

Reconciliation of work with caring for dependants deteriorated in the Basque Country in 2024, although there was an improvement in the balancing of employment with children and personal activities

Women report greater difficulties in balancing work and caring for dependents

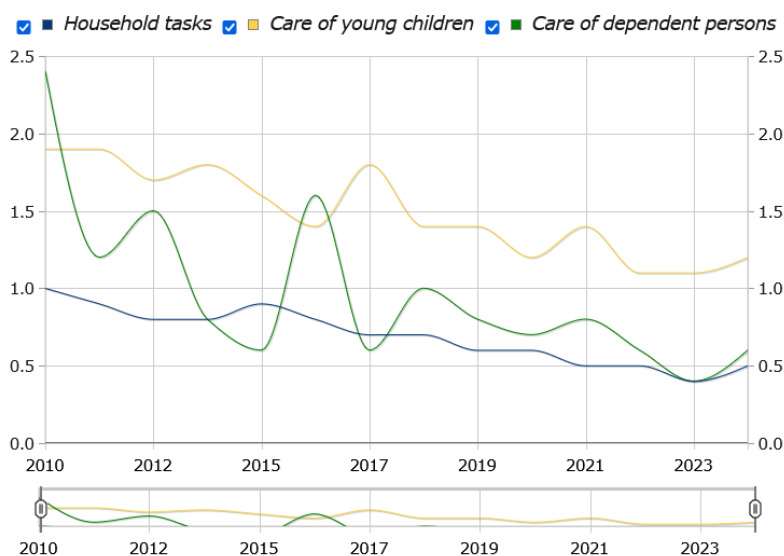
In 2024, there was a rise in the percentage of employed people residing in the Basque Country who indicated that they have great difficulty balancing their work with caring for dependants, according to Eustat data. However, for the other factors analysed, fewer respondents reported great difficulty compared to 2023.

Almost one in three people with dependants (35.8%) stated that they have great difficulty with the balance between work and caring for them, up 2.9 percentage points on the previous year. By contrast, the 26.1% of people in employment who reported a high level of difficulty with the balance between work and raising children represented a decrease of 3.1 percentage points compared to 2023. Lastly, 26.9% indicated great difficulty in combining their work with personal activities, down 0.8 points.

From a gender perspective, women reported greater difficulties, particularly in the balance between work and caring for dependants. While 30.2% of men indicated that they had great difficulty (3 tenths lower than in 2023), the percentage of women rose to 41.2%, up 6.1 percentage points on the previous year.

Differences between the time spent by women and men in the Basque Country on aspects of work-life balance

hours



Source: Eustat. Survey on the reconciliation of work, family and personal life

Gender differences persist in household chores and caregiving

In 2024, the differences between women and men in time spent per day on caregiving and housework increased slightly compared to 2023. However, an examination of the trend since 2015 reveals a slight reduction of 0.4 hours in the gap in time spent on childcare and household chores. However, the difference in caring for dependent persons remains stable.

Although the differences have not increased over time, women continued to spend more time on these questions. As such, women working outside the home who have children aged under 15 spent an average of 1.2 hours more per day on their care than men in the same situation (4.7 and 3.5 hours, respectively).

With regard to caring for dependent persons, employed women spent 2.2 hours a day, while men spent 1.6, a difference of 0.6 hours. As for household chores, the difference was 0.5 hours: working women spent 2.1 hours a day and men 1.6.

This unequal distribution of roles was reflected in the levels of satisfaction. 15.6% of employed women reported being very dissatisfied with the collaboration of their spouse or partner in household chores. By contrast, a high 77.6% of working men were very satisfied with their partner's participation. However, satisfaction with personal time spent on household chores was similar for men (52.1%) and women (49.0%).

As regards satisfaction with time spent caring for dependants, 41.2% of people in work reported that they were very satisfied, with similar percentages for men (42.2%) and women (40.1%). A higher level of satisfaction was reported for caring for children: 60.5% of people in work stated they were very satisfied, with a slightly higher score for women (62.9%) than men (58.2%).

As regards time spent on personal activities, nearly half of the working population indicated that they were very satisfied (46.4%), with men reporting a higher level of satisfaction (50.3%) than women (42.3%).

In respect of general job satisfaction, the overall score was 7.4 out of 10. However, there were differences depending on the factors assessed. The lowest rated was career options with a score of 4.0, followed by flexibility of working hours (6.5), breaks during the working day (6.6) and remuneration (6.9). The highest-rated factors were working hours and holidays & leave (both at 7.4) and job stability, with a score of 7.8.

Overtime decreased, but there was an increase in the perception that requesting reconciliation measures hinders career advancement

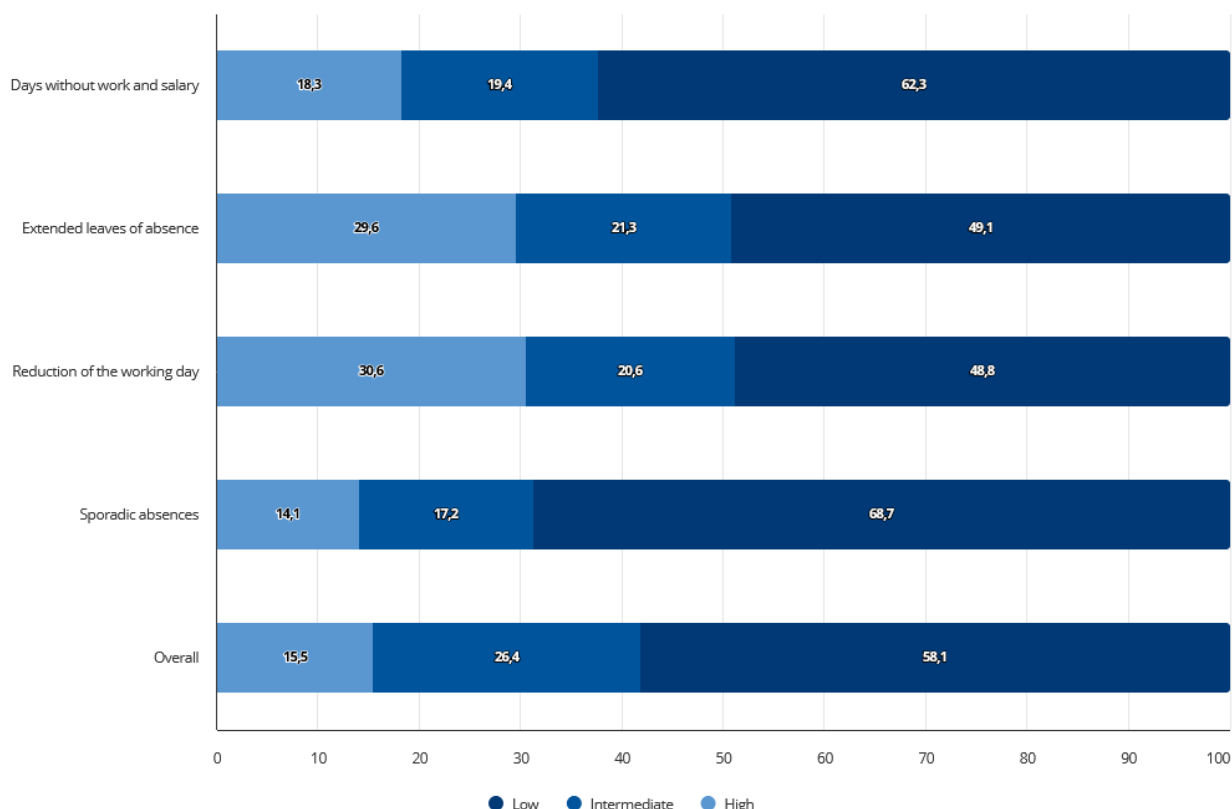
In 2024, 18.9% of the working population in the Basque Country reported regularly having to spend more hours on their work than stipulated or envisaged. This figure represents a decrease of 1.8 percentage points compared to 2023. In addition, 15.5% worked overtime on an occasional basis, half a point lower than the previous year.

As regards how leave related to work-life balance was perceived, 19.1% of working men believed that taking paternity leave could affect them adversely, compared to 28.5% of women who thought the same about maternity leave. However, only 9.5% of men believed that being a father could have a significant impact on their careers, compared to 24.8% of working women who thought that being a mother could be a disadvantage for professional advancement.

Concern that requesting leave or reduced working hours for family reasons may have a major negative effect on career development increased by 5.8 points compared to the previous year. This concern was expressed more by women (35%) than men (29.3%).

Population in the Basque Country by difficulty of requesting permissions. 2024

percentage



Source: Eustat. Survey on the reconciliation of work, family and personal life

17.1% of employed people worked from home to a greater or lesser extent

Amongst the various measures that might facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and personal life, occasional absences from work were within reach of 68.7% of the working population, followed by the possibility of requesting leave in the form of unpaid days off (62.3%). Furthermore, almost half the working population stated that they experienced little difficulty in obtaining extended leaves of absence (49.1%) or a reduction in working hours (48.8%).

As regards flexibility of working hours, compared to 2023, there was an increase of 4.8 points in the percentage of individuals who benefited from this reconciliation measure: while the percentage was 51% in 2023, it rose to 55.8% in 2024. However, gender inequalities persisted: 60.4% of men had access to flexible arrangements, compared to 51% of women.

As for home-based employment, 17.1% of people had this working arrangement to some degree, up 1.3 points on 2023. Of these, 7.4% did their job from home on at least half of their working days, while 9.7% did so occasionally. Use of this arrangement increased by 0.7 percentage points compared to 2023 and 2.4 points compared to 2020. However, while the percentage of people working from home on at least half of the days rose by 0.6 points compared to 2023, it was still 3.4 percentage points lower than the 2020 figure (10.8%).

With respect to the different types of working day, a steady decrease was seen in the percentage of people who had a split working day. In 2015, 40.9% of people had a split working day (morning and afternoon), but in 2024 this proportion had fallen to 27.3%. Conversely, there was a rise in the percentage of people with a continuous working day (from 50.8% in 2015 to 60% in 2024) and a mixed working day (from 8.3% to 12.7%).

In households where both partners worked, looking after children during parents' working hours corresponded, in 87.7% of cases, to schools, on 4.2% of occasions to family members or people who were not paid, and in 3.9% of cases to both parents.

In the same households, sporadic care of children during working hours, when they need to be taken to the doctor, are ill or do not have school, was provided in most cases by both parents (64.1%), and less frequently by unpaid persons or family members (18.3%), by the mother (10.9%) or the father (5.2%).

As regards employment preferences, working people favoured being employees (86%) over self-employment (14%). They also preferred the public sector (62.3%) to the private sector (37.7%), while the balance was greater between large and small companies: 57.6% opted for large companies and 42.4% for small ones.

Children under the age of 15 of the employed population in the Basque Country by daily care (when both spouses work). 2024

	2023	2024
Total (thousand)	185.2	170.5
Daily care during the working day of the employed person (%)		
Both	4.0	3.9
Relatives or individuals without earnings	3.2	4.2
Other individual with earnings	0.1	0.6
Nurseries	1.6	3.5
Education centres	91.1	87.7
Sporadic care during the working day of the employed person (%)		
Mother	10.4	10.9
Father	4.7	5.2
Both	61.5	64.1
Relatives or individuals without earnings	20.3	18.3
Other individual with earnings	1.8	1.1
Selfemployed (Left alone)	1.4	0.5

Date June 26, 2025

Source: Eustat. Survey on the reconciliation of work, family and personal life

For further information:

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