



# The promotion of workplace rights for carers

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## Informal carers: key relationships





## Care workers in the EU policy debate

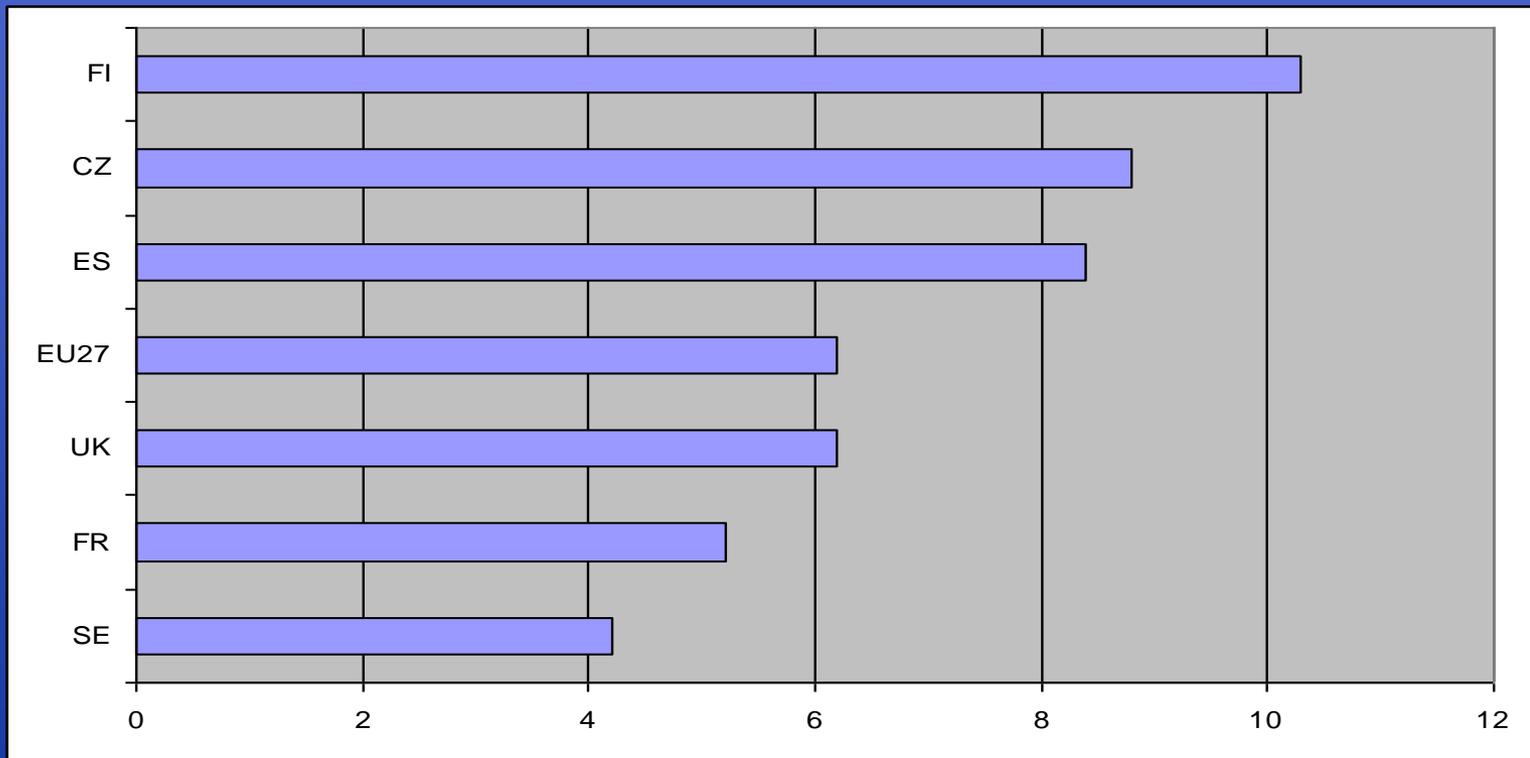
Role and contribution of informal carers begins to be visible, especially in long-term care.

- *Employment*: Recruiting and retaining an adequately qualified and skilled care workforce; training
- *Social protection*: For both formal and informal carers
- *Equal opportunities*: Measures to reconcile employment with informal care
- *Health*: Sustainability of care provision and quality of the care workforce

But concerns (e.g. in the 2009 Communication on Alzheimer's disease) about shortages of carers, lack of support for informal carers, and risk of social exclusion for carers. Concerns amplified by economic crisis and any reductions in services.



## Share of employed persons who care for an adult relative, 2005



Source: LFS ad hoc module



## Work-life balance: Caring and working

- More than half of carers under 65 combine care with employment
- 6%-10% of employees are providing regular care, especially older (female) workers (13%-16%)
- But among those with care responsibilities only half of women but 9 out of 10 men (are able to) work full-time
- Generally lack of action in the workplace to support working carers – benefits, information, services, flexible working times, work organisation and leave entitlements
- Enabling access to employment of excluded carers



# Company level measures - Framework

Objective/ outcome	Type of employer support			
	Flexibility / flexicurity		Other supports / measures	
	Practical measures	Minimising financial or other down-sides	Care-related supports	Other measures
Support full-time working for carers	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility in working hours</li> <li>- Teleworking</li> <li>- Accessibility at work</li> <li>- Short- and emergency care leave</li> </ul>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Payment during leave</li> <li>- Other measures to minimise financial or other down-sides of flexibility (e.g. for career)</li> </ul>	For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information</li> <li>- Referral, care brokerage</li> <li>- Counselling</li> <li>- Carer networks / support groups</li> <li>- Practical daily life supports (e.g. home delivery of groceries etc.)</li> <li>- Use of phone / other technology</li> <li>- Direct care provision</li> <li>- Support for care costs</li> </ul>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addressing carers health and wellbeing in occupational health services</li> <li>- Carer surveys/audits</li> <li>- Awareness-raising, promotion of positive attitudes amongst managers, co-workers etc.</li> <li>- Lobbying / liaison with external stakeholders (e.g. other employers, care services)</li> </ul>
Enable part-time working (down-shifting) and caring	For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part-time work</li> <li>- Term-time working or equivalent</li> </ul>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measures to minimise income loss associated with hours reduction</li> <li>- Measures to minimise other down-sides of part-time working (e.g. for career)</li> </ul>		
Enable complete / lengthy time-off for carers	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longer carer leave</li> <li>- Possibility to accumulate (additional) leave</li> <li>- Maintaining continuity whilst on leave</li> </ul>	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paid leave and/or 'topping up' social benefit payments whilst on leave</li> <li>- Helping employees to save/self-provide income for leave periods</li> <li>- Measures to minimise other down-sides of leave (e.g. for career)</li> </ul>		



## **Carers Leave – ‘better than the minimum’**

- **Energy company (UK)**
  - Additional leave; part-payment (for short-term leave)
- **Insurance company, Pharmaceuticals company (NL)**
  - Extended eligibility; additional leave; part-payment (short-term)
- **Public sector (IE)**
  - Careful examination of downsides; help to return early
- **Energy company (UK)**
  - Contact during longer leave; support on return



## **Accessibility and interruptions at work**

- **Social care provider (NL)**
  - Allows short interruptions of working day to go home to care
- **Pharmaceutical company (NL)**
  - Policy allows use of phone, e-mail and internet to deal with caring issues during working hours
- **Energy company (UK)**
  - By arrangement with line manager, can use phone for caring purposes whilst at work; privacy and use of company-supplied mobile phone also possible



## Information, counselling (on caring issues)

- **Health insurer (NL)**
  - Company help desk and care agency
- **Energy company (UK)**
  - Advice service for carers, also available to their families
- **Chemical company (DE)**
  - Information and counselling service, shared with other companies in the region



## Organising or providing care

- **Health insurance fund; pharmaceutical company (DE)**
  - External company contracted to help employees find care facilities
- **Chemical company; pharmaceutical company (NL)**
  - Company supports volunteer network (retirees, partners etc.) to provide care and other supports – e.g. provides insurance
- **Social care provider (NL)**
  - Employees can use company's care services free of charge (even if the person cared for is not a client of the organisation)



## What next?

- **Raising awareness and promoting good practice**
  - Amongst companies; among workers
  - Also at policy and social dialogue levels
- **Increasing take-up of measures**
  - Support of line managers and colleagues
  - Preferences of male and female workers; private matter
- **Ensuring wider and more consistent provision**
  - Labour legislation (EU and Member State)
  - Formal provisions in social dialogue (EU, Member State, sectoral)
- **Joined-up approach**
  - Better integration of employment policy (and practice) and home/community care service policy (and practice)
- **Promote evaluation**



## Strengthening cooperation in the EU

- Promote awareness and debate on care and its importance in the European model of society – Research, Health programmes
- Use structural funds (especially Social Fund) for training of both formal and informal carers
- Protect employment and promote equal opportunities for carers in employment – role for social partners as well as employment policy
- Protect the rights of carers and provide support to organisations representing interests of carers e.g. through PROGRESS programme
- Use the OMC for Social Protection to share best practice on how to optimise support for informal carers