

# Austria<sup>70</sup>

**Eva-Maria Schmidt** (Austrian Institute for Family Studies at the University of Vienna) and **Gerlinde Mauerer** (Department of Sociology, University of Vienna)

April 2025

N.B. Austria is a federal state.

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the [Leave Network website](#)). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members](#) page on the Leave Network website.

## 1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

### a. Maternity leave (*Mutterschutz*) (responsibility of Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection)

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- 16 weeks: 8 weeks before the birth and 8 weeks after the birth. It is obligatory to take leave; employed expectant mothers are prohibited from being employed during this time.

*Payment, funding and taxation*

- Maternity benefit (*Wochengeld*): 100 per cent of average net income for the last three months of employment before taking leave for employees, with no upper limit. Freelance workers receive an income-based maternity benefit: self-employed women who work in a trade or agriculture are eligible for 'operational support' (i.e. financial or other support to maintain their business) as a form of maternity benefit. If no operational support is granted, they can claim a flat-rate payment of €70.28 per day. Marginally employed, self-insured

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<sup>70</sup> Please cite as: Schmidt, E.-M. and Mauerer, G. (2025) 'Austria country note', in Dobrotić, I., Blum, S., Kaufman, G., Kosłowski, A., Moss, P. and Valentova, M. (eds.) *21<sup>st</sup> International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2025*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

women receive a flat-rate payment of €11.87 per day. Eligible, unemployed women are entitled to 180 per cent of previous unemployment benefit (with the latter corresponding to 55 per cent of previous net income). Expectant mothers receiving the childcare benefit are entitled to 100 per cent of the childcare benefit if their Maternity leave starts before the childcare benefit ends.

- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded by multiple sources: 70 per cent by the 'Family Burden Equalisation Fund' (FLAF – *Familienlastenausgleichsfond*) which is financed by contributions from employers (3.9 per cent of each employee's salary bill), by general taxes, and by federal states; and 30 per cent by public health insurance. In 2023, total expenditure on Maternity leave (i.e. maternity pay and the payment for operational support) was €606 million.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- None.

#### *Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All employed women are entitled to 16 weeks of Maternity leave with 16 weeks' payment (100 per cent of average income), except for short-term employed women and self-employed workers who are eligible for Maternity leave only if they have a voluntary affiliation with the statutory social health insurance (SHI). Unemployed women are only eligible for maternity payment if they have completed three months' continuous employment or have been affiliated to the statutory SHI for 12 months within the last three years.
- Expectant mothers receiving the childcare benefit are entitled to 100 per cent of the childcare benefit if their Maternity leave starts before the childcare benefit ends. If the income-related childcare benefit has already ended and expectant mothers have not started to work again or are still on Parental leave (see 1c for details), they are not entitled to maternity benefit.
- If a child is stillborn or dies during birth and if, and only if, it weighs 500 grams or more, this constitutes a stillbirth, and the mother is prohibited to be employed for eight weeks after the birth. There is no entitlement to maternity leave after a miscarriage (birth weight of less than 500 grams). However, there is the possibility of sick leave and from September 1, 2024, midwife assistance will be granted if a miscarriage occurs after the 18th week of pregnancy.
- From the beginning of pregnancy until four months after the birth, female employees are protected against dismissal and redundancy.
- In the event of a miscarriage, this protection against dismissal and redundancy ends four weeks after the miscarriage; in the event of a stillbirth, it ends after four months.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent) or delegation of leave to person other than the mother*

- In case of danger to the health of the mother or unborn child, women are eligible to take leave earlier than eight weeks before delivery; in the case of premature births, multiple births, or births by Caesarean section, women remain eligible for 12 weeks after birth (in exceptional cases, 16 weeks).

*Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- None.

*Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)*

- None reported.

**b. Paternity leave (responsibility of Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection)**

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Employed parents who live in the same household with the child and the second parent who is on Maternity or Parental leave have a legal claim to a Paternity leave called 'family time' (*Familienzeit*) if they were employed for at least 182 calendar days before this. These parents have to interrupt their employment for a full-time leave period between 28 and 31 days within the first 91 calendar days after the birth of the child. Four months before, during and four weeks after the 'family-time' these parents are protected against dismissal.
- Parents are entitled to take 'family-time', regardless of their parental status (i.e. as biological, adoptive, or foster parents), partnership status, or sexual orientation. Only legal residence in Austria (not citizenship) and a shared household of both parents and the child is required to obtain this form of Paternity leave.
- Other collective agreements may provide a few days of special leave for fathers immediately after the birth of a child, during which time fathers receive full earnings replacement.

*Payment, funding and taxation*

- Parents on 'family time' are entitled to a monetary benefit called 'family-time bonus' (*Familienzeitbonus*) which amounts to €54.87 per calendar day since January 2025, thus amounts up to €1,700 in total.
- Payments are not taxed, and the family-time bonus is automatically compensated for inflation in January every year.
- Funded by the FLAF; see 1a for more details. In 2023, total expenditure on family-time bonus was €7 million.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- Entitled parents can choose a full-time leave period of interrupted employment between 28 and 31 days flexibly within the first 91 calendar days after the birth of the child.

#### *Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)*

- Only employed parents who live in the same household with the child and the second parent who is on Maternity or Parental leave are eligible.

#### *Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent) or delegation of leave to person other than the mother*

- If the child or the other parent is hospitalized for medical reasons, a joint household is exceptionally assumed under the following conditions:
  - If the child is hospitalized: The father must take over the personal care and supervision of the child together with the other parent for an average of at least 2 hours a day.
  - If the other parent is in hospital: the father must, in the presence of the child, provide personal care and supervision of the other parent for an average of at least 2 hours a day.

#### *Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- None.

#### *Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)*

- Federal employees are entitled to the 'family time bonus' during so-called early parental leave ('Frühkarenzurlaub').

### **c. Parental leave (*Elternkarenz*) (responsibility of Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and Federal Chancellery/Women, Family, Integration, and Media)**

#### *Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Parental leave is an entitlement per family. It lasts until the child reaches two years of age if both parents take leave for at least two months each or for single parents.
- If only one parent takes parental leave (except single parents), the leave lasts until the end of 22<sup>nd</sup> month of the child's life at the latest.
- If both parents take one month of parental leave at the same time, the parental leave can last until the end of the child's 23<sup>rd</sup> month of life at the latest.

### *Payment, funding and taxation*

- A childcare benefit (*Kinderbetreuungsgeld*) is available to all families who meet the eligibility conditions, whether or not parents take Parental leave.
- For their youngest child, parents can choose between the flexible flat-rate childcare benefit account and the income-related childcare benefit. The flexible flat-rate benefit (*Kinderbetreuungsgeldkonto*) enables parents to distribute an overall sum of about €15,020 (if only one parent receives the benefit) or €18,762 (if both parents receive the benefit) over a chosen time span, calculated in days. If only one parent applies for the childcare benefit, he or she might spend the overall sum across a period from 365 days (at an amount of €41.14 per calendar day), up to a maximum of 851 days (at an amount of €17.65 per calendar day). If both parents receive and share the childcare benefit (respecting a minimum of 20 per cent non-transferable days of all childcare benefit days requested), the money can be used within a time span between 456 days (at a daily amount of €41.14) and 1,063 days (at a daily amount of €17.65).
- The income-related childcare benefit (*Einkommensabhängiges Kinderbetreuungsgeld*) refunds 80 per cent of net income in the previous six months, for 365 days (if only one parent receives the childcare benefit) and up to 426 days after the birth (if both parents share the childcare benefit, with 61 non-transferable days (which are around 14 per cent of all childcare benefit days requested). The amount of the income-related option ranges up to a maximum of €80.12 per calendar day (€2,400 per month).
- Although calculated in calendar days, the childcare benefit is paid out monthly.
- For the flat-rate childcare benefit account, a parent may additionally earn 60 per cent of the income he or she earned in the calendar year prior to the child's birth, or at least €18,000 per year. For the income-related option, additional earnings may not exceed €8,100 a year.
- In case of employed parents, the length of the childcare benefit does not have to correspond to that of Parental leave. However, health insurance corresponds to receiving the childcare benefit and ends even if the parent might still be on Parental leave.
- If parents share their childcare benefit at a minimum ratio of 40:60 and if each parent has received the benefit for at least 124 days, then each parent is entitled to a 'partnership bonus' payment of €500. Thus, together they receive a total of €1,000.
- Payments are not taxed, and the childcare benefit is automatically compensated for inflation in January every year.
- Childcare benefit is funded from the FLAF; see 1a for more details. Total expenditure on this benefit in 2023 was €1.22 billion, including total expenditure on 'partnership bonus'.

### *Flexibility in use*

- Parental leave may be taken by one parent only (mother or father) or by both parents on an alternating basis (the whole period can be divided into a maximum of three parts alternating between parents, with each part spanning at least 2 months).
- One parent may take Parental leave alone until the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday if they do not live with the second parent in the same household or if the second parent is deceased or does not acknowledge parenthood. Furthermore, if the

parent who initially cares for the child is not entitled to parental leave, the other parent can take parental leave at the earliest two months after the Maternity leave. In this case, the parental leave entitlement is extended until the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> month of the child's life.

- The parents cannot change their chosen childcare benefit option. Within the flat-rate childcare benefit account, they can change the duration once (which may lead to back payment or repayment demands). If parents choose the income-related option and one parent does not fulfil the employment or income requirements (i.e. was not employed or earnings were not high enough), he or she receives a childcare benefit of €41.14 per calendar day, which corresponds to the daily amount paid in the shortest duration of the childcare benefit account.
- Each parent has the possibility of postponing 3 months of Parental leave, up until the child's 7<sup>th</sup> birthday (or school entry).

*Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All employed parents are entitled to take Parental leave, regardless of their parental status (i.e. as biological, adoptive, or foster parents), partnership status, or sexual orientation. The employer cannot refuse parental leave.
- A permanent (at least 91 days) joint household with the child and identical main legal residence at this address in Austria is required (not citizenship) in order to obtain leave.
- There is no entitlement to take Parental leave for self-employed parents; however, they can claim both the childcare benefit options under the same conditions as applied to employees.
- All parents with a legal residence in Austria, regardless of their employment status and their citizenship, are entitled to receive the flat-rate childcare benefit account.
- In the case of parents living separately, but sharing custody of the child, both parents are eligible to receive and share the childcare benefit, in the same way as parents living together. There are no specific provisions for single parents.
- All parents are only entitled to the full amount of childcare benefit when they carry out mandatory health check-ups with their child by the time their child reaches the 15<sup>th</sup> month of age. Otherwise, the amount of childcare benefit will be reduced by € 1,300 per parent for both models.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent; or delegation of leave to person other than parent)*

- In the case of multiple births, the respective daily amount of the childcare benefit account (not the income-related childcare benefit) is increased by 50 per cent for each additional child.
- In the case of one of the two parents being prevented from using the childcare benefit due to death, a prison sentence, or other extreme circumstances, the available parent may receive the full amount of the flat-

rate childcare benefit account (not the income-related childcare benefit) for further 91 days.<sup>71</sup>

- Single parents who are entitled to childcare benefit account and earn no more than €8,100 per calendar year can apply for a subsidy of €6.06 per day. Receivers of income-related childcare benefit are not eligible.

#### *Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- None.

*Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)*

- None reported.

### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

- Employees have the possibility of taking between 2 and 12 months off for private reasons (e.g., further education or family reasons). It is based on labour legislation, a mutual agreement between employer and employee, and is, therefore, not a statutory entitlement. This leave period is unpaid.

### **e. Other types of leave and flexible working**

#### *Adoption leave and pay*

- For adoptive and foster parents, the same regulations for Parental leave and the childcare benefit apply as for other parents.

#### *Time off for the care for sick relatives*

- Employees can take **leave to care for either all sick persons who live in the same household, or for sick close relatives who are not living in the same household** (*Pflegefreistellung*). Close relatives are children (biological, adopted, or foster children, or children from the partner, or grand- or great-grandchildren), siblings, parents and grand/great-grandparents, or partners (regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or marital status). They can take the hours of one (average working) week off per year to care for other household or family members; for the hours of two (average working) weeks to care for sick children under the age of 12 years. They are eligible for full earnings replacement.
- An employee may accompany a child under the age of 10 years during an **in-patient stay at the hospital** (*Begleitungsfreistellung*); and accompany a child up to the age of 14 years during an inpatient rehabilitation stay for up to a total of four weeks per year (*Freistellung für Kinderrehabilitation*), provided that this accompaniment has been approved by social insurance. During this time, there is a legal entitlement to care leave allowance (*Pflegekarenzgeld*) described below.

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<sup>71</sup> Lone parents who do not yet receive alimony may receive the flat-rate childcare benefit account (N.B. not the income-related childcare benefit) extended by a further 91 days. After divorce/separation, custodial parents should receive alimony from their former spouses – if they do not, or the ex-partner does not pay, childcare benefit is extended.

- If the child's main **carer falls sick or becomes unavailable** (e.g., grandmother), parents are entitled to stay at home with their child (based on the respective law *Urlaubsgesetz §16*). A shared household is not required.
- Employees who have worked in companies with more than five employees for 3 preceding months are entitled to take **long-term care leave** (*Pflegekarenz*) or **part-time care leave** (*Pflegezeit*). This leave allows caregivers to provide (informal) care or organise (formal) care for sick or frail dependants, close relatives, or family members for a duration of 1 to 3 months (initially) per dependant; a shared household is not required. Although employees should seek an agreement with their employer, they have the right to take care leave unilaterally and initially for 2 weeks, with the possibility of extending leave for another 2 weeks. If employers refuse or postpone long-term or part-time care leave, they must give factual reasons in writing. Long-term or part-time care leave for up to 6 months can be agreed with the company on a voluntary basis. Slightly different regulations apply for public sector employees, but self-employed persons are not eligible for these care leave models. In principle, a person can only apply once for long-term or part-time care leave for a person in need of care. However, several people can take long-term or part-time leave for the same person in succession (e.g., two siblings can apply for care leave for the same parent in different periods.)
- Employees have a statutory right to take up to 6 months of **family hospice leave** (*Familienhospizkarenz*) for the purpose of nursing terminally ill family members. If the leave is taken for severely ill children, it can be extended to 9 months, and this leave may be renewed twice (i.e., up to a maximum of 27 months). Again, a shared household is not required.
- During long-term or part-time care leave or family hospice leave to care for sick children, dependants or family members respectively, employees are entitled to care leave allowance (*Pflegekarenzgeld*). Eligible family members are relatives within the direct ascending or descending line, including siblings, adoptive parents, step-parents, step-children, partners or registered partners of a parent, and in-laws. The basic amount of the allowance is income-dependent and is payable at the same level as unemployment benefit (55 per cent of the daily net income), but at least at the monthly low income threshold (2025: €551.10). Child supplements are payable for dependent children who care for close relatives. The maximum duration for the payment is 3 months per employee, or 6 months per dependent person, if the leave is shared and several relatives take care leave for the same person in succession. If the need for care increases by at least one level of care allowance (*Pflegegeldstufe*), care leave allowance can also be drawn again for the same relative after a new agreement on care leave. However, the total duration of the care leave allowance may not exceed 12 months for the same person requiring care. Low-income families may claim subsidies for family hospice leave, if the leave causes financial distress (funded from FLAF, see section 1a). Receivers of care leave allowance are protected against dismissal for cause.
- Family carers who have given up or reduced their employment due to their care for a close relative at home can apply for a relatives' bonus (*Angehörigenbonus*); some receive this bonus without additional requirements. A shared household with the person receiving care is not necessary. The bonus amounts to €125 per month and will be increased for



the first time in January 2025.<sup>72</sup> Care by relatives is accounted for under inheritance law in Austria. People who have personally provided unpaid, intensive care for a close relative for at least six months in the three years before the relative's death may receive a financial compensation after the relative's death.

- Family caregivers can be granted financial support for a period of 1 day or more if they are temporarily unable to provide care due to illness, vacation or other reasons for temporary substitute care (*Ersatzpflege*). Furthermore, the group of eligible substitute carers has been extended for this measure and in addition to close relatives now includes partners of daughters or sons, or the mother or father of the person in need of care, foster parents, aunts and uncles.

#### *Specific provision for (breast)feeding*

- Mothers are entitled to 'nursing' leave of 45 minutes per day out of 4.5 - 8 working hours. If a mother works 8 hours or more, she is entitled to a daily nursing leave of two times 45 minutes (or one break of 90 minutes).

#### *Flexible working*

- Parents have the legal right to work 'Parental part-time' (*Elternteilzeit*) until the child is 7 years (or school entry) if they live in the same household with this child, if they are working in companies with more than 20 employees, and if they have been continuously employed with their present employer for at least three years. The reduction in working time must amount to at least 20 per cent of their previous working time. It is not possible to work part-time for fewer than 12 hours per week or more than 32 hours per week. Parents working in companies with fewer than 20 employees may enter into an 'agreed Parental part-time' with their employer, up until the child is 4 years. The regulations also include the right to change working hours within the day (e.g., from morning to afternoon) without reducing the number of working hours, as well as the right to return to full-time employment. An employee is not allowed to claim 'Parental part-time' when their partner is on Parental leave.
- Parents are protected against dismissal until their child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, starting 4 months before they start and during the period they work 'Parental part-time' under the entitlement outlined above. During the remaining period of part-time work (i.e., until the child's is 7 years or school entry) they are protected against dismissal without cause.

#### *Antenatal appointments and care*

- Medical examinations of the (unborn) child and the mother are part of a programme called Parent-Child Passport (*'Eltern-Kind-Pass'*). The programme starts in the prenatal phase and continues throughout the first

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<sup>72</sup> Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz (BMSGPK) (2024) *Österreichischer Pflegevorsorgebericht 2023* [Austrian Long-Term Care Provision Report 2023], p.15f. Available at: [https://broschuerenservice.sozialministerium.at/Home/Download?publicationId=852&attachmentName=Österreichischer\\_Pflegevorsorgebericht\\_2023.pdf](https://broschuerenservice.sozialministerium.at/Home/Download?publicationId=852&attachmentName=Österreichischer_Pflegevorsorgebericht_2023.pdf)

years of life, including costs for braces in cases of severe misaligned teeth. The examinations are financed by the health insurance companies, but two thirds of the costs are subsequently reimbursed by the FLAF, see section 1a.

#### *Other provisions*

- **Leave for educational reasons.** Employees can take leave for educational reasons (*Bildungskarenz*) for at least 20 hours per week, including study time, which must be confirmed (e.g., with course attendance certificates). For parents with childcare obligations for children under the age of 7 years, proof of 16 hours per week is sufficient if there are no other childcare options. During this leave, a training allowance (*Weiterbildungsgeld*) is available, paid by the Public Employment Service Austria from unemployment insurance funds. Payment is calculated proportionately in alignment with the lower limit of the unemployment benefit scheme that amounts to a daily amount of €14.53. Additional earnings may not exceed €551.10 a month. The employee must meet the eligibility criteria for unemployment benefit and the employer must recruit a substitute for the duration of the leave.

## **2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy**

The maximum period of post-natal Parental leave available in Austria is 24 months. There is an entitlement to ECEC from five years of age, for part-time attendance of kindergarten (20 hours per week). Attendance is obligatory. So, there is a gap of three years between the leave ending and ECEC entitlement beginning, and a gap of 46 months between the end of the income replacement benefit (if that option is chosen) and any ECEC entitlement.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the <a href="#">cross-country tables</a> at the front of the review.
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## **3. Changes in policy since April 2024 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

As of 2025, all taxpayers who are granted the child tax deduction (*Kinderabsetzbetrag*) are also entitled to a child supplement (*Kinderzuschlag*) for the period from July to June in the entitlement period. The child supplement amounts to €60 per calendar month for each child and is jointly paid with the child deduction (see BGBl. Nr. 144/2024).

An EU directive stipulates that women are entitled to continued payment of their salary or a social benefit during Maternity leave. In May 2025, by amending the relevant laws, the federal government took this requirement into account and has created a new benefit for the women concerned: the 'Special maternity benefit' (*Sonderwochengeld*). The amount is based on the increased sickness benefit,

which guarantees financial security even in the event of prolonged sick leave. It was introduced retroactively from 1 November 2023, and 70 per cent of the costs will be covered by the Family Burden Equalization Fund and 30 per cent by the women's health insurance fund.

Since 1 September 2024, and being part of Austria's care reform, family caregivers can be granted financial support for people who temporarily undertake substitute care ('*Ersatzpflege*') for a period of 1 day or more if they are temporarily unable to provide care due to illness, vacation or other reasons. Since 1 January 2025, the maximum duration of substitute care of 4 weeks per calendar year was removed and a maximum daily limit was introduced instead.<sup>9</sup>

Leave for educational reasons ('*Bildungskarenz*') was abolished by the new government by 31st March 2025. However, those who have started their educational leave before this date can continue this leave as agreed with their employer before this date. In addition, the law has not yet come into force. It was passed by the National Council on 7 March 2025 - the Federal Council's decision is still pending. In any case, a new model is to be introduced on 1 January 2026.

## **4. Uptake of leave**

### **a. Maternity leave**

It is obligatory for employees to take Maternity leave and almost all mothers are eligible (see section 1a); the take-up of leave, therefore, corresponds to the number of births.

### **b. Paternity leave**

Statistics on take-up of 'family time' show an increase in numbers of fathers that claim family time. In 2020, in about 10 per cent of all parental relationships, fathers receive the 'family time bonus' during their paternity leave<sup>73</sup>.

### **c. Parental leave**

Data show that almost all eligible (i.e. formerly employed) mothers – between 93 and 96 per cent – took up Parental leave in the final years of the previous scheme. Since replacing the Parental leave benefit with the new childcare benefit in 2002, there has only been information on parents' uptake of the childcare benefit. As there are no official statistics on the uptake of Parental leave, it is difficult to know how many fathers currently take it. Some studies address this issue, but the percentages vary significantly depending on the population under study.

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<sup>73</sup>Riesenfelder, A.; Danzer, L. (2024) *Wiedereinstiegsmonitoring 2024. Kontinuitäten, Trendbrüche und Nachwirkungen der Covid-Krise* [Re-entry monitoring 2024. Continuities, trend breaks and aftermath of the Covid crisis], Wien: Hg. v. Arbeiterkammer. Available at: [https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitundsoziales/familie/Wiedereinstiegsmonitoring\\_2024.pdf](https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitundsoziales/familie/Wiedereinstiegsmonitoring_2024.pdf). .

Regarding the number of women and men receiving the childcare benefit, it is crucial to keep in mind the difference to Parental leave, i.e. both parents who are on leave and parents who are not on leave alike are able to receive a childcare benefit. Further, parents are able to decouple the duration of leave from the duration of receiving the childcare benefit. Thus, they might be on leave up to 24 months but might receive the childcare benefit for a shorter period of time (e.g., 12 months income-related benefit) or a longer period of time (e.g., if receiving the flat-rate childcare benefit account) (see 1c).

Recent statistics<sup>74</sup> show that the flat-rate childcare benefit was chosen by nearly two thirds of all parents. Among these parents, 35 per cent applied for 28 or more months and 25 per cent chose about 24 or more months. On the contrary, 36 per cent of all parents applied for the income-based model paid for 12 to 14 months. Despite access to equal sharing, 91 per cent of the principal recipients of the flat-rate childcare benefit were mothers only, in 9 per cent of the cases fathers also received a share of the flat-rate benefit. This share is significantly higher in the income-based model, in which fathers also applied for childcare benefit in 28 per cent of all cases. On average, fathers claimed for childcare benefit in nearly 15 per cent of all cases<sup>5</sup> and about 4.5 per cent of all days taken off for childcare in Austria<sup>75</sup>. Over the past years, the share of fathers claiming childcare benefit thus has decreased<sup>5,76</sup>. However, if childcare benefit is received by both parents, they increasingly do so in almost equal shares (50:50 to 60:40) and receive the Partnership Bonus: this proportion rose from 5.8 per cent in 2018 to 8.3 per cent in 2021.<sup>8</sup>

#### **d. Other employment-related measures**

The number of beneficiaries of care leave allowance for people on care leave ('*Pflegekarenzgeld*') has been steadily increasing since 2014 when it was introduced. In 2024, 5,367 people used this paid leave model compared to 2,323 in 2014 when the model was introduced. In 2024, 72 percent of beneficiaries were female. Among the receivers, in 2024, 2,409 people used the long-term care leave model ('*Pflegekarenz*'); while 179 used the same model in part-time ('*Pflegezeit*'); and 989 used the family hospice leave model. In addition, 1,720 people were on care leave to provide support for seriously ill children (incl. part-time); and 462 people accompanied children during rehabilitation stays. (Double counts are possible, as one person may use both a long-term care leave and a

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<sup>74</sup> Austrian Federal Chancellery (2024) *Auswertung Väterbeteiligung beim Kinderbetreuungsgeld für Geburten in 2020* [Statistics Father Involvement in Childcare Benefit for births in 2020]. Available at: [https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:cf2071cc-0dc0-405d-838a-40c184d06f03/vaeterbeteiligung\\_bundeslaender\\_stand\\_jaenner2024.pdf](https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:cf2071cc-0dc0-405d-838a-40c184d06f03/vaeterbeteiligung_bundeslaender_stand_jaenner2024.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Rechnungshof Österreich (Ed.) (2020) *Leistungen nach dem Kinderbetreuungsgeldgesetz. Bericht des Rechnungshofes* [Benefits under the Child Care Allowance Act. Report of the Court of Auditors]. Wien: Rechnungshof Österreich. (BUND, 2020/24). Available at: [https://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/rh/home/home/004.684\\_Kinderbetreuungsgeld\\_2.pdf](https://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/rh/home/home/004.684_Kinderbetreuungsgeld_2.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> Rille-Pfeiffer C. and Kapella O. (2022) *Evaluierung des neuen Kinderbetreuungsgeldkontos und der Familienzeit. Meta-Analyse* [Evaluation of the new childcare allowance account and family time. Meta-analysis]. Available at: <https://services.phaidra.univie.ac.at/api/object/o:1429698/diss/Content/download>.

family hospice leave.) With regard to substitute care (*‘Ersatzpflege’*) in 2024, a total of 10,628 people received an allowance for substitute care. Of these, 47 per cent were women and around 53 per cent were men.<sup>77</sup>

The most recent study on long-term care leave (*‘Pflegekarenz’*) has revealed that two thirds of long-term care leavers are women. Caregivers who take a leave have a relatively low income and live in municipalities with a smaller population size.<sup>78</sup> Calculations based on estimates regarding the eligible number of employees show an uptake rate of 2.5 per cent<sup>79</sup>, while others<sup>80</sup> report a take-up rate of 5 per cent among main caregivers. The average duration of long-term and part-time care leaves amounted to 87 days and 81 days respectively in 2021, i.e. slightly below the three months that this model allows for initially.<sup>81</sup> About 70 per cent of employees taking leave from work to care for frail or sick dependants/family members (i.e. long-term care leave or family hospice leave) are women.<sup>8</sup> Reconciliation works only to a limited extent, according to a qualitative study carried out in 2015/2016<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Information on 2024 provided by the BMSGPK (Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz).

<sup>78</sup> Klotz, J. and Scharf, R. (2020) *Studie zur Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Pflege bei NutzerInnen von Pflegekarenz/-teilzeit: Integrierte Evaluierung durch Registerforschung und Befragung von NutzerInnen. Sozialpolitische Studienreihe, Band 27* [Study on the compatibility of work and care among users of care leave/part-time care: Integrated evaluation through register research and surveys of users], Vienna: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection.

<sup>79</sup> Schmidt, A.E., Fuchs, M. and Rodrigues, R. (2016) *Policy brief: juggling family and work – leave from work to care informally for frail or sick family members – an international perspective*, Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

<sup>80</sup> Nagl-Cupal, M., Kolland, F., Zartler, U., Mayer, H., Bittner, M., Koller, M., Parisot, V. and Stöhr, D. (2018) *Angehörigenpflege in Österreich. Einsicht in die Situation pflegender Angehöriger und in die Entwicklung informeller Pflegenetzwerke* [Family care in Austria: Insight into the situation of family caregivers and the development of informal care networks], Wien: BMASGK.

<sup>81</sup> Data for 2022 from ‘Parliamentary inquiry 10234/J on long-term and part-time care leave’, (*‘Anfragebeantwortung der Anfrage Nr. 10234/J der Abgeordneten Rosa Ecker, MBA und weiterer Abgeordneter betreffend die Inanspruchnahme von Pflegekarenz bzw. Pflegezeit’*). Available under [https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/AB/9978/imfname\\_1447272.pdf](https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/AB/9978/imfname_1447272.pdf).

<sup>82</sup> Sardadvar, K. and Mairhuber, I. (2018) ‘Employed family carers in Austria: the interplay of paid and unpaid work – beyond ‘reconciliation’’, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol.43: 61-72.