

A photograph of a young couple smiling and looking at their newborn baby. The woman is on the left, leaning over the baby, and the man is on the right, also leaning over. The baby is lying down, wearing a white onesie. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

EQUAL AT HOME – EQUAL AT WORK

**Practical guide for working parents
and employers**

April 2023



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Managing editor: Sylwia Ziemacka • Layout and graphics: Anna Jarota

INTRODUCTION





Sylwia Ziemacka
Council Member
Share the Care Foundation

AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS EQUALITY

THE ACT IMPLEMENTING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE CAME INTO FORCE ON 26 APRIL 2023.

This is a significant step towards parental equality, which is inextricably linked to equality in the labour market. Why? Because granting nine weeks of leave to fathers, and, importantly, weeks that cannot be transferred to the mother, was motivated by the desire to improve the situation of women in the labour market.

Women still pay a high price for motherhood (so called “motherhood penalty”), i.e. mothers receive lower remuneration, have limited access to promotion

and are often discriminated against already at the recruitment stage. Moreover, the research by the Polish Economic Institute (PIE) shows that when both parents are professionally active, it is mothers who take care of their children more often. In as many as 68% of families with young children aged 1-9 where both parents work, mothers carry out most of the caring duties.

BUT SOCIALLY, THE PRICE FOR THIS INEQUALITY IS ALSO PAID BY CHILDREN AND FATHERS.

In her book “FOR THE LOVE OF MEN: FROM TOXIC TO A MORE MINDFUL MASCULINITY”, Liz Plank reminds us that we are all limited by gender stereotypes, but, more importantly, shows how much toxic masculinity harms men themselves – taking a toll on their health, relationships and careers.

The Empowering Children Foundation has investigated research on the impact of involved fatherhood on children. Greater involvement of fathers in childcare, especially in the first months of a child’s life, has an unequivocally positive impact on: building a secure bond between child and father, the child’s emotional

development, building the child’s self-esteem and building the child’s social competencies.

Finally, the family context. Research from Scandinavian countries shows that sharing parental leave reduces divorce and separation rates. Common responsibility for both the child’s upbringing and the family’s finances brings parents closer together, builds understanding and provides a sense of security and stability.

ALREADY 58% OF POLES BELIEVE THE OPTIMAL FAMILY MODEL IS ONE BASED ON PARTNERSHIP. PARTNERSHIP, THAT IS, WHEN BOTH PARENTS WORK AND SHARE CHILDCARE AND HOUSEHOLD DUTIES.

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This means that the world is changing and it is worth following this change.

Moreover, supporting working parents pays off for

employers themselves. Employers who provide support to parents and carers are more likely to see benefits such as reduced absenteeism and staff turnover and increased retention. The 9 weeks of parental leave for fathers is also a tool to build gender equality in the labour market.

In order for men to benefit from this entitlement, the favour of employers is important. Why? Because most fathers believe that their employers would be displeased if they decided to take parental leave. This is indicated, among others, by a study published in December 2022 by the Polish Economic Institute.

Do we then have a chance to make partnership and parental leave sharing a social norm in Poland?

ENJOY THE READING OF OUR GUIDE „EQUAL AT HOME – EQUAL AT WORK”.

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Elizabeth Gosme
Director of COFACE Families Europe

● THE EU WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE: NEW SOCIAL RIGHTS, CONSOLIDATION OF EXISTING SOCIAL RIGHTS, AND SOME MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

COFACE Families Europe has supported the notion of work-life balance for all, based on measures that tackle the stereotypical vision of “traditional” and old-fashioned distribution of roles, where women are caregivers and men are the breadwinners. Moreover,

the importance of time for families should be underlined, as lack of time and stress are correlated. Many people find it difficult to strike a balance between work and family demands, with proven links between Work-Family conflict and burnout factors, which is detrimental to families, employers and society.

Equality between women and men, and sharing of family care responsibilities, is a cornerstone of the reconciliation of family and professional life.

**OF COURSE, THIS REQUIRES
A CULTURE SHIFT TOWARDS
GREATER FAMILY TEAMWORK
(WHICH WAS THE FOCUS OF THE
COFACE CAMPAIGN FOR THE 2022
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES).**

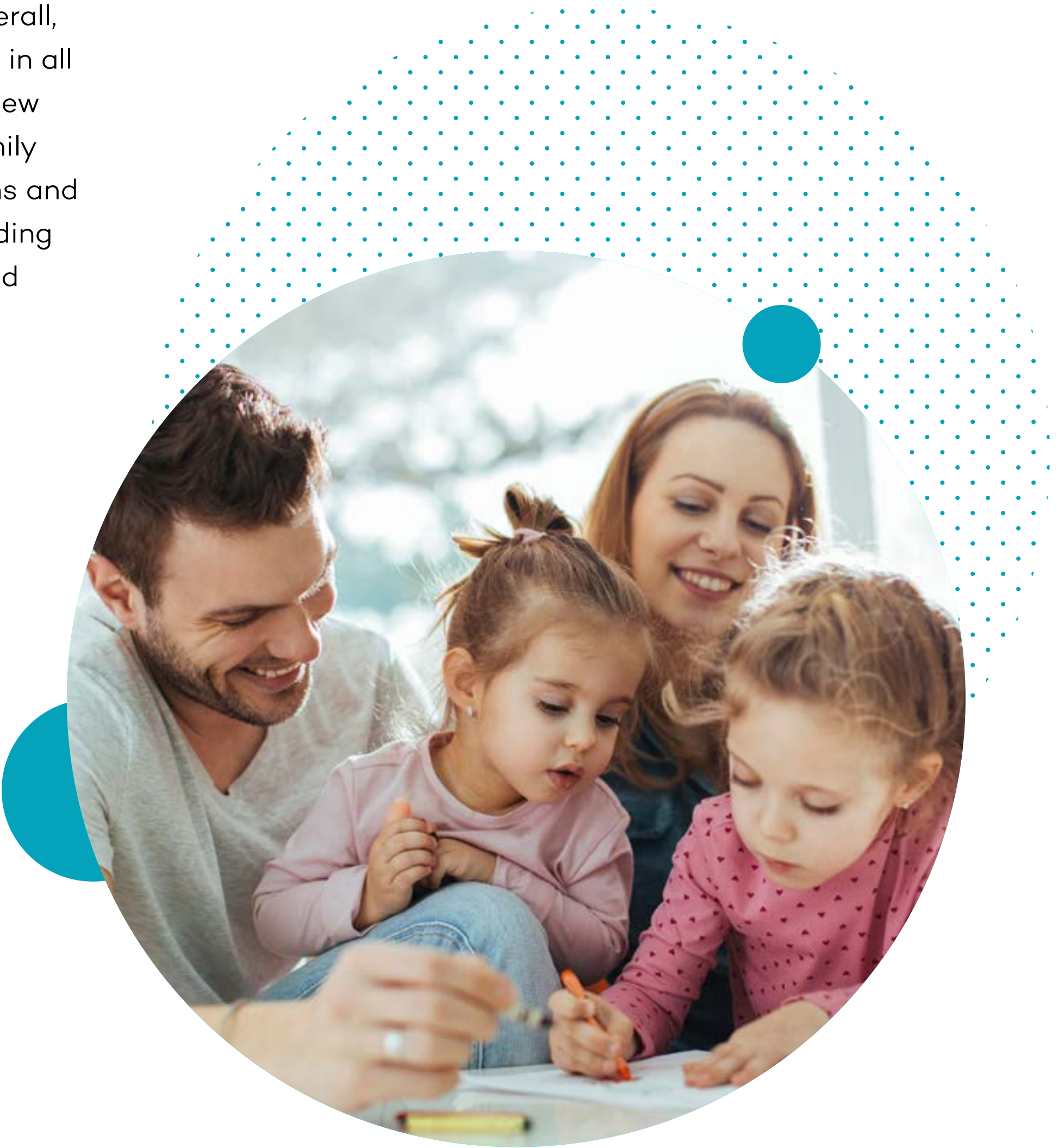
But such equality also relies on structural arrangements such as comprehensive policies based on a mix of Resources, Services and Time to support families and give them real options for work-life balance.

Such structural arrangements include the EU Work-life Balance Directive, a key European legislative initiative that follows the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017. It was formally adopted two years later in 2019 and fully integrated in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. In a first reaction, COFACE stated clearly that the expectations of families have not been fully met by this Directive, but that the agreement is still an important step in the right direction for creating new social rights and consolidating existing rights.

The directive contains legal elements which acknowledge the diversity of families in the 21st century, for instance with the mention of “equivalent second parent” under the paternity leave article. It provides for adequate payments of paternity, parental and carers leave, to ensure take-up of leaves and as an anti-poverty measure so workers with care duties do not fear loss of income. The directive also includes a provision of non-transferability of parental leave for fathers, to ensure that they use their right and are able to invest time in family care for their children, hence also promoting gender equality between women and men.

COFACE Families Europe expects high ambitions from the different EU institutions, national governments

and social partners in ensuring this directive is fully transposed, and has published an assessment of the transposition focusing on family leaves (paternity, parental and carers’ leave) in 10 countries. Overall, we consider it crucial to launch a new dynamic in all Member States’ social policies by setting out new minimum standards for gender-responsive family leaves which respect diversity of social systems and family-friendly policies at workplaces by providing flexible working arrangements for both men and women.



LEGAL CONTEXT





Karolina Andrian
President of Share the Care
Foundation

● THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE LABOUR CODE RESULTING FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE IN POLAND

THE ACT IMPLEMENTING THE
WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE IN
POLAND CAME INTO FORCE ON 26
APRIL 2023.

The implementation was delayed, as the deadline expired on 2 August 2022. Therefore, the legislator granted the right to additional weeks of leave to parents who would have otherwise missed out on the extra benefits due to the delay.

Please note that paternity leave and parental leave for fathers are two different benefits.

- The time for using paternity leave has been shortened to the first 12 months of the baby's life

This is a positive change. It should be remembered that paternity leave can last 2 weeks and is paid at 100%. It is meant to facilitate taking care of the mother and baby while the mum recovers after childbirth.

- The length of parental leave has been increased to 41 weeks (single pregnancy) and 43 weeks (multiple pregnancy), 9 weeks of which has been reserved for the second parent

In the Polish context, this means that the additional 9 weeks of parental leave will be granted to fathers. If the father fails to use the leave, it will be lost.

- Fathers have gained an individual right to parental

leave

An individual right means that it is not dependent on the eligibility and employment of the mother. This is a very important change, as it recognises fathers as independent carers.

- Maternity allowance for the period of parental leave amounts to 70% of the base salary

In practice, this means that during the 9 weeks of parental leave fathers will receive 70% of their base salaries.

- The mother may apply to have the allowance averaged during the whole maternity and parental leave (52 weeks in total) – it will then amount to 81.5%.

Mothers who usually apply to have their allowance averaged throughout the 12 months of leave (20 weeks of maternity leave + 32 weeks of parental leave) will receive 81.5% of their salaries.

- Parental leave may be used in 5 parts before the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 6 years old.

Indeed, it is possible to take parental leave until the child is 6 years old, but the most optimal scenario seems to be the one where dad uses his 9 weeks of parental leave when mum returns to work.

This will give the child a chance to spend time with a close person whom he or she knows and loves, while the mum will be able to return to work with relative peace of mind and the dad will be able to create a bond with his child ‘his own way’.

- Parents of a child diagnosed with a severe and irreversible disability or an incurable life-threatening disease that arose during the prenatal period of the child’s development or during childbirth (i.e. having the certificate referred to in Article 4, pos. 3 of the “Pro-life” Act on Support for Pregnant Women and Families of 4 November 2016) are entitled to 65 weeks of parental leave in the case of a single pregnancy or 67 weeks in the case of giving birth to 2 or more children (multiple pregnancy).
- A parent raising at least one child under 8 years of age may apply for flexible work arrangements.
- Employees gain the right to 2 days off per year due to force majeure with right to 50% salary.

- 5 days of carer’s leave (without pay) are introduced for the care of family members or dependants living in the same household. Family members are defined as son, daughter, wife and husband.

Benefits for parents affected by the delayed implementation of the work-life balance directive in Poland

Granting the right to additional weeks of parental leave to parents who, as a result of the delayed implementation of the directive, would not have been able to benefit from such benefits is a great success. This means that all parents who on 2 August 2022 (the date by which the work-life balance directive should have been implemented) were on parental leave or had the right to it will be granted additional parental leave (an additional 9 weeks for healthy children and 33 weeks for children with a ,pro-life’ certificate).



Mec. Agnieszka Fedor
Partner, Law Firm SKS Sołtysiński
Kawecki & Szlęzak

● THE DIRECTIVE WILL FACILITATE PROCESSES AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

This year is witnessing amendments to the Labour Code on a huge scale. Apart from the changes resulting from the implementation of the work-life balance directive and the directive on transparent and predictable employment conditions, which came into force on 26 April 2023, and the changes concerning sobriety testing, the legislation regulating remote working came into force on 7 April.

THIS REQUIRES COMPANIES TO VERIFY AND ADAPT THEIR HR PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES.

From the point of view of employers and employees, these changes sort out many of the issues that were previously of concern to both parties, but they also create a number of new challenges.

Looking at the changes resulting from the implementation of the work-life balance directive, it is safe to say that their implementation will in fact facilitate the real use of benefits by fathers. The non-transferable 9 weeks of parental leave for the other parent, i.e. in Polish reality – for the child's father, is a new legal construct. As a result, the mum does not have to relinquish her share of leave to the dad, and the employer should not challenge the man's desire to use such a benefit.

Before the amendment of the Labour Code, the mother could transfer part of the parental leave to the child's father. In practice, the different types of requests and the resulting different levels of pay for parental leave created many problems on the part of HR departments and accounting offices. This, in turn, led to situations in which the parents withdrew from their decision because, for example, as a result of an incorrect request (so-called 'up-front' request rather than 'in parts'), the dad would be paid at 60% of the salary base instead of 80%.

The new legislation has made it more flexible to share parental leave and this is a very good change for parents. The introduction of 9 weeks for the other parent involves a clear pathway for requesting the use of this benefit. If the other parent only takes the non-transferable part of parental leave, they only need to do the paperwork at their own workplace. Previously, the mother had to submit a declaration waiving part of the parental leave in favour of the child's father, which had to be delivered to the partner's HR department.

THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FATHERS, WHICH UNTIL NOW DID NOT EXIST IN THE POLISH LEGAL SYSTEM, SHOULD BE RECOGNISED.

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This is an important change for many couples. It means a right to parental leave for the father even if the child's mother is not entitled to maternity benefit. Now, if the mother is not in employment and is not entitled to maternity leave, the father can still take parental leave and actively join in raising his child.





Marzena Pilarz-Herzyk
lawyer, labour law expert, leader of
Mamaprawniczka.pl blog

THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE IN PRACTICE

FORMS OF USING MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

The changes in legislation have unified the system of taking leave. Two forms of taking leave have been abandoned, leaving maternity and parental leave in the regulations, for which applications must be made in parts. In practice, this leave option is more beneficial to parents as it gives much more flexibility in deciding how to divide the leave and when to use it. Unfortunately, due to the complicated transitional provisions, in the first months of dealing with the amended regulations the process is likely to be complicated for many people – I am referring here to

employees, but also to employers, who will face many procedural changes.

SHARING ENTITLEMENTS

Maternity leave begins automatically with the child's birth and is obligatory. As a general rule, it is intended for mothers, but even in this case it is possible to discontinue it earlier and transfer the last six weeks of this entitlement to the father.

Parental leave, which – as the name suggests – is by definition granted to both parents, is structured differently. This leaves freedom of choice as to how the parents will use it. The leave can be divided into 5 parts and, most importantly, the father's entitlement is independent of the insurance status of the child's mother. This is a very good change for employees.

It is important to note that the existing length of leave has been increased by 9 weeks and in the case of parents of children with a certificate introduced by the 'pro-life' Act – by an additional 24 weeks. The full length of leave is a cumulative length for both parents. The 9 weeks cannot be transferred to the other parent.

The allowance for maternity and parental leave has also been changed. The average allowance will be 81.5% of the benefit base. The mother, despite being able to take the leave only ‘in parts’, has the right to apply for an equal allowance for the entire duration of the leave. In the absence of such a request, the allowance for the period of maternity leave will be at 100%, while for the period of parental leave – at 70% of the benefit base.

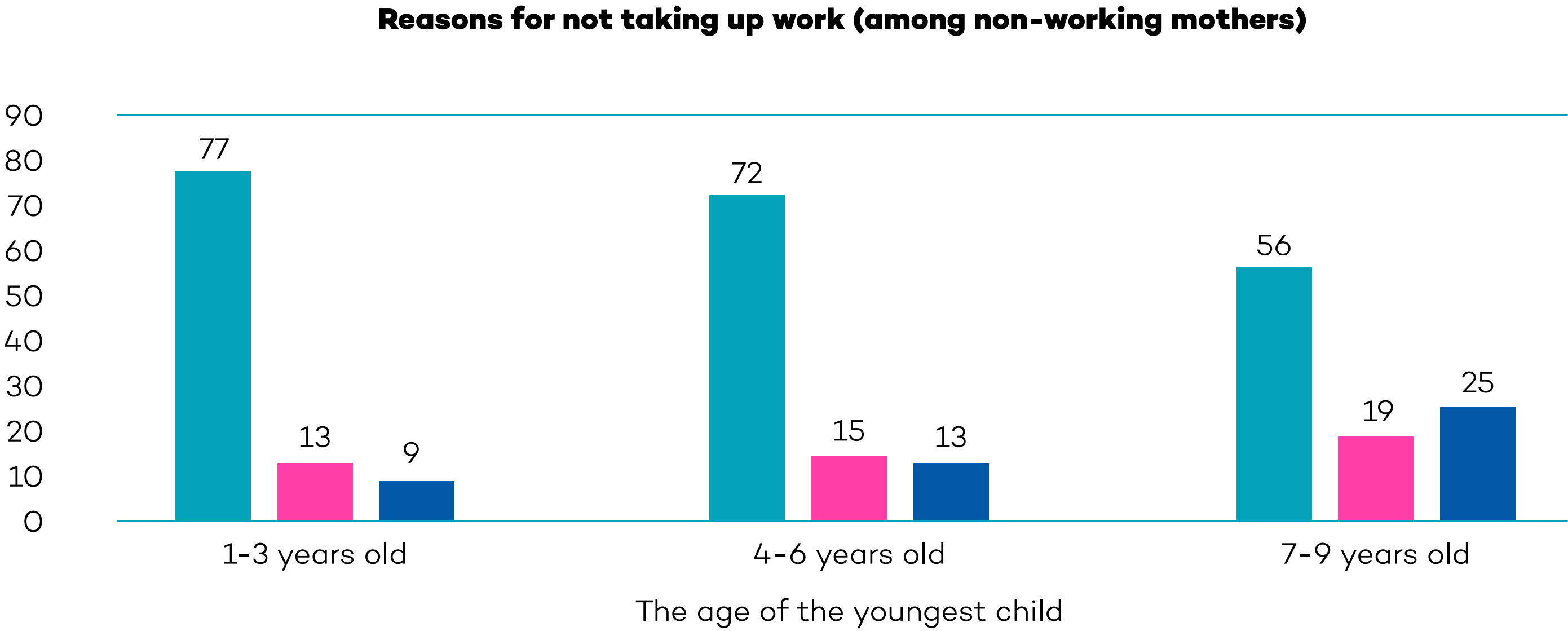
It would seem that changes aimed at broadening the entitlements of fathers should not cause difficulties, but only increase the privileges available to men and thus significantly improve the situation of women returning to work. Unfortunately, at the moment, it is still women who mostly tend to take advantage of their parental entitlements. Knowledge of a father’s entitlements is still too low. Parents’ uncertainty caused by information chaos, delayed introduction of legislation, and multiple changes at the legislative stage have unfortunately hindered the process of a smooth entry into the new legal reality.



ARE WOMEN READY TO SHARE PARENTAL LEAVE?



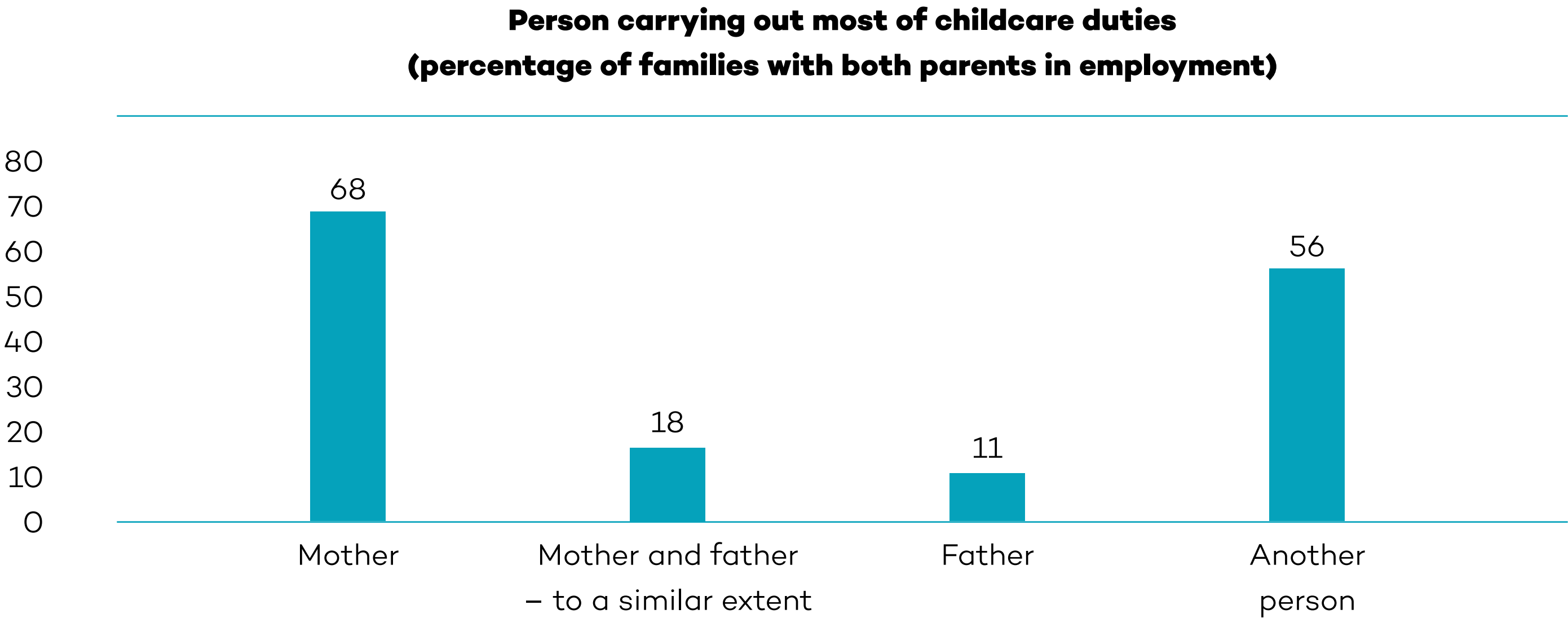
77 PERCENT OF NON-
WORKING WOMEN WHOSE
YOUNGEST CHILD IS
BETWEEN ONE AND THREE
YEARS OLD CITE THE
NEED FOR CHILDCARE AS
A REASON FOR NOT.



- Providing childcare
- Being unable to find (appropriate) work
- Other reasons (health problems, unwillingness to take up employment and others)

Source: PIE’s own elaboration based on research carried out

IN AS MANY AS 68 PERCENT OF FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AGED 1-9 YEARS OLD IN WHICH BOTH PARENTS WORK, MOTHERS ARE THE ONES CARRYING OUT MOST OF CARING RESPONSIBILITIES.



Source: PIE’s own elaboration based on research carried out
“Work and home. Challenges for parents and their consequences”, Polish Economic Institute, December 2022

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EQUALITY STARTS AT HOME

Author:
Sukces Pisany Szminkq Foundation

86% OF POLISH WOMEN ADMIT THAT THEIR PARTNERS HAVE NOT TAKEN, AND WERE NOT PLANNING TO TAKE, PARENTAL LEAVE

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This is one of the conclusions of our report ‘Businesswoman of the Year: Female Entrepreneurship and Family Life’. However, we emphasise what Olga Kordys Kozierowska, president of the Sukces Pisany Szminkq Foundation, has been saying for years – if there is no equality at home, there will be none anywhere else. The work-life balance directive only confirms this. And it is an opportunity for change in the family structure. It is an opportunity for women

to develop professionally and find fulfilment in a role other than being a mother. It is also an opportunity for men to gain experience as a parent and build healthy relationships with their children. Finally, it is an opportunity for the family – for parents to be equal partners and for children to grow up in this type of safe environment.

AS MANY AS 39% OF COUPLES SEE NO REASON TO SHARE PARENTAL LEAVE

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Last year, nearly one in four women surveyed by us also admitted that she did not share household and family responsibilities equally with their partner – and this is unfortunately not changing. This lack of awareness concerning the importance of a man’s role – both as father and partner – is daunting. A father is exactly the same parent as a mother. He has exactly the same responsibility. He may know his child just as well, indeed – he may even know his child better than the mother. A father’s duty is not to just help. He also has a duty to look after the child, to care for the child, and to respond to the child’s needs. These are exactly the same responsibilities as those of the mother. The responsibilities are no different, because nobody

should be disadvantaged in this arrangement. And the faster people understand this, the better for all of us.

ONE IN SIX FEMALE RESPONDENTS STATE THAT FINANCIAL REASONS PREVENT HER FROM SHARING PARENTAL LEAVE WITH HER PARTNER

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According to the coordinated pay gap indicator, the differences in earnings between Polish men and women range between 14 up to even 20 percent. In addition, women hold less than 20 percent of CEO positions in Polish companies. The average pay gap for employees in the same positions is much greater – to the detriment of women. This disparity is so large that, at the current rate of change, it will take more than 130 years for these differences to disappear.

Differences in earnings translate into women’s professional activity, which is why for years now, as part of the Sukces Pisany Szminkq Foundation, we have been working for gender equality in both business and private life, because – let us say it again – equality starts at home. Now. Not in 130 years.



Aleksandra Włodarczyk
co-founder and coordinator of the
30% Club Poland campaign

LET THEM HEAR US

DATA SHOWS THAT COMPETENT WOMEN ARE NOT IN SHORT SUPPLY, BUT THE TOP OF THE CORPORATE HIERARCHY DOES NOT REFLECT THIS.

In 2022, women accounted for 62.9% of university graduates in Poland, including 65.8% in economics, law, management and administration. However, their participation in the management and supervisory boards of companies remains low. At the end of 2022, the share of women on the boards of Poland's 140 largest listed companies was only 17.2%, and only three of them were headed by a female CEO. Where does this disproportion come from? The answer is provided by the report "Let them hear us! The voice of women in corporations", compiled by the 30% Club Poland social campaign acting to increase diversity in

boardrooms.

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT FOR A VAST MAJORITY OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS (91.1%) PROMOTION AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS WERE IMPORTANT.

The women surveyed rarely refused promotion (70.4% never declined such an offer) and nearly half of them were interested in holding positions at the top of the corporate ladder. When asked about the reasons for giving up on promotion, they most often quoted the 'family situation'.

Women want to get promoted, but are they given equal opportunities? According to more than half of the female respondents (52.1%), it was their gender that was the source of their being treated worse than men in an equivalent position. In second place, female respondents identified their family situation – almost one in three women (29.5%) felt they were treated worse because of their family situation. This was more often the case for mothers than for women without

children, particularly mothers of children under three, for whom the percentage rose to 45.6%..

Among the barriers that limited their access to higher positions, women pointed out the lack of an adequate professional network, the heavy burden of family responsibilities and the traditional division of roles and social pressure, which seem to be closely related. The traditional division of roles assigns domestic responsibilities mainly to women, and this results in an excessive burden on women. In turn, the heavy burden of family responsibilities contributes to the fact that women find less time for networking and find it more difficult to build a wide professional network.

MOREOVER, THE SURVEY RESULTS SHOWED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST THE GENDER OR FAMILY SITUATION ALONE, BUT ALSO THE STEREOTYPES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM THAT CONSTITUTED A BARRIER TO WOMEN’S CAREERS.

Half of the respondents very often or often encountered the stereotype that „ambitious women are difficult to work with” (52.5%) and that „women are ruled by emotions/hormones even at work” (49.8%). Working mothers, on the other hand, were more likely to encounter an increased prevalence of the stereotype that „a man’s career as the main breadwinner takes precedence over a woman’s career” (46.3%) and that „a woman can develop herself as long as this does not interfere with family responsibilities” (46.5%).

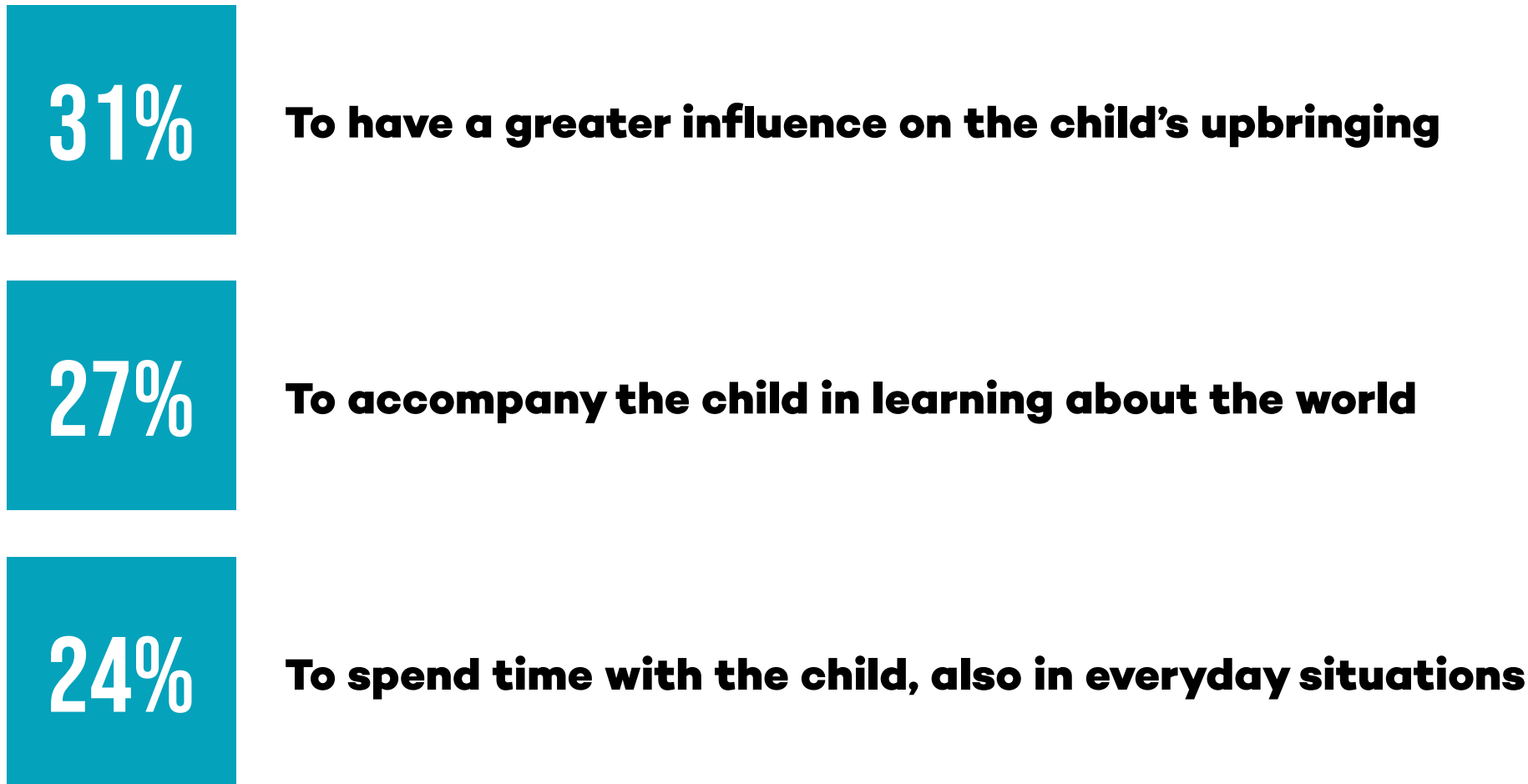
Time to change this.



ARE MEN READY TO USE PARENTAL LEAVE?



WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE (TOP 3)?

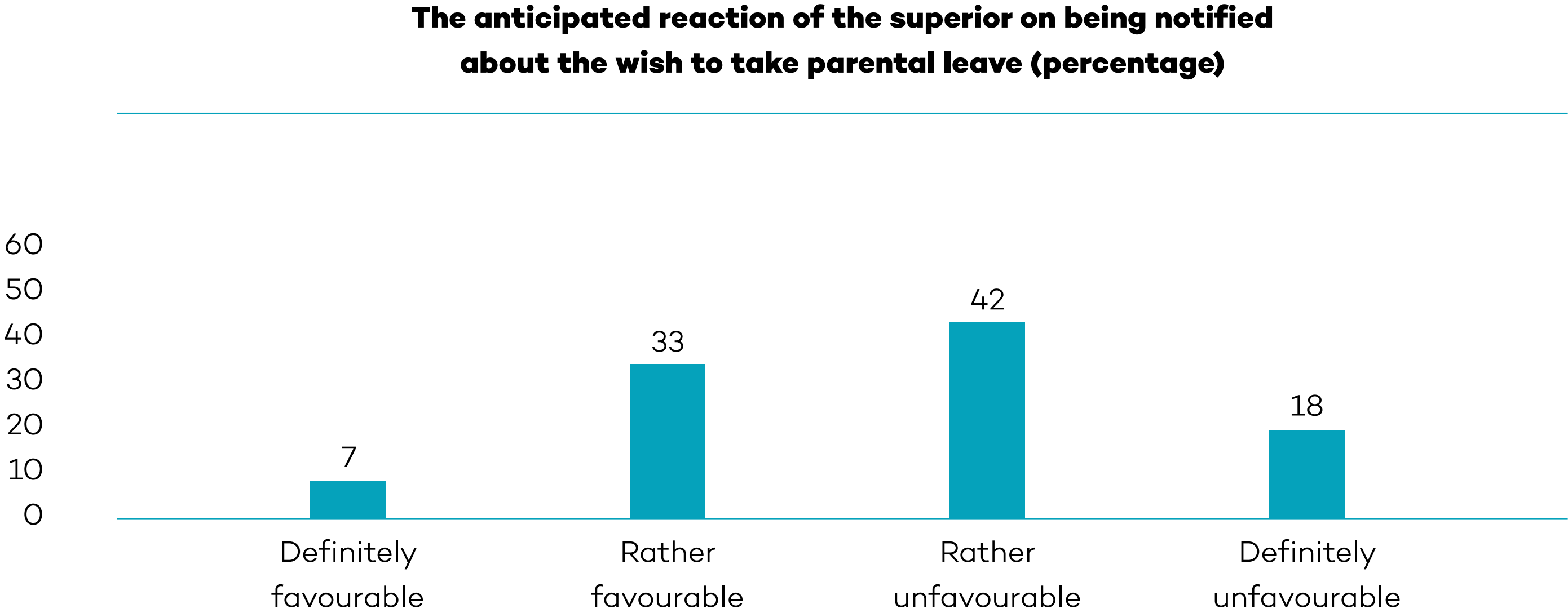


WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE (TOP 3)?



Source: "Opinions of Poles concerning parental leave", IQS Agency, March 2020

**MOST FATHERS BELIEVE
THAT THEIR EMPLOYERS
WOULD SEE THEIR DECISION
TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE
UNFAVOURABLY.**



Source: “Work and home. Challenges for parents and their consequences”, Polish Economic Institute, December 2022



Joanna Włodarczyk
Researcher, collaborator of the Share
the Care Foundation

DEAR MEN, PLEASE TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE! YOU'RE AS READY AS YOU'LL EVER BE

ARE MEN READY TO USE PARENTAL LEAVE? NO, THEY AREN'T.

This is the bad news. But the good news is that no one is actually ready for this. If anyone thinks otherwise, it is safe to tell them: “You know nothing, Jon Snow!”

Parenthood, especially the long hours of single-handedly taking care of a child every day, is unpredictable. It is relatively easy to learn how to change or feed the baby, but what is most difficult

about being on parental leave is dealing with the exhaustion and uncertainty.

This uncertainty is associated with a much more important question than the initial one: Do men feel ready to take parental leave? Here the answer is also negative. In a study conducted by the Share the Care Foundation (Włodarczyk, 2022), a number of interviewees stated that the father is in no way able to match the mother as far as childcare is concerned, especially at the infant stage.

[The child] will always be better off with the mother. There will always be a greater bond between the child and the mother than the father. (a father)

The role of the father starts after the first/second year of life. This is when this role makes sense. This is when the child will benefit more from the father's presence than in infancy. (a father)

Does anything change when we talk about additional parental leave for the father, which takes nothing away from the one-year leave usually taken by the mother? The men who consider such an arrangement still have little faith in their abilities.

I'm not sure if I would cope. I don't know if I would

manage with all of it. It's demanding to stay at home like that. (a father)

Additionally, one of the biggest concerns men have is the reaction of the employer. There is a strong sense of the leave being optional that is not present for women. It is difficult to expect a pregnant woman to wait for a better time to take leave. In the case of a man, this does happen. However, it is worth remembering that the time spent with the child at this early stage of the child's development will not come back, and fortunately more and more men are becoming aware of this.

It's just two months. Let's not fool ourselves, gentlemen, two months is like taking annual leave plus some sickness leave. I think it's down to our mentality that we take work so seriously, thinking that without us something bad would happen or it would be difficult to return to work and we do not allow ourselves to take time off to take care of the family and the baby. (a father)

I believe that the father should be there to witness the child's development, so I would take such a leave. Actually, nothing would stop me, not even some financial issues. Because that 20% is what I actually spend on my commute. (a father)

Quotes: Włodarczyk, J. (2022). "For me a child is always better off with the mother". A report from the study on parental leave for fathers. The Share the Care Foundation





Dr Kamil Janowicz

PhD, psychologist, SWPS University,
founder of the fatheringdaily.com
portal

THE MOTHER'S OPENNESS AS A KEY TO SUCCESS

Fathers' are seemingly showing increasing interest on social media in changes to parental and paternity leave (Facebook groups, fathering forums, comments on various fanpages and profiles). I read this fresh motivation to face this topic as very positive and a great starting point in considering all aspects of taking parental leave.

One aspect is confronting the traditional view of 'the father as the main breadwinner', which is still going strong. This is increasingly being deconstructed by men who are discovering that, for them, fatherhood is more than that – it is about having a close emotional relationship with the child, being involved in caring and nurturing activities, being sensitive and available, spending more time with the child, and also partnering

in household responsibilities, among other things.

This change in attitude is quite slow, but an increasing number of fathers are ready to break the stereotypical pattern. Sharing parental leave with their partner or taking non-transferable parental leave is part of this change.

**THE FEMALE PARTNER'S
WILLINGNESS TO BECOME MORE
INVOLVED IN LOOKING AFTER
THE FAMILY FINANCES IS AN
IMPORTANT CONDITION. IF A MAN
CAN SEE THAT THIS IS NOT JUST
HIS RESPONSIBILITY, IT IS EASIER
FOR HIM TO DECIDE TO TAKE
A TEMPORARY STEP BACK FROM
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY.**

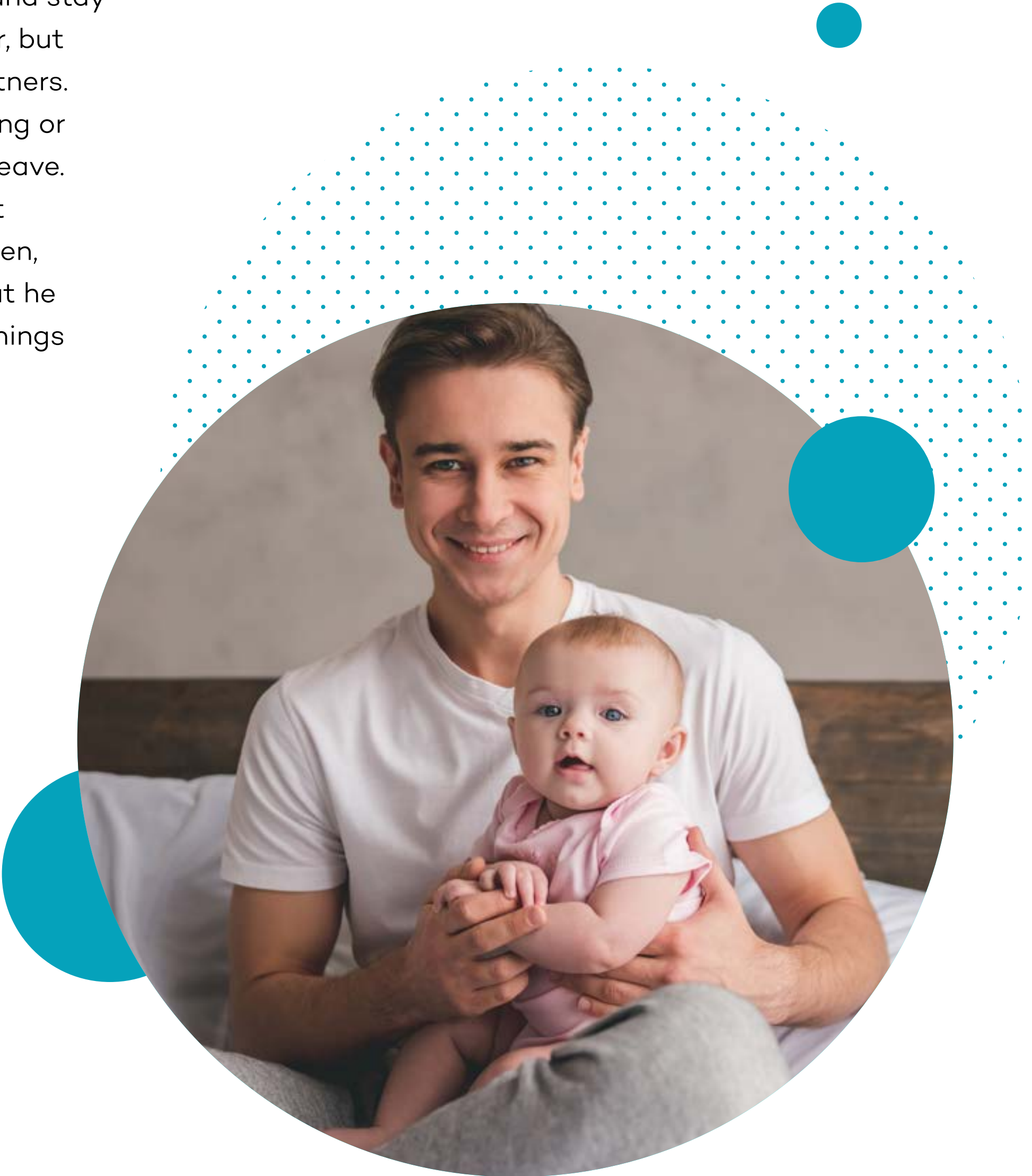
Another important aspect is the sense of being prepared for childcare and relationship building.

There is still a lot of work to be done in this area. A considerable number of fathers feel insecure at the thought of being left alone with a young child and taking on the role of primary carer. They do not always know how to take care of such a child, what to do or how to nurture the bond with a child so young. It is therefore important to provide education and adequate support in this area (through publications aimed at fathers, workshops, support groups, webinars).

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT A SENSE OF COMPETENCE AND AGENCY IN CARING FOR A CHILD AND SUPPORTING THE CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT ARE VERY IMPORTANT FACTORS INCREASING PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT.

It is therefore worth encouraging and supporting fathers, providing knowledge and strengthening competences that none of us are born with. Neither men nor women. But we can learn everything!

The final aspect concerns the readiness of... mums. More and more men want to become involved and stay at home with the child as the primary caregiver, but encounter a lack of trust from their female partners. And this is a very important condition supporting or sabotaging men’s willingness to take parental leave. The key is for mums to be open to the fact that parenting is not exclusively the domain of women, to make space for their partner and accept that he can be a good parent, even if he will do some things differently than a mum.





Piotr Jan Pietrzak
father of a one-year-old Kazik,
International Development Director,
Non-European Markets at BLIK

WHY TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE MAKES YOU A BETTER DAD, PARTNER AND LEADER?

Would you take a few weeks or months off from your daily job to spend time with your loved ones? I do not mean working from home, but truly disconnecting from your office, corporate mailbox and calls. Forget about your professional life, and turn on your autoresponder to “I do not really have access to my email so will answer upon my return in X months time”. Would you? Your answer probably depends on the length of the leave and amount of your salary cut during that period. Or maybe there are some other dependencies that may influence your decision?

Many dads calculate their parental or paternity leave by looking at benefits they may temporarily lose during

their absence at work, but not at benefits they can gain! The fear of what they might miss is great (those great endless meetings leading to nowhere). I do not know if it is a male thing, but most of my friends who are entering into fatherhood seem to not see many advantages of taking leave and entering into the role of a caregiver, reserved in many cultures exclusively for moms. I can imagine that similar concerns may appear in many other kinds of families with two mothers or two fathers.

Whenever the topic of parental leave taken by dads appears, many of my male friends see just one indisputable benefit which is building a stronger bond with their little ones. But they do not see the bigger picture, which reveals so much more than that. What if more new fathers took on caregiving responsibilities? What if they began making that commitment by sharing parental leave with moms? What if taking that time improved work and life balance, while also making fathers feel more positive about their own careers?

I took a commitment of taking (just) two months of partially-paid parental leave. That was a decision made before our son was born. Born to a dual-career couple, with college degrees and financially stable jobs, to make it clear. My partner and I have both developed our careers and they are important to us

equally. Each of us wants to give our baby boy the best of ourselves, but at the same time still be ambitious and care about our careers. Yes, we want to have our cake and eat it.

I am happy we did it, and even more about the fact that as a dad I spent more than just a weekend with our little fella, because the benefits extended beyond the personal gains. Below are a few of them which I have experienced myself, and you or your partner can easily enjoy them in the same way.

INVESTMENT IN YOUR PARTNERSHIP

Some may associate staying at home with dividing household tasks that normally would land on their partner’s daily repetitive endlessly backlog. But beyond housekeeping tasks I see emotional support for moms in early challenging days. Having the father fully engaged at home reduces the burden on the mother and strengthens the relationship as both parents regard themselves as equals. On top of that, such commitment from dad in the early months may have an influence on more egalitarian parenting arrangements long-term. As one of my friends once said, ‘Our family is an airplane with two engines operating at full capacity – that’s me and my partner.’

A LIFELONG AND STRONG BOND WITH YOUR CHILD

Time spent with your child is critical to forging a stronger bond. Money will not buy it, time is precious and parental leave gives that time to dads and their newborns. Increased presence and number of daily interactions tightens those bonds. The more parental or paternity leave a dad takes, the more time he invests, and the stronger lifelong connection he has with his child. The time spent with a kid will naturally be unequal between fathers and mothers, but our aim should be to make the most of the time given us to spend with our little ones. Dads invest in their professional relationships to achieve long-term benefits, and the biggest benefit in your personal life is the support of your kid when you may need it, when you both are much older.

SUPPORT OF YOUR PARTNER’S CAREER

Gender inequality takes many forms including but not limited to unequal pay and disparity in promotions.

One of many reasons is that women have a break from work when their child comes into this world. Dads taking over daily responsibilities help moms in a faster return to the workforce. I strongly believe that this can contribute to closing the gender gap. In the case of a dual-career relationship when both parents are able to share parental leave, they can both stay on track in their professional life. In the long-term, successful dual-career parents increase total household financial well-being. Remember my friend comparing parents to two engines? It is also about financial engines bringing stability, freedom and security.

ADVANCE YOUR OWN CAREER

Do you recognise mixed feelings of sadness but also motivation to work when you return from holidays? Now imagine how motivated you could be upon the return from weeks or months off. With a renewed sense of priorities, some fathers are more productive and prioritize their office time better, like myself. Paternity leave helps to take a step back and get your head above water, to get some better perspective at work. When your head is free from the daily office rush you can rethink what you like and dislike about the job, and motivate yourself to change something about it. Taking a longer break from work does not slow your

career, it gives it a boost!

When thinking about parental or paternity leave, do not focus only on possible career setbacks. It is possible for you to be a better dad and better partner while also being a successful professional. Simply put, dads on leave are good for business! While the challenge of getting dads to take parental or paternity leave is long-standing, and I will not change that with my written thoughts, I wish that one, two or maybe even three future dads from among my readers, will change their attitudes toward leave, and perhaps decide to take one. Talk to your boss and tell them that you read this article and want to discuss things now.

Dear Dads! From 26 April you can take advantage of the nine weeks of parental leave that are reserved just for you. If you don't use it, you'll lose it.

And here let me quote Mark Twain: “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”



ARE EMPLOYERS READY FOR THE CHANGE?





Paulina Janiak
co-founder of Femmeritum.
Psychologist, coach and mentor,
EMCC EIA Practitioner Level. An
active member of the European
Mentoring & Coaching Council
Poland

ARE EMPLOYERS READY TO IMPLEMENT THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE?

Is it possible to be unprepared for legislation that has been being prepared for the last two years and debated even earlier at European Union level? In my opinion, the question we should ask instead is: can employers effectively take advantage of the opportunities which the implementation of the work-life balance directive has to offer our labour market, business efficiency and gender equality. Whoever recognises the links between parental and gender equality and is able to translate this into business processes and a supportive organisational culture will gain an indisputable competitive advantage.

Men's involvement in childcare is inextricably linked

to women's participation in the labour market. The directive on gender balance, which was recently voted through by the European Parliament, forces employers to have relevant quotas on management and supervisory boards. In Poland, 43% of managerial positions are held by women, one of the highest figures in the EU. However, at board level, the percentage drops to 17%. Do women not want to be promoted and apply for higher positions?

RESEARCH BY THE POLISH ECONOMIC INSTITUTE HAS SHOWN THAT WOMEN ARE JUST AS KEEN AS MEN TO DEVELOP PROFESSIONALLY.

The 30% Club Poland report also confirms this. What is stopping women from reaching these top positions? To a large extent, it is the burden of caring responsibilities. It is mainly mothers who shoulder most of the responsibilities, even in families where both parents work professionally (68%, Polish Economic Institute).

It should therefore come as no surprise that family

responsibilities account for 32% of all reasons for women's lower activity, in contrast to men for whom they only account for 3% ("Women, the labour market and equal pay" survey by the Women's Congress). Research by the Share the Care Foundation has shown that it is employers that women expect to dispel gender stereotypes regarding the role of women and men in the family.

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE WORKPLACE EFFECTIVELY HINDER WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT AND THUS THE FULL REALISATION OF THEIR POTENTIAL.

Some employers have long recognised this and have taken action without waiting for either the work-life balance directive, the gender balance directive or directives setting ESG reporting standards. They know that these changes cannot be made quickly. What is needed is consistent action in many areas over a longer period.

The Edelman Trust Barometer concerning social

trust has shown that business organisations are the most trusted. They are the ones who are expected to be the leaders of social change, setting the course of action responding to the challenges of today's world. This trust invokes great responsibility, but is also a foundation for working together for a better tomorrow. Isn't this a window of opportunity which begs to be used?





Karolina Andrian
President
Share the Care Foundation

FIRST IMPRESSION COUNTS

HOW A MANAGER'S RESPONSE CAN DETERMINE A FATHER'S DECISION TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE.

Managers are the strategic link of change when it comes to fathers' leave. Their attitude translates directly into the culture of the organisation.

While in the case of mothers the support of the manager is crucial for the process of returning to work, in the case of fathers, a manager's reaction can make all the difference with a father deciding whether to take leave at all. A manager's reaction to a father's announcement of the intention to take parental leave can also determine subsequent decisions of other

fathers.

An employee-father will ask himself the following questions:

- Will my manager understand my needs?
- Will my manager bear a grudge against me for wanting to take parental leave?
- Will I be made redundant?
- Will the team cope without me?
- Will the team think I'm just 'sitting at home with the baby' instead of working?
- Will I be punished for my decision i.e. deprived of a bonus, a pay rise, and no longer being assigned to interesting projects?

It is worth discussing the above issues with your management group and addressing the operational risks that arise with them.

It is likely that the current managers themselves did not have the opportunity to take parental leave or share it with their partner. Therefore, they cannot refer to their personal experience. This can be a barrier to understanding the new situation and the needs of the new generation. The differences in attitudes to the role of the man in the family can be significant here. Older generations of men understand loving their family

as providing for it financially. Younger ones see it as having a deep bond with their loved ones.

THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY. IF WE WANT TO MOVE WITH THE TIMES AND HAVE AN ENGAGED TEAM, WE NEED TO TREAT EMPLOYEES AS PARTNERS AND TAKE THEIR NEEDS REGARDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE INTO ACCOUNT.
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A company’s policy on building parental equality must be clear and understandable for managers. Process support should be prepared in the area of managing the absence of employees-parents (9-week long or longer).

The employer has the tools to support teams during a father’s absence – it has developed them, for example, to manage the absence of employee-mothers. The difference between fathers and mothers

is that we can prepare for a woman’s absence during her pregnancy. A father, on the other hand, according to the Labour Code, submits a request for parental leave 21 days before it starts. This is a very short period to prepare for his absence, especially since as an employer we may not be aware he is expecting a child.

This situation requires measures to build mutual trust between the employee and the manager and employer. This can determine the success of the whole process.

Developing measures to strengthen trust and information flow as well as real support from managers is key for the success of any effort to transform the organisation with inclusivity and parental equality in mind.

It is normal to be afraid of change – this is true for everyone. For decades, cultural messaging has told us that a child’s care should be in its mother’s hands. Recognising the father as an equal carer is still difficult, but very important. Men increasingly want to build a bond with their children from the very beginning, share family responsibilities fairly with their partners and give their partners the chance to have the same professional development as they have themselves.

Employers who understand this and build an organisational culture that recognises and supports these needs will have a competitive advantage over other businesses. Those that fall behind will still have to comply with the new guidelines, if only because of ESG reporting requirements. Even if the reporting does not affect their company directly, it is likely to be enforced by their business partners who care about ESG within their value chain.

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FINANCIAL BARRIERS CAN BE OVERCOME

Autor: **Karolina Andrian**
President of the Share the Care
Foundation

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One of the main reasons why men do not take parental leave is finance. The most common answer is: “I earn more than my partner, it is not financially viable for us.” Interestingly, it is not only men who raise this argument, but also their female partners – the household budget can suffer because of the father’s parental leave, as the one who usually earns more loses a percentage of his salary. Another barrier pointed out by men is the form of employment – most often a B2B contract, which is much more often chosen by men due to compulsory tax and social security contributions optimisation.

As much as the form of employment of men requires more discussion and changes, the financial barriers pointed out by those on employment contracts can be

removed quite simply.

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EMPLOYERS CAN OPT FOR 100% SALARY SUBSIDIES, WHICH MEANS TOPPING UP A MAN’S SALARY BY 30% FOR TWO MONTHS.

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How to finance that?

When an employee-father decides to take nine weeks of parental leave, the financing of his salary is immediately taken over by the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). The employer thus retains the salary of this employee in their budget.

Employers will rarely choose to hire a temporary employee to cover the position for nine weeks. This is basically unfeasible given the recruitment or onboarding time.

What can then be done with the nine weeks of salary saved by a dad going on parental leave? The option described earlier – 30% can be used to subsidise the salary of the father on parental leave, so that his

salary during this time is 100%. The remainder of the salary can be used to provide extra allowances for employees who will undertake the employee’s duties during his absence.

What can we gain as an employer? Quite a lot, actually.

Firstly, we eliminate the financial barrier for new fathers described above.

Secondly, we have a benefit that is very attractive for employees, which enables fathers to exercise their rights and fulfil their needs also in the area of being a parent and partner to their wife.

Thirdly, while on parental leave the employee-father acquires a number of soft skills that can be easily transferred and used in the professional field – to the benefit of both the employee-father and his team.

Last but not least, through such actions, we are building parental equality in our organisation, promoting partnership between men and women, raising men’s awareness of their role in levelling the playing field for women in the labour market, dispelling gender stereotypes operating in the area of family and work, and building a more diverse and inclusive

workplace. No one needs to be convinced of the benefits of diversity anymore.

If a woman’s perspective is close to your heart, surely the questions “what about women?”, „why aren’t women’s salaries subsidised to 100%?”, may spring to mind.

It is worth referring to the Labour Code. A woman taking maternity and parental leave can receive maternity allowance at 100% for 20 weeks and at 70% for 32 weeks or an average maternity allowance of 81.5% for 52 weeks (12 months). Men have no such option – only two weeks of paternity leave are paid at 100%.





Sylwia Ziemacka
Council Member of the
Share the Care Foundation

● A DAD-FRIENDLY COMPANY

April, has seen the enforcement of the work-life balance directive in Poland, a directive which is specifically intended to strengthen parental leave for fathers. However, there are companies in Poland which did not wait for the new regulations and have been supporting their employees in the work-life balance on their own for years.

THE DAD-FRIENDLY COMPANY RANKING (IN POLISH: “FIRMA PRZYJAZNA TACIE NA ETACIE”) ORGANISED BY FORBES WOMEN, THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK POLAND AND THE SHARE THE CARE FOUNDATION, HIGHLIGHTED

GOOD EXAMPLES AND PRACTICES OF ORGANISATIONS IN ORDER TO INSPIRE COMPANIES TO CHANGE.

From all the entries, the award committee selected finalists who recognise the parenting needs of fathers working for them, as well as those who use the power of their brands to address the topic of engaged fatherhood in the public space. The companies on the podium were: NatWest, Phillip Morris and Ikea. Honourable mentions went to BNP Paribas and the Polish Economic Institute. By rewarding them, we showcase good practice and encourage more companies to act responsibly in this area.

“We all agree on the principle that women and men should have the same rights and have the same opportunities for development. Unfortunately, in practice this ideal is far removed from reality. Not only is progress in gender equality frustratingly slow, but we often experience the opposite process – going backwards in equality. At Forbes Women, we have not only been supporting women to succeed for years, but we have been saying that equality pays off for everyone. That is why it is so important to

convince men of the idea of equality and to promote role models of male childcare providers, partners who share household responsibilities and leaders who support parents in their companies,” says Aleksandra Karasińska, editor-in-chief of Forbes Women.

“The results of the ranking show that companies increasingly realise that parental equality is inextricably linked to equality in the labour market. We hope that the amendment to the Labour Code providing for nine weeks of parental leave for fathers will contribute to the further popularisation of dad-friendly solutions in the workplace,” says Karolina Andrian, President of the Share the Care Foundation.

“The UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 5 which assumes achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030 sets out very precisely the tasks to be accomplished, e.g. valuing unpaid care work and housework by promoting shared responsibility in the household and family. The activities of the winners of the ‘Dad-Friendly Company’ ranking in favour of parental equality bring us closer to the realisation of SDG 5, inspire us and are excellent examples of real action in striving for gender equality,” says Anna Potocka-Domin, Head of Business and Human Rights Programme | Board Member, UNGC.

WHAT CONNECTS THE WINNING COMPANIES – NATWEST, PHILLIP MORRIS AND IKEA – IS A STRATEGIC AND MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO THE TOPIC OF PARENTAL EQUALITY. THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THEIR BOARDS OF DIRECTORS.

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The organisations are prepared in terms of HR processes and communications. The need to support fathers is clear to employees and managers. It is intended to favour men, but also to build equality for women in the labour market. Additional benefits addressing the financial barrier that often demotivates men from taking parental leave also deserve recognition.

Building such a support system takes time, but it is worth addressing this topic holistically within the company, especially in the context of the amendment to the Labour Code. The amendment is bound to result in more fathers taking nine weeks of parental leave. This will necessitate or has already

necessitated an update to the procedures and processes in the organisation. However, it is worth going a step further to ensure that the new benefits are actually used by employees.

Communication, education and shaping an organisational culture that supports parental equality are key to success. Words have power and our experience clearly demonstrates the need for fathers to be singled out in communication. Being aware of this, companies are updating existing communications and including the father’s perspective. Research shows that men in Poland do not exercise their parental rights for fear of losing their jobs or losing their professional position, among other things. Employers who create an organisational culture in which men feel confident in taking paternity or parental leave, or are not afraid to take sick leave if their child is ill, deserve recognition.

PROVIDING RELIABLE INFORMATION ON FATHERS’ PARENTAL RIGHTS, PREPARING MATERIALS, AND ORGANISING WEBINARS OR WORKSHOPS FOR FATHERS ON

**THEIR RIGHTS ARE ALL VALUABLE
ACTIVITIES WHICH MAY SEEM
UNSPECTACULAR, BUT IT IS THROUGH
THEM THAT REAL CHANGE HAS
A CHANCE TO HAPPEN.**

Of course, employers have the opportunity to engage in building an organisational culture supporting parental equality to a much greater extent. Subsidising up to 100% of salary during parental leave or offering employees additional fully-paid paternity leave are very attractive benefits, appreciated by men and their female partners. But the most important issue concerns appropriate communication – informing and creating an atmosphere of acceptance.

The power of communication does not only apply to activities aimed at employees. More and more brands are challenging gender stereotypes through social and marketing campaigns in the public space. Such campaigns shape a new order and promote equality, inclusion and diversity.

Advertisements convincing the public that involved

fatherhood is the new social norm will accelerate the process of achieving gender equality in all areas of life.

The first edition of the “Dad-Friendly Company” ranking has identified the leaders of change. With the implementation of the work-life balance directive, we hope that more employers will commit to achieving parental equality. This will make the use of parental leave by fathers the norm. And let us remember that at the end of the day this will result in many benefits not only for children, women, and fathers but also employers.





Ewa Sobiech
Manager People Engagement,
Inclusion & Diversity, Philip Morris
International

● **AT PHILIP MORRIS
POLSKA, WE SUBSIDISE
UP TO 100% OF THE
SALARY OF FATHERS ON
PARENTAL LEAVE**

The enforcement of the work-life balance directive means 9 additional weeks of parental leave for the other parent. The maternity allowance for this period is 70% of base salary. We know that the loss of 30% of one family member's salary can be severe for the household budget.

**IN AN EFFORT TO ADDRESS THIS
FINANCIAL BARRIER, CITED BY MANY
FAMILIES AS THE MAIN REASON FOR**

**NOT SHARING PARENTAL LEAVE,
PHILIP MORRIS IN POLAND (PMI)
HAS INTRODUCED A SUBSIDY FOR
FATHERS TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE
TOPPING UP THEIR SALARIES UP TO
100% PAY DURING NINE WEEKS OF
LEAVE.**

We introduced this solution in Poland with reference to the standard adopted by the company globally. For this reason, we decided to subsidise 100% of the salary rather than introduce a fully-paid paternity leave for fathers. It is certainly a unique solution on the Polish market. We introduced this global solution with the overarching goal in mind: to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market and for men in childcare.

We believe that a dad who takes his share of parental leave after the mum has returned to work both supports his partner's professional development and gives himself a space to bond and become more competent in taking care of his child. As a result, even

after parental leave is over, he is more involved in the life of the child and the family, which is confirmed by numerous studies and our observations. This relieves the burden of the mum and has many benefits for the children.

We are positive that far more men will decide to take their share of parental leave. At PMI, they will not have financial dilemmas as our company offers the aforementioned 100% pay subsidy.

This solution is part of a multi-level ‘Happy Parents’ programme supporting working parents. In addition to the solutions described above, PMI offers a special ‘First Month’ package to employees returning from maternity or parental leave. This is a solution rarely used on the Polish market. During the first month back at work after parental or maternity leave, a parent can work part-time while retaining full remuneration. Our activities also include an internal education campaign on parental rights and the benefits of sharing leave. We have launched an intranet site where employees can find key legal information, parental leave forms and requests, and educational materials addressing the benefits for sharing parental leave for women, men and children, among other things. We have also prepared our managers for the changes. Together, we have developed tools to help them

organise workload during the absence of new fathers. We therefore feel that as an organisation we are well-prepared for the work-life balance directive in this respect.





Małgorzata Petru
Diversity & Inclusion Manager,
Diversity Officer, BNP Paribas Bank
Polska

BNP PARIBAS BANK POLSKA – THE BANK FOR A CHANGING WORLD

IN OUR ORGANISATION, WE
HAVE BEEN PREPARING FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK-
LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE FOR A FEW
YEARS NOW.

The topic of reconciling work and family life has proven to be important for both women and men, so we have taken a number of initiatives aimed primarily at creating an environment of acceptance of our employees' choices.

Being able to listen to the voices of others is not easy,

especially when you have followed well-trodden paths all your life. But a change in attitude is essential. It is necessary to look for solutions, to be courageous. Once a person accepts that change is an immanent part of life, they will understand that they should also be part of it. A change of attitude will help them and the organisation they work for.

We are particularly proud of the programmes run as part of employee networks – ‘Women changing BNP Paribas’ and ‘Dad, you can bank on it’.

Dad, you can bank on it

It is an initiative which was started by fathers employed at the bank focused on developing parenting skills, fathers' rights, parental equality and the taking of parental leave by men. The initiative was born in the office corridor when Konrad Siedlecki, a dad of two, started a conversation with his male colleagues about parenthood. It turned out that there was a need among fathers to share experiences concerning childcare and talk about fatherhood with fellow men. Konrad knows from his personal experience how becoming engaged in childcare from infancy translated into the bond with his child. "It's no longer: 'mummy, mummy!' but also 'daddy!'," Konrad says.

“I have an impression that such conversations used to be a taboo topic for guys. We often tried to transfer the responsibility for bringing up a child onto the partner. Now times have changed, we are responsible modern guys who want to actively participate in family life. Talking about this is extremely important and desirable,” emphasised another group member.

‘Women changing BNP Paribas’ support working parents

The initiative ‘Women changing BNP Paribas’ was also created in a bottom-up way. The idea was initiated from the need to build gender equality, ensure greater representation of women within management and project structures and support broadly-defined diversity and inclusion.

We want to make women more confident and comfortable and to have a sense that they have equal access to the development opportunities offered by BNP Paribas Bank. We want to unleash their potential and create a space for them to realise what they really want – without feeling guilty.

**WE BELIEVE THAT OUR INITIATIVES
WILL LEAD TO A CHANGE IN WOMEN’S**

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEMSELVES
AND THEIR CAPABILITIES.**

We look at this more broadly than just through the prism of professional life, because work intersects with our family life. If men want their daughters, wives, sisters, friends to live in a world of equal opportunities, it makes sense for them to create equal opportunities for their female colleagues at work. They should ask themselves if this is the kind of professional environment they would want for the women close to them. If men appreciate their female colleagues for their ambition and desire to develop, why not create the conditions for their wives or partners to develop by becoming involved in childcare and household duties? If women want to combine their professional development with family life, but think they can’t do it, it is worth remembering that they don’t have to be perfect at everything and that they don’t have to do everything on their own. It is worth working on the work-life balance. It’s not worth giving up on yourself.





Iwona Dudzińska
Managing Director, Citibank Europe
Poland Branch

CITI – DIVERSITY IS ABOUT RESPECTING AND SUPPORTING THE AMBITIONS OF ALL EMPLOYEES

AT CITI WE REALISE THAT SINCE MORE AND MORE MOTHERS AND FATHERS SUCCEEDING IN THE ORGANISATION HAVE SIMILAR AMBITIONS – BOTH REGARDING INVESTING IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

IN BRINGING UP CHILDREN – IT IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT BOTH PARENTS.

In 2021, we implemented internationally the so-called global minimum standard – a minimum of 16 weeks of fully-paid maternity leave (which in Poland is already guaranteed by the legislator) and four weeks of fully-paid paternity leave. In Poland, men are entitled to two weeks of fully paid-paternity leave, so the two additional weeks are covered by Citi from its own means.

Our initiative is important not only for financial reasons, but above all for psychological ones. For our employees, recognising such a need already means a lot, because gender stereotypes which still surround us create all sorts of barriers.

In our organisation, fathers who want to take parental leave can feel confident. They do not have to fear the negative consequences indicated by men in many studies, such as the fear of losing their job, worsening of their professional position or the reaction of their employer.

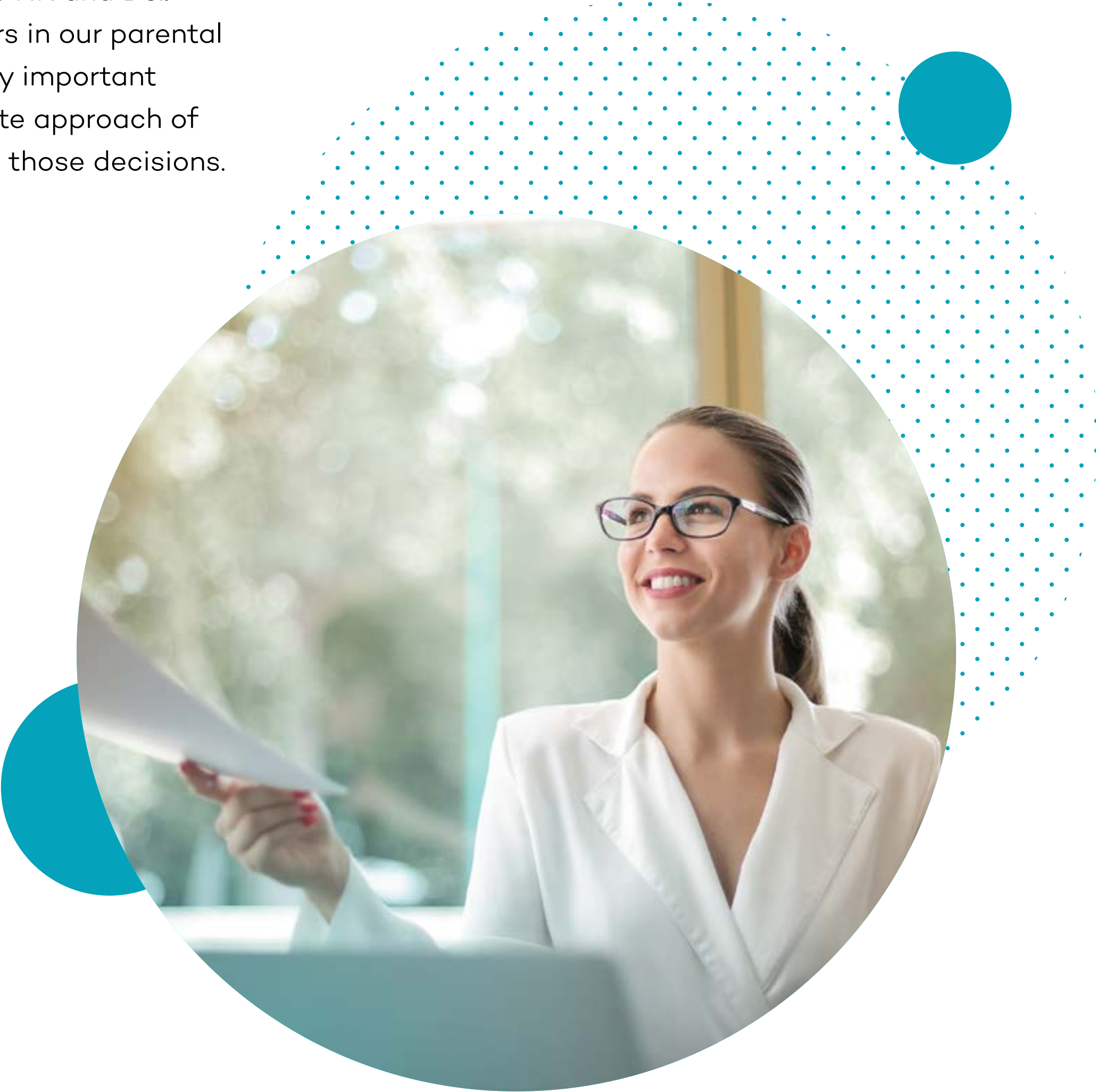
Moreover, we can see that such an arrangement reduces the risk of burnout among men. It is not often mentioned, but a month off from professional work and an opportunity to redirect one's thoughts and energies to children makes it possible to distance oneself from many things.

WORKING MOTHERS CAN ALSO COUNT ON OUR SUPPORT.

Citi takes various measures to support women in their careers and to show that parenthood does not conflict with professional development. These include mentoring, dedicated training for women, processes aimed at closing the gender pay gap implemented by, among others, the Inclusion and Diversity team responsible for diversity management and the Citi Women Network.

Also we have Families Matter Network, a group of parents working at Citi, which has set itself the goal of supporting families, particularly in finding a work-life balance. The Network provides education, experience sharing, and regular training and workshops where employees can discuss partnerships and equality, as well as various other parenting challenges.

Building an organisational culture is a team effort. For the process to be effective, we need to involve employees at all levels. Therefore, in addition to the strategic support of the board and the HR and D&I departments, we also involve managers in our parental equality activities. Their support is very important for working parents and the appropriate approach of superiors affects comfort while taking those decisions.





Marta Podedworna
Director of Remuneration and
Employee Matters Department at
Bank Gispodarstwa Krajowego

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BALANCE IN AN EMPLOYEE'S LIFE IS A SUCCESS FOR THE WHOLE ORGANISATION

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OUR EMPLOYEES CARE ABOUT WORK-LIFE BALANCE, SO WE AS AN EMPLOYER CARE ABOUT IT TOO.

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Thanks to the amendments to the Labour Code, including, among other things, nine weeks of additional parental leave for fathers, it will be easier for women to reconcile family life with work. It is also about returning to professional activity after a break related to the birth of a child. This is a particularly difficult time for most mothers. The fact that the child will then be taken care of by the father is far less stressful for the

mother than leaving her son or daughter in the nursery or in the care of a third party.

Research shows that men who have been on parental leave are more involved in childcare and home life even after returning to work. This is particularly important in the light of a study by the Polish Economic Institute of December 2022, which shows that even in families where both parents work, it is the mothers who take care of the children to a much greater extent.

The nine weeks of parental leave for the father emphasises his crucial role in raising the child from the very beginning. Thanks to the changes in the Labour Code, fathers will be able to actively participate in the first months of the child's life, build a bond with the child from infancy and be part of the parenting process. This has a positive influence on a sense of responsibility and involvement.

We are convinced that this nine-week break from work will give fathers the chance to build their parenting skills and get a fresh perspective. Fathers working at BGK who have previously taken parental leave confirm that such a break has enriched their experience and allowed them to gain strength and motivation for other activities, including professional ones.

With reference to the financial benefits of this solution – parents can save money by not having to pay for a nanny, private nursery or kindergarten. For the two months of taking care of his child, the father is entitled to partial remuneration.

We have been discussing the work-life balance directive with our employees for more than two years. A survey conducted at BGK confirms that it is a good solution. Our employees are open to us as an employer encouraging the taking of paternity and parental leave. Reducing stress amongst employees at this time has a positive impact on the functioning of the entire organisation.





Agnieszka Jankowska
head of HRBP, Grupa OLX

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LET'S LOOK AT THIS CHANGE IN TERMS OF BENEFITS FOR ALL

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THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE
HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED A LONG TIME
AGO AND THE PRINCIPLES UPON
WHICH THE CHANGES WERE TO BE
IMPLEMENTED IN POLAND HAD ALSO
BEEN COMMUNICATED FOR MANY
MONTHS.

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Preparing appropriate procedures in a company which
directly result from the amendment of the Labour

Code is one thing, but applying them in practice
is another. And here we do not have the slightest
doubt that without the support of HR and internal
communication departments, the new law may not go
any further than the words on the page.

Building awareness of the new law in Poland, including
the father's right to nine additional weeks of parental
leave, requires a long-term and consistent approach
from employers. It may be good practice to create an
intranet page where parents and guardians can find
all the necessary information on their rights and the
associated formalities. In addition, the page could also
include content on parental leave sharing. It is worth
emphasising that this change is intended to help make
women more active in the labour market, so the new
provisions should bring benefits to working mothers as
well as fathers and children.

What's in it for employers? The directive as a tool to
build equality in the labour market will help to build
diverse and inclusive teams. This translates into
higher levels of innovation and better understanding
of customer needs. It helps attract talent and
ensures higher retention. It also increases employee
engagement and loyalty, as employees appreciate
it when employers accept and support their need to
spend time with their families.

DIRECT SUPERIORS PLAY A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS AREA. IT IS WORTH SYSTEMATICALLY UPDATING MANAGERS’ KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTAL LEAVE, INCLUDING THAT TAKEN BY FATHERS.

It is also important to develop scenarios to help spread the team’s workload during a parent’s absence. According to the Labour Code, men can apply for parental leave 21 days before it starts. Undoubtedly, planning the team’s work with such notice will require employers to be flexible, but it will also demonstrate that the organisation is supportive and treats the different life roles of its employees with seriousness and respect.

Despite certain challenges which are natural when implementing any change, it is worth looking positively at what we can achieve through the work-life balance directive. As the American motivational speaker

Wayne Dyer said: “If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” Let’s look at this change in terms of benefits for all.





Joanna Osińska
CEE Talent Lead, Nestlé Poland

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WE ARE PART OF THE CHANGE

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AT NESTLÉ POLAND, WE CARE ABOUT PARENT-FRIENDLY WORKING ENVIRONMENT. WE HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKING A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT PARENTAL EQUALITY FOR YEARS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT EVERY DAD AND MUM WORKING FOR OUR COMPANY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL THEMSELVES AS PARENTS.

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We know that raising children can be really challenging for working parents. That is why we want to create the right conditions for combining private life with work life. Especially as taking care of children together increases happiness.

However, as the results of the Parenting Index, a study commissioned by Nestlé in 16 countries around the world, including Poland, show, our country has one of the lowest rates of equal division of childcare. Only **33% of parents agree with the statement „in my house we share parental responsibilities equally”**. That is why support in this area is so important. We deeply believe that as an employer we have a significant role to play in this field.

For Nestlé Poland, these are not just empty words. We realise how important it is to build a bond with the child from the first days of life. That is why in 2021 we introduced a new policy to support parents working for Nestlé in Poland. According to our internal regulation, each Second Guardian can take four weeks of additional fully-paid paternity leave within one year from the date of the child’s birth or adoption. In this way, we want to encourage fathers to become more involved in caring for their little ones.

Other benefits offered to parents working in our

company include flexible working hours, shorter Fridays, preferential medical care packages for the whole family, an extra day for childcare and welcome packages for newborns.

Our company is also involved in educational activities. On the **Nestlé Baby&Me** platform, a ‘Dad Zone’ has been created with dedicated content aimed at fathers. The materials published there aim to give support and increase their confidence in their new role.

An inclusive working environment has been part of our company’s DNA for years. **Currently, 50% of management positions at Nestlé Poland are held by women**, and this year our company was recognized in the Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index for the fifth time with a top score of 78.5%. One of the activities building awareness of diversity in the organisation are the webinars which we make available to our employees.

Everything we do stems from the desire for every employee to be able to fulfil themselves both at work and at home. As an employer, we are not only ready for change, but have already become part of it.



FROM THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE





Renata Szredzińska
Board Member, the Empowering
Children Foundation

THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CHILD'S WELFARE

The new legislation resulting from the implementation of the work-life balance directive provides an opportunity for a child to become securely attached to both parents. It is important not to lose sight of the welfare of the child when discussing the benefits of the new law. It is the child who can gain the most from this. Numerous studies point out a number of positive aspects of father's involvement in the care of the child in its early months. Examples of countries that implemented such a social policy long ago (e.g. Iceland in 2000) prove that it works and serves the youngest.

FORMING A BOND WITH THE FATHER

Greater presence and involvement of fathers in childcare, especially in the first months of the child's life, gives fathers the chance to build a secure bond with the child, which can significantly support building the foundations of the child's mental health. Moreover, it helps fathers to develop nurturing and parenting skills at a higher level, gives them the chance to get to know the child, its character, habits, preferences, which makes the father a more attentive parent who is able to provide the child with greater emotional security in the subsequent stages of the child's life. Research shows that the more time a father spends with his child in the first months of life, the more competent he becomes and he is more likely to become involved in caring for and playing with his child in the following years.

BUILDING A BOND WITH AN ADOPTED CHILD

When a non-biological child enters a family (as a result of foster care or adoption), irrespective of the

child's age, the extra time is important to develop the new family bonds and build a harmonious and stable environment. This may reduce the risk of the adoption being reversed.

Greater involvement of fathers in childcare, especially in the first months of a child's life, has an unequivocally positive effect on building a secure bond between a child and a father, and creating opportunities for better communication in the future as well as the child's emotional development, building the child's social competence, the child's cognitive development, improving academic performance and building self-esteem.

A BETTER BOND WITH A TEENAGER

The importance of the quality of the relationship with the father built up during the early years of a child's life is particularly evident during adolescence. Children whose relationship with their father in infancy and early childhood was close and based on trust have fewer social problems in adolescence, better relationships with their peers, and are able to deal with conflicts, disagreements and differences of opinion.

PREVENTION OF MENTAL DISORDERS

In the long term, a good relationship with the father is also an additional factor protecting against the development of mental disorders and self-destructive behaviour, including suicide attempts. It should be noted that the mental state of children and adolescents in Poland has been deteriorating in recent years. In 2019, nearly 10,000 people aged 0-18 years were hospitalised for mental and behavioural disorders. The number of suicides committed by young people under 18 has also been increasing for years. Suicide is now the second cause of death in the 10-19 age group.

A good relationship with the father means extending the support available to the child, especially in the teenage years. Currently, only 40% of Polish teenagers declare that they would turn to their father in a difficult situation. Fathers are outranked by mothers (67%) and peers (43%). Fathers are on a par with grandparents.

Research also shows that teenagers whose fathers showed more involvement and interest in their early childhood are less likely to get into conflicts with the law or use stimulants.

Greater involvement of fathers in childcare, especially in the first months of a child's life, also relieves mothers, who usually bear the entire burden of caring for a young child. The presence and involvement of the child's father can take some of the responsibilities away from the mothers and provide emotional support. It is also a recognised protective factor against the development of postnatal depression in mothers. A calmer, more attentive, and less tired mother is in a better position to provide loving care to her child and create a more secure bond.

PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE

Fathers' involvement and consequently a stable, secure relationship, a deeper understanding of the child and his or her needs and an equal distribution of responsibilities minimises the possibility of violent relationships, including physical punishment.

Greater involvement of fathers in the care of the child and a more equal division of household responsibilities between the two parents can contribute to preventing conflicts in the family, provides a more harmonious atmosphere for the child's development, and can be a protective factor against conflicts and relationship

or family breakdown.

BUILDING OF CORRECT ATTACHMENT PATTERNS

In addition, the harmony in the parents’ relationship and the low stress levels of both parents contribute to the development of attachment patterns that give the child a sense of security and provide a basis for valuable relationships in the years to come.

However, should the relationship between mother and father break down, the established bond and relationship between father and child and the father’s higher parental competence will make it easier for the child to maintain a relationship with both parents even after the break-up. This can also be an important rationale for the court when establishing custody after divorce to award shared custody (also known as alternate custody).

Greater involvement of fathers in childcare in the first months of a child’s life will also have a positive impact on changes in social awareness and on moving away from gender stereotypes regarding family roles and parental figures in Poland, e.g. the stereotype of

the mother sacrificing herself for the child and the absent father providing for the family. Such changes may influence a more equal approach to the role of the family as a stable and safe environment for all its members rather than a cultural and legal construct with pre-assigned roles and limitations.



SOCIAL CONTEXT



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A BROADER PERSPECTIVE SERVES NOT ONLY SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, BUT ALSO THE INDIVIDUAL

An interview with **Professor Irena E. Kotowska**, a demographer from the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH), honorary Chairperson of the PAN Demographic Sciences Committee.

The act implementing the work-life balance directive has come into force. Could this build a perception among employees that parents receive privileges, while childless people and singles have to work for them?

You cannot talk these days about the work environment treating employees only as individual participants in professional life, without considering the whole family background. Some workers have obligations, some do not, and some may have them in the future. I would therefore consider this issue in terms of being a member of a certain community and solidarity, both intra- and inter-generational. I am reaching for such broader categories, but I think that is what needs to be addressed.

This means that the community, its members, but also the state which is responsible for organising the life of that community, must take into account precisely these mutual relationships. The reactions that “others have it better”, or “it seems to me that they have it better”, or that „they had it better” are probably linked to increasing individualism. And indeed, social and cultural changes indicate that individualism determines our behaviour to a significant degree.

I would therefore refer to arguments from the macro

and meso levels. From a macroeconomic perspective, we know that trends in the age structure indicate that the number of people of working age is declining, i.e. there will be fewer workers on the labour market. It therefore becomes crucial to make the most effective use of these dwindling labour resources.

It is then understandable that an employer will want to create a working environment that encourages employees to work for his organisation. Therefore, he looks for solutions which will make those who take up a job with the company feel good. Since there is a shortage of employees, staff turnover is to be expected, as employees may seek better jobs.

It is therefore in the interest of employers to create an environment that is not only friendly to professional development, but is also inclusive and in some way integrates the employee into the workplace. In other words, it is not only business considerations that count, but also social and solidarity considerations. Employers want to compete for the best employees, so they build work organisations which take into account the requirements and needs of employees, including those related to their private lives. I believe that this trend will grow, and not just because of legal regulations. It is not only about a good brand, but also about creating conditions that encourage people to

work for a particular company or to continue working there. So there is this element of competition over labour resources.

Given the individualism you mentioned, should we expect solidarity from people on this, this social empathy, or is it better to resort to pragmatic arguments – as a society we need more children, because this is associated with, for example, pension payments?

Indeed, I see a problem associated with looking at the fertility rate from a macro perspective, i.e. understanding why more children are needed, and combining this with a micro perspective, i.e. the autonomy of parental choices and the factors that influence these choices. This is not easy. For the past two decades, I have been trying to explain that these individual choices concerning having children matter not only for the lives of the individuals who make these choices, but also for the lives of others, for the population as a whole, including the future of these children.

We rarely realise that the current decisions of individuals to have children or not (of course there are people who cannot have children) define the future of the whole society, not just those individuals.

And this future is defined in different dimensions. From the point of view of the economy, what is important is how many people can be economically active, i.e. provide the products and services needed by all, and thus participate in the creation of a country’s wealth. And what is important here is not so much the size of the population, but its age structure – how many people are under 20, how many over 65, and how many in the so-called working age, i.e. between 20 and 64. This last group makes up the so-called labour resource. What is important is the ratio between these groups and how many people can participate in the labour market, i.e. be both producers and consumers, and how many people are just consumers.

Long-term trends of declining fertility and mortality affect changes in the size of the population and its age structure. The lengthening of life expectancy is undoubtedly a civilisational success. And this is a mass process. More and more people are living to an older and older age. From an individual point of view, a longer life expectancy is a benefit – we live longer and longer, our relatives stay with us longer and longer, which means that the coexistence of successive generations becomes longer. This is something we are happy about. But when we look at it on a macro level, this means that the number of older people is increasing – we talk of an ageing population and

certain consequences of this process, usually regarded as burdens. This shows the contrast between the perception of human life extension on an individual level and on a population or society-wide level.

So how should we look at it?

What I am trying to highlight is that the increase in the size of the elderly population is not in itself a burden, provided that we understand that it is an irreversible change, an effect of the success of civilisation. But it is also a challenge – the question is how to adapt the economy and institutions, including the social security system, as well as social relationships including relations within and between generations, to the growing number of older people. In an increasing number of countries, declining mortality is accompanied by a decline in fertility to a level which does not guarantee replacement of generations, i.e. the average number of children per woman of childbearing age (15-49) does not exceed 2.1. Moreover, there are more and more countries, including Poland, where the so-called low fertility rate persists, i.e. the average number of children per woman of childbearing age is lower than 1.5. This causes the number of people of working age to start decreasing over time. There is then a steady increase in the number of older people, but the importance of this increase for the population

as a whole is greater than for a population that has a higher fertility rate. In addition, the ratio between the shrinking group of producers and the growing group of consumers – children and young people and the elderly, especially the group of elderly people on pension benefits – is worsening.

We need to realise the interconnections between these three groups in the scale of the whole population. Intergenerational connections are easier to notice on a micro level with reference to family structures. From the point of view of the functioning of the economy – production and appropriate distribution of products determining the well-being and quality of our lives – it is important that more children be born. A low fertility rate may result in life being harder for the generations to come.

According to forecasts, the size of Poland’s population will shrink by almost 4 million by 2050. This does not make me worry about the future of the country, but what does worry me are the projected changes in age structures and the worsening proportions between the groups of the youngest people, those making up the labour force and the elderly. The group of people aged 65 and over will increase by almost half and, at the same time, the number of people aged 20-64 will decrease significantly. As a result, the ratio of people

aged 65 and over per every 100 people aged 20-64 will increase from the current 30 to 50 in 2050. If we take into account the fact that the number of people in the youngest age group will fall even further, the total number of people aged 0-19 and 65 and over per 100 people in the labour force will rise from 33 to 81 in 2050. Above all, I am concerned about people’s health and their capacity to develop their competence and skills necessary to function in a changing world. In other words, I am concerned about the human capital of this population. So, in my view, it is not only the quantitative aspect of population processes that is important, i.e. how many of us there will be and what our age structure will be, but also what kind of members this collective will have.

From the perspective of human capital, but also the structure of producers, is women’s participation in the labour market important?

It’s very important. As I have already mentioned, making the best use of dwindling labour resources is a key issue. This is linked, among other things, to how long we remain in the labour market. And this is where an important element comes in, related to the responses to the various solutions to support parents. If we accept that mothers do not return to work after childbirth and there will be no instruments supporting

their return to the labour market, we will not avoid long-term consequences both on an individual and social level.

From an individual point of view, for some women, especially those with lower salaries, staying at home may be beneficial in the short term. However, from a long-term, lifelong perspective, it is the woman who bears the consequences of this decision. This is because a longer break from work affects pay when she returns to employment and later income when she is older. Pension benefits are also dependent on the contribution-paying period.

On the other hand, at a macro level, such decisions cause the number of people who will need support in old age to rise. Pension poverty mainly affects women. But above all, such decisions not only make poorer use of increasingly scarce labour resources, but also depreciate their competences. This will also affect how the economy functions. We need more, better prepared workers, constantly updating their competences. And this requires maintaining links with the labour market. To sum up, these decisions to periodically withdraw from the labour market have social and economic consequences on both an individual and macro level.

I believe that, for these reasons, we cannot afford to

have some people, and these are generally women, simply withdraw from the labour market because of childcare commitments. That is also what this directive is about. Not being in the labour force is not good for them, nor is it good for society or the economy, particularly if we consider a long-term view and current demographic trends.



EXPERTS' COMMENTS





Anna Berczyńska
ABSL, Vice-
President Talents

“The work-life balance directive promotes flexibility, well-being and gender equality in the workplace – values which are key for ABSL and companies in the business services sector. D&I matters play an important role in the industry, especially in relation to employee sourcing. The directive makes it easier for women to return to work after childbirth by introducing flexible working arrangements and making men more active in exercising their parental rights. This is particularly important, as – according to analyses by McKinsey & Company – a greater participation of women in the labour market could increase Poland’s GDP by as much as 9%. Companies can build a friendly working environment and take care of employee satisfaction, commitment and loyalty, which is an important element of long-term business growth.”



Marzena Strzelczak
President, General
Director of the
Responsible
Business Forum,
Board Member of
CSR Europe

“The implementation of the WLB Directive in Poland will not change much. Leaves for parents in Poland are among the longest in the EU. Fathers can choose to take a few months of leave, which is supposed to strengthen mothers’ presence on the labour market, among other things. However, this is not the case. It is not the extension of the leave by a few weeks (which our country did not have to do), but a significant increase in the financial allowance paid during this time (which Poland could do) that would make a real difference. At the same time, the introduction of five days of unpaid leave for carers of dependent adults shows that the public administration does not see the challenges of Polish demography. All hope lies with business, which is already introducing solutions adequate to the needs. But does it have to do it outside the system?”



Joanna Osińska
CEE Talent Lead
Nestlé Poland

“The Parenting Index study, commissioned by Nestlé, shows that parenting responsibilities are still mostly assigned to women. In order to alter this, social and cultural changes are needed, and it will take time for the desired model of sharing care to become established at homes of Polish families. As a responsible employer, we support and promote these processes. At Nestlé, we introduced an additional four-week paternity leave and have been conducting a number of educational activities to encourage fathers to become more involved in caring for their little ones.”



Kamila Kurkowska
President, Women
in Law Foundation

“When employees of both genders have the right support, they are better at finding a work-life balance, which allows them to be more effective and efficient in the professional sphere. Finding this balance is a major challenge for most working women, but also increasingly for men.

Support for both parents helps to combat harmful stereotypes which claim that only the woman is responsible for the care and upbringing of children. These patriarchal models are not only severely outdated, but above all harmful to both women and men.”



Anna Potocka-Domin
Head of Business and Human Rights Programme | Board Member, UNGC

“The UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 5 which assumes achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030 sets out very precisely the tasks to be accomplished. They include valuing unpaid care work and housework by promoting shared responsibility in the household and family. The overarching aim of the work-life balance directive is to facilitate women’s quicker return to work after childbirth through the introduction of flexible working arrangements and the increased activity of men in using their parental rights. In the longer term, it will contribute to narrowing the pay gap between women and men and to levelling the gender playing field in the labour market, because, as we know, these inequalities originate from the asymmetric burden of caring roles between women and men.”



Malgorzata Cichecka
Advanced Analytics Director, Poland, NielsenIQ, LEAD Network Polanch Chapter

“The mission of the LEAD Network ((Leading Executives Advancing Diversity) is to attract, retain and advance women in the consumer goods and retail sectors in Europe through education, leadership and business development. Women still experience the so-called motherhood penalty – on the labor market, mothers have at least lower earnings than fathers. The implementation of the work-life balance directive is an important step towards equalizing women’s opportunities on the labor market. The new regulations are a specific tool that will balance the involvement of women and men in caring roles, which will have a positive impact on their professional activity. Employers who embrace values such as diversity and inclusivity will certainly be ambassadors of new solutions. In the end it will benefit them as well.”



Natalia Nowak
Volunteer at the Share
the Care Foundation,
author of legal articles
on the #Team Rodzina
Parenting Portal

“The revolutionary changes in labour law will have an invaluable impact on the functioning of Polish families. At a time when we often get caught up in the whirlwind of work, we could use a breather and build relationships within the family. This is what these changes are intended to do. The biggest challenge, however, is for organisations to adapt to the changes in the law. Not only from an organisational point of view, but also in terms of how they approach fathers, as the change will mainly concern them.

The additional nine weeks of parental leave means the need for extra staff, a flexible approach and the smooth running of the organisation, particularly HR departments. Not only will the employer have to accommodate the request for parental leave, but they will also be prohibited from making any preparations to terminate the employment of the person who wishes to exercise their entitlement.

Until now, many parents have been concerned about exercising their parental entitlements, such as reduced working hours, for fear of losing their jobs. This state of affairs will change. The amendment introduces certain protection for employees. First of all, the employer will have to justify the termination of a fixed-term employment contract. This is the first benefit. Then there is a reversed burden of proof. This means that it will not be the employee who will have to prove that he or she was dismissed for exercising his or her parental rights, but the employer will have to show that this was not the reason. Given the procedural and evidentiary difficulties, this is a huge change in favour of employees.

Undoubtedly, the changes are ground-breaking. If they go hand in hand with a social and educational campaign and a change in social attitude, the result will be work-life balance and strong, lasting and, above all, equal relationships within the family.”



Monika Lis
Talent Development &
Learning Project Manager,
Mentor at State Street Bank

“At State Street we are pleased that the implementation of the work-life balance directive has finally become a fact. Our managers have long been encouraged to actively cooperate with employees of both genders to ensure they have the right balance between work and private life. Our company provides the opportunity to adapt working hours to individual needs arising from employees’ various life situations – including a flexible approach to work starting time or a hybrid work model. The leave policy, emphasising the ongoing use of leave, including an uninterrupted two-week holiday at least once a year, is also a very important element. As an employer, State Street Bank Poland offers more than the statutory days off. At State Street Bank Poland, the combination of the company’s business and social goals translates directly into employee involvement in employee networks. For more than 10 years, we have had a thriving Working Parents’ Club. Its main objective is precisely to support parents working in our organisation in achieving the balance between work and family life. There are many ‘role models’ and ambassadors of the work-life balance directive in our organisation.”



FUNDACJA —
SHARE THE CARE

We know that employers play a key role in building equality in the labour market. That is why the Share the Care Foundation supports companies in implementing parental equality solutions.

Challenges for employers associated with the implementation of the work-life balance directive in Poland

- How to prepare for two-month absences of fathers?
- How to obtain information about the father's plans for parental leave? (time to submit a request is 21 days before)
- How to discuss parental leave sharing with women?
- Handling the 'logistics' of sharing leave
- Preparing request forms and internal communications

Challenges for employers associated with the implementation of the work-life balance directive in Poland

- We create communication on partnership and work-life balance directive implementation
- We conduct webinars and podcasts for employees
- We train managers and HR departments
- We prepare tools for business, including e-books for mothers and fathers concerning their rights
- We carry out research on building parental equality in organisations
- We develop strategies to build an organisational culture supporting parental equality
- We carry out joint social campaigns

Go ahead and use our knowledge and experience. Let's create a world of equal opportunities together.

More information:

Marta Bem,

mob. 602 229 013,

e-mail: marta.bem@sharethecare.pl



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AND FOR OTHER**



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