



Family-Friendly Measures

Research Report for 2020

People Development Section

Institute for the Public Services



INSTITUTE
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PUBLIC SERVICES

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1. Introduction

The Malta Public Service continues to rely on the effectiveness and productivity of its human resources. The COVID-19 pandemic, contributed towards the creation of a new way of working environment that suits the wellbeing of the employees and the new normal.

Family-friendly measures are increasing and continue to capture the attention of policymakers, researchers, and employers, given the growing recognition to provide work-life balance opportunities. The family-friendly measures are widely being promoted as a positive link to a variety of individual and organisational outcomes (Hayman, 2010; Leblebici, 2012). By analysing the impact and utilisation of the family-friendly measures every year, the Malta Public Service continuously strives to improve these measures to ensure a healthy working environment

This report evaluates the uptake of Family-friendly Measures, in the Malta Public Service in 2020. By analysing this research report, one can better assess the situation in the utilisation of Family-Friendly Measures, within the Malta Public Service, to identify whether the current measures match the current needs of public officers, and to investigate any possible ways to improve the present system.

1. Preamble

Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation: Overall

- Unlike the previous year, the fathers' involvement toward parenthood [Parent Leave] have **increased by 122.73%**.
- There was also a drastic decrease in parents' involvement in general by **43.62%** from the previous year.
- Although not surprisingly, if one takes the COVID-19 pandemic into consideration, there was a drastic increase in the employee convenience measurements, notably work on reduced hours by **57.72%**.

Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation: Scale

- The utilisation of measures related to parenthood **remain predominant by the Middle Management (Scales 6-10)**; however, there is a drastic increase of paternity leave among the male employees.

Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation: Gender

- A drastic increase of **122.73%** in parent leave indicate a very positive change in the involvement of household duties among the male public officers.
- The Career Break remains predominant **by the female public officers**; however, here is an increasingly preference for flexitime and teleworking from both genders across the ministries.
- Unlike the previous years, there is a high increase of **57.72%** in applications for reduced hours.

Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation: Profession

- The utilisation from **Top Management (Scales 1-5)** shows a spike increase in parental leave, with a **total increase of 533.33%**; albeit that such utilisation is among the female employees.
- Although the utilisation of family-friendly measures has increased in all categories, the **Middle Management (Scales 6-10)** remains **predominant** in the work convenience category.
- The utilisation from **Administrative / Executive / Clerical (Scales 11-15)** is likewise predominant in the work convenience options.
- The utilisation from **Definite Contract** is sparked a high increase in parent leave and a total increase of **203.31%** for work convenience measures.

Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation: Ministry

- The **Ministry for Home Affairs & National Security** carried the highest utilisation of parent leave, but less so in the other parenthood options.
- The **Office of the Prime Minister** has the highest utilisation rates with respect to flexitime, but less so in other work convenience options.
- The **Ministry for Home Affairs & National Security** reported the highest amount of maternity leave utilisation followed by the **Ministry for Justice, Equality, and Governance**.

2. Data Analysis

This report follows the same structure as last year's report [2019] for the possibility of a longitudinal analysis in the future. Thus, this section provides a brief outline of the compiled secondary data and illustrates them into four main sub-sections for different perspectives.

- Family-Friendly Measures: Overall
- Family-Friendly Measures: Scale
- Family-Friendly Measures: Gender
- Family-Friendly Measures: Profession
- Family-Friendly Measures: Ministry

The **Utilisation of Family-Friendly Measure** is the first sub-section to provide an overall analysis of the types of leave, grouped in main categories: parenthood; alternative option; and employment convenience.

The **Family-Friendly Measure: Scale** is the second sub-section to provide a brief analysis of the types of leave, based on scales. The scales are grouped in five categories:

- a) top management (Scale 1-5),
- b) middle management (Scale 6-10),
- c) administrative (Scale 11-15), technical (Scale 16-20), and
- d) definite (Scale 1-20).

The **Family-Friendly Measure: Gender** is the third sub-section to provide a brief analysis of the types of leave, based on gender. This report divides gender into two categories: males and females.

The **Family-Friendly Measure: Profession** is the fourth sub-section to provide a brief analysis of the types of leave, based on profession. It analyses each category of scale from the variety of family-friendly measures.

2.1 Family-Friendly Measures: Overall

This section illustrates the difference in the utilisation of Family-Friendly Measures, in the Malta Public Service, between 2019 and 2020. The types of leaves, which this report takes into consideration for this report, were grouped and classified in three main categories:

1. Parenthood
2. Alternative Options
3. Employment Convenient

2.1.1 Parenthood

	2019	2020	Difference
Maternity Leave – First 14 weeks (WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)	548	769	40.33%
Maternity Leave – Additional 4 weeks (WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)	420	597	42.14%
Parent Leave (WLBM Manual - Section 1.4)	88	196	122.73%
Parental Leave (WLBM Manual - Section 2.2)	393	519	32.06%
TOTAL	1449	2,081	43.62%

From the table above, there is a drastic increase of **122.73%** in the utilisation of parent leave.. However, it is worth to mention that all forms of leave are being considered and increasing, with an overall increase of **43.62%** in parenthood leave.

Unlike the previous years, where maternity leave continued to decrease slowly from one year to another, this year-round indicates an increase of **42.14%** in maternity leave, despite a decline of 0.27% [9.755 births per 1000 people) in Year 2020 (Eurostat, 2021).

2.1.2 Alternative Options

	2019	2020	Difference
Career Break (WLBM Manual - Section 2.3)	186	233	25.27%
	186	233	25.27%

Unlike the previous years, there is a drastic increase of 25.27% among public officers seeking for a career break. One may conclude that this increase is the result of a ripple effect from drastic increases of the paternity, maternity, and parental leaves.

2.1.3 Employee Convenience

	2019	2020	Difference
Work on Reduced Hours (WLBM Manual - Section 3.1)	835	1317	57.72%
Teleworking (WLBM Manual - Section 3.2)	1383	1840	33.04%
Flexitime (WLBM Manual - Section 3.3)	1172	1418	20.99%
	3390	4575	34.96%

The utilisation of employee convenience measures have increased by an overall of 34.96%. One should take into consideration that Malta, like other countries, was experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic for the first time, and thus, since formal structures for remote working were in the process of being implemented, one may speculate the cause for such a drastic increase in reduced hours and teleworking. However, one should also take into consideration that special working arrangements were being made, due to unforeseen circumstances, such as increase in positive COVID-19 cases and quarantine special leave.

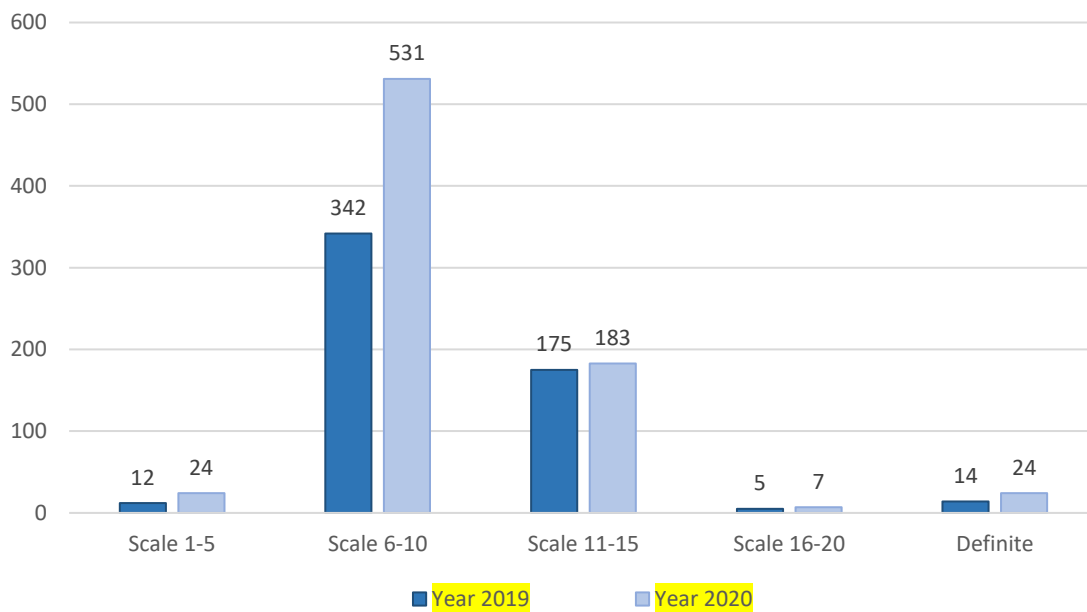
2.2 Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation by Scale

This section illustrates the family-friendly measure utilisation by scale for the types of leave, in the Malta Public Service, yearly:

- Top Management (Scale 1 – 5)
- Middle Management & Professional (Scale 6 – 10)
- Administrative / Executive / Clerical (Scale 11 – 15)
- Supervisory / Technical / Industrial (Scale 16 – 20)
- Definite Contract (Scale 1 – 20)

2.2.1 Maternity Leave – First 14 weeks

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)

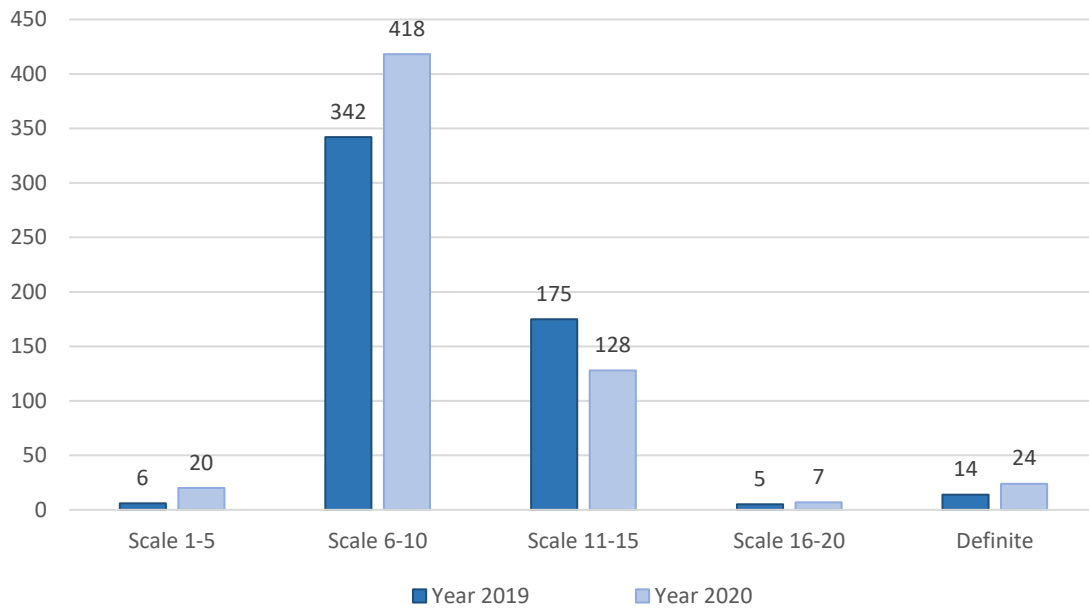


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
100%	55.26%	4.57%	40%	71.43%

While the utilisation of maternity leave has increased and remains predominant in Middle Management & Professional scales, a drastic increase is visible in Top Management scales.

2.2.2 Maternity Leave – Additional 4 weeks

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)

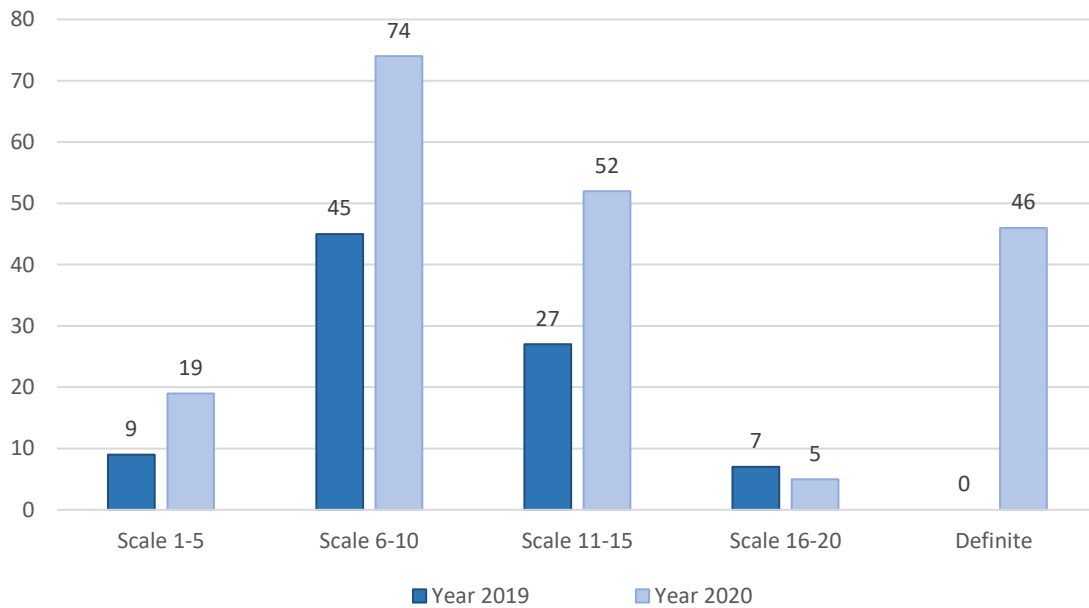


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
233.33%	22.22%	- 26.86%	40.00%	71.43%

When it comes to the utilisation of the additional weeks of maternity, the result has increased almost across all scales, with a spike in the Top Management scale. This is a very interesting observation, when compared with previous reports, because the application for maternity leave in Top Management scales is generally low, mostly due to the commitment and responsibility that such roles entail. This year, however, not only did the maternity leave in this scale increase, but also shows a spike in the utilisation of the additional four weeks.

2.2.3 Parent Leave

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.4)

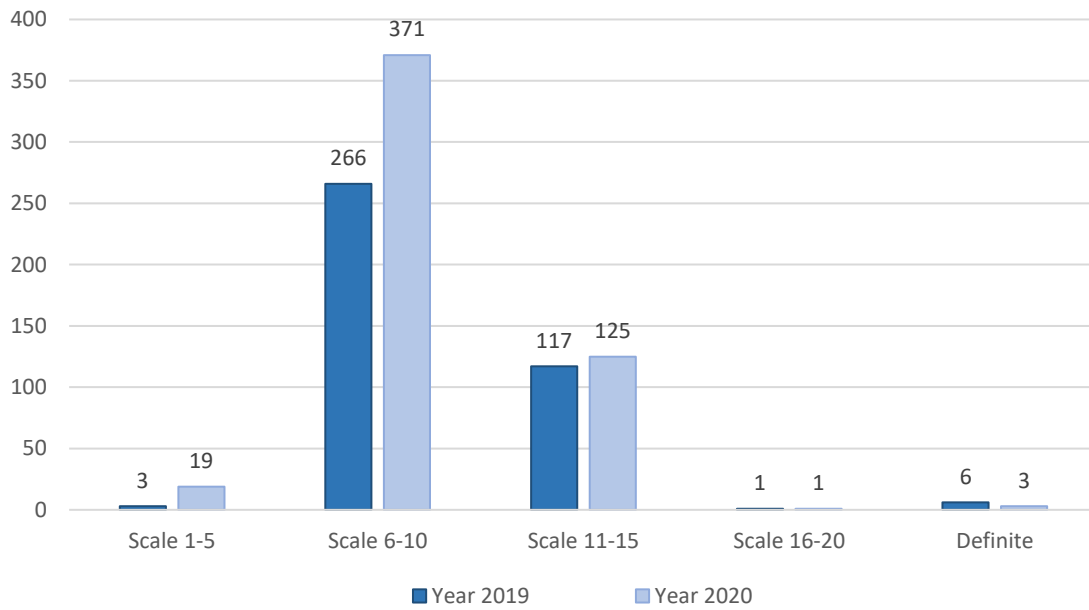


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
111.1%	64.4%	92.6%	28.6%	n/a

This graph shows a similar pattern, when compared to those undertaking the maternity leave and the additional four weeks. It is interesting enough to note that such spike is indeed visible in the Top Management scale, where the job position entails a high amount of commitment and responsibilities.

2.2.4 Parental Leave

(WLBM Manual - Section 2.2)

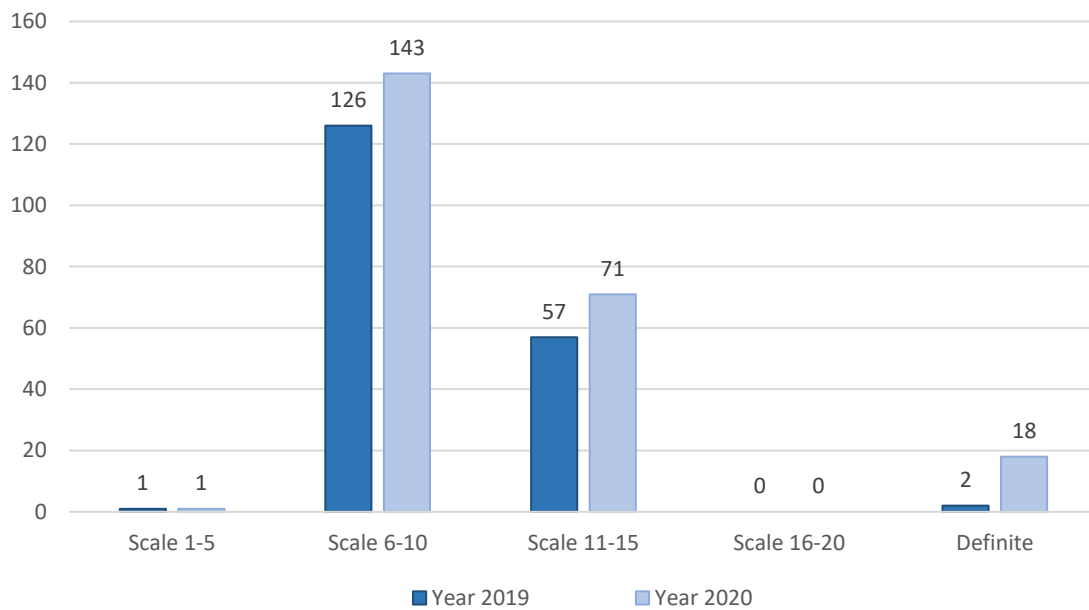


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
533.33%	39.47%	6.84%	0%	-50%

Although there is a drastic increase for parental leave among the Middle Management & Professional scale, parental leave remains the lower option under the parenthood type of measures.

2.2.5 Career Break

(WLBM Manual - Section 2.3)

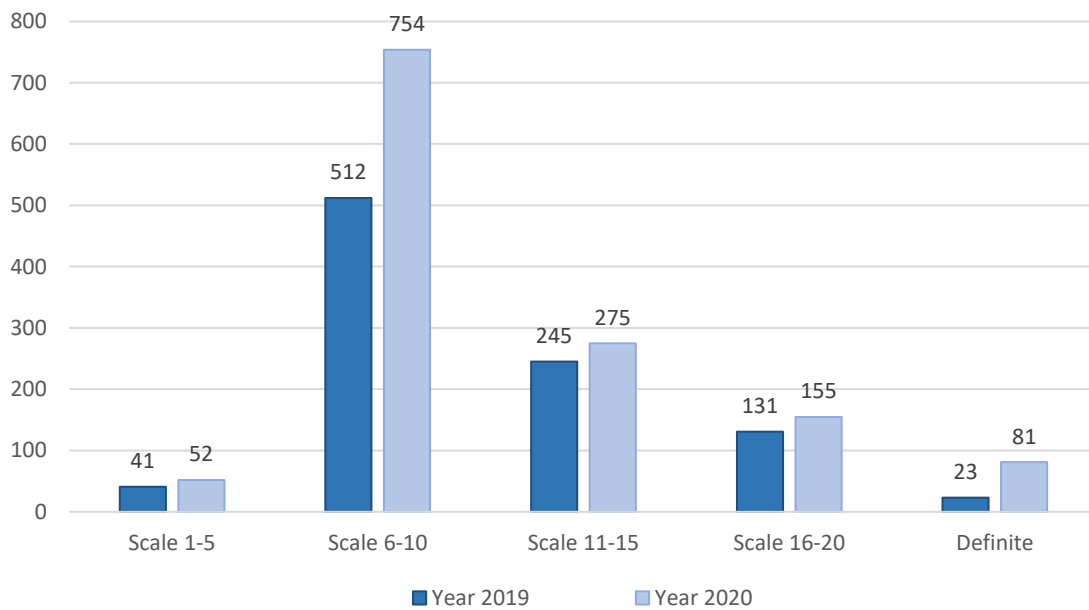


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
0%	13.49%	24.56%	n/a	800%

When taking into consideration the previous reports, the pattern of utilisation of career break among the employees is quite inconsistent. However, it is important to notice an increase among employees on a definite contract.

2.2.6 Work on Reduced Hours

(SL Manual - Section 3.1)

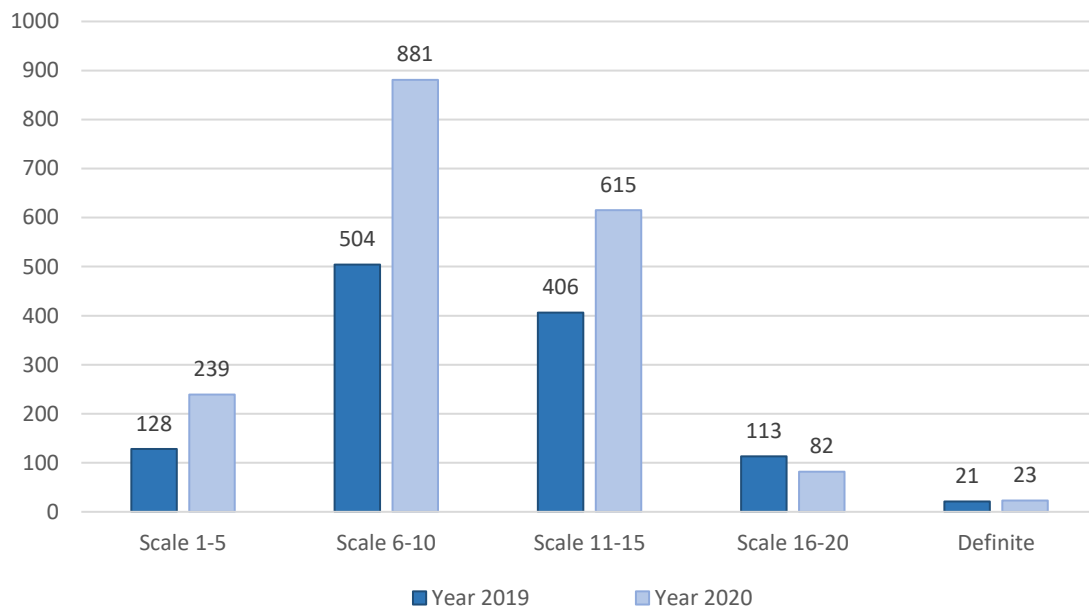


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
26.83%	47.27%	12.24%	18.32%	252.17%

The increase for work on reduced hours is visible across all scales. This is an interesting observation since the previous years indicated otherwise. The shift in trend may not be due to the COVID-19 pandemic since teleworking and flexible can be more convenient for these circumstances. Hence, this may require further investigation, even on a qualitative research approach.

2.2.7 Teleworking

WLBM Manual - Section 3.2)

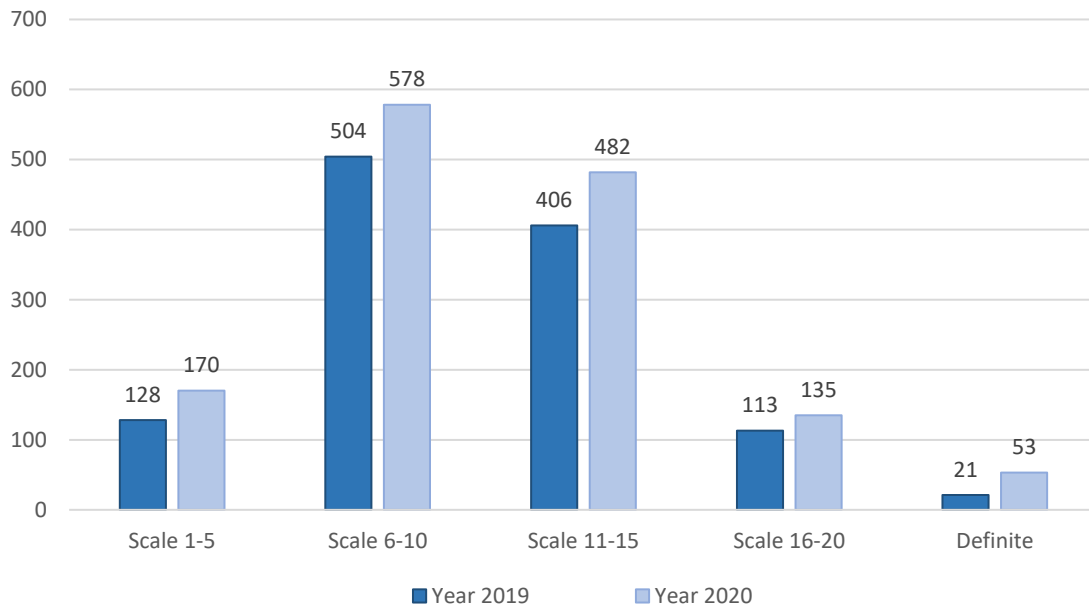


Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
86.72%	74.80%	51.48%	-27.43%	9.52%

There is a drastic increase in teleworking across the majority of scales, but the increase is predominant across the Middle Management & Professional one by **74.80%**. Although it is certainly not surprising, since last year's reports have also demonstrated an increase for teleworking, the COVID-19 pandemic may have had an impact on such increase. For instance, the employees may have opted for teleworking to cope with the new necessities, such as online classes for their children.

2.2.8 Flexitime

WLBM Manual - Section 3.3)



Scale 1-5	Scale 6-10	Scale 11-15	Scale 16-20	Definite
32.81%	14.68%	18.72%	19.47%	152.38%

Flexitime has also increased drastically, when compared to previous years. What is interesting to note, however, is that such measure is utilised more or less equally among all scales, with the exception of Top Management. However, the pattern is quite justified since, it may be easier for employees in Scale 1-5 to work in flexitime rather than reduce their working hours.

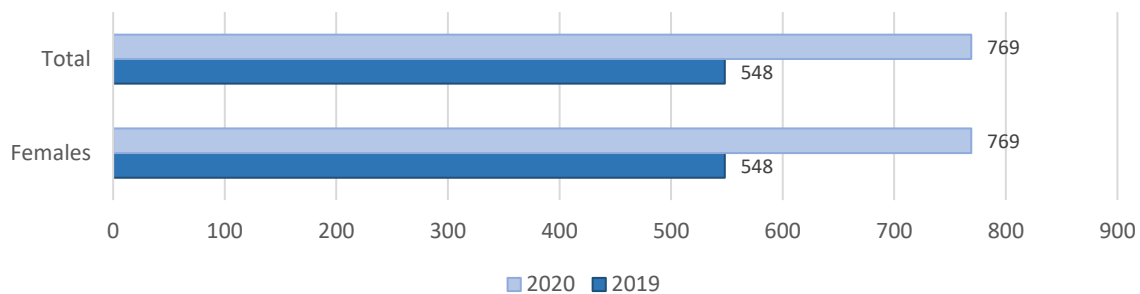
2.3 Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation by Gender

This section illustrates the family-friendly measure utilisations by gender for the respective types of leave, in the Malta Public Service, on a yearly basis:

- Female Public Officers
- Male Public Officers

2.3.1 Maternity Leave – First 14 week

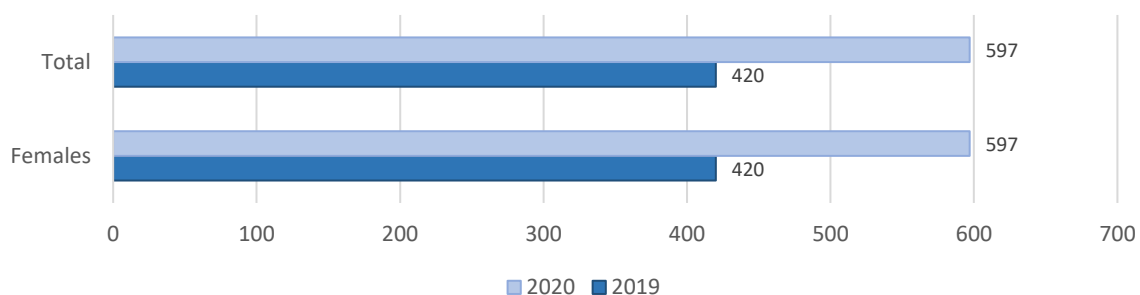
(WLB Manual - Section 1.3)



Unlike previous years, where maternity leave continued to decrease, in 2020 there was a significant increase.

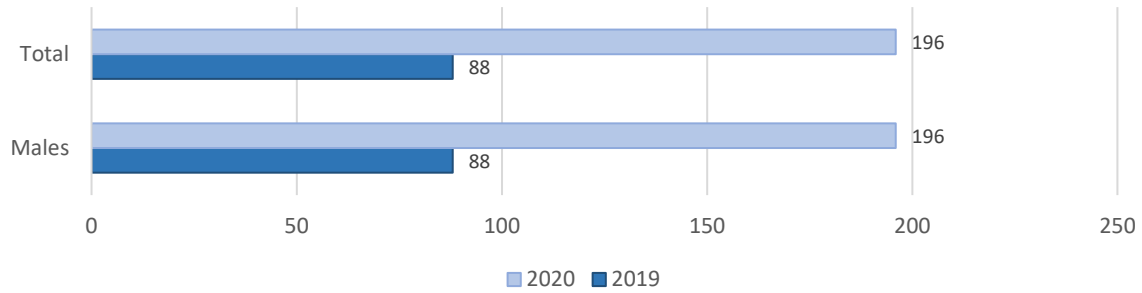
2.3.2 Maternity Leave – Additional 4 week

(WLB Manual - Section 1.3)



2.3.3 Parent Leave

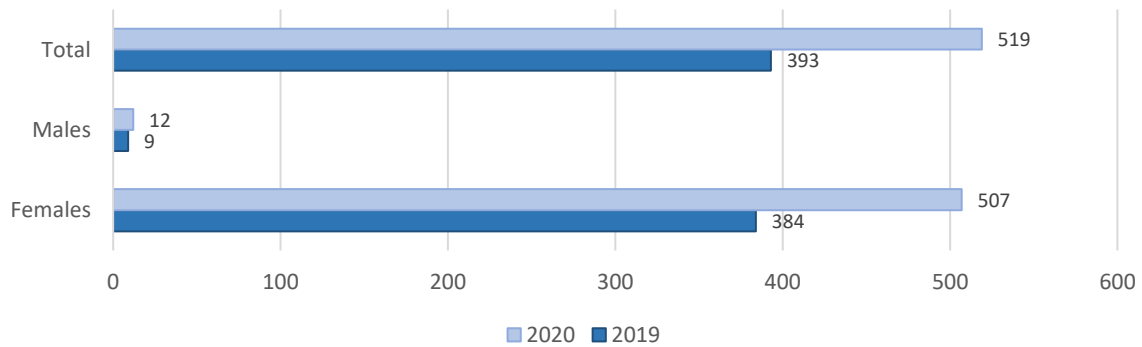
(WLB Manual - Section 1.4)



A drastic increase of 222.72% in paternity leave indicates a very positive change in the involvement of household duties between the male employees.

2.3.4 Parental Leave

(WLB Manual - Section 2.2)

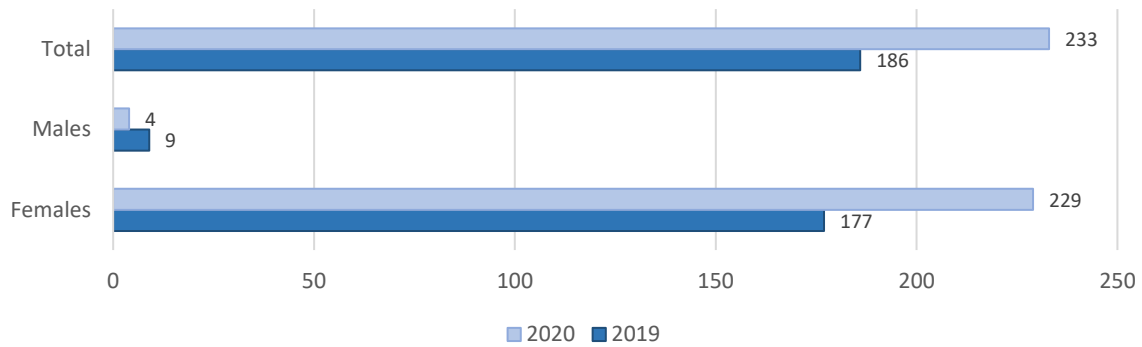


Males	Females	Total
33.33%	32.03%	32.06%

What is interesting to point out is that, while parent leave has increased drastically, the utilisation of parental leave among the male employees remains significantly low.

2.3.5 Career Break

(WLBM Manual - Section 2.3)

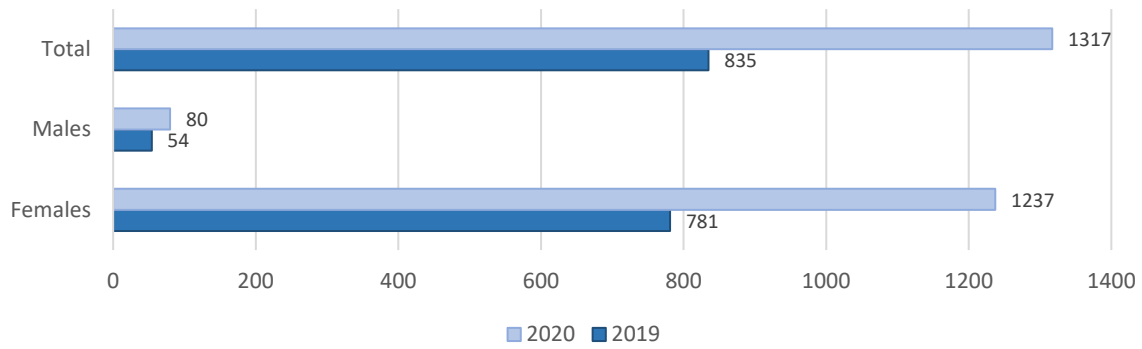


Males	Females	Total
-55.56 %	29.38%	25.27%

The utilisation of career break remains predominant among the female employees and continuing a pattern from year to year. However, the male employees are increasingly opting for other measures, thus investing more toward a work-life balance approach.

2.3.6 Reduced Hours

(WLMB Manual - Section 3.1)

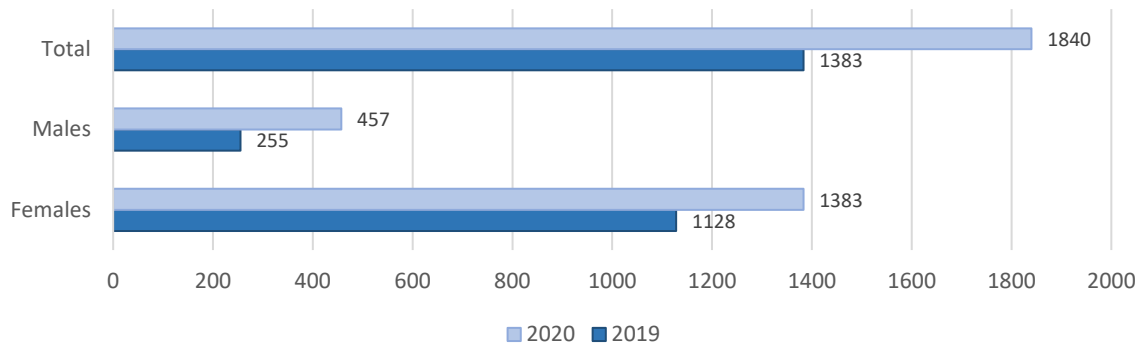


Males	Females	Total
48.15 %	58.39 %	57.72 %

Despite a drastic increase in reduced hours among public officers (57.72%), the gap between males and females remains high, like the previous years.

2.3.7 Teleworking

(WLMB Manual - Section 3.2)

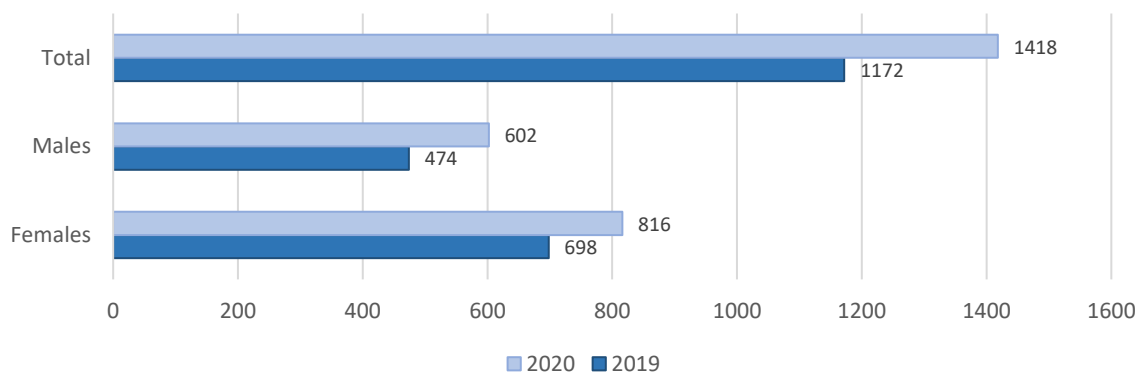


Males	Females	Total
79.22 %	22.61 %	33.04 %

There is a high increase in teleworking from male public officers; however, this scheme is still predominantly used by female public officers when compared to previous reports.

2.3.8 Flexitime

(WLMB Manual - Section 3.3)

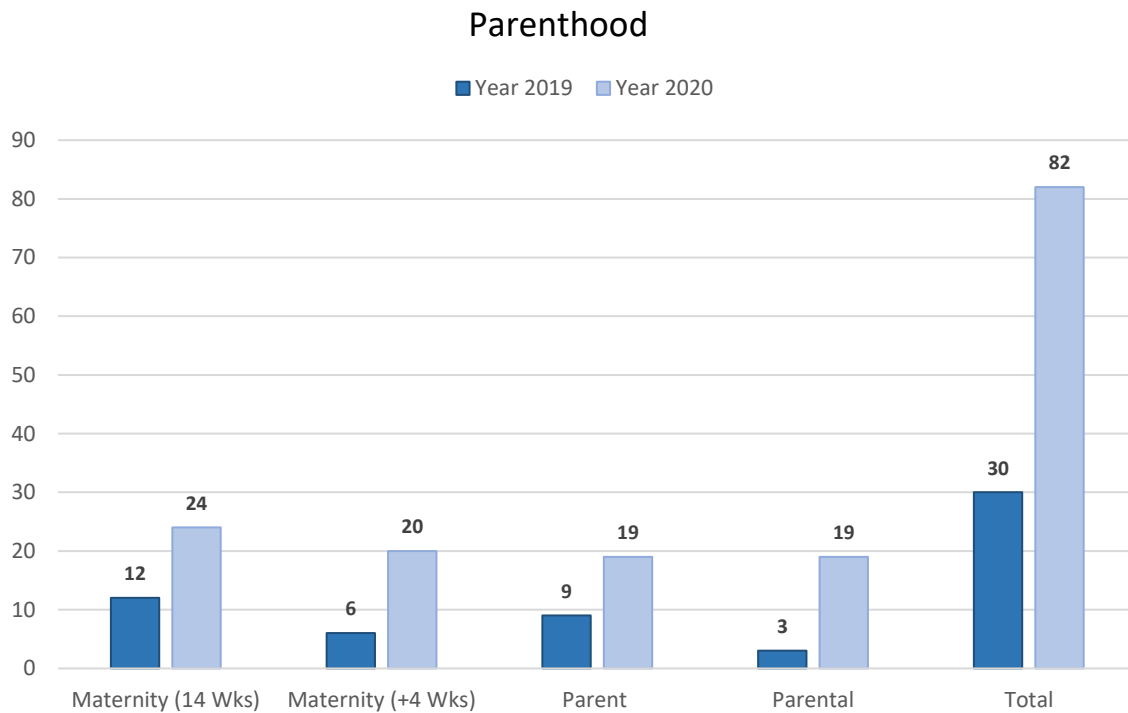


Males	Females	Total
27 %	16.91 %	20.99 %

When compared with reduced hours and telework, the flexitime is the most preferred measure among the male public officers.

2.4 Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation by Profession

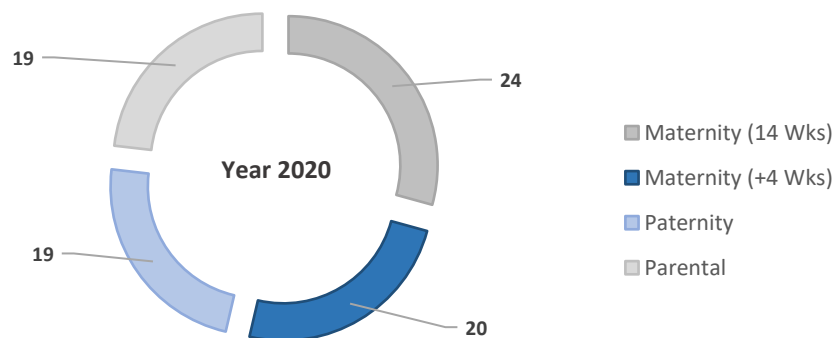
2.4.1 Top Management (Scale 1 – 5)



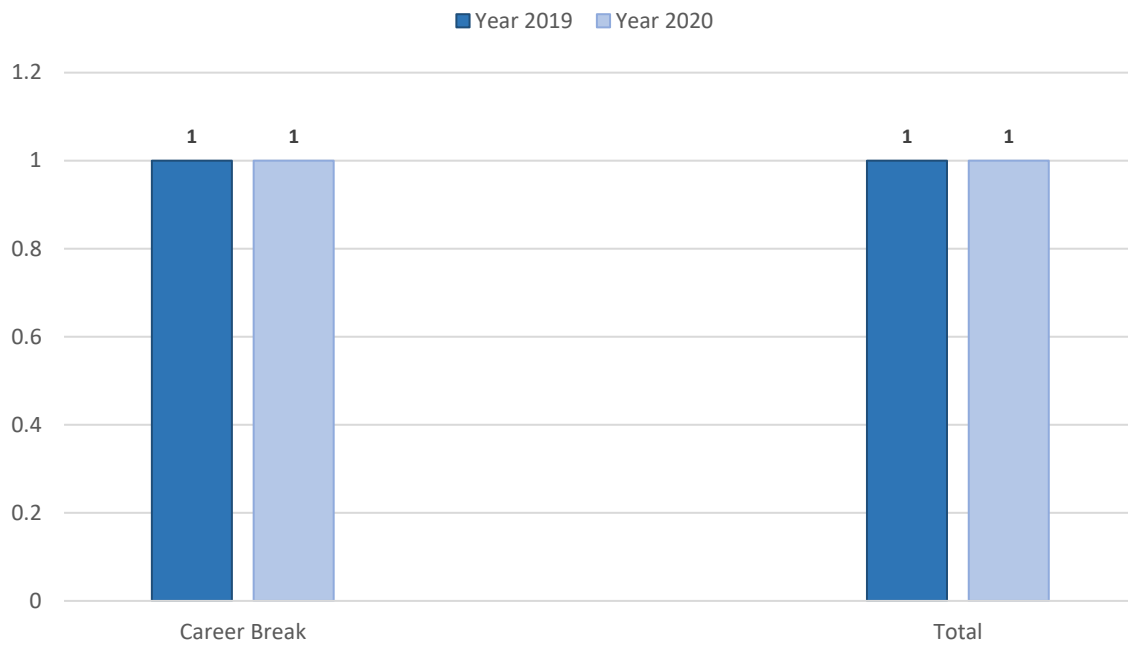
Yearly Variance in Percentage

Maternity (14 Wks.)	Maternity (+4 Wks.)	Paternity	Parental	Total
100 %	233.33 %	111.11 %	533.33 %	173.33 %

It is interesting to note a high increase in the parenthood involvement among the Top Management scale. A further observation is that all types of measures are being utilised, with a spike increase in the parental leave.



Alternative option

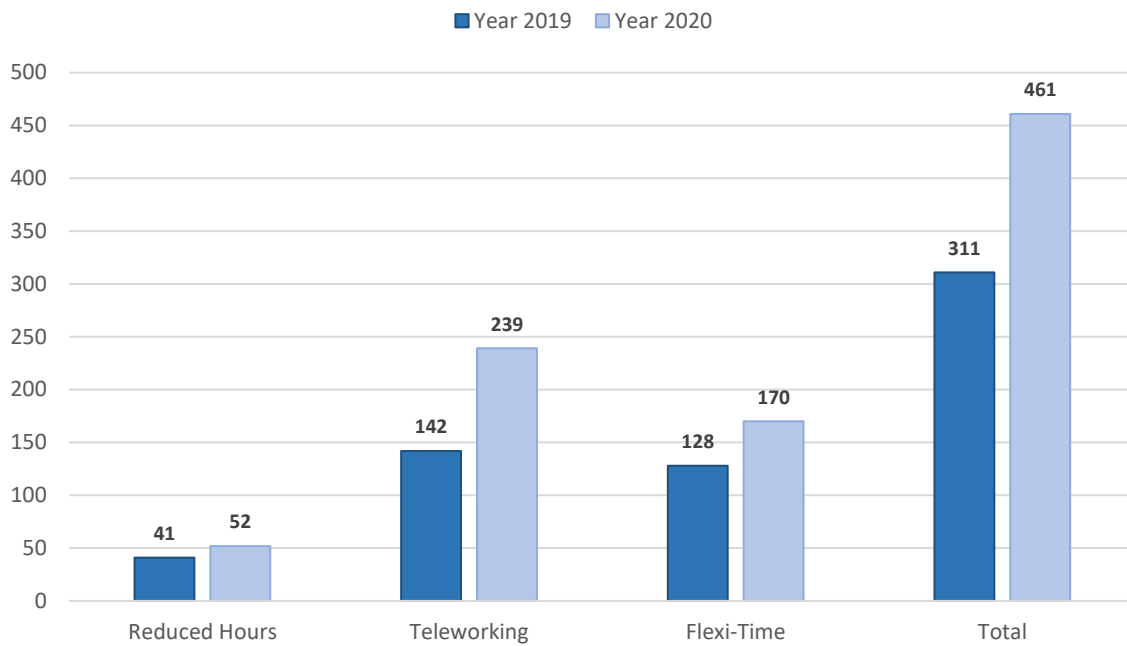


Yearly Variance in Percentage

Career Break	Total
0%	0%

The utilisation of career break in top management scales has remained stable from the previous year.

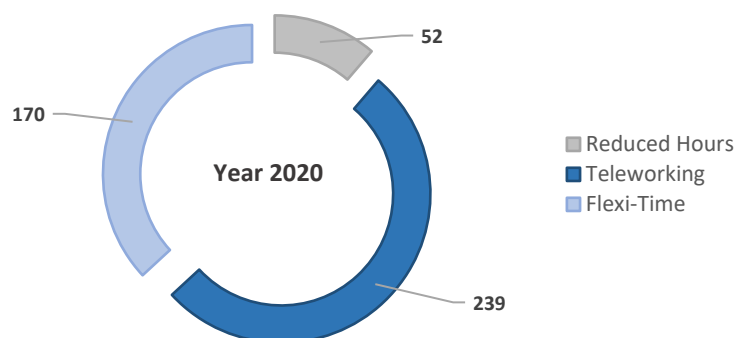
Work Convenience



Yearly Variance in Percentage

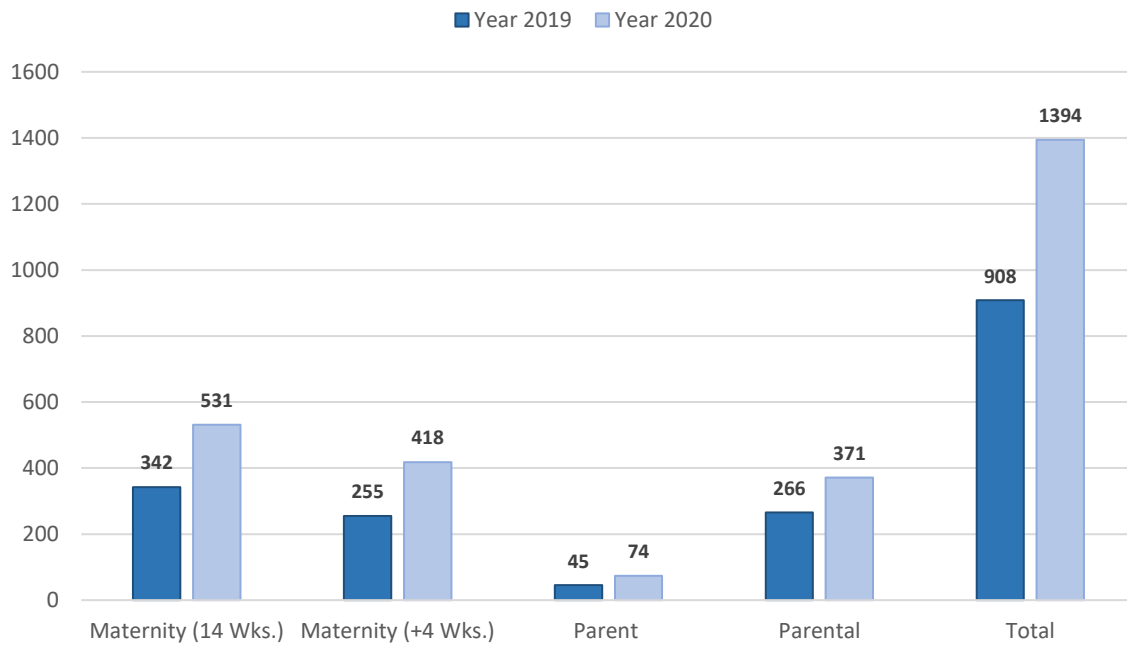
Reduced Hours	Teleworking	Flexitime	Total
26.83 %	68.31 %	32.81 %	48.23 %

Although the COVID-19 pandemic may have played an important role in the utilisation of work convenience measures, it is worth noting that there was an increase for the demand of teleworking in Top Management scales.



2.4.2 Middle Management & Professionals (Scale 6 – 10)

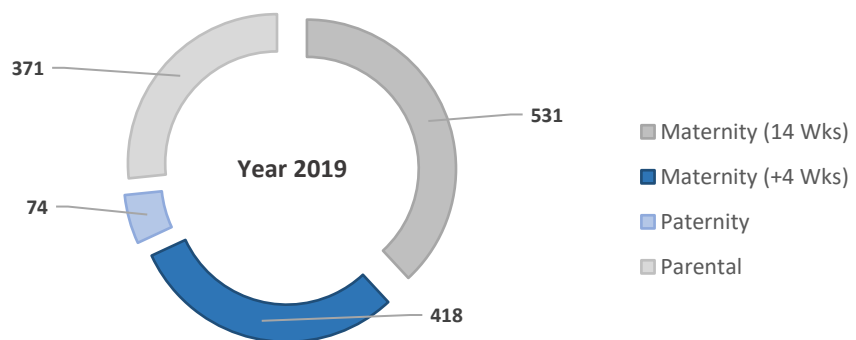
Parenthood



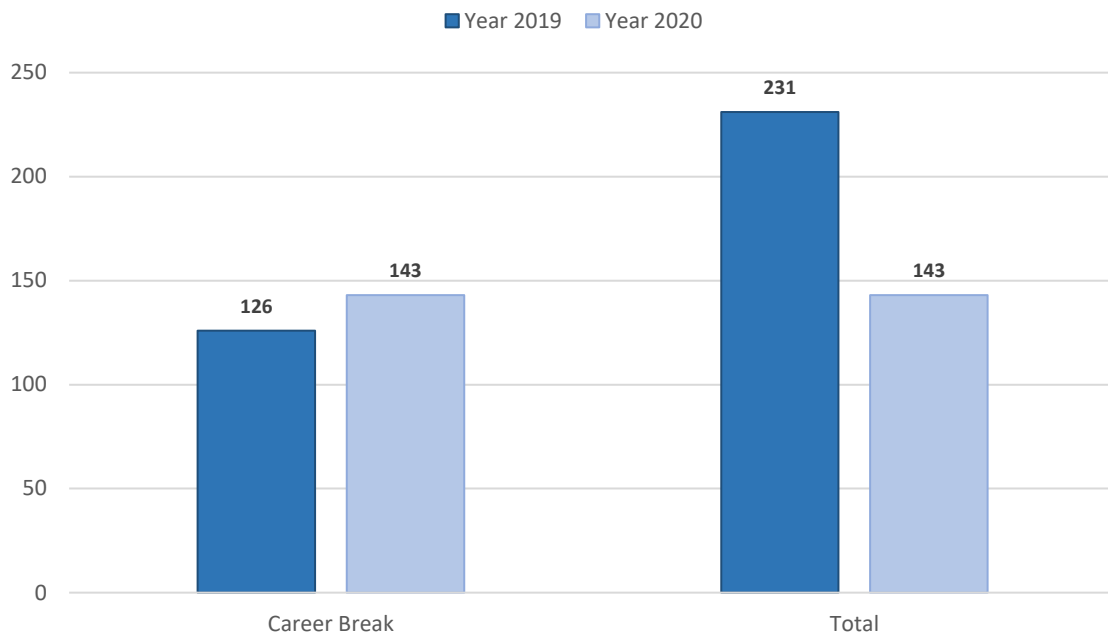
Yearly Variance in Percentage

Maternity (14 Wks.)	Maternity (+4 Wks.)	Paternity	Parental	Total
55.26 %	63.92 %	64.44 %	39.47 %	53.52 %

Although parent leave indicates drastic increases among the public officers, it is worth to mention that such increase indicated an exception in Middle Management & Professionals.



Alternative option

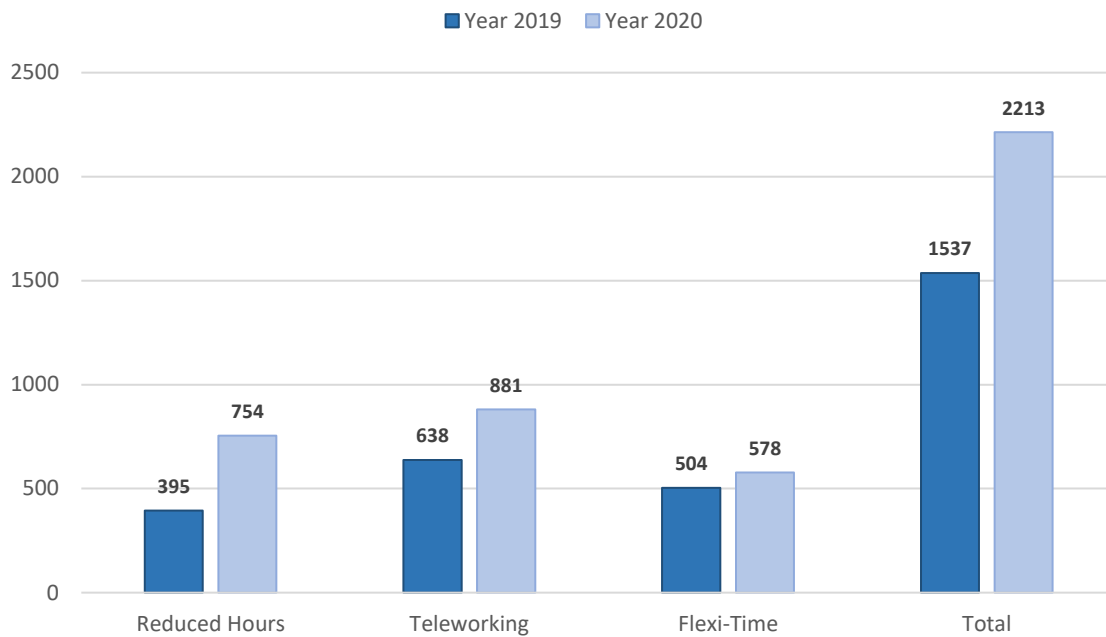


Yearly Variance in Percentage

Category	Year 2019	Year 2020
Career Break	126	143
Total	231	143
	13.49 %	n/a

There is a small increase of 13.49% in career breaks among public officers in the top management positions compared to last year.

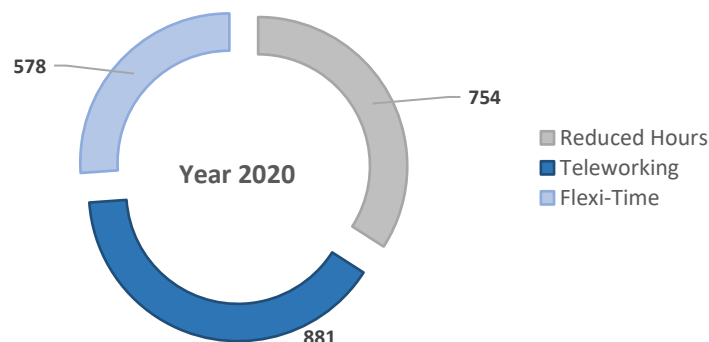
Work Convenience



Yearly Variance in Percentage

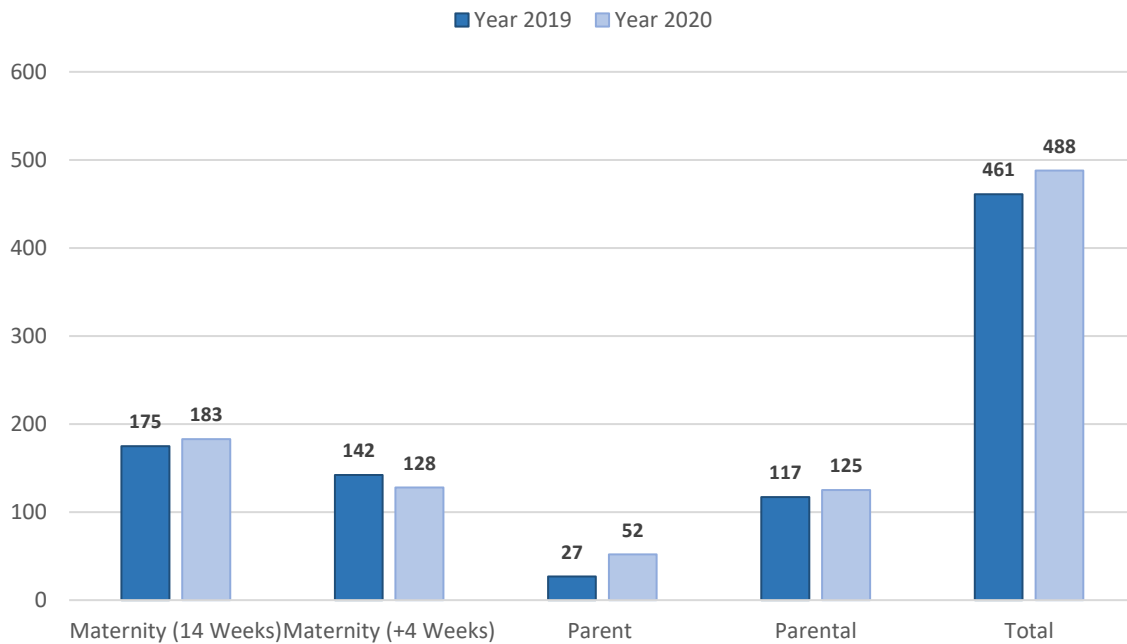
Reduced Hours	Teleworking	Flexitime	Total
90.89 %	38.09 %	14.68 %	43.98 %

Although one can notice a significant increase in work convenience measures among the Middle Management & Professional scale, such increase is shared among all types of measures, but mostly concentrated on reduced hours. This is an important observation because, if taken on an overall perspective among all scales and previous years, reduced hours tend to be the least favoured measure, when compared with teleworking and flexitime.



2.4.3 Administrative / Executive / Clerical (Scale 11 – 15)

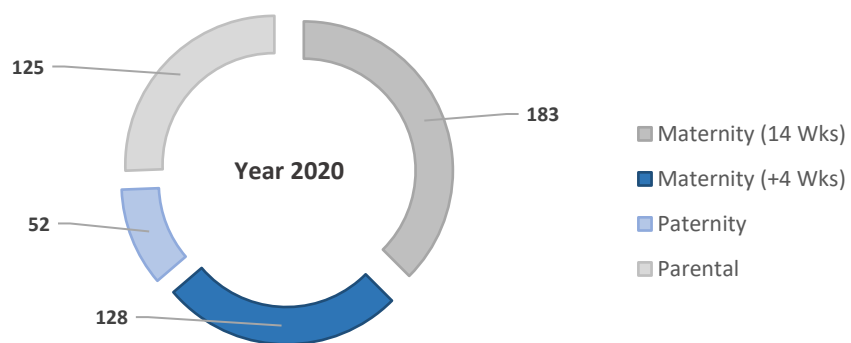
Parenthood



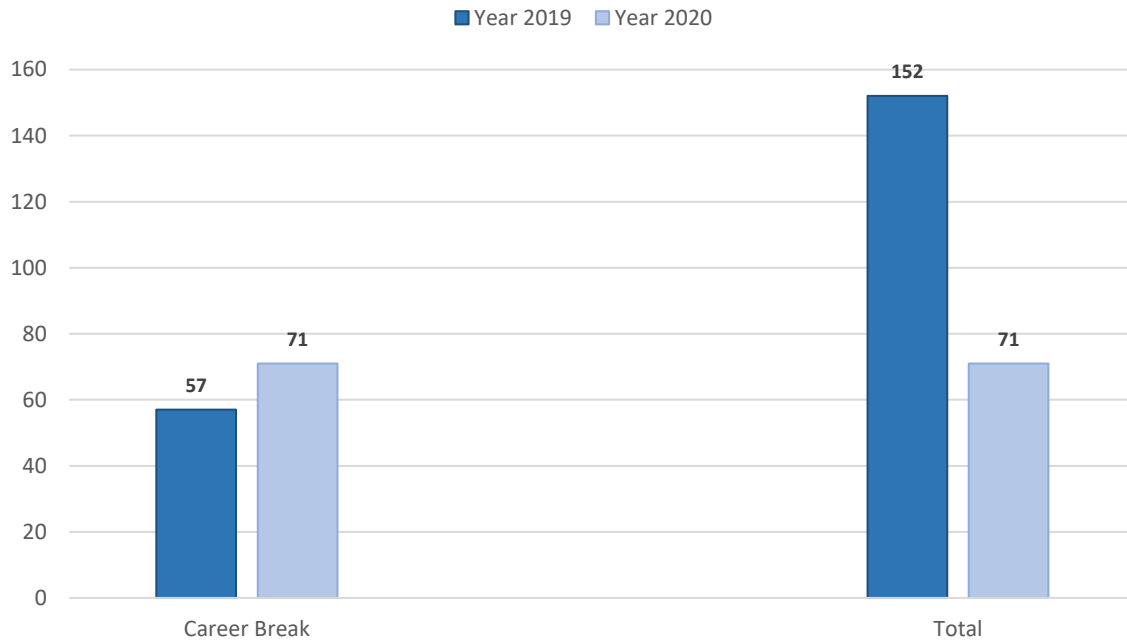
Yearly Variance in Percentage

Maternity (14 Wks.)	Maternity (+4 Wks.)	Parent	Parental	Total
4.57 %	-9.86 %	92.59 %	6.84 %	5.86 %

From the perspective of Administrative / Executive / Clerical scale, there has been a drastic increase in the use of parent leave by 92.59%. As shown in the next few pages, this pattern is very similar to that of Definitive Contract.



Alternative option

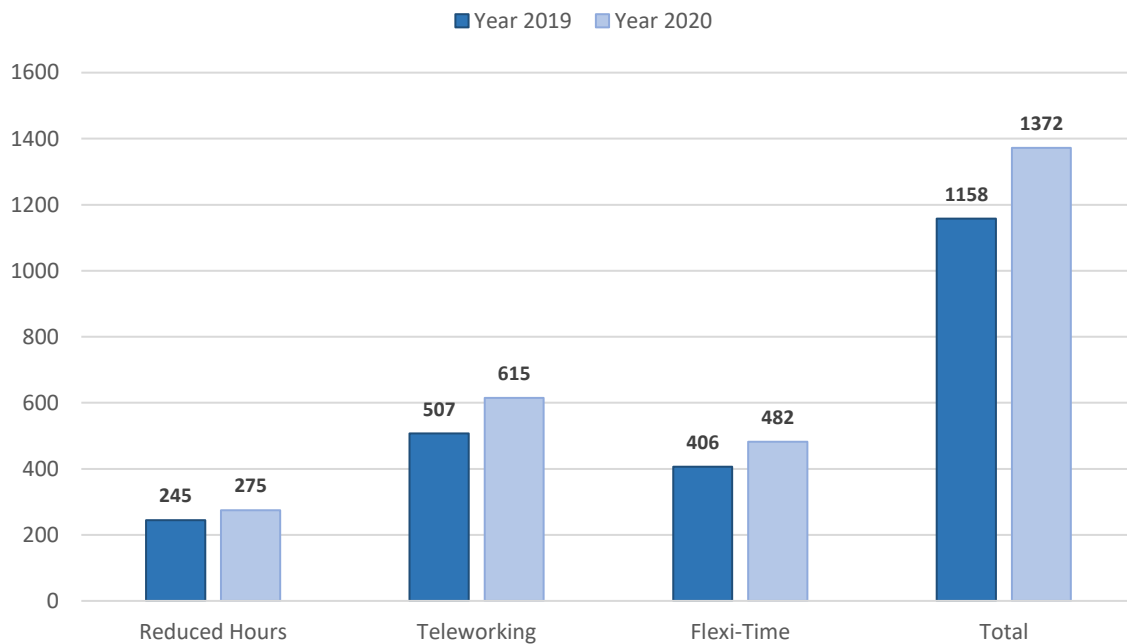


Yearly Variance in Percentage

Career Break	Total
24.56 %	n/a

From the perspective of Administrative / Executive / Clerical scale, utilisation for career breaks increased by 25.56%. This is a common trend and pattern when compared with the previous years.

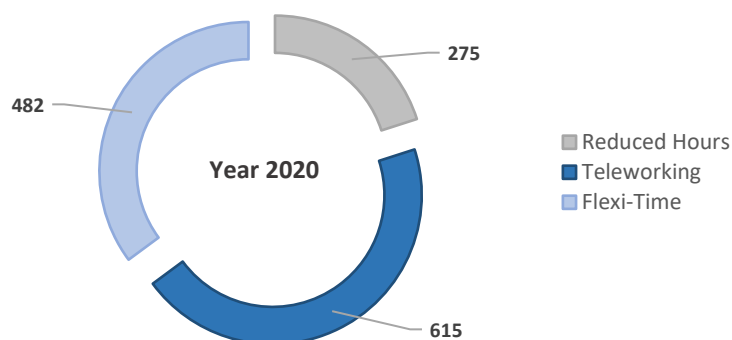
Work Convenience



Yearly Variance in Percentage

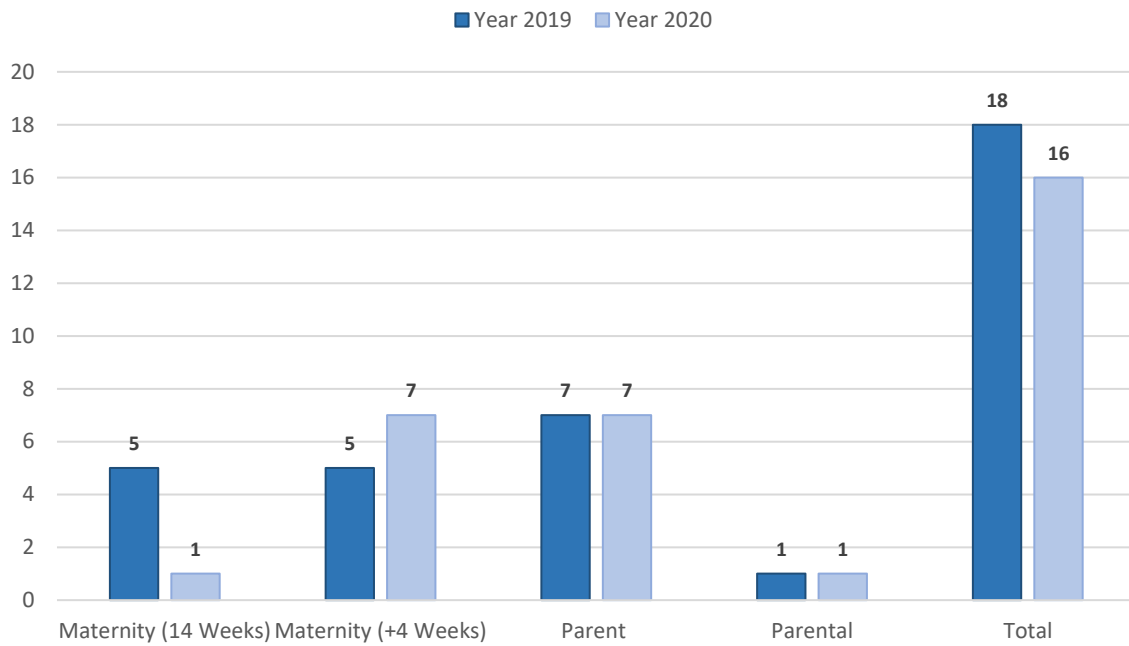
Reduced Hours	Teleworking	Flexitime	Total
12.24 %	21.30 %	18.72 %	18.48 %

From the perspective of Administrative / Executive / Clerical scale, utilisation for the work convenience measure remains constant, with small but significant increase from year to year.



2.4.4 Supervisory / Technical / Industrial (Scale 16 – 20)

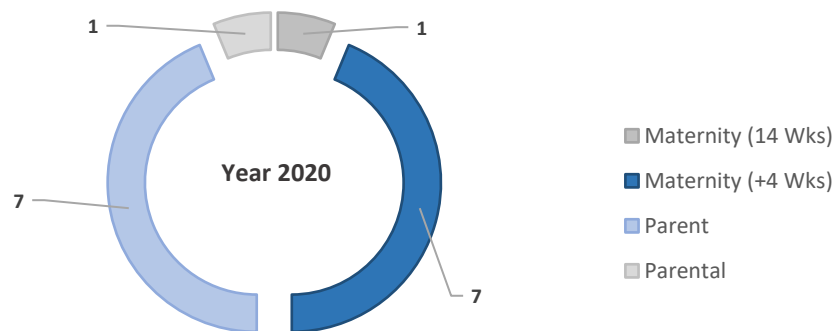
Parenthood



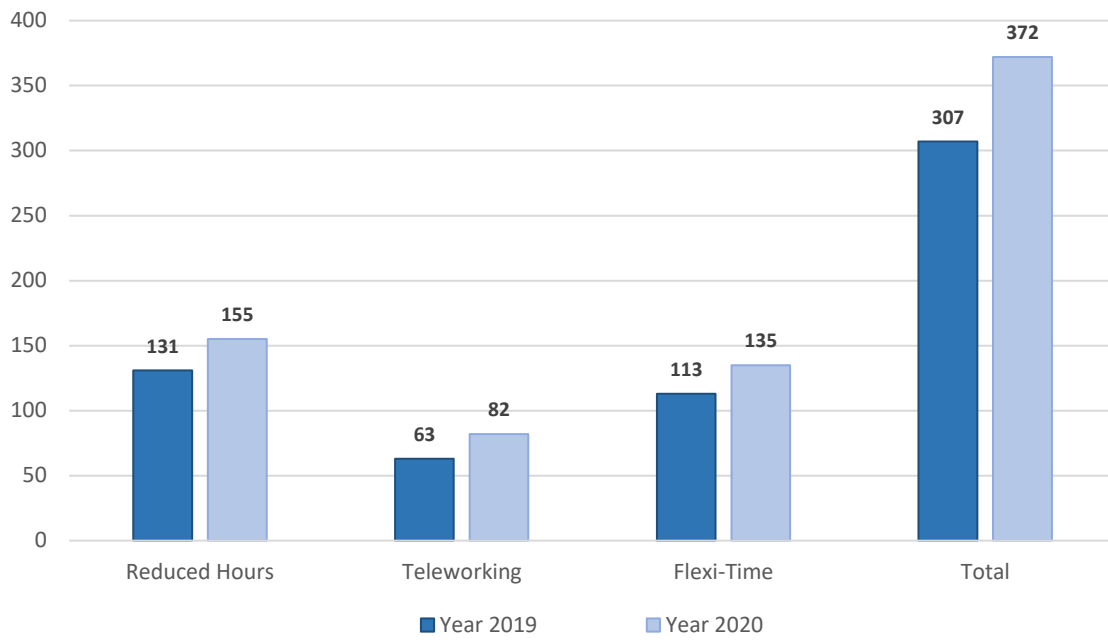
Yearly Variance in Percentage

Maternity (14 Wks.)	Maternity (+4 Wks.)	Parent	Parental	Total
-80 %	40 %	0 %	0 %	-11.11 %

Unlike the other grades and scales, parenthood measures among the supervisory / technical/ and industrial scales have decreased.



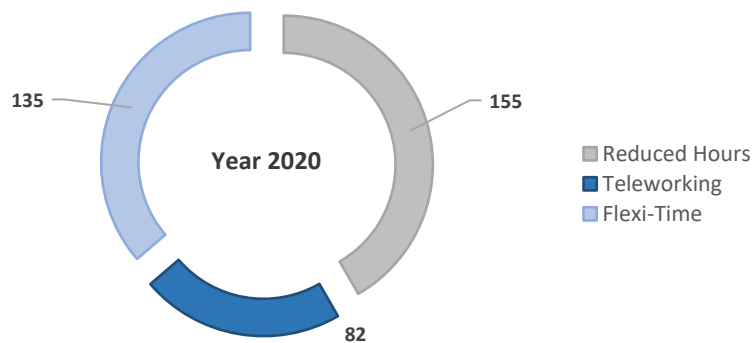
Work Convenience



Yearly Variance in Percentage

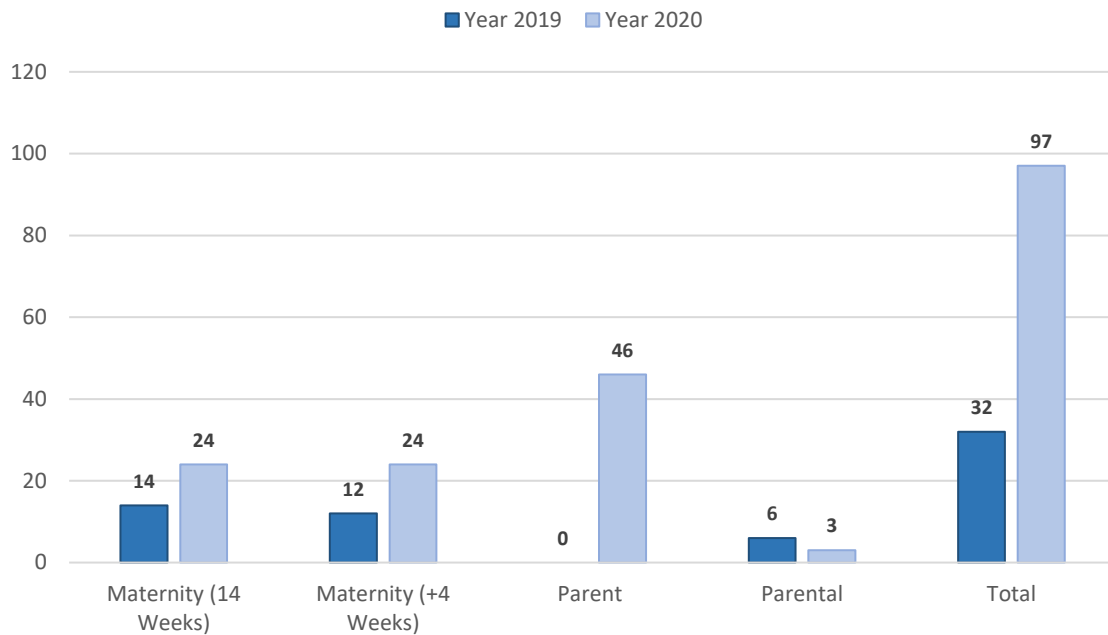
Reduced Hours	Teleworking	Flexitime	Total
18.32 %	30.16 %	19.47 %	21.17 %

When considering COVID-19 pandemic , work convenience measures were not high, when compared with other scales. Nonetheless, teleworking continued to increase by 30.16% this year.



2.4.5 Definite Contract

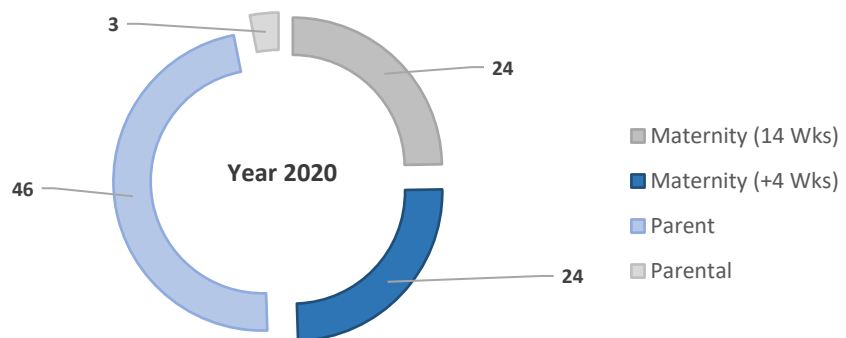
Parenthood



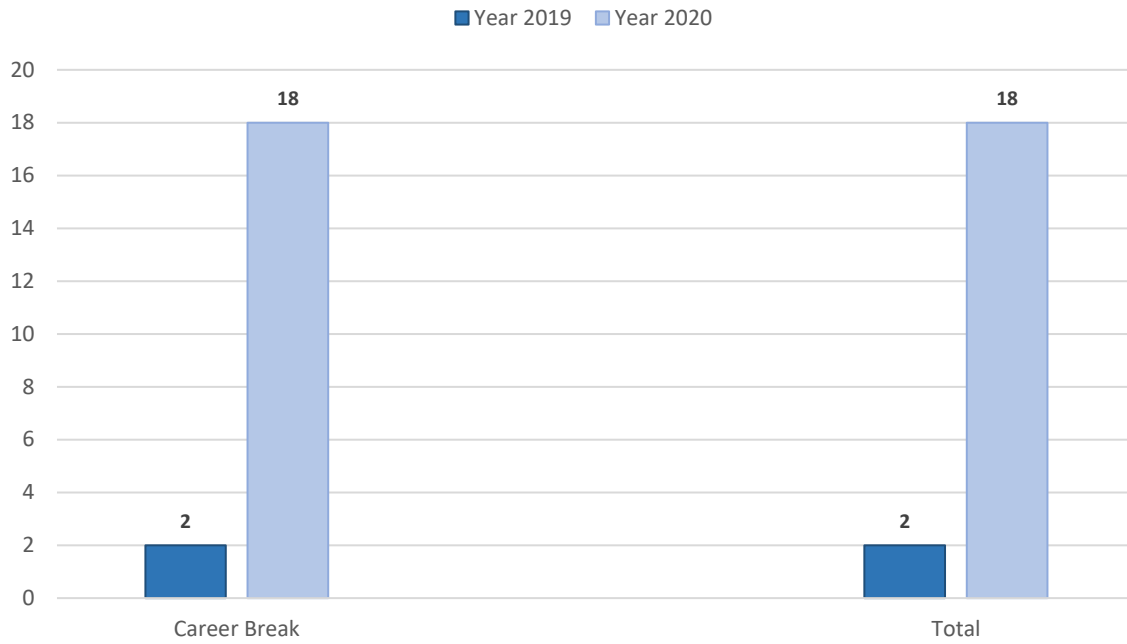
Yearly Variance in Percentage

Maternity (14 Wks.)	Maternity (+4 Wks.)	Parent	Parental	Total
71.43 %	100 %	N/A	- 50 %	203.13 %

It is interesting to point out a spike in parent leave among the Definite Contract employees.. Nonetheless, parental leave has decreased drastically, compared to last year.



Alternative option

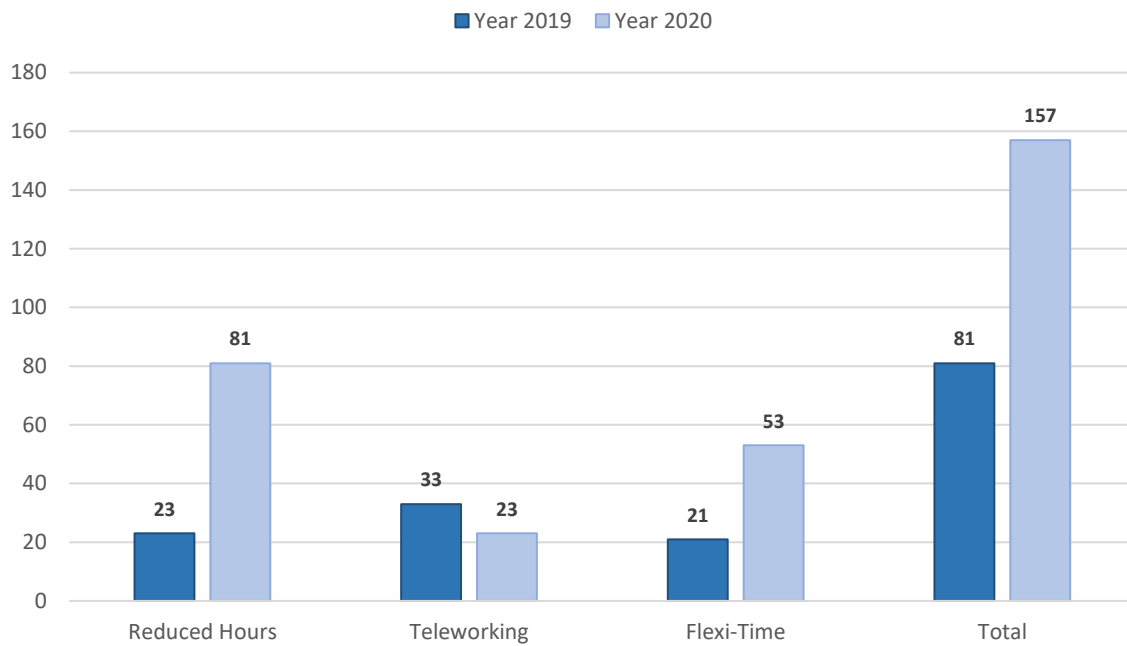


Yearly Variance in Percentage

Career Break	Total
800 %	Na

There is a surprising increase in the career break measurement among those working on definite contract.

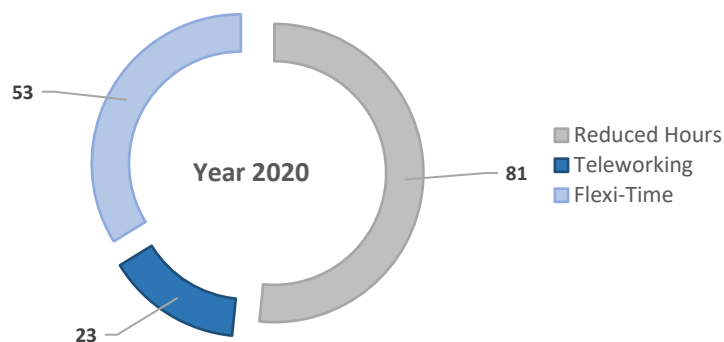
Work Convenience



Yearly Variance in Percentage

Reduced Hours	Teleworking	Flexitime	Total
252.17 %	- 30.30 %	152.38 %	93.83 %

From the perspective of Definite Contracts, the utilisation of work convenience has almost doubled in its amount by an increase of 93.83%. However, there is still a decrease in teleworking, especially when considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

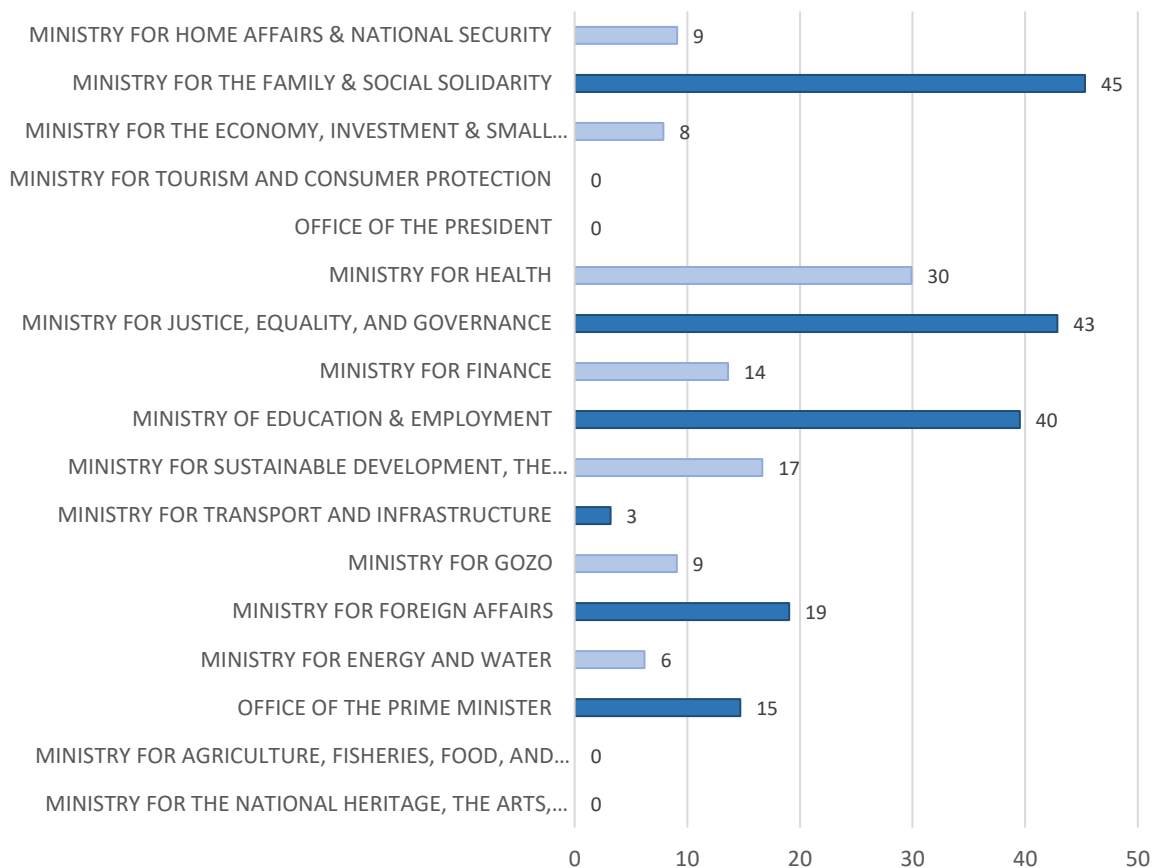


2.5 Family-Friendly Measures Utilisation by Ministry

This section illustrates the family-friendly measure utilisations by ministry for the respective types of leave, in the Malta Public Service, on a yearly basis.

2.5.1 Maternity Leave (14 Weeks)

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)

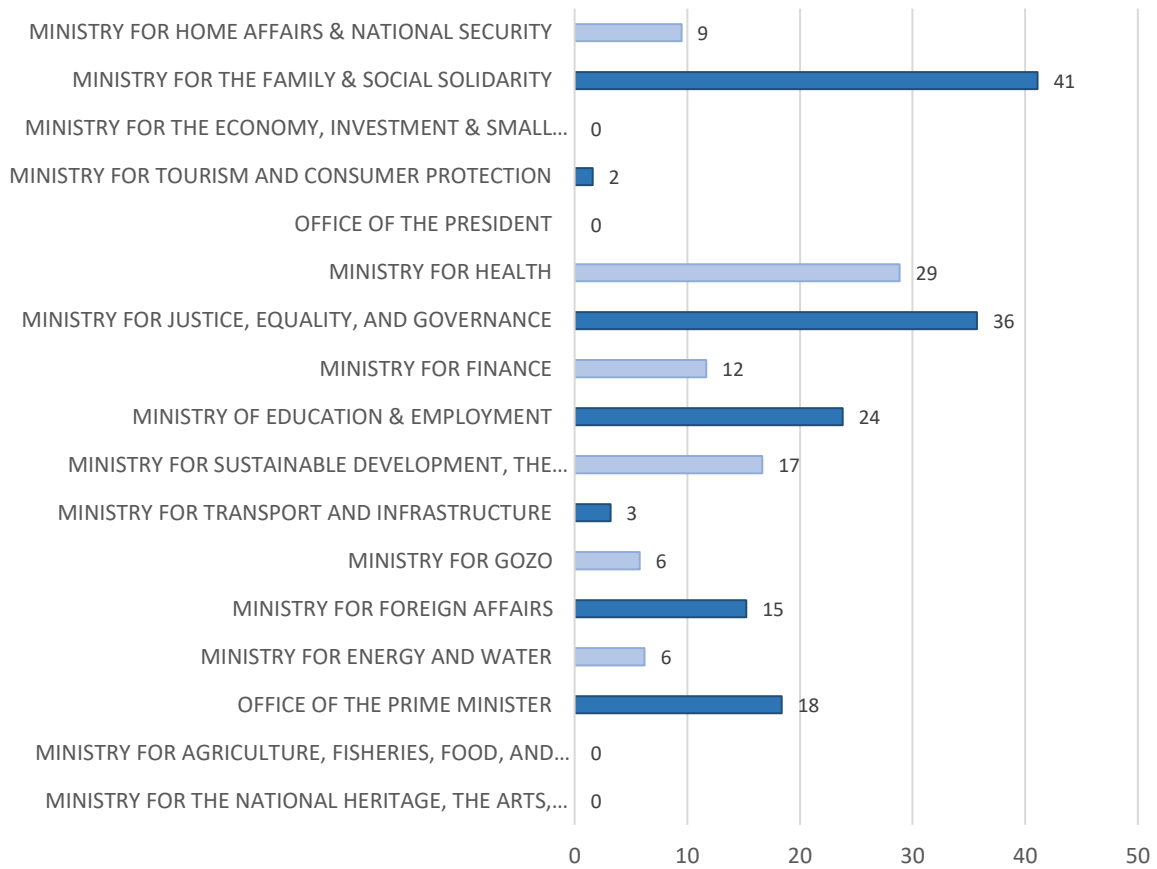


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

The highest number of public officers who opted for maternity leave was highest within the Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity (N=45), followed by the Ministry for Justice, Equality (N=43), and Ministry for Education (N=40).

2.5.2 Maternity Leave (+4 Weeks)

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.3)

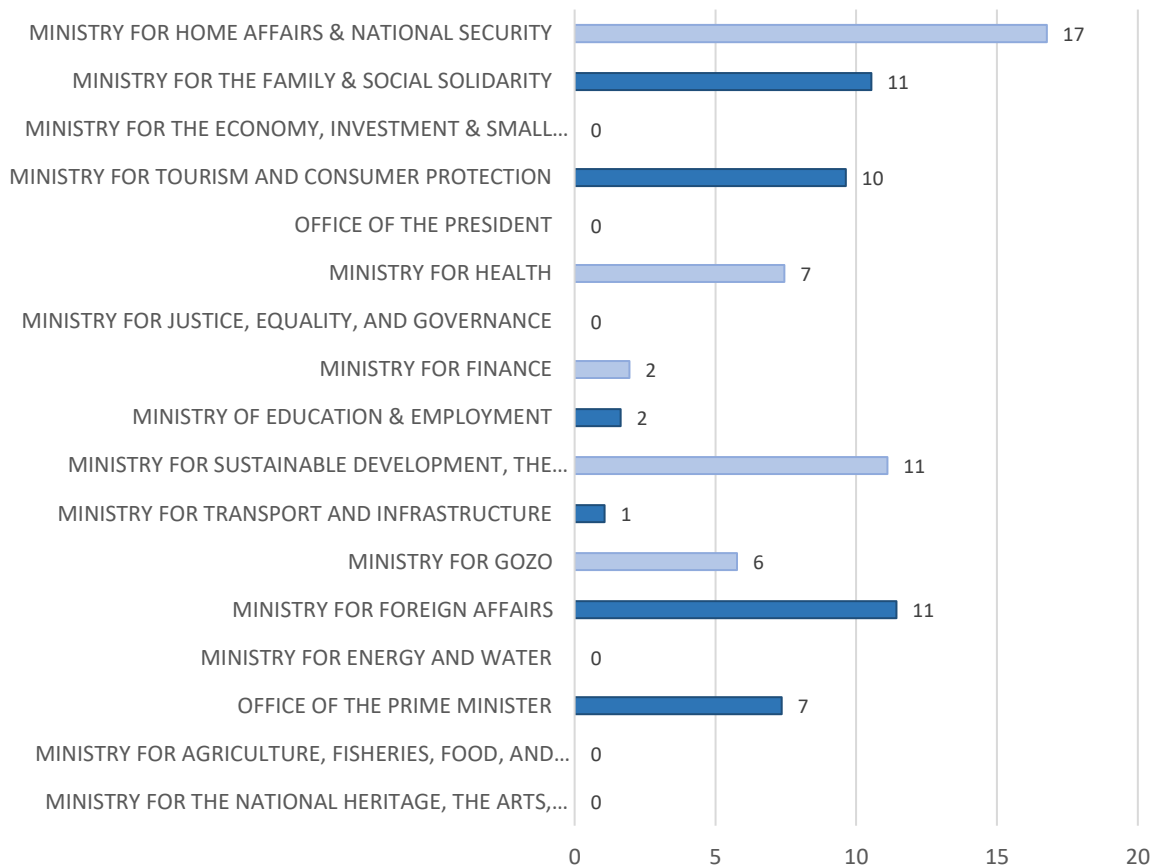


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

Since this measure is an extension of the previous one, one can conclude that this graph follows the pattern of the previous one.

2.5.3 Parent Leave

(WLBM Manual - Section 1.4)

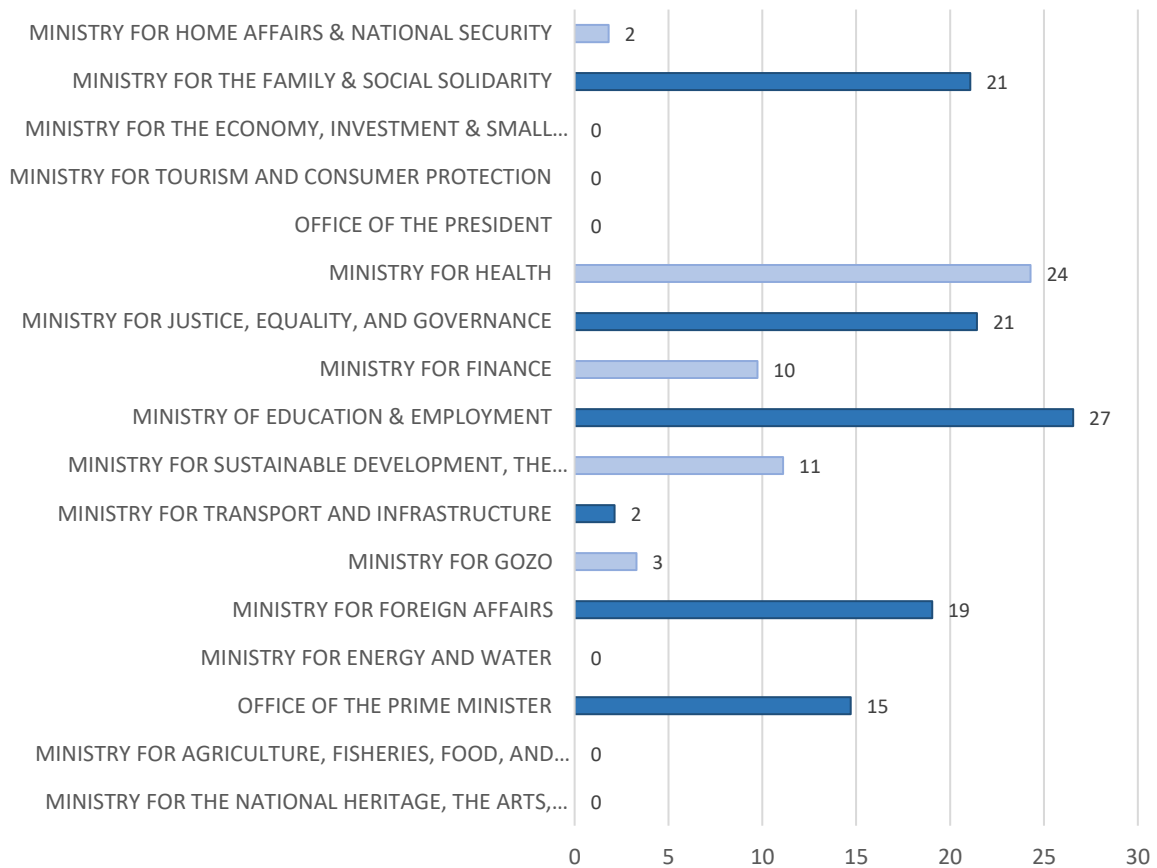


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

As one can note from the graph above, the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (N=17) recorded the highest number of public officers who utilised the parent leave. This is followed by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (N=11). However, it is worth to mention that nobody utilised this measure from the Ministry For Justice, Equality, and Governance.

2.5.4 Parental Leave

(WLBM Manual - Section 2.2)

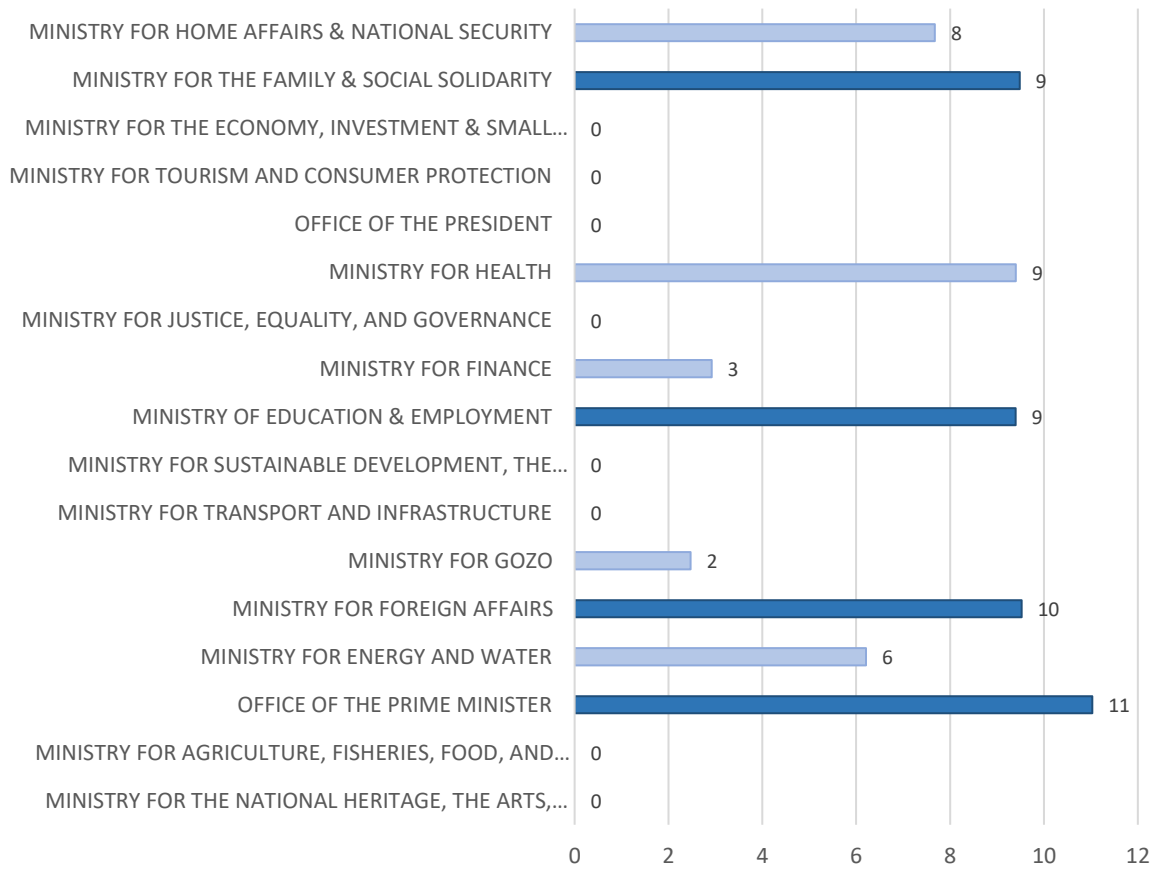


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

It is interesting to note that, if one takes into consideration the previous gender graphs, one may realise that, ministries where the parental leave is highly utilised, compared with the ministries which do not do so, are predominant with female employees.

2.3.5 Career Break

(WLBM Manual - Section 2.3)

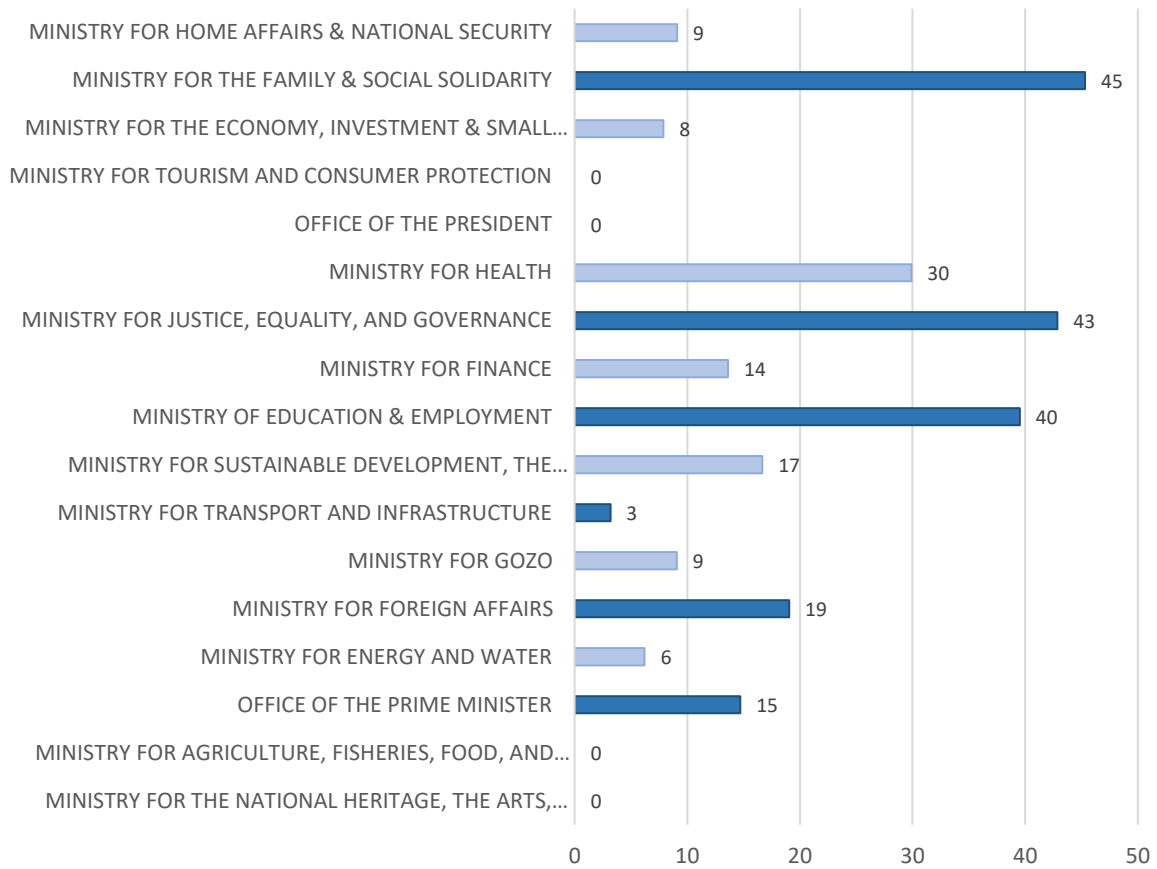


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

The pattern in this graph is interesting because, despite a low utilisation of career breaks across the Malta Public Service, such utilisation is nonetheless being shared across many ministries. Another observation is that there are still several ministries where this measure is not utilised at all.

2.5.6 Reduced Hours

(WLBM Manual - Section 3.1)

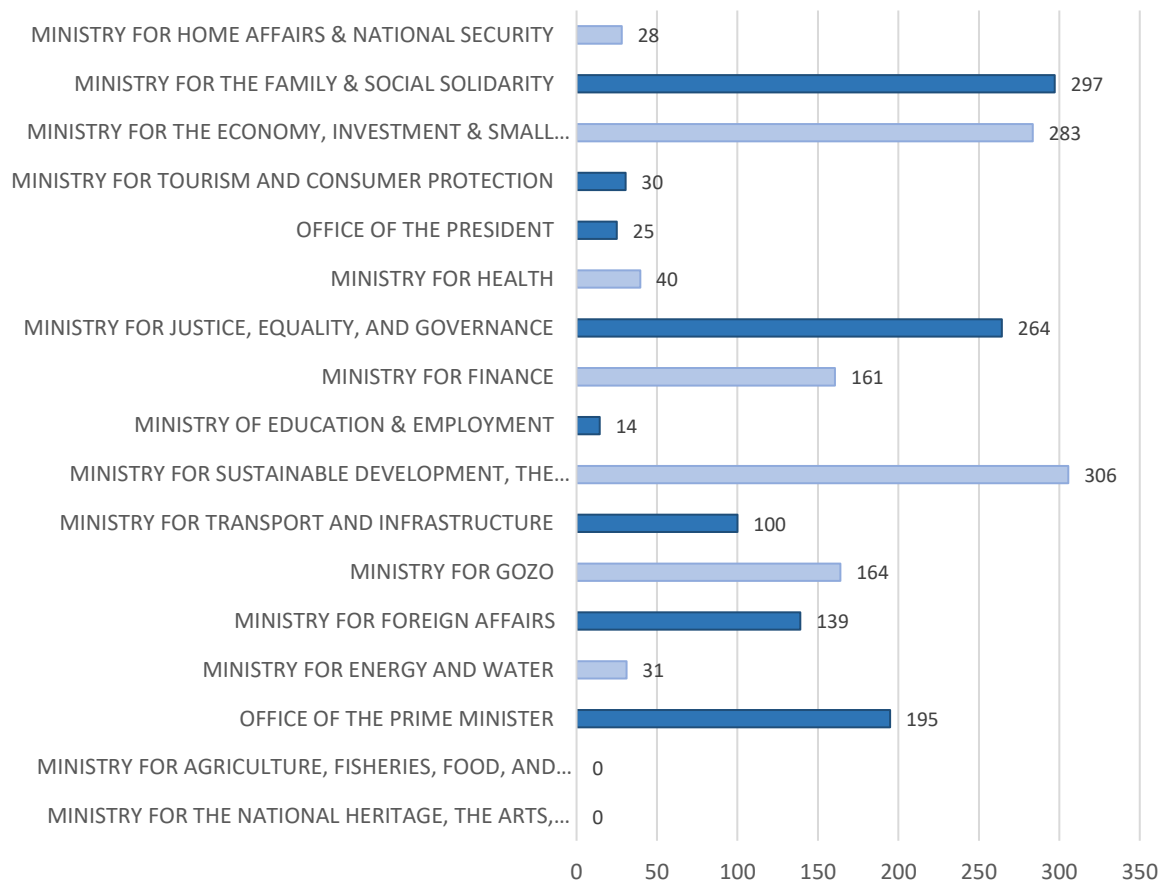


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

This graph takes a similar pattern, when compared to that for teleworking, largely because both served as a convenient approach for the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.5.7 Teleworking

(WLBM Manual - Section 3.2)

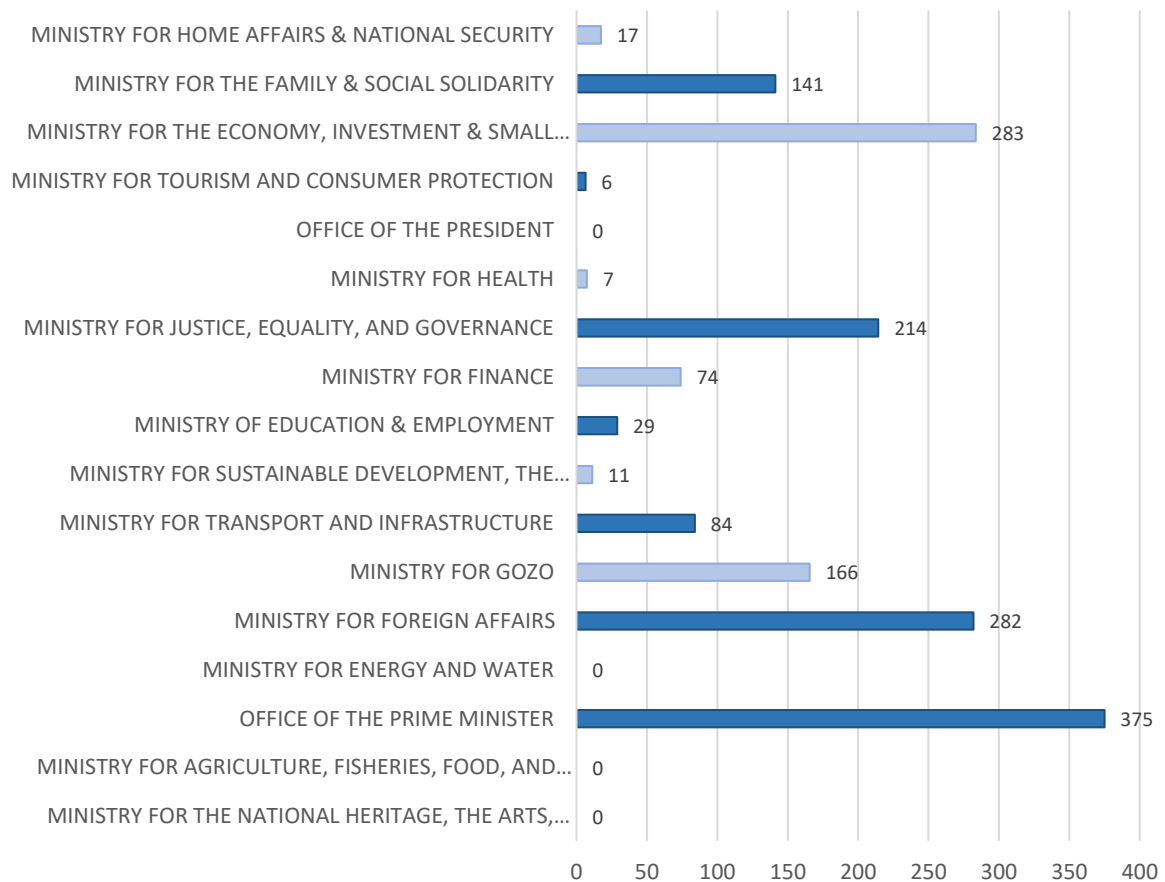


Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

This graph demonstrates a wide range of utilisation in teleworking. The highest number of public officers who opted for teleworking was recorded with the Ministry for Sustainable Development (N=306), Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity (N=297) and the Ministry for the Economy, Investment & Small Businesses (N=283).

2.5.8 Flexitime

(WLBM Manual - Section 3.3)



Note: This graph is based one leave out of every 1000 employees.

The highest number of public officers who opted for flexitime was within the Office of the Prime Minister (N = 375). Followed by the Ministry for the Economy, Investment & Small Businesses (N=283) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (N=282). The results can show quite a contrast since some ministries have not utilised any flexitime at all. Although one should keep in mind that such ministry has a smaller number of employees.

3. Conclusion

This year's findings reported significant changes in patterns across the utilisation of some measures, such as flexitime and teleworking. However, one should take into good consideration the COVID-19 pandemic.

In any case, this report served to carry on for the upcoming longitudinal study, thus ensuring that the current circumstances for modern working conditions are being evaluated for better implementation programmes and measures. Be it traditional or modern, the notion of family as a concept is nevertheless engraved within our culture and plays an important part in the wellbeing of any individual. Moreover, these schemes foster a gender equilibrium where females are empowered to join the workforce, whereas the males are encouraged to invest more on familial duties.

According to the European Union (Eurostat, 2020) Malta continues to be one of the lowest employment rates for women. The glass ceiling that women face to join/re-join the workforce is to be understood from a cultural and structural standpoint, for the Malta Public Service to offer more accurate and relevant work-life balance schemes.

However, during 2021, there seem to have been an increase in the use of family friendly schemes with the Malta Public Service. Although this increase may have been in effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in all levels of employment, positively a slight increase in flexitime and teleworking was adopted more.