



**European Commission**  
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Strategy on Gender Equality  
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## **PROM project**

### **DISCUSSION GROUP OF EXPERTS**

### **HÄSSELBY-VÄLLINGBY, 14/09/07**

Meeting lasted from 13h30 to 16h.

#### **Questions:**

- I. Did you discuss among yourself how to influence councillors and superiors on the issue of work life balance in Hässelby-Vällingby?**
- II. Is it possible to change the mind of the employer?**
- III. What does the municipal employer offer their employees?**
- IV. What more do you think that the municipal employer (city district of Hässelby-Vällingby) should do in order to improve condition for parents (that are municipality employees)?**
- V. Are there strong demands from employees? Do the employees put a o lot of pressure on the municipal employer?**

## **Notes from meeting: [Quotations from participants]**

“I discuss these matters with my superior. As a supervisor, my self, I apply the attitudes I get from my boss. But sometimes my own employees are negative.”

“At home in my family equality is not a problem.  
It is important that kids sometimes are permitted to be present together with mum and dad at work. As a supervisor I have to accept kids at work, sometimes.”

“Tolerant attitudes are not enough. I want a policy. I need to know where the limits are.”

“Values are important. They are spread all the time.”

“People do one thing. And say another thing. - It does not feel OK if your boss tells you to stay at home with your kids but she spends the whole evening working at her office.”

“Gender issues always have to be on the agenda of staff meetings.”

“You can’t formalize everything. We write to many documents. It is more important to keep the discussion going.”

“Superiors on a higher level are often older. In their age they are not responsible for small kids. They can put more energy in work (than I can).”

“Work life balance is not just a “man/woman-thing”. It is also a generation issue. Older people tend to relate to their experience when they were young parents. But nowadays the general attitude is more allowing to parents than it was when they were young.”

“As a union organizer (preschool workers and employees in social and medical care) I don’t think that there are many opportunities for my members. “Flexi-time” or “work from home” is not possible for them. - You become less tolerant if you are undermanned.”

“If I work in a team and have to stay at home to take care of my kids because they are ill it mite affect my colleagues in a negative way. And consequently I feel bad. I get at bad conscience. And perhaps out of loyalty to my colleagues I ask my wife to stay at home instead of me.”

“At work it is assumed that we do not have children. It seems there is no room, time or space for parenting in professional system (at work). The employer should take a greater responsibility to change this order. That is important!”

“The responsibility should be split between me as an individual, and my employer.”

“As an employee you are hired to work. You get paid for that. The responsibility of the individual is important.”

“The concern of children is very essential. They are our future. Different flexible solutions to supply the needs of different individual employees.”

“Men tend to be more interested in work, professional life etc. While women often care more about family.”

“I am supervisor. When I recruit new staff I regard parenting as a qualification.”

“I work in the field of sociomedical care. In my field men are encouraged to stay at home on parental leave.”

“In Hässelby-Vällingby the local city district council (=the municipal employer) mixes “gender equality” and “ethnic diversity” in a joint policy. That is not good.”

”There is not much pressure from the employees.”

”The supervisors are generally generous when it comes to “Flexi-time” or “work from home” and other flexible solutions. But there this should be regulated in an official policy (program/platform). Communicate this policy to everybody!”

“Nursing staff and preschool workers should be given the right to write their schedule.”

“It is not OK to invite to staff meetings late in the afternoon. (It is hard for parents with young kids to attend.)”

“We also have to think about our costumers, clients etc. As public servants we have to be available on their conditions.”

“Longer vacations for parents to young kids.”

“We count the number of sick days. But we care less about why people stay at home.”

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## SUMMARY

- Communicate policy to everybody.
- Parenting is a qualification also at work.
- “Right to” flexi-job
- “Right to” work-from-home.
- Flexibility. (It is OK to be late for a meeting)
- Flexible schedule.
- Substitutes should be hired when needed
- More generosity from fellow workers and colleagues
- The level of flexibility should no be related to what kind of supervisor you have. (But regulated in policies)
- Preschools at work.
- Respect differences, individuality.
- The costumers prospective.

<b>Five questions compiled by</b>	Rosmari Ljunglöf	project manager
	Johanna Krigström	deputy project manager
	Patrik Edgren	external consultant
<b>Chairman of meeting</b>	Patrik Edgren	
<b>Secretary</b>	Peter Forslund	

<b>Name of participant</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Age</b>
Leyla Anabestani	supervisor, care of old people	F	married	40s
Annika Persson	substitute supervisor, human resources	F	married	60s
Mats Elgström	supervisor, social care	M	cohabitant	30s
Åsa Enroth	supervisor, jobless program	F	married	40s
Camilla Hedlund	union organizer (preschool workers)	F		30s
Ingrid Alegren	supervisor, care of alcoholics and drug addicts	F	married	40s