

LMF2.4. Family-Friendly Workplace Practices

Definitions and methodology

Workplace practices are key determinants of families' ability to reconcile work and family life. These practices are especially important for employees who do face constraints in access to public supports in the tax/benefit (e.g. PF1.1 to PF1.5), parental leave (PF2.1 to PF2.5) and childcare and out-of-school-hours (OSH) care systems (PF3.1 to PF4.3). Not all parents have access to family-friendly workplace measures to the same extent, and even if they have access to such support, they do not always feel comfortable with using it. In all, working schedules differ widely across and within economic sectors as well as countries.

OECD (2007) defines family-friendly workplace arrangements as those practices that facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, and which firms introduce to complement statutory requirements. Family-friendly arrangements include extra-statutory leave from work arrangements; employer-provided childcare, OSH-services, and elderly care supports and flexible working time arrangements. As childcare, parental leave support and part-time employment are considered elsewhere (LMF1.6 to LMF2.3), the focus here is on flexibility in working time arrangements that do not necessarily involve reduced working hours. For example, teleworking, working at home, and working a full-time working week at non-standard hours.

Flexibility in working time, for example, allows parents to adjust their working schedule to map with school and/or childcare centre hours. The extent to which flexi-time practices help workers balance work and family life is co-determined by the extent to which workers have control over these arrangements. In practice, flexible working schemes are primarily designed to address employer needs in the production process, and their use as a reconciliation tool is determined by the extent to which employees can use these arrangements (for example, by working at home) to reflect their preferred working time schedule (Chung 2024); Flexi-time arrangements can vary considerably in the degree of flexibility and control they offer workers. Flexible working-time arrangements differ not only in the degree of flexibility they provide, but also in the degree of autonomy workers have over their schedules. Recent evidence shows that working-time autonomy is associated with better work–life balance, while highly flexible schedules without worker autonomy are associated with poorer work–life balance and health outcomes (Eurofound, 2026).

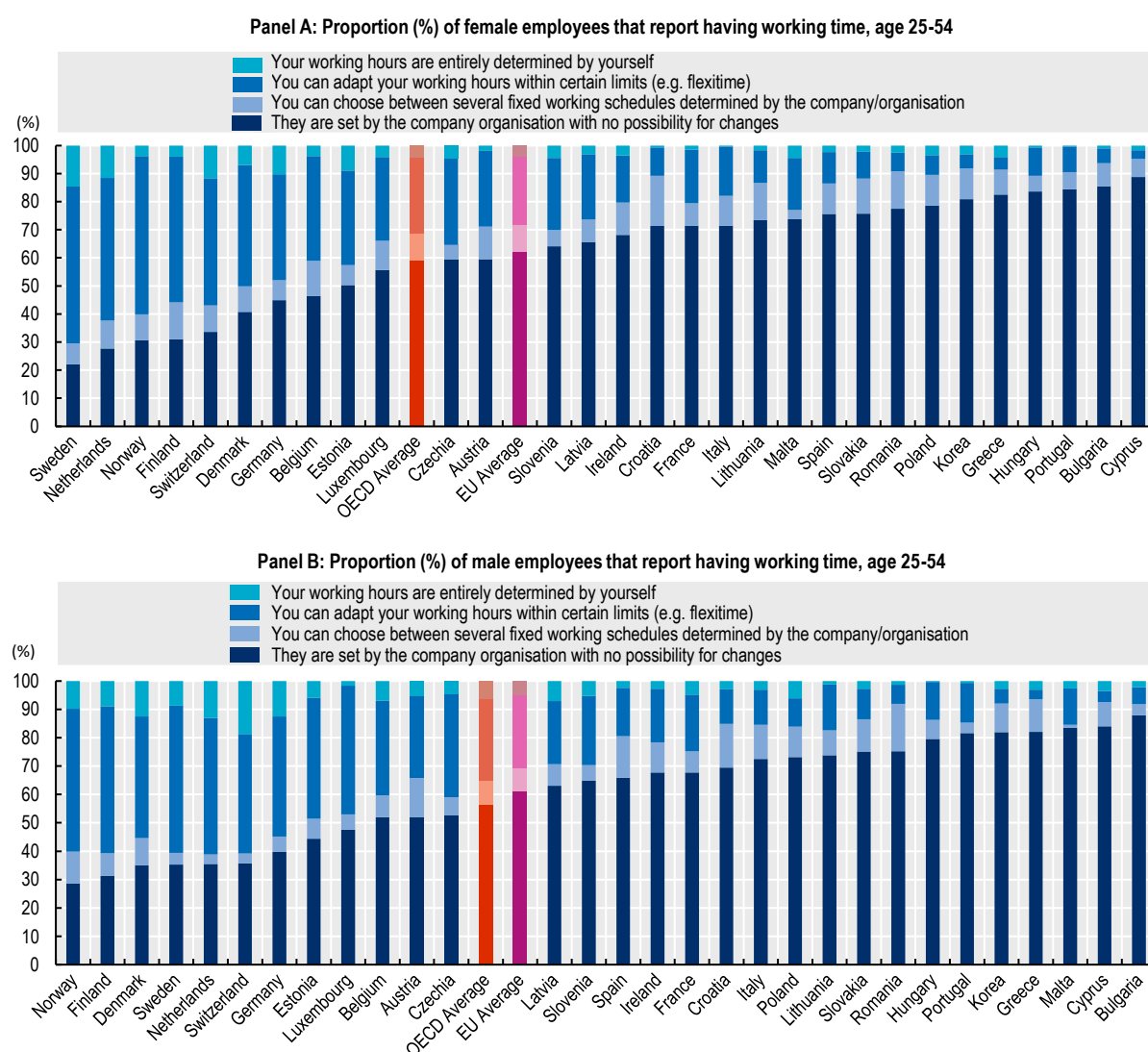
This indicator present information on the extent to which male and female employees have some sort of control over their working hours (Charts LMF2.4.A and LMF2.4.B); and the incidence of working from home (Chart LMF2.4.C). For the most part, the data presented here cover European countries and Korea only (see Comparability and data issues). The data are also limited to employees aged 25–54 to focus on the prime working-age population and reduce the influence of age-related differences in working patterns across countries, particularly those institutional practices associated with education at younger ages and retirement at older ages. Especially in Korea, it remains common for workers to retire from their main career around age 55 (OECD, 2025). Some data on flexible working arrangements in OECD countries outside Europe do exist, but these data are generally not comparable with the information on European countries and Korea (see Box LMF2.4.A).

Other relevant indicators: Key characteristics of parental leave systems (PF2.1); Additional leave entitlements (PF2.3); LMF1.6 Gender differences in employment outcomes; and, Distribution of working hours among adults in couple or single parent households (LMF2.2 and LMF2.3).

Key findings

The extent to which employees have some control over their working time varies considerably across countries. Charts LMF2.4.A considers the proportion of employees who: (i) face working times entirely set by the company; (ii) can choose between fixed working schedules set by the company; (iii) can adapt working time within certain limits; and, (iv) are free to decide their own working hours. In Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, half or more of male and female employees have at least some ability to set their own working time. By contrast, the control of working time by employees is limited in Greece, Korea and Portugal, where more than 80% of employees report that working time is entirely fixed by the company.

LMF2.4.A. Ability of employees to set working time arrangements, 2024



Note: Data for Korea refer to 2023. The survey question used for the figure, referring to respondents' main job, is "How are your working time arrangements set?". The figure shows the share of respondents in each group selecting each response option. Data exclude respondents who answered 'don't know/no opinion' or who refused.

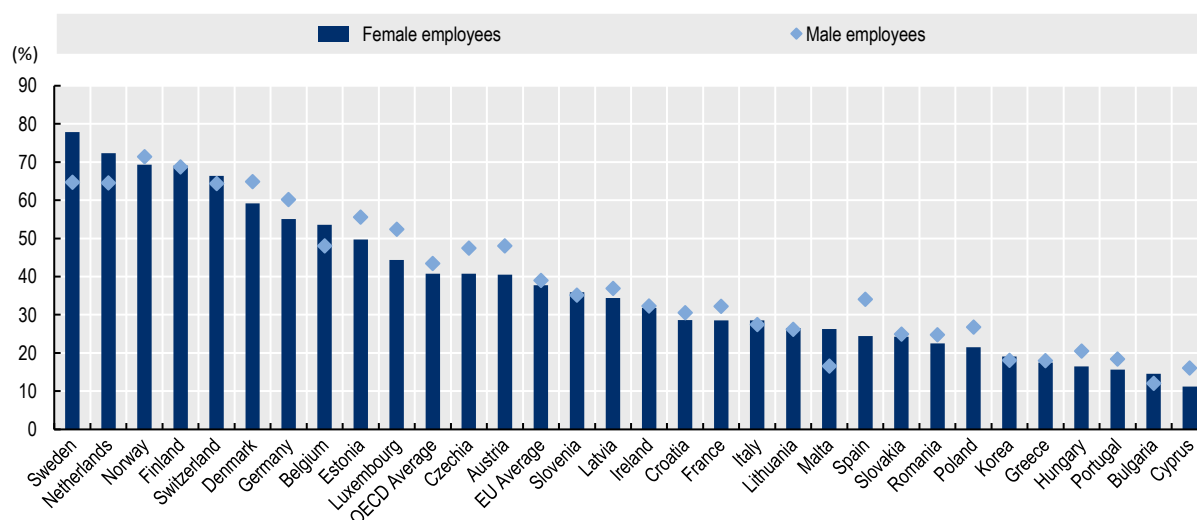
Source: [For European countries, European Working Conditions Survey 2024](#). [For Korea, Korean Working Condition Survey 2023](#).

In many OECD countries, there are small gender differences in access to flexible working time arrangements with male employees often slightly more likely to have at least some ability to set their own

working time arrangements (Chart LMF2.4.C). Control over working time is likely to be related to the position of employees within companies, and more senior staffers are most likely to have access to flexible working time schedules. As men are more likely to be in senior positions than women (see indicator LMF1.6), they are sometimes more likely to have some control over their working hours than women (Chart LMF2.4.C). Yet, in all OECD countries any gender difference in access to flexible working arrangements is only very small, and women are on average a bit more likely to have at least some ability to set their own working time in Belgium, Finland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland. (See OECD (2016 and 2021) for more detail and discussion.)

LMF2.4.C. Gender differences in the ability of employees to set working time arrangements, 2024

Proportion (%) of employees aged 25–54 who have at least some ability to set their own working time arrangements, by gender



Note: Data for Korea refer to 2023. The survey question used for the figure, referring to respondents' main job, is "How are your working time arrangements set?". The data show the share of respondents in each group who answered "You can choose between several fixed working schedules determined by the company/organisation", "You can adapt your working hours within certain limits (e.g. flexitime)", or "Your working hours are entirely determined by yourself", excluding those who answered "They are set by the company/organisation with no possibility for changes". Data exclude respondents who answered 'don't know/no opinion' or who refused.

Source: [For European countries, European Working Conditions Survey 2024](#). [For Korea, Korean Working Condition Survey 2023](#).

Box. Information on flexible workplace practices in OECD countries outside Europe and Korea

Information on flexible workplace practices in OECD countries outside Europe is available from country surveys and contains information on employers who provide flexitime and employees who use it. However, results are not directly comparable to the information for European countries and Korea in Charts LMF2.4.A to LMF2.4.C.

Flexible working time is an important feature of Australian workplace practices and in 2025, 30% of employees aged 15 and over had an agreement to work flexible hours. People who worked from home were more likely to have such an agreement (47%, compared with 22% of those who did not) (ABS, 2025).

In Canada, 26.2% of employees aged 15-69 could adapt their working hours within certain limits and a further 6.3% could determine their working hours entirely themselves in 2024-25. By comparison, 58.9% had their schedules set by their employer and 8.9% could choose between different fixed schedules (Statistics Canada, 2026).

Flexitime options also exist in Japan. In 2025, 8.3% of private enterprises with 30 or more regular employees had a formal flexitime system, covering 11.1% of workers. Such arrangements were more common in larger enterprises (MHLW, 2025).

In New Zealand, half of employees aged 15 and over had flexible working hours allowing them to start and finish work at different times in 2018. The share exceeded 70% in rental, hiring and real estate services and in professional, scientific and technical services (Stats NZ, 2019).

Similarly in the United States, 56.7% of wage and salary workers aged 15 and over could vary their schedules in 2024-25; the share was 57.9% for men and 55.4% for women. Among workers with flexible schedules, 36.1% could vary their schedules frequently and 44.7% occasionally (BLS, 2026).

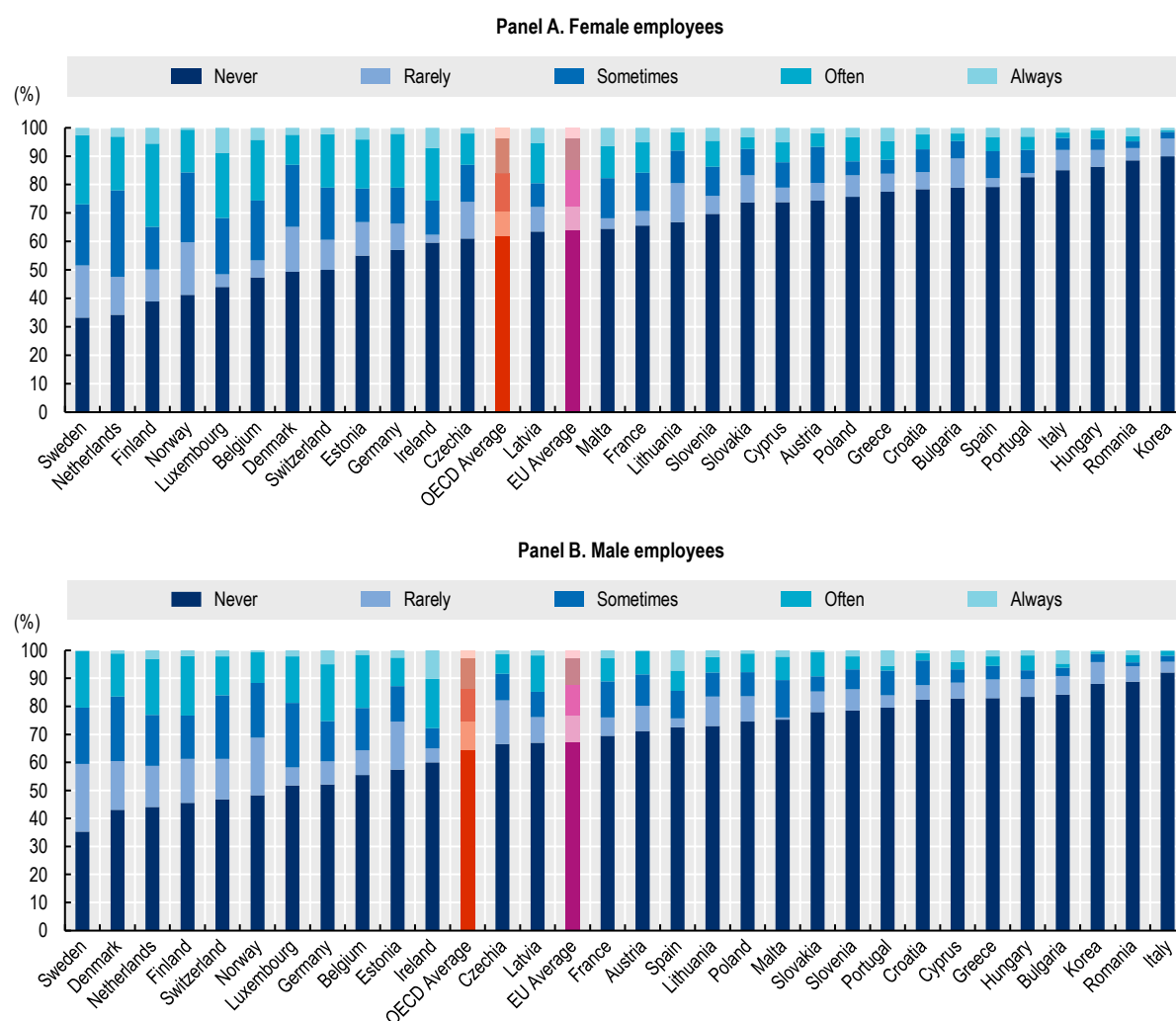
Working from home can also help workers match their work and family commitments. Chart LMF2.4.D presents the proportion of female employees (panel A) and male employees (panel B) who report how frequently they have worked from home over the 12 months preceding the interview. Generally, few employees (3.6% of female and 2.5% of male employees, on average across OECD countries with available data) report that 'always' work from home, but this is 7.2% of female and 10.1% of male employees in Ireland.

Yet, in many OECD countries a considerable proportion of employees report that they have 'often' worked from home in the past twelve months. For instance, in Finland and Sweden, over 20% of both female and male employees report having often worked from home over the past 12 months. Still, the vast majority of both female and male employees have 'never' worked from home over the past year, with around 90% of female and male employees in this situation in Italy and Korea, for instance. (See OECD (2016) for more detail and discussion.)

Directly comparable data is not available for non-European OECD countries, but home-based work is important in both Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, 36% of employed people who worked during the reference week worked from home some or all of the time in 2024, including 8.9% who worked exclusively from home and 24.1% who combined working from home with working elsewhere (Stats NZ, 2024). In Canada, 24.9% of workers aged 15-69 worked at least some of the time from home in February 2024: 13.5% worked exclusively from home and 11.4% had a hybrid arrangement. The share was higher among women (27.8%) than men (22.4%) (Statistics Canada, 2024). In the United States, 33.6% of wage and salary workers aged 15 and over worked at home at least occasionally in 2024-25, including 35.2% of women and 32.1% of men. About 37% of workers had the possibility to work from home (BLS, 2026).

LMF2.4.C. Employees working from home, 2024

Proportion (%) of employees aged 25-54 who report their main place of work as their 'own home' and the proportion of employees who report their main place of work as other than 'own home' but have worked from their 'own home' in the past twelve months, by gender



Note: Data for Korea refer to 2023. The survey question used for the figure, referring to respondents' main job, is "During the last 12 months, how often have you worked in any of the following locations?", and the data show the share of respondents in each group by their reported frequency of working at "Your own home". Data exclude respondents who answered 'don't know/no opinion' or who refused.

Source: [For European countries, European Working Conditions Survey 2024](#). [For Korea, Korean Working Condition Survey 2023](#).

Comparability and data issues

Measures of family-friendly workplace supports are taken from different national surveys with different sample sizes, categorizations and questions for employers and employees (see for an overview of issues, Evans, 2001). Comparisons are therefore difficult, but some indicators on flexible working hours from national surveys have been summarized in Box LMF2.4.A.

The European Working Conditions Survey (2024) was carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) between February and November 2024 (Eurofound, 2026). A total of 36 644 workers were interviewed face-to-face in 35 European countries. The survey provides information on the characteristics of the workforce, workplaces, job quality and the quality of working life. The target population covers employed people aged 16-74. The target sample was around

1 000 workers in most countries, with larger samples in Belgium (2 000) and Slovenia (1 300) and a smaller sample in Luxembourg (500). Multi-stage stratified random samples of the working population were used in each country.

The seventh Korean Working Conditions Survey (KWCS) was carried out by the Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute of the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) in 2023. A total of 50 195 employed people aged 15 and over were interviewed through face-to-face household interviews. The survey covers a wide range of employment and working conditions, including working time, work organisation, work-life balance, exposure to workplace risks and health. The KWCS was developed with reference to the European Working Conditions Survey and uses many of the same questions. For the indicators presented here, only questions with the same wording and response categories in the EWCS and KWCS are used, allowing the results to be compared directly.

Sources and further reading:

OECD (2016), *Be Flexible! How Workplace Flexibility can help European Employees to Balance Work and Family*; OECD (2021), "Working time and its regulation in OECD countries: How much do we work and how?", in *OECD Employment Outlook 2021: Navigating the COVID-19 Crisis and Recovery*, OECD Publishing, Paris; OECD (2007), *Babies and Bosses: reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries*, OECD; Paris Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2025), *Working arrangements, August 2025*, ABS, Canberra; Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2026), *Job Flexibilities and Work Schedules – 2024-2025: Data from the American Time Use Survey*, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC; Cho, Y. (2023), "Data resource profile: the Korean Working Conditions Survey (KWCS)", *Annals of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 35, e49; Chung, H. (2024), *Flexible Working Arrangements and Gender Equality in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; Eurofound (2026), *European Working Conditions Survey 2024: Overview report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; Eurofound (2026), *Working anytime, anywhere: The quality of working time in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute (OSHRI) (2023), *The 7th Korean Working Conditions Survey (KWCS)*; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) (2025), *2025 General Survey on Working Conditions*, Tokyo; Statistics Canada (2024), "Labour Force Survey, February 2024", *The Daily*, 8 March 2024; Statistics Canada (2026), "Canadian Survey on Working Conditions, 2024-2025", *The Daily*, 16 January 2026; Stats NZ (2019), *Survey of Working Life: 2018*, Stats NZ, Wellington; Stats NZ (2024), *Labour Market Statistics: September 2024 Quarter*, Stats NZ, Wellington.