Chapter Three

FATHERS AT WORK – FAMILIES KEEP OUT: THE NEED FOR CULTURE CHANGE IN NEW ZEALAND WORKPLACES

by
Trudie McNaughton and Julie O'Brien

In *Perspectives On Fathering* the EEO Trust identified changing demographics and societal expectations as driving a demand for workplaces to enable men as well as women balance their work and family commitments. We provided examples of how workplaces could be father friendly and details of three male winners of the Walk the Talk category of 1998 EEO Trust Work & Family Awards.

In this article, we examine in more detail the specific workplace issues for fathers, including the cultural workplace norm of long hours and invisible families. We also explore options for two groups of men: those in management positions, who have considerable opportunity to influence workplace culture, and those in low paid jobs who have much less autonomy and power. Because the focus of this publication is on fathers we focus on this role. However, work and family policies need to recognise that men have other roles as well, including as grandfathers, partners and sons, and may have obligations to extended family members. Policies also need to recognise the diversity of fathers, including birth fathers, adoptive fathers, guardians, step-fathers, donor fathers, non-custodial fathers and sole fathers.

Hours and participation rates in work

Unlike the significant pattern for women aged 25-34 with children, who leave the labour force for a period of time, most partnered men with children are in the labour force, regardless of the age of their youngest child. In 1996, 60.7 per cent of sole fathers with a youngest child under five were in the labour force, as were 91.8 per cent of fathers in two-parent families with a youngest under five.[1]

Of those in paid work, most men in families with a youngest child under five were working full time (84.3 per cent of sole fathers and 94.9 per cent of two parent family fathers). In fact, male parents in two parent families with pre-school children are much more likely than other parents to work full time.[2] This statistic is likely to reflect a response to the financial pressures on a family with the addition of a new family member.

---

1 Statistics New Zealand (1998) *New Zealand Now: Families and Households.* Wellington: Statistics New Zealand, p61

2 ibid.

Therefore, most fathers are likely to experience some degree of conflict between their work and family commitments, the extent of this depending on whether they have a partner, whether their partner is in paid employment and how traditional a fathering role they take in the family. Given their high workforce participation rates during their children's early years and beyond, for those men who wish to be more active parents strategies around managing work and family will be critical.

Long hours

It is not only participation in paid work per se that exerts the pressure on fathers that conflicts with their parenting role; it is the extent of this participation. Many fathers work long hours. For example, of all fathers employed full time, 43.7 per cent worked 50 or more hours per week.[3] Twenty per cent of fathers with a child under five years worked 60 or more hours per week.[4]

The length of these hours reflect several pressures on men at work, including:

- the fact that success, particularly in the corporate world, has been predicated on long 'face hours' at the office, rather than output or outcomes
- the fear of unemployment, particularly for men in lower paid jobs or industries where there has been considerable restructuring and a need to demonstrate loyalty
- the need to 'fit in' to the work ethic of their workplace, especially that relating to men.

Long hours equal success

The long hours expectation leads to 'face hours', or 'presenteeism' – "being at work when you should be at home, either because you are ill, or because you are working such long hours that you are no longer effective."[5] Yet one reason men continue to work long hours is that traditionally they have been accompanied by career success, especially at senior levels. Change is difficult because long hours are seen as the norm and are used as a measure of commitment. Any reduction of working hours is therefore seen as a reduction in commitment to the organisation.[6]

Typical of this ethic is the practice of law and accounting firms to charge out in six minute units, rather than requiring a certain quality of work, client satisfaction, successful maintenance of interpersonal relationships or other criteria which could just as well be indicators of success. Such a culture is expensive. Senior staff with high billable hours can either burn out themselves, or staff working for them. Up to 40 per cent of clients follow senior legal and accounting staff who leave.[7]

---

3 ibid., p75

4 'Power daddies switch on' *New Zealand Herald*, 11 July 1998, H1-2. See also Callister, P. (1999) 'Iron John or Ironing John? – The changing lives of New Zealand fathers', in S. Birks and P. Callister (eds) *Perspectives on Fathering*. Palmerston North: Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, pp23-40

5 New Ways to Work (1995) *Balanced Lives: Changing work patterns for men*. London: New Ways to Work, p15

6 ibid., p16

7 'Wake up call for law firms in client loyalty study' *The Independent*, 28 October 1998, p7

For managers, leadership can be equated with being at the office and being seen to be available. Once again this is an unimaginative view of what it takes to lead, and fails to reward vision, the ability to motivate others, to manage time or to delegate. The other common argument made for working long hours is the need to be accessible to clients. Yet once a person has more than one client, they can never be available to any client all the time.

Fear of unemployment

The Fathers Who Care: Partners in Parenting project instigated by former Commissioner for Children Laurie O'Reilly found that men worked long hours because they were constrained by financial responsibilities and the fear of unemployment.[8]

The restructuring of the New Zealand economy since the mid-1980s has impacted particularly on full time work for men, especially with the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector. It has contributed to the culture of long hours, with those remaining in jobs left to manage larger workloads between fewer staff. Working long hours can be interpreted as demonstrating commitment to the job and reducing the chances of being next in line in any future restructuring. High unemployment feeds this pressure, especially for those in lower paid jobs.

As research by New Ways to Work found:

> *It is clear that many men feel under psychological pressure to work long hours. One man working in a large company commented: 'There are usually entrenched views of commitment (demonstrated by physical presence, usually long hours). Few men are willing to challenge this in the current uncertain economic conditions.'* [9]

Fitting in to the work ethic

Long hours demonstrates an ability to play the game, and therefore to being a 'company man'. It does not measure productivity and can demonstrate a lack of initiative and character. A manager from the New Ways to Work survey commented:

> *I think there is a long hours culture, but my answer to this is, if you are working 50-60 hours a week, how many are really productive? It's human nature, that you just cannot be productive for long periods of time. I also know that a lot of it is about playing games. I remember working with a manager who said that he was frightened to go before his boss went, so he used to have an office that overlooked the car park*

---

8 Julian, Rae (1998) *Focus on Fathers*. Fathers Who Care: Partners in Parenting. Wellington: Office of the Commissioner for Children, p19

9 New Ways to Work, p15

and he would stay in his office all the time his boss's car was there. He would just sit at this desk, and wait. [10]

Effect of long work hours on family life

Men in an Australian study reported that "there wasn't enough time available to be the type of father they would ideally like to be."[11]

People interviewed for the Fathers Who Care: Partners in Parenting project identified work and time as key barriers to increased involvement by men in child rearing, and they were critical of the pressures placed on men to work long hours. "The men came home tired and could not give quality time to the children."[12] Over half the respondents said the pressure of work and some employers' lack of sympathy towards family needs made it difficult for fathers to spend more time with their children. Some employers were considered to be unsupportive of men who wanted to take paternity leave, or even to take time off for events such as school sports days.[13]

The negative impact of long hours on family life is beginning to be recognised in Europe, where the European Working Time Directive set a weekly working limit of an average of 48 hours. In citing their reasons for bringing this directive into law, the British Government said the "'long hours culture' has historically not only created barriers to work for women with caring responsibilities, but has also prevented many men from taking an active role in their children's upbringing."[14]

Role conflict and stress

Research indicates that men are as likely to report a similar level of work and family conflict as women. For example, Families and Work Institute research found that 70 per cent of women and men in dual earner families experience a lot of or some work family conflict.[15] The gender similarity in these statistics may partly reflect the fact that the work and family conflict for many women is so great they are not in paid work.

This role conflict stress experienced by so many fathers reflects the impact of the changing definition of what it is to be a good father. As James Levine says, "Where that definition used to be almost unilaterally fulfilling the good-provider role, equal to that now is having an emotionally close relationship with the kids."[16]

---

10 ibid., p16

11 Holland, A. (1995) 'Fatherhood in transition: men finding their feet as fathers' in *Australian Journal of Early Fatherhood* 20: 2, cited in Julian, Rae, p8

12 Julian, Rae, p19

13 ibid., p25

14 'Working-time law "will benefit families"' *Equal Opportunities Review* No 79, 1998, p2

15 Levine, James A. and Pittinsky, Todd L. (1997) *Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, p16

16 Cited in Schellhardt, Timothy D. 'Work & Family (A Special Report): Regaining a Balance – Dropping Out: More and more men are leaving successful jobs to spend time with their families'. *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 March 1997

Other research indicates there is a proviso on this perception. As Joseph Pleck puts it: "Within the general belief that it is desirable for fathers to be more involved lurks a hidden qualification: not if it negatively impacts their jobs."[17]

A nationally representative American study of employed parents with children under 13 years reported that they would or might change jobs for flexitime, indicating that parents recognise the relationship between their job schedules and their level of stress.[18]

The work stress faced by executives (who are usually male) is such an issue worldwide that it was a topic at the 1999 World Economic Forum. One report from the forum concluded that chief executives must avoid 'workaholism' no matter how much they enjoy their jobs. "They must especially avoid overworking when it renders their home lives so unpleasant that the office, in being happier, becomes the home."[19]

Families and Work Institute research found that parents' job conditions have an indirect effect on children's development through the following route: difficult job conditions exacerbate psychological distress in parents, which, in turn, affects their parenting and thus their children's development.[20]

Workplace culture and the fear of the 'daddy trap'

The long hours are just one indicator of a workplace culture that conflicts with men taking a more active parenting role. The culture has traditionally been based on an assumption of a clear public and private sphere split predicated on a full time wife and mother at home and no intrusion of the family into the world of work. As one woman described it:

> *This view of women as somehow producing children by a form of asexual reproduction is one which appears to inform company policy and the approach towards female employees more generally. Obviously men do have families but the assumptions which inform organisational cultures and practices are sufficiently powerful to render these families invisible.* [21]

In the United States there has been some evidence that women who have participated in the flexible options of the work and family programmes have been sidelined into a 'mummy track' that keeps them off the career path of their male colleagues and female ones without children.

---

17 Pleck, Joseph H. (1999) 'Balancing Work and Family' *Scientific American*, June 1999

18 Galinsky, E et al (1993) *National study of the changing workforce*. New York: Families and Work Institute, cited in Fuligini, Allison et al (1995) *The Impact of Parental Employment on Children*. New York: Families and Work Institute, p29

19 Way, Nicholas 'The Fast Lane Speeds Up' in *Business Review Weekly*, 11 June 1999, p87

20 Fuligini, Allison et al (1995) *The Impact of Parental Employment on Children*. New York: Families and Work Institute, p30

21 Jones Carol and Causer Gordon (1995) 'Men don't have families': equality and motherhood in technical employment' *Gender, Work and Organisation*. Vol 2, No2, p54

A fear of a similar 'daddy track' developing influences men's weightings of factors in making decisions around work and family. For example, employed mothers are more likely than employed fathers to give priority to control over work schedule in deciding whether to take a job. In contrast, employed fathers give more priority to fringe benefits, management opportunities and opportunities for advancement.[22] There is some evidence to show this fear can be justified. A five-year study of employees of a large, geographically diverse Swedish telephone company found there were significant costs attached to taking time out of the labour force, particularly for men. According to the researchers, some of the costs of time out of the workforce for men are attributable to 'signalling effects', that is the perception that such men are less committed to their careers.[23]

Yet other European research points to other positive impacts for men on working part time in order to be with their families. For example, interviews with 500 German men who either worked part time or were 'househusbands' led researchers to conclude that while the househusbands were largely disillusioned with their role, the part time workers expressed overwhelmingly favourable attitudes. While they had to overcome prejudice in the workplace, they felt highly rewarded by the greater interaction with their children and female partner. The researchers suggest the main barriers to implementing this model are rigid work schedules that do not conform to the changed needs and aspirations of many family oriented younger men.[24]

Many Australian organisations report that men access family friendly policies less than women.[25] Men are less likely to take periods of unpaid leave to look after new babies, yet they seem to be happy to take a period of paid paternity leave. The Work and Family Unit consider this could be related to the unwillingness or inability of men to forgo income in order to look after children to the same extent as women. Working fathers are more likely than working mothers to structure their time to gain maximum income.[26] Recent New Zealand research found a similar trend, with 28 per cent of fathers compared to 45 per cent of mothers finding the need for changed childcare arrangements when a child falls ill impacted on their employment.[27] Only five per cent

---

22 Fuligini, Allison et al, p2

23 Stafford, F. P. and Sundström M. (1994) Time out for childcare and career wages wages for men and women. Paper presented at the 6th annual conference of the European Association of Labour Economists, Warsaw

24 Prenzel, W. and Strumpel, B. (1990) 'Male role changes between partnership and career' Zeitschrift fur Arbeits – und Organsiationspsychologie, 34 (1), pp37-45 cited in Callister, P. Podmore, V. N. with Galtry, J and Sawicka, T. (1995) *Striking a balance: Families, work and early childhood education*. NZCER: Wellington

25 'Working fathers and working mothers – do their needs differ?' *Work and Family*. Insert No 17, August 1998, p2

26 ibid.

27 *Childcare, Families and Work – Key Findings, The New Zealand Childcare Survey 1998: A Survey of Early Childhood Education and Care Arrangements for Children*. (1999) Department of Labour and the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women: Wellington

of fathers reported that accessing early childhood education and care had an impact on their employment, compared to 22 per cent of mothers.[28]

There are indications of reluctance by ambitious managers to choose to put the brakes on their career progress.

> *The biggest barrier to successful part time work has not been the employer but the employee's willingness to define boundaries and come to terms with a slower career progression.* [29]

Although there is not necessarily a high uptake, other research demonstrates a desire by many men for part time work. One European study found that about 80 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men would prefer not to work full time when their children were under school age.[30] Similarly, a Danish study also suggested that on the basis of attitudinal surveys, almost half of young men said they would find part time work ideal for themselves while they had young children.[31]

Levine and Pittinsky point to the effect that perceived and actual workplace culture can have on the behaviour of working fathers. They found for example that many fathers were too scared to admit why they wanted some time off work, if it was to do with looking after their child. Others would automatically expect their wife to look after their child because they thought her boss would be more understanding than his.[32]

Also contributing to the low take up of work and family policies is the tendency of men to be reluctant to seek help, seeing this as an admission of failure.[33]

Levine and Pittinksy found in a number of cases the assumption that the workplace culture would not accommodate the demands of fathers was ill founded.[34]

Given this, fathers who wish their workplaces to change need to speak out. Men's conflicts between their work and family responsibilities add impetus to the need generated by the rising numbers of mothers in paid work.

The reality for employers is if men's changing role means they are finding their family needs cannot be accommodated in their existing workplace, it becomes an issue of retention and productivity, (as well as recruitment) just as it has been for women employees.

---

28 ibid.

29 Schmidt, Lucinda 'Finding a Balance' *Business Review Weekly*, 11 June 1999, p90

30 Kierman, K (1992) The roles of men and women in tomorrow's Europe. Employment Gazette Britain, pp 491-499 cited in Callister, P. Podmore, V. N., with Galtry J. and Sawicka, T. (1995) Striking a balance: Families, work and early childhood education. NZCER: Wellington

31 Pruzan, V. (1994) 'Family policy in Denmark: Towards individuation and a symmetrical family structure'. In W. Dumon (ed) *Changing family policies in the member states of the European Union.* European Observatory on National Family Policies: Commission of the European Communities, pp35-56. Cited in Callister, P. et al, ibid.

32 Cited in 'Working fathers and working mothers – do their needs differ?', p2

33 Morton, Tom 'Reinventing fatherhood' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1998

34 Cited in 'Working fathers and working mothers – do their needs differ?', p2

Some commentators speculate that until men speak out about their needs in this area, the belief that fathers' family involvement should not affect their job performance in any way will mean fathers are likely to follow a similar pattern to mothers: making individual accommodations, largely invisible from the public view.[35] This will continue until sufficient pressure is exerted on employers to introduce policies that allow for a more public accommodation of those needs and the subsequent benefits to all parties.

Signs of change

However, there are signs that change is occurring in work and family practices for men as well as women. At AMP in Australia a three-year programme of introducing flexible work policies reduced staff turnover from 25 per cent to 14 per cent and doubled employee satisfaction to reach 85 per cent. AMP's Financial Services human resources executive Rilla Moore says the impetus for change came from AMP chief executive George Trumbull, who is passionate about balanced lifestyles and humanistic values, including children. He practises what he preaches, scheduling meetings only between 9am and 5pm. She says that flexible policies are only the first step and stage two is changing the workplace culture so that people feel comfortable about using the policies. "Well over 100 men have taken paternity leave, including a couple of senior managers, and 50 per cent of our parental leave is taken by males. If men feel comfortable to do this, that indicates the culture has changed."[36]

Evidence of a similar pattern is starting to emerge in New Zealand workplaces. The winner of the large organisations category of the 1999 EEO Trust Work & Family Awards, Shell New Zealand and Shell Services International (NZ) Ltd, report significant take up by men of their work and family policies. For example, since implementation in September 1998, five men have taken parental leave with a 100 per cent return rate, compared to four women, two of whom returned and two who are still on leave.[37] Examples given in other entries demonstrate the beginnings of a shift of acceptance in some workplaces of men accessing these policies.[38]

The degree to which men are able to influence this culture themselves is determined by several factors including the position held in the organisation. Fathers in management are in a unique position to influence the development of work and family policies in New Zealand, while men in low paid positions share the difficulties faced by many women of the limitations in terms of flexibility and autonomy that go with these jobs.

Men in management

A key difference between women and men in terms of changing workplace culture around work and family attitudes is that men are more likely to be in positions of power in the organisation. A recent National Business Review-Dun & Bradstreet Market Poll showed men still occupy the greatest percentage of management roles across all sectors of industry within New Zealand, including 92.6 per cent of managing director

---

35 Pleck, Joseph H., op cit.

36 Schmidt, Lucinda, p90

37 EEO Trust (1999) *New Zealand's Best Employers in Work & Family 1999,* p13

38 ibid.

positions.[39] The EEO Trust's 1998 *Index* shows that men comprise 75.4 per cent of the top three tiers of management.[40] Men in these positions have the ability to directly influence company culture, and some do. The EEO Trust's article in *Perspectives On Fathering* gave examples of individual men who have led by example and as a result were winners in the Walk the Talk category of 1998 EEO Trust Work & Family Awards.[41] In this year's awards the winning companies in both the large organisations and beginners categories were headed by managing directors with strong personal commitment to work and family balance.[42]

Another gender difference is that male managers are more likely to face work and family conflict than women managers as they are more likely to have children (although women managers may still have other family responsibilities). An Australian study found that two thirds of men managers had children, compared to one third of women senior managers.[43]

Those managers who organise their working lives so they spend time with their children bring benefits into the workplace. Involved fathering advocate Steve Biddulph says evidence suggests that those who spend more time fathering tend to be empathetic, listening managers for whom employees enjoy working.[44]

Graeme Russell believes that with faxes, mobile phones, email and potentially flexible working hours, executives and others working long hours have more control over their time than before, if only they are prepared to assert themselves. The barrier can be in the workplace culture, or in the person's own preferences.[45] He has found that male managers are more likely than female managers to be happy with the balance of their work and life commitments (86 per cent compared with 70 per cent) and that male manager's organisational commitment is higher when they are positive about their own work/family outcomes.[46]

There are increasing examples in the United States[47] and more recently Australia[48] of high profile men leaving jobs citing the importance of spending time with their children

---

39 'Top corporate jobs elude women especially in bigger companies' *National Business Review*, 28 May 1999, p55

40 EEO Trust (1998) *EEO Trust Index: Benchmarking Business Success through Diversity*, p9

41 S. Birks and P. Callister (eds) (1999) *Perspectives on Fathering.* Palmerston North: Centre for Public Policy Evaluation. See also EEO Trust (1998) *New Zealand's Best Employers in Work and Family: 1998 EEO Trust Work & Family Awards*, pp13-17

42 EEO Trust, 1999, pp9-11

43 Wajcman, Professor Judy (1999) *Managing Like a Man: Women and Men in Corporate Management.* Polity Press and Allen & Unwin, cited in *Work and Family*, 19 April 1999, p18

44 'Good fathers make good managers, says psychologist' *New Zealand Herald* 15 September 1997, C8

45 Cited in Heinrichs, Paul 'Are your children little heads on pillows?' *Reuters Business Briefing*, 22 March 1997

46 Russell, Graeme *Working the family to achieve gender equity!* Paper presented at Women, Management & Industrial Relations Conference, Sydney, July 1999

47 Schellhardt, Timothy D. op cit.

48 Tuohy, Wendy et al 'Hero fathers: how do they combine career and the call of "Hey, Dad?"' *The Sunday Age*, 4 July 1999

while they are still young as the reason for their departure. Exemplars of this kind contribute to changing cultural norms around male behaviour in relation to work and family.

Ideas for managers who are fathers:

- model good work and family balance in your own life - this sends messages to employees that this is acceptable practice for them. For example, only arrange meetings from 9am-5pm, schedule in time with family, e.g. school sports, etc., just as you do with team briefings, board meetings, etc., and don't let it be dropped
- allow flexibility in hours for your staff, recognising that the return in loyalty improves productivity and far outweighs any benefits of having everyone at their desks at the same time all day
- be a champion of work and family in your workplace and professional bodies you are involved in. Doing this signals forward thinking and an ability to lead rather than follow, as these changes will increasingly be forced on organisations wishing to retain staff and improve productivity
- encourage an organisational focus on quality, effectiveness and meeting objectives, both individually and through teamwork, rather than on valuing 'presenteeism'
- get a copy of the EEO Trust publications on work and family, including *Work & family: ideas for managers & supervisors*
- seek another job if your organisation will not make moves to become father friendly, and make it clear in your exit interview why you are leaving. This is the sort of action that makes clear the necessity to respond to fathers' work and family needs.

Men in low paid work

Father friendly workplace policies must not apply only to men in senior positions. The conflicts exist for those in low paid jobs, even if those men may be less vocal about their needs. They may have fewer career options but experts suggest environments for lower paid workers are characterised by more traditional views of gender roles[49], making it harder for fathers who do wish to be more active parents to stand up and be counted. Financial constraints are likely to limit the range of options for meeting family responsibilities, so for example hiring someone to mind the children after school is not an option.

Shift work in particular can have a significant impact on family life. New Zealand research into shiftwork and families found that 57 per cent of those on rotating shifts and 31 per cent of those on permanent shifts found their family life was disrupted.[50] Other effects cited were isolation of the shift worker from family activities and reduced contact between children and the shift worker.[51] The research found that the greater the

---

49 'The Daddy Trap' *Business Week*, 21 September 1998

50 Saville-Smith Kay (1996) *Families and Shiftwork: a paper for the conference on effective shiftwork and rostering*. Centre for Research Evaluation and Social Assessment, p5

51 ibid., p5

certainty surrounding obligations and commitments, the greater the ability to manage familial and social obligations.[52] Other research found that families in which there was a full time homemaker were most able to accommodate shift work, reflecting the considerable management demands shiftwork places on families.[53] There were others who found shiftwork attractive because of the opportunities it gave for men as well as women to contribute to familial management. [54]

The type and timing of the shiftwork will impact to varying degrees on family life, and therefore different solutions may apply. For example, afternoon shift workers don't have the opportunity to see their school-age children during the week, while night shift workers who may be able to see their children, have higher levels of marital tensions.[55]

An increasing issue for low paid workers is the managing of not just one job, whether shift work or not, with their family responsibilities, but often balancing two or more casual, part time or shift work jobs and family. For these workers certainty may be key to managing family and work obligations in a multitude of workplaces.[56]

Ideas for fathers in low paid work:

- talk about work and family issues with your work mates to get support for yourself and generate ideas for your workplace
- get your union on side by raising the issue with them
- talk to your HR manager about your needs – and suggest solutions. They may be more willing to hear if they have solutions as well as problems
- raise it at your social club – activities could involve family members as well, such as picnics and other outings
- practical suggestions that make a difference can include things such as a homework room for children to use after school, access to a phone in a private space to call home, school holiday jobs for teenagers eg helping in the warehouse, clearing out a storeroom, doing photocopying, stock taking and filing jobs.

Other suggestions can be found in the EEO Trust's *Below Average Wages – Above Average Employers.*

Organisational change

As well as providing flexibility, other key areas for the development of work and family policies for men include:

- ensuring the policies clearly state they are available for men as well as women

---

52 ibid., p8

53 ibid., p9

54 ibid.

55 Fuligini, Allison Sidle et al, p48

56 Saville-Smith Kay, p14

- provision of information, especially electronically, about what the policies are
- the availability of paid parental leave. Even if men are not the primary caregivers they should still have access to paid leave. Some companies offer different lengths of paid leave to the primary and secondary care givers.
- the ability to transition from parental leave to part time work
- the ability to work from home where possible
- legitimising family leave and making it available in small blocks, such as two hours. This helps make it okay for men to say "I'm going to the kids' sports' day", or "I'm taking one of the children to the optometrist" rather than pulling a sickie or pretending to go to a meeting
- redesigning work. This can include issues such as what work is included together in a job, where that work is carried out, what hours, how results are measured and so on.

Related issues include the disparity between women's and men's pay and the economic imperative this often places on a family for the father to continue in full time employment rather than for example both working part time to share the child care. Until the gender pay gap closes this will continue to have an impact on work and family decisions.

Structural changes are necessary, but as discussed above flexible policies are only the first step and changing the workplace culture is critical to enable those policies to be used. In New Zealand a good example of a values based initiative driving change is that of Shell New Zealand & Shell Services International (NZ) Ltd. The companies have seven shared values, one of which is balancing work and personal life. Employment criteria, team and individual performance are all measured against this value.[57]

Conclusion

We are increasingly seeing recognition of the need for work and family policies in New Zealand workplaces, and leading employers in the country are beginning to develop quite comprehensive approaches. There is evidence of uptake of these policies by men in workplaces where the cultural norm supports that. However, men in many other organisations do not access these policies for fear of negative career impact or job loss.

The challenge for fathers is to speak out about their need to access these policies. Part of the challenge for organisations is to respond to this demand in order to maintain productivity and retain fathers in their workplace rather than losing them to one of New Zealand's leading employers in work and family. Even more so, the bigger challenge for organisations is to be pro-active rather than just respond to pressure, and take the initiative to change and become employers of choice in developing, implementing and monitoring work and family policies for men as well as women.

---

[57] EEO Trust (1999) p14