National College of Ireland

Family Friendly Work Arrangements: An inquiry into the provision, range and benefits of family friendly work arrangements that exceed the statutory minimum and which aim to assist employees to merge employment with their personal life (within public, private, semi-state & voluntary sector companies).

Mary Conway

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management of
The National College of Ireland

28th July, 2006

BA (Hons) HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DISSERTATION SUBMISSION FORM

National College of Ireland

Dissertation Title: Family Friendly Work Arrangements: An inquiry into the provision, range and benefits of family friendly work arrangements that exceed the statutory minimum and which aim to assist employees to merge employment with their personal life (within public, private, semi-state & voluntary sector companies).

Declaration:

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of BA (Hons) Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Student Number: _____

ABSTRACT

Family friendly work arrangements could be defined as measures that support or assist employees in managing the dual responsibilities of work and family life. This research study deals with the family friendly work arrangements made available to staff in a number of private, public, semi state and voluntary sector companies.

The ultimate aim of this research project is to assess to what extent the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has benefited the companies surveyed. The provision, the range, the obstacles to, and the benefits of these family friendly work arrangements were investigated and analysed. The research objectives were threefold:

- To identify the range of family friendly work arrangements, both formal and informal, which have been adopted by the companies surveyed.
- To examine why and how the various work arrangements were introduced.
- To determine the obstacles to and business benefits of these initiatives, as experienced by the companies targeted, considering issues such as staff recruitment, retention, motivation, productivity and absenteeism.

The findings conclude that while 100% of the companies surveyed have family friendly work arrangements in place, there is considerable scope for promoting greater uptake of these initiatives. The findings also conclude there is a much greater uptake of family friendly work arrangements by female staff than by male staff.

Finally, the study demonstrates that the larger private, semi-state and public sector companies provide a greater range of family friendly than the small private and voluntary sector companies.

National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland

Dedication

To Fergal, Grace & David

National College of Ireland

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the companies who responded to the survey, particularly the individuals within those companies who gave their time and supplied the information so willingly.

Thank you to Grace O'Malley for her guidance and assistance during the course of this study.

Finally to Fergal, many thanks for your support and encouragement and to Grace and David thank you for your patience.

CONTENTS

Bibliography & References

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Covering letter and questionnaire
Appendix 2 - Summary of family friendly work arrangements
Appendix 3 - Comments
Appendix 4 - Survey Statistics
Appendix 5 - Survey Findings, Graphical Representation

National College of Ireland

List of Companies Requested to Participate in Survey

1. Boston Scientific

2. Bank of Ireland

3. Bus Atha Cliath

4. E.S.B.

5. Irish Life Investment Managers

6. Glanbia

7. Department of Social & Family Affairs

8. Concern Worldwide

9. Johnson Brothers

10. CPL

11. Citigroup

12. Department of Enterprise and Employment

13. Department of Finance

14. Oracle

15. VHI

16. MBNA

17. PFPC International

18. BISYS – Associate Connection

19. State Street International

20. Bank of Scotland (Ireland)

INTRODUCTION

Demographic changes throughout Europe have led to a changing social situation requiring new social policies. The increasing labour force participation of women, particularly of women in the childbearing years, has been accompanied by increasing needs for flexible working arrangements, childcare and greater demands for equality in the workplace. *(Fine-Davis et al 2000, p. 1)*.

This research study deals with the family friendly work arrangements made available to staff in a number of private, public, semi state and voluntary sector companies.

The ultimate aim of this research project is to assess to what extent the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has benefited the companies surveyed. The provision, the range, the obstacles to, and the benefits of these family friendly work arrangements were investigated and analysed. The research objectives were threefold:

- To identify the range of family friendly work arrangements, both formal and informal, which have been adopted by the companies surveyed.
- To examine why and how the various work arrangements were introduced.
- To determine the obstacles to and business benefits of these initiatives, as experienced by the companies targeted, considering issues such as staff recruitment, retention, motivation, productivity and absenteeism.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed as well as the use of secondary data sources. Initially 20 companies were requested to participate. Of that 20 companies 18 (90%) agreed to participate. A questionnaire was designed and issued to the 18 companies which sought to gather both the quantitative and qualitative information. Of the 18 questionnaires are response rate of 12 (66.67%) was achieved.

The questionnaire was developed based on a desire to identify what range of family friendly work arrangements had been put in place by companies, why the companies introduced the initiatives, how they ascertained what options to offer staff as well as questions on cost, uptake by staff, difficulties experienced and benefits to the organisation. The questionnaire was modelled on a questionnaire developed by Hugh Fisher in his research study *'Investing in People: Family-friendly work arrangements in small and medium sized enterprises'*.

The author aimed at achieving a mix of public, private, semi-state and voluntary sector companies of varying sizes in order to assess to what degree, within those sectors, family friendly work arrangements were provided for. Also, by analysing a range of sectors, the author hopes by the end of the study, to be in a position to ascertain which sector family friendly work arrangements are most prevalent in.

In conclusion, the research findings adduce that while family friendly work arrangements have acquired high prominence over the last decade and 100% of the companies who responded to the survey have some form of family friendly work arrangements in place, there is considerable scope for promoting greater uptake of these initiatives, particularly in the smaller private and voluntary sector companies.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1. Understanding Family Friendly Work Arrangements:

Ireland has experienced many changes over the last two decades; these changes have resulted in greater prosperity, higher standards of education, full employment, an increase in the number of employed females etc. all of which are having a major impact on our economy, our society and our business world in general. The world of work has also changed in Ireland; in this twenty four hour seven day society customers expect service at a time that suits them.

Against a background of a tightening labour market, the recruitment and retention of quality employees has become a major preoccupation of public and private sector employers. Innovative ways are, therefore, increasingly required both to encourage existing staff to remain with the organisation and also to attract those considering a return to the paid workforce. (*Drew, Humphreys & Murphy 2003, p. 13*)

Most people in the industrialised world will combine employment with the care of others – children, adults or elders – at some stage in their working lives. Yet paid work is taking up ever more of people's lives, leaving little time to fit in other demands and activities (*Hewitt, 1993; Schor, 1991*). The question of how to bring about change in employing organisations so that people can meet the demands in the interdependent domains of work and family has been widely debated and growing numbers of employers are developing formal policies designated as 'family friendly' (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p.1*)

So what do we mean by a family friendly organisation? Organisations are often described as 'family-friendly' on the basis of the number of formal policies initiated to meet the needs of employees with family commitments. (*Lewis &*

Lewis, 1996. p.5). Another form of terminology favoured by the European Union is the 'reconciliation' of employment and family responsibilities. But is 'reconciliation' synonymous with 'family-friendly'? *Lewis & Lewis (1996)* argues the term 'reconciliation' implies the need to seek accommodation between various needs and interests – of employer, but also children, other 'cared for' groups, women, men and society – and as such indicates a more differentiated and interactional approach than 'family friendly'.

In their definition *Drew, Humphreys & Murphy (2003)* see family friendly measures as those that support or assist employees in managing the dual responsibilities of work and family life. However, work-life balance extends the concept of all employees, regardless of family status, in seeking a better balance, and healthier lifestyle, in work and no-work life. Evans (2001:10) in defining family friendly work arrangements as "arrangements, introduced voluntarily by firms, which facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life" emphasises the proactive role adopted by some firms (*Drew, Humphreys & Murphy 2003, p.19*). And the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT) suggests that to be categorised as 'family friendly', flexible work arrangements must be genuinely directed towards the needs of employees and mutually agreed by employers and employees.

Lewis & Lewis (1996) contend little consensus about the definition of 'family-friendly' currently exists and establishing a working definition is difficult, particularly when a European perspective is taken. Nevertheless they state it is possible to identify key objectives which policies must address if they are to be considered 'family friendly'.

1. At their most basic, policies must enable people to fulfil family as well as work demands.

2. In order to enable all employees to do so, policies should be based on the promotion of gender equality and the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.

3. Policies must also be non-discriminatory, employee-friendly and accompanied by acceptable working conditions.

4. Overall, no family-friendly policy is successful unless a balance is established between the needs of the employees and the employer. This balance has been variously referred to as the 'invisible' contract or 'trust' relationship between an employer and an employee, or synergy.

Regardless of the definition used, the desired outcome is for businesses to remain competitive and retain valuable staff by assisting them in juggling work with family commitments.

1.2. The Role of the European Union:

In reviewing the historical evolution of family friendly work arrangements, it is probably true to say that many of the initiatives came about as a 'non-obligatory' extension of EU directives which were designed to assist employees reconcile work and family commitments.

The major competence for the EU's active involvement in promoting reconciliation between employment and family friendly responsibilities arises from the Union's commitment to the objective of gender equality in the labour market. *(Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p.21)*. The legal basis for this objective, and for EU action to promote and enforce this objective, comes from Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome, which deals with the principle of equal pay, and the five subsequent Directives relating to equality of treatment between women and men. In addition, in 1994, the Commission's Family Policy Unit established a Families and Work Network, focusing on innovative practice in the workplace. A Directive (92/85/EEC) adopted in October 1992, which set minimum

standards for maternity leave in the Union, was proposed and adopted as a health and safety at work measure.

Many of the current 'family-friendly' statutory entitlements in Ireland originated from these EU Directives. Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Force Majeure Leave, Adoptive Leave, Carers Leave and Holiday Leave (under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997), the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001 provide statutory leave entitlements to employees to help them balance their work and family commitments.

- The **Maternity Protection Act 1994** implements the employment rights aspects of the EU Pregnant Workers' Directive (92/85/EC). All employees covered by the Maternity Protection Act are entitled to a minimum period of leave, subject to certain conditions.

- The **Parental Leave Act 1998** implemented the Parental Leave Directive (96/32/EC). The act, which came into effect in December 1998, provides an individual entitlement of both parents to 14 weeks unpaid leave from work to take care of young children.

- **Force Majeure Leave** implemented under the Parental Leave Directive (96/32/EC) entitles an employee to leave with pay from his or her employment for urgent family reasons.

- Holiday leave under the **Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997** (implemented under Directive 93/104/EC) provides for statutory annual leave and public holiday entitlements for all employees who work under a contract of employment of contract or apprenticeship.

- **Protection of Employees (Part-time Work) Act, 2001** (implemented under Directive 97/81/EC) provides that part-time employees cannot be treated in a less favourable manner than a comparable full-time employee in relation to conditions of employment.

- The purpose of the **Adoptive Leave Act 1995** was to redress the imbalance between the ways an adoptive mother was treated with regard to leave as compared with that of a natural mother.

- The **Carers Leave Act 2001** provides an employee with an entitlement to avail of unpaid leave from employment to personally provide full-time care and attention for a person who is in need of such care.

Source: Guide to Labour Law, 2005

As is evident from the findings of this research many companies have gone beyond their statutory obligations and introduced additional family friendly work arrangements, as well as having enhanced the statutory entitlements available to staff. However, notwithstanding the increased profile of flexible working arrangements for 'family friendly' and other purposes over the past decade, evidence from a number of OECD countries suggests that, outside of the public sector, availability of such arrangements remains comparatively limited.

Most OECD countries have introduced some public policy interventions designed to ease the reconciliation of working and caring responsibilities. Maternity leave is perhaps the longest established, but more recently many countries have also made statutory provisions for other forms of leave, including paternity leave, emergency/special leave. However, regardless of government policies and intervention, it remains the case that the detailed

aspects of work/family reconciliation are worked out at the level of the workplace and the job. (*Drew, Humphreys & Murphy, 2003, p. 18*).

1.3. Family Friendly Work Arrangements in Ireland:

Ireland together with the other EU Member States was party to the Amsterdam Treaty (adopted 1997) and reconciliation of work and family is a key theme addressed in the guidelines for Member States to implement in their employment policies. In Ireland this has been given expression in part, to the establishment of a National Framework Committee for Family Friendly Policies, which was an element of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness to which the Government and the social partners are participants. "The Framework Agreement encourages management, unions and employees to come together to find out what the needs of the employee and the company are, and then to identify how they can, in their particular enterprise, meet these needs to the mutual benefit of both company and employee". (*ICTU Statement in National Development Plan, 2001*).

In its 1997 Annual Report, the Employment Equality Agency highlighted that among the main conclusions from the debate were the recognition that people's private lives must be reconciled with the interests of the workplace; the need to change the perception that flexible working hours relate only to women in the workplace instead of both women and men; and the need to change the misconception that a management position is incompatible with working part-time. (*Employment Equality Agency, 1997*).

Gunnigle (1999) remarks that to the casual observer, the year 1998 witnessed what may have appeared to be a sudden surge of interest in work and family issues although in reality the groundwork had been taking place over a number of years. The Parental Leave Bill came into law on the 3rd of December 1998.

8

The Minister for Justice, Family and Law Reform announced details of a £5.2 million Equal Opportunity Nationwide Childcare programme to enhance the accessibility and affordability of childcare. The terms of Partnership 2000 included the establishment of an Expert Working Group on Childcare. Overall, there appears to be a desire to see a more balanced 'quality of life, this has become increasingly important as many employers face skills shortages and must endeavour to attract and retain high quality employees.

Quite notably the Irish labour market has witnessed a sustained increase in women's labour force participation and employment and the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has come about because of this increase. The number of women at work in Ireland has grown rapidly over the past twenty five years, far outpacing the growth in male employment. Women's share of total employment increased from 37% in 1993 to almost 42% in 2002. It is anticipated that this trend is expected to continue, and women are expected to account for almost 45% of total employment by the year 2015 *(Sexton, Hughes and Finn, 2002)*. The increased participation of women in employment, in a situation where labour market shortages exist, makes the case for adaptive working arrangement and gender equality policies self evident.

Labour Force Participation Rate of Mothers by Number of Dependant Children, 1991 and 1996

Number of Dependant Children	1991 (%)	1996 (%)
One	33.1	42.6
Two	30.2	43.2
Three or more	21.6	33.2
All Mothers	*25.7*	*36.6*

Source: Labour Force Survey, 1996

There are several reasons for the growing proportion of women in the work force, including later marriage and childbirth, a higher propensity to return to work after having children, structural changes in industry with the decline of male dominated manual manufacturing jobs and growth of services sector employment and finally social pressures for greater equality of opportunity between women and men. (*Drew, Humphreys & Murphy 2003, p.23*).

The 'traditional' family is no longer as prevalent in Ireland, families now come in many different forms such as 'two-parent, single parents and reconstituted families, households with young, teenage or adult children, people in heterosexual or gay relationships living with friends, or in nuclear or extended families' (*Kirton & Greene, 2000:240*). The introduction of divorce in Ireland has also increased the number of single parent families.

There is also a clear change in sex-role attitudes, with men and women 'increasingly exposing more egalitarian attitudes' (*Kiernan, 1992:82*). Women are devoting less time to domestic duties including childcare. Traditional assumptions about the separation of work and family life and the man as the breadwinner have 'become more anachronistic than ever'. The younger generation is currently 'experiencing shifts in men's involvement in families' (*Kiernan, 1992: 65*).

However, while statistics show a marked increase in female participation in the workforce, childcare has been and continues to be a particularly critical issue in Ireland in this whole debate. When it comes to sharing the caring of children, statistics published by Eurostat, the EU's central statistics office, show that, in all countries, working mothers look after children more than working fathers do (*Equality News, 1998*).

In general, the three Nordic Member States of the EU together with Belgium and France have the highest level of publicly-funded provision for children under 3 years of age. This is in contrast to the current situation in Ireland where according to a 1999 report, 'childcare provision is uncoordinated, variable in quality and in short supply'. The report also points out that 'Ireland has amongst the highest childcare prices (as a proportion of average earnings) in the EU' and that 'average full day care prices in Ireland are 20% of average earnings" (*Fisher, H. 2000, p60*).

The Government is still grappling with the childcare issue and while the most recent political gesture of introducing the 'Early Childcare Supplement' in the 2006 budget may assist in funding childcare expenses and may be considered to be a positive measure in the short term, the lack of a comprehensive, integrated long-term childcare strategy still remains.

It is generally accepted that the Scandinavian countries have been more progressive than the rest of Western Europe in developing social and employment policies which benefit workers, so should we not try to learn from them? *Fine-Davis et al (2000)*, suggest 'that with one of the lowest childcare provisions in Europe, Ireland is in a unique position to benefit from the wealth of knowledge and data, which has been gathered on childcare from around the world.

1.4. The Drivers for Introducing Family Friendly Work Arrangements:

A combination of factors has lead to the promotion of family friendly work arrangements. In many countries, a range of policy programmes developed by governments and state agencies have encouraged the development of family friendly employment practices. In Ireland the setting up of a National

Framework Committee for Family Friendly Polices, together with work life balance websites, work life balance consultancy support and the dedication of a working day titled 'Work Life Balance Day' are indications that work life balance and family friendly initiatives are on the agenda of the Government, the employer organisations and the Unions.

In reviewing the relevant literature, the main points put forward which are said to have influenced the implementation of family friendly work arrangements and polices are *equal opportunities, quality of life, the business rationale and the role of Human Resource Management.*

1.4.1. Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Gender Equality:

Lewis & Lewis (1996) state that the equal opportunities rationales for recognising the interdependence of work and family take a number of forms. At its most basic, the equal opportunities objective seeks to give women and men equal access to pay. A more developed objective is to achieve equal representation of women and men at all levels of organisations. Work and family policies or practices are often conceived as removing barriers to women's achievement at work.

The legislative context for employment equality measures are provided for in the *Employment Equality Act 1997, 2004* and the *Equal Status Acts 2000, 2004* and consequently have relevance to workplace equality practices. In recent research on equality and flexible working arrangements, *O' Connell & Russell (2005)* presents the argument that there is a societal dividend in terms of promulgating equality within the workplace. They contend that the inclusion of wider and more diverse labour market participant groups has the potential to enhance economic growth. A society that reflects diversity and equality within the workplace is therefore, active in its expression of democratic legitimacy by its commitment to all groups.

In a similar vein *Rutherford* and *Ollerearnshaw (2002)* posit that equality and diversity policies are becoming effective mechanisms for a more focused approach to recruitment, HR planning, improvements in service delivery and encouraging workforce innovation (*Cox, P., 2005, p.22*). The diversity approach highlights the different contributions diverse groups can make to organisations. It argues for culture change such that diversity is valued rather than stresses the business advantages of such an approach (*Herriot and Pemberton, 1995*). Relating this to work and family, the objective becomes 'to enhance opportunities for men and women to adopt work for family reasons, with the diverse work patterns that emerge from these adjustments being as equally valued as traditional patterns of work' (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p.8*).

A gender equity approach extends this argument by emphasising equity and fairness of rewards and constraints at the workplace and beyond. Lewis contends that for gender equity to occur it has to be taken for granted that men and women are equally responsible for generating family income and for family care giving (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p. 8*).

1.4.2. Quality of Life Rationale

The quality of life argument for family friendly employment rests on the case that multiple roles in work and family have the potential to create stress. It aims to examine the 'relationships between work, family and well-being which includes the impact of maternal employment on women's well being, as well as the impacts on other family members' (*Crompton & Le Feuvre, 2000*). Many Irish organisations now recognise the importance of health and welfare issues in facilitating and encouraging employees to attend work regularly and perform to the optimum (*Gunnigle, 1999, p. 690*). And again, legislation has been enacted to ensure employers take responsibility for the physical safety as well as

13

employee health, including stress which has become one of the leading occupational illnesses.

Excessive pressures on employees have proven costly to both the employer and the employee over the last decade or two. In a recent article written by Cary Cooper he states that 'the collective cost of stress in the US from sickness absence, premature retirement, increased corporate medical insurance premiums and lost productive value was estimated at $150 billion. In the UK, direct and indirect costs, including NHS treatment for stress-related illness, have been estimated at 5%-10 % of GNP. (*People Management, December 1995, page36*). The rising number of stress related litigation cases being taken by employees could also prove to be very costly to employers.

The ultimate objective of the quality of life rationale is to reduce stress at work and minimise the potential negative impact of work on family life. Many companies have introduced family friendly work arrangements and work life balance policies in order for employees to achieve greater quality of life. Employee Assistance Programmes, workplace counselling, flexible working arrangements etc. all go a long way to ensuring employees have control over their jobs, feel valued and gain some sense of job satisfaction.

1.4.3. Business Rationales

Gunnigle (1999) suggest there is evidence that Irish companies do not attach importance to the health and welfare issues of their employees solely because of legislative requirements or altruism. The 1997 Report of the Irish Health and Safety Authority (*HAS, 1998*) suggests that companies recognise that a healthy workforce makes a significant contribution to employee and business performance.

14

As we will see from the findings of the research in the subsequent chapters many of the companies surveyed have outlined how the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has benefited their business. Like the other rationales the business case also has a broader objective. It is concerned about retaining highly skilled staff who are motivated and whose productivity can be maintained at a consistently high level.

Drew (2003) argues that the implementation of flexible work arrangements can be demanding on organisations. As well as the additional administrative work, there can be considerable logistical difficulties occasioned by staff working a variety of reduced or flexible working hours. However, these 'costs' can be offset by a number of positive impacts with direct financial considerations, such as: low staff turnover, reduced casual sickness absence, improved morale etc.

In a climate of global competition and cost cutting, human resource personnel must demonstrate to corporate leadership that investing in human capital is, in fact, linked to corporate success. (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p71*). And if workforce diversity is to be seen as a competitive advantage (versus an organisational problem), the challenge to corporations is to support strategies that enable employees to bring their whole selves to the job, their skills, experiences, values and attitudes. (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996, p.73*).

Cooper (2005) contends that organisations cannot continue to demand commitment from employees to whom they don't commit. More and more outsourcing, short-term contracting and autocratic or bottom-line management styles only undermine the psychological contract between the employer and employee. A large survey of UK managers which Cooper carried out for the Chartered Management Institute showed that outsourcing, delayering, downsizing and so on led to substantially increased job insecurity, lower morale and most seriously of all, eroded motivation and loyalty.

Support from management is crucial for the success of any modifications to normal working practices. Drew argues that even in countries with quite extensive legislation promoting work-life balance, attitudes within companies are of great importance.

There are still managers with views that women should not combine a career with parenthood and at present family commitments are largely viewed as a woman's issue. Unless there is a change to this attitude and the business benefits of introducing family friendly work arrangements are recognised at all levels of an organisation, it is unlikely the promotion and execution of flexible working arrangements will be successful.

An important first step in transforming work-family from an issue largely peripheral to the core of the organisation to one aligned with central business goals is the reframing of its agenda beyond a focus on mothers and women and an overreliance on programs and benefits. The discussion must be broadened to focus on all employees and must address more profound and difficult work-family issues such as deep-seated organisational attitudes, cultural norms, and the unintended negative consequences of existing corporate policies. (*Lewis & Lewis, 1996*, p.6).

1.4.4. The Role of Human Resource Management

The establishment of HR units and the growing professionalism of the HR function are widely regarded as having been a positive influence in the development of flexible work arrangements. (*Drew, Humphreys & Murphy, 2003, p. 24).*

Literature contends that the development of Human Resource Management (HRM) as a function within organisations has played a role in the promotion of

family friendly work arrangements and work life balance. *Evans (2001)* maintains that in recent years HRM models equating to 'best practice' or 'resource based' HRM place an increased emphasis on 'high trust', 'high commitment' or 'high performance' working arrangements. These are predicated on involving greater mutual cooperation and commitment between employers and employees in order to support more complex jobs involving greater employee discretion and involvement (*OECD, 1999*).

HR professionals are viewed as having a role to play in recreating the psychological contract between employer and employee as well as investigating and creating opportunities for flexible working. *Cooper (2005)* contends there is a need for HR to help managers to learn how to manage people remotely and to use technology such as email or video conferencing, to their advantage, rather than letting it become another source of overload and stress.

Author's Commentary:

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine existing research literature in relation to family friendly work arrangements in order to provide a context for the presentation of the findings of the research in subsequent chapters.

The evidence presented and findings from research studies indicate that a great deal of work and debate has taken place around the integration of work and family issues and while the issue generating the greatest attention has been childcare, in recent years organisations have moved from trying to create an environment supportive of work and family to one that is more inclusive: appropriately called 'work-life' culture.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction & Context of Research Methodology

The preceding chapter presented the background to the study by annotating the findings of relevant literature related to family friendly work arrangements. This chapter will outline the manner in which the study was conducted and the methodologies applied. It will outline and justify the research chosen.

The research focuses on gathering information on family friendly provisions and practices, from a mix of public, private, semi-state and voluntary sector companies. The **research question** aims at answering what range of family friendly practices the companies surveyed have put in place and if the companies have benefited from the introduction of these practices.

The **research objectives** were threefold:

- To identify the range of family friendly work arrangements, both formal and informal, which have been adopted by the companies surveyed.
- To examine why and how the various work arrangements were introduced.
- To determine the obstacles to, and business benefits of, these initiatives, as experienced by the companies targeted, considering issues such as staff recruitment, retention, motivation, productivity and absenteeism.

The analysis was carried out on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire (see appendix 1). In addition, on receipt of the twelve completed questionnaires, four follow up telephone interviews were carried out with one company from each of the sectors.

National College of Ireland

A combination of research methods including qualitative and quantitative were employed. This was undertaken to allow a complementary approach. The quantitative and qualitative findings from the questionnaire have been used in conjunction with the qualitative conclusions from the follow up interviews.

Accordingly, the research will, in later chapters, seek to draw conclusions and make certain recommendations having regard to the overall implementation of family friendly work arrangements.

2.2. Sample Population:

In choosing companies to participate in the survey, the author aimed at getting a broad mix of public, private, semi-state and voluntary sector companies, as well as different sized companies in terms of the number of employees. The rationale for this was to examine the degree to which companies & sectors differ in their provision and range of family friendly work arrangements.

In addition, it is hoped the research will ascertain the extent to which the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has benefited the sample population.

2.3. Quantitative Data: Survey of Companies

Primary data was collected through a questionnaire which was distributed to 18 companies to develop the research objective of gaining an insight and understanding of what family friendly work arrangements were put in place by the companies.

HR professionals from 12 of the companies (66.67%) completed and returned the questionnaire as requested. The chosen method was justified having regard to the number of companies being targeted as well as time and other logistical

19

considerations. It provided both a consistent and efficient mechanism of collecting responses from the sample population in advance of quantitative analysis.

2.4. Qualitative Data: Survey of Companies and Follow-up Interviews

Qualitative data was gathered throughout the questionnaire as well as by means of the four follow-up interviews. The follow-up interviews were used to further explore some of the responses to questions and to elicit informants' reflections and perspectives in more detail. These interviews took the form of a general conversation, focusing/expanding on certain sections of the original questionnaire, as opposed to drafting a new questionnaire. The author made the decision to conduct the telephone interviews in this manner following a request by two of the interviewees 'not to have to go through another questionnaire'.

As the interviewees were familiar with the subject matter and in many cases were participating in the implementation of family friendly practices within their company, it was considered this method of enquiry was most suitable.

2.5. Secondary Data: Review of Relevant Legislation

Ghauri and *Gronhaugh (2002)* highlight the advantages of using secondary data in research studies. It can provide significant savings in terms of time and other resources. They provide authoritative sources of comparative and contextual data. *Denscombe (1998)* also contends that one distinct advantage of using secondary data is that it provides a source of data that is both permanent and readily available.

An important part of this study was to review the overarching legislative principles on family friendly related policies/directives. This formed part of the

literature review where EU and national legislation was considered on the subject.

2.6. Limitations of Research

The author acknowledges that this study has its limitations. In the first instance the research project deals with an area which is still a relatively new phenomenon within Irish companies, and therefore evaluation and analysis of their benefit etc., have generally not taken place.

In retrospect the author would have preferred to be in a position to carry out semi-structured interviews with the total sample population as an alternative to issuing questionnaires for completion. The author is of the opinion that semi-structured interviews may have revealed more information and a greater response rate to the questions.

Also, while the follow-up phone interviews revealed more than the questionnaires there was, in one case, an unwillingness to co-operate and to expand further in the telephone interview. The author sensed 'fatigue' with the survey on the interviewees part and felt that if the telephone interview had taken place initially, as opposed to the questionnaire, there may have been more interest in co-operating.

In addition, while the response rate to the questionnaire (66.67%) is considered a good representative sample, the author, in hindsight, would issue the questionnaire to a larger sample population, in order to identify more definite trends.

Finally, the author feels it is necessary to express a difficulty in putting forward extensive recommendations from this research given that this study was not carried out for a set organisation or body.

Chapter 3: Research Analysis - Company Responses to Survey

3.1. Introduction

In order to evaluate the range and the benefits of the family friendly work arrangements implemented by the chosen organisations, a survey was undertaken as a means of primary data provision. This related to the research objective of developing an insight and understanding of what family friendly provisions were put in place by companies, how they ascertained what initiatives to offer staff and how effective the companies in question have viewed the implementation of these work arrangements. A response rate of 66.67% was achieved.

Twenty companies were contacted and requested to participate in the survey, twenty of the eighteen (90%) agreed to take part. Out of the eighteen questionnaires dispatched, twelve (66.67%) were returned. Significantly, 100% of the companies who responded to this survey reported having some form of family friendly work arrangements in place for their staff.

Where relevant, the comments made by the participants under various questions will be referred to in this chapter. In addition, a transcript of all comments received form part of the appendices.

3.2. Organisation Profile:

The first part of the survey was designed to gather quantitative data on the profile of the selected organisations. The responses revealed the following:

Q. 1. Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in?

Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in?

Manufacturing 16.67%

IT, 0%

Other, 50%

Services, 25%

Retail, 0%

Distribution 8.33%
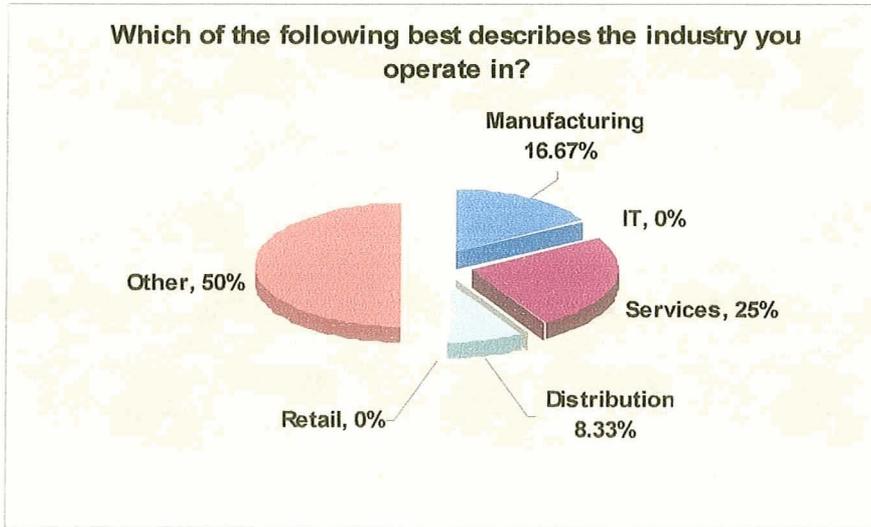
Six out of the twelve companies who responded classified themselves as 'other'. Three of these were financial service companies, two were government departments and one was categorised as a non-governmental organisation.

Q. 2. Which of the following sectors does your company belong to?

Which of the following sectors does your company belong to?

Voluntary Sector 8.33%

Other 0%

Public Sector 16.67%

Semi-State Sector 16.67%

Private Sector 58.33%
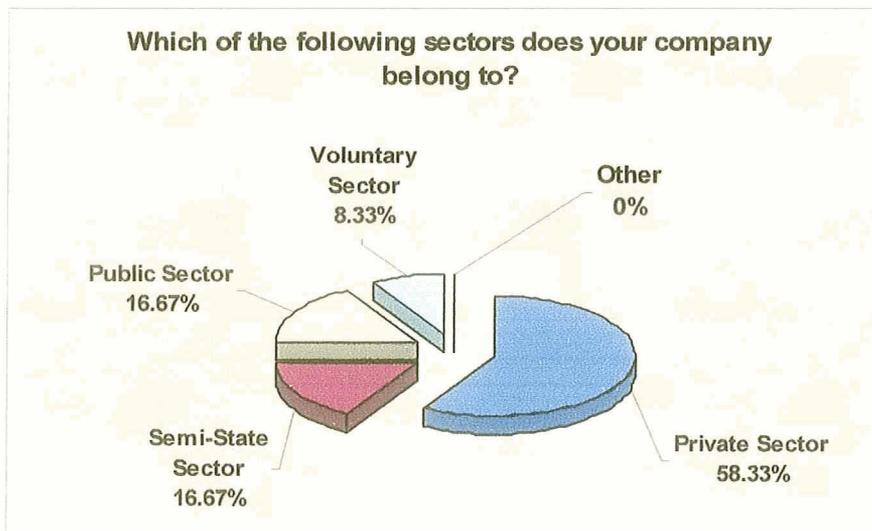
It was the author's intention to achieve a balanced mix of sectors, however; some 58% of respondents were private sector companies. This is a significantly higher representation than that of other sectors.

Q. 3. How many people do you employ?

How many people do you employ?

701 + employees	50.00%
501 - 700 employees	8.33%
301 - 500 employees	16.67%
101 - 300 employees	25.00%
1 - 100 employees	0%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%
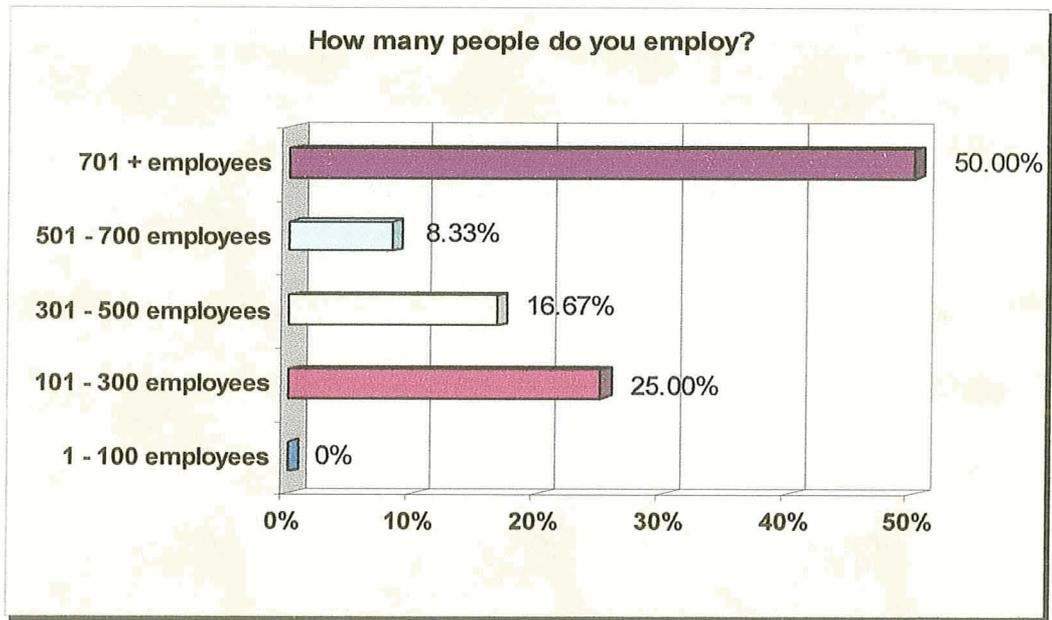
The companies vary in size quite notably, 50% of the companies have 700 plus employees, and of these the company sizes range from 1,243 employees to 16,000 employees. Twenty five percent of the companies employ 101 – 300, 16.67% employ 301 - 500 employees, 8.33% employ 501 – 700 and no company who responded has less than 100 employees.

A question on company size was deemed to be important in order to compare and contrast the family friendly work arrangements being offered by the smaller versus larger organisations. This point will be considered further in the conclusion.

There was an 83% response rate to the second part of this question which requested a breakdown of employees by gender and employment status i.e. full-time/part-time. Taking a cumulative figure of all the companies' employees, a total of 47.58% of employees are male and 52.42% of employees are female. Eight per cent of the male employees are part-time, while 24 % of the female employees are part-time. In absolute terms, the number of male employees employed on a part-time basis (3.59%) is small, when compared with that of the female employees (12.68%).

	Male	Female	Total
Full-time	15,321 (92%)	13,839 (76%)	29,160 (84%)
Part-time	1,250 (8%)	4,416 (24%)	5,666 (16%)
Total	16,571 (100%)	18,255 (100%)	34,826 (100%)

As outlined in the table below, only 22.06% of the total numbers of part-time employees are male while 77.94% are female.

Total No. of Part-time Employees	Male	Female
5,666	1,250 (22.06%)	4,416 (77.94%)

A particularly interesting feature which emerged from the responses to this question was the number of private sector companies with no male staff working part-time. Fifty eight percent of the responses to the survey are private sector companies and of this 58% (18,895 employees) only .07% (133) of the male staff works on a part-time basis. In exploring this point a little further and for the purpose of comparison, the responses from the two semi-state companies (with a

total of 11,028 employees) indicate that 9.6% (1062) of their male employees work on a part-time basis, which is a considerable difference.

Q. 4. What percentages of your employees are aged between?

What % of your employees are aged between?

51 - 65 years
26.94%

20 - 30 years
16.88%

31 - 40 years
27.09%

41 - 50 years
29.09%
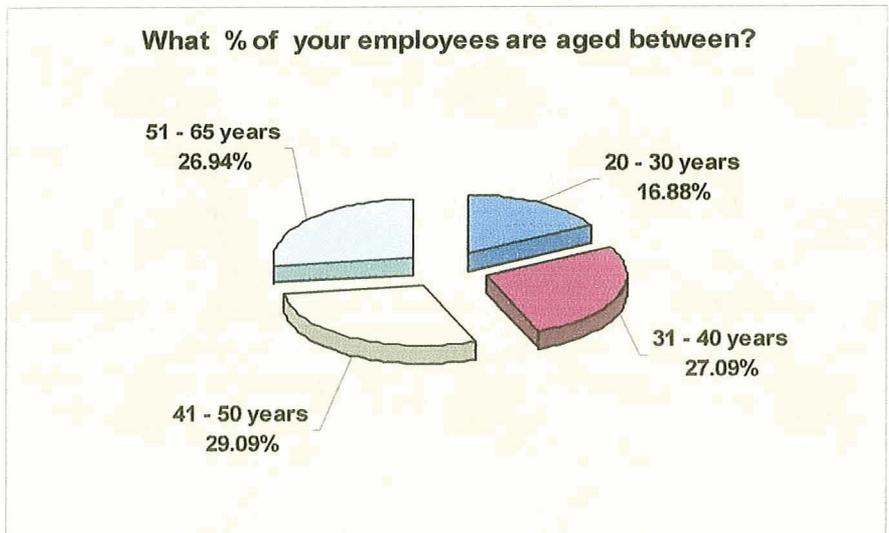
Nine companies responded to this question giving a total sample size of 18,512 employees. Out of the nine responses, five companies were private sector, two were semi-state, one voluntary and one public sector. The following is the collective breakdown by age group, employee numbers and percentages of those companies.

Age Group	Total Sample	%
20 - 30	3125	16.88
31 - 40	5014	27.09
41- 50	5386	29.09
51 - 65	4987	26.94
	18,512	100.00 %

As the chart below indicates, the age profile within private sector, semi state and public sector vary noticeably. Of the five private sector companies who responded, 40.60% of their cumulative staff is aged between 20 – 30 years of age, while in contrast the two semi-state companies and the public sector company respectively have only a percentage of 13.37% and 12.00% of their total employees in this age cohort.

For comparison purposes it is interesting to look at the 51 – 65 age group, where the findings are reversed. The table below illustrates that the private sector companies who responded have a low percentage of staff in the 51 -65 age group (5.97%), while the semi-state (at 31.21%) and public sector companies (at 29%) are similar in that they both have a higher percentage of staff in this age group.

Age	Private Sector		Semi-State Sector		Public Sector		Voluntary Sector	
	No. of employees	% of employees	No. of employees	% of employees	No. of employees	% of employees	No. of employees	% of employees
20-30	1,048	40.60%	1,474	13.37%	569	12.00%	34	21.00%
31-40	991	38.40%	2,768	25.10%	1,186	25.00%	69	43.00%
41-50	388	15.03%	3,343	30.32%	1,612	34.00%	42	26.00%
51-65	154	5.97%	3,442	31.21%	1,375	29.00%	16	10.00%
	2,581		11,028		4,742		161	

Interestingly, when the age groups 31-40 & 41- 50 are combined there is little difference between the private sector at 53.43%, the semi-state sector at 55.42% and the public sector at 59%. The voluntary sector at 69% has the highest percentage when the two age cohorts (31 – 50) are combined.

The above examination shows a reversal of trends between the 20 – 30 age groups and the 51 - 65 age groups, with the private sector companies having a younger workforce than that of the semi-state and public sector companies.

Q. 5. What percentage of your employees are members of a Trade Union?

Three of the seven private sector companies indicated that none of their employees are members of trade unions; in contrast, the semi-state companies responded that 100% of the employees in one company and 75% in another are members of trade unions. This is not surprising particularly when statistics show that 80% of semi-state/public sector employees as opposed to circa 30% of private sector employees are members of trade unions. (*Source ICTU*).
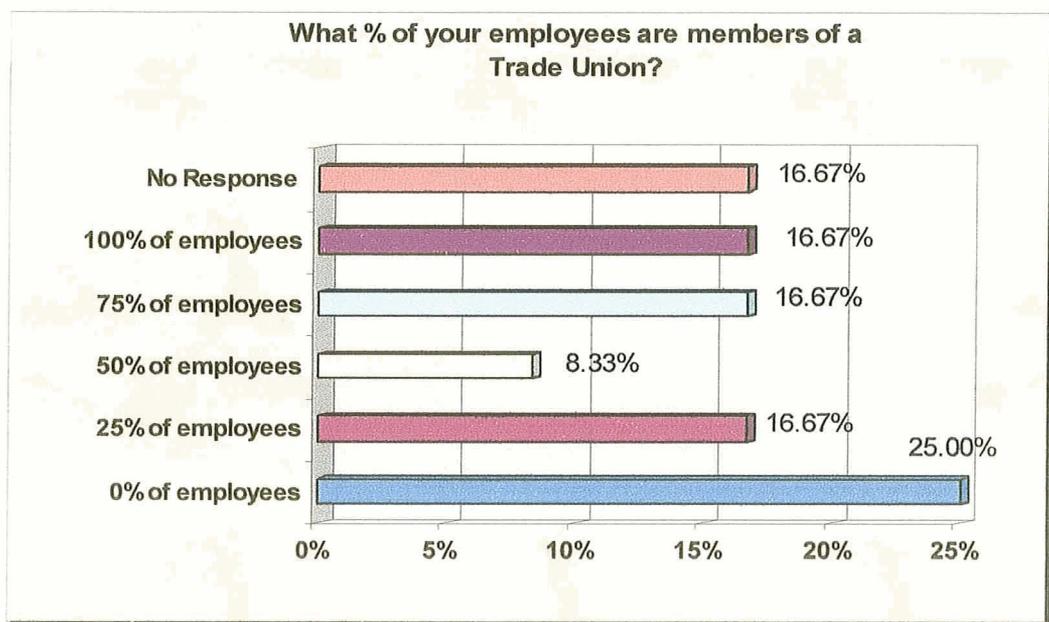
What % of your employees are members of a Trade Union?

Category	Value
No Response	16.67%
100% of employees	16.67%
75% of employees	16.67%
50% of employees	8.33%
25% of employees	16.67%
0% of employees	25.00%

Q. 6. If your company is unionised do you recognise Trade Unions for negotiating purposes?

If your company is unionised do you recognise Trade Unions for negotiating purposes?

Not Applicable
25%

No
0%

Yes
75%

The response to this question indicates, where applicable, 100% of companies recognise trade unions for negotiating purposes e.g. negotiating terms and conditions of employment.

3.3. Family Friendly Work Arrangements:

Q. 7. Do you currently operate any of the following family friendly work arrangements?

All of the companies surveyed reported having some form of family friendly work arrangements in place and analysis shows they offer more than one type of arrangement. Under 'other' additional arrangements such as paternity leave, compassionate leave, study leave, unpaid leave and marriage leave were included.

Do you currently operate any of the following family friendly work arrangements?

Arrangement	Percentage
Part-time work	83.33%
Job sharing	66.67%
Flexitime	66.67%
Term-time working	41.67%
Personalised working hours	58.33%
Emergency/special leave	91.67%
Working from home	50.00%
Career Breaks	66.67%
Childcare facilities	25.00%
Other	25.00%
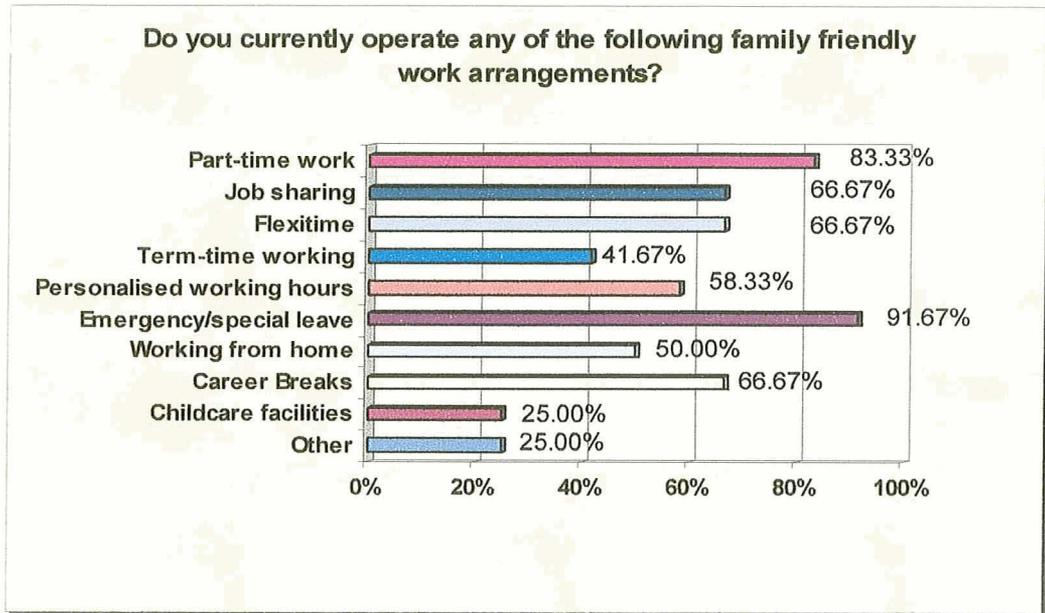
As the chart demonstrates, overall the most common forms of family friendly work arrangements are emergency/special leave, part-time work, followed by flexitime, job sharing and career breaks. Emergency/special leave is offered by 91.67% of the companies who responded, part-time work 83.33% and flexitime, job sharing and career breaks are provided by 66.67% of the companies. One of the semi-state companies provides each one of the above family friendly work arrangements and in 75% of the companies surveyed a minimum of five of the above family friendly work arrangements are available to staff.

The 91.67% findings for emergency/special leave could suggest that family friendly work arrangements are, in many cases, rather informal and based on individual needs as they arise in 'emergency' situations. However, with part-time and flexible working in place it is likely a more formal/standardised approach is taken.

An interesting point was made by two companies (one private sector and one semi-state) in their answer to this question regarding the terminology 'family friendly work arrangements'. One company stated they use the term 'flexible

working arrangements' as opposed to 'family friendly work arrangements' as they feel the latter could be deemed to be discriminatory by employees who do not have a family. The second company uses the term 'work life balance' for the same reason and the broader label also encompasses compassionate leave, employee assistance programmes, employee personal development programmes as well as a welfare scheme. These points will be considered in more detail in the conclusion.

Q. 7(b). Please indicate by gender the number of employees who avail of your company's family friendly initiatives.

Disappointingly the request for a breakdown by gender of the uptake of each arrangement was only supplied by 50% of the respondents and the responses received were somewhat incomplete. As a result it is difficult to try to determine the significance of trends under these headings. However, it is clear from the analysis below that women predominantly avail of these initiatives. It also shows that the larger companies in both the public and private sector (companies D & F) offer a greater range of family friendly work arrangements to their staff.

The chart overleaf also shows the percentage of staff taking up family friendly work arrangements in the private sector is low when compared to that of the public sector government department. The breakdown overleaf shows that approximately 32.96% of the female staff in the public sector avails of the part-time working arrangement available to them, while in comparison the highest uptake in the private sector is approximately 2.77% (company B). This finding could indicate that part-time work is more readily available to staff in the public sector than it is in the private sector.

The response from the voluntary sector company shows there is a relatively high uptake in female staff working part-time, with 6.89% of their female staff availing of this benefit.

Of the responses received the following is a breakdown by gender of the uptake of the family friendly work arrangements provided.

	Company A Private S.	Company B Private S.	Company C Voluntary S.	Company D Public S.	Company E Private S.	Company F Private S.
Total Number of employees	Female n/a Male n/a	Female 108 Male 206	Female 87 Male 74	Female 3,225 Male 1,517	Female 259 Male 325	Female 640 Male 603
Part-time work	10 Women 0 Men	3 Women 0 Men	6 Women 1 Man	1063 women 54 Men	2 Women 0 Men	10 Women 3 Men
Job sharing	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	Categorised as above.	2 Women 0 Men	4 Women 0 Men
Flexitime	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	All staff in H.Q.	3,600, gender breakdown not avail.	25 Women 19 Men	50 Women 50 Men
Term-time working	*Not supplied*	1 Woman 0 Men	*Not supplied*	367 Women 25 Men	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*
Personalised hours	3 Women 0 Men	1 Woman 8 Men	Adhoc	As flexitime above	*Not supplied*	50 Women 50 Men
Emergency leave	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	Mostly women	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	All staff are eligible.
Working from home	*Not supplied*	Occasionally for both.	1 (gender not specified)	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	10 Women 5 Men
Career Breaks	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	1 Women 5 Men	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	10 provided for both genders each year
Childcare facilities	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	20 provided for both genders each year
Other	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	Compassionate leave, study leave & marriage leave are also provided.	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*	*Not supplied*

Q. 7(c). Do you provide part-time work as a specific family friendly work arrangement?

Do you provide part-time work as a specific family friendly initiative?

No 50%   Yes 50%
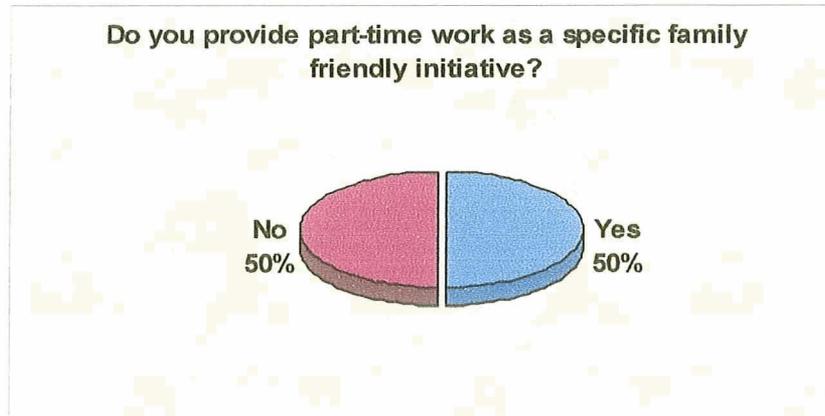
This question was asked in order to establish if part-time working was set up specifically as part of a family friendly work initiative or not. The result shows that 50% of companies do provide part-time work as a specific family friendly work arrangement.

Of the 50% 'yes' response, four companies are private sector, one is semi-state and one public sector. Of the 50% 'no' response three companies are private sector, one is semi-state, one public sector and one voluntary sector.

Q. 8. Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all employees?

Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all employees?

No
41.67%

Yes
58.33%
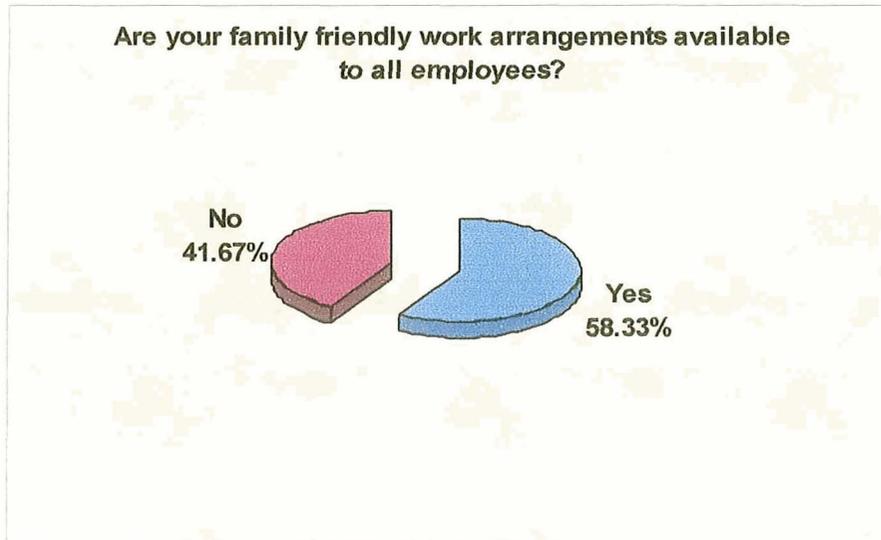
Question 8 was answered 'yes' by a number of companies with the clarification it was subject to management approval/meeting eligibility criteria. Four private sector companies offer family friendly work arrangements to all staff, as do one of the semi-state companies, one of the public sector companies as well as the voluntary sector company. This leaves the balance responding 'no' as one semi-state company, one public sector company and three private sector companies.

Q. 9. If 'no' what staff are they available to and why are they not available to all staff?

The respondents to this question stated that the particular business in which they operate is a factor in allowing staff to avail of their family friendly work arrangements or not, e.g. one manufacturing company replied 'part-time work, flexible and job sharing are only available to non manufacturing personnel as production scheduling could not be managed with erratic work schedules'.

While another company said their arrangements are only available to office based staff and not production based staff as plant and machinery must run 24 hours a day. These employees work on rotating shift cycles.

Other companies made comments like 'certain arrangements are only available to certain grades for operational reasons' and 'each initiative will only be available to employees on the following basis: (a) is the job compatible with the family friendly initiative being considered, (b) can the department function with the initiative'?

These comments make it clear that business needs and operational issues must be considered before agreeing to implement family friendly work initiatives.

Q. 10. Why did your company introduce family friendly work arrangements?

Why did your company introduce family friendly work arrangements?

Category	Value
Negotiated by union	33.33%
Suggested by employer	66.67%
Requested by employees	41.67%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
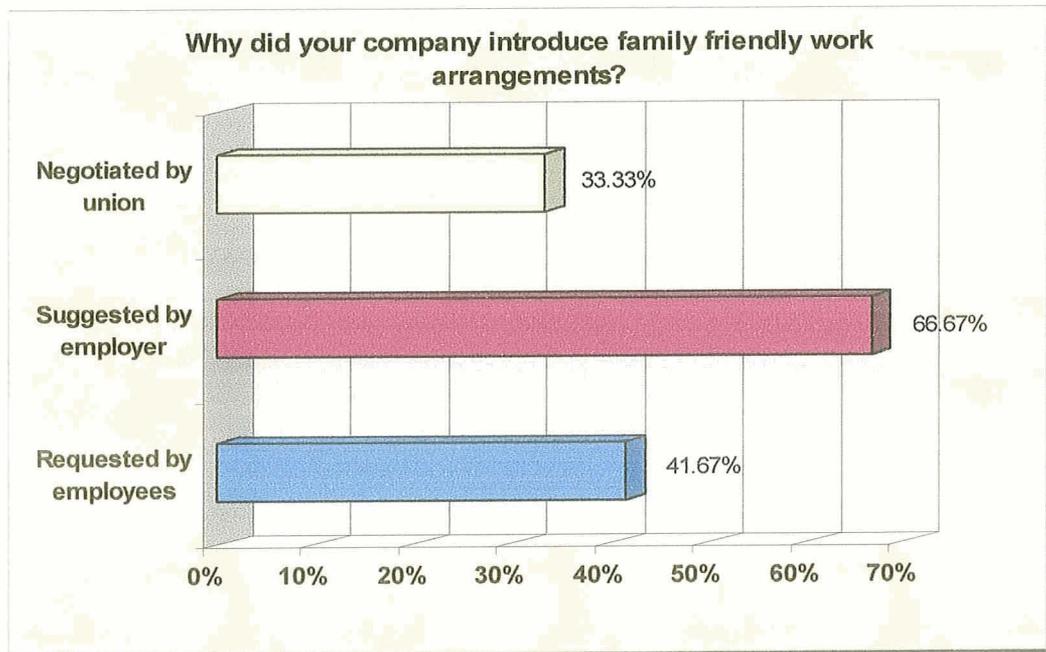
Family friendly work arrangements were introduced in the majority of cases as a result of being suggested by the employer. Again, the fact that 58% of respondents to this survey were private sector companies (with low union membership) this response rate is not surprising.

The two semi-state companies responded by saying their family friendly work arrangements were introduced as a result of all three of the above points, while one public sector company highlighted that terms and conditions of civil service employment are determined centrally by the Department of Finance and the unions negotiate regarding further developments of these terms and conditions.

Q. 10 (b) If you answered 'suggested by employer' please give your business reasons for introducing these arrangements.

Where respondents answered 'suggested by employer', they were requested to state their business reasons for introducing these arrangements and the following are some of the reasons put forward by various companies:

> ➤ To reduce high turnover of female staff and to reduce absenteeism.
> ➤ To ensure the smooth running of the organisation.
> ➤ The company felt it would be a progressive step to achieving best practice.
> ➤ In this area, in a predominantly female industry where good staff are hard to find and essential to keep, having a flexible approach to employment arrangements makes commercial sense.

The responses to this question highlight the desire of some companies to accommodate female staff in particular; this would suggest that family friendly work arrangements have been introduced by many companies because of the increased numbers of female staff. The point also backs up the statement quoted in the literature review taken from *Equality News, 1998* that 'when it comes to

sharing the caring of children, statistics published by Eurostat, show that, in all countries, working mothers look after children more than working fathers do'.

Q. 11. **How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?**

The response 'decisions made by management' was the most common form of ascertaining what family friendly work arrangements to introduce, with 50% of the companies favouring this method. Thirty three percent of the companies indicated that they use more than one system to determine what initiatives to introduce, while one of the semi state companies uses all four means in their decision making progress.

How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?

Category	Percentage
Negotiated with union	25.00%
Decisions made by management	50.00%
Negotiated on ad hoc basis	41.67%
Negotiated with staff representatives	16.67%
Other	16.67%
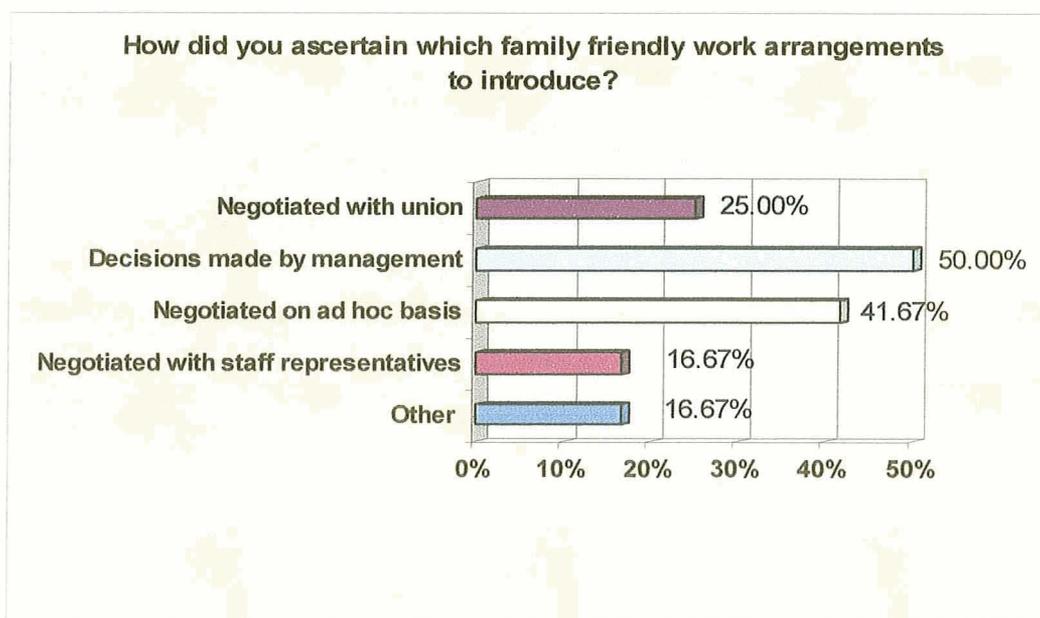
Only one of the companies who responded 'other' elaborated further. This company a private sector financial services company said 'in 1995/6 we set up round table discussions with groups of staff and discussed what they would like to see introduced. Line management and HR then decided on practical issues and went back to the staff/unions to finalise'.

Q. 12. Which of the following issues were drivers in your company's decision to introduce family friendly work arrangements?

The author sought to establish what the drivers were for companies in deciding to set up family friendly work arrangements. In addition to this she hoped to ascertain if the drivers had been measured by the company and if there were family friendly policies in place for each of these drivers.

Which of the following issues were drivers in your companys decision to introduce family friendly policies?

Driver	Percentage
Conflict with home demands	58.33%
Employee motivation	66.67%
Productivity	50.00%
Sickness absenteeism	25.00%
Non-return from maternity leave	25.00%
Retention of talent	75.00%
Recruitment calibre	16.67%
People unwilling to be promoted	0.00%
Other	16.67%
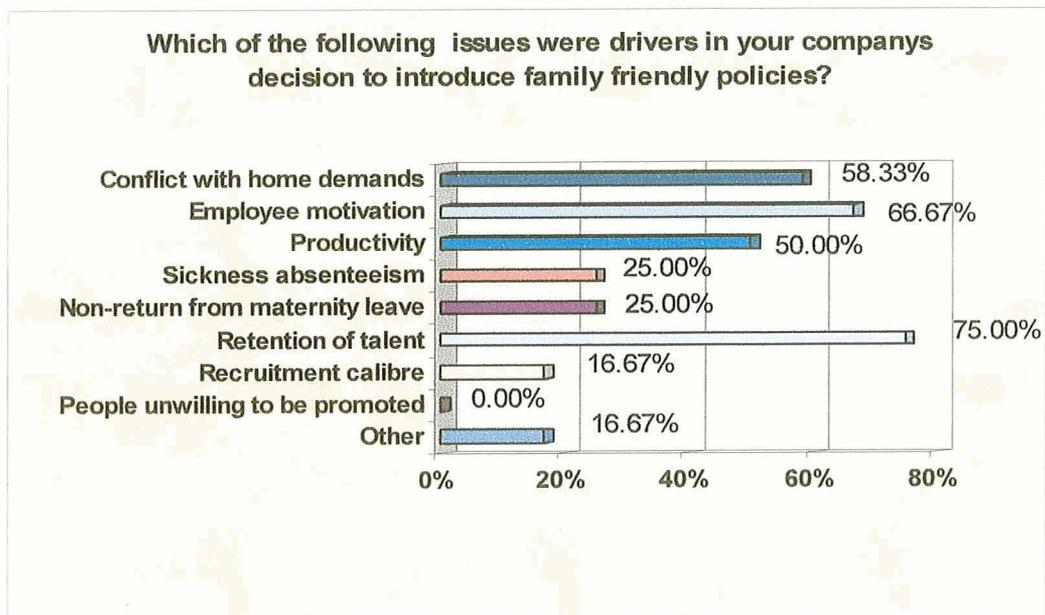
Retention of talent is the key driver for companies, with 75% of the companies surveyed citing this as their main motivation for providing family friendly work arrangements. Employee motivation, conflict with home demands and productivity are also strong drivers. Under 'other' the well being of staff and the importance of work-life balance in the company were also cited as reasons to provide flexible working arrangements.

Regretfully the response rate to the latter parts of the question was only 41.67%. However, a breakdown of responses to these sections (b) 'Which of the following

drivers have you measured'? & (c) 'Do you have family friendly related policies for each driver?' are outlined in the charts below. In response to section (b) retention of talent appears to be important as it is the driver most commonly measured at 33.33%, with sickness absenteeism following at 25%.

The responses to section (c) show that policies for these drivers are only in place in 25% of the companies who responded. There is a 16.67% 'yes' response rate for having a sickness absenteeism policy in place, with retention of talent and employee motivation both at 8.33%.

Q. 12 (b). Which of the following drivers have you measured?
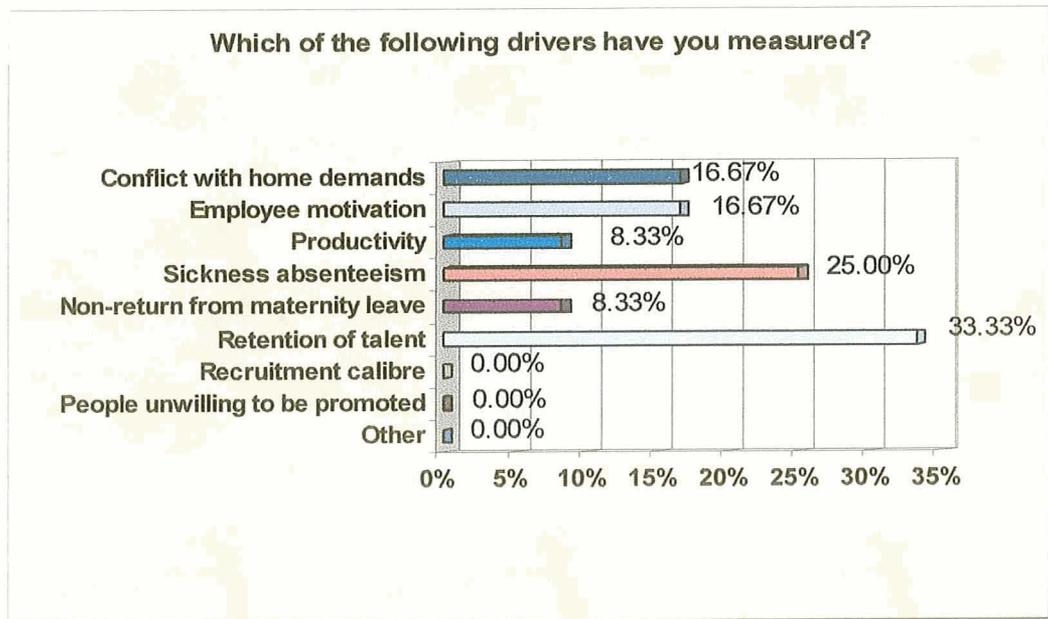
Which of the following drivers have you measured?

Q. 12. (c) Do you have family friendly related policies for each driver?

Do you have family friendly policies for each of the drivers?

Legend: Yes, No, No Response

X-axis categories: Other, People unwilling to be promoted, Recruitment calibre, Retention of talent, Non-return from maternity leave, Sickness absenteeism, Productivity, Employee motivation, Conflict with home demands

Y-axis values: 70%, 60%, 58.33%, 50%, 41.67%, 40%, 33.33%, 30%, 25.00%, 20%, 16.67%, 10%, 8.33%, 0%, 0.00%
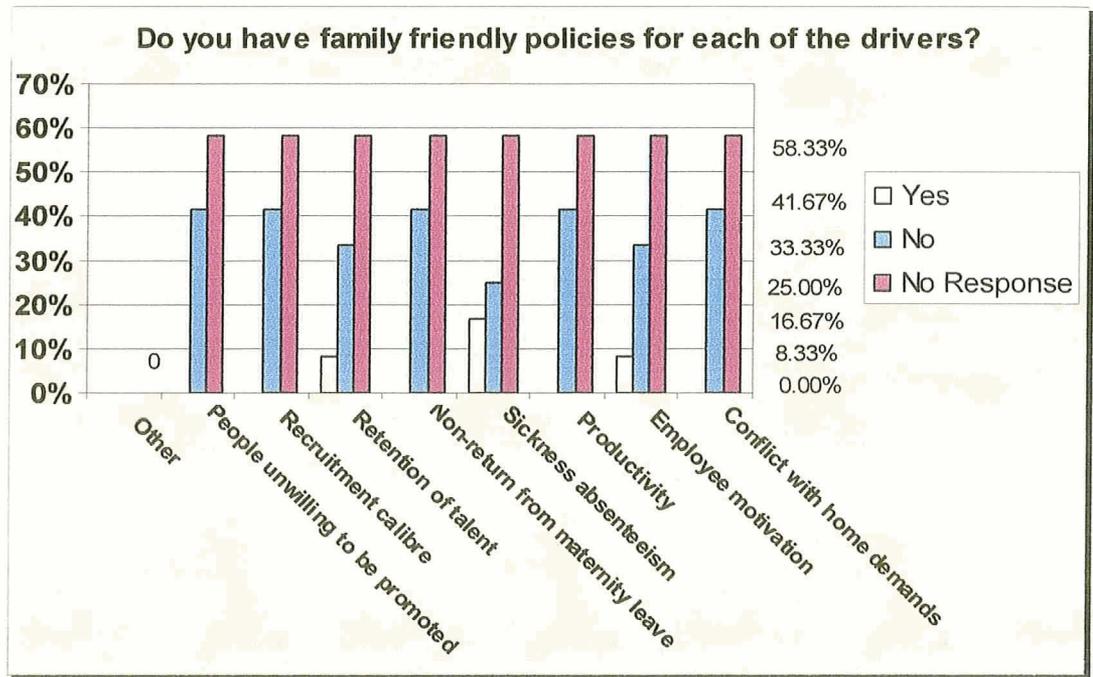
Q. 13. Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?

As the title suggests this thesis 'aims to establish the provision, range and benefits of family friendly work arrangements that exceed the statutory minimum'. In question 13 the author seeks to ascertain to what extent the employers of the companies surveyed have gone beyond their statutory obligations by enhancing statutory entitlements. Six of the twelve companies responded to this question – three of the companies were private sector, two were semi state and one was the voluntary sector company. All of the six enhance some of the statutory entitlements available to staff.

40

Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?

Maternity Leave	50.00%
Parental Leave	33.33%
Carers Leave	8.33%
Adoptive Leave	33.33%
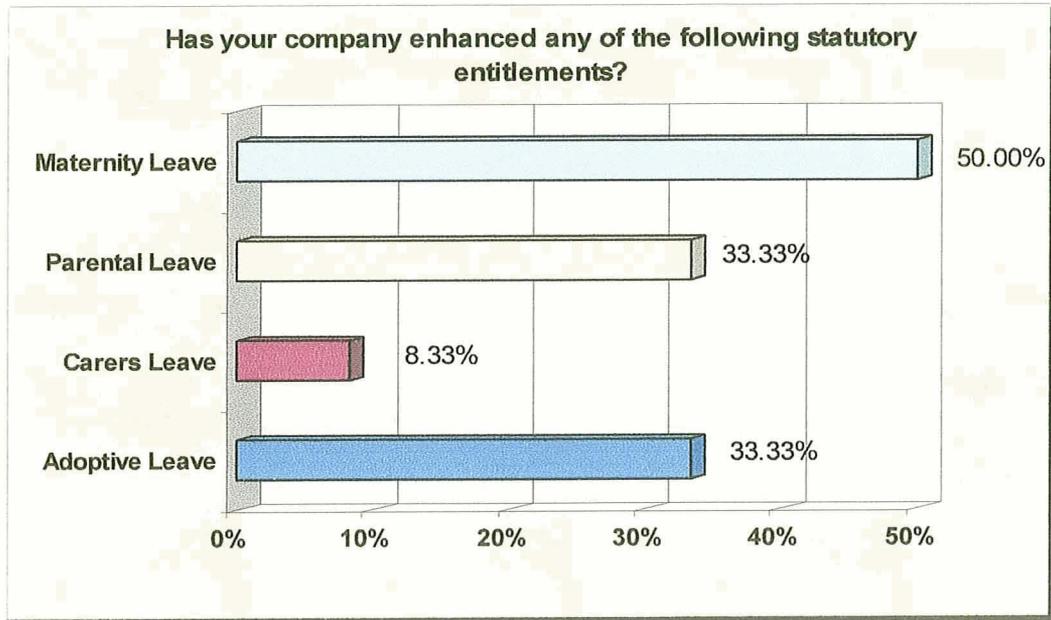
The findings show that maternity leave is the most commonly enhanced type of leave with 100% of the companies who responded 'topping up' this entitlement. The percentage of companies enhancing maternity leave could be construed as another indication that employers are trying to accommodate and retain female staff.

When requested to provide a brief explanation outlining their reasons for enhancing statutory entitlements, the following comments were made:

➢ We top up state maternity/adoptive pay to 100% of employees' salary once they are with the company for 3 years. We allow employees to take parental leave in 3 periods rather than the statutory 1 period of 14 weeks. We do this to reward employees for their length of service and to show our appreciation.

➢ We have enhanced the four statutory entitlements in order to offer staff additional flexibility. For maternity leave we offer staff a further 8 weeks unpaid leave, in addition to their statutory entitlements.

> We want to be recognised as the 'employer of choice' and we want to hold on to valuable employees.

> We provide fully paid maternity leave.

> Maternity leave enhanced – a practical decision made to suit individual circumstances.

Q. 14. What are your main reasons for not providing family friendly work arrangements?

This question is redundant for the purpose of analysis, as all the companies who participated in the survey operated some form of family friendly work arrangements. However, under this question, three companies (all private sector) did state that even though the company has family friendly work arrangements in operation they are difficult to operate given business demands and one further suggested they are too expensive for the business and it lacked information on this area.

3.4. Implementation of Family Friendly Work Arrangements:

Q. 15. **Does your company have formal family friendly policies or do they provide them on an informal basis?**

Does your company have formal family friendly policies or do they provide them on an informal basis?

Combination of both 25%

Informal policies 16.67%

Formal policies 58.33%
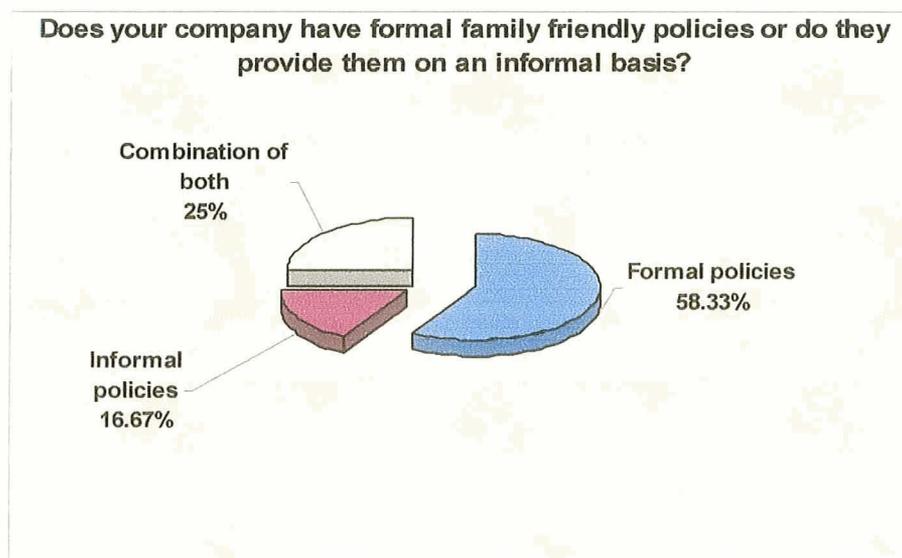
Some 58.33% of responding companies have put in place formal policies on family friendly work arrangements, with 16.67% operating their policies on an informal basis and 25% a combination of both.

The 58.33% response rate confirming formal policies are in place supports a point made in question 7 where the author suggests 'with part-time and flexible working in place it is likely a more formal/standardised approach is taken'.

It might have been interesting to examine this issue further to determine which aspects of family friendly work arrangements are based on formal policies (probably part-time working and flexitime) and which are based on informal policies (probably emergency/special leave in response to individuals' largely unanticipated needs).

Q. 16. How do you communicate your family friendly policies to your employees?
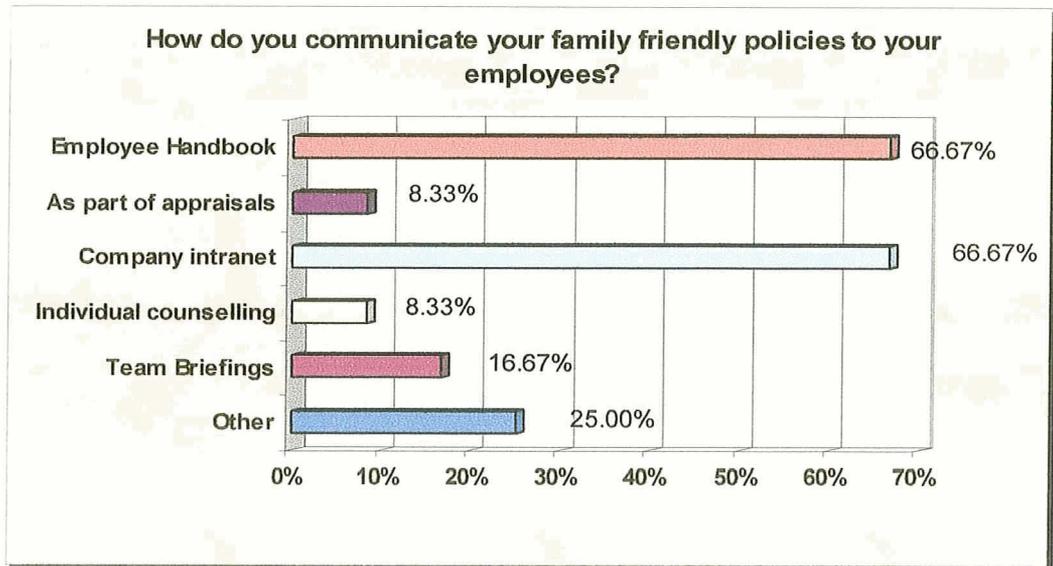
The responses to this question show that more than one method of communicating family friendly work arrangements is used by the companies surveyed. The most popular means of communicating policies to staff are the employee handbook and the company intranet with 66.67% of the companies using both means. The high usage of company intranet and employee handbooks for this purpose suggests a level of formality (written policies in place) with less of an ad-hoc approach being taken.

Under the response 'other' additional means were suggested e.g. circulars to staff, as part of induction courses and by email. The responses under 'other' also suggest formal policies are in place.

Q. 17. What are the main reasons employees give you for taking up family friendly work arrangements?

In all companies surveyed 'child care' was cited as the primary reason given by employees for availing of family friendly work arrangements, balancing work and personal life was cited as the second most frequent reason with care of

dependant following closely. The responses to this question endorse the point made in the literature review that the issue of childcare has been and continues to be a particularly critical issue in Ireland.

What are the main reasons employees give you for taking up family friendly work arrangements?

Reason	Percentage
To balance work and personal life	50%
Care of dependent	41.67%
Child-care	100%
Other	16.67%
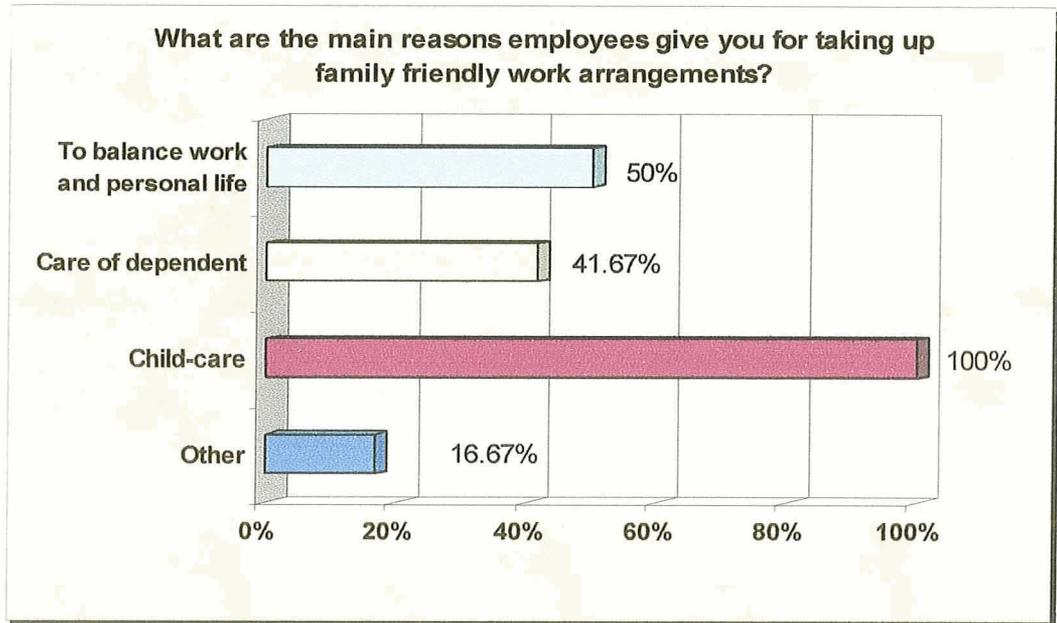
Additional suggested reasons highlighted under 'other' were; further education, travel and to take a break.

3.5. Family Friendly Work Arrangements, Benefits and Obstacles

Q. 18. What do you consider to be the main benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements?

When asked to consider the main benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements, 100% of the responding companies reported several benefits of implementing these arrangements and staff retention (at 83.33%) is clearly perceived to be the main benefit resulting from the introduction and availability of family friendly work arrangements.

National College of Ireland

What do you consider to be the main benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements?

Category	Percentage
Assists employee recruitment	33.33%
Improved 'ee/manage work relations	41.67%
Improved staff morale	58.33%
Reduces absenteeism	33.33%
Improved motivation/productivity	66.67%
Staff retention	83.33%
Other	0%
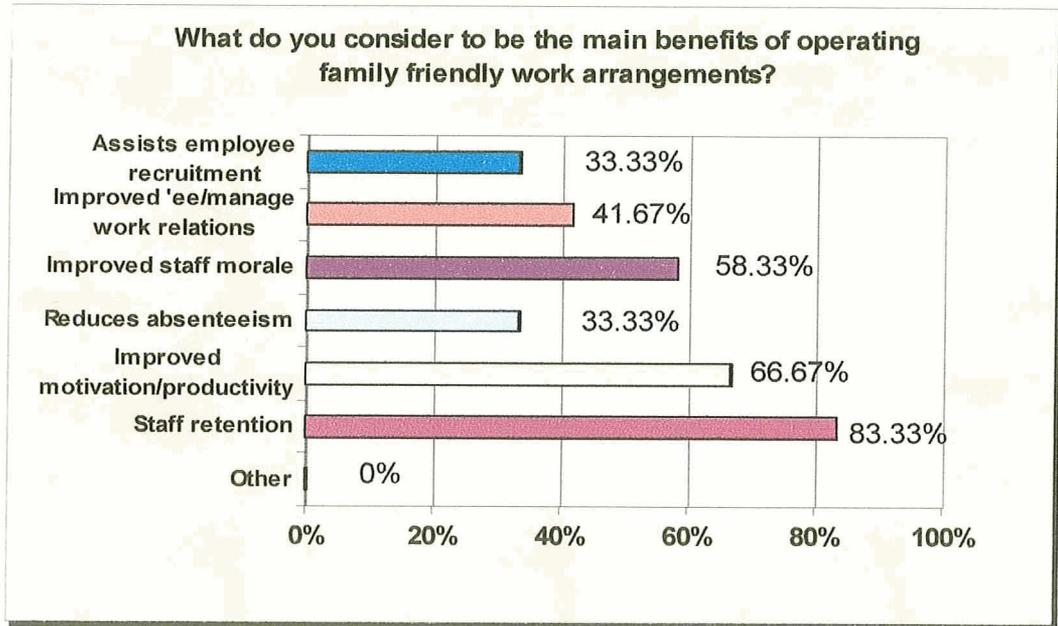
Improved motivation/productivity 66.77% was the second most common benefit with improved staff morale at 58.33%.

The responses to this question show that the benefits of operating such arrangements are clearly multi-faceted with one company summing it up by saying 'having this range of family friendly work arrangements assists the recruitment and retention of staff and also improves job satisfaction'.

Q. 19. Have you formally evaluated the operations and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements?

When asked if they had formally evaluated the operations and benefits of their family friendly work arrangements 66.67% of the companies answered 'no'. The author was keen to establish to what degree arrangements have been evaluated, because it was felt that formal evaluations would possibly depict a clearer analysis of the benefits/draw backs of family friendly work arrangements.

Have you formally evaluated the operations and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements ?

Yes, 33.33%

No, 66.67%
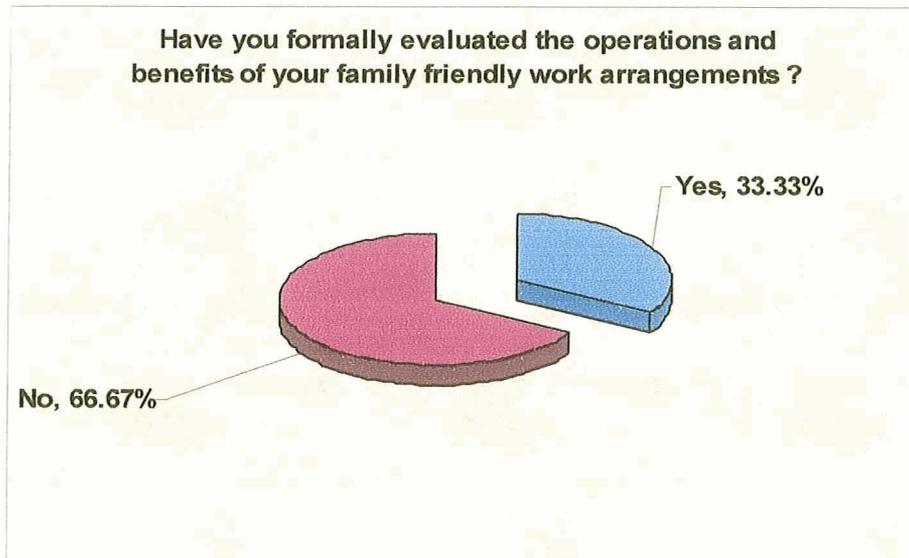
Q. 20. If 'yes' did this evaluation include feedback from employees?

As a follow on from question 19, question 20 sought to establish if the evaluation of the family friendly work arrangements included feedback from employees. One hundred percent of the companies who answered 'yes' to question 19 include feedback from employees as part of their evaluation.

Linking question 20 and question 21 below, 50% of the companies who have included feedback from employees as part of their evaluation process deemed their family friendly work arrangements to be very successful and the other 50% deemed them to be successful. From these percentages the author concludes it is very likely there is general satisfaction on the part of the employees consulted with the family friendly work arrangements provided.

Q. 21. Overall how would you rate the success of your family friendly work arrangements?

Quite significantly no company who responded rated their family friendly work arrangements "unsuccessful". Thirty three percent rated them "very successful" and 66.67% "successful". Of the 33.33% who rated them "very successful" 25%

47

were from the public sector, 25% from the private sector, 25%, from the semi-state sector and 25% from the voluntary sector.

Overall how would you rate the success of your family frienldy work arrangements?

Unsuccessful, 0.00%

Very successful, 33.33%
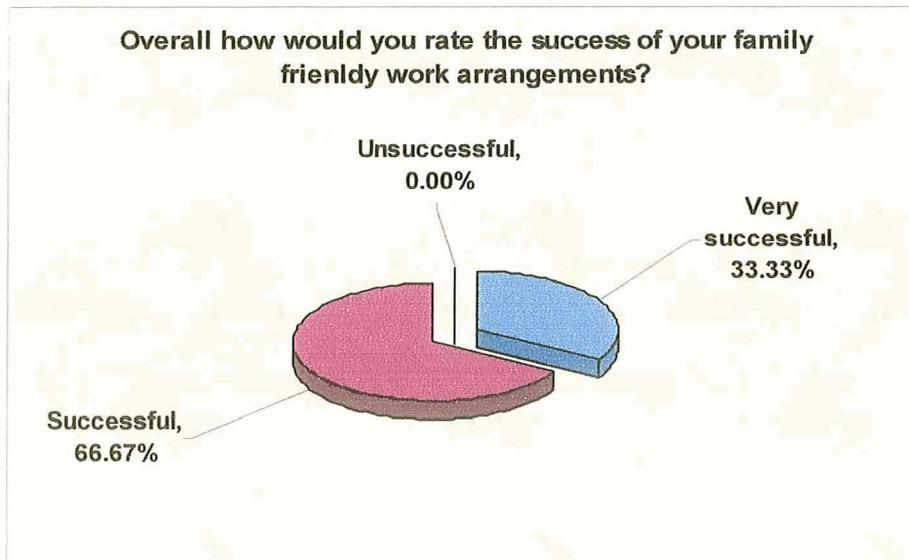
Successful, 66.67%

A number of comments were made by companies in response to this question. Some 16.66% of the companies suggested their arrangements were successful for those availing of them but for others who would like to avail of the arrangements but cannot be accommodated this is not very satisfactory.

Also, it was felt by one company that the arrangements were not in place long enough to evaluate fully if they are successful or not. Another company felt 'there are inconsistencies in the way employees have reacted to, and take benefit from, their initiatives. When it works well it is terrific but when abused it is a costly disaster'. The company in question said they have experienced both.

Q. 22. **If you have found that family friendly work arrangements have benefited your company would you encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements?**

The response to this question shows support for the operation of family friendly work arrangements, with 100% of the companies stating they would encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements.

Would you encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements?

No, 0%

Yes, 100%
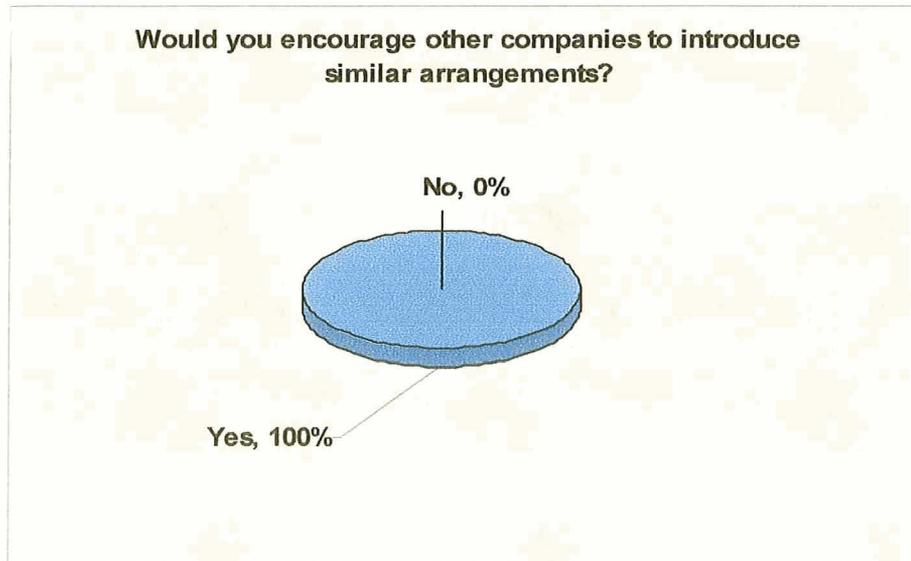
Endorsing their operation of family friendly work arrangements, one company stated 'it is a great retention strategy'.

Q. 23. What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family friendly work arrangements?

The two main perceived problems associated with family friendly work arrangements are 'open to abuse' at 41.67% and 'additional time demands on supervisors' also at 41.67%. Once again a number of companies cited they had experienced more than one problem.

Under 'other', companies stated reasons such as 'trying to get cover for staff has proven difficult in that trying to match skill sets for staff wishing to job share hasn't always worked out'. Also, one company had teething problems initially because most part-timers wanted to work in the morning but because of the nature of the business and public openings hours this wasn't possible.

National College of Ireland

What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family friendly work arrangements?

Category	Percentage
Difficult to operate	25.00%
Cost implications	16.67%
Additional time demands on supervisors	41.67%
Arrangements are open to abuse	41.67%
Other	16.67%
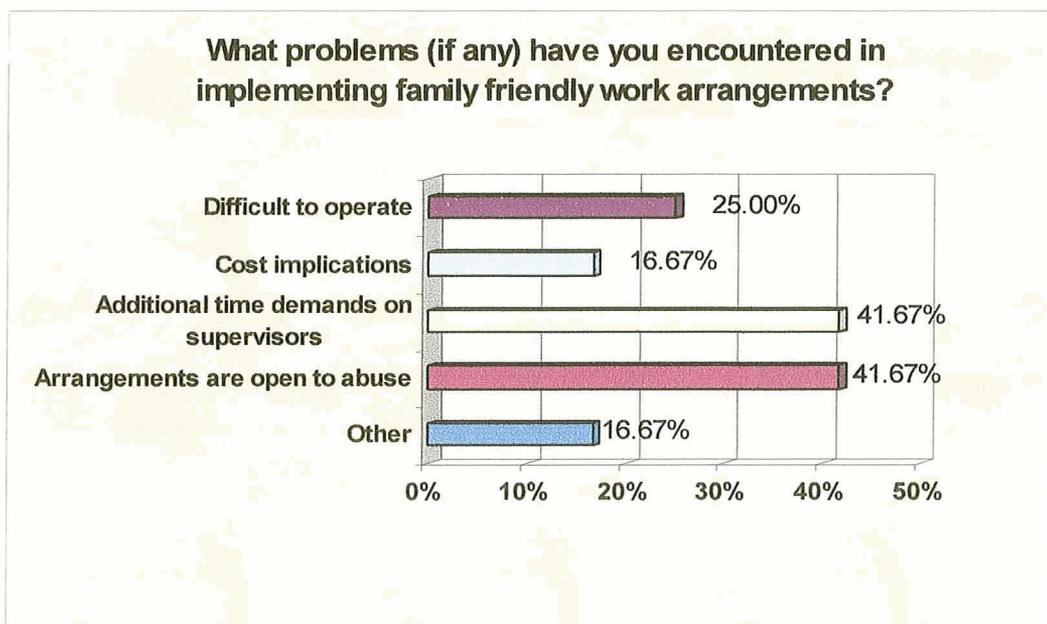
However, in spite of the problems or difficulties experienced by companies, as is apparent from the responses to question 21, every respondent indicated the arrangements were either successful or very successful.

Q. 24. What additional family friendly work arrangements (if any) do you plan to introduce in the future?

One of the larger private companies responded by saying they have nothing new in the pipeline, what they have in place they consider to be extensive and their public opening hours will not allow for any further benefits in this area.

A large semi-state employer stated they have recently introduced Life Balance Time, which gives people the option of taking 6 – 20 weeks special leave without pay but with the option of having salary adjusted/spread over the leave period.

Another private sector company stated they hope to put in place a childcare allowance and a more formal approach to working from home.

Q. 25. What other practices/arrangements, in an ideal world, would you like to see made available to your employees?

Some of the practices/arrangements suggested in response to this question were:

- Work from home where appropriate to do so. More flexibility with parental leave. Ability to build up additional time off for routine needs.
- Statutory child care support/arrangements.
- E-working available to all staff.
- Compressed working week.
- Term-time working.
- Flexitime
- Childcare, job sharing, home-working, increased paternity leave, paid parental leave. We need to address the issue of gender equality; the glass ceiling issue and the retention of women in the workforce and should be looking towards the Scandinavian model, and also Iceland's recent change in legislation around maternity leave.
- Commuting avoidance practices.
- Childcare facilities & greater potential for remote working.

Once again the issue of child-care arises with a number of companies.

Q. 26. **To what extent do you believe family friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?**

To what extent do you believe family friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?

Not at all,
8.33%

Significantly,
41.67%

Not significantly,
50%
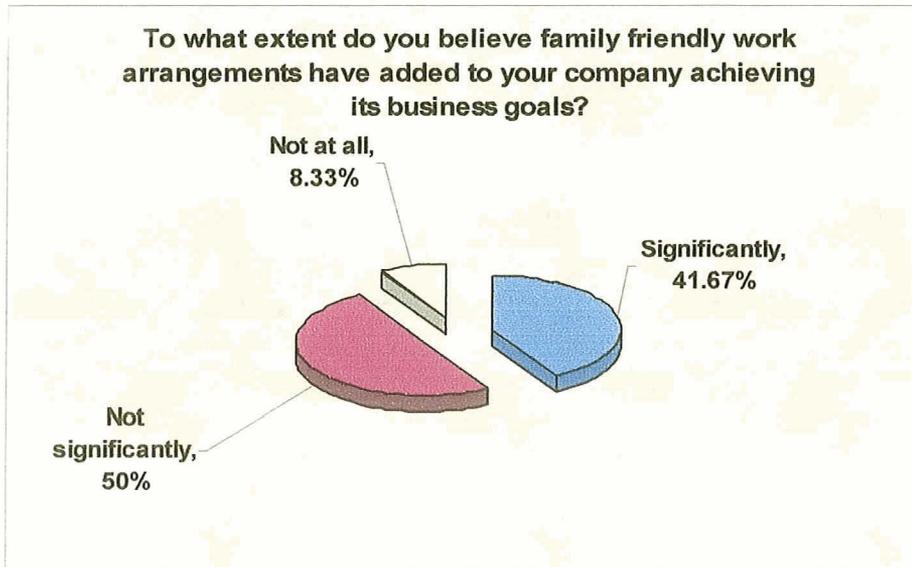
A total of 41.67% of respondents felt that the family friendly work arrangements they have put in place have added significantly to the organisation achieving their business goals. However, 50% feel these working arrangements have not had a significant effect.

Interestingly, the company who stated 'not at all' is the company who (from analysing their responses) has minimal family friendly work arrangements in place and do not appear to have any plans to improve employee entitlements in this area.

Chapter 4: Research Analysis: Follow-up Interviews

4.1. Introduction

On receipt of completed questionnaires, four follow up telephone interviews were carried out. One company was from the private sector (Company A), one from the semi-state sector (Company B), one from the public sector (Company C) and the fourth from the voluntary sector (Company D).

4.1.1. <u>Company A</u> is a financial services company with 16,000 employees and the following is a breakdown of staff numbers by gender and employment status.

Male (full-time)	3,870
Female (full-time)	9,300
Male (part-time)	130
Female (part-time)	2,700
Total	**16,000**

While I was unable to secure a breakdown of staff ages, the interviewee stated the staff was primarily between the 20 – 30 age bracket, with minimal staff in the 50-65 age cohort.

This company has a broad range of family friendly work arrangements which have been established for approximately ten years. They ascertained the type of family friendly work arrangements to implement by conducting a series of 'round table' discussions with groups of staff and unions.

Their main driver for doing so was the high attrition rate of female staff and their desire to retain talent. They felt the introduction of family friendly work arrangements would be a progressive step and it was their aspiration to commit to best practice in this area. As outlined above this company has a

predominantly female staff and the interviewee stated, without any hesitation, that the drive to implement family friendly work arrangements was influenced by this factor.

This company has rated the success of their flexible working arrangements as 'very successful' and staff members who have availed of them have been very satisfied. They have no plans to introduce any further initiatives as they feel what they have in place is extensive.

When asked about the problems they have encountered the interviewee states 'initially there were teething problems, in terms of skills matching and trying to get cover, however, as time has gone on these have been ironed out'. She also mentioned there are implications in terms of costs, but the retention of valuable staff is more important to them.

4.1.2. **Company B** is a semi-state, services company with 7,547 employees and the following is a breakdown of staff numbers by gender and employment status.

Male (full-time)	4959
Female (full-time)	950
Male (part-time)	1062
Female (part-time)	576
Total	**7547**

The following is the percentage breakdown of staff ages. As highlighted in the preceding findings the age profile of this company is older than that of Company A, with the highest percentage in the 50 – 65 age group.

20 - 30 years	14%
31 - 40 years	21%
41 - 50 years	30%
51 - 65 years	35%

National College of Ireland

This company offers staff all of the family friendly work arrangements that were outlined in the questionnaire, with the caveat that working from home is not generally available to all staff, a number of IT staff work from home and some managers work from home on the odd occasion. In addition to offering the family friendly work arrangements this company also offers further work life balance initiatives such as:

- ➢ Sports Club
- ➢ Health Care e.g. flu vaccinations
- ➢ Medical Provident Fund: Two health insurance schemes
- ➢ Credit Union
- ➢ Employee Assistance Programme
- ➢ Social Clubs
- ➢ Pension Fund

The interviewee stated that the company has benefited significantly from the introduction of family friendly work arrangements and that employee surveys consistently show satisfaction with their work life balance initiatives (their preferred term). As a result of these initiatives, the organisation is seen as a caring one where staff needs are met. As a result of what is offered to staff the staff turnover rate is minimal and they also use these benefits as a recruitment tool.

The interviewee also stated they consider themselves to be an 'employer of choice' and that staff appreciate what is done for them. Work life balance is both encouraged and promoted in the company.

4.1.3. Company C is a public sector government department and the following is a breakdown of their employees by gender and employment status. At this point the author would like to explain that this telephone interview was short and the

interviewee did not divulge any additional information to that received in the questionnaire.

Male (full-time)	1463
Female (full-time)	2162
Male (part-time)	54
Female (part-time)	1063
Total	**4742**

The following outlines the age profile of staff which is similar to that of Company B above.

20 - 30 years	12%
31 - 40 years	25%
41 - 50 years	34%
51 - 65 years	29%

The company offers six out of the nine family friendly work arrangements outlined in the questionnaire and has a high percentage of female staff working part-time.

Overall the company would rate their family friendly work arrangements as successful however, they would not consider the arrangements to have significantly added to the company's achievement of its business goals. Additional time demands on supervisors are stated as being the biggest problem this government department has in implementing family friendly initiatives and when asked if supervisors are trained to deal with these issues, the interviewee stated they follow set guidelines and are reminded on an ongoing basis that business needs are the priority and should be met.

4.1.4. <u>Company D</u> is a voluntary sector non-governmental organisation and below is a breakdown of staff by gender and employment status.

Male (full-time)	73
Female (full-time)	81
Male (part-time)	1
Female (part-time)	6
Total	**161**

Their age profile is broken down into the following:

20 - 30 years	21%
31 - 40 years	43%
41 - 50 years	26%
51 - 65 years	10%

In discussing their family friendly work arrangements with the interviewee, she stated that while the company has a number of options available to staff at present they are on an adhoc/informal basis. Work life balance is on their agenda though as they have a number of proposals ready to present to the Senior Management Team. These proposals are to do with childcare facilities and working from home on a larger scale.

The arrangements they have in place they consider to be very successful, however they do not believe these arrangements have added significantly to the organisation achieving its business goals.

National College of Ireland

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

It is evident that family friendly work arrangements/work life balance has acquired high prominence over the last decade and this is manifested in the legislation which has been enacted in recent years as well as the development of policies and practices in this area. However, while some progress has been made it is clear from this research that there is considerable scope for promoting greater uptake of these initiatives.

The fact that 100% of the companies who responded to the survey have some form of family friendly work arrangements in place, demonstrates that there has been a shift towards employers recognising the need to assist staff reconcile work with family commitments. The business reasons for this shift are numerous, with the main reason, as concluded from these findings, being to retain talent.

While organisations may incur additional costs in adopting policies to support work life balance, such costs could be outweighed by the gains in achieving strategic objectives. As outlined in the 'Introduction' the ultimate aim of this research is to assess to what extent the introduction of family friendly work arrangements has benefited the companies surveyed. One conclusion arising from the research is that family friendly work arrangements enhance employee satisfaction, increase productivity and motivation and improve staff morale. Furthermore, the perception of one of the semi-state companies surveyed is that their work life balance policies (which include family friendly work arrangements) have contributed to the organisation achieving competitive advantage and improved its reputation as an 'employer of choice'.

Some 50% of the companies who responded to the questionnaire highlighted a minimum of two benefits to having family friendly work arrangements in place, while the other 50% highlighted benefits ranging from three to six. The largest private

sector company and the largest semi-state company stated that they would consider their company to have benefited in all six areas.

As is demonstrated from some of the responses to the survey, there is a need to move from family friendly work arrangements to the broader concept of better work-life balance for all. Organisations need to change from trying to create an environment supportive of work and family to one that is more inclusive of all staff e.g. work life balance or flexible working arrangements. Placing all the emphasis on the problems faced by people with young children is too narrow a focus and as suggested by two companies participating in this survey, can alienate other employees.

Also, organisations need to recognise that work/family is an issue for men as well as women. While responses to the question requesting a breakdown by gender of the uptake were disappointingly low, the findings do show a gender bias in the uptake of family friendly work arrangements, with female staff predominantly availing of them. If policies are to be truly family friendly the key objectives of these policies must address enabling people to fulfil family as well as work demands, by promoting gender equity and the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.

Support from managers is also crucial for the success of any modifications to normal work practices. Family friendly work arrangements have to be driven from the top and become a core strategic issue if they are to succeed. A change in the culture or attitude in organisations is also essential, allowing it to become acceptable to take time off or work reduced hours while dispelling the idea that taking advantage of family friendly work arrangements could limit your career.

The research study revealed that smaller private sector and voluntary sector companies do not appear to provide the same range of benefits as the larger public/semi-state sector companies, possibly because of more limited resources. The top three providers of family friendly work arrangements in this survey are a large

private sector company, a large semi-state sector company and a large public sector company. However, as the research shows many of the employers across the sectors appear to have recognised the potential business benefits of family friendly work arrangements and their positive assessment of such arrangements is an encouraging example for others.

The study also uncovered that 100% of the companies who responded cited 'childcare' as the main reason given by employees for taking up family friendly work arrangements. This is a very significant response rate and highlights the point made earlier, that childcare has been and continues to be a critical issue in Ireland in this whole debate and one that possibly requires more decisive government intervention.

Another conclusion arising from the research is the fact that family friendly work arrangements have been deemed either 'successful' or 'very successful' by all the respondents. No company who responded rated their family friendly work arrangements "unsuccessful". This is a notable finding and one that should be encouraging for organisations who are considering implementing family friendly work arrangements. That said, only 41.67% of the companies who responded to the questionnaire feel that family friendly work arrangements have significantly added to the organisation achieving their business goals. This could be seen as a disincentive to introduce such arrangements; with organisations wondering what is to be gained from their introduction.

On an associated issue the two main perceived problems linked with operating family friendly work arrangements are 'open to abuse' at 41.67% and 'additional time demands on supervisors' also at 41.67%. The formulation of policies and the training of managers/supervisors on this matter are two possible means of overcoming these challenges.

Looking to the future a number of the respondents outlined their desire to increase the range of family friendly work arrangements available to staff, with initiatives such as working from home, compressed working week and childcare supports being considered. This demonstrates a degree of commitment by the companies surveyed to expand on what already exists. However, the top two providers stated what they have in place is extensive and the organisations have no plans, at present, to introduce any further related benefits.

Also, as outlined in the findings 100% of the companies surveyed stated they would encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements; this is quite an endorsement for operating family friendly work arrangements.

Finally, family friendly work arrangements and other work life balance practices are now becoming the norm in our workplaces, spreading out from larger private sector companies and public/semi-state companies. The key issue is how to implement and operate those policies in practice, to create a positive and supportive culture, and to deliver the potential benefits they offer both in terms of competitive performance and employee well-being.

Recommendations:

The author does not feel it is necessary to put forward recommendations for the semi-state, public sector or large private sector companies because what they have in place is extensive and the uptake is high. However, having regard to the analysis undertaken and based on the research findings the following recommendations are put forward for the small private and voluntary sector companies as well as organisations considering the implementation of family friendly work arrangements.

Employers should:

I. Examine the business cases for the implementation of family friendly work arrangements, study their implementation in other companies and implement where feasible.

II. Carry out discussions/meetings with staff associations/employees to establish the type of family friendly work arrangements desired by the employees.

III. Run a pilot project at the initial stages to establish good operational practices.

IV. Provide appropriate training for managers and supervisors in order to ensure the smooth running of the arrangements.

V. Communicate policies and procedures via intranet, employee handbook etc.; ensure employees are fully aware of their statutory entitlements as well as the additional family friendly work arrangements.

VI. Include information on family friendly work arrangements on induction and development programmes.

VII. Ensure gender balance in the uptake of family friendly work arrangements by promoting/demonstrating from top management down the acceptability of choosing to work flexible hours.

VIII. Monitor, evaluate and amend arrangements where necessary.

IX. Continually liaise with other organisations/employer bodies to ensure best practice in this area.

REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Coffey, A & Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. California: Sage

Cox, P. 2005, *Managing Disability in the Workplace: An enquiry into whether the reality as perceived by employees with disabilities, measures up to the anti discrimination rhetoric of existing Equality and HRM policies in the Department of Social and Family Affairs?* MBA thesis, Coventry University.

Cromptom, R & Le Feuvre, N. (2000) *'Gender, family and employment in comparative perspective: the realities and representations of equal opportunities in Britain and France'*. Journal of European and Social Policy, Vol. 10, No. 4

Drew, E., Humphreys, P. and Murphy, C. (2003) *Off the Treadmill: Achieving Work/Life Balance*, National Framework Committee for Family Friendly Policies.

Employment Equality Agency (1997), Annual Report, Dublin: EEA.

Employment Equality Agency (1998), *'Attitudes to Work and Family'*, Equality News, Number 13, Spring, p.15.

Evans J M. (2001), Firms' *Contribution to the Reconciliation between Work and Family Life*. OECD Occasional Papers No. 48. Labour Market and Social Policy Papers, No. 48. OECD, Paris.

Fine-Davis, Fagnini, Giovannini, Hojgaard and Clarke, 2002. *Fathers and Mothers: Dilemmas of the Work-Life Balance*. Dublin: University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Fisher, H. 2000. *Investing in People: Family Friendly Working Arrangements in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Ireland*. Equality Authority, Dublin

Gunnigle, P. (1999). *The Irish Employee Recruitment Handbook*. Dublin Oak Tree Press.

Guide to Labour Law, 2005: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Humphreys. P., Fleming, S., and O'Donnell. O., (2000), *Flexible Working in the Public Service*, Committee for Public Management Research. Report No.3, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin.

Kiernan, K. (1992). The *Roles of Men and Women in Tomorrow's Europe*. Employment Gazette, October 1992. 491 – 499.

Kirton, G & Greene, A.M. (2000) 'The Dynamics of Managing Diversity: A Critical Approach'. Butterworth Heinemann, p 240-43.

Lewis and Lewis, 1996. The Work-Family Challenge: Rethinking Employment. London: Sage

Miles, R.E. and Snow, C.C. (1984) 'Designing Strategic Human Resources Systems', Organisational Dynamics (Summer): 36-52.

National Development Plan (2001). ICTU Statement in National Framework Committee for Family Friendly Policies: - "An Introduction to Family Friendly Working Arrangements" Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, National Development Plan. Dublin: Stationery Office.

O'Connell, P.J. & Russell, H. (2005) 'Equality at Work? Workplace Equality Policies, Flexible Working Arrangements and the Quality of Work', Dublin: ERSI

OECD (1999) Employment Outlook. Paris: OECD.

Gary Cooper, (December 2005). 'Another Year Down' pages 36 & 37. People Management,

People Management, September 2005

Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, (2000), Stationary Office, Dublin

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. Thornhill, A. (2003) Research Methods for Business Students 2nd Edition, Prentice Hall: Financial Times.

Sexton, J.J., Hughes, G. and Finn, C. (2002). Occupational Employment Forecasts 2015. FAS/ERSI Manpower Forecasting Studies, Report No. 10. Dublin: ERSI

Silverman, D. (2000) Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook. London: Sage.

Websites Consulted:

www.oecd.org

www.worklifebalance.ie

www.ibec.ie

www.cipd.co.uk/default.cipd

www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

www.oecd.org

www.workliferesearch.org

www.flexibleworking.co.uk

www.ictu.ie

www.entemp.ie

National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland

APPENDIX 1 – COVERING LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:

Dear

Further to our recent telephone conversation please find enclosed a copy of my questionnaire. I would be grateful if you would complete and return the questionnaire to me by Friday 2nd June, 2006. I have enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience.

As discussed with you I am currently undertaking a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management. The questionnaire forms part of my thesis which is titled 'Family Friendly Work Arrangements: An inquiry into the provision, range and benefits of family friendly work arrangements that exceed the statutory minimum and which aim to assist employees to merge employment with their personal life (within public, private, semi-state & voluntary sector companies).

If you have company literature or policies on your family friendly work arrangements which you feel might augment the information provided in the questionnaire, please enclose same. Your responses and any additional literature provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If you require clarification or further information you can contact me at either of the phone numbers provided below or by email. Your co-operation in completing and returning the questionnaire is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

_____

Mary Conway

National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland

| Family Friendly Work Arrangements Questionnaire |

Section 1 – Organisation Profile

Company Name: _____

1. Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in? (Please √)

Manufacturing ☐

Services ☐

IT ☐

Distribution ☐

Retail ☐
Other (please specify) _____

2. Which of the following sectors does your company belong to? (Please √)

Private Sector ☐   Semi-state Sector ☐   Public Sector ☐

Voluntary Sector ☐   Other ☐ (please specify _____)

3. How many people do you employ?
1 – 100 ☐   101 – 300 ☐   301 – 500 ☐   501 – 700 ☐   701– ☐

Male (full-time) _____   Male (part-time) _____

Female (full-time) _____   Female (part-time) _____

4. What percentage of your employees are aged between

20 – 30 years _____
31 – 40 years _____
41 – 50 years _____
51 – 65 years _____

5. What percentage of your employees are members of a trade union?

      0% of employees'   □

     25% of employees'   □

     50% of employees'   □

     75% of employees'   □

   100% of employees'   □

---

6. If your company is unionised do you recognise Trade Unions for negotiating purposes?

Yes □   No □

Section 2 – Family Friendly Work Arrangements

---

7. Do you currently operate any of the following family-friendly work arrangements? If yes, please indicate the number of employees who avail of these arrangements, then move on to question 8. If no, please move to question 14.

	Yes	Number of women	Number of men
a) Part-time work*	_____	_____	_____
b) Job sharing	_____	_____	_____
c) Flexitime	_____	_____	_____
d) Term-time working	_____	_____	_____
e) Personalised working hours (flexible start & finish times)	_____	_____	_____
f) Emergency/special leave	_____	_____	_____
g) Working from home	_____	_____	_____
h) Career breaks	_____	_____	_____
i) Childcare facilities	_____	_____	_____
j) Other (please describe)	_____	_____	_____

* Do you provide part-time work as a specific family-family initiative?

  Yes □   No □

---

8. Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all employees?

  Yes □   No □

---

9. If 'no' what employees are they available to and why are they not available to all staff?

_____

_____

_____

10. Why did your company introduce family-friendly work arrangements?

Requested by employees   ☐

Suggested by employer   ☐

Negotiated by union   ☐

If you answered 'suggested by employer' please give your business reasons for introducing these arrangements.

_____

_____

11. How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?

Negotiated with union	☐
Decisions made by management	☐
Negotiated on an ad-hoc basis with staff member	☐
Negotiated with staff representatives	☐
Other	☐

12. Which of the following issues were drivers in your company's decision to introduce family friendly work arrangements?
Did you measure them?
Do you have family-friendly related policies for each of them?

	Important Yes/No	Measured Yes/No	Have policy Yes/No
Conflict with home demands			
Employee motivation			
Productivity			
Sickness absenteeism			
Non-return from maternity leave			
Retention of talent			
Recruitment calibre			
People unwilling to be promoted			
Other			

13. Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?
(When your complete this question please move to question 15).

Maternity Leave	Yes ☐	No ☐
Parental Leave	Yes ☐	No ☐
Carers Leave	Yes ☐	No ☐
Adoptive Leave	Yes ☐	No ☐

If 'yes' please provide a brief explanation, outlining your reasons for doing so:

_____

14. What are your main reasons for **not** providing family-friendly work arrangements?
(When you complete this question please move to question 27).

Lack of information on this area   ☐

No request from employees or unions to provide them   ☐

Too difficult to operate given business demands   ☐

Too expensive for the business   ☐
Other (please provide short explanation)

_____

Section 3 – Implementation of Family- Friendly Work Arrangements

15. Does your company have formal policies on family-friendly work arrangements or do they provide them on an informal basis?

Formal policies [ ]   Informal policies [ ]   Combination of both [ ]

16. How do you communicate your family-friendly policies to employees? (Please √ all that apply)

Employee handbook	☐
As part of appraisals	☐
Company intranet	☐
Individual counselling	☐
Team briefings	☐
Other _____	☐

17. What are the main reasons that employees give you for taking up the family-friendly work arrangements?

   To balance work and personal life   ☐

   Care of dependent   ☐

   Child-care   ☐

   Other (if other, please give reasons)_____

   _____

Section 4 – Family Friendly Arrangements, Benefits and Obstacles

18. What do you consider to be the main business benefits of operating family-friendly work arrangements?

   Assists employee recruitment   ☐

   Improved employee/management work relations   ☐

   Improved staff morale   ☐

   Reduces absenteeism   ☐

   Improved motivation/productivity   ☐

   Staff retention   ☐

   Other (please provide a brief explanation)   _____

19. Have you formally evaluated the operation and benefits of your family-friendly work arrangements?

   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

20. If 'yes' did this evaluation include feedback from employees?

   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

21. Overall, how would you rate the success of your family-friendly work arrangements?

    Very successful   □

    Successful   □

    Unsuccessful   □

    Please provide a brief explanation for your rating:_____

    _____

22. If you have found that family-friendly work arrangements are of benefit to your organisation, would you encourage other employers to introduce similar arrangements?

    Yes   □   No   □

23. What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family-friendly work arrangements?

    Difficult to operate   □

    Cost implications   □

    Additional time demands on supervisors'   □

    Arrangements are open to abuse   □
    Other (please provide a short explanation) _____

    _____

24. What additional family-friendly work arrangements (if any) do you plan to introduce in the future?

    _____

    _____

25. What other practices/arrangements, in an ideal world, would you like to see made available to your employees?

    a) _____

    b) _____

    c) _____

26. To what extent do you believe family-friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?

Significantly   □

Not significantly   □

Not at all   □

---

27. If required would you be willing to discuss your responses in more detail by phone?

Yes   □

No   □

If yes, please provide:

Name of person to be contacted: _____

Contact phone number: _____

The information in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire.

National College of Ireland

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF THE FAMILY FRIENDLY WORK
ARRANGEMENTS WHICH FORM PART OF THE SURVEY

Summary of the Family Friendly Work Arrangements which form part of the survey

Part-time Work:

Part-time work is where the employee holds a regular job but works less than full time hours on a standard ongoing basis. The hours of work are arranged to suit both employers and employees.

The EU Directive on part-time work defines a part-time worker as 'an employee whose hours of work when calculated over a period of months or a year are less than those of a comparable full-time worker'. Under the Directive all employees working on a part-time basis are entitled to maintain continuity of employment and accrue leave and other benefits on a pro-rata basis.

Job Sharing:

This is an arrangement where two employees share one full time position and divide equally the duties and responsibilities of the job. The arrangement can operate in a variety of ways, e.g.

- ➤ The employees split the working day
- ➤ The employees split the week
- ➤ One employee works 2 days per week, the other 3 days per week and vice versa for the following week.

Flexitime:

The employee works on a full-time basis but the company provides flexibility with starting and finishing times. There are core times when all employees must be present, apart from authorized absence. The flexible times are those periods during which the employee's starting and finishing times may be varied, subject to the demands of the job. The hours worked during these periods are credited to the employee's total hours.

Flexitime enables employees to plan caring responsibilities, travel arrangements and other aspects of life around their work.

Term-time working:

Term-time working is an arrangement whereby employees are allowed to take unpaid leave of absence during their child's school holidays.

Personalised working hours (flexible start & finish times):
There is a range of options for enabling employees to adjust or personalise their working hours in a manner that suits both the employer and the employee. A number of the most commonly operated arrangements include:

> **Annualised hours**: The employee works the same number of hours over a full year as a full or part-time employee but the hours are arranged to suit both the employer and the employee. The weekly hour's contract is replaced by one that covers working hours for the whole year. Working time is calculated on an annual or (in some organisations on a monthly) rather than a weekly basis and hours must be worked within a defined period of time.

> **Compressed work week**: This involves the employee working the full number of weekly hours in a reduced number of days per week.

Emergency/special leave:

This provides employees with time off to deal with emergency situations. The time given depends on the nature of the crisis. It is important to note that employees have emergency leave entitlements for specific situations under the *force majeure* provisions of the Parental Leave Act, 1998.

Working from home:

This is distinct from teleworking in that the work done at home may not necessarily involve the use of information or communications technology. Depending on the type of work involved, the employee may combine working from home with part-time work on the employer's premises or simply work at home for the duration of a particular project.

Career breaks:

An employment of career break is a period of unpaid leave granted by an employer for a specific duration, usually for between one and five years. The Institute of Personnel and Development has adopted the term employment break rather than career break which it says is 'usually associated with professionally qualified women and their child-care needs'. Employment breaks may be taken by an employee for a range of reasons including:

> Further education
> Voluntary work
> Travel
> Care of children or family member
> Personal needs.

Childcare facilities:

This can mean the provision of childcare facilities on the company site, the purchase of child-care places in local crèches or the subsidising of childcare costs.

(*Source*: Investing in People, by Hugh Fisher)

National College of Ireland

APPENDIX 3 – COMMENTS

Additional comments made by the respondents of the questionnaire were as follows:-

Q. 5. What percentage of your employees are members of a trade union?
➤ This information is not available to us. Under the Data Protection Act we cannot ask payroll to give us statistics on the number of staff members paying union membership. However, the industry average is 30% – 35% and we feel our company is probably representative of that.

Q. 7. Do you currently operate any of the following family-friendly work arrangements? Part-time work, job sharing, flexitime, term-time working, personalised working Hours, emergency/special leave, working from home, career breaks, childcare facilities, other.
➤ We use the term flexible working options we feel that family friendly work arrangements could be considered to be discriminatory by staff members who don't have a family.
➤ Our company has work-life balance arrangements rather than family-friendly work arrangements. These arrangements also include compassionate leave, employee assistance programme, employee personal development programme and the welfare scheme.
➤ Other – Paternity leave.
➤ Working from home is not generally available to all staff, a number of IT staff work from home – some managers work from home on the odd occasion.
➤ Personalised hours – ad hoc, may apply to various people depending on their circumstances. Working from home – one person formally, however, many work 1 -2 days a week from home, due to open plan office and lots of distraction for reading/writing reports etc – this is more job associated than gender associated. Other – Health & Safety leave, compassionate leave, exam/study leave, marriage leave, unpaid leave.

Q. 9. If your family friendly work arrangements are not available to all staff, why not?
➤ Part-time work, flexible & job sharing in only available to non manufacturing personnel as we could not manage production scheduling with erratic work patterns.
➤ Certain arrangements are only available to certain grades for operational reasons.
➤ Available only to office based staff. Not available to production based staff as plant and machinery must run 24 hours a day. These employees work on rotating shift cycles.
➤ Work-sharing and term time are available up to Principal Officer level. Flexitime is available to Higher Executive Officer. Work-sharing and term time are granted at the discretion of local management, considering the business needs of the area.
➤ Flexitime does not apply to 2 receptionists as job dictates it is set hours position.

National College of Ireland

1

➢ Each initiative will only be available to people on the following basis: 1. is the job compatible with the family friendly initiative being considered? 2. Can the department function with the initiative?

Q. 10. If you answered 'suggested by employer' please give your business reasons for introducing these arrangements.

➢ We conduct a yearly review of our benefits for employees in an effort to remain competitive. It is in this process we identify any amendments to, or the introduction of new benefits.

➢ We felt it would be a progressive step to achieving best practice in this area.

➢ To reduce the high turnover of female staff & to reduce absenteeism

➢ In times of surplus staff it was a way of managing costs.

➢ To ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

➢ Terms and conditions of civil service employment are determined centrally by the Department of Finance. Unions negotiate regarding further developments of these terms and conditions.

➢ In a predominantly female industry where good staff are hard to find and essential to keep, having a flexible approach to employment arrangements makes commercial sense.

➢ To meet personal needs of staff members through work life balance.

Q. 11. How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?

➢ In 1995/6 we set up round table discussions with groups of staff and discussed what they would like to see introduced. Line management and HR then decided on practical issues and went back to the staff/unions to finalise.

Q. 12. Which of the following issues were drivers in your company's decision to introduce family friendly work arrangements?

➢ The two biggest issues for our company were conflict with home demands and retention of talent. We were losing valuable female staff who needed more flexible working arrangements. We were conscious of the numbers of valuable married women who for family reason could not continue the normal working hours, so where we could we accommodated them.

➢ Other driver – well being of staff.

➢ Work life balance is important to people in this company.

Q. 13. Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements? 1. Maternity leave. 2. Parental Leave. 3. Carers Leave. 4. Adoptive leave.

➢ We top up state maternity/adoptive pay to 100% of employees salary once they are with the company for 3 years +. We allow employees to take parental leave in 3 periods rather than the statutory 1 period of 14 weeks. We do this to reward employees for their length of service and to show our appreciation.

➢ We have enhanced the four statutory entitlements in order to offer staff additional flexibility. For maternity leave we offer staff a further 8 weeks unpaid leave, in addition to their statutory entitlements.

> We want to be recognised as the 'employer of choice' and we want to hold on to valuable employees.
> We provide fully paid maternity leave.
> Maternity leave enhanced – a practical decision made to suit individual circumstances.

Q. 17. What are the main reasons that employees give you for taking up the family friendly work arrangements?
> Other – Mix of child care, further education and travel.
> Take a break, travel the world, study.

Q. 18. What do you consider to be the main business benefits of operating family-friendly work arrangements?
> Having this range of family friendly work arrangements assists the recruitment and retention of staff and also improves job satisfaction.

Q. 19 Have you formally evaluated the operation and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements?
> On a regular basis at local branch level.
> We had an equality audit carried out by external consultants who would have looked at this issue amongst others – we carry out annual climate surveys which would include questions in this area.

Q. 21 Overall, how successful would you rate the success of our family-friendly work arrangements? Very Successful, Successful, Unsuccessful.
> Where introduced they are used and valued but we could do better as the benefits are limited.
> Anyone who has availed of them says they are very successful.
> Some of the arrangements are not in place long enough to evaluate fully.
> Successful for those who have the arrangements but for others who would like to avail of the arrangements but cannot be accommodated at this time they would be unhappy.
> Successful for the limited number of people they apply to.
> It's important to note that everyone's personal circumstances are very different, and hence policies and procedures need to be adopted to match an individual and managers needs. We operate an informal system whereby we discuss the issue and come to a suitable arrangement for the individual and manager concerned, particularly when it comes to family illness and issues that require a lot of flexibility and compassion.
> Although we do not actively promote family friendly policies, we try to accommodate requests where we can.
> There are inconsistencies in the way employees have reacted to and take benefits from our initiatives. When it works well it is terrific but when abused it is a costly disaster. We have had both.
> Operated on a case by case basis – have met both individual and business needs.

Q. 22. **If you have found that family-friendly work arrangements are of benefit to your organisation, would you encourage other employers to introduce similar arrangements?**
➢ Yes – It is a great retention strategy.

Q. 23. What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family-family work arrangements?
➢ Trying to get cover for staff has proven difficult in that trying to match skills set for staff wishing to job share hasn't always worked out. It has proved costly in terms of doubling up staff. We had teething problems initially because most part-timers wanted to work in the morning and because our business has public openings hours this isn't possible. We have also experience localised problems e.g. staff do not want to work part-time in Dublin because it could possibly take them an hour to get to and from work because of traffic and this defeats the purpose.
➢ Cost of replacement staff.
➢ Our company has a ban on recruitment, it has undergone two successive voluntary severance schemes which has seen 4,000 approx staff leave since the mid 90's, yet work load has increased as a result of record new connections, network renewal programme, market opening etc., this has resulted in an increased work load for managers/staff. It can be difficult trying to manage demand/expectation for flexible working arrangements.
➢ Management need to ensure the business and quality of service is maintained, including allocation and distribution of work to other staff.
➢ No issues.

Q. 24. What additional family-friendly work arrangements (if any) do you plan to introduce in the future?
➢ Unsure – we are currently being taken over by another company so we will have to wait to see what changes they will make.
➢ Nothing in the pipeline, what we have is extensive and our public opening will not allow anything more.
➢ We have recently introduced Life Balance Time, which gives people the option of taking 6 – 20 weeks special leave without pay but with the option of having salary adjusted/spread over leave period. We have also a scholarship programme which allows a number of staff members to go back into full time education while retaining all their benefits including pay.
➢ Childcare allowance and a more formal approach to working from home.
➢ None planned at present – large number already provided.
➢ No plans to enhance current family friendly work arrangements.

Q. 25. What other practices/arrangements, in an ideal world, would you like to see made available to your employees?
➢ Work from home where appropriate to do so. More flexibility with parental leave. Ability to build up additional time off for routine needs.

4

- We feel we have a fairly comprehensive range of initiatives with a good balance at present.
- Statutory child care support/arrangements.
- E-working available to all staff.
- Compressed working week.
- Term-time working.
- Flexitime
- Childcare, job sharing, home-working, increased paternity leave, paid parental leave. We need to address the issue of gender equality; the glass ceiling issue and the retention of women in the workforce and should be looking towards the Scandinavian model, and also Iceland's recent change in legislation around maternity leave.
- There will probably be a greater demand for commuting avoidance practices.
- With better communications technology we will be allowing more staff work from home.
- Childcare facilities & greater potential for remote working.

Q. 26. To what extent to you believe family-friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?
- Significantly – Retention and motivation of staff is very important to us, as a result of our initiatives staff feel engaged.

National College of Ireland

APPENDIX 4 – SURVEY STATISTICS

Family Friendly Work Arrangements Survey 2006

Number of Respondents: 12

Question	Answer	Response	%
1 Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in?			
	Manufacturing	2	16.67%
	Services	3	25.00%
	IT	0	0.00%
	Distribution	1	8.33%
	Retail	0	0.00%
	Other	6	50.00%
2 Which of the following sectors does your company belong to?			
	Private Sector	7	58.33%
	Semi-state Sector	2	16.67%
	Public Sector	2	16.67%
	Voluntary Sector	1	8.33%
	Other	0	0.00%
3 How many people do you employ?			
	1 - 100	0	0.00%
	101 - 300	3	25.00%
	301 - 500	2	16.67%
	501 - 700	1	8.33%
	701 +	6	50.00%
	Full-time employees	29,160	83.73%
	Part-time employees	5,666	16.27%
4 What % of your employees are aged between?			
	20-30 years		16.88%
	31-40 years		27.09%
	41-50 years		29.09%
- No Response 3 (25%)	51-65 years		26.94%
- Total Responses 9 (75%)			
- Total Sample 18,512 employees			
5 What % of your employees are members of a trade union?			
	0% of employees	3	25.00%
	25% of employees	2	16.67%
	50% of employees	1	8.33%
	75% of employees	2	16.67%
	100% of employees	2	16.67%
	No response	2	16.67%

Question		Answer	Response	%
6	If your company is unionised do you recognise trade unions for negotiating purposes?			
		Yes	9	75.00%
		No	0	0.00%
		No applicable	3	25.00%
7	Do you currently operate any of the following family friendly work arrangements? If 'yes' please indicate the number of employees who avail of these arrangements.			
		Part-time work	10	83.33%
		Job Sharing	8	66.67%
		Flexitime	8	66.67%
		Term-time working	5	41.66%
		Personalised working hours	7	58.33%
		Emergency/special leave	11	91.66%
		Working from home	6	50.00%
		Career breaks	8	66.67%
		Childcare facilities	3	25.00%
		Other	3	25.00%
7(b)	Do you provide part-time work as a specific family friendly initiative?			
		Yes	6	50.00%
		No	6	50.00%
8	Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all staff?			
		Yes	7	58.33%
		No	5	41.67%
9	If 'no' what staff are they available to and why are they not available to all staff?			
	Not Applicable		7	58.33%
	No reason given		1	8.33%
	Only available to certain grades for operational reasons		1	8.33%
	Only available to office based staff		1	8.33%
	Work sharing & term time available up to Principal Officer level. Flexitime is available to Higher Executive Officers.		1	8.33%
	Certain criteria must be met i.e. job must be compatible with family friendly working & has to suit the department.		1	8.33%
10	Why did your company introduce family friendly work arrangements?			
		Requested by 'ees	5	41.67%
		Suggested by employer	8	66.67%
		Negotiated by union	4	33.33%

National College of Ireland

Question	Answer	Response	%
10(b) If you answered 'suggested by employer' please give your business reason for introducing these arrangements.		4	33.33%
1 We conduct a yearly review of our benefits for employees in an effort to remain competitive. It is in this process we identify any amendments to, or the introduction of new benefits.		1	8.33%
2 We felt it would be a progressive step to achievin best practice in this area.		1	8.33%
3 To reduce the high turnover of female staff & to reduce absenteeism.		1	8.33%
4 In times of surplus staff it was a way of managing costs.		1	8.33%
5 To ensure the smooth running of the organisation.		1	8.33%
6 Terms & conditions of civil service employment are determined centrally by the Department of Finance. Union negotiate regarding further developments of these terms & conditions.		1	8.33%
7 In a predominantly female industry where good staff are hard to find and essential to keep, having a flexible approach to employment arrangements makes commercial sense.		1	8.33%
8 To meet personal needs of staff members through work life balance		1	8.33%
11 How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?	Negotiated with union	3	25.00%
	Decisions made by management	6	50.00%
	Neg. on ad hoc basis	5	41.67%
	Neg. with staff repres.	2	16.67%
	Other	2	16.67%
12 Which of the following issues were drivers in your companys decision to introduce family friendly work arrangements?	Conflict with home demands	7	58.33%
	Employee motivation	8	66.67%
	Productivity	6	50.00%
	Sickness absenteeism	3	25.00%
	Non-return from maternity leave	3	25.00%
	Retention of talent	9	75.00%
	Recruitment calibre	2	16.67%
	People unwilling to be promoted	0	0.00%
* (1) Well being of staff (2) Work life balance is important in this company.	Other*	2	16.67%
12(b) Did you measure these drivers?	No Response	7	58.33%
	Conflict with home demands	2	16.67%
	Employee motivation	2	16.67%
	Productivity	1	8.33%
	Sickness absenteeism	3	25.00%
	Non-return from maternity leave	1	8.33%
	Retention of talent	4	33.33%

		Recruitment calibre	0	0.00%
		People unwilling to be promoted	0	0.00%
		Other*	0	0.00%

12(c	Do you have family friendly related policies for each of these drivers?				
		No Response		7	58.33%
		Policy in place	*Yes*	*No*	
		Conflict with home demands	0	5	41.67%
		Employee motivation	1 (8.33%)	4 (33.33%)	41.67%
		Productivity	0	5 (41.67%)	41.67%
		Sickness absenteeism	2 (16.67%)	3 (25.00%)	41.67%
		Non-return from maternity leave	0	5	41.67%
		Retention of talent	1(8.33%)	4(33.33%)	41.67%
		Recruitment calibre	0	5	41.67%
		People unwilling to be promoted	0	5	41.67%
		Other	0	0	0.00%

13	Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?			
		Maternity leave	6	50.00%
		Parental Leave	4	33.33%
		Carers Leave	1	8.33%
		Adoptive Leave	4	33.33%

14	What are your main reasons for <u>not</u> providing family friendly work arrangements?*		
		Lack of information on this area	n/a
	*Comments were made by 3 companies in response to this question, these comments are outlined in the Research Analysis chapter.	No requests from employees or unions	n/a
		Too difficult to operate given business demands	n/a
		Too expensive for the business	n/a
		Other	n/a

15	Does your company have formal family friendly policies or do you provide them on an informal basis?			
		Formal policies	7	58.33%
		Informal policies	2	16.67%
		Combination of both	3	25.00%

National College of Ireland

4

National College of Ireland

Question		Answer	Response	%
16	How do you communicate your family friendly policies to your employees?	Employee handbook	8	66.67%
		As part of appraisals	1	8.33%
		Company intranet	8	66.67%
		Individual counselling	1	8.33%
	*circulars to staff, induction courses & email	Team Briefing	2	16.67%
		Other*	3	25.00%
17	What are the main reasons that employees give you for taking up family friendly work arrangements?	To balance work & personal life	6	50.00%
		Care of dependent	5	41.66%
		Childcare	12	100.00%
	* Travel & Study	Other*	2	16.67%
18	What do you consider to be the main business benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements?	Assists employee recruitment	4	33.33%
		Improved 'ee/manage. relations	5	41.67%
		Improved staff morale	7	58.33%
		Reduces absenteeism	4	33.33%
		Improved motivation/ productivity	8	66.67%
		Staff retention	10	83.33%
		Other	0	0.00%
19	Have you formally evaluated the operation and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements?			
		Yes	4	33.33%
		No	8	66.67%
20	If 'yes' did this evaluation include feedback from employees?			
		Not Applicable	8	66.67%
		Yes	4	33.33%
		No	0	0.00%
21	Overall, how would you rate the success of your family friendly work arrangements?			
		Very successful	4	33.33%
		Successful	8	66.67%
		Unsuccessful	0	0.00%
22	If you have found that family friendly work arrangements are of benefit to your organisation, would you encourage other employers to introduce similar arrangements?			
		Yes	12	100.00%
		No	0	0.00%

Question	Answer	Response	%
23 What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family friendly work arrangements?			
	Difficult to operate	3	25.00%
	Cost implications	2	16.67%
	Additional time demands on supervisors	5	41.67%
*Comments detailed in 'comments' section in	Arrangements are open to abuse	5	41.67%
appendix	Other*	2	16.67%

24 What additional family friendly work arrangements (if any) do you plan to introduce in the future?

	Answer	Response	%
	No response	3	25.00%
	No plans to improve existing benefits	5	41.67%
	Responses*	4	33.33%

*Responses

1 Unsure - We are currently been taken over by another company so we will have to wait and see what happens
2 Nothing in the pipeline, what we have is extensive and our public opening hours will not allow any more.
3 We have recently introduced Life Balance Time, which gives people the option of taking 6-20 weeks special leave without pay.
4 Childcare allowance and a more formal approach to working from home.

25 What other practices/arrangements, in an ideal world, would you like to see made available to employees?

	Answer	Response	%
	No response	2	16.67%
	Responses*	10	83.33%

* Responses

1 Work from home where appropriate. More flexibility with Parental leave. Ability to build up additional time off for routine needs
2 We feel we have a fairly comprehensive range of initiatives with a good balance at present
3 Statutory child care support
4 E-working available to all staff
5 Compressed working week
6 Term-time working
7 Flexitime
8 Childcare, job sharing, home working, increased paternity leave, paid parental leave
9 There will probably be a greater demand for commuting avoidance practices
10 With better communications technology we will be allowing more staff to work from home

National College of Ireland

Question	Answer	Response	%
26 To what extent do you believe family friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals.			
	Significantly	5	41.67%
	Not significantly	6	50.00%
	Not at all	1	8.33%

National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland

APPENDIX 5 – SURVEY FINDINGS GRAPHICAL
RESPRESENTATION

Q. 1. Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in?
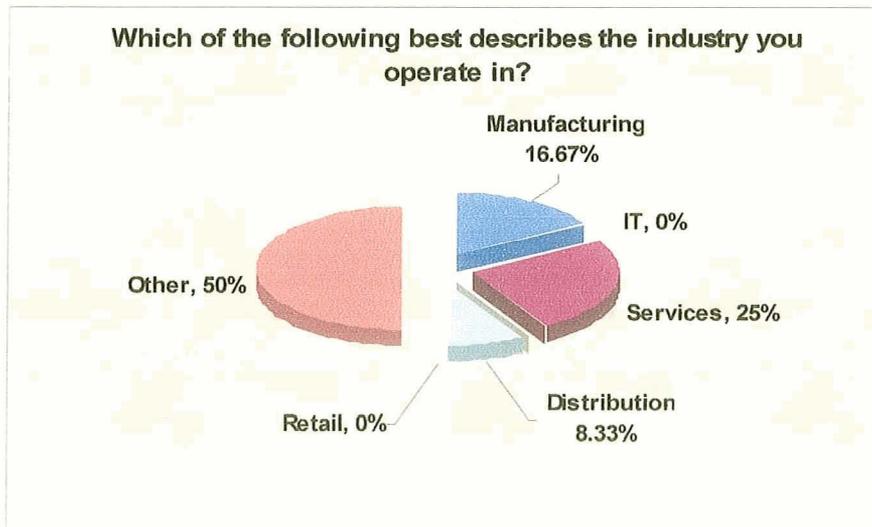
Which of the following best describes the industry you operate in?

Manufacturing
16.67%

IT, 0%

Other, 50%

Services, 25%

Retail, 0%

Distribution
8.33%

Q. 2. Which of the following sectors does your company belong to?

Which of the following sectors does your company belong to?

Voluntary
Sector
8.33%

Other
0%

Public Sector
16.67%

Semi-State
Sector
16.67%

Private Sector
58.33%

Q. 3. How many people do you employ?

How many people do you employ?

Category	Percentage
701 + employees	50.00%
501 - 700 employees	8.33%
301 - 500 employees	16.67%
101 - 300 employees	25.00%
1 - 100 employees	0%

Q. 4. What percentages of your employees are aged between?

What % of your employees are aged between?

- 51 - 65 years 26.94%
- 20 - 30 years 16.88%
- 31 - 40 years 27.09%
- 41 - 50 years 29.09%
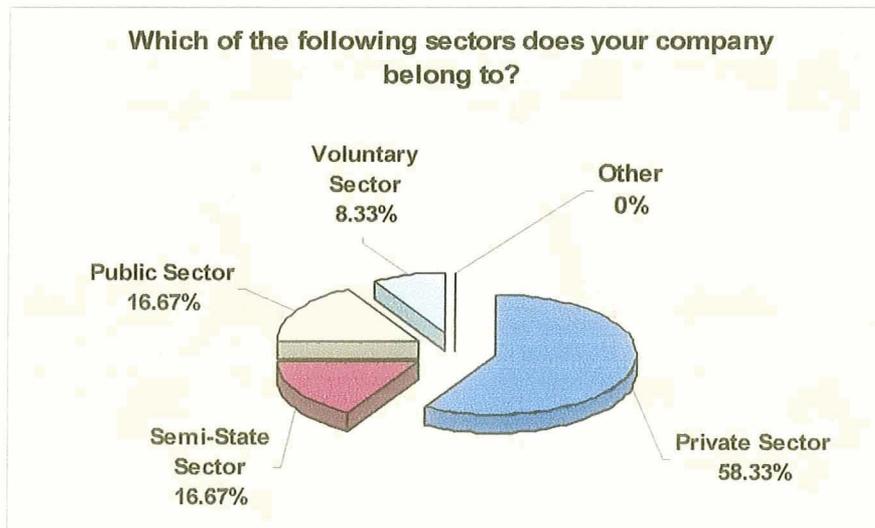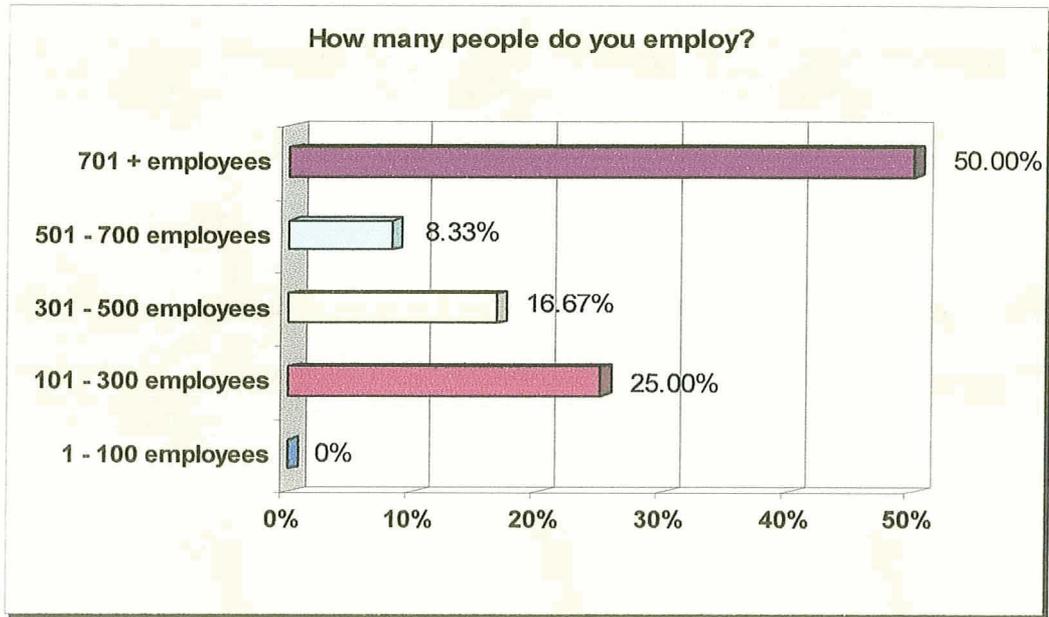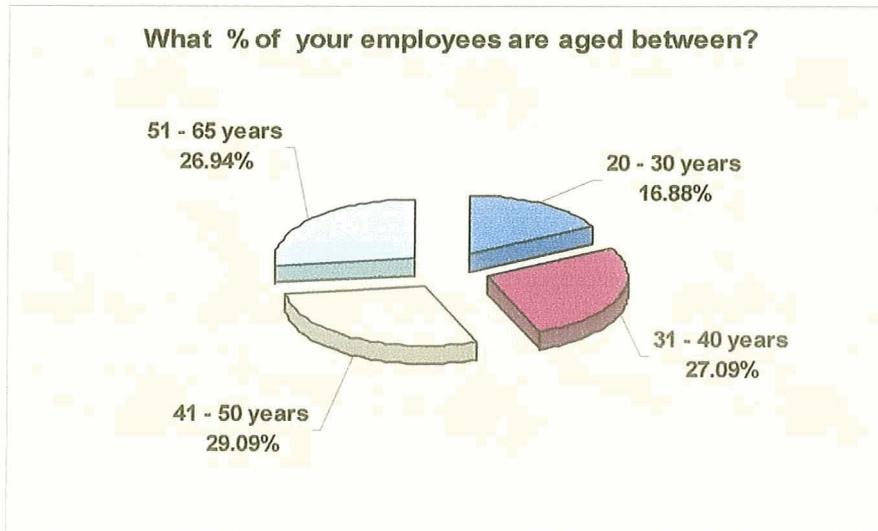
Q. 5. What percentage of your employees are members of a Trade Union?
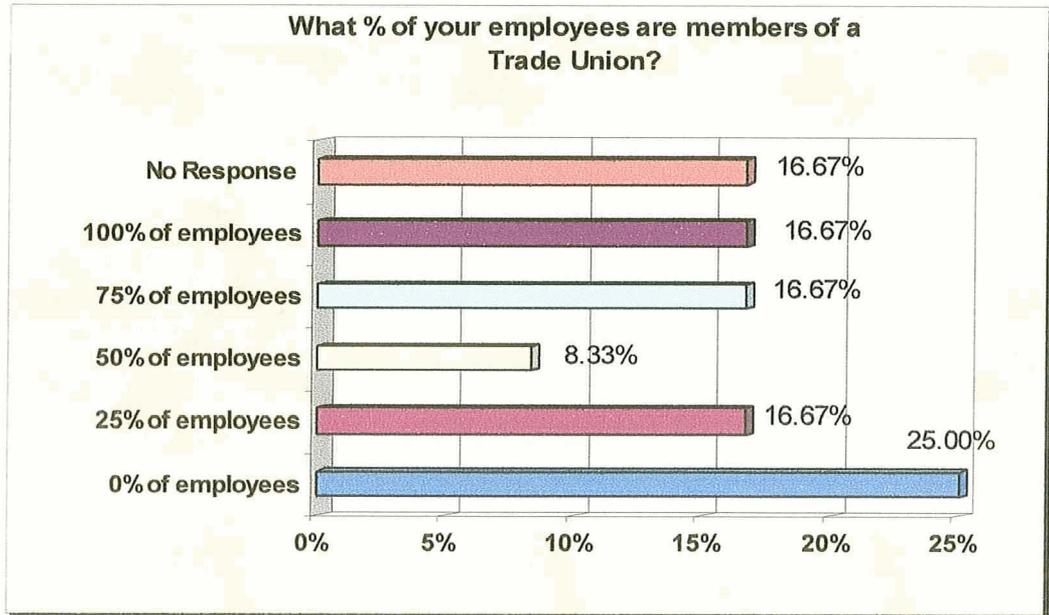
Q. 6. If your company is unionised do you recognise Trade Unions for negotiating purposes?

Q. 7. Do you currently operate any of the following family friendly work arrangements?

Do you currently operate any of the following family friendly work arrangements?

Part-time work	83.33%
Job sharing	66.67%
Flexitime	66.67%
Term-time working	41.67%
Personalised working hours	58.33%
Emergency/special leave	91.67%
Working from home	50.00%
Career Breaks	66.67%
Childcare facilities	25.00%
Other	25.00%

Q. 7(c). Do you provide part-time work as a specific family friendly work arrangement?

Do you provide part-time work as a specific family friendly initiative?

No 50%   Yes 50%

Q. 8. Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all employees?

Are your family friendly work arrangements available to all employees?

No
41.67%

Yes
58.33%

Q. 10. Why did your company introduce family friendly work arrangements?

Why did your company introduce family friendly work arrangements?

Negotiated by union	33.33%
Suggested by employer	66.67%
Requested by employees	41.67%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Q. 11. How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?

How did you ascertain which family friendly work arrangements to introduce?

Category	Percentage
Negotiated with union	25.00%
Decisions made by management	50.00%
Negotiated on ad hoc basis	41.67%
Negotiated with staff representatives	16.67%
Other	16.67%

Q. 12. Which of the following issues were drivers in your company's decision to introduce family friendly work arrangements?

Which of the following issues were drivers in your companys decision to introduce family friendly policies?

Category	Percentage
Conflict with home demands	58.33%
Employee motivation	66.67%
Productivity	50.00%
Sickness absenteeism	25.00%
Non-return from maternity leave	25.00%
Retention of talent	75.00%
Recruitment calibre	16.67%
People unwilling to be promoted	0.00%
Other	16.67%

National College of Ireland

Q. 12 (b). Which of the following drivers have you measured?

Which of the following drivers have you measured?

Driver	Percentage
Conflict with home demands	16.67%
Employee motivation	16.67%
Productivity	8.33%
Sickness absenteeism	25.00%
Non-return from maternity leave	8.33%
Retention of talent	33.33%
Recruitment calibre	0.00%
People unwilling to be promoted	0.00%
Other	0.00%

Q. 12. (c) Do you have family friendly related policies for each driver?

Do you have family friendly policies for each of the drivers?

Q. 13. Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?

Has your company enhanced any of the following statutory entitlements?

Maternity Leave	50.00%
Parental Leave	33.33%
Carers Leave	8.33%
Adoptive Leave	33.33%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

Q. 15. Does your company have formal family friendly policies or do they provide them on an informal basis?

Does your company have formal family friendly policies or do they provide them on an informal basis?

Combination of both 25%

Informal policies 16.67%

Formal policies 58.33%

**Q. 16.** **How do you communicate your family friendly policies to your employees?**

How do you communicate your family friendly policies to your employees?

Employee Handbook	66.67%
As part of appraisals	8.33%
Company intranet	66.67%
Individual counselling	8.33%
Team Briefings	16.67%
Other	25.00%

**Q. 17.** **What are the main reasons employees give you for taking up family friendly work arrangements?**

What are the main reasons employees give you for taking up family friendly work arrangements?

To balance work and personal life	50%
Care of dependent	41.67%
Child-care	100%
Other	16.67%

Q. 18. What do you consider to be the main benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements?

What do you consider to be the main benefits of operating family friendly work arrangements?

| Category	Value
Assists employee recruitment	33.33%
Improved 'ee/manage work relations	41.67%
Improved staff morale	58.33%
Reduces absenteeism	33.33%
Improved motivation/productivity	66.67%
Staff retention	83.33%
Other	0%

Q. 19. Have you formally evaluated the operations and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements?

Have you formally evaluated the operations and benefits of your family friendly work arrangements ?

Yes, 33.33%

No, 66.67%

Q. 21. Overall how would you rate the success of your family friendly work arrangements?

Overall how would you rate the success of your family frienldy work arrangements?

- Unsuccessful, 0.00%
- Very successful, 33.33%
- Successful, 66.67%

Q. 22. If you have found that family friendly work arrangements have benefited your company would you encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements?

Would you encourage other companies to introduce similar arrangements?

- No, 0%
- Yes, 100%

Q. 23. What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family friendly work arrangements?

What problems (if any) have you encountered in implementing family friendly work arrangements?

Category	Percentage
Difficult to operate	25.00%
Cost implications	16.67%
Additional time demands on supervisors	41.67%
Arrangements are open to abuse	41.67%
Other	16.67%

Q. 26. To what extent do you believe family friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?

To what extent do you believe family friendly work arrangements have added to your company achieving its business goals?

- Not at all, 8.33%
- Significantly, 41.67%
- Not significantly, 50%