

## New forms of employment

### Job sharing, Poland

#### Case study 37: Krakow Regional Labour Office

*At the Regional Labour Office in Krakow, the benefits of job sharing included supporting a full-time employee to return to work on a part-time basis after parental leave. However, despite the potential advantages for some groups (carers, older people and immigrants), job sharing can be an administrative burden for the employer.*

### Introduction

The idea of job sharing emerged in the UK and has been transplanted to many other EU Member States (Drela and Sokół, 2011). The Polish equivalent of job sharing is known as *podział* (or *dzielenie*) *stanowiska pracy*. Job sharing is an extremely flexible form of part-time employment. It corresponds to the distribution of tasks ascribed to one full-time job between two or more persons, who divide the time needed to perform the tasks between each other and are then paid in proportion to their workload. Job sharing can be arranged in many ways, depending on the preferences of employees and the nature of tasks performed (Hajn, 2003). Besides the typical 50/50 split, a job can be shared in various proportions (for example, 40/60 or 80/20), or under various arrangements (for example, a split working day, alternate or overlapping working weeks) (Association for Labour Market Development (STOS), 2007).

In Poland, job sharing requires the signing of an employment contract and there are no laws governing this form of employment directly. Job sharing is not the preferred flexible form of employment in Poland. However, information about job sharing and the possibilities of introducing it have become more widely available (Infor, 2014). It is becoming an increasingly popular, although not common, form of employment in the country. Being a job sharer means working part-time and involves lower, often insufficient income to make ends meet. Employees are often reluctant to reduce their working hours to accommodate family obligations as they are afraid they might lose their job or face difficulties in re-entering full-time work.

Poland is among the European countries with the lowest share of part-time employment as a proportion of total employment. In 2011, only 7.3% of employees were employed part-time (Eurostat, 2012a). In addition, job sharing requires good cooperation between workers as well as understanding and help from a line manager, which is sometimes difficult to obtain. Limited duration contracts are the most popular flexible forms of employment. Poland has the highest share of employees with fixed-term contracts among EU countries (27% in 2011) (Eurostat, 2012b).

The analysis presented in this case study looks at the job sharing scheme introduced by the Regional Labour Office in Krakow, hereafter referred to as the Public Employment Service (PES). The key sources of information were interviews conducted with two job sharers working at the Labour Market and Education Observatory of Małopolska (a branch of the PES) and interviews with two representatives of the employer, namely the team manager and the human resources (HR) manager at the PES. External experts' opinions (including those of a career adviser at the PES and an academic expert) enriched the analysis of the job sharing scheme introduced by the PES.

## **General characteristics of job sharing at Krakow Regional Labour Office**

The Regional Labour Office in Krakow is part of the PES in Poland. Its main objectives are to help match the local labour market's supply and demand through information, placement and active support services. It operates under the regional government of the Małopolskie region and plays a major role in determining and coordinating the regional labour market policy as well as monitoring the local labour market situation. The PES had no works council at the time of the case study.

Of the 313 employees working for the PES in Krakow, 262 are women and 51 are men (as at the end of February 2014). The PES is headed by a director and deputy director who lead expert teams and independent employees. The HR management team is responsible for planning and implementation of the HR policy and is directly accountable to the director. A majority of the employees are young (with an average age of 36.7); however, some workers are over 50. Most of the employees are university graduates (93.61%). Due to the fact that a large proportion of the young and educated staff are women, the PES tries to attract and keep employees by offering them flexible forms of employment including teleworking, flexible working time and job sharing. This helps the employees to reconcile their careers and family life.

PES employees are often recent university graduates. The PES provides its employees with regular opportunities to enhance their skills through trainings, conferences, seminars in Krakow and all over Poland, and study visits abroad. The customised training scheme is an important non-financial incentive since the PES has limited capacity to reward its employees financially.

The job sharing example analysed in this case study concerns an information management specialist position at the Labour Market and Education Observatory of Małopolska, a body formed under the PES.

This position was shared from December 2012 to June 2013, but was filled by a single employee both before and after the job sharing scheme. The Observatory's team of employees carries out research and analyses of the regional labour market to inform decisions about development of the Małopolskie region. The main tasks of the Observatory's project team are to monitor socioeconomic trends in the regional labour market, develop solutions for research in this field and support cooperation and dissemination of information. The Observatory was created by the regional PES in January 2008 after a pilot scheme period between 2006 and 2007, and is expected to run until April 2015. The type of work carried out by the Observatory requires extensive teamwork among its employees.

There are two main groups of employees working at the Observatory. A research coordinator and three researchers focus on research and analysis. At the same time, a public relations (PR) specialist, a cooperation coordinator and two information management specialists deal with promotion and dissemination of project results. There is also a project manager, administration support and an accountant. Altogether, 10 employees work for the Observatory.

The two employees sharing the position of information management specialist between 3 December 2012 and 30 June 2013 were sociology graduates from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Employee 1 had been working at the PES in Krakow since August 2005. She was 37 years old and had two small children (one born in 2010, the other in 2012). Employee 2 was in her 20s (25–30 years old). She had already temporarily worked for the PES, having twice covered the maternity leave of employee 1 – first in 2010, and then for a month in 2012 when employee 1 extended her leave for an unpaid month before beginning the job sharing scheme in December.

## **Design and implementation process**

According to the HR manager, there were a number of reasons for introducing job sharing at the PES. It enabled employee 1, who had the necessary knowledge and skills, to return to work part-time after being on maternity leave and then unpaid extended post-maternity leave. As the duties connected with the job made it a full-time role, steps were taken to employ another person on a part-time basis to 'fill' the remaining hours so that the Observatory could operate effectively.

Employee 1's view chimed with that of the HR manager. She explained that the idea of job sharing was a natural consequence of seeking a solution that would reconcile her interests (willingness to

return to work part-time) with those of the team (dutiful performance of tasks). Employee 1 wanted her return to work to be as smooth as possible for the management and the team. Therefore, she decided to return to work on a part-time basis only, so that the other part of the job could be filled by another employee. The willingness to work part-time resulted from the employee's family situation: employee 1 had two young children. This is the reason why, after returning from the unpaid extended post-maternity leave, she asked for her workload to be reduced by half from 1 November 2012 to 30 June 2013.

Before being implemented, the job sharing idea was the subject of many consultations. Employee 1 admitted that she was not familiar with the concept of job sharing before but that the idea of having two people employed in her position came into her mind while looking for a good solution for her and for the team during her unpaid extended maternity leave. She talked to the project manager about the issue, and the project manager in turn talked to the PES deputy director and the project team. In September 2012, employee 1 applied officially to reduce her working hours by half. At the same time, the project manager, after collecting the opinions of all parties, decided to share the position of information management specialist between two employees for half a year and applied to the director to have this position temporarily filled. Consequently, the procedure to recruit an employee to fill the other half of the job was launched, as provided for under the Act on Local Government Employees. Employee 1 came back to work in November 2012 and job sharing started on 3 December 2012. The HR manager was not directly involved in coming up with the idea of job sharing. Her task was instead to administrate this form of employment once the decision was made.

Initially, the project manager doubted whether a part-time employee could be found, but many candidates expressed an interest in the offer. The job seekers included women who wanted to return to the labour market after a break, but who could not or did not want to work full time, primarily due to childcare responsibilities. Others were simply seeking a job and found the idea of part-time work satisfactory. The recruitment process lasted quite a long time and the successful candidate was selected in late November 2012. In the end, the other part of the information management specialist position was filled by the person (employee 2) who had replaced employee 1 during her maternity and parental leave in 2010 and 2012. According to employee 1, the reason for choosing employee 2 was her prior experience of working in the position. The project manager emphasised that employee 2 had previously worked for the Observatory and that her performance had been assessed positively.

The reason why employee 2 decided to enter the job sharing position was the opportunity it gave her to become employed, particularly by an employer she knew. Thus, she could benefit from her experience in working at the position and had the opportunity to continue employment with the same employer. Employee 2 emphasised that she decided to accept the job (despite the fact that it was part-time) because she knew the team and liked working with them.

After half a year of job sharing, employee 1 again opted for unpaid parental leave and employee 2 replaced her for two months (from July to August 2013). In September 2013, employee 1 returned to part-time work with the intention of continuing job sharing at the position of information management specialist. As the idea did not get the directors' approval, employee 1 was offered a part-time job as an assistant to the chair of the Commission of Proposal Evaluation in the Team for Promotion, Tenders and Calls for Proposals. The project manager emphasised that prolonged absences of employee 1 due to her child's illness had led to delays in task completion (reporting) and this had led to her transfer to another team. The HR manager also said that the problem was not job sharing itself but the temporary nature of the contract, which was only six months. When employee 1 came back from her further period of unpaid maternity leave and was offered a transfer, it was clear that new recruitment would be needed to keep her original position as a job-share. It made the whole situation too complicated.

Consequently, a vacancy was created at the Observatory and a recruitment procedure to fill the full-time job was announced. Employee 2 was no longer interested in working for the PES, mainly due to time (long recruitment procedure) and financial reasons. The process of taking and giving up employment with the same employer started to bother employee 2, who decided it was a good time to seek employment with another company.

## Working method, processes and procedures

Employee 1 is employed by the PES in Krakow on the basis of a permanent employment contract. Following her request to have her working time reduced by half after her return from parental leave, she signed a new contract changing the permanent employment contract into a fixed-term, part-time employment contract for the period from 1 November 2012 to 30 June 2013. The fixed-term contract was agreed only to reduce working hours by half for a predetermined period of time. By default, employee 1 was still entitled to be employed full time for an indefinite period of time. Reducing working hours did not change her social and employment protection. Job sharing commenced with the signing of the fixed-term, part-time employment contract by employee 2 who was entitled to employment and social protection granted to part-time new entrants at the PES in Krakow.

According to the HR manager, there was no need to introduce any special provisions in the employment contracts or to sign any agreements as the employees complemented each other. Job sharing was formalised only in terms of the written scope of duties assigned to the respective employees. The scope of duties is a document prepared on the basis of a job description. While a job description is related to a particular position and consists of a range of tasks, duties and permissions ascribed to a particular position, the scope of duties is assigned to a particular person and sets out the name of the employee, the person to whom he or she is subject and the task he or she is to perform. On the basis of the job description, the project manager decided on the scope of duties for employees 1 and 2 respectively. The HR manager claims that job sharing did not cause any problems in this respect. The project manager expressed a similar opinion.

As the information management specialist position involves both analytical and dissemination tasks, the project manager divided the scope of duties in line with the experience and capabilities of the two employees. Employee 1 was entrusted with the dissemination tasks (for example sending reports), whereas employee 2 was delegated to perform the more analytical tasks due to her skills in this area. In addition, the employees had to pursue one major task together – namely, to study the Observatory project's demand for information biannually. The task lasted from November 2012 to February 2013. The employees shared the subtasks with each other and consulted each other on their implementation without much interference from the line manager. The consultation was possible due to the fact that some of the employees' working hours overlapped. The project manager assessed the cooperation positively and both employees shared this opinion.

The project manager decided that the employees should not work 'shifts'. The parental duties of employee 1 excluded the possibility of one person starting the job in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Thus, the employees worked five hours a day, four days a week. While employee 1 worked from Tuesday to Friday for five hours a day, including a break for breastfeeding, employee 2 worked five hours a day from Monday to Thursday. Thus, the employees worked together three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). As reported by the project manager, such an arrangement required the provision of an additional desk and computer for the other employee, resulting in additional organisational effort for the project manager and additional costs for the PES.

Employee 1 praised the cooperation and emphasised that when she was on leave, employee 2 was able to perform all job-related duties. Pursuing common tasks under the project enabled the employees to replace each other as employee 2 had already been acquainted with the tasks. Employee 2 evaluated the situation similarly. Despite the division of duties, she was able to perform all tasks connected with the job and had no difficulty in replacing employee 1. However, employee 2 claimed that the system did not always work properly: sometimes she felt that she performed more duties than were ascribed to her part-time job (for example, due to breastfeeding, employee 1 worked half an hour less than employee 2).

The project manager believed that job sharing was more effective during shorter absences of employee 1. The problem was that while working part-time, employee 1 was absent from work for more than one week at a time due to her child's illness. In such cases, the replacement was limited because employee 2 worked part-time, so she could only perform the most urgent duties of both employees. Otherwise, her employment contract would have had to be changed so that she could work longer hours during the absences of employee 1. Such a change was impossible as it would have resulted in double remuneration for the same job.

According to the project manager, the longer absence of employee 1 due to her child's illness caused problems that delayed task completion. Employee 1 was aware of the problem and said that her child's illness had occurred at the beginning of the task, so it had not been possible to transfer the task to employee 2. As a result, the assignment was completed with a two-week delay, to the dissatisfaction of the managers.

The job sharers were remunerated proportionally to their workload. Employee 1 received exactly half the remuneration she was paid when she worked full time. Although employee 2's remuneration was not the same as that of employee 1, it was proportional to the full-time job performed by a person with similar experience of working for the PES. The only difference concerned the availability of some benefits under the PES Social Benefits Fund, which depend on the length of service. Employee 2 did not feel aggrieved due to the remuneration and benefits, and she was entitled to a discretionary bonus awarded by the project manager, who emphasised that he did not distribute bonuses to the team members proportionally to the form of employment (full-time or part-time), but took into account absence from work and an employee's involvement in the tasks.

The job sharers had equal access to trainings, and this was emphasised by the employees themselves as well as by the project and HR managers. The HR manager also stressed that the PES employment policy does not discriminate against employees on the basis of what type of employment contract they have. The project manager mentioned an external team training which had taken place during the job sharing and which was attended by both employees. Onsite trainings were also equally available to both employees.

## **External support**

All respondents agreed that external support in planning and implementing job sharing at the PES in Krakow was not needed. According to a career adviser, the PES in Krakow itself used to conduct training programmes for job seekers, informing them about opportunities and threats of flexible forms of employment (including job sharing). The aim of this action was to make unemployed people familiar with such forms of employment and point them towards prospective job opportunities.

## **Outcomes and effects**

According to both the managers and the job sharers, the introduction of job sharing produced the expected results – employee 1 returned to part-time work at her previous position and the Observatory project team implemented its tasks as scheduled. The HR manager expressed the opinion that job sharing enabled the PES to enforce the laws concerning women's return to work after maternity and parental leave. This signalled to other employees that it is possible to return to work, share the job and implement the scheduled tasks effectively.

Employee 1 mentioned that job sharing implemented by the PES in Krakow is a good incentive for other women in the local labour market taking care of small children to apply for a part-time job. According to employee 1, women are not brave enough to fight for their rights to flexible employment arrangements as they are afraid they will lose their job. Sometimes, they do not even ask whether it is possible to work part-time and to share their position with another employee. As a result, they withdraw from the labour market completely because they feel unable to reconcile their work with their family life.

Job sharing helped the managers to retain an experienced worker (employee 1) at the Observatory who at that time was not able to perform her tasks on a full-time basis. Moreover, the employees and the project manager noticed additional benefits of job sharing. The manager appreciated mutual arrangements made by the employees while pursuing one task. Similarly, employee 1 claimed that job sharing produced synergy. According to her, the fact that two persons worked part-time to fill one job was more valuable in terms of time (the employees sometimes stayed longer at work even without overtime pay, but it was rare) and quality (fresh ideas and common planning inspired the employees and benefited the management) than if one person filled the job. Employee 2 also emphasised the opportunity to receive support from the other job sharer. The job sharers positively evaluated the cooperation between each other as well as among them, the project manager and the whole team. Employee 1 believed that the work is and has been cooperation-oriented, which is conducive to job

sharing. The project manager and the project coordinator helped to divide the duties among all team members. According to the job sharers, this form of employment was comfortable for them and did not cause much stress related to the task sharing. Employee 1 felt satisfied, although employee 2 struggled a bit in getting used to sharing the position and in the continuity of task performance related to the organisation of work (described below).

According to employee 2, learning how to work on a project was the major effect of introducing job sharing. She emphasised that she had an opportunity to develop and perform interesting tasks. Moreover, the fact that she had to share the job with employee 1 was of psychological significance as employee 2 had to move to another room and face the person whom she had replaced before. In addition, employee 2 felt she had contributed more to the team than employee 1, which was noticed and appreciated by the team. She claimed that, in the beginning (directly after the period of covering employee 1), the team wanted her to stay full time instead of introducing job sharing. They were afraid that after maternal leave, employee 1 might be less effective and less engaged in performing her tasks.

The problem with the handover of tasks arose when employee 1 was absent due to her child's illness. The tasks (sending the reports) were not transferred to employee 2, who at that time dealt with different analytical issues. It had a negative impact on the quality of service provided by the Observatory as clients received reports with a two-week delay and were dissatisfied.

Employee 2 also observed that job sharing and related duty distribution resulted in problems with maintaining the continuity of task performance during the week. Employee 2 did not find the working time (four days a week) convenient as this caused a three-day long disruption in task performance. It was particularly irritating when the employees implemented tasks in two different fields (employee 1 – promotion and dissemination, employee 2 – analysis).

The job sharers also referred to financial effects. While employee 1 admitted she could afford to work part-time because her husband's earnings were high and she could entrust childcare to her parents, employee 2 saw her part-time employment as a temporary solution and felt she needed to earn more. In normal part-time employment, income might be higher when the reduction in working hours is lower; however, job sharing requires a 50:50 division of tasks in order to ensure an acceptable level of income. Employee 1 decided to reduce her working time by half to make job sharing possible. Reducing working hours by less than a half (which is much more common among PES employees according to the HR manager) would have given her the chance to earn more but, on the other hand, it would have made the introduction of job sharing impossible.

## **Strengths and weaknesses**

### **Weaknesses of job sharing**

The PES managers observed that job sharing may result in an extra administrative burden for the employer. The project manager claimed that he had to monitor working time more closely and supervise the application of various laws and guidelines, both internal and external. The HR manager did not notice any increase in workload due to job sharing; however, she admitted that some of her subordinates might have. The career adviser shared this opinion, stating that job sharing may cause organisational problems.

An external expert emphasised that it may affect the effectiveness of administration and coordination. He pointed out that it might be easier for a company to employ two people for separate part-time positions rather than creating a shared job. This would mean that when one fell ill, it would be easier to change the working hours of another part-time employee without having to pay for overtime work.

Another weakness is the difficulty of resorting to this employment form. Introducing job sharing in Poland requires the 50:50 division of tasks because people cannot afford to work less than 50% of a full-time contract due to low income levels. This is one of the most significant obstacles to introducing job sharing in Poland. The HR manager knew from experience that few women return to part-time work after maternity or parental leave. If they do, they usually work three quarters to 80% of a full-time contract; this makes filling the remaining part of the job extremely difficult.

Another requirement for successful job sharing is job security. Employee 1 emphasised that mothers with young children would be willing to work part-time but, for fear of losing their job, they do not apply to have their full-time employment reduced on their return from leave. The project manager noticed that job sharing is not a popular form of employment in Poland and, consequently, women are often not offered jobs that would address their needs.

All the respondents emphasised that job sharing cannot be introduced for every type of position. Being able to divide tasks is of key importance for this form of employment, as underlined by the project manager and the external expert. The project manager drew attention to the fact that handover wastes time if the job sharers work shifts. According to the HR manager, job sharing can increase the risk of failing to hand over some tasks, which may produce adverse effects, especially regarding conceptual tasks. The career adviser stressed that equal division of duties is vital too and requires mutual trust, cooperation and identification with the employer.

Job sharing may be psychologically challenging for the employee whose terms and conditions of employment are subject to change. This was mentioned by employee 2, who had replaced employee 1 full time. When employee 1 returned to work, employee 2 had to move to another room, which she found inconvenient.

The managers emphasised that job sharing at the PES in Krakow was limited by the laws governing the recruitment procedure (the Act on Local Government Employees and the Labour Code). The project manager noticed that filling a full-time job and altering its staffing requires a formal recruitment procedure, and this takes considerable time to carry out. The job is reduced for a short time (half a year in the case analysed), but the whole recruitment procedure to employ someone to work part-time and for a fixed term has to be started. The recruitment would be easier if the procedure was not a standard competition procedure. Instead, the PES could use its database to find the employees needed. As a consequence, the project manager did not blame the job sharing mechanism for the fact that sharing the position of the information management specialist was not continued. The project manager emphasised that because employee 1 was absent from work for a relatively long period of time due her child's illness, this led to delays in task completion (reporting). As a result, employee 1 was transferred to another team. The HR manager added that changing forms of employment (turning a part-time job into full-time replacement and vice versa) were another disadvantage. The complex recruitment procedure and changing forms of employment extended the recruitment process and might have been inconvenient for employee 2.

## **Strengths of job sharing**

The interviewed experts, managers and employees said that job sharing provides better opportunities to use the employees' potential as the institution may benefit from having two employees with different skills. However, it was added that it was difficult to cover the short-term replacement needed due to the illness of employee 1's child because employee 2 worked only part-time and so had to perform only the most urgent duties of both employees. To work longer during the absence of employee 1, her employment contract would have had to be changed.

According to the external expert and the HR manager, introducing flexible forms of employment, including job sharing, makes it possible to keep valuable employees who might otherwise withdraw from the labour market. Employees often view their inability to work full time as a temporary situation. The HR manager said that flexible forms of employment offer a good non-financial incentive, enabling employees to achieve a better work-life balance, and that job sharing provides parents returning from maternity or paternity leave with a feeling of job security. The HR manager also pointed out that job sharing offers employees an opportunity to enhance their skills and qualifications. Employee 2 liked job sharing because she had a chance to develop professionally and to perform an interesting job. She felt she had learnt a great deal. The HR manager emphasised that various opportunities to improve skills and qualifications are equally available to full-time employees and to those for whom flexible forms of employment have been introduced.

All the respondents agreed that job sharing can create an opportunity for both the employer and the employee, and not only when the latter has to perform parenting duties. The project manager stated that this form of employment may be convenient, for instance, for employees who are about to retire.

Through job sharing, the person with considerable experience could introduce their prospective replacement to the position. This is essential, given the recently increased retirement age in Poland (currently set at 67 years). Thus, job sharing could also be a good way to share the experience of older employees with junior employees.

According to the HR manager, job sharing could also be beneficial for employees aged over 50 who take care of senior family members. Currently, the PES offers such employees individual work schedules, although it could introduce job sharing for them as well. According to the HR manager, it will be possible if employers are interested in it. Prospective beneficiaries of job sharing could also include employees who return to work and undergo rehabilitation after having health problems.

The respondents believe that job sharing impacts the local labour market as well. In the career adviser's opinion, flexible forms of employment, including job sharing, may be a good intermediate solution providing employees with an opportunity to gain some professional experience when they cannot sign an employment contract. It is also conducive to the development of human resources in macroeconomic terms and contributes to increasing the employment rate. The project manager shared this opinion, pointing out that job sharing provides unemployed people or those not active in the labour market, including women engaged in child rearing, with an opportunity to 'gain a foothold' in the labour market. In such instances, the job sharer should be offered pay that will enable them to support themselves.

According to the employees and managers interviewed, job sharing could be successfully introduced in other organisations or PES teams. The possibility of task division would be of vital importance in this respect.

## **Future plans**

The PES management does not rule out the possibility of using job sharing in the future. According to the HR manager, this form of employment might be introduced to benefit other employees – for example, those aged 50 or over. However, she emphasised that deciding whether job sharing is acceptable and fits the scope of duties for a given position should be done exclusively by the employer (direct supervisor).

The project manager conceded that job sharing might be introduced at an employee's request, as the nature of the work performed by the project team neither requires nor justifies the introduction of this form of employment. While employee 1 is still interested in job sharing, employee 2 views it as an important stage in her career but does not see any reason to return to this form of employment.

## **Commentary**

The external expert advises that the development of job sharing should be encouraged by:

- developing the 'care infrastructure' (for example, babysitters, carers, kindergartens) to enable carers to work;
- increasing the scope and number of activities mobilising older people to seek jobs by offering them rehabilitation and assistance in taking care of dependent family members, or by implementing clear anti-discriminatory laws (for example, quotas for employers to employ a given number of older workers);
- providing incentives for young people to take part in flexible forms of employment (such as job sharing) during their studies.

According to the external expert, job sharing and its introduction may also be a solution for immigrants seeking employment in the Polish labour market. As they usually have limited access to full-time jobs, immigrants may be interested in flexible forms of employment such as job sharing.

It seems that the success of introducing flexible forms of employment (job sharing) depends primarily on good relations at a given institution, mutual trust and seeking organisational solutions that will meet employees' needs (work-life balance in the described case). Particularly significant factors at the PES included a positive work environment (the Observatory team), an obliging and conscious manager, and good interpersonal relations. Owing to this, the team managed to find a good candidate

for job sharing who performed the assigned tasks, sometimes even exceeding the scope of her duties. With such a positive work environment, employee 1, a mother of two young children, did not hesitate to suggest returning to work part-time, reducing her work tasks by half to enable job sharing.

Thus, job sharing was introduced to address a specific employee's need. This would not have been possible if it had not been for the PES HR policy, which seeks to keep good employees and to introduce flexible forms of employment as an incentive for its staff (mostly young women).

Job sharing created highly favourable working conditions for this employee when combined with the support made available to mothers of young children by legal provisions for parental leave. Such provisions include the right to unpaid parental leave that can be taken by the parent as needed until the child turns four, shorter working time for women who are breastfeeding and childcare leave due to a child's illness. The employee appreciated these possibilities and would like to continue this form of employment. The above-mentioned measures that help parents to reconcile work and family duties already existed in Poland. They have, however, become somewhat more available in recent times in both the public and private sectors because of the introduction of longer paid parental leave and the possibility of dividing the leave between parents. Even so, while this might create good conditions for the further development of job sharing, it is not the most important determinant.

Despite its advantages, job sharing at the PES in Krakow also created a number of problems for the employer, the team and employee 2, including:

- failure by employee 1 to meet the deadline for task completion due to her child's illness and hospitalisation;
- the need to initiate a time-consuming recruitment procedure owing to employee 1's decision to take further parental leave during the job sharing period. Job sharing requires a new recruitment competition procedure, while signing a replacement employment contract does not demand as much organisational effort. The team was concerned that employee 1 might not be sufficiently involved in the work required on her return from leave;
- the perception of employee 2 that she had to perform more duties than those ascribed to her part-time role due to employee 1's shorter working time to allow for breastfeeding. The fact that each job sharer worked four days a week also caused problems for the continuity of tasks.

Despite the generally positive evaluation of job sharing, the PES in Krakow did not decide to continue this form of employment for the position of information management specialist. Since job sharing was been a one-off experiment, it is difficult to determine whether this form of employment would be tried for another position. Apart from employee 1, most of those involved felt that the job share had reached the end of its usefulness and that its continuation would result in more costs than benefits. However, it is worth adding that the managers did say that they could see the benefits of introducing this form of employment in the future.

## Information sources

### Websites

Labour Market and Education Observatory of Małopolska:

<http://www.obserwatorium.malopolska.pl/en>

European Commission Public Employment Services information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=105&langId=en>

Regional Labour Office in Krakow: <http://wup-krakow.pl/o-wup>

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