

Working in female-dominated workplaces means worse access to flexible working arrangements

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Workers in female-dominated workplaces have worse access to flexible working arrangements than those in gender-neutral and even male-dominated workplaces, new research from the University of Kent has found.

It is commonly assumed that the low wages often found in female-dominated workplaces can be justified through better provision of family-friendly arrangements, but the research provides evidence that low wages are accompanied by worse working conditions for many.

The study looked at individuals in 27 countries across the EU. It found that the best workplaces for providing flexibility were gender-neutral - where men and women were equally represented.

Researcher Dr Heejung Chung, of the University's School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, found that what she called a 'women's work penalty' existed in every country covered by her study.

She said her research provides the evidence to 'reject the assumption' that women have better access to flexible working arrangements and that female-dominated workplaces are better at providing them.

Further, she argues that the research puts into question the theory of 'compensating differentials' that claims that low wages found in female-

dominated workplaces can be justified through the better provision of family-friendly arrangements, such as flexible working arrangements.

The implication for [policy makers](#) is that the group of the population that may be in most need of flexible work arrangements may be unable to gain [access](#) to them.

More information: Heejung Chung, 'Women's work penalty' in access to flexible working arrangements across Europe, *European Journal of Industrial Relations* (2018). [DOI: 10.1177/0959680117752829](https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680117752829)

Provided by University of Kent

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