

Family-friendly measures

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Family-friendly measures are flexible measures or working arrangements that assist workers to find ways to balance and reconcile work-related demands with family needs. These measures include various support and work arrangements allowing workers to attend to their caring responsibilities and private life. Such measures include flexi-time, job sharing, reduced hours and teleworking.

Statistical evidence shows that in Malta there is a much higher uptake of family-friendly measures from women when compared to their male counterparts in the public administration¹. Hence, to further safeguard equal opportunities to women and men in all spheres of society and in order to challenge such traditional gender stereotypes, it is imperative that men are further empowered to make use of family friendly measures and participate in the upbringing of their children and in family life.

Employers are encouraged to be well-versed with the family-friendly initiatives covered by the law, in order to be in a better position to safeguard equal opportunities at the workplace through the provision of such measures. It is also suggested to employers to ensure that employees are aware of the availability of such measures, for instance through a formal policy indicating conditions of access to these measures. Each request for the use of family-friendly measures is to be considered on its own merits, taking into consideration the needs of the employee, employer and the entity. Therefore, this may require a compromise to be reached for the benefit of the parties involved.

Family-friendly measures for men and women with caring responsibilities is one of the criteria that NCPE assesses when certifying organisations as true equal opportunities employers in awarding the Equality Mark. NCPE is meeting these organisations, and assessing their policies and practices, including recruitment and employment practices and the implementation of family-friendly measures to ensure that a commitment towards gender equality is evident in these entities. For more information on the Equality Mark one can visit NCPE's website www.equality.gov.mt or contact NCPE on equality@gov.mt or 25903850.

¹ Public Administration HR Office, *Family-Friendly Measures Report 2011* and National Statistics Office, *Labour Force Survey – July-September 2013*.