

EMPOWER
CHANGE. ACCELERATED.



REDEFINING WORK, DOUBLING IMPACT

Empower Job Sharing Report 2023

About Empower

Launched in 2019, Empower's aim is to accelerate female and minority empowerment by promoting those organisations, women, and men, who are reshaping the rules to achieve gender equality.

The campaign strives to level the playing field between men and women, not because equality is the end goal, but because it is the starting point for creating a space of genuine value, worthiness and respect in society.

Empower is committed to developing effective, strategic, and compelling campaigns for organisations and people who are sympathetic to these goals or who want to incorporate them into their work and lives, both internally and externally.

The campaign has now built a group of thought leaders from the worlds of politics, business, media and the third sector to campaign on behalf of women and minorities on a range of issues around the world. The aim is to use the network to increase women's voices so that they are truly heard by policymakers and industry leaders.



Foreword



Rt Hon Jacqui Smith

Former Home Secretary and
Deputy Minister for Women

In order for businesses and organisations to thrive, we need to ensure they are truly representative of the communities they serve. To achieve this, we need to help people from all walks of life to access well-paid jobs and support them throughout all stages of their career.

While we've made encouraging steps in recent decades to reduce workplace inequalities and tackle the gender pay gap, it's clear that women are still disadvantaged from progressing in the workplace. Men still continue to dominate the most senior positions, with women who take maternity leave frequently resuming their careers at more junior levels where their talents aren't fully recognised.

Job sharing brings benefits for both employees and the employer. By creating more opportunities for people – most often women – with caring or other responsibilities, we can increase organisational productivity, boost morale and benefit from senior leadership teams which are more representative of the population as a whole.

By allowing individuals to retain senior roles while working reduced hours – often two or three days per week – we can also help accommodate the right of employees to a healthy work-life balance while ensuring that companies have access to the best talent possible.

Uniquely placed to address the continued structural barriers women face

across society, job sharing can play a key role in supporting women to thrive in more senior positions in the workplace, helping to reduce the gender pay gap.

While the government has worked with cross-party MPs to announce legislation which will further support flexible working conversations between employers and employees, this White Paper identifies a clear need for long-term cultural challenges to be addressed by proactive action from both employers in adjusting their workplace policies, alongside legislative action from the government to make sure nobody is left behind.

As the UK's first female Home Secretary and a former Deputy Minister for Women, I know first-hand how both the public and private sectors have supported female senior leaders through introducing flexible job share arrangements. Post-pandemic, we've seen continued progress to support those with caring responsibilities and other requirements, which in turn significantly boost organisational productivity and ultimately our economy. It is now essential that we do not lose the progress we've made.

This white paper will set out how all sectors can realise the true potential of their employees, helping to create both more productive and more inclusive workplaces.



2023

WHAT IS JOB SHARING?

Job sharing is a form of flexible working where two people work part-time and share one role.

Employees in job sharing have dropped

124k
in 2021



101k
in 2022

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

In 2022, there were approximately 101,000 employees in job sharing contracts in the UK, dropping from 124,000 in 2021.¹ This accounts for just 0.31 percent of all UK employees.

In light of Covid, there has been widespread discussion about the increased uptake of flexible working patterns, particularly as more people have had the opportunity to work from home or change their working hours to fit with constraints placed on them by the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic hitting, the take up of flexible working had not increased significantly in the UK in the last decade.²

Now, employees and employers alike are increasingly incorporating innovative working patterns as people are hesitant to give up the increased personal time lockdown had afforded. Flexible working expands employment opportunities for a wide range of people and has been shown to improve retention of employees.

Particularly in the case of job sharing it enables people who need or want to work part time to continue to progress in their career. While not all roles can be undertaken on a part time basis, they can be effectively delivered by a job share team.

In a tight labour market, employers are keen to attract and retain the best possible talent at all levels and flexible working is a key requirement for those looking for new roles.

Results from a study commissioned by The Job Share Report revealed that 61% of women surveyed said they

would like the opportunity to job share and 87% of respondents saying that the ability to job share meant the difference between staying with a company or leaving.³

Empower believes job sharing roles are a critical solution to many of the issues women most commonly face in the job market. Based on a trajectory rate from 2023, it would take at least 30 years for women to catch up to men's participation rate in the labour force.⁴ Job sharing could provide an opportunity for acceleration both in terms of participation and in advancement of women in more senior positions. How-

ever, barriers in our working culture are preventing job sharing from becoming a mainstream working practice. Drawing on the experiences of those in job sharing roles, this White Paper will examine the benefits of this form of working – particularly in the context of post-Covid recovery and the tight labour market - the challenges faced by job sharers and their employers alike, and solutions to make the arrangement work for all concerned.

We make seven clear recommendations for change to encourage a growth in job sharing as a mainstream form of flexible working.



The benefits

Job sharing is uniquely placed to address many of the workplace challenges faced by women in particular.

Increasing openness to the practice will enable employers to access a pool of talent which would otherwise be out of their reach, and to extract additional value from a post in which ‘two heads are better than one’.

Data from Zurich Insurance shows that employers get more applications from women when they advertise roles as open to job sharing, part-time and flexible working. Their own applications rose by 60%, with applicants drawn to the flexibility displayed by the organisation.

1. Opening up senior roles

Women are still more likely than men to work part-time. 38 percent of women in employment were working part-time at the end of 2021 while the proportion of men working part-time has hardly increased past 13 percent since 2010.⁵

While many women choose to take up a part time role to better accommodate a work life balance, very few senior roles allow part time hours.

This means that women are more likely to accept junior roles when returning to the workplace after maternity leave, or to reduce their working hours. It also means that women are prevented from progressing their careers as more senior roles are often not open to applications from those who work part time.

Research by PWC found that two-thirds of professional women could be working below their potential when they return to work from career breaks. This is a huge loss of talent and has wide reaching consequences in the UK economy.

The research suggests that opportunities for women are constrained by a lack of flexible or part-time roles available. Women also face barriers of negative CV bias amongst recruiters and potential employers, who assume that the lack of recent experience is automatically associated with an erosion of skills.⁶

Job sharing roles provide an ideal solution as job sharers can retain or secure a senior role while still working reduced hours – most commonly just two to three days a week.

As a result, job sharing helps both to retain women and promote them into more senior roles, supporting their continued career progression. This reduces the gender pay gap and increases diversity in senior leadership too. This further supports increased diversity at executive level, which data shows increases organisational creativity and profit.⁷





Claire Walker and Hannah Essex are now in their third senior role together. They have recently been appointed as Co-CEO's of the Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre, having previously been Co-Executive Director at the British Chamber of Commerce and Co-Directors of Communications at Teach First.



Claire Walker and Hannah Essex
Co-Ceo of Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre

Claire and Hannah discussed how job-sharing roles can present an exciting new form of leadership, and how important it is for a company to have two women in senior roles.

Claire and Hannah were both already employees at Teach First when they began their partnership. Claire credited job sharing as an integral scheme for companies to adopt in order to retain women in senior roles.

Claire expanded on this when considering how crucial retention of women in senior roles is for a company, saying, "The good thing about the organisation was even though we were the first job share and certainly the first at a senior level, they came from a position of wanting to keep and maintain us."

Katy Murray is Director of Communications and External Affairs at Westminster Foundation for Democracy and job shares this role with Chloe Tait.

"In the insurance and long-term savings sector where Chloe and I previously worked, research showed that men and women were equally represented at entry level, but that women accounted for around one quarter of those at executive level.

"Enabling job sharing and advertising roles as open to both flexible working and job sharing is proven to significantly increase the level of applications from both men and women. It gives employers access to a much wider talent pool, and it provides a way of retaining talent if a full time employee wants to reduce their hours.

"Around 90% of all part time workers in that sector are women and job sharing is a great way of supporting more women to progress and of reducing the gender seniority gap."

2. Facilitating a work-life balance

Work-life balance is often cited as a key reason as to why individuals in senior roles reduce their working hours, something that has only been exaggerated by the pandemic. This is often because women also have to balance caring responsibilities.

In the UK today, women are still more likely to be the primary carer of both children and elderly parents. Out of 1.25 million sandwich carers in the UK, 68% (850,743) are women⁸ and three quarters of mothers say they have the primary responsibility for childcare in the home.⁹

In a study conducted by Deloitte, only 31 percent of women said they had a good work-life balance, down from 71 percent pre-pandemic.¹⁰

A further 57 percent of women who responded said that they plan to leave their current job within two years, with work-life balance challenges being the number one reason why. This is a concern for employers, as retaining staff simply makes commercial sense. For every employee who leaves, an employer will spend an average of £30,613 replacing them¹¹.

Job sharing facilitates a work-life balance by reducing the number of working hours each week, with most job sharers covering a three-day week to accommodate one day of crossover.

Kate Jeremiah, Head of People Partnering at Lloyds Banking Group job shares with Louise Wykeham-Martin on a 0.6 full-time equivalent.

Reflecting on her job sharing role, Kate explained how she originally wanted to reduce her hours to a four day working week. However, one of the key benefits for Kate has been the peace of mind that comes with job sharing for three days a week and knowing that someone else is effectively continuing your work while you are away.

“It’s more than just someone staffing my out of office, it is someone doing my job brilliantly on Monday and Tuesday. So when I’m on duty at home, I am not worried about what’s happening at work and checking my emails. I’m available but I’m not on the hook.”

Kate feels strongly that, for her, a job sharing role is more effective than doing a job on reduced hours to a four day week, as it provides total cover over the five day week, meaning she does not have to catch up on work missed.

“You are off when you’re off. That, for me, is worth what I sacrifice in salary. I feel very strongly that if I was doing this job alone in four days, I would spend my first days back in





Kate Jeremiah and Louise Wykeham-Martin

Share the job role of Head of People Partnering at Lloyds Banking Group

constantly catching up. And therefore, you'd get less than 0.8 out of me."

Claire Walker explained how job sharing gives employees more time to engage with interests outside of work, enabling people to undertake volunteering roles, pursue education or take up a new hobby.

"I was on a trustee board for five years and set up various nurseries and built a park. Hannah, my job sharing partner, coached the program that I'm now coaching on. We went on school trips, I restructured a house. I had a hip operation and had to recover, and Hannah is doing 10Ks. These are all things that people could do outside of their working life but normally don't if they are working a full-time job with two small children."

Katy Murray reflected on how job sharing has been shown to improve both wellbeing and resilience.

"Job sharing is far more prevalent in the Civil Service compared with the private sector and there is clear data showing that people who job share in the Civil Service have higher levels of wellbeing compared with those who work full time or part time. This makes sense to me. Job share partners don't just share a job – they share their skills, experience and ideas, they mentor and support each other, they problem solve together and they celebrate success together too.

"When there's a crisis or a significant deadline and you need to work a 70hr week – job share teams can do that in a more sustainable way compared with an individual. If one team member is unwell, then their partner can continue the work and if one person is on holiday then the other ensures they don't return to an inbox that's full. Job sharing improves resilience – not just for those who job share, but for the organisations they work for."

3. Job sharing is better value for employers

The benefits of job sharing roles are not exclusive to employees. Job sharing makes businesses more profitable, as job sharers have been shown to be 30 percent more productive than their full time counterparts¹².

If a job share team works six days a week then employers gain 120 percent of the usual output of a full time employee, due to one full day of crossover, providing time for collaboration and strategic planning, and the ability to be in two places at once.

Those in job shares can also take a team approach to tasks, giving two opinions, experiences and skills – leading to more innovative and successful outcomes within just one role.

Kate Jeremiah from Lloyds Banking Group explained how both her and Louise were apologetic at the start of their role, due to people’s concerns and the extra admin that is associated with job sharing. However, they have gone on to celebrate the value a job sharing role brings to a company and their stakeholders.

“We would say: ‘we’re a job share but don’t worry’ and now I think you get so much more richness to everything that we give you because it’s been through two minds, with two perspectives and experiences.”

Claire Walker, Co-CEO of Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre added: “Employers obviously get more in the sense that they get six days a week, but they also get 24/7 cover in a way that you would not get with one person.”

Between Claire and her job share partner Hannah, they have a combined 50 years of experience, meaning that there are few situations at work where they do not already have experience. With skills in membership engagement, service delivery, policy, public affairs, marketing and communications, digital and stakeholder relations, Claire and Hannah bring vast experience to a role than perhaps just one person would.

“You definitely have a built-in sounding board in the relationship that is a benefit for the individuals, but it’s also certainly a benefit for the organisation in terms of the quality of the judgement and decision at the end.”

Chloe Tait, who job shares at Westminster Foundation for Democracy agrees, adding “A lot of people talk about the personal benefits of job sharing but actually I think there are benefits to you professionally, to have your work enhanced by working in a job share partnership. When I create a piece of work and then Katy looks at it later in the week, she’s able to tweak it, refine it, make suggestions, and make it even better.”



4. Job shares would support post-pandemic recovery

The disproportionate effect the pandemic has had on women has meant that many individuals were forced to reduce their hours or step back from their careers to accommodate childcare or other responsibilities in the home.

While more men died from COVID-19, women's well being was more negatively affected than men's during the first year of the pandemic.¹³

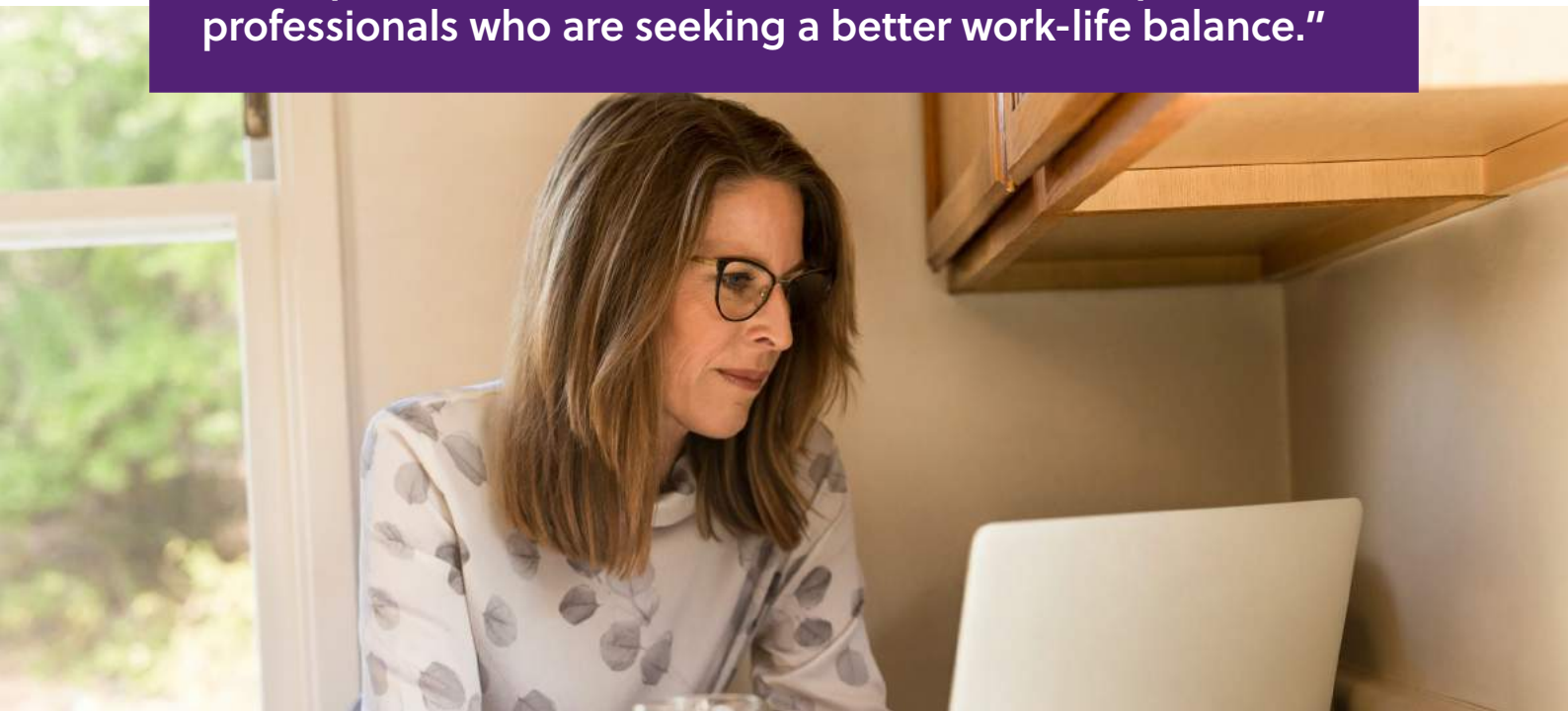
This is largely due to responsibilities within the home that affected women's ability to maintain full-time employment.

When returning to the workforce after taking a break, whether it be post-maternity leave, or otherwise, the lack of flexible and part time roles available for higher-skilled jobs means that 3 in 5 professional women (around 249,000) are likely to move into lower-skilled or lower-paid roles, experiencing an immediate earnings reduction of up to a third.¹⁴

Fully addressing the career break penalty for female professionals is crucial for post pandemic recovery as it could increase the UK economic output by £1.7 billion. For women, their annual earnings could increase by £1.1 billion, or £4000 per woman (ibid).

Katy Murray explained how job-sharing roles could benefit a range of people and employers to retain and attract talent.

“Job sharing is for anyone who wants or needs to work part time and is passionate about progressing in their career. There are many different people who could benefit from the opportunity to job share and these type of roles can be done for a short or long time. It’s a great option for someone who’s considering retirement for example, or who is considering coming out of retirement. It is a fantastic way for employers to attract and retain talent and experienced professionals who are seeking a better work-life balance.”



5. Job sharing facilitates parental leave

More than three-quarters of parents (78 per cent) found it challenging to manage childcare and paid work during lockdown. As a result, 57 per cent thought increased childcare responsibilities had negatively affected their career prospects or would harm them in future.¹⁵

At the beginning of the UK's first lockdown in March 2020, women spent 55 percent more time than men on unpaid childcare. However, this difference is smaller than in September and October 2020, when women spent 99 percent more time on unpaid childcare than men.¹⁶

Data shows that nearly twice as many mothers (15 percent) reported having to take time off work with no pay due to school closures or a self-isolating or sick child compared to 8 percent of fathers.¹⁷

The effects of the pandemic have thus exacerbated the existing 'motherhood penalty', including underemployment, slower career progression and lower lifetime earnings, women face in work.

In 2022, 5.2m fewer women participated in the labour force across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) due to the effects of the pandemic and the duty of childcaring being disproportionately responsible to women.¹⁸

In a survey of 20,046 parents conducted by the Guardian, only 16 percent of women said that childcare responsibilities had not affected their seniority or income at work, compared to 42 percent of men.¹⁹

Two-thirds of female respondents reduced their hours after having a baby, compared with 26 percent of men.(ibid) However, if given the opportunity to work flexibly, 37 percent of working mums would increase the number of hours they worked each week.²⁰

Kate Jeremiah from Lloyds Banking Group considered her experiences of returning to the workplace after maternity leave and how this shift in her personal and professional identity was better supported by having a job share partner working alongside her.

Kate added: "I love that we have a built in element of our partnership that is a professional coach all the time, and it is such a gift at this particular point of our lives. I think it will be brilliant all the way through our professional careers. Frankly, we see it having legs for as long as it works. But I really think going back after maternity leave is so extraordinary and doing that as a partnership and having that completely built in has been fantastic."

In the UK in 2019-20, only 3.6% of eligible fathers took part in the Shared Parental Leave scheme which was introduced in 2015. This shows a widespread failure to meet the government's target of 25% of those eligible taking part and means greater encouragement is required from employers and the government to help inform employees of their options.²¹

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15%

of mothers reported having to take time off work with no pay due to school closures or a self-isolating or sick child.

Challenges

Job sharing is not yet a mainstream form of flexible working. To increase the number of job sharing roles across the UK, a number of challenges must be understood to consider the current barriers to entry.

1. Lack of awareness and understanding

As job sharing is currently not a mainstream form of flexible working, there are few role models across industries to show how successful this type of working can be. Many are still not aware that this type of role is even an option to them and thus prevents employees from asking their employer.

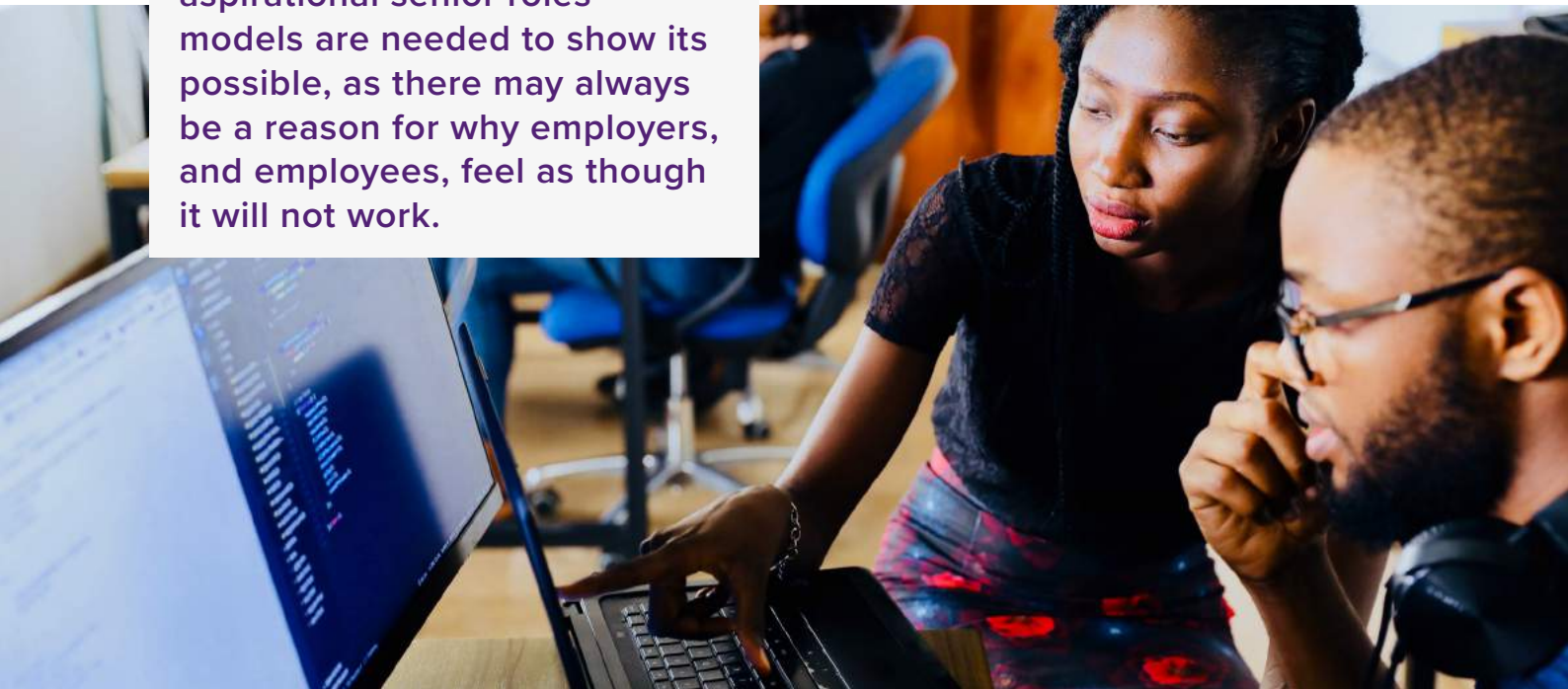
This lack of awareness can sometimes lead to a stigma, that job sharing will not work or it is simply too difficult for a company to successfully introduce.

Kate from Lloyds Banking Group explained how aspirational senior roles models are needed to show its possible, as there may always be a reason for why employers, and employees, feel as though it will not work.

By sharing their experiences from a job sharing role, Kate hopes to show how simple it is for an employer to introduce a job sharing role, as any company will already split work between colleagues, and job sharers just do this in a slightly different way.

Louise Wykeham-Martin agreed: “I think the perception that you can’t do your job as well in a job share is a barrier to entry for some. People are then put off asking, because I think about a lot of my friends that have recently gone back to work after having children and they say, ‘well, I just wouldn’t be able to do it where I work’ or ‘it just isn’t something that’s accepted.’ And I think that’s a massive barrier - but it is changing.”

Reflecting on her recent appointment to Co-CEO of Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre, Claire Walker said: “I feel that Hannah and I broke a barrier to show that it is possible, and desirable, for two people to share the CEO role. But we are a rarity, and much more needs to be done for it to become the norm.”





2. Finding a job share partner on the market

Finding a job sharer in the market can be challenging – particularly to find someone with a similar skillset and career ambitions. The majority of job shares tend to come from internal teams and few vacancies are advertised externally on mainstream platforms as job sharing roles.

Kate and Louise reflected on the luck they experienced in finding each other at a similar life stage, with a similar skill set and both looking for flexible working options. This will not be the experience of everyone looking for a job share – particularly in smaller start-up businesses.

This systemic issue makes it difficult for hopeful job sharers to find their ideal partner, as there is currently no easy way for a person to find a job share partner they do not already know or a job sharing role outside of their existing organisation.

Kate emphasised the importance of finding someone who is right to partner with.

“It’s a like a marriage. You have to trust each other completely but it doesn’t need to be a relationship that already

exists. We weren’t particularly close before we started. But you need to be able to believe it’s possible to build it. Without the trust it could be problematic and not a good experience for the other people working with them.”

Not having a partner in mind is a significant barrier and this opportunity tends to be more accessible for some groups of society over others.

Claire Walker from Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre: “If it’s a new company, I actually do think that it’s a huge ask for an organisation to then find someone else, especially at a senior level.

“On the whole, I haven’t heard of people being successful when they haven’t got a partner in mind from the outset. That doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t get there, but we have to remember that we’re still on the first journey of making it acceptable. We need to facilitate opportunities for like-minded people to find each other.”

One of the ways this barrier is trying to be overcome is with the introduction of job share registers of interest, where employees can note their interest in joining a partnership.

However, this only goes so far, as matching people who will be successful in a job share partnership can be a very personal decision.

3. Overcoming practical issues

As many companies are not set up to accommodate job sharing from the outset, those in job shares often run into practical difficulties. Challenges can include HR and management issues, IT problems and how to effectively recruit for two people.

While these issues are often small problems that can be easily overcome, they do emphasise how job sharing roles are not seen as the norm, and how companies may unconsciously create a culture that is not conducive to supporting flexi working roles.

Kate Jeremiah from Lloyds Banking Group said: “We had some IT problems. For example, we could get a shared email, but we couldn’t have access to any shared folders. So that’s less helpful, because then we couldn’t see the same things and file the same things. Things like that feel more difficult than they should be, but it’s not insurmountable.”

Louise Wykeham-Martin: “At the start as we didn’t have a shared email, you would have to copy us both into an email and you would get people forgetting. They still do a bit and then you don’t quite get the whole story. So it takes me or Kate to just be alert to it to make sure that we’re equipped with the same information at all times.”

Katy Murray added. “The way Chloe and I have approached our job share is almost like a game of tennis – we keep the ball up and we keep the momentum going. Our shared inbox, shared folders and a handover process that we’ve refined over several years make all the difference. We want to ensure that when our colleagues or stakeholders talk to one of us, it’s as if they’re talking to both of us.”

4. Establishing a working routine

Since beginning their job share role, handovers have been a challenge for Louise and Kate. Striking the balance between giving the richness and depth to each other without spending more than two hours on a handover is crucial for job sharers.

This is also essential in demonstrating value to employers – job sharers are keen to demonstrate that they are delivering 1.2x the output of a full time employee, and a shared day is an opportunity to come together to share and develop ideas.

Louise explained how this has forged their own working routines “We both acknowledge and appreciate that we probably do put in a bit of extra time to make it work. I normally do a couple of hours on Sunday, listening to Kate’s voice note and clearing down emails, which means I am ready to go on a Monday. But that’s personal choice and that’s how I want to make it work. It’s not a necessity. And our handovers have just got better, but we do have to constantly review it.”



Chloe Tait and Katy Murray

Share the role of Director of Communications and External Affairs at Westminster Foundation for Democracy



Chloe echoed the importance of their overlap day and how time must be used as effectively as possible to avoid spending too much time on the handover.

“At the end of our individual working weeks we draft a handover, and we have a structure for that and if we need to, we have a conversation the night before the other person starts work again.

“We have an understanding that it’s not a final structure and it will continue to evolve as our role evolves and as the organisation changes.”

5. Appointing a job share role

Appointing two people can be a challenging HR issue for companies to navigate as they have to understand the experience and skillset of two individuals for one role. This throws up a number of questions employers may ask – what if we prefer one person for the role over the other? How can we ensure that two people will have the same attitude towards work, ambitions and goals?

Most roles advertised on the market are not open to job sharing applicants and recruiters may find it challenging to source a suitable role for those already in a job sharing partnership and looking for a new opportunity.

This makes it difficult for two people to apply for a job sharing role without prior knowledge of each other, and yet the market can be equally as challenging for those applying for roles that are already in a partnership.

Clearly, this is a cultural issue, where our current job market is not set up to accommodate job sharers.

However, this issue could be overcome if employers were more aware of job share roles, overcoming some of the key misconceptions.

Claire Walker and Hannah Essex Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre faced this issue when seeking their first role. This experience can be summarised by a top global CV writer telling Claire and Hannah that they would be unable to write a CV for two people.

As a result of this, Claire and Hannah have been inspired to use their own CV as an example to show others of how you can combine two people's experiences and communicate joint experience.

Claire summarised: "I think employers think it's more complicated than it is. I do think they worry at senior levels around accountability and how can you have a relationship with more than one person. How does it work day-to-day? How does the handover work?"

However, Claire illustrated the success of the partnership, saying: "Our KPIs and performance speaks for itself and so therefore we've demonstrated it works and has multiple benefits in terms of relationships, impact and pace."

Katy Murray discussed how it can be difficult for job share teams to apply for roles on an equal footing with individual candidates: "Many firms don't brief their recruiters on whether they would consider an application from a job share team and the answer is often no, even before the recruiter or company has looked at the experience and skills of the job share team applying."

"Another major challenge is that online recruitment platforms, used by millions, often don't facilitate applications from people applying as a job share. This means that job share teams, the majority of which are women, are prevented from applying for roles or have to overcome significant barriers that don't exist for other candidates. Changing this would not be difficult, but it would make a big difference."

Empower believes this one of the most significant barriers to entry, and ongoing engagement with recruitment websites and platforms will be needed to enable job share partnerships to apply for roles.

6. Cost prohibitive

Working with the British Chambers of Commerce, the Empower team has costed job sharing at approximately 23 percent more expensive (including pension and NI contributions) than one FTE.

It is important to note here that from an FTE perspective, job sharing is no more expensive in terms of employer contributions, because they get 120 percent of the output. Employees also benefit from additional cover during sickness absence or annual leave.

This has led Empower to ask the Government to incentivise job sharing by introducing a reduction on Employers' National Insurance contributions for employees in job shares.



Creating a successful environment for job sharing

When considering how employers can create the best environment for job sharers in the workplace, Kate Jeremiah from Lloyds Banking Group said: “Trust. I think a job share is so individual and personal to the job and to the two individuals and their circumstances that the only way it can work is if the leader or organisation is not heavily involved in how we operate.

“So, the reason I think we can be successful is our boss says to us: this is what I need you to do to deliver in your job. And we say “cool, okay” - in exactly the same way as anyone else would go “cool, okay I’m going to figure out how I would deliver that.” We have the opportunity and the space to figure out how we deliver that between us and our boss trusts us to do it.

“And so having that trust is just so important because you can’t dictate how they work, you need to have the space to figure it out.”

Louise Wykeham-Martin agreed with Kate, and added: “Be open minded. I think the leaders that we partner were open-minded to it working. And that’s definitely helped. If we would have had to work with people that go into it thinking, this isn’t what I want, this isn’t going to work. Then it wouldn’t have.”

Janine Osborn explains how creating a successful environment for job sharers is best achieved by fostering a culture that enables people to work in flexible ways. She sums this up as:

“Companies should not tolerate any behaviour that undermines or does not encourage job sharing. Companies have to fully support it to make it work and should avoid a culture where employees try to catch out those in a job share role.”

Janine Osborn is People Director, Group Executive Functions at Lloyds Banking Group.

When considering how best to manage two employees in a job share partnership, she explained that one challenge could be the potential clashes of two different personalities coming together for one role.

“Differences in individuals can come into focus under pressure or over time. So you can have two people that are very different and that can be positive from a job share point of view because they bring very different things. But actually, under times of pressure sometimes that difference can cause a certain amount of friction.”

However, she does explain that managing a job share is not unlike managing one full time employee.

The only key difference is managing the practical contracting considerations, including explicitly outlining how to have performance conversations and development conversations for two people – and whether job sharers would rather do them individually or together.

Managers must consider how job sharers want to be managed as a pair and to what extent they need solo time.

Ultimately, Janine believes it comes down to honest and effective communication: “Each party in the job share has to be open with each other to be able to say something isn’t right and that’s not always easy.

“But I think those kind of conversations have to happen from the start to ensure you’re thinking about how you’re going to work. And they have to include your business stakehold-

ers and your boss, so the minute they notice something isn’t working, they can tell you.”

Chloe Tait expressed how a lot of the concerns employers have are around managing a job share and how appraisals should happen. Another hesitation may be the concern around what happens if one half of a job share is underperforming or wants to leave the partnership.

Ultimately, she argues that all these things can be overcome, in a similar way to how issues are worked through with a full time employee, and it most often comes down to the individual pairing.

When considering advice to offer employers, Chloe believes that the simplest solution is to ask the job share partnership what they need to be successful in the role and how they can be best supported. Whether that’s a joint inbox or holding team meetings on their shared day.

She added, “I would also say, be prepared to champion the job share partnership internally to other colleagues and especially to senior colleagues. If you’re a manager who is going to have a job share partnership in your team, you also have to fly the flag for the job sharing yourself.”



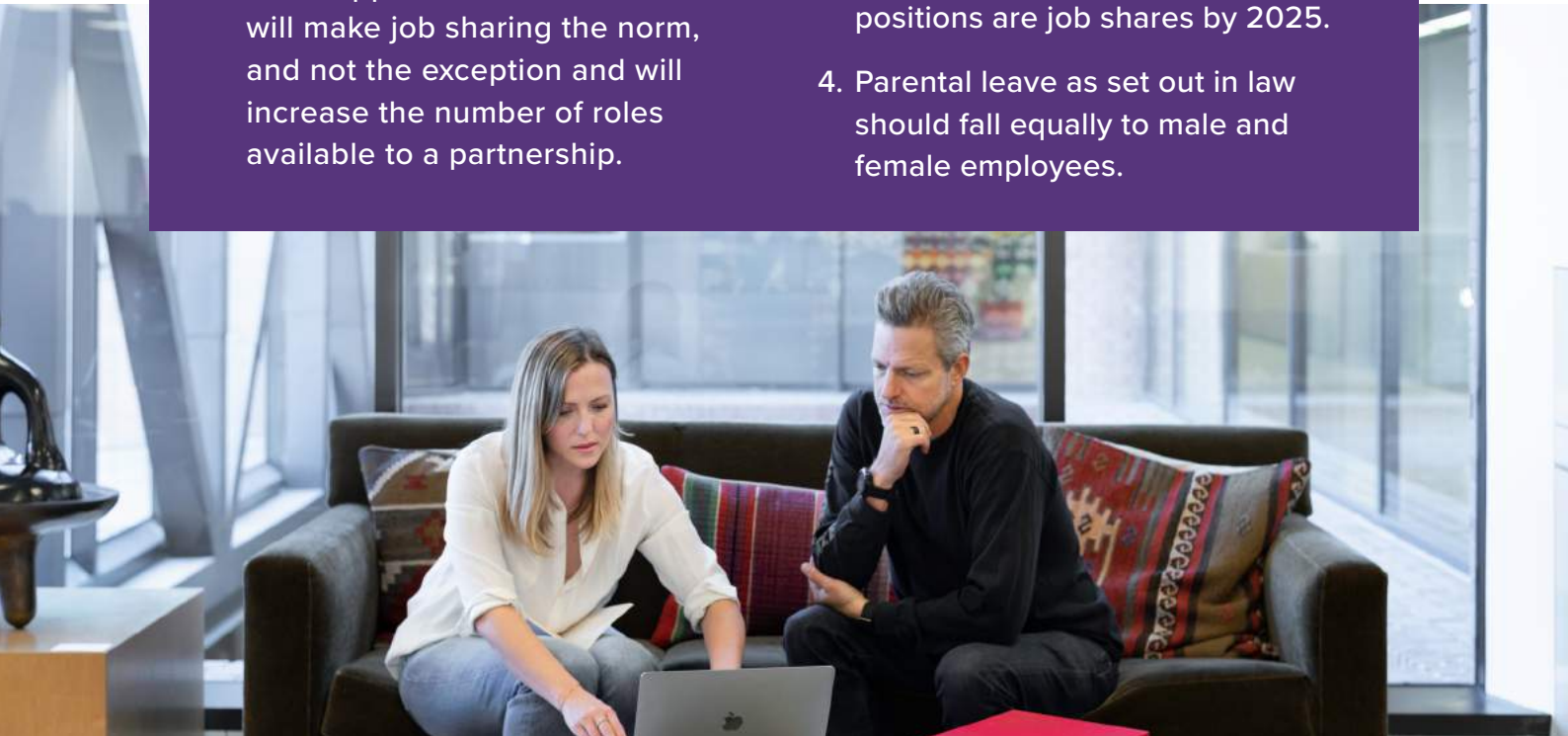
Recommendations

Employer and sector-led proposals

1. Employers and job search sites should clearly advertise positions which are applicable for a job-share and should not disfavour applicants seeking one.
2. Employers should consider all requests for job shares fairly and cannot refuse applications based on their preferred working patterns.
3. Job search sites should introduce an 'opt-out button' if job sharing is not applicable to a role. This will make job sharing the norm, and not the exception and will increase the number of roles available to a partnership.

Legislative proposals

1. The Government should introduce a reduction on National Insurance contributions for two employees in a job share to incentivise employers to introduce job sharing roles and reduce the cost barrier.
2. The Government should create a statutory duty on employers to consider flexible working requests from employees.
3. The Government should expand the Civil Service's existing internal 'job share finder' and ensure across the public sector, 5 percent of senior positions are job shares by 2025.
4. Parental leave as set out in law should fall equally to male and female employees.



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