

## [No, not a win win](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

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So we're to have an extension of the right to ask for flexible working hours are we? Quite why anyone thinks this is a great step forward somewhat confuses me: everyone already has the right to ask "Hey, Boss, may I?" and while many might not like the answer given these new "rights" don't change anything. For specifically all that is happening is that you now have the same right to ask that you've always had when negotiating your terms of employment.

That aside, some seem to think that it's a [great idea](#) <sup>[3]</sup>:

*A "win-win" in which families are happier at home and work, says research by Cranfield School of Management.*

Perhaps, but they do really seem to have missed the most important part about part time working (for this is what is meant by "flexible").

*The fact is that 14 million people, far more than the 10.5 million covered by Walsh, already do flexible working, part-time and reduced hours, voluntarily agreed.*

*Almost half are men, but those who work flexi-time for childcare reasons are overwhelmingly women.*

Quite, and there's the explanation of part of the gender pay gap for us as well. Part time workers get paid less per hour than full time ones do, so they cost the employer more in overhead.

Another description of "win-win" in economics is the search for that all too elusive free lunch. In this case maybe it doesn't exist. Perhaps people would be happier if they could work fewer hours, but perhaps not when they find out that they'll get less pay for each of those shorter hours as well?

Given that there is in fact no new right being offered here, might we assume that people have already looked at this trade off and made their own decision?

Essentially then, we've just had a political announcement which means nothing much at all. Honestly, I can't remember the last time that happened, can you?

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