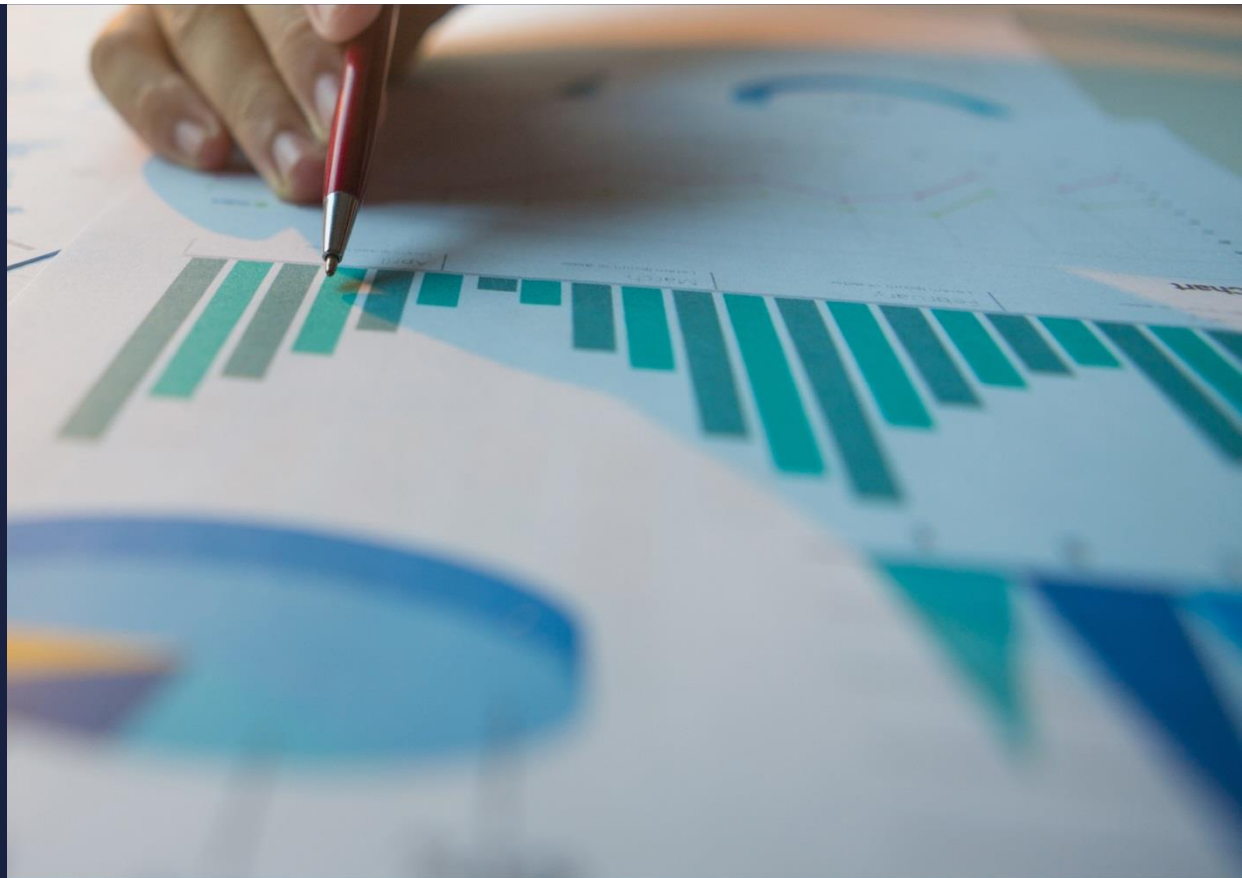


Who can work from home in Ireland?

Geary Institute Conference of the
Future of Work post Covid-19

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Labour market impact of Covid-19

- Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate went from 4.8% in February to an estimated peak of 28.2% in April when Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) recipients are included. Currently at 16.7% (July 2020).
- Around 575,000 individuals claimed PUP in April 2020 (since fallen to 274,600 – July 2020). Additional 390,000 employees currently supported by the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme.
- In Q1 2020 there were 2,009,000 employees and 331,000 self-employed. So the numbers accessing supports equated to almost 50% of employees (42% of total employment).

Why is the ability to work from home (WFH) important ?

- The ability of individuals to WFH a key mitigating factor in limiting the labour market and health impact of the pandemic.
- As public health measures are relaxed and economies reopen, ensuring as many people as possible WFH will help control against another spike in virus cases.
- The ability to WFH may alleviate short-term childcare pressures in light of school and crèche closures. However, combining working from home with childminding is not a sustainable long-term option.

Existing Evidence

- Dingel and Neiman (2020) find that 34 % of US jobs can plausibly be performed at home, and homeworking is more feasible in certain industries, including ICT, finance and education. However, in accom & food, just 3% of jobs could be done from home.
- For the UK, ONS (2020) report that around 12% of employees report WFH. Again, opportunities more limited in sectors like accom & food and transport.
- Pouliakas (2020) found that while only 5.3% of employees in Greece WFH, there is scope to increase this to almost 40% subject to changes in work organisation, norms and policies.

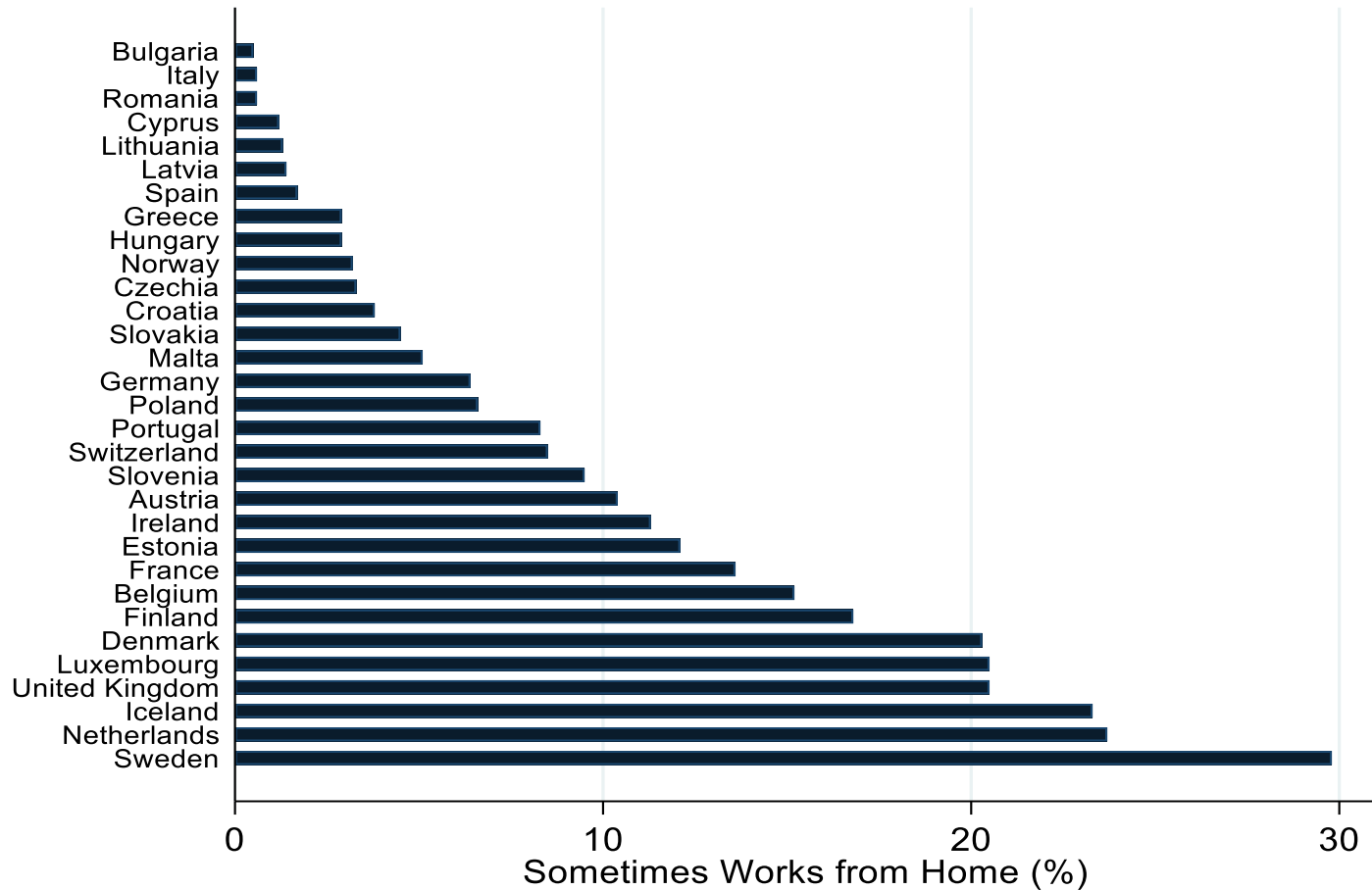
Data and Methods

- We examine the extent of homeworking in Ireland (pre-Covid).
- Use Irish Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. Contains a variable, HOMEWK, that indicates whether the individual ‘usually works at home’, ‘sometimes works at home’ or ‘never works at home’.
- We combine the ‘sometimes’ and ‘usually’ groups to form one working from home variable
- Our data comes from the merged 2017 to 2019 waves.

Incidence of working from home in Ireland

	Work from home (%)
All Employees	13.8
<u>By Sector</u>	
Education	37.3
ICT	36.2
Finance	25.5
Professional	23.6
Agriculture	14.3
Industry	11.7
Defence	10.8
Other	9.6
Administrative	8.7
Health	7.3
Construction	6.9
Retail	6.9
Transport	6.8
Accommodation & Food	2.4

% of Employees that work from home across Europe in 2019



% of employees working from home by group

	Work from Home (%)
Essential employee	5.6
Non-essential employee	16.3
Male	14.3
Female	13.4
Irish national	14.6
Non-Irish national	10.3
Age 15-29	7.4
Age 30-49	16.6
Age 50-64	14.0
Armed forces	5.9
Managers	29.3
Professionals	31.0
Associated Professionals	15.0
Clerical	9.0
Services	3.2
Agriculture	10.4
Craft	4.0
Plant	1.7
Elementary	1.4
Couple (no child)	16.0
Couple (with child)	16.7
Lone parent	11.1
Living with parents	6.0
Not living with family	13.0

Results from a probit model

- Essential employees 7 % points less likely to WFH as are non-nationals (2.7%) and part-time workers (2.4%).
- Females and lone parents approx. 1% points less likely to WFH compared to males and couples with children
- Employees aged 16-29 are around 2.5% points less likely to WFH than those in older age groups.
- Largest differences relate to occupation.
 - Compared to elementary services, professionals and managers are over 40% points more likely to work from home.
 - Falls to 26% for assoc profs, 18% for clerical workers, 12% for services occupations and 5% for craft.

Summary & Conclusions I

- % working from home in Ireland is roughly average in a comparative EU context.
- Access is far higher in highly paid occupations and is more prevalent in industries such as education, ICT and finance.
- Men, older employees (over 30) and full-time workers are more likely to WFH. Essential employees and lone parents are less likely to WFH.
- Given the high numbers of lone parents among essential employees, this underscores the need for adequate childcare provision for essential employees given continued limited access to schools and crèches.

Summary & Conclusions II

- In terms of policy, while WFH is prevalent among higher paid occupations, increasing this capacity among lower paid occupations will be key in combating the potential unequal consequences from job losses arising from the pandemic.
- Policies to increase WFH access among women, non-Irish nationals, young workers and lone parents will help prevent certain groups facing disproportionately bad outcomes.
- WFH is less likely among essential workers. As these are more likely to have caring responsibilities by virtue of the fact that they are disproportionately female, or lone parents, the inability to WFH exacerbates childcare difficulties among this group. Effective policy intervention for this group is overdue.

Summary & Conclusions III

- More research is needed on why Irelands rates of WFH differ from those of other countries.
- We need to identify the extent to which these international differences relate to:
 - Variations in occupational structure
 - Differences in access to affordable childcare
 - Variations in workplace attitudes and levels of managerial trust.
 - Cultural factors