usually limited to a 'quick check'. Solo parents were less likely to consult their former partners. Although former partners were sometimes involved because custody arrangements could affect work, most solo parents in the qualitative research claimed that they made decisions relating to work arrangements on their own.

A few respondents reported that they had discussed workplace decisions with their parents, children or friends, but these came up irregularly. The exception to this was Case study 11 (Māori grandparents bringing up young children), who were caring for their great nephew as part of a whangai arrangement. The decision to have the child live with them had been made as part of a family committee, and other family members, including their own adult children, had their say in his ongoing care. Others in the family were consulted on big decisions, with the trade-off being that they were expected to help out when necessary. While the child's parents were currently unable to help, they could also eventually have a say.

The experience of this family was consistent with a trend noted in the focus groups, which found that Māori and Pasifika respondents had consulted more widely (however, this observation should be treated with caution because of the small numbers involved). There was no evidence of formal information channels being consulted for flexible work arrangements, although some had consulted organisations for other matters relating to employment or families. These included various parenting support services run by government and non-government organisations, such as Parents as First Teachers and Kiwi Families; daycare centres; parenting magazines; Citizens Advice and church groups. While information from these sources had not necessarily been sought out it was still seen as very useful by family members.

A reasonable proportion reported using the internet to find parenting information, and many regarded this as a good way of accessing complex and tailored information. However, many people needed to be pointed towards it – information provided on sites such as Kiwi Families that parents used already was more likely to come to their attention.

Being a mum and working I don't really have the time to just sit around and go through everything and see if I can find something on that subject... So I mean even an ad on the TV or the radio or just anything that is going to get it out there to mothers that are actually running around or in the car with the radio on. (Christchurch, blended family, female)



6.2 IMPACT OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES ON DECISIONS ABOUT WORK

A key finding from both the qualitative and quantitative research concerned the degree to which respondents chose their work to fit around their family responsibilities. The focus groups and interviews suggested that many respondents prioritised their care responsibilities, then proceeded to look for employment to fit around these responsibilities.

Evidence to support this finding was also found in the quantitative research, which asked respondents whether the statement 'I chose my career because it fitted in well with my family commitments' applied to them. More than two-thirds (67 percent) of women and 39 percent of men indicated that this statement pertained to them, with those who were self-employed and those with a lot of flexibility more likely to agree with this statement. Also more likely to agree were those who were working 20 hours or less each week, those who worked in the weekend and those whose partners worked full-time.

There were also differences by income in reports of decision-making about work and family. Table 6 shows that those reporting lower incomes were more likely to report choosing their career to fit with their family responsibilities and putting their career on hold to look after family. They were also less likely to have missed out on family occasions because of work.

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAID STATEMENT APPLIES TO THEM, BY PERSONAL INCOME

% WHO SAID STATEMENT APPLIES TO THEM, OR WHO AGREED WITH STATEMENT	TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME PER YEAR						MORE THAN \$70,000
	LESS THAN \$15,000	\$15,001–\$25,000	\$25,001–\$30,000	\$30,001–\$40,000	\$40,001–\$50,000	\$50,001–\$70,000	
I chose my career because it fitted in well with my family commitments	80	79	71	60	45	42	31
I have put a career on hold to look after the family	60	57	46	51	31	29	20
Because of my work responsibilities, I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in	39	46	40	50	60	61	61

The survey also found that there were gender differences in the percentages of respondents who agreed that they had put their careers 'on hold' to care for family members. A total of 42 percent of respondents agreed with this statement, with 56 percent of women agreeing, compared with 24 percent of men. Pasifika women were less likely to say they had put their careers on hold to look after family (28 percent strongly agreed, compared with 35 percent of all women), while Māori women were more likely to agree with this statement (40 percent strongly agreed).

6.3 PERCEPTIONS OF FLEXIBILITY AFFECT DECISIONS ABOUT WORK

The qualitative research indicated that decisions about particular types of employment were made, to a large degree, according to perceptions of flexibility in particular occupations, rather than evidence of the specific arrangements that a particular position might offer. In some cases, choosing a job for the perceived flexibility it offered resulted in significant under-employment, or under-utilisation of skills.

My sister has a law degree and she has two children and she is not using her degree at all. She's got a job at the Playcentre Shop in town because it's pretty much the only job she could get that would give her the hours ... even this Playcentre Shop was quite reluctant (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

Same with me in science ... that's why I'm typing because it is flexible and all that ... I've actually been looking for a job [using my degree] in microbiology ... but they just do not have part-time jobs... (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

Respondents reported perceptions that there were some industries and professions that were expected to offer highly flexible work arrangements and be 'family friendly', and others where flexibility was assumed to be very hard to come by. The most commonly cited example of a profession that was felt to be conducive to family life was teaching. The key reason for this presumed 'family friendliness' was that teachers would have holidays at the same time as their children, and could start and finish school at more or less the same time. Numerous respondents in the qualitative research said that one of the factors they considered when they chose to become a teacher was the hours and school holidays, and others said they had also thought about switching to this career for this reason.

And that's why I've chosen to study what I'm studying so obviously being a school teacher I'll get the same holidays. So my career has been chosen because of my kids... I obviously had to choose something that I was good at and art was it, so teaching because of the hours, because of being able to be there for my children. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

[Children's mothers are teachers] I mean the holidays coincide as well so the whole daycare fits around – you know a lot of working parents, how did they manage through school holidays? It's already taken care of. (Auckland, gay parents bringing up children, male)

However, in practice, teaching offers little flexibility in terms of taking time off during term-time and few opportunities to start or finish late, and those who were working in this profession acknowledged this. While hours in teaching might be 'family friendly' to some extent, the fact that school finished at 3.00pm did not mean that a teacher's work finished at that time, and teaching therefore often carried the negative effects of working from home.

It's all the extra time. I mean I do work in the weekend ... [or I] stay at school and work until 6 o'clock or whatever, get everything done and come home, or I stay up late at night during the week so I can spend more time with my family in the weekend. (Auckland, Māori family member, male)

6.4 GENDER AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY

As well as shaping decisions and choices about careers that would accommodate family needs, gender also played a role in perceptions of the need for flexible work. In some cases, expectations meant that active decisions about who would care for family and thus need to work flexibly were unnecessary, as it was assumed that the caring work would be done by women. As a result, gender was a key variable in family- and work-related decision-making .

Respondents in the qualitative research reported that perceptions of the need for flexible work arrangements were gender-related, with employers tending to expect that women, rather than men, would require flexible work. Similarly, many respondents reported that people tended to assume that it would be women who were the first call for care responsibilities, and would thus be the ones who needed flexible work arrangements.

We are absolutely 50/50... Yet every time there's something going on they ring my wife first. Why is that? (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, male)

My brothers definitely consider it's my job to look after my mother because I am a woman. (Auckland, caregivers for elderly family, female)

Respondents in the survey agreed that women had a greater need for flexible work. The survey asked respondents whether they agreed with the statement 'women require more flexibility in their work arrangements than men do', and 72 percent of respondents indicated they agreed. Women were more likely to agree than men (77 percent of women agreed, compared with 67 percent of men), and were in stronger agreement (52 percent of women strongly agreed with the statement, compared with 32 percent of men). However, male respondents were more likely to agree with the statement 'my extended family often expect me to take time off work to deal with family commitments' with 29 percent of men agreeing with this, compared with 20 percent of women.

TABLE 7: IMPACT OF GENDER ON THE NEED FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement. Women need more flexibility in their work arrangements than men.			
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%) N=1,000	WOMEN (%) N=552	MEN (%) N=448
Strongly agree	43	52	32
Somewhat agree	29	25	35
Somewhat disagree	15	13	17
Strongly disagree	10	8	12
Unsure	3	2	4

There were also gender differences in the respondents who agreed with other statements about flexible work. Table 8 shows the proportions of men and women in the quantitative research who agreed with these statements. Evident in these statements is the greater likelihood of women to agree with statements that involve putting family needs before personal or work responsibilities.

TABLE 8: RESPONDENTS WHO AGREE WITH STATEMENT, BY GENDER

	WOMEN (% AGREE) N=552	MEN (% AGREE) N=448
I have put my career on hold to look after the family	56	24
I often use up all my sick leave on my children*	43	27
I would consider a small cut in my income if I could have more flexibility at work	44	38
Having flexible work arrangements can mean your colleagues feel that they have to pick up the slack	47	52
Work commitments mean my family time is pressured and less enjoyable	41	46
I have good support networks which can provide care for my children if I need them to*	69	77
It's hard to have flexible work arrangements in the industry I work in**	40	46

* Only asked of those who regularly care for their own children under the age of 18 (n=896)
 ** Only asked of those who do paid work that contributed to the household's financial situation (n=858)

Perceptions that women were more likely to need and use flexible work arrangements affected not only decisions about who needed work that could accommodate family needs, but also families' expectations. Several female respondents in the qualitative research commented that their children expected them to attend school events, but if the child's father attended the same event, the child became very excited.

Often my husband is not there for things and quite often one of the kids will say 'Will dad be there, is dad coming' and I say 'no, because dad's working from da-da-da'. 'Oh, okay'... It seems to be with the children [when] mum goes to things, 'Yes that's cool mum'; [but when] dad goes to things it's 'hi dad' and they really are excited. It seems dad only has to show up once in the term and it's really cool whereas mum can go every week and it's like 'Oh yes, there's mum'. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

Some fathers in the qualitative research reported that they valued the time they spent with their children when dropping them off at or picking them up from school, as it gave them a chance to talk to their children. In families where mothers provided much of the day-to-day care, respondents felt that there was value in fathers allocating a regular time for an activity with the children. Similarly, several argued that it was important for men to be involved in activities and in school pick-ups or drop-offs, because it set a positive example of the contribution men could make.

6.5 INFLUENCES ON COMMITMENT TO WORK

A key finding from the qualitative research was the high degree of commitment and dedication many respondents showed when talking about their work. There were numerous examples of respondents putting in extra hours and effort to complete work tasks, even when this was not formally required by their employer. Similarly, respondents spoke of missing family events because they were needed at work.

I made up the time [I had off], and I would work in weekends as well. No one else would be in the office but I'd go in and make up whatever hours. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

[If there is a problem at work] I stay at work. Mum goes to the event, dad has to apologise when he gets home ... it's not like both the parents let the kid down. It's only dad that does. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

Many respondents spoke of feeling guilty when time off work was taken, especially if they perceived they were letting down either their employer or their colleagues. There were, for example, many respondents who said that they felt guilty about calling in sick when they had to look after sick children, or when they needed to care for other family members.

You feel the guilt too. You want to do your job. That's how I was anyway. I didn't want to let my old employers down either... I didn't want them going through that because they needed someone there who could do the hours when they needed it... I do the glide time sort of thing where I work ... but I feel guilty that I'm not there ... because that puts extra stress on all my fellow co-workers if I'm not there. It means they're one person down. (Auckland, caregivers for sick and disabled family, female)

My wife's been sick recently and I had sick days off for that to look after her and the child which was pretty cool. I thought I was going to have to use annual leave or something like that but they just put it in as sick... I actually feel guilty if I'm not really sick... If I'm not ill then I feel real guilty about it because it doesn't feel right. [Do you still feel guilty even if your wife is sick?] Yes, I felt terrible. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

Well I think as an employee, to any place you work for, I don't know, again I think it's men feel guilty about taking time off work. Men feel more guilty than women do ... you always feel obligated to your employer... And so I've always had very little time off work. (Bay of Plenty, Māori family member, male)

I've definitely felt that guilty if my kids are sick. Since last year I've had two days' annual leave, then went back to work for a day and then my daughter got chickenpox so my husband and I were taking days off but I was conscious that I'd already been out of the office for two days that week... I mean they're very understanding. I don't actually think it was probably them as much as me. I just feel dreadful. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

It was common for respondents to put in extra hours of work to make up for time off. Many employees in the qualitative research reported that if they were able to leave work early on a particular day, they often more than made up for this time with additional hours on another day. Several respondents commented that they worked more additional hours than they took off. These comments were more about feeling guilty and morally obligated to do more, rather than about the employer actually requiring more work.

Those who used flexible work arrangements were more likely to report these feelings of guilt, and many reported that they had actually ended up working harder and for longer hours than they might otherwise have done.

My expectation is that you're at work, you do 40 hours, we more often than not do a lot more than 40 hours. (Auckland, no children but care responsibilities, female)

If I take a bit more time off than I should, I feel a bit guilty leaving the extra hour's work. We're quite busy. When I take two weeks' holiday I think 'poor bugger'. I know what it's like. So I think twice about ringing in sick and stuff like that because I know the work that we've got to do that day. If I want to finish at two o'clock I'll work through lunch or have a short lunch or whatever or have two half-hour lunch hours for a couple of days and finish earlier that day. (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, female)

If I've got something at like seven or eight o'clock at night, I might go into work at 10.00am ... regular time and just work extra hours. I guess that's a bit of a disadvantage as well, as because there's not really any fixed hours, you can [stay at work longer than you need to (interjection)]. Yes, I've had it sometimes where you just work until sort of 12 o'clock at night. It's generally because there is something the customer wants or something. (Auckland, no children but care responsibilities, male)

[If I come in late] I actually feel guilty that I'm not following my normal routine and then you actually think that you're taking more time off than most people but you're actually not because if you're back at your desk and you don't take a break until you leave at 6.00pm you're probably actually doing more work than you would normally. (Auckland, no children but care responsibilities, female)

It is likely that feelings of guilt about having time off work, and the corresponding desire to work harder to make up for such time, is influenced by both the culture of the workplaces respondents are in, as well as broader cultural messages about what being a 'good worker' involves. If colleagues and managers frown on time away from the workplace, either explicitly or subtly, an employee may feel more guilt about taking time off and more of an obligation to make this time up. It is important, therefore, to consider workplace culture as part of the context in which decisions about work are made. The role of workplace culture is further discussed in section 8.

These are the companies, when they say they've got flexibility, mean they're quite happy for you to work as many extra hours as you want. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

6.6 GIVE-AND-TAKE BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative research reported that for flexible work arrangements to be beneficial to all parties, there must be give-and-take on both sides.

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed with this give-and-take. A vast majority agreed, with 76 percent strongly agreeing and 20 percent somewhat agreeing. Those in the youngest age group (18–24 years) and those with the lowest household incomes were less likely to agree with this (58 percent and 65 percent respectively strongly disagreed).

The qualitative research provided many examples of give-and-take relationships between employers and employees, which were often based on trust. Often, both parties believed that the other would be more likely to give them what they wanted if they were prepared to do something in return. The employers in the research noted that staff who they made an effort for tended to go the extra mile themselves out of appreciation.

I think probably it's been very much a two-way thing. They know I'll do the long hours... I'll be there if I need to be there, so there's no question that when you need the time off, it's their payback... I put the hours in, they give me the time back and it just works... I think having built that trust, now it's to a point where they just don't question it. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

If you're a good worker and do your hard yards they'll look after you... (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

I think if you're flexible with them then they tend to be flexible with you. So if you need – like you might need someone to work some overtime and they'll put their hands up a little bit more. They can tend to go the extra mile. (Waikato, employer, male)

Many felt that willingness to have these arrangements signified a healthy, trusting relationship between employers and employees. There was a definite element of moral obligation, where the understandings about having flexibility were often unspoken. Flexible arrangements were consequently often not put into formal employment agreements, and were not discussed in great detail at recruitment interviews.

Interestingly, the quantitative research showed that employees were more likely than employers to strongly agree that flexible work arrangements required this give-and-take between parties. Of employees surveyed, 81 percent strongly agreed that 'flexibility means that there has to be give-and-take between employers and employees', compared with 68 percent of employers and 66 percent of self-employed respondents.

Summary

Decisions about flexible work were rarely arrived at through formal family discussions. Where these did occur, they tended to be part of an expectant couple's discussion about how they would split the responsibility of caring for the baby when it was born. For most, subsequent decisions about flexible work tended to be more informal, and based on a combination of assumptions, understandings and incremental decisions. Most people consulted only their partner, with solo parents making decisions on their own, though there was some indication that Māori and Pasifika families were more likely to consult their wider families. Parents used the internet and other channels for parenting support and information, but not specifically for guidance on flexible work.

There was evidence of employees choosing work according to how it fitted with their family responsibilities, with some evidence of gender and income differences in these choices. This could lead to skills not being fully used, as employees traded off job status (and pay) for flexibility. Decisions about what work to take were often based on general perceptions about flexibility in different types of work, rather than on specific arrangements in particular jobs. Teaching was cited as a profession often chosen for its hours and holidays, even though during school hours it can be very inflexible, and preparation and marking work can easily spill over into home life.

Evidence in both the qualitative and quantitative research indicated that assumptions meant that decisions about flexible work were often unnecessary, as it was taken for granted that women would need flexible work to accommodate care responsibilities to a greater extent than men.

Employees' strong commitment to their work meant that many put in extra hours (even when not required to by their employer) and felt guilty when they had to take time off to care for family. Those who used flexible work arrangements were more likely to report these feelings of guilt, although this may be because they were the people whose caring responsibilities made it more likely that they would have to take time off. Employees felt a 'moral obligation' to make up (or more than make up) for time that they had to take off. Employees were more likely than employers to say that flexibility needs to involve give-and-take between both sides (88 percent compared with 66 percent).



7. WHAT KINDS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS DO FAMILIES WANT?

Different families valued different flexible work arrangements, and there was no one arrangement that helped all families. However, a key finding from the qualitative research was that what really matters is the extent to which family members have control over their flexible work arrangements and can choose which work arrangements best suit their own family.

Table 9 shows the proportions of respondents in the survey who said they would find various flexible work arrangements helpful. Proportions are calculated using the base of those who are employed but do not have access to the particular arrangement.

The table shows that taking time off in the school holidays was the arrangement that the highest proportion of those without access to it reported would help “a lot.” This, along with occasionally taking time off for special events, were the two arrangements most desired by those without access to them. Interestingly, around half of respondents without access to flexible start and finish times reported that having access to these arrangements would not be helpful to them, while 55 percent reported that banking worked hours in order to have more time off at a later date would not be helpful.

TABLE 9: HELPFULNESS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

	BASE (N=)	A LOT %	A FAIR AMOUNT %	TOTAL HELPFUL %	NOT THAT MUCH %	NOT AT ALL %	TOTAL NOT HELPFUL %	UNSURE %
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	83	31	35	66	13	16	29	5
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children *	129	36	20	56	17	20	37	7
Changing hours to regularly attend activities involving family members, such as sports practices	227	29	21	50	19	25	44	6
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	164	31	16	47	16	32	48	5
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	206	28	16	44	15	36	51	5
Sometimes working longer hours to have more time to spend with the family at other times	246	21	20	41	22	33	55	4
Working from home to look after family at the same time	456	22	19	41	13	41	54	5
Able to change lunchtime to attend a family commitment during ordinary work hours	169	20	18	38	23	33	56	6

Base: Those who are not in paid employment

* Only asked of those who regularly care for children who are in primary, intermediate or secondary school (n=95)

Table 10 shows the proportions of those not currently in the workforce who would be more likely to work if particular flexible work arrangements were available to them. However, the small sample size in this group means that these results should be treated as indicative, rather than conclusive. It is also worth noting that of the 142 respondents in this group, 124 were women.

The table shows that the arrangements that might make this group more likely to move into paid work, were being able to have time off to attend special events, finishing early in time to do school or childcare pick-up and having school holidays off.

TABLE 10: INTERESTED IN SPECIFIC FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS – NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK

Can you tell me whether having access to each of these work arrangements in a job would make you more likely to move into paid work?

	(N=142) %	
	YES, MORE LIKELY	NO, NOT MORE LIKELY/UNSURE
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	78	22
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	77	23
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children *	77	23
Working from home to look after family at the same time	75	25
Changing hours to regularly attend activities involving family members, like sports practices	70	30
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	68	32
Able to change lunchtime to attend a family commitment during ordinary work hours	64	36
Sometimes working longer hours to have more time to spend with the family at other times	59	41

Base: Those who are not in paid employment

* Only asked of those who regularly care for children who are in primary, intermediate or secondary school (n=95)

7.1 GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN WORKING HOURS

While there was no one-size-fits-all arrangement desired by participants in the qualitative and quantitative research, there were some flexible work arrangements that were commonly listed as potentially the most helpful. One of these was more flexible working hours – being able to take more time off during the week when they wanted to and easily take breaks during the day without being penalised. Respondents willingly accepted that they would have to make up these hours later on.

I guess being able to work the hours somewhere within the working week so we're not being regimented. You have to do it between this hour and this hour, but if [name] was to start at 7.00am and finish at 2.00pm he could do the remaining three hours in the evening, for example. (Auckland, gay parents bringing up children, male)

I wouldn't mind just to be on flexitime and just doing my required hours and when it's suiting my family you know, staying home until maybe half-nine and getting to work for 10.00am and then working till six o'clock or something... Lots of times we've had to go in our lunch hour and get off because we've had to get back to work. (Auckland, parents of mainly secondary school children, male)

The quantitative research showed that arrangements that provided flexibility in working hours were amongst those that were most desired by those who did not currently have access to them. Two-thirds (66 percent) of those who were unable to take time off to attend special events reported that having access to this would be helpful to them, and half (50 percent) of those who were unable to change their working hours stated that it would be helpful to them if their hours could be altered to allow them to regularly attend a non-work-related activity.

In the qualitative research, arrangements with annualised or contracted hours were seen as particularly desirable and able to deliver the desired flexibility in working hours.

I reckon what would be really good would be if you got paid instead of an hourly rate, you got paid a salary where they said 'This is what your job is worth, you can do it in as many hours as you please but this is the job you have to do every week and this is what it's worth to you annually' and you do it. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

We were talking about this because we've got [name]'s sister-in-law ... her young daughter got pregnant and she spoke to her bosses about it and she still worked the same job for the same amount of money but took the laptop home and did all her work from home. So she could still carry on and do a full day's work on her laptop at the hours that suited her, and I thought how do you get to that point? [Seems like a dream come true, who else could get a job like that? (Interjection.)] (Bay of Plenty, Māori family member, male)

A number of respondents in the qualitative research liked the idea of compressed working weeks – working longer hours on some days in order to have more days off. This was typically explored as a '40 hours in four days' concept, although individual respondents were open to variations on this, such as working longer hours on some days in exchange for shorter hours on other days.

There's a consultant that I'm working with, a really good guy and everything like that, and he has Fridays as his art day. He has a three-day weekend and one of those days is his art day. He wants to draw pictures. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

The four days a week thing, I think it would be great for me like if I could do my work in four days and then have the Friday off to myself it would be really good for me, but I don't think it would be of any benefit to the rest of the family. I could just chill out and have the house to myself, do what I want to do, because you tend to put the kids first and do what they want to do basically. (Auckland, caregivers for sick/disabled relative, female)

However, some respondents recognised that compressed work weeks might not be practical for their work.

I'd like to be able to work four days a week. In all honesty there's not a week goes by that I don't do 50+ hours. I want more time with my kids but I want to still be good at my job, and seeing as I always do 10 hours a day at my job I'd like to just drop one day and I'd still be doing contractually what I'm meant to do but I'd have one day with my kids that wasn't a weekend. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)



7.2 ABILITY TO TAKE LEAVE TO ACCOMMODATE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

A number of the respondents in the qualitative research desired more flexible leave arrangements, especially to allow them to accommodate school holidays. In the quantitative research, this was the arrangement that was considered 'a lot of help' by the greatest proportion of those without it. More than half (56 percent) of parents who did not have access to this said that it would be helpful to them, with 36 percent indicating that it would be 'a lot of help'.

Some respondents were restricted in when they could take leave, or had to work on weekends when they would rather not. One male respondent (parents with no flexible work arrangements) for example, was currently restricted in when he could take his holidays, which meant that it was harder for the couple to cover school holidays and very difficult for them to have holidays together (because she had to take time off over Christmas whereas he was not allowed to).

Both have a week off together... You'd be able to spend time with the kids, maybe go camping or something like that... More bonding I suppose with your children. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, male)

One respondent suggested a variation in order to have more annual leave, which they hoped to use to cover school holidays better.

Six weeks a year holiday with one week through the year for each of those two-week holidays. That can be earned by 8½-hour days. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary school children, male)

A small number of respondents were open to the idea of using unpaid leave (or 'leave purchasing'), but others felt they could not afford to lose the income.

I like the leave purchasing idea. I hadn't actually heard of that before. If it added to annual leave ... four weeks is barely enough for a family I think when you take into account the fact they have 12 weeks' school holidays a year. It's probably not quite enough so it would be nice to probably spend more time as a family. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary-school children, female)

I don't get bugger all now. There's nothing to trade with... We're not well paid, minimum wage plus a dollar or something... So you can't trade anything like that for holidays. (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, female)

Some respondents in the qualitative research who were not currently in paid work indicated that they would be more likely to re-enter the workforce if they had flexible hours and could have school holidays off.

For part-time work it would have to be flexibility in the holidays... It would be able to give me time off during the holidays to be at home with the kids... It would have to be school hours really, or if it was anything it couldn't go past five o'clock. I could have them in after school care until about then... I think it's best to start at around 9.00am, that way you can get them to school, you can get them there by 8.30am and then start work. (Christchurch, blended family, female)

7.3 WORKING FROM HOME

Working from home appealed to some respondents in the qualitative research, as it would allow them to complete work at times that suited the family. Similarly, in the quantitative research (Table 10 p 75), 75 percent of those who were not in paid work said this would appeal to them. However, working from home did not appeal to everyone, with one of the main concerns being the belief that it erodes the boundary between work and family life. Similarly, others believed that they could never work effectively from home because the environment would be too distracting and they would be unable to get enough done.

I just couldn't work from home... I don't think I'd stay motivated. It's never been an option for me because I think I'd just sort of go off on 'Oh, let's just put this aside and go and do this instead'. So for me I have to be in a workplace. (Christchurch, sole parent responsible for children, female)

In the quantitative research (Table 9 p 74), 41 percent of respondents who were not currently able to work from home said that it would be helpful to be able to do this, while 22 percent of those who were in paid employment who could not currently work from home reported that it would be 'a lot of help'.

7.4 WHY FAMILIES WANT ADDITIONAL FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The reasons that respondents in the qualitative research gave for desiring additional flexible work arrangements mirrored the benefits of those arrangements that were stated by those who did have access to them.

One benefit of flexible work arrangements was more time to spend with family members. Others spoke of the desire for additional time as the reason they wanted these arrangements. Specific reasons included:

- > more opportunities to spend quality time with family
- > families feeling closer
- > being able to attend events and activities
- > helping children feel happy and secure
- > being able to cover for changing circumstances
- > not having to rely on others as much to provide support
- > family life that was less pressured and stressful
- > (for some) being able to do paid work at all, and feeling that they were contributing to the family.

It'd be nice to finish up early and walk down to the beach ... on my shorter days I actually have the time to wander on down there, it's a 10 minute walk down to the beach, and do something like that... Trying to fly a kite ... and do normal stuff. (Christchurch, solo parent responsible for children, female)

The quality of relationships with both children and partners was seen as an important reason for wanting more flexibility.

The only other thing I'd like to change is spending more time as a family, with just myself and my wife, but sometimes things don't dictate that. (Auckland, caregivers for sick and disabled, male)

Stress was again a common theme, both personal and financial.

I think it would lift the financial stress and trying to keep up with the kids ... we'd have a bit more extra money... We'd share the load a lot more evenly. I'd like to think the problems in the home with the children actually would settle down because they're getting that time with both of us, and they're getting their own one-on-one time. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, female)

If my husband could take some of the pressure off, like with the children. If he could finish early and take them to after school things, sort of take on my role that I was doing. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, female)

The quantitative research tested reasons respondents in the qualitative research gave for wanting more flexible work arrangements. Half of the respondents (50 percent) would consider a small cut in their income if it meant that they could spend more time with their family. Fifty-seven percent of those who were working more than 40 hours a week and earning under \$50,000 said that they would accept a small cut if they could have more time with their family, compared with 49 percent of those earning more than \$70,000 and working more than 40 hours a week. Some 41 percent agreed with the less specific statement that they would accept a small cut in their income if they could have more flexibility in their work arrangements, and 48 percent of those who were working more than 40 hours a week and earning under \$50,000 said that they would accept a small cut in their income in exchange for better access to flexible work arrangements. This compares with 35 percent of those earning more than \$70,000 and working more than 40 hours a week.

7.5 THE IMPACT OF TRANSITIONS

Transitions, or changes in family circumstances, were a strong motivator for seeking flexible work arrangements, and a substantial proportion of respondents in the qualitative stage reported that they had some sort of transition coming up. Such transitions influenced both the extent to which families wanted flexible work arrangements, and also which flexible arrangements they wanted.

Some transitions related to the age of children, including children starting primary or secondary school, or being old enough to be home on their own. Children starting primary school could mean a significant change in the flexible work arrangements desired, because 'care' during the day was effectively provided at school.

I think it's easier now because if you're running a few minutes late they will be in the playground playing and waiting, and there's not that 'Oh my god I'm going to get a crusty-faced caregiver throwing this kid out the door' simply because I got stuck in a traffic jam I wasn't expecting... You know you can ring the school even and say, 'Hey I've got stuck' and they're more than accommodating to sort of let the kids know even. (Auckland, gay parents bringing up children, male)

However, starting school could also mean the loss of full day care, as parents needed to drop children off at the start of the school day and pick them up at the end, or put them into before- or after-school care.

The big problem with school is it starts with 8.30am and by the time you've done a drop-off at 8.30am – I work on the North Shore, to do a drop-off at 8.30am for school, even if you dropped them at 8.15am or something – I mean a five-year-old you don't want them to be at school for ages beforehand, and then to get to work, I'm not starting my day until nine and I still have a job to do so it's going to impact on my end of the day. We don't have the solution to this yet but that's the kind of problem. [The decision may actually be you can't work on the North Shore any more. (Interjection)] (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

Parents also had to make arrangements for the school holidays, whereas pre-school children in paid childcare could be there every week.

[The holidays make me] ... just suicidal. I'm stressed out the first week. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary school children, female)

It was so stressful knowing that the holidays were coming up and organising it all. Who can I send her to this day? Who can I send her to that day? (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

The effects of children moving to secondary school and becoming old enough to be home on their own were related, and the latter was often seen as easing the burden on families. For some parents in the qualitative research, dependence on flexible work arrangements lessened at this time.

Now I start work at eight o'clock so before I leave the kids are just waking up and I say to them 'Right, I'm off, fed the cat, your breakfast is on the thing, see you later' and that's it. It's quite good because actually now it's giving them a sense of trust from us. [It's given them independence from us too. (Interjection.)]...They're pretty trustworthy like they lock up the house and set the alarm before they walk down the road. (Auckland, caregiver for sick/disabled relative, male)

However, children entering the teenage and secondary school years also increased the reliance on flexible work arrangements for other respondents in the qualitative research. The carer still had to be available when needed (at the extreme end of the scale, being able to 'drop and run' if their teenager got themselves into trouble), and some had teenagers considered at-risk and had therefore arranged their work so they could spend extra time with them.

Being home after school I think is important because you can put them into a routine of doing their homework when they get home, they hopefully don't go astray, like they don't wander the streets. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school children, not using flexible arrangements, female)

I wanted to spend time with the teenagers. I think they really need you at that stage. The babies are fine. You can let them go. I thought the teenagers really needed me. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary school children, female)

When they're 16, you can't leave them at home all day, a 16-year-old. That's when they get into trouble. (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, female)

Officially that's when they can look after themselves, but that's when you've got to watch them more. You've got to be aware of what they do, and working full-time it's very difficult. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary school kids, female)

Secondary schools have longer holiday breaks, which meant it became even more of a challenge to cover these periods, particularly until the parents were comfortable with leaving their children home on their own.

Transitions were not always associated with changes in children's ages. Respondents of one case study (caregivers for an elderly relative), who spent every third week in another town in order to look after her 98-year-old mother, had negotiated with her employer to arrange her job so she had some work there. Her mother had previously stayed in her home alone at night, but the family was becoming uncomfortable with this and so further changes to work arrangements were needed.

On Sunday afternoon just for example, my sister said to me after I'd been away camping, 'Mum's become more needy, I'm having to go there twice a day. When you come up and you go to work all day, she really needs somebody more than that'. So I said 'Well I will change my work hours', so instead of just having a half-hour lunch break and sitting in the office staffroom at the work I'll take an hour off and go home back to mum's, it's five minutes' drive from [place], make her a lunch, make sure she's okay and go back to work, and work said yes that's not a problem. (Waitakere, caregiver for elderly relative, female)

The following case study, which is from a family experiencing a change in circumstances, illustrates how having their granddaughter move in with them will require some planning and changes to their work arrangements.



MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS

Looking after their 13-year-old granddaughter will be a life change for the Samuels, but they are planning to adjust their lives to fit around her needs.

Meet the Samuels

Jude and Christopher Samuel* call themselves 'semi-retired'. They're both aged over 60 years with no children at home. Christopher is retired and because Jude, who is under 65, is included in his superannuation payments, she only works a few hours a month. Earning more than \$80 a week would affect Christopher's pension.

They sometimes do casual work together as contract exam supervisors and volunteer as tutors, although they do it more to keep active than for the money, as they own their home freehold and expenses are minimal. They enjoy the freedom of not being financially dependent on a job.

Their 13-year-old granddaughter will be coming to stay with them for a few months when she starts secondary school because her parents are currently living in Auckland and aren't sure when they'll return to Rotorua. This will mean a few life adjustments.

They also regularly have homestay students living with them and often look after their neighbour's children.

Their story

The Samuels only do their job a few times a month, but they have some flexibility. "If I had to work to their time schedule, and being retired, I probably wouldn't do it as enthusiastically as I do it," says Christopher.

Because the Samuels work together it's possible for one of them to do the job while the other deals with emergencies such as looking after the neighbour's sick children. Exams can sometimes be conducted at their home, allowing them to take care of personal commitments while working.

Having their granddaughter living with them will be a big change. "We're going to have to act as parents and be there for her. We'll have to reschedule ourselves."

On days when they would ordinarily be working, Jude is considering coming home at lunchtime so that she can be there when her granddaughter comes home. She says she would miss not working as much, but she has made a commitment to caring for her granddaughter.

"We feel that she's approaching a major crossroad in her life and at the moment the indicators say she doesn't have enough stability within her life to make sure she goes in the right direction and that's where we come in. We will fit our lives around her and try and guide her down the right road for her own future."

They have always made sure they are home after school for their international students and will be there for their granddaughter too. "We always would want to be here. We do that for the international students and they're older, they're 15/16-year-olds, but we still feel that it's important to know they've come home from school, that they're okay, they've had a good day, then they have afternoon tea and then they can go off and do whatever they're doing, but I think it's because we're able to, we weren't always able to do that."

They still feel guilty about some of the things they couldn't do with their own children, such as attending their activities, because of work commitments. "I think I probably would have given my eye teeth when I was working at the climax of my career to have been able to have had the flexibility to have done more things than I was able to do," says Christopher. "Because I was restricted, very restricted, and like everything else it wasn't the fact that you had a choice because you either worked or you didn't work and if you didn't work your kids suffered in the long run anyway."

Jude often attended to family tasks when their children were at school. "Looking back now, the way that we actually ran our family was completely different to my vision of how it should have run because you didn't have a choice, and because I know that – it wasn't that you didn't want to, it was just that you didn't have a choice."

Jude reflects on the last boss she had. "He was very flexible, but if you haven't got a flexible boss, or even a boss with an imagination – I think that is what it is, it's being able to imagine what it's like for the person, for your workers."

Christopher says, "The one thing I've learnt in life is there's no point in making things hard if you don't have to make them hard. Flexibility is probably one of your greatest assets. If you can achieve what you want to achieve but be flexible at the same time, it's a winner every time."

*Not their real names



7.6 ARRANGEMENTS FAMILIES IN THIS STUDY WANTED, COMPARED TO OTHER STUDIES

The finding that the most desired flexible work arrangements related to flexible working hours, time off in school holidays and the ability to work from home shows strong parallels to previous research exploring the kinds of flexible work arrangements families want.

The Department of Labour's Work-Life Balance study (2006a) examined the preferences and working arrangements of 'carers'. Their research reported the kinds of working arrangements carers in families wanted, with the ability to take annual leave in small blocks and to have school holidays off topping the list of desired arrangements.

The Equal Employment Opportunities Trust Parenting and Paid Work survey (2005) found that parents most commonly wanted workplace flexibility to help them combine work and caring responsibilities. This flexibility extended beyond the commonly provided 'occasional variations in start and finish times to cope with a problem', to include occasional time off during the day to attend medical appointments or school activities, and changing working hours occasionally. Routine flexibility of start and finish times were also amongst the options parents desired in both in the Equal Employment Opportunity Trust survey (2005) and the Department of Labour /Work-Life Balance survey (2006a).



Summary

Families' needs for flexible working arrangements varied widely, and there was no one type of arrangement that would help all families. But families did value control over their working arrangements and the opportunity to tailor these around their own needs.

Those who were in paid work, but did not have access to particular flexible working arrangements, reported that having more flexible working hours and more flexible leave (especially around the school holidays) would be helpful. The working hours arrangement most (66 percent) said would be helpful was to be able to take time off occasionally for special events involving their family. Of those in paid work who could not work from home, 41 percent said that it would be helpful to do so. However, in the qualitative research, some people said that they would not want to work from home, because of the difficulty of keeping home and work life separate.

The research indicates that the availability of flexible arrangements would make moving into paid work more attractive for many of those who were not currently employed. Between 60 and 80 percent of those not currently in employment said that they would be more likely to move into paid work if various flexible work arrangements were available. Three-quarters of these respondents said they would be more likely to move into paid work if they could work from home.

Flexible work arrangements of different types were often sought when there was a change in family circumstances. Often these transitions relate to the children's ages: moving from pre-school to primary school and from primary to secondary school, or becoming able to stay at home on their own, for example.

The reasons respondents gave for wanting additional flexible work arrangements were very similar to the benefits described by those who did have access to these arrangements. The key benefit of flexible work arrangements was the ability to spend time with family members. This was seen to have many other benefits, including feeling closer as a family, having a less-pressured family life with better relationships with each other, and being able to attend events and activities. About half of survey respondents said that they would consider taking a small cut in income in order to spend more time with their family; those on higher incomes were less likely to say they would consider this.



8. BARRIERS TO THE TAKE-UP OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The qualitative and quantitative stages of the research suggested that there were a number of barriers preventing the take-up of flexible working arrangements. Many of these were inter-related, and included:

- > such arrangements were not offered in a particular workplace
- > workplace cultures that did not support the use of flexible work arrangements, with this including the perceived and anticipated negative attitudes from employers, managers and co-workers
- > concerns that using flexible work arrangements would have a negative impact on career progression
- > the perception that flexible work arrangements involved a cut in income
- > a (sometimes accurate) perception that only highly valued employees would be granted flexible work arrangements
- > employees' perceptions that their kind of work or industry made it impossible to have flexible work arrangements.

8.1 FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS NOT OFFERED

One reason that workers did not use flexible work arrangements was that the particular arrangement was not offered in their workplace. Table 11 shows that between 10 percent and 53 percent of respondents reported that specific flexible work arrangements were not available to them, with most being able to take time off occasionally, but less than half able to work from home.

TABLE 11: RESPONDENTS IN PAID WORK WITH NO ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

TYPE OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT	JOB DOES NOT OFFER % OF RESPONDENTS N=858
Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts	10
Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work	19
Able to change lunchtime to attend a family commitment during ordinary work hours	20
Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work	24
Taking time off during school holidays to look after children *	19
Sometimes working longer hours to have more time to spend with the family at other times	29
Changing hours to regularly attend activities involving family members, such as sports practices	26
Working from home to look after family at the same time	53

Base: Those who do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation
 * Only asked of those who regularly care for children who are in primary, intermediate or secondary school AND do paid work that contributes to the household's financial situation (n=692)

8.2 NEGATIVE ATTITUDES FROM EMPLOYERS, MANAGERS AND COLLEAGUES

Evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research suggests that a significant barrier preventing the take-up of flexible work arrangements, even when they were available, was a workplace culture that did not support the use of flexible work arrangements. There were two elements to this: the attitudes of an immediate manager or employer, and the views of colleagues and co-workers.

This finding echoes a theme that arose in the Department of Labour's consultation on Quality Flexible Work (2006b), which reported that various real and perceived fears made it harder for an employee to approach their manager or organisation to ask for flexible work arrangements.

The respondent's perception that their manager or employer would not allow workers to use or request flexible work arrangements, or would frown upon this, was a significant barrier to taking up such arrangements. Sometimes, these perceptions were enough to prevent the respondent from requesting an arrangement they were entitled to.

I didn't actually ask them [for time off with sick children]. I was absolutely terrified of asking them and I'd only been there for so many months that I couldn't bring myself to even talk about that. It was just easier to resign than to go through the whole thing of 'Oh god, back at paediatrics again'. (Christchurch, solo parent responsible for children, female)

The qualitative research suggested that employees may 'sound out' their employer (or 'float' the idea past them) in order to gauge their reaction rather than asking them for flexible arrangements formally, and may decide not to pursue their request if their employer seemed unenthusiastic.

Sometimes it depends on who your management is. It might be just one person in that chain that has a totally negative viewpoint. It was actually the team leader that was reasonably quite negative on the whole scenario. He was the one that was like 'If you're not in at a certain hour of the morning, it's like where are you?' (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, female)

In the quantitative survey, 27 percent of respondents agreed with the statement 'I would be nervous about asking my employer to give me flexible work arrangements'. This figure was significantly higher (49 percent) in the small sub-sample (n=49) who said that their job offered no flexibility at all, and 34 percent of those with 'not that much' flexibility agreed. In contrast, only 24 percent of those with 'a fair amount' and 11 percent of those with 'a lot' of flexibility agreed with this statement.

The likelihood of having a negative impact from an employer when requesting a flexible work arrangement showed differences by income and ethnicity. Eleven percent of employees in the quantitative survey said that they had asked their employer about flexible work arrangements and had a negative reaction. Those with lower personal incomes were more likely to report that they had had a negative reaction from their employer when asking about flexible work (14 percent of those working more than 40 hours per week and earning \$40,000 or less had had a negative reaction, compared with only five percent of those who were working more than 40 hours per week and earning more than \$70,000).

Employed Māori and Pasifika respondents were more likely to have encountered negative reactions when approaching employers about flexible work arrangements

(15 percent of each of these groups had encountered negative reactions, compared with nine percent of the total sample and eight percent of New Zealand Europeans). In addition, 40 percent of Pasifika respondents and 34 percent of Māori respondents stated that they would be nervous about asking their employer for flexible work arrangements, compared with 27 percent of all respondents, with 47 percent of Pasifika men agreeing they would be nervous to make such a request, compared with 26 percent of all men. However, it is important to note the effect of income on these findings – as noted above, those with lower personal incomes were more likely to report that they had had a negative reaction from their employer when asking about flexible work.

The type of flexible work arrangement respondents were most likely to have had declined was time off to deal with personal rather than family matters, with almost a quarter of declined requests relating to this. Of the 77 respondents who had had negative reactions, 13 said that they had asked to attend events and activities, with school functions making up a large proportion of this.

The profile of the person filling the position of manager or employer was seen as having a strong influence over the availability and take-up of flexible work arrangements, and this often determined whether an employee felt they could request flexible work arrangements. The qualitative research included cases where the company policy was to allow certain forms of flexible work, but the respondent's line manager was unwilling to offer it (perhaps because it would inconvenience the line manager or make it more difficult to meet targets). There were also cases where there was no specific company policy to allow flexible work, including companies that disapproved of it (one respondent brought his children to work in contravention of company policy because he had no other option), but where the line manager had decided to allow it.

[My boss] ... was very regimental so you got set hours, you stuck to those hours and that was it. We got another boss and his attitude is quite different. He's very open, like if someone can step in and do your job while you're away, he'll let you do that. That works extremely well. It's a lot better. Everyone's happy. (Auckland, low socio family with school-aged children, male)

Respondents often argued that employers who had children were more likely to offer flexible work arrangements, and discussions with the small group of employers showed that they often recognised the importance of flexible work arrangements to help with family commitments because they had (or had had) family commitments themselves.

My branch manager has recently separated [he has an] 11-year-old daughter so he occasionally has to go and pick her up whereas previously he didn't have to, so he's aware of all those sorts of things. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

The wider culture of the workplace, particularly the attitudes of co-workers, was also important, either as a barrier or enabler of flexible work. Some respondents in the qualitative research had experienced negative reactions from colleagues when they used flexible work arrangements.

I think it's interesting this thing of people looking at you sideways. It seems to be that people who choose to come in and start work early and leave early get far more funny looks than people who come in late, don't they? It's almost like 'What are you doing?', no account is taken of the fact that you were at work two and a half hours before anyone else got to the office, but you're going at 3.30pm. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

Some respondents felt that colleagues who had similar family responsibilities to their own were likely to be more accepting, echoing the perceived reactions of employers or managers who also needed flexibility (discussed above). Because of this, there was sometimes the expectation that female-dominated workplaces would have cultures more receptive to flexible work arrangements; that female employers and colleagues would be more sympathetic; and female-dominated workplaces would be more likely to offer flexible work arrangements than those which were male-dominated.

It doesn't matter at my workplace. They have no problem because most of the people there are mothers and they don't have young children, not quite as young as mine, but it's no problem. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

Mine are actually pretty good because I think there's 13 of us and there are 11 females and two males, and they always say to me family's first which is really good. (Bay of Plenty, parents of mainly school-aged children, not using flexible arrangements, female)

However, some respondents argued that this was not always the case.

I would say that male bosses are more understanding from my point of view, but my reasoning behind that ... is that most women in senior positions in business don't have kids or are earning enough money that they have a full-time nanny ... I actually think men are better bosses when it comes to those things. A woman who has had children is a little bit more understanding. (Auckland, parents of mainly pre-school children, female)

Where a person was requesting more flexible work arrangements than their colleagues had, there was a risk that colleagues would interpret this as laziness or unfair treatment by employers or managers. As with the reactions of employers, a primary factor was the perceived reaction rather than any hard evidence of negative reactions from colleagues. However, witnessing evidence of other colleagues experiencing negative reactions to flexible work arrangements was a strong disincentive to ask for changes to personal work patterns.

We had a lady who worked for us at [office] ... a few days she had a [child] come along in there and it was just so frowned upon and it was just 'Oh God, [she's] unreliable type, you know, just completely irresponsible' ... it was just like 'Well you just don't do that. This is the workplace, you're supposed to be professional' ... and I thought 'My God, I've got two kids at home'. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

In the quantitative research, almost half of respondents (49 percent) agreed with the statement 'having flexible work arrangements can mean your colleagues feel that they have to pick up the slack'. Those who had limited access to flexible work arrangements themselves were more likely to agree, with 64 percent of those with no flexibility and 69 percent of those with limited flexibility agreeing with the statement, compared with 49 percent of those with 'a fair amount of flexibility' and 35 percent of those with 'a lot of flexibility'.

The survey also found some differences by ethnicity in perceptions about the impact of using flexible work arrangements on colleagues. Asian and Māori respondents were more likely to agree that using flexible work arrangements means that colleagues have to pick up the slack, with 32 percent of Asian respondents and 27 percent of Māori respondents strongly agreeing, compared with 16 percent of New Zealand European respondents and 20 percent of Pasifika respondents. Twenty-nine percent of Māori women strongly agree with this statement, compared with 18 percent of all women.

8.3 NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON CAREER PROGRESSION

The quantitative research also found that almost half of respondents (49 percent) agreed with the statement that ‘people who use flexible work arrangements progress more slowly in their careers’, with 19 percent of respondents strongly agreeing with this.

Respondents in the qualitative research expressed concerns that using flexible working arrangements would indicate a lack of seriousness and commitment to work, and thus restrict career progression. These fears were serious when respondents felt their positions might be at risk.

‘Are you serious about your job or are you serious about your family?’... And the flexibility thing, ‘Well are you committed or are you not committed?’ (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

We’re also going through a big restructure at work where two of our factories are being relocated so they’re downsizing in our department. So I think whoever is left is going to be expected to pick up more work and I don’t know how I’m going to be with that if I’m still there. (Auckland, Pasifika female)

Numerous respondents in the qualitative research cited examples of people who had been promoted because they seemed prepared to work long hours at inconvenient times. The general assumption was that an employee who asked for flexible work could be seen as less dedicated to their job.

The more hours you work the further up the ladder you go and that’s as simple as it is. (Auckland, Māori family member, female)

The guy who works next door to our shop because he’s got no kids, he’s only got a girlfriend, he was doing crazy hours and because of that he went from a junior retail assistant to managing the store and now they’re promoting him to a head office job. [So if he’d asked for (flexible work), do you think he would have been promoted?] No, I don’t think they would have even considered him. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, male)

This is related to the fact that some employees were hesitant to ask employers about flexible work arrangements, even if they believed that the employer was actually likely to be open to the idea.

Interviews with employers in the qualitative research suggested that some of the respondents’ fears were justified. While the employers interviewed generally said that they would consider an employee for a promotion if they had flexible arrangements, they felt that there were good reasons why flexible work arrangements might impinge on a person’s ability to do certain roles properly and have negative effects on the business. This was one reason why flexible work arrangements could affect their chances of promotion.

So you’d sit down with them at the interview and ... if the person says ‘Look, I can’t do that possibly because on a Wednesday I’ve got to pick up my child at three o’clock in the afternoon’, I would say to them ‘Is it only Wednesday?’ and if they said ‘yes’ I’d say ‘Well we’ll work around that’. But if it was ‘I’ve got to pick up my child Monday to Friday for three o’clock every single week so I’ve got to leave early’ then I’d be saying ‘Well that might infringe on what your job is because your job may be that you need to look after certain people after three o’clock, you need to do this, you need to do that’, and then that just encroaches on what the business needs... That’s what a supervisor gets paid for is to supervise people and make sure that their shift is operating well. (Waikato, employer, male)

8.4 NEGATIVE FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

For many respondents in the qualitative research, flexible work arrangements were synonymous with reduced hours, with this particularly the case for flexible start and finish times. Respondents expected flexible arrangements to have negative financial consequences, with many focus-group and case-study participants indicating that a loss of income was one of the major downsides of using flexible work arrangements.

COST OF LIVING REDUCES QUALITY TIME

The Tawhitis have struggled since moving to Auckland from England. The cost of living has forced them both to work full-time, giving them less time with their children. As work flexibility is not high on their company's agenda, the family is seriously considering other options.

Meet the Tawhiti family

Cherie and Pita Tawhiti* have two boys, aged 11 and 14. He is New Zealand Māori and she is British. They moved to New Zealand from England two years ago, and kept their jobs at the same company. Pita's role is in equipment manufacturing and Cherie works in warehousing and distribution.

The Tawhitis have arranged for two days per week that they can both be home earlier in order to have a family meal with the children, but with some changes in company management they're unsure whether this flexibility will continue.

They have informal arrangements for their boys to spend some time with friends before or after school and to share transport.

Their story

When the Tawhitis lived in England Cherie worked part-time, but she can't afford the reduced hours now because of their mortgage. "What with house prices and trying to get our children to go to [good] schools, that's a very expensive house ... to do that we're having to work full-time, and so we don't spend much time with our children so it puts the pressure on."

They find their work rewarding, but overly demanding. "It's a real pressure cooker situation, both in our jobs ... we can't come away until everything is done and these hospitals have got their items delivered and so we tend to have to stay in and can work up to an hour beyond our finish time just to complete.

"It's very draining, especially when you've got children to look after and a house to keep tidy, you know, you've got all your day-to-day chores. It can get very stressful at times."

They are looking at changing their current situation. "If we haven't got balance or we feel like the children are ... suffering in any way because of our absence ... for our children, we will try and remedy that.

*Not their real names





“We are considering our future right now. We’re considering selling the house. We’re considering moving out of Auckland. We considered moving to Australia. We’ve got lots of things we’re considering because we’re finding it very hard.”

Their employer will give time off grudgingly when their children are sick. “We don’t seem to get much leeway when our children are sick ... they can put pressure on and say, ‘Alright, well I guess you’ve got to go.’”

They have also missed a lot of their children’s school activities and events.

“They [the company] profess to have flexibility and they have a credo which allows for the family at some time, I don’t know. But trust me, it’s not always exercised.”

Holiday time together is also an issue. “We haven’t had a holiday together since we got here... I think we’re understaffed so it’s difficult to manage when one person is not in... The business has really increased – it’s very busy and especially amongst this period when it is the school holidays, it’s a busy period.”

They would like to be able to make up time if they took a longer lunch break to run errands. “We’ve missed a lot of lunch. Run and do things in that hour we have and then get back and be running out to the bank or business that we need to sort out and then going straight back to work and then we’re not having lunch or eating really until we get home.”

Ideally, Cherie would prefer to work part-time, preferably around family and school times. “I wouldn’t mind just to be on flexitime and just doing my required hours and when it’s suiting my family you know, staying home until maybe half-nine and getting to work for 10am and then working till six o’clock or something.”

Significant numbers of respondents in the qualitative research indicated that they perceived the primary trade-off for flexible work arrangements is between quality time and family finances. A key finding in the research was that while using flexible work arrangements does not have to mean sacrificing income, many people assumed that this was the case. This was because people equated flexible work with reduced hours and part-time work, rather than considering the range of flexible working arrangements. As a result, a substantial proportion of respondents in the qualitative research who had flexible work arrangements reported that they had given up some income in order to have more flexible work arrangements.

I suppose we’ve given up a lot of money really because we both could have been out working. We could have been earning \$100,000 a year or whatever, but for us it comes to a values thing. We weren’t prepared to sacrifice our children in what we thought we wanted to put into them so that they’d be good citizens. (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, male)

Obviously a reduction in wages but the benefits are the family. We can drop off at school, the after-school activities, all the other little things, the sports. It’s good that my wife can be there. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

We traded off money. We would be a lot more financially further ahead. [What difference might that have made?] No difference. There’s no trade-off. To me, personally, I don’t care whether I could have a holiday to Disneyland every year if I worked full-time. I’d rather work the hours I’m doing and be able to go to school things. (Auckland, parents of mainly primary school children, using flexible arrangements, female)

The financial impacts were alleviated to some extent by the reduced need to pay for childcare, but few respondents suggested that they would be financially better off if

they had flexible arrangements and many felt that they would be at least slightly worse off. A number of the families in the qualitative research felt they were under financial pressure, and were unwilling to countenance anything that might mean a reduction in their income, although many others felt that they had already made a sacrifice along these lines.

Others in the qualitative research assumed that flexible work (particularly part-time work) would tend to be lower paid.

[What's the employer getting out of giving flexibility?] Really she's got us working for such little money that not many people are going to take the money she's got us on. (Christchurch, blended family, female)

Flexible work arrangements were seen as hampering career progression and having a negative effect on family finances. Turning down, or not being offered, a promotion because of the need or desire to work flexibly had long-term implications for financial goals, as it meant that more senior and higher-paying positions were not reached. However, not all families were concerned about this, as promotions were also perceived as requiring longer hours and more stressful work.

People were going past me so I thought 'Oh crap, I'm going to have to work my arse off' so I basically had to step up. That's when I actually started moving up in the company, busting my hump basically. Working ridiculous hours until late... That was what I found was the only way to get ahead, then as soon as I found that I thought 'What am I doing, I'm selling my time for not much, I'm getting no time at home, none of it is quality' so I backed it off a bit and that's when people started going past again. The only way is 110 percent or nothing in the job I'm doing. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

8.5 PERCEPTIONS THAT ONLY VALUED EMPLOYEES GET FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Around two-thirds of respondents (65 percent) in the quantitative survey agreed with the statement 'employers are more likely to grant flexible work arrangements to employees who are more senior or who they think are more important'. There were no significant differences in responses to this question in terms of income and length of time working at the current job (both of which could be seen as useful indicators of perceived value). However, while 66 percent of those with no flexibility agreed with this statement, only 56 percent of those with 'a lot' of flexibility agreed.

In the qualitative research, it was perceived that the availability of flexible work was strongly related to the power relationship between employer and employee, and the amount of power an employee had was chiefly determined by their value to the company. Where respondents felt that they had a significant amount of power, often because they believed that they would be difficult to replace, then they believed that flexible work arrangements were relatively easy for them to access, and a number of these respondents already had a considerable amount of flexibility in their arrangements.

Some people are more attractive to employers than others and while you've got that ability you might as well try and get what you can out of it, so if they want you... (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, male)

Not feeling confident of personal value in the workplace was a significant barrier to requesting flexible working arrangements. Participants who felt that they had little power

and could be easily replaced believed that it would be hard for them to get flexible work arrangements, and they generally had little flexibility.

I wasn't going to be intelligent enough to have a job that they were going to give me as much time off as I wanted, or I wasn't going to be any different to any other employee, so if I said 'Well look I really want Thursday afternoons off and Tuesday mornings off' and things like this, they're probably going to say well bugger off then, there's somebody else down the road who will do all those hours. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

I know I've got to put myself in a position where I've got a bit of negotiating power. At the moment, they go 'We pay your bills at the end of the day so we've got all the power here, mate'. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, male)

[My partner] is best to go in and say 'young couple'. You don't say anything about having kids and that. I can work whenever you want, I'll be here every day. Gets in, proves himself. Then if he's really that good they'll let him have a bit of time off. (Auckland, Pasifika family member, female)

The power/value relationship could be determined by a number of factors, including the seniority of the position, how specialised the position was (and how many other people were there who could do the job), the length of time the employee had spent with the company and the employee's personal track record.

But if you're a valued employee... It all comes down to how much value you are. They didn't want to lose you. A lot of employers would say no, if you're not the right worker. They're not going to give you that option, that choice. (Whakatane, parents with mainly primary school children, female)

It was clear that many employees saw asking for flexible work arrangements as potentially reducing their value to their employer. This was because they expected flexible work arrangements to negatively affect the business, at least in the short term, even if it was simply that the employer found it a little inconvenient. Employees felt that the fact that a person had inconvenienced their employer meant that they were a less desirable employee than they would otherwise be (even if the difference was minor), which in turn eroded their value to the company.

They want to make a good impression and think 'Well I won't come across as someone that's going to work really hard'. (Christchurch, high socio with school children, female)

Employers and employees in the qualitative research saw increased loyalty of valued staff as one of the key benefits of offering flexible work arrangements. This loyalty was seen as being driven by the positive impact of the flexible arrangement on the employee's family, and also by appreciation for the perceived negative impact of this arrangement on the employer. As a result, flexible work arrangements that employees saw as particularly inconvenient for the employer (such as the frequent or lengthy absences from work caregivers for sick relatives needed to have) generated greater loyalty.

While many people would only ask for flexible work arrangements if they felt valued, the fact that they had been granted flexible work arrangements confirmed that they were valued. In other words, an effective way for employers to demonstrate that they value employees is to grant them the flexible work arrangements that they might need. Being seen to trust and value employees were closely linked.

The critical factor here was *perceived* rather than actual value. Respondents seldom had a quantifiable measure of their value to their employer, or how much their value would be eroded by requesting flexible work arrangements. It seems likely that there are many situations where employees underestimate their value to their employer, which may make them hesitant to ask for flexible work that they would probably be granted.

The current skill shortage has shifted the value balance somewhat, as it helped employees feel that they would be more difficult to replace and therefore have a better position from which to bargain for flexibility. It is reasonable to assume that if the availability of flexible work arrangements is related to the skill shortage, then should the skill shortage end (for example, because of a declining economy) flexible work arrangements would become less common.

Some people ... haven't realised that things have perhaps changed and that employers are desperate for staff in a lot of instances. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

[My boss] was great ... he allowed me to go on that day to [my son's] violin lesson or whatever because he needed – I was in demand and he couldn't get what he wanted so I had some bargaining power. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

8.6 PERCEPTIONS THAT THE NATURE OF WORK AND/OR INDUSTRY MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

A key theme in the qualitative research was that many respondents believed that it was not possible to work flexibly in their job or industry, and many expressed resignation that this was the case.

[Is flexible work possible for you?] Not for me. [Why?] It's just the nature of the work I do. (Auckland, no children but care responsibilities, female)

[My lack of flexibility] ... is just the job I do. I mean, it's the industry I've chosen and the position I'm in, that's just what we do. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

So I'm listening to all this stuff about flexible work and the job sharing and stuff like that and I'm thinking not in my industry. You couldn't have flexible work in it. (Christchurch, sole parents responsible for children, female)

These perceptions were also prevalent in the quantitative research, with 43 percent of participants declaring that it was hard to have flexibility in the industry they worked in.

Respondents in the focus groups and interviews also voiced perceptions that certain industries suffered not only from a lack of flexible work arrangements, but also required long hours.

In my industry, anyone under 10 hours [a day] is a part-timer. (Auckland, parents with mainly pre-school children, male)

[In] my profession, I think there's a culture of not really doing part-time. (Christchurch, high socio with school-aged children, female)

Options such as flexible start and finish times were often seen as impractical in industries which dealt directly with customers.

The people we service only work 8.00am until 5.00pm so we can only work 8.00am until 5.00pm although I work 8.30am until 4.00pm. But we can't do any other hours because none of the garages or people who want stuff work then. (Whakatane, parents with mainly secondary school children, female)

I think most places have [flexibility] in their work policy but it's actually really hard to implement. You've still got to serve the customer. (Auckland, low socio, family with school children, male)

You've still got to serve the customer. Everyone wants to start at six so they get carparking and then go home at three. Our customers usually go to work until five. (Auckland, low socio, family with school-aged children, male)

The Department of Labour consultation on Quality Flexible Work noted that maintaining production and customer service standards was a particular challenge in managing flexible work arrangements (Department of Labour, 2006b).

In some industries, the times when families traditionally wanted to take holidays (such as over the Christmas period) often coincided with busy times, which meant employers found it difficult to grant leave requests over this time. This was also true for businesses that were open in the weekend. One employer in the small and medium employers focus group described how weekends were often the busiest days, and also the days when staff were least willing to work. He was also unwilling to allow staff time off during school holidays because they were also very busy periods.

We get penalties if we open late or close early. So if we can cop a punishment like that then it's not suitable for you to come to work in this place [if you can't work at particular times], find somewhere else. (Auckland, employer, male)

We try and share it around, because you have got a workforce full of people and so you can't have the same [holidays] ... [We say] 'Well you had last Christmas off so we're going to let someone else put in for holidays over Christmas and New Year's this year' ... Just to try and make it a little bit fairer on people. (Waikato, employer, male)



Summary

There were a number of barriers to taking up flexible work, ranging from arrangements simply not being offered in the workplace, to perceived or actual negative reactions to requests for flexible work.

The survey showed that, with the exception of working from home, most flexible work arrangements were fairly widely available in New Zealand workplaces. Arrangements relating to flexible working hours and holidays were available to between 70 and 90 percent of respondents. But, even where flexible work is available, a workplace culture where managers', employers' and colleagues' reactions to flexible work are perceived to be negative is a major barrier to the take-up of these arrangements. Around a quarter of respondents (and almost half of those who said their own job offered no flexibility) said that they would be nervous about asking their employer to give them flexible work arrangements; 11 percent said they had asked their employer and had received a negative reaction.

Whether requests for flexible work got a positive or negative reaction was thought to be determined both by the wider culture of the workplace and by what the person in the position of manager or employer was like. There were cases where managers had not agreed to flexible work, despite it being company policy to allow it and, conversely, cases where flexible arrangements had been allowed, despite the company disapproving of them.

Survey respondents voiced a number of other perceptions that acted as barriers to taking up flexible work. These included the negative effect on career progression, loss of income resulting from reduced hours, slower career progression or lower pay in the type of jobs perceived to offer flexibility and lack of confidence about one's personal value in the workplace.

Employers could use the offer of flexible work arrangements as a way of signalling to staff how much they valued them. The increased loyalty of valued staff was seen as one of the key benefits for employers of offering flexible work arrangements.



9. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that flexible work arrangements can strengthen family life, as well as enable family members to have fulfilling careers. At the same time, the data suggest that employers and the economy in general could also benefit, particularly in an environment of skill shortages. However, many participants in the research did not have the degree of flexibility that they desired, and talked about wanting to work in ways that allowed them to spend more time with their family. Those who did take up flexible work arrangements often felt that they experienced slower career progression and had to 'trade off' flexibility for pay and status.

The fact that flexible work has the potential to benefit both employers and employees (and not just those with caring responsibilities) highlights the importance of increasing the use and acceptance of flexible working arrangements. All types of families need to have real choices for balancing family and work commitments – not just the workers favoured by skill shortages and those who are expensive to replace. This research has shown that flexible work is not just an issue for parents and their children, but also for people in other family relationships who want a better balance between work and family time. Without access to flexible work, some New Zealand families will continue to experience stress and conflict between their paid work and family responsibilities.

Key findings

The findings of this research suggest that many family members have access to flexible work arrangements, and that they provide many benefits for these families. Flexible work arrangements can allow family members to meet their care responsibilities while maintaining their participation in the paid workforce, and to undertake both work and family roles with less stress and pressure on the family. In addition, flexible work arrangements allow families to spend more time together, and this has many advantages for all family members.

Participants in the research indicated that some flexible work arrangements, such as working from home, were not without cost. There was evidence of tension between the benefits and potentially negative consequences of using such arrangements, such as the extension of the work day into family time and a feeling of having to constantly juggle work and family responsibilities. However, respondents who had chosen to use flexible work arrangements clearly believed that the benefits of doing so outweighed any negative impacts.

At least 20 percent of the workers in the research did not have access to flexible work arrangements, while others had access to some arrangements, but not to the ones they felt would benefit them most. Those without access to the flexible work arrangements they needed found that it was more difficult to spend time together as a family and that often parents were unable to attend family events, resulting in disappointment for both parents and children. Families in the qualitative research described feeling pressured and stressed, with little time to complete everyday tasks. The quantitative research supported these findings, with those lacking access to flexible work more likely to report feeling as if they were juggling priorities, that they had missed out on family activities and that their family time was stressed and pressured.

Many family members indicated that in addition to their current flexible arrangements, they also wanted more flexibility in working hours, the ability to take leave to look after children during school holidays and the ability to work from home. Most respondents were realistic about the drawbacks of these arrangements and whether they would fit with the needs of the business that employed them. The arrangements that families

wanted and needed changed as their profiles changed (for example, as children reached school age).

There was some evidence of variation in the experiences of respondents with lower and higher incomes, as well as differences in the work experiences of New Zealand European, Māori and Pasifika workers, especially regarding working patterns and employers' reactions to requests for flexible work.

There were significant gender differences in the work patterns and the perceptions of flexible work, with women more likely to be in part-time work and men more likely to work longer hours. However, once women were in paid work their use of flexible working arrangements was not significantly different from that of men. However, women were less likely to have access to flexible work arrangements, with the exception of time off occasionally for special family events. The perception from employers of the need for flexible work, however, was that women would be more likely to require flexible working arrangements.

It is clear from the research that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for all families, and that the needs of families will change over time. The changing needs of families at different life stages (for example, following re-entry into paid work and at times of re-adjustment to accommodate caring responsibilities for children, disabled or family members) need to be considered. Transitions, or changes in family circumstances, were strong drivers of the need for flexible work arrangements. Families need to find solutions that suit their individual circumstances and to consider a range of factors, such as access to childcare, to enable them to make the best possible use of flexible work arrangements.

There are a number of misunderstandings and misperceptions about what flexible work involves. Some people's understanding of 'flexible work' arrangements included those which are actually statutory entitlements (such as sick or bereavement leave) and those which are different from standard arrangements, but do not provide true flexibility (such as having pay cut as a result of arriving late). In addition, many participants believed that using flexible arrangements would disadvantage their families because it would inevitably result in a drop in family income. If access to quality flexible work arrangements is to be improved, and flexible work is to improve families' situations, these perceptions will need to be addressed, particularly if the benefits of the amendment to the Employment Relations Act are to be optimised.

The qualitative research suggested that employees may try to gauge their employers' reactions informally rather than formally asking them for flexible arrangements, and then decide not to pursue the matter if the response seems unenthusiastic. This may limit the effectiveness of the new legislation, since it provides a right for certain employees to request flexible working arrangements and requires employers to consider such requests. A slightly grumpy or terse reaction from an employer may be enough to discourage employees from pursuing the matter further despite the legislation.

The research found that families did not formally discuss flexible work arrangements, but usually discussed more general decisions about work patterns, especially when a first child was expected. However, questions about decision-making revealed that many respondents chose particular occupations to allow them to care for their families, and that (sometimes inaccurate) perceptions of flexibility in those jobs shaped decisions about the kinds of roles to apply for and take on. Other respondents believed that flexible work arrangements would not work in their job or industry, highlighting the importance of raising awareness of the wide variety of flexible work arrangements that are possible.

Finally, the research suggested that there are still significant barriers to the take-up of flexible work arrangements, even when they are offered in workplaces. A key barrier was workplace cultures that did not support the use of flexible work arrangements. Managers' and colleagues' attitudes to flexible work have a strong influence on whether workers feel they can use such arrangements, whether they are 'valuable' enough to warrant them and whether they can take them up without sacrificing career progression, income or their reputation as committed workers. Respondents showed commitment and dedication to their work, and a strong sense of obligation to 'pull their weight' and fulfil the expectations of managers and colleagues. Many indicated that they felt guilty about taking time away from work.

Flexible work was viewed as a give-and-take arrangement between employers and employees, with both parties seeing such arrangements as signifying a healthy and trusting relationship.

Responding to the needs of families: improving the take-up of quality flexible work

Communication and a common understanding of what flexible work means are crucial. They may help to bridge the 'implementation gap' between what employers say they offer and what employees understand is on offer. This research provides a platform on which to establish this communication as it gives us insights into barriers to the take-up of flexible work from the perspective of families. Key concerns family members raised included:

- > the impact on pay, and the ability of people on different income levels to cope with loss of earnings on pay, and possible loss of earnings
- > being able to manage different life stages and changes in family circumstances
- > workplace cultures and perceptions of the acceptability of flexible working and its effect on colleagues
- > possible effects on career prospects
- > external constraints such as access to childcare.

This research points to the need for advocacy to overcome these barriers, to improve access to flexible work of the kinds that families desire. The findings can be used to raise awareness of what constitutes flexible working arrangements, including statutory entitlements (such as sick or bereavement leave) and the benefits for both employers and employees. They can also inform discussion and debate on what might be preventing families from accessing the types of flexible work arrangements they would like. This work will also support families in their choices regarding flexible work arrangements.

The Families Commission will support families' take-up of flexible working arrangements by developing an online tool. It will be a step-by-step guide to help families and individuals consider what flexible work arrangements would be beneficial (and realistic) for them, their family and their workplace. It will also help them to develop proposals on flexible work to discuss with their employers, to maximise their chances of meeting their family's needs and those of their employers.

This is an opportunity to use the internet to deliver a personalised resource using a medium that many people in the research said they preferred. The Commission will use

the case studies to develop this resource to complement information being developed by the Department of Labour to make flexibility work in the employment context.

Influencing policies and practice

The Commission wants to improve access to flexible work to enhance individuals' and families' wellbeing. While this issue is attracting increasing attention, lack of awareness about the range of flexible work options available may mean that the way flexible work arrangements are introduced will not meet the needs of all employees and their families. The Government has an important role in fostering comprehensive solutions to this problem.

The analysis in this research suggests that take-up of flexible work is likely to be enhanced in New Zealand when there is:

- > better knowledge about the full range of quality flexible work arrangements, their effects and how to request them
- > better awareness of how flexible work arrangements can improve life balance
- > an understanding that requesting flexible arrangements should not adversely affect other employment conditions such as pay, scheduled leave or career advancement, or stigmatise those who take them up
- > the ability to make informal arrangements in small workplaces and formal policies and practices regarding flexible work in larger workplaces
- > a workplace culture that encourages employees to request flexible work arrangements
- > working conditions a workplace culture that values family commitments alongside productivity.

More effort is needed to promote more family-friendly workplaces and to raise employees' expectations in this regard. These research findings will greatly help the Commission and other agencies to advocate for and assist employees in quality flexible work arrangements that help them reconcile work and family life commitments. The research provides a strong evidence base regarding the needs and preferences of families, from which to develop strategies to help parents and other carers to take up flexible working arrangements, or secure them where they are not available.

Interventions in this area need to strike the right balance between supporting families' wellbeing and allowing businesses to manage their workforces effectively. Information-sharing, education and awareness-raising – for both employers and employees – should be part of such a strategy. Policies in this area also need to consider the current social context, as reflected in this research, in which many adults strive to have satisfying jobs and be good family members, and where experiences in paid work and family life can strengthen each other. Flexible work should be seen in the context of the wider discussion on work-life balance: while it is valuable in itself, it needs to be accompanied by other measures to secure good work-life balance. For example, the relationship between parental leave and access to flexible working conditions is particularly important for many mothers during transition periods between full-time childcare and returning to work. Many respondents acknowledged that they had deliberately chosen jobs on the basis of the flexibility that they offered, while on the other hand put their careers on hold.

The capacity of the labour market to provide family members with working options that work for them is a significant issue at a time of high employment and skill gaps. Many countries with a shrinking working-age population have begun to focus on policies to address barriers to workforce participation, with particular attention to women, single parents, older people and some ethnic minorities (OECD, 2003).³ In New Zealand, the working landscape will change as baby boomers redefine retirement and the number of people over the age of 85 continues to rise.

The implementation of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act provides an opportunity for discussing flexible work, and for the Families Commission to raise debate about effective ways to encourage employers to provide families with the flexible working conditions they need. Legislation alone is not enough. For the legislative change to be effective and for employees to feel able to use these policies, government will need to work with employers, employees, business organisations and unions. The case studies and focus groups in this research identified workplace culture as a key influence on the provision and take-up of flexible work. Continued promotion of good employment practices should help extend flexible work arrangements to more employees, to the benefit of all concerned.



³ See also the OECD series of *Babies and Bosses* reports on Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Japan, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2005a,b,c). These reports review policies in OECD countries to support people in their choices of paid work and childcare and recommend measures to improve outcomes.

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APPENDIX 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES COMMISSION FOCUS GROUPS

1. INFORMATION COLLECTED BEFORE THE GROUP

1.1 Recruitment questionnaire

This questionnaire is used to decide whether or not people should be recruited to the group, and is conducted by telephone before the person is recruited.

In addition to the recruitment criteria for the specific group (ie the criteria they need to meet to attend the particular group), the recruitment questionnaire will collect basic information about each respondent, such as:

- > caring responsibilities
- > how many people live in their household
- > the area they live in
- > household income
- > age of respondent
- > ethnic background
- > a question ensuring that someone in the household is in paid work

In groups where the recruitment criteria specifies that respondents should have children but does not specify the age of the children, we would ensure that respondents have children of a mix of different ages.

This information will be provided to the moderator before the group, who would then be able to use this information to tailor questions during the group.

1.2 Post-group questionnaire

It will only be possible to collect certain information in the recruitment questionnaire because:

- > Some questions may be seen as giving away too much personal information over the telephone and make potential respondents uncomfortable.
- > The shorter the recruitment questionnaire, the more people are likely to attend.

We would therefore collect some information using a post-group questionnaire. This offers a useful way of collecting demographic information while maximising the time available for discussions during the groups. This information could include:

- > Identifying their 'close family members' from a list of titles such as 'partner', 'child', 'uncle' etc, with respondents left to decide the definitions of 'close' and 'family' that they feel is appropriate for them. This would help to identify each person's family make-up, along with the way they defined their 'close family'.
- > Which family members did paid work, and which did not contribute to the family's finances (eg a teenage child may work part-time but keep the money for themselves rather than contributing it to the family's overall finances).
- > How much paid work each person usually did (eg hours, days off etc).
- > What caring responsibilities each person has.

Respondents would be asked to complete this questionnaire at the end of the groups, by which time they should feel comfortable with giving this information. We would not recommend giving it to them beforehand, as they may feel uncomfortable and therefore less likely to participate in the group.

The number of questions in this post-group questionnaire needs to be kept to a minimum (five minutes maximum) in order to keep respondents happy. This is particularly true for the first group of the evening, where there needs to be a transition time between the first and second groups.

2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Notes:

- > The target length for each group is 90–100 mins. Timings currently come to 100 mins.
- > Moderators would be instructed to ensure that the groups focus on the impacts of **specific** kinds of flexible work rather than on the general concept of flexible work.
- > Facilitators would also note and probe for any differences between the experiences and needs of different kinds of families (eg the extent to which the needs of parents of pre-school, primary and secondary age children differ).
- > As much as possible, moderators would avoid using jargon such as ‘flexible work’ and ‘work life balance’, and instead use whichever terms are favoured by respondents.
- > The emphasis will be on the impact of flexible work on the family as a whole, rather than necessarily limiting it to the impact on individual respondents.

2.1 Warm-up (5 mins)

The groups would begin with a short round-the-table discussion where each respondent would be asked to quickly identify:

- > who they regarded as their immediate family
- > who in their family did paid work
- > how much paid work each person usually did (eg hours, days off etc).

This will repeat some of the information collected in the post-group questionnaire, but will allow respondents to share this information with each other and give them an easy warm-up to the main discussion.

2.2 Flexible work – introduction (10 mins)

Once each respondent has given us this information, in order to help set the context for the rest of the discussion, we would explain that the purpose of the groups is to explore ‘flexible work’ and how this affects families.

In order to identify what the term ‘flexible work’ means to respondents, we would have a brainstorming exercise

where the group as a whole would be asked to come up with as many examples as they can of ‘flexible work’. The moderator would record these on a whiteboard. If respondents don’t mention them, the moderator needs to add:

- > flexible start and finish times (routinely and/or occasionally)
- > using sick and annual leave flexibly
- > working from home (routinely and/or occasionally)
- > having time off and making up the work later (time off in lieu)
- > annualised hours
- > flexible lunch breaks
- > reduced working hours
- > having additional leave in exchange for cut in pay (leave purchasing)
- > having school holidays off
- > unpaid leave.

This would help focus later discussions, and moderators will refer back to these responses later in the groups.

2.3 Flexible work – actual experiences (15 mins)

We would then ask respondents to discuss the experiences of their family with flexible work, with the examples of flexible work recorded on the whiteboard helping to jog their memories.

- > What kinds of flexible work options (if any) do members of their family use at the moment?
- > What kinds of flexible work have they used in the past?
- > What kinds of flexible work have they considered?
- > What kinds of flexible work, if any, have they wanted and then ruled out?
- > What kinds of flexible work are offered or available at their/their family members’ workplace?
- > How satisfied are respondents with their working arrangements as these relate to flexibility?

2.4 Impacts of actual experiences with flexible work – benefits (10 mins)

- > Positive impacts – if they currently use flexible work options, how do these improve life for the respondent? How do they improve family life?
- > How do flexible arrangements help with meeting family responsibilities? Examples?
- > Which arrangements are the most help in particular situations? [Prompt A – scenarios – not given to respondents, but used by facilitator to probe responses]

These benefits would almost certainly include more time with their partner/children; more time for self; less money on childcare; happier lifestyle and/or more sharing of household responsibilities; not being constantly rushed; but if these were not raised we would prompt respondents to discuss these.

2.5 Impacts of actual experiences with flexible work – drawbacks (5 mins)

- > Negative impacts – if they currently use flexible work options, what negative effects do they have on them/their family/their work?

These would almost certainly include lower pay, reduced career prospects, getting less interesting/meaty work (due to part-time status) and employers who are reluctant to offer flexible work, but we would prompt on these if they were not raised.

2.6 Benefits and drawbacks of not having flexible work (10 mins)

- > How does not having access to flexible work make life harder, for individual, and for family as a whole?
- > Are there positive impacts for NOT having flexible work? What things put them off flexible work arrangements?
- > What factors/reasons have made them reject flexible work options? (Probe here re negative perceptions of flexible work ... especially if flexible work is offered/available and not taken up).
- > What benefits might there have been?

2.7 Decision-making process and actual trade-offs (15 mins)

- > How do decisions about work get made in their family?
- > Who is involved in making decisions?
- > Are decisions made by the employee or as a family? Or by the job/manager? (ie not a choice/decision).
- > What kinds of factors influenced decisions?
 - Family situation?
 - Characteristics of job/workplace?
 - Whether flexible work was offered? Requested? Chosen?
 - Income?
 - Trade-offs involved?
- > How did these factors affect work outcomes?
 - To work or not.
 - To work full-time or part-time.
 - Whether other family members work or not.
 - Which job was chosen.
- > What trade-offs do they currently make in order to have the work situation they have right now?
- > What trade-offs have they made in the past?

2.8 The ideal (5 mins)

The moderator will then explain in their own words that the discussion will now shift to their 'ideal' way of working in terms of flexible work (ie what they would do if they could, rather than what they currently do or the arrangements they currently use.

- > In an ideal world, what kinds of flexible work arrangements would they like to have, even if it is something they don't think they would be able to do at the moment?
- > If you had to choose one flexible work arrangement, which would be the one that would make the most difference to your family?

2.9 Benefits of 'ideal' (10 mins)

We would then have a brainstorming exercise, where respondents would be asked to identify the benefits they would hope to get from their ideal.

The moderator would record these on the whiteboard, noting where particular benefits are mentioned by more than one respondent.

Once the moderator has recorded responses on the whiteboard, we would have a general discussion around the following:

- > If they or their family members did take up flexible work options, what would be the specific benefits for their family?

2.10 Barriers to achieving 'ideal' (5 mins)

- > What are the things that stand in the way of their having the 'ideal'?
- > How could these be overcome?

2.11 Trade-offs – Ideal (5 mins)

- > What trade-offs would they be willing to make to get their ideal?
- > What trade-offs wouldn't they be willing to make? What wouldn't they sacrifice?

We would supplement this with Prompt B, which is a list of sacrifices people might consider making in order to have more flexible work.

2.12 Tools (5 mins)

Is flexible work something they would like more information about? What would they be looking to find out?

- > How do they/would they find out about flexible work options at the moment?
- > What information/advice/support would they be looking for/find useful?

APPENDIX 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES COMMISSION CASE STUDIES

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Recruitment questionnaire

Much of the recruitment process will involve a discussion to identify whether or not they will make a 'good' case study. We have interpreted 'good' in this case to mean:

- > People who represent as far as possible common experiences for families of their type (as identified in the tables).
- > People who meet the demographic criteria specified in the updated methodology.
- > People who can reasonably be expected to provide us with honest and detailed responses.

This last point is in effect a qualitative judgement on the part of the recruiter, and will likely be based more on their professional impression rather than on

responses to specific questions. Some respondents will have previously participated in the focus groups or be previously known to either UMR or the Families Commission, which will mean that the recruiter is in a better position to make these judgement calls than they would ordinarily have been.

If respondents have previously participated in the focus groups, then we will have already collected the information in the recruitment and case study questionnaires. This information would not need to be collected for a second time.

As noted, the case studies will also be selected to represent 'typical' people in their demographic group based on the findings of the focus groups. These desired characteristics are identified in the table below. We would aim in the first instance to recruit families where at least one caregiver meets at least one criterion in the 'actual' cell for their demographic group, and at least one criterion in the 'desired' cell.

CASE STUDIES (N=15)

NUMBER	CORE CRITERIA	LOCATION	CURRENT FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	DESIRED FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS
CS1	Parents of mainly pre-school children	Auckland	Work from home OR work part-time/job share	Would like to be able to work for only short periods per day (eg 2–3 hours) while child in kindergarten OR considering asking their employer about working from home
CS2	Parents of mainly primary school-aged children, currently using flexible work arrangements	Auckland	Can usually attend one-off events (school prizegivings etc) but would struggle with regular events OR arrange their work start/finish times with drop-offs/pick ups in mind OR do job with 9.00am–3.00pm hours in order to be home for children	Would like to be able to participate more in children’s activities OR want to be able to arrange work so they can pick-up/drop-off children (but don’t at the moment) OR want to be able to take time off work during school holidays OR would like to be able to negotiate sick pay conditions so taking time off to look after sick children doesn’t affect their own entitlements
CS3	Parents of mainly school-aged children, not currently using flexible work arrangements	Whakatane	Feel that their job has no flexibility and that they have to accept this situation	Want to be able to arrange work so they can pick-up/drop-off children (but don’t at the moment) OR work prevents them attending as many school events (etc) as they would like to OR would consider four day weeks as long as income doesn’t reduce (ie 4 x 10 hour days instead of 5 x 8 hour days)
CS4	Blended family	Secondary city (Wellington or Christchurch)	Arrange work so they can look after children who do not ordinarily live with them (eg part-time custody arrangements) OR have periods where they do not have to look after children because they are with other parent (not their current partner) OR arrange their work so they can look after their step-children OR work arrangements affected by the need to pay child support for children from previous relationship – impacts on life of new blended family	Want flexible work arrangements so they can take time off to look after children who do not ordinarily live with them (eg part-time custody arrangements), and/or work more during periods where they do not have to look after children because they are with other parent (not their current partner) OR want to be able to arrange their work so they can look after step-children (but can’t at the moment)

CASE STUDIES (N=15) – CONTINUED

NUMBER	CORE CRITERIA	LOCATION	CURRENT FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	DESIRED FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS
CS5	Sole parent responsible for children	Christchurch or Whakatane	<p>Bring children to work with them if all else fails</p> <p>OR have taken on a job with great flexibility (eg jobs where you work whatever hours as long as the work gets done) since they became a solo parent</p> <p>OR rely on support networks (eg grandparents, friends) for childcare on a regular basis</p>	<p>Want to be able to take time off work during school holidays</p> <p>OR concerned about having to rely too much on support networks for childcare (eg grandparents, friends)</p>
CS6	Pasifika family	Auckland	<p>Do a lot of hours (50+) so they can look after large extended family</p> <p>OR one partner arranges work so they can look after members of extended family (ie not their own children)</p>	<p>Need work that allows them to go back to islands/take time off to visit relatives when necessary</p> <p>OR need employers who are understanding of fact that they have caring responsibilities for people who are not their children</p>
CS7	Māori family	Rural/small town	<p>Have relatives living in other New Zealand locations that they need to arrange their work so they can visit on a regular basis</p> <p>OR have had to take time off work to attend a tangi over the last two years</p>	<p>Need employers to recognise that they will need to 'drop and run' for extended periods from time to time. Something they regard as a priority, although it may not be something they have encountered problems with</p>
CS8	Chinese family	Secondary city (Wellington or Christchurch)	No specific criteria	No specific criteria
CS9	Indian (Indian subcontinent) family	Auckland	No specific criteria	No specific criteria
CS10	Gay parents bringing up children	Auckland	No specific criteria	No specific criteria
CS11	Māori grandparents looking after grandchildren	Provincial centre	<p>Have relatives living in other New Zealand locations that they need to arrange their work so they can visit on a regular basis</p> <p>OR have had to take time off work to attend a tangi over the last two years</p>	<p>Need employers to recognise that they will need to 'drop and run' for extended periods from time to time. Something they regard as a priority, although it may not be something they have encountered problems with</p>

CASE STUDIES (N=15) – CONTINUED

NUMBER	CORE CRITERIA	LOCATION	CURRENT FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	DESIRED FORMS OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS
CS11	Māori grandparents looking after grandchildren	Provincial centre	<p>Have relatives living in other New Zealand locations that they need to arrange their work so they can visit on a regular basis</p> <p>OR have had to take time off work to attend a tangi over the last two years</p>	<p>Need employers to recognise that they will need to ‘drop and run’ for extended periods from time to time. Something they regard as a priority, although it may not be something they have encountered problems with</p>
CS12	Parents of mainly secondary-school children, currently using flexible work arrangements	Auckland	<p>Transport children to regular activities (as opposed to one-off sports events etc) outside school hours</p>	<p>Want to be able to keep an eye on children over the school holidays because holiday programmes no longer appropriate for age of children</p> <p>OR would like to be able to transport children to more regular activities – children currently can’t do as many activities as they would like to because parents do not have sufficiently flexible work arrangements</p>
CS13	Over 60 year old couple with no children at home	Rural/small town	<p>Have had their requests for flexible work arrangements turned down</p> <p>OR currently have flexible work arrangements to allow them to do family activities (not involving looking after sick/disabled/elderly relatives)</p> <p>OR arrange work to look after grandchildren</p>	<p>Would like to have flexible work arrangements that allow them to do more as a couple (eg attend a quiz night)</p> <p>OR would like to arrange work to look after grandchildren</p>
CS14	Caregiver for elderly relative	Auckland	<p>Have formalised flexible work arrangements (eg taking a week/few days off every so often)</p> <p>OR have to ‘drop and run’ (ie leave work) occasionally if elderly relative has accident/falls ill</p>	<p>Want to be able to attend medical appointments and spend whatever time they need to with the person to make sure that their needs are met. Means that employers need to be flexible if they are not back in time.</p> <p>OR elderly relative has a regular medical appointment that caregiver wants to be sure to attend</p>
CS15	Caregiver for sick/disabled relative	Auckland	<p>Have flexible work arrangements that allow them to take whatever time off as is necessary to be able to handle situations as they come up</p> <p>OR have become self-employed in order to get flexibility</p>	<p>Need employers who understand that they will need to be taking time off and that this will not always be predictable</p> <p>OR sick/disabled relative has a regular medical appointment that caregiver wants to be sure to attend</p>

The following points should be noted with these criteria:

- > The locations should be regarded as indicative only. We would get a good spread of locations, but the locations may be switched between case studies if it proves too difficult to recruit a particular case study in the specified location (ie if for some reason we could find a Chinese family in Auckland but not in Wellington, we could switch the location to Auckland and look, for example, for a gay family in Wellington).
- > Issues associated with a particular location (eg concern about commuting in Auckland or access to childcare in Whakatane) will also be covered in the recruitment criteria for some of the interviews in that location.

We also need to collect some basic demographic information **in addition to the recruitment criteria for the specific case study** (ie the criteria they need to meet to be eligible for the particular case study) as this information will help the moderator. The recruitment questionnaire will therefore collect basic information about each respondent, as in the focus groups.

This information will be provided to the moderator before the case study, who would then be able to use this information to tailor questions during the case study.

1.1 Case study questionnaire

It will only be possible to collect certain information in the recruitment questionnaire because:

- > some questions may be seen as giving away too much personal information over the telephone and make potential respondents uncomfortable
- > the shorter the recruitment questionnaire, the more people are likely to participate

We would therefore collect some information using a case study questionnaire. This offers a useful way of collecting demographic information while maximising the time available for discussions during the case study.

The questionnaire would be the same as the post-group questionnaire used in the groups.

1.2 Notes on case studies

The emphasis in the case studies will be on developing narratives about different families.

- > We would encourage respondents to invite any members of their household who they believe could make a sensible contribution to participate in the

interview. We envisage that this will most often mean case studies will involve two respondents (the primary participant and their partner). Interviews will generally be conducted at the respondents' home.

- > The general approach would be to find out as much as possible about the family before specifically exploring their experiences with flexible work.
- > As much as possible, moderators would avoid using jargon such as 'flexible work' and 'work life balance', and instead use whichever terms are favoured by respondents.
- > The emphasis will be on the impact of flexible work on the family as a whole, rather than necessarily limiting it to the impact on individual respondents.
- > Where the discussion guide refers to 'paid work', we are primarily interested in paid work that respondents feel makes a contribution to their family's finances.
- > The target length for these case studies is 1 hour 10 minutes.
- > Where respondents have also participated in focus groups, sections they have covered previously will be covered relatively briefly.

2. CASE STUDY DISCUSSION GUIDE

2.1 Initial information collection

The discussion would begin with the moderator quickly going through the case-study questionnaire (identical to the post-group questionnaire used in the focus groups). If respondents have participated in the focus groups the moderator would refer back to the questionnaire the person has already completed. If respondents have not participated in the focus groups, then the moderator would go through the questionnaire with them. The case-study questionnaire collects information on the following topics:

- > Who do they regard as being part of their household?
- > How many people are in their household?
- > Who in their household does paid work?
- > How much paid work do they do and when do they do it?
- > Who in the household provides or receives care?

The moderator would also take note of a variety of ethnographic factors such as:

- > the location of the house (eg suburb)
- > the size of the house (eg number of bedrooms)
- > specific factors such as whether house has the appropriate facilities for physically disabled people if the family is caring for such a person.

The ethnographic factors we can collect need to be restricted to objective measures as opposed to subjective observations (eg whether or not the family seems affluent). This is particularly the case because we will be sending respondents a copy of the write-up of their case study in line with the recommendations of the Ethics Committee.

2.2 Family profile

Tell us about your family.

This is intended as an open discussion allowing respondents to tell us about their family in a more flexible way than is possible in the case-study questionnaire. It may include factors such as:

- > Who is in it? Who is not in it? (eg whether anyone else lives in the household occasionally/comes to stay regularly)
- > Whether they have caring responsibilities for anyone who is not part of the household.
- > Who does what?
- > What things are important to them/their family?

All of these factors are likely to have impacted on the family's work choices, particularly in terms of flexible work arrangements.

2.3 Work (10 mins)

Tell us about work arrangements in your family.

Discussion to include factors such as:

- > Who works? Who does not work?
- > What type of work does each person do (occupation)?
- > What specific hours do they generally do (eg start and finish times, days)?
- > How long they have been at the job?
- > How senior is their role?

- > How were these decisions worked out?
- > How generally does each person feel about their job? How important is it to them? How important is it to the family (apart from in financial terms)?

2.4 Current flexible work arrangements

What flexible work arrangements do they have?

What impact do flexible work arrangements, or the lack of them, have on their family's wellbeing?

Discussion to include factors such as:

- > What specific arrangements do they have for dealing with family commitments? Why these arrangements?
- > How do they deal with specific situations (tailored to each case study, including but not limited to the examples in Prompt A)? What did they do the last time this situation came up?
- > How were the decisions made?
- > Positive impacts of specific arrangements they have.
- > Negative impacts of specific arrangements they have. What sacrifices have they made?
- > What impact has the availability of workplace flexibility had on people's decisions about participating in paid work and the type of participation in paid work? If so how?

The moderator would probe for the reasons behind the current and desired flexible work arrangements they have been recruited to have (those indicated in the tables on pages 2–4).

They would also probe for the extent to which the flexible work arrangements they have enhance family wellbeing by helping them:

- > maintain an adequate standard of living/advance economically
- > positively deal with periods of transition, adversity and change
- > balance work, time for themselves and time for their families
- > maintain and enhance family relationships (including extended families) and responsibilities across generations and households
- > provide care for family members.

2.5 Desired flexible work arrangements

What flexible work arrangements do they need?

If they had the flexible work arrangements they've said that they need/want, what impact would this have on their family's wellbeing?

Discussion to include factors such as:

- > Are there any flexible work arrangements at their workplace that are available but that they do not take advantage of? If so, why?
- > Are there any ways they would like to be able to arrange their work that they cannot at the moment? In what situations would this be relevant? What do they need? What would help?
- > Positive impacts of not having specific flexible work arrangements they would like to have.
- > Negative impacts of not having specific flexible work arrangements they would like to have.
- > What, if anything, would they be willing to give up to have these flexible work arrangements?

Where it seems that specific forms of flexible work would be of value (eg those in Prompt B) but respondents do not raise these, the moderator will test their appeal. The moderator will also probe for the reasons behind the desired flexible work arrangements they have been recruited to have (those indicated in the tables on pages 2–4).

The facilitator would probe for the extent to which the desired flexible work arrangements would enhance family wellbeing by helping them:

- > maintain an adequate standard of living/advance economically
- > positively deal with periods of transition, adversity and change
- > balance work, time for themselves and time for their families
- > maintain and enhance family relationships (including extended families) and responsibilities across generations and households
- > provide care for family members.

The discussion will again include the current and desired forms of flexibility associated with that case study as indicated in the tables on pages 2–4.

2.6 Tools

What might help in terms of information and support?

Is flexible work something they would like more information about? What would they be looking to find out?

- > How do they/would they find out about flexible work options at the moment?
- > What information would they be looking for/find useful?

APPENDIX 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES COMMISSION EMPLOYERS GROUPS/INTERVIEWS

1. NOTES ON EMPLOYERS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

- > The purpose of these groups is to supplement the findings of the general public groups and case studies, in order to ensure that the recommendations developed out of the research are in line with what employers are likely to consider.
- > We need to ensure throughout these groups that we are not duplicating any other previous research.
- > The same discussion guide will be used for both the in-depth interviews and the group.

2. WARM-UP

The discussion would begin with a basic exploration of the nature of the business. This is important as it will help to understand the types of flexible work that are currently and might potentially be offered. One of the findings of the general public focus groups was that availability of flexibility depended very much on the nature of the job (eg more senior people tended to find it easier to ask for or even demand flexible work).

- > What is the nature of their business?
- > How many people are working for their business?
- > What is the nature of the positions (seniority, level of qualifications/training required)?
- > Does it tend to be a firm with many long-term employees or is turnover relatively high?
- > What is the typical profile of their employees (gender, age, education, experience etc)?
- > What is the role of collective bargaining in their company (ie unionised/not unionised)?
- > What hours do their staff work (ordinary office hours, nights, weekends, early mornings etc)?

Are they full time/part-time/casual etc? Is there anyone who works on a 'very' casual basis (ie only called in when needed, small number of hours per week)?

Where some employees work very long hours (say 50hrs+), how important is this to their business – what impact would this have on the business if the employees did not work those hours?

3. FLEXIBLE WORK – BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS (WARM UP DISCUSSION)

- > As a warm-up, we would ask respondents to come up with one advantage and one disadvantage of offering employees flexible work arrangements to help them manage family commitments. In the group we would ask respondents to write this down.
- > This would lead into a more specific discussion of attitudes towards making arrangements to help staff manage family commitments. How generally do they feel about doing this?
 - What generally do they see as the benefits for their business? If they were to offer more flexible work, what would they get out of it?
 - What are the drawbacks, if any? If they were to offer more flexible work, what negative impacts would it have on their business?

4. FLEXIBLE WORK – CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS (UNPROMPTED DISCUSSION)

- > What, if any, arrangements do they offer their staff to help them manage family commitments, above and beyond what is required by legislation?
- > If they have made such arrangements:
 - Which are the most common arrangements?
 - Are these arrangements used by a single staff member, a defined group or does everyone use them? Have they been offered to a single staff member, a defined group or all staff?

- Why do they offer these arrangements? What motivated their introduction?
 - How did these come about? What was the decision-making process?
 - Do staff members take these up? why/why not?
- > Areas of interest regarding the decision-making process:
- Was it a case of one existing employee asking for it; a new employee asking for it as a condition of their employment; collective bargaining; a change in general company policy; or something else?
 - Who was involved in the decision-making process? Was it just them and their employee or were other people involved (eg other managers, unions etc)?
 - [If large organisation] what freedom do line managers have to make decisions on flexibility? Can they offer forms of flexibility that are not specified in company policy or turn down requests for flexibility if they feel they need to?
 - Have they ever turned any requests for flexibility down? Reasons? How did they feel about doing this?
 - General role of guilt in decision-making process (eg have they felt pressured into offering anything that was not really in their best interest?)
- Have they encountered situations where employees want flexibility to deal with family commitments other than their own children (eg looking after a sick or elderly relative)? If so, are there any differences in how they handle these situations?
- > If employers have made arrangements for employees, or have experiences of some of the forms of flexible work covered in Prompt A:
- What benefits do the arrangements have for their business?

(Probe for: happier employees, employees stay longer, better workplace generally, able to attract better staff, retaining staff in tight labour market)
 - What are the drawbacks, if any? What negative impacts do the arrangements have? What were the barriers that had to be overcome?

(Probe for: other staff resentful if only some staff have arrangements, other staff have to cover for them/resourcing impacts, financial impacts on business, lack of certainty about when people will be there)
 - [Will be able to explore trade-offs by looking at balance between benefits and drawbacks]
- > This would lead into a discussion about specific aspects of flexibility, based on the themes from previous rounds of research:

5. FLEXIBLE WORK – CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS (PROMPTED DISCUSSION)

After unprompted discussion, we would hand respondents Prompt A. The purpose of this is to outline the range of flexible options that are used, along with a list of circumstances where flexible work may be needed. This will help employers to identify any other forms of flexible work that they do in fact offer that they have not mentioned up to this point. For Prompt A:

- > Which, if any, of these do they offer (for those which have not previously been discussed)?
 - How did these come about? Why do they offer them?
- Have they observed gender differences in terms of who requests flexibility? Is there any evidence of gender differences in terms of the flexibility granted? [If comments suggest flexible work arrangements are mainly offered to mothers rather than fathers] What impact does this have on their willingness to hire women/mothers?
- Have they encountered any situations where flexibility was requested/granted to enable employees to care for people other than their own children? What difference did it make to them as an employer?
- Have they ever given/been asked to give an employee extended leave because of a family commitment (eg 1–2 months to go overseas)? What were their views on this?

- What difference has technology made to their propensity to accept request for/offer their staff flexible work?
- Do they promote particular positions as being flexible?
- What impact does flexibility have on individual's career prospects (eg how would they feel about promoting someone who was part-time ahead of someone who was full-time)
- [For those whose staff work shifts] How do they balance the needs and desires of their employees in terms of shift work against the demands of their business? What impact does this have? Shift workers have talked about the impact of variable shifts on their ability to plan their family life – what are their views on this? What could they do about it?
- Any times of year when it would not be practical to offer it (asked to explore the existence of these no-go periods rather than to identify when these no-go periods are)?
- [If considering alterations to daily hours] How much earlier/later? How flexible could lunch breaks be? Would they be prepared to offer regular or only occasional flexibility?

> If they were to offer these sort of flexible work arrangements:

- What benefits would this have for their business?
(Probe for: happier employees; employees stay longer; better workplace generally; able to attract better staff; retaining staff in tight labour market)
- What would they be worried about?
(Probe for: other staff resentful if only some staff have arrangements; other staff have to cover for them; financial impacts on business; resourcing impacts; lack of certainty about when people will be there; 'thin end of the wedge' – if you offer something to your staff will they ask for more?)

6. FLEXIBLE WORK – POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS (PROMPTED DISCUSSION)

- > How do they feel about the arrangements listed in Prompt A (and any others that they have heard of but that are not included here)?
 - Are there any that they have offered before but that are not available anymore or employees are not using at the moment? Why is it not available or are employees not using it?
 - Are there any that they have considered offering or been asked to offer that they do not currently offer? Reasons for this?
 - Are there any that they have not considered offering before but might consider in the future? Reasons for this?
 - Are there any options on this list that they would rule out? Reasons why? Is this because they do not imagine their staff would want them (why is this?), or because they are not practical for their particular business (why is this?)
- > Explore possible compromises
 - What compromises would they be prepared to consider (eg running lighter shifts on some weekend days)? What are the limits to what they would be prepared to offer?

> Differentiation between employees:

- Are there arrangements that they would be more likely to give to some employees than to others? What are the differentiating factors?
- Employees have often argued that employers are more likely to grant requests for flexibility to employees who are valued. How true is this?

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- > If they were considering offering more flexible work:
 - who if anyone would they need to consult?
 - who if anyone would they choose to consult?

APPENDIX 4

SURVEY – FEBRUARY 2008

Int ID	_____	Market	_____
Phone no.	_____	Sex	Male 1 Female 2
Date	_____	Finish time	_____
Start time	_____		
Call	1 2 3 4		

INTRO

[You have called: KEY in market: MARKET]

We are conducting a nationwide survey on behalf of the Families Commission looking at how people manage their time around work and around family. Your phone number was selected at random and your individual answers will remain completely confidential. Could I please speak to a WANT who regularly looks after a child or another family member?

[REINTRODUCE IF NECESSARY]

Are you aged 18 or over and would you like to participate?

[REINTRODUCE IF NECESSARY]

Proceed[] GO TO Q1CONT SP

Don't proceed[] TERMINATE

Q1CONT CONTINUE

Q1

Thinking about your family, regardless of whether they live with you, which of these people do you regularly look after?

[NOT RANDOMISE]

- 1** Your own children under the age of 18
- 2** Other children under the age of 18 who are related to you, such as grandchildren, nieces or nephews
- 3** Children under the age of 18 who are not directly related to you
- 4** A sick, elderly or disabled relative

	1	2	3	4	
	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	SP
Yes	1	1	1	1	
No	2	2	2	2	
[DO NOT READ]					
Unsure	3	3	3	3	

IF No/Unsure to ALL THE STATEMENTS IN Q1 (Q1(STATEMENT 1-5)), ASK Q1A

Q1A Is there someone else in your household who looks after their own children, a sick disabled or elderly relative, or children that are not directly related to them?
 [DO NOT READ] (16) SP
 Yes 1 BACK TO INTRO
 No 2 TERMINATE

IF (Q1(1)='No' OR Q1(1)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') AND (Q1(2)='Yes') AND (Q1(3)='No' OR Q1(3)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') AND (Q1(4)='No' OR Q1(4)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') ASK Q1B

Q1B Thinking about the children under the age of 18 who are related to you but are not your own children, do you look after them at least once a week?
 [DO NOT READ] (17) SP
 Yes 1
 No 2 TERMINATE
 Unsure 3 TERMINATE

IF (Q1(1)='No' OR Q1(1)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') AND (Q1(2)='No' OR Q1(2)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') AND (Q1(3)='Yes') AND (Q1(4)='No' OR Q1(4)='[DO NOT READ] Unsure') ASK Q1C

Q1C Do you get paid for looking after the children who are not related to you?
 [DO NOT READ] (18) SP
 Yes 1 TERMINATE
 No 2
 Unsure 3 TERMINATE

IF (Q1(1)='Yes' OR Q1(3)='Yes' OR Q1(4)='Yes') OR (Q1B='Yes') OR (Q1C='NO') START ACTUAL SURVEY

SEX INTERVIEWER: Enter sex of respondent (19) SP
 Male 1
 Female 2

F1 Firstly, we need to make sure that we speak to people of all different ages. What age group are you in? Please stop me when I read out the appropriate age group. (23) SP
 [READ LIST]
 18–19 1
 20–24 2
 25–29 3
 30–34 4
 35–39 5
 40–44 6
 45–49 7
 50–54 8
 55–59 9

		(24) SP
60–64.....	0	
65–69.....	1	
70–74.....	2	
75 Plus.....	3	
[DO NOT READ] Refused.....	4	TERMINATE

Q4

Who lives in your household? What relationship are they to you?

[MULTI]

[READ LIST IF NECESSARY]

Your partner (for example your husband or wife)	1
Your mother.....	2
Your father.....	3
Your partner's mother	4
Your partner's father	5
Your own children.....	6
Children not directly related to you	7
Your or your partner's grandchildren	8
Your brother or brothers.....	9

(25) MP

(26) MP

Your sister or sisters.....	0
[DO NOT READ] Unsure.....	1
[DO NOT READ] None of the above.....	2
Other (specify)	3

(27–46)

Specified Other

ASK Q5 OF “YOU” PLUS THE RESPONSES SELECTED IN Q4

Q5

And who in your household currently does paid work that contributes to your household's financial situation?

[MULTI]

[READ LIST IF NECESSARY]

You.....	1
Your partner.....	2
Your mother.....	3
Your father.....	4
Your partner's mother	5
Your partner's father	6
Your own children.....	7
Children not directly related to you	8
Your or your partner's grandchildren	9

(49) MP

	(50) MP
Your brother or brothers	0
Your sister or sisters	1
[DO NOT READ] Unsure	2
[DO NOT READ] None of the above.....	3
Other (specify)	4
	(51-70)
Specified Other	

IF (Q5 NOT EQUAL 'You.') AND (Q5 NOT EQUAL 'Your partner.') TERMINATE

IF Q1(1)='Yes' OR Q1(2)='Yes' OR Q1(3)='Yes' ASK Q6

Q6 Thinking about the children you regularly provide care for, are any of the children:

[RANDOMISE]

- 1** Pre-schoolers
- 2** At primary or intermediate school
- 3** At secondary school

	1	2	3	SP
	(71)	(72)	(73)	
Yes	1	1	1	
No	2	2	2	
[DO NOT READ]				
Unsure	3	3	3	

ASK ALL

Q7 Is there anyone else who you regularly look after who does not live in your household?

[DO NOT READ]

(74) SP

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Unsure 3

IF Q7='Yes' ASK Q7A

Q7A What relationship are they to you?

[MULTI]

[READ LIST IF NECESSARY]

(75) MP

- Your partner..... 1
- Your mother..... 2
- Your father..... 3
- Your partner's mother 4

Your partner's father	5	
Your own children	6	
Your brother or brothers	7	
Your sister or sisters	8	
[DO NOT READ] Unsure	9	(76) MP
[DO NOT READ] None of the above.....	0	
Other (specify)	1	(8-27)
Specified Other		

ASK ALL

This survey is about flexible work arrangements, and how people fit their work around their family commitments.

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q9

Q9 Thinking about the paid work that you do, would you say that your job has a lot of flexibility to fit around family commitments, a fair amount of flexibility, not that much flexibility or no flexibility at all?

[DO NOT READ]		(28) SP
A lot.....	1	
A fair amount.....	2	
Not that much.....	3	
No flexibility	4	
[DO NOT READ] Unsure	5	

IF Q5='Your partner.' ASK Q9A

Q9A Thinking now about the paid work that your partner does, would you say that their job has a lot of flexibility to fit around family commitments, a fair amount of flexibility, not that much flexibility or no flexibility at all?

[DO NOT READ]		(29) SP
A lot.....	1	
A fair amount.....	2	
Not that much.....	3	
No flexibility	4	
[DO NOT READ] Unsure	5	

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q10, Q10X, Q11

Q10

For each of the following flexible work arrangements, please tell me whether they are
 A) an option you use, B) an option your job offers that you do not use or C) an option
 your job does not offer?

[INTERVIEWER: READ IF NECESSARY – Is it:

- A) an option you use
- B) an option you don't use
- C) an option that's not offered

[RANDOMISE]

- 1** Starting late to drop family off at school, pre-school, childcare or work
- 2** Finishing early to pick family up from school, pre-school, childcare or work
- 3** Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times
- 4** Working from home so you can look after family at the same time
- 5** Able to take time off to attend funerals and tangi
- 6** Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts
- 7** Able to take time off if another family member is sick or in hospital
- 8** Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices
- 9** Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours
- 10** Taking time off during school holidays to look after children **[ONLY ASK STATEMENT IF Q6(2) OR Q6(3) = YES]**

	8	9	10	
	(41)	(42)	(43)	SP
A) An option you use.....	1	1	1	
B) An option you job offers that you do not use.....	2	2	2	
C) An option your job does not offer.....	3	3	3	
[DO NOT READ]				
Unsure	4	4	4	

Q10A

Do you have access to any other kind of flexible work arrangements?

[INTERVIEWER – IF YES “WHAT ARE THEY?”]

[PRECODES – NO, UNSURE]

(44) SP

[DO NOT READ] No..... 1

[DO NOT READ] Unsure 2

Other (specify) 3

(45–64)

Specified Other

- Q11** Please tell me whether each of the following flexible work arrangements would help your family a lot, a fair amount, not that much or not at all?
 [ONLY ASK Q11 STATEMENTS IF THAT SAME STATEMENT IN Q10 = C) An option your job does not offer]
- 1** Starting late to drop family off at school, preschool, childcare or work
 - 2** Finishing early to pick family up from school, preschool, childcare or work
 - 3** Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times
 - 4** Working from home so you can look after family at the same time
 - 5** Able to take time off to attend funerals and tangi
 - 6** Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts
 - 7** Able to take time off if another family member is sick or in hospital
 - 8** Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices
 - 9** Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours
 - 10** Taking time off during school holidays to look after children **[ONLY ASK STATEMENT IF Q6(2) OR Q6(3) = YES]**

	8	9	10	
	(72)	(73)	(74)	SP
A lot.....	1	1	1	
A fair amount.....	2	2	2	
Not that much.....	3	3	3	
Not at all.....	4	4	4	
[DO NOT READ]				
Unsure	5	5	5	

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q12

- Q12** Have you asked about having any of these arrangements and had a negative reaction from your employer?
 [DO NOT READ] (75) SP
- Yes 1
 No 2
 Unsure 3

IF Q12='Yes' ASK Q12A

- Q12A** What did you ask for?
 [PROBE] (8-27)

IF Q12='Yes' ASK Q12B

Q12B Why did your employer react negatively? What did they seem to be concerned about?
 [RECORD FULL VERBATIMS]

(28–47)

IF Q5 DOES NOT EQUAL 'You.' ASK Q13 (**RESPONDENT NOT WORKING**)

Q13 I am going to read you a list of work arrangements. Can you tell me whether having access to each of these arrangements in a job would make you more likely to move into paid work?

[RANDOMISE]

- 1 Starting late to drop family off at school, preschool, childcare or work
- 2 Finishing early to pick family up from school, preschool, childcare or work
- 3 Sometimes working longer hours so you can have more time to spend with the family at other times
- 4 Working from home so you can look after family at the same time
- 5 Able to take time off to attend funerals and tangi
- 6 Able to take time off occasionally for special events involving family, such as school concerts
- 7 Able to take time off if another family member is sick or in hospital
- 8 Changing your hours so you can regularly attend activities involving family members other than yourself, like sports practices
- 9 Able to change your lunchtime so you can go to a family commitment during ordinary work hours
- 10 Taking time off during school holidays to look after children **[ONLY ASK STATEMENT IF Q6(2) OR Q6(3) = YES]**

	8	9	10	
	(57)	(58)	(59)	SP
Yes, more likely.....	1	1	1	
No, not more likely.....	2	2	2	
[DO NOT READ]				
Unsure	3	3	3	

ASK ALL

Q14 What other forms of flexible work arrangements might help your family?
 [RECORD FULL VERBATIMS]

(60–79)

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q15

Q15 Are you an employee, employer or self-employed?
 [MULTI]
 [DO NOT READ] (80) MP

Employee.....	1
Employer	2
Self-employed.....	3
Unsure	4

ASK ALL

Q16 Please tell me if the following phrases apply to you?
 [RANDOMISE]

1	I have a mortgage						
2	I am under financial pressure						
3	I chose my career because it fitted in well with my family commitments [ONLY ASK IF WORKING Q5='YOU.']						
4	I am or my partner is studying for a tertiary qualification						
5	I have more than one paid job [ONLY ASK IF WORKING Q5='YOU.']						
6	I have a fixed term contract with my employer [ONLY ASK IF WORKING Q5='YOU.']						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	SP
Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	
No	2	2	2	2	2	2	
[DO NOT READ]							
Unsure	3	3	3	3	3	3	

Q17 Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements?
 [RANDOMISE]

1	I have put a career on hold to look after the family
2	Because of my work responsibilities, I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in
3	Because I have to spend so much time looking after some people, I'm not able to spend as much time with other family members as I would like.
4	I would be nervous about asking my employer to give me flexible work arrangements
5	The most important thing you can give your family members is quality time
6	I would consider a small cut in my income if it meant I could spend more time with my family
7	I am satisfied with the current balance between my work and the rest of my life
8	Flexibility means that there has to be give and take between employers and employees
9	Employers are more likely to grant flexible work arrangements to employees who are more senior or who they think are important
10	My extended family often expect me to take time off work to deal with family commitments

- 11 My employer is less understanding when I take time off to meet extended family needs than when I take time off for my immediate family **[ONLY ASK IF Q5 = YOU.]**
- 12 Women need more flexibility in their work arrangements than men do
- 13 I feel like my family is constantly juggling work and family commitments
- 14 I would like greater separation between work and family life
- 15 I often use up all my sick leave on my children **[ONLY ASK IF Q1(1) = YES]**
- 16 I have good support networks who can provide care for my children if I need them to **[ONLY ASK IF Q1(1) = YES]**
- 17 I often use up all my sick leave on my relatives **[ONLY ASK IF Q1(4) = YES]**
- 18 I have good support networks who can provide care for my sick, elderly or disabled relatives if I need them to **[ONLY ASK IF Q1(4) = YES]**
- 19 It's hard to have flexible work arrangements in the industry I work in **[ONLY ASK IF Q5 = YOU.]**
- 20 Having flexible work arrangements can mean your colleagues feel that they have to pick up the slack
- 21 Technology such as email and mobile phones make it easier to juggle work and family commitments
- 22 Technology such as email and mobile phones make it harder to separate work time from family time
- 23 Work commitments mean my family time is pressured and less enjoyable
- 24 I would consider a small cut in my income if I could have more flexibility at work
- 25 People who use flexible work arrangements progress more slowly in their careers.

	22	23	24	25	
	(39)	(40)	(41)	(42)	SP
Strongly agree	1	1	1	1	
Somewhat agree	2	2	2	2	
Somewhat disagree	3	3	3	3	
Strongly disagree.....	4	4	4	4	
[DO NOT READ]					
Unsure	5	5	5	5	

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q18, Q18A, Q18B

- Q18** Do you usually work (a) twenty hours or less, (b) twenty one to forty hours, (c) forty one to fifty hours per week or (d) more than fifty hours a week? (43) SP
- [DO NOT READ]
- A) Twenty hours or less 1
 - B) Twenty one to forty hours..... 2
 - C) Forty one to fifty hours 3
 - D) More than fifty hours 4
 - Unsure 5

Q18A And do you usually work (a) weekdays, (b) weekends, (c) weekdays and weekends or (d) shift work?

[DO NOT READ] (44) SP

A) Weekdays.....	1
B) Weekends	2
C) Weekdays and weekends.....	3
D) Shift work.....	4
Unsure	5

Q18B How long have you been at your current job – less than one year, one to two years, two to five years or more than five years?

[DO NOT READ] (45) SP

Less than one year.....	1
One to two years	2
Two to five years.....	3
More than five years.....	4
Unsure	5

IF Q5='Your partner.' ASK Q19, Q19A

Q19 Does your partner usually work (a) twenty hours or less, (b) twenty one to forty hours, (c) forty one to fifty hours per week or (d) more than fifty hours a week?

[DO NOT READ] (46) SP

A) Twenty hours or less	1
B) Twenty one to forty hours.....	2
C) Forty one to fifty hours	3
D) More than fifty hours	4
Unsure	5

Q19A And does your partner usually work (a) weekdays, (b) weekends, (c) weekdays and weekends or (d) shift work?

[DO NOT READ] (47) SP

A) Weekdays.....	1
B) Weekends	2
C) Weekdays and weekends.....	3
D) Shift work.....	4
Unsure	5

IF Q6(1)='Yes' OR Q6(2)='Yes' OR Q6(3)='Yes' ASK Q20A

Q20A Are any of the children you provide care for:
[RANDOMISE]

- 1** Regularly looked after by people who are paid and not part of your household
- 2** Regularly looked after by people who are not paid and not part of your household

	1	2	
	(48)	(49)	SP
Yes	1	1	
No	2	2	
Unsure	3	3	

IF Q20A(2)='Yes' ASK Q20E

Q20E Who else outside your household regularly provides unpaid care for the children you usually care for – what is their relationship to you?

[MULTI]

[READ LIST]

[RESPONSE LIST TO NOT INCLUDE RESPONSES IN Q4] (50) MP

Your partner (for example your husband or wife) 1

Your former partner..... 2

Your parents 3

Your partner's parents..... 4

Your own children 5

Children not directly related to you 6

Your or your partner's grandparents 7

Your or partner's siblings..... 8

Family friends 9

(51) MP

Neighbours 0

[DO NOT READ] Nobody..... 1

[DO NOT READ] Unsure 2

[DO NOT READ] None of the above..... 3

Other (specify) 4

(52–71)

Specified Other

IF Q1(4)='Yes' ASK Q22, Q21

Q22 How old is the sick, elderly or disabled relative you are currently looking after? (72) MP

[DO NOT READ]

Under 18 years.....	1
18–29 years.....	2
30–44 years.....	3
45–59 years.....	4
60–74 years.....	5
75 years or older.....	6
Unsure	7

Q21 Have you looked after a sick, elderly or disabled relative before the relative you are looking after now? (73) SP

[DO NOT READ]

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK ALL

These last questions are for statistical purposes only, to make sure we have an accurate sample.

Once again I would like to remind you that any information you give me is confidential

Q2 How many people 18 years of age or older are currently living in your household, including yourself? (74) SP

[DO NOT READ]

1.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4.....	4
5 or more.....	5
Unsure	6
Refused	7

Q3 How many people under the age of 18 are currently living in your household? (75) SP

[DO NOT READ]

1.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4.....	4
5 or more.....	5
None	6
Unsure	7
Refused	8

RUR2	Do you live in a rural area or district that has a population of less than 2,000 people? [DO NOT READ]	(76) SP
	Yes	1
	No	2
	Unsure	3

IF Q5='You.' ASK Q28, Q30

Q28	What is your occupation? [PROBE]	(8-27)
------------	-------------------------------------	--------

Q30	And how many people are employed by the company you work for? [READ LIST IF NECESSARY]	(28) SP
	1-4.....	1
	5-10.....	2
	11-20.....	3
	21-50.....	4
	51-100.....	5
	More than 100.....	6
	Unsure	7

ASK ALL

F3	What is the approximate combined before tax income in your household. Please stop me when I read out the appropriate income range. [READ LIST]	(29) SP
	\$20,000 or less.....	1
	\$20,001-30,000.....	2
	\$30,001-40,000.....	3
	\$40,001-50,000.....	4
	\$50,001-70,000.....	5
	\$70,001-100,000.....	6
	More than \$100,000.....	7
	Income was nil/or made a loss.....	8
	[DO NOT READ] Refused.....	9

F4 What is your total PERSONAL income, including income support, before tax. Please stop me when I read out the appropriate income range.

[READ LIST] (30) SP

Less than \$15,000.....	1
\$15,001–25,000.....	2
\$25,001–30,000.....	3
\$30,001–40,000.....	4
\$40,001–50,000.....	5
\$50,001–70,000.....	6
More than \$70,000.....	7
Income was nil/or made a loss.....	8
[DO NOT READ] Refused.....	9

F6 Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to? One or several groups may apply to you.

[CODE ALL THAT APPLY]

[READ LIST] (31) MP

NZ Māori	1
NZ European	2
British.....	3
Other European.....	4
Pacific Island.....	5
Chinese	6
Indian.....	7
Other Asian.....	8
Other (specify).....	9

(32–51)

Specified Other

NAME Occasionally our supervisors call to ensure I have done the interview.
May I have your first name only.

PHCHKand can I confirm that your phone number is KEY

[CODE ALL THAT APPLY] (52) SP

Yes	1
No.....	2

IF PHCHK='No' ASK STD, PHONE

STD Could you please tell me the std code for your area
[YOU CAN ONLY ENTER THE STD CODE 04 OR 4]
1 TO 9 _____ (53)

PHONEand if you could tell me your phone number
[ENTER ONLY THE RESPONDENTS 7 DIGIT PHONE NUMBER]
1000000 TO 9999999 _____ (54-60)

ASK ALL

FOCUS Can we contact you in the future to take part in other studies – such as telephone surveys or focus discussion groups?

Yes 1
No/Unsure 2

(64) SP

SKIP/CONTINUE

That's the end of this survey.

I would like to thank you for taking part.

My name is NAME and if you have any queries about this survey you can ring my supervisor NAME on 09 373 8711



Families Commission research reports

- 1/05 *Review of New Zealand Longitudinal Studies*, May 2005.
- 2/05 *Review of Parenting Programmes*, June 2005.
- 3/05 *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key issues and future directions for family violence work in New Zealand*, August 2005.
- 4/05 *Focus on Families: Reinforcing the importance of family*, October 2005.
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- 1/07 *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services*, February 2007.
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- 3/07 *It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families real choice*, August 2007.
- 1/08 *Elder Abuse and Neglect: Exploration of risk and protective factors*, January 2008.
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- 3/08 *The Kiwi Nest: 60 years of change in New Zealand families*, June 2008.

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