

The Netherlands³⁷⁴

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For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the Leave Network website). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members page](#) on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave (*zwangerschaps-en bevallingsverlof*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 16 weeks: 4 to 6 weeks before the birth and 10 to 12 weeks after the birth. If the birth is later than the expected date of delivery, the longer benefit period preceding childbirth is not deducted from the benefit period after childbirth, resulting in a longer period of leave.
- It is obligatory to take 4 weeks before and 6 weeks after the birth.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of earnings up to an upper limit of 70 per cent of the 'daily maximum wage', which is set annually by the government, and is €304.25 in 2026.
- Payments are made to the mother by her employer, who claims back from the Employee Insurance Agency.
- Payments are taxed.
- Pension rights continue to accrue during leave.
- Funded from the Employee Insurance Agency, which is financed by employers contributing between 2.6 and 7.64 per cent of employees' earnings.

³⁷⁴ Please cite as: den Dulk, L. and Yerkes, M.A. (2026) 'Netherlands country note', in Dobrotić, I., Arnaldis, Á.A., Kaufman, G., Koslowski, A., Moss, P. and Valentova, M. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2025*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be started between 6 and 4 weeks before the expected date of delivery, but pregnant workers are not allowed to work between 4 weeks before the expected date, and 6 weeks after the actual date of delivery.
- After the 6 weeks' obligatory leave following delivery, mothers are entitled to use the remaining part of their leave in a flexible way, spread over a maximum of 30 weeks.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- All female employees.
- Self-employed women who have worked at least 1,225 hours in the calendar year in which they give birth are entitled to 16 weeks payment up to a maximum of 100 per cent of the statutory minimum wage, depending on the number of hours worked (€14.71 per hour before taxes for those aged 21 years and older in 2026).³⁷⁵
- Women in same-sex relationships who give birth are eligible.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- Additional leave of up to 10 weeks, if the child needs to stay at the hospital for more than 1 week after the birth.
- Delegation of 10 weeks of leave to the partner if the mother dies, even if the mother was self-employed or was not eligible for leave (e.g., because of not being in paid employment).
- In the case of multiple births, mothers are entitled to 20 weeks of Maternity leave (8 to 10 weeks before the due date and the remaining leave after the birth).
- In the case of miscarriage or stillbirth after 24 weeks, mothers are entitled to the full 16 weeks of leave.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusions, or rights to postpone)

- Collective agreements may supplement Maternity leave payments. According to a 2024 study of a sample of 108 collective agreements, 43 of these agreements supplement payments up to 100 per cent of earnings.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Previous country notes for the Netherlands reported this amount as a maximum monthly salary. Since the introduction of a Statutory Minimum Wage in 2024, the Dutch government and the Employee Insurance Agency rely solely on a minimum hourly wage. See: <https://www.uvw.nl/nl/premies-bedragen/referentiemaandloon> for more information.

³⁷⁶ Mol, H. and Domen, I. (2024) *Gezinsvriendelijk Personeelsbeleid* [Family-friendly personnel policy], The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs.

b. Paternity leave (*geboorteverlof* - 'birth leave') (responsibility of Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)

Length of leave

- The length of leave is equivalent to the number of working hours per week per partner/father, e.g., a full-time job of 38 hours per week gives a leave entitlement of 38 hours (i.e., 1 week).
- Supplemental birth leave (*Aanvullend geboorteverlof*) is also available. The length of supplemental birth leave is 5 times the number of working hours per week, up to a maximum of 5 weeks, e.g., a full-time job of 40 hours per week gives a supplemental leave entitlement of 5 weeks.

Payment, funding and taxation

- The first week is paid at 100 per cent of earnings, with no upper limit on payment.
- The weeks of supplemental leave are paid at 100 per cent of earnings up to an upper limit of 70 per cent of the daily wage, which is set annually by the government (€304.25 in 2026).
- Payments are made to the partner/father by his/her employer, who claims back from the Employee Insurance Agency.
- Payments are taxed.
- The first week is paid by the employer. The weeks of supplemental leave are funded from the Employee Insurance Agency, which is financed by employers contributing between 2.6 and 7.64 per cent of employees' earnings.

Flexibility in use

- The 1st week of leave must be taken within 4 weeks after the birth of the child.
- The weeks of supplemental leave can be taken flexibly over a longer period, e.g., 1 week of leave can be taken 1 day a week for 5 weeks. The supplemental leave must be taken within 6 months following the birth of the child.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- Male and female employees who are the partner (by marriage, civil union or co-habitation of a woman giving birth) or who acknowledge the child.
- Self-employed partners/fathers are not entitled to birth leave.
- Employees in same-sex relationships are eligible if they have a relationship with the birth mother (by marriage, civil union or co-habitation) and legally recognize the child.
- Fathers or partners are eligible for the supplemental weeks of leave as long as they have taken the 1st week of birth leave.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the father

- None.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Collective agreements may contain supplementary arrangements with respect to the duration of paid birth leave and/or top-up payments for supplemental birth leave beyond the 70 per cent payment. Collective agreements may not deviate from the legislation if it disadvantages the employee. A 2022 evaluation of the supplemental leave found that 79 per cent of employers topped up the leave payment, 63 per cent to full earnings and 19 per cent to the maximum daily wage of €274.44.³⁷⁷ However, a 2024 study of a sample of 108 collective agreements suggests this percentage may be lower, with just 29 of the 108 collective agreements providing payments beyond 70 per cent of earnings, including 24 topping up to 100 per cent.³⁷⁸
- Employers can temporarily refuse or change the take-up of supplemental birth leave up to 2 weeks before the leave is scheduled to begin. This can only occur if there are serious business reasons for doing so. For example, employers can change the days or weeks in which leave are taken, but this can only happen in consultation with the employee.

c. Parental leave (*ouderschapsverlof*) (responsibility of Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)

Length of leave

- 26 times the number of working hours per week per parent per child, e.g., a full-time job of 38 hours per week gives a leave entitlement of 988 hours (i.e., 26 weeks).
- Leave is an individual, non-transferable entitlement.

Payment, funding and taxation

- The first 9 weeks of leave, if taken during the first year of the child's life, are paid at 70 per cent of earnings up to an upper limit of 70 per cent of the 'daily maximum wage', which is set annually by the government (€304.25 in 2026).
- Payments are taxed.
- Taking unpaid Parental leave has no consequences for unemployment benefits. However, when an employee falls ill during the leave period, they cannot make claims for sickness payment; this insurance entitlement is restored once the leave period ends. The impact on pensions depends on the specific pension agreement and collective agreement.

³⁷⁷ Based on the maximum daily wage for 2022. Rossing, H. and Vissee, H. (2022) *Evaluatie WIEG Eindrapport*, Amsterdam: Regioplan. Available at: <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-0692237f7cac997ca0d9fed7bb8e28b55b97c904/pdf>

³⁷⁸ Mol, H. and Domen, I. (2024) *Gezinsvriendelijk Personeelsbeleid* [Family-friendly personnel policy, The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs.

- Funded from the Employee Insurance Agency, which is financed by employers contributing between 2.6 and 7.64 per cent of employees' earnings.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken until a child is 8 years.
- Parents are granted full flexibility in use unless uptake conflicts with serious business needs.
- Parents can take leave at the same time, if they choose.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employees are entitled to Parental leave, including same-sex couples, parents of foster children, step-children, adopted children (as long as they live in the same household), and employees with temporary contracts.
- Self-employed parents are not entitled to Parental leave.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- Each parent is entitled to additional leave in the case of a multiple birth.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Since paid leave was introduced in 2022, collective agreements continue to supplement legislation, for example topping up leave payments. A 2024 study of a sample of 108 collective agreements found that 21 collective agreements augment legislation in favour of the employee. For 11 of these 21 agreements, employees receive a top up payment (ranging from 75 per cent to 100 per cent of earnings); others pay over a longer period (i.e., 12 agreements provide partial payment for a period of 13 weeks) or enable leave to be taken beyond a child's 8th birthday (3 agreements).³⁷⁹

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

³⁷⁹ Mol, H. and Domen, I. (2024). *Gezinsvriendelijk Personeelsbeleid* [Family-friendly personnel policy], The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Each parent is entitled to 6 weeks of leave when a child is placed for adoption (or long-term fostering), with payment equivalent to Maternity leave.
- Leave can be used flexibly over a period of 26 weeks (four weeks before the child is placed and 22 weeks after), as long as it does not conflict with serious business needs. This leave does not have to be taken in one block.
- For adoptive parents, the same regulations for Parental leave (both paid and unpaid) apply as for other parents. But while employed parents of adopted children are entitled to the full 9 weeks of paid Parental leave per child, employed parents of foster children and step-children are not entitled to a separate period of 9 weeks paid Parental leave per child; they are only eligible for a total of 9 weeks of leave, no matter how many foster or step-children they have.
- Collective agreements can also supplement adoption leave and pay. A total of 29 of 108 sampled agreements in 2024 offer a top up to 100 per cent of employees' earnings for adoption leave.³⁸⁰

Time off for the care of dependants

- **Short-term leave** (*Kortdurend zorgverlof*) up to a maximum of two times the number of working hours per week can be taken annually to care for a sick child living at home, a sick partner, or parent, other household members, family members, or friends. The employer is required to pay 70 per cent of the employee's earnings. All employees are eligible, subject to three conditions: (i) an employer can refuse to grant the leave if the interests of the organisation might be seriously harmed; (ii) care must be necessary because of illness; and (iii) the employee must be the only person capable of providing care.
- **Long-term leave** (*Langdurend zorgverlof*), of up to six times working hours per week per year, to be taken part-time (i.e., 12 weeks at half of the working hours), can be taken in all cases where long-term care is needed. It is unpaid. With the agreement of the employer, long-term care leave can also be taken full-time or with reduced hours per week over a longer period, up to a maximum of 18 weeks. The right is conditional: the employee must be the only person capable of providing care and an employer can refuse the leave if the organisation's interests are seriously harmed.
- A reasonable amount of time off work can be taken by an employee with very exceptional personal circumstances (e.g., a broken water pipe, a death in the family, or a child suddenly taken ill). This so-called '**emergency leave**' can last from a few hours to a few days, but terminates after 1 day if short-term leave (see above) is subsequently taken. The employer is required to pay 100 per cent of the employee's earnings.
- Collective agreements can also supplement these forms of leave. A total of 24 of 108 sampled collective agreements provide 100 per cent payment during short-term leave. Fewer agreements offer payment for long-term

³⁸⁰ Mol, H. and I. Domen. (2024) *Gezinsvriendelijk Personeelsbeleid* [Family-friendly personnel policy]. The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs.

leave: 7 provide 100 per cent of earnings and eight provide some payment during the leave.³⁸¹

- Collective agreements can also offer a specific form of carer's support, including leave. The 2024 study suggests 39 of the 108 sampled agreements includes arrangements for informal carers; five of these agreements include carer's leave.³⁸²

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- Mothers returning to work after Maternity leave are entitled to breastfeed or pump breast milk during working hours until their child is 9 months old, and are entitled to take breaks of up to 25 per cent of their working hours. Employers are required to offer a suitable room and pay for these hours.

Flexible working for carers

- All employees who have completed 6 months' continuous employment with their present employer have the right to increase, decrease, or adjust their working hours and the right to work from home. These rights are, however, conditional: the employer can refuse to grant the request if the interests of the business or service might be seriously harmed; and the law does not apply to employers with fewer than 10 employees.

Time off for antenatal appointments and care

- Under the Working Hours Act, pregnant employees are entitled to attend antenatal appointments during working hours without loss of earnings. During pregnancy, employees are also entitled to regular working hours and resting times, a suitable room to rest, additional breaks (maximum of one-eighth of daily working hours), exemption from overtime and night shifts (unless the employer can prove necessity), or to work not more than a maximum of 10 hours per shift.

Other provisions of leave

- None reported.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

The maximum period of post-natal leave per family is just over 16 months, 8.1 months of which is well paid. There is an entitlement for children to start school, on a voluntary basis, from 4 years of age, prior to compulsory schooling at 5 years of age. There is, therefore, a significant gap of nearly 40 months between the end of well-paid leave and an entitlement to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the form of early admission to elementary school.

³⁸¹ Mol, H. and Domen, I. (2024) *Gezinsvriendelijk Personeelsbeleid* [Family-friendly personnel policy], The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs.

³⁸² Ibid.

ECEC (VVE, or *voor- en vroegschoolse educatie* in Dutch) is partially subsidized by municipalities and offered to children aged 2½ to 4 years old. In many municipalities, ECEC is offered to children at risk of language or learning deficiencies; in some municipalities, all children aged 2½ to 4 years old are eligible. In short, considerable differentiation exists regarding eligibility and provision across municipalities.

Parents can also make use of market-based formal childcare services, and working parents may be entitled to childcare allowances.³⁸³ The Netherlands experienced a government crisis in 2021 related to the provision of these childcare allowances, in which parents were falsely accused of fraudulently receiving allowances. In these cases, the allowance was rescinded and parents were required to pay back thousands of Euros retrospectively, with far-reaching social and economic consequences for the affected families.³⁸⁴ Ongoing attempts to financially compensate the tens of thousands of parents affected have been relatively unsuccessful. An emergency commission convened in 2025 concluded that the government promised more than it can deliver, hampered in part by the more than 70,000 applications received requesting compensation. It is estimated that approximately 44,000 families have a right to compensation, and even if simplified compensation procedures are followed, it will take until at least 2027 before all families will be compensated.³⁸⁵ A 2025 report suggests, however, that there has been no decline in childcare attendance levels since the childcare allowances crisis; childcare attendance has actually grown since 2017, with an increase in both the total number of hours of childcare provided as well as the number of hours of childcare attendance per child.³⁸⁶

The National Childcare Quality Monitor (LKK) monitors the quality of childcare facilities in the Netherlands. Trend analysis shows a steady increase in the quality of childcare between 2017 and 2023. In 2024, there are indications of declining quality, in particular regarding after-school care. Future measurements are needed to establish whether this is a start of a downward trend or a fluctuation. Nevertheless, in comparison to other countries, and based on international measures such as ITER-S/ECER-R and CLASS, the Netherlands is still considered to have high quality childcare.³⁸⁷ Trend analysis also shows that the

³⁸³ Yerkes, M.A. and Javornik, J. (2018) 'Creating capabilities: childcare policies in comparative perspective', *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol.29, 4: 529-544.

³⁸⁴ Van Dam, C. J. L., Van Aalst, R. R., Leijten, R. M., Belhaj, S., Kuiken, A. H., Van der Lee, T. M., Van Wijngaarden, J. and Van Kooten-Arissen, F. M. (2020) *Ongekend onrecht. Parlementaire ondervraging Kinderopvangtoeslag* [Unprecedented injustice. Parliamentary inquiry into childcare benefits]. Available at: www.tweedekamer.nl/sites/default/files/atoms/files/20201217_eindverslag_parlementaire_ondervragingscommissie_kinderopvangtoeslag.pdf

³⁸⁵ Van Dam, C., Dortmans, C. and Sibma, S. (2025) *Minder Beloven, Meer Doen. Een eerlijk en uitvoerbaar plan om toeslagenouders verder te helpen* [Promise Less, Do More. An honest and viable plan to help childcare subsidy parents move forward]. Available at: <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/5f5e7ae7-7c9c-4db0-94f9-841d70a2f83c/file>

³⁸⁶ Statistics Netherlands (2025) *Aanbod kinderopvang in Nederland, 2017-2023* [Childcare supply in the Netherlands, 2017-2023], The Hague: CBS. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/aanvullende-statistische-diensten/2024/aanbod-kinderopvang-in-nederland-2017-2023>.

³⁸⁷ Romijn, B., Slot, P., Jepma, IJ. et al. (2025) *Kwaliteitsmonitor Kinderopvang. De kinderdagopvang, peuteropvang, buitenschoolse opvang, gastouderopvang in beeld. Analyses op basis van gecombineerde metingen 2017-2024* [Childcare quality monitor. Developments in the quality of the Dutch day care, toddler care, after school care,

demand for childcare continues to grow in the Netherlands, while at the same time, staff shortages are also growing.³⁸⁸

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review.

3. Changes in policy since April 2025 (including proposals currently under discussion)

Elections were held in November 2025 and a new government was installed in February 2026. The newly-formed political coalition under Prime Minister Jetten planned to reduce the maximum daily wage, which would have effectively reduced the payment provided for Maternity, Paternity (supplemental birth leave) and Parental leaves. Following critiques of these plans and the expected effect on leave uptake, the cabinet has revised them and is no longer planning to adjust this rate.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Statistics from 2023 show that 96.7 per cent of women who work and have a child younger than 1 year old took up Maternity leave.³⁸⁹ A total of 5.5 per cent of women took supplemental Maternity leave for the birth of multiple children. Moreover, statistics from the same biennial report on the use of the flexible part of Maternity leave shows that although a majority of women (52.3 per cent) are aware that the last part of leave can be taken flexibly (i.e., after the first 6 weeks following delivery, the flexible uptake of leave remains limited (9.3 per cent in 2023). A report from 2025 suggests that Maternity leave uptake among self-employed mothers may be declining, with 7 per cent less uptake in the first 8 months of 2025 compared to the first 8 months of 2024.³⁹⁰

b. Paternity (Birth) leave

Research shows that in 2023, 89 per cent of eligible fathers took birth leave directly after the birth of the child, compared to 90 per cent in 2021.³⁹¹ The percentage of

childminder care based on the combined measurement 2017-2024], Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht and SARDES.

³⁸⁸ Slot, P., Bodine, R., Jepma, I., Muller, P., Bredeveld, M. and Leseman, P. (2023) *Knelpunten, werkbeleving en de gevolgen van COVID-19 in de kinderopvangsector* [Bottlenecks, work perceptions and the impact of COVID-19 in the childcare sector], Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht and SARDES. See also: Statistics Netherlands (2025) *Aanbod kinderopvang in Nederland, 2017-2023* [Childcare supply in the Netherlands, 2017-2023], The Hague: CBS. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/aanvullende-statistische-diensten/2024/aanbod-kinderopvang-in-nederland-2017-2023>.

³⁸⁹ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Monitor Arbeid, Zorg en Kinderopvang 2023* [Work, Care and Childcare Monitor 2023], The Hague: CBS. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2024/15/monitor-arbeid-zorg-en-kinderopvang-2023>.

³⁹⁰ UWV (2025) *UWV Achtmaandenverslag 2025* [UWV 8-month report 2025], Amsterdam: UWV. Available at: <https://www.uwv.nl/assets-kai/files/b2a4a37a-d60c-4e43-b302-4b1c45bf41eb/uwv-achtmaandenverslag-2025.pdf>.

³⁹¹ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS; Statistics Netherlands (2022) *Emancipatiemonitor 2022*, The Hague: CBS.

fathers taking the full 6 weeks of leave is growing. Whereas one-third of fathers took 5 weeks of leave or more in 2021, more than half (53 per cent) of fathers took all 6 weeks of leave in 2023 and a further 14 per cent took 5 weeks³⁹² An initial evaluation of the new law suggests that the majority of fathers take this leave concurrently with mothers.³⁹³ Fathers not taking leave (11 per cent) cited financial difficulties, difficulties taking leave at work, or believing it was bad for their career as reasons for not taking leave. Although more recent statistics are not available, information from the Employees Insurance Agency suggests Paternity leave uptake increased between 3 and 5 percentage points between 2024 and 2025.

c. Parental leave

Statistics on the uptake of paid Parental leave, introduced in 2022, remain limited. According to news reports, a total of 124,000 parents claimed paid Parental leave in the first year of its implementation, which is approximately 36 per cent of parents in a given year.³⁹⁴ General statistics on the uptake of Parental leave (paid or unpaid) suggest that uptake has grown since the introduction of paid Parental leave but that gender differences in the use of Parental leave have increased. In 2021, 18 per cent of female employees with children up to 8 years old took Parental leave. For male employees, this was 17 per cent.³⁹⁵ In 2023, 32 per cent of female employees and 27 per cent of male employees took Parental leave.³⁹⁶ This marks a shift in leave uptake in the Netherlands, where differences in uptake between men and women had declined between 2015 and 2021. Biennial statistics on the duration of Parental leave are no longer being collected.

The biennial *Emancipatiemonitor* study indicates that both mothers and fathers not taking Parental leave are influenced by financial constraints, a belief that it is not possible to take leave from their job, that it would have a negative effect on their career or being unaware of the leave.³⁹⁷ Studies of Parental leave before it was paid suggested uptake of Parental leave is higher among more formally educated and high-income parents, parents with a Western ethnic background and native Dutch parents, those working more hours per week, working in a large organisation, and working in either the education sector or a governmental organisation. The latter is related to the fact that collective agreements in those sectors offered partial pay to employees taking Parental leave.³⁹⁸

³⁹² Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS; and Alejandro Perez, S. and Souren, M. (2022) *Module Arbeid, Zorg en Kinderopvang 2021 [Module Labour, Care and Childcare 2021]*, Den Haag: CBS. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/rapportages/2022/module-arbeid-zorg-en-kinderopvang-2021>

³⁹³ Rossing, H. and Vissee, H. (2022) *Evaluatie WIEG Eindrapport* [Evaluation WIEG Final report], Amsterdam: Regioplan. Available at: <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-0692237f7cac997ca0d9fed7bb8e28b55b97c904/pdf>

³⁹⁴ www.parool.nl/nederland/ruim-120-000-ouders-maken-gebruik-van-nieuw-betaald-ouderschapsverlof~bb0da8c2/.

³⁹⁵ Statistics Netherlands (2022) *Emancipatiemonitor 2022*, The Hague: CBS.

³⁹⁶ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS.

³⁹⁷ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS.

³⁹⁸ Zwinkels, W. (2018) *Verlofregelingen arbeid en zorg naar type arbeidsrelatie [Work and care leave according to type of employment relation]*, The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

d. Other types of leave and flexible working

Care leave: percentages of informal carers range between 7 and 12 per cent depending on the source. According to Statistics Netherlands, a total of 9 per cent of female employees and 7 per cent of male employees provided long-term informal care (for more than 2 weeks) in 2023.³⁹⁹ A 2024 study from the Ministry of Health suggests these percentages may be higher, with 10 per cent of men and 15 per cent of women providing an average of 11 hours care per week.⁴⁰⁰ Workers with informal care responsibilities report that emotional support from their supervisor and colleagues plus flexible working hours are most beneficial when combining paid work and informal care.⁴⁰¹

Relatively few employees with informal care responsibilities use short or long-term care leave. In 2023, 4 per cent of women providing long-term care (i.e. more than 2 weeks) and 6 per cent of men made use of short-term care leave. Less than 1 per cent of employees providing long-term care made use of unpaid long-term care leave.⁴⁰² The majority of employees do not take any form of leave when providing short- or long-term care.⁴⁰³

Flexible working: the Flexible Working Act 2016 entitles employees to adjust their working hours and working times, and entitles employees to work from home. With respect to the right to adjust working hours, it is well known that many workers in the Netherlands work part-time. The Netherlands Institute of Social Research has published several reports on part-time work in the Netherlands.^{404 405 406 407} It is clear that part-time work is very popular (and for women even almost regarded as 'natural'). Most Dutch employees are satisfied with their amount of working hours, suggesting that part-time work is, in most cases, voluntary.⁴⁰⁸ However, research suggests that women who are young, working in white- and blue-collar

³⁹⁹ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS.

⁴⁰⁰ See: <https://www.vzinfo.nl/participatie/mantelzorg>.

⁴⁰¹ Boer, A. de, Plaisier, I. and Klerk, M. de (2019) *Werk en mantelzorg [Work and informal care]*, The Hague: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.

⁴⁰² Perez, A.A. and Souren, M. (2024) *Monitor Arbeid, Zorg en Kinderopvang 2023 [Monitor Work, Care and Childcare 2023]*, CBS/SZW. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/aanvullende-statistische-diensten/2024/monitor-arbeid-zorg-en-kinderopvang-2023>

⁴⁰³ Statistics Netherlands (2024) *Emancipatiemonitor 2024*, The Hague: CBS.

⁴⁰⁴ Portegijs, W. and Keuzenkamp, S. (eds.) (2008) *Nederland deeltijdland. Vrouwen en deeltijdwerk [Part-time working in the Netherlands]*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

⁴⁰⁵ Portegijs, W. (ed.) (2008) *Verdeelde tijd. Waarom vrouwen in deeltijd werken [A picture of part-time working]*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

⁴⁰⁶ Keuzenkamp, S. (ed.) (2009) *Deeltijd (g)een probleem. Mogelijkheden om de arbeidsduur van vrouwen met een kleine deeltijdbaan te vergroten [Working part-time: (not) a problem?]*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

⁴⁰⁷ Portegijs, W. (2022) *Eens deeltijd, altijd deeltijd. Waarom vrouwen in deeltijd blijven werken als ze 'uit' de kleine kinderen zijn [Once part-time, always part-time. Why women keep on working part-time when they no longer have small children]*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

⁴⁰⁸ Vlasblom, J.D., van Echtelt, P. and de Voogd-Hamelink M. (2015) *Aanbod van arbeid 2014, Arbeidsdeelname, flexibilisering en duurzame inzetbaarheid [Supply of labour 2014, labour participation, flexibility and sustainable work]*, Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

occupations, and/or married/co-habiting are more likely to be in precarious, part-time jobs with short hours.⁴⁰⁹

Labour market shortages have led to a debate on part-time work again in recent years, directed at part-time working women. In 2023, the government launched a campaign to entice these women to work more hours by asking them to discuss this option at home and at work. In addition, the government commissioned research on incentives that may encourage men and women who work part-time to increase their hours.⁴¹⁰ This study suggests that a combination of incentives - financial, alignment between work and personal life, and free childcare - is the most promising. In 2024, a grant scheme 'More hours Works!' (*Meer uren werkt!*) has been introduced to facilitate the development and testing of interventions that aim to increase working hours among part-timers. So far, this scheme focuses on sectors that have both a high rate of part-time workers and struggle with labour shortages (i.e., health care, primary education and childcare).⁴¹¹

In 2020, the Flexible Working Act was evaluated. The evaluation shows that the introduction of the law did not lead to a major increase in flexible working requests or a substantial increase of collective agreements on flexible working. The evaluation shows that most employees are not aware of their entitlements. Hence, employees who submitted a request during 2016-2020 did not always refer to the law. Of the employees who participated in the evaluation, 16 percent submitted a request between 2016-2020. Most requests were related either to a decrease (27 per cent) or increase of working hours (44 per cent). Requests to adjust working times or place were less common (27 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Requests to work fewer hours are granted (59 per cent), while requests to adapt the place of work were most often denied (only 25 per cent granted). However, the evaluation concludes that since the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home has become more common.⁴¹²

Similar to 2023, 45 per cent of employees worked part of their working hours from home in 2024, although the average number of hours decreased somewhat from 12.3 to 10.4 hours per week.⁴¹³ Previously, in 2021, 47 per cent of employees worked part of their working hours from home, for an average of 17 hours per week.⁴¹⁴ ⁴¹⁵ The main reasons to work from home are being able to combine paid

⁴⁰⁹ Yerkes, Mara A. and Hewitt, B. (2019) 'Part-Time Work Strategies of Women and Men of Childbearing Age in the Netherlands and Australia', in Nicolaisen, H., Kavli, H.C. and Steen Jensen, R. (eds.) *Dualization of Part-Time Work – the New Normal?* Bristol: Policy Press.

⁴¹⁰ ResearchNed (2023) *Meer uren werken in het onderwijs na (financiële) prikkels [Working more hours in education after (financial) incentives]*, Den Haag: OCW.

⁴¹¹ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/a1350b70-543d-478e-bec3-b62bf773c13b/file>

⁴¹² Ten Hoeve, Y., Talman, J., van Mierlo, J. and Engelen, M. (2021) *Evaluatie Wet flexibel werken. Onderzoek voor het ministerie van SZW [Evaluation of the Flexible Working Act. Research for the ministry of SZW]*, Den Haag: De Beleidsonderzoekers.

⁴¹³ TNO (2025) *Nationale Enquete Arbeidsomstandigheden 2024, resultaten in vogelvlucht [National Survey Working Condition 2024, an overview of findings]*. Den Haag: TNO/CBS. Available at: [NEA 2024 Resultaten in Vogelvlucht - TNO Monitor arbeid](#)

⁴¹⁴ TNO (2024) *Nationale Enquete Arbeidsomstandigheden 2023, resultaten in vogelvlucht [National Survey Working Condition 2023, an overview of findings]*, Den Haag: TNO/CBS. Available at: <https://publications.tno.nl/publication/34642410/oTgRGy/TNO-2024-nea.pdf>

⁴¹⁵ TNO (2022) *Nationale Enquete Arbeidsomstandigheden resultaten in vogelvlucht [National Survey Working Condition an overview of findings]*, Den Haag: TNO/CBS.

work and personal life, to get more work done, and to reduce commuting time and travel costs.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁶ TNO (2024) *Nationale Enquete Arbeidsomstandigheden 2023, resultaten in vogelvlucht* [National Survey Working Condition 2023, an overview of findings], Den Haag: TNO/CBS. Available at: <https://publications.tno.nl/publication/34642410/oTgRGy/TNO-2024-nea.pdf>