



# Gender gaps in care: Estonia

## Key findings at a glance

- Women are more likely than men to provide intensive childcare, while involvement in long-term care is similar.
- Men are more likely to use formal long-term care services for their main care recipient.
- Housework remains unevenly distributed, with women engaging more frequently in daily domestic tasks.
- Women have less leisure time, while men report more difficulty balancing care.

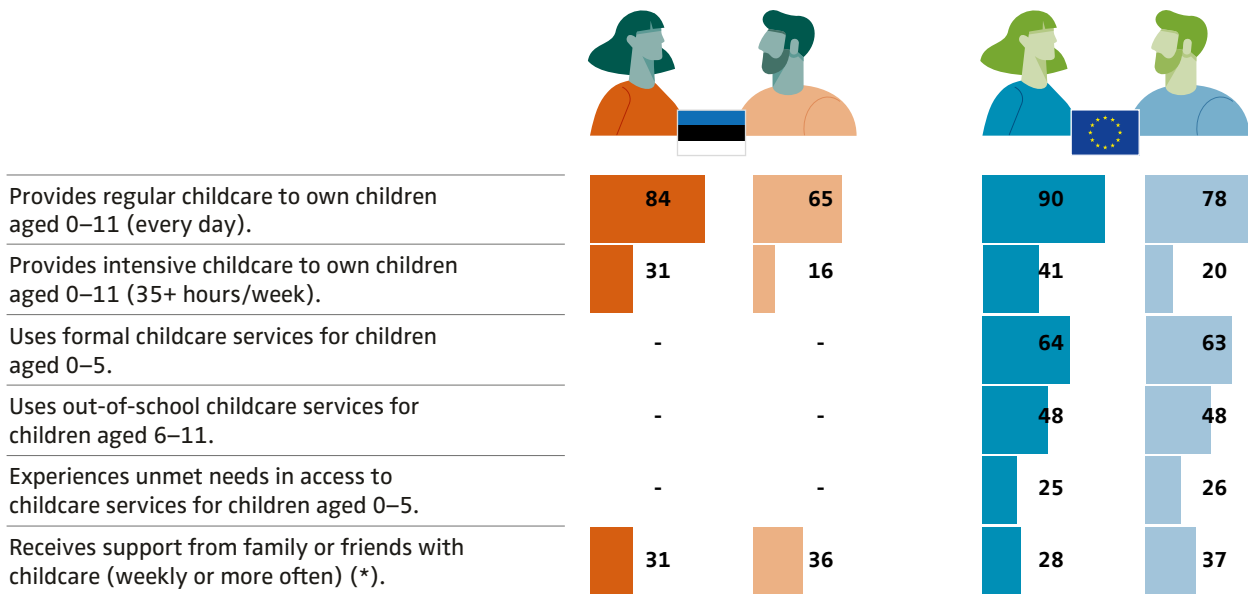
In societies where caregiving responsibilities are shared equally between women and men, everyone benefits. It strengthens families, boosts economic opportunities and enhances overall well-being. EIGE's 2024 survey on gender gaps in unpaid care and individual and social activities provides high-quality data to support key EU policies, particularly the **EU gender equality strategy** and the **European care strategy**, which aim to close the gender care gaps. This data also contributes to the **Gender Equality Index**, specifically enriching the [domain of time](#).

## Explore Estonia's findings



### Childcare: sharing responsibilities and improving access

Childcare is one of the forms of informal care that remains unbalanced between women and men. It includes personal care, assistance with school tasks and managing children's activities, leisure, supervision and emotional support. The survey asked respondents about their unpaid childcare responsibilities, including care for their own children, grandchildren and other children, such as those of relatives, neighbours or friends.



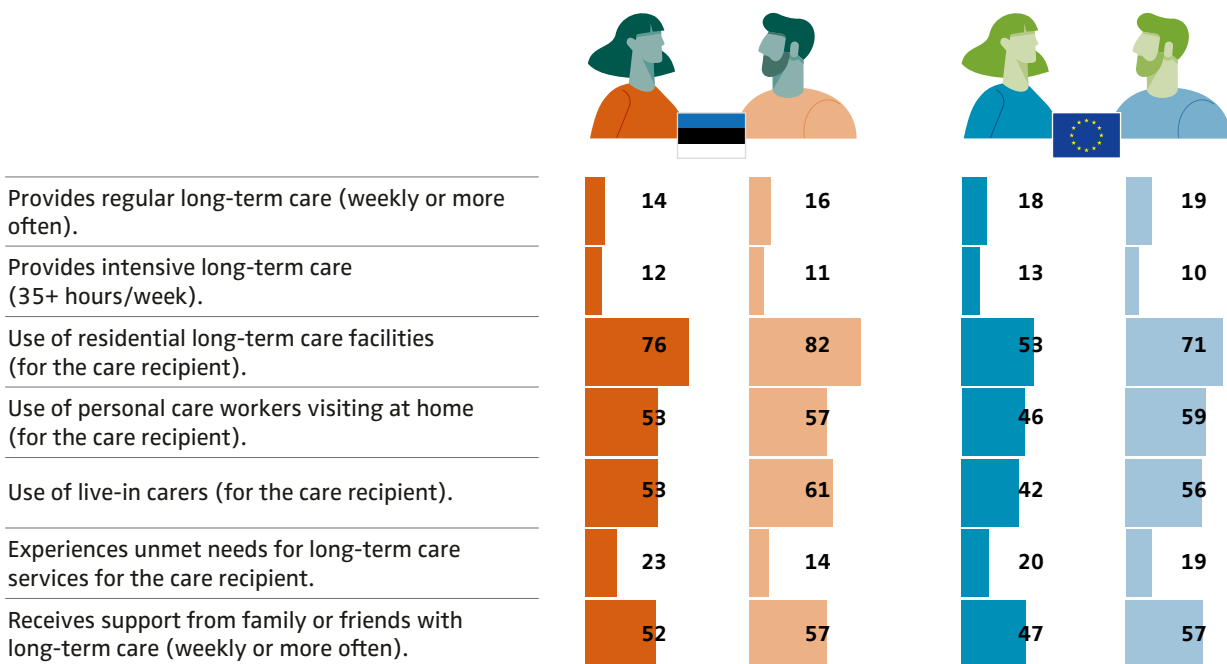
(\*). Low reliability – Estonia – women and men for indicator on ‘Receives support from family or friends with childcare (weekly or more often)’.

NB: Percentages based on respondents providing care to children under the age of 12 unless specified.



## Long-term care: addressing a growing challenge

Long-term care is another form of informal care where women continue to carry most responsibilities. It involves unpaid support for family members, relatives, neighbours or friends who need help due to physical or mental frailty, disability or old age. The survey covered both personal and instrumental care activities such as dressing, eating, moving around, grocery shopping, managing money and housework.

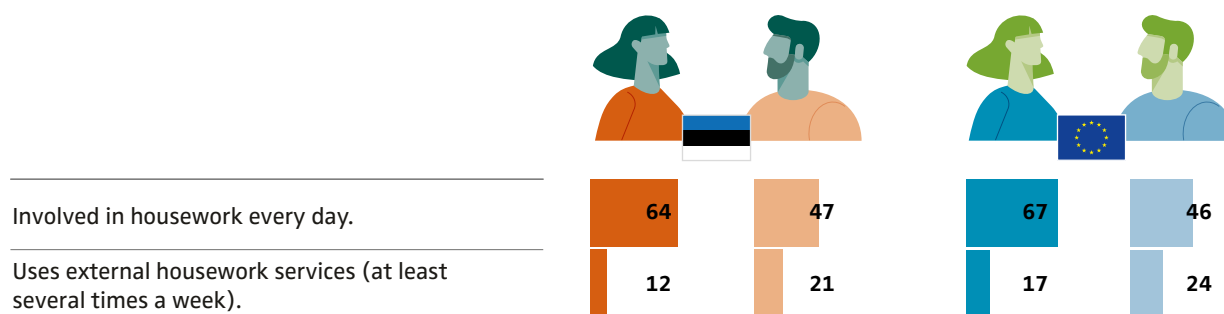


NB: Percentages based on respondents who have long-term care responsibilities.

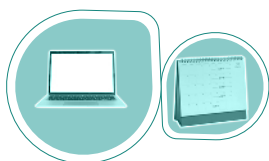


## Housework: sharing the load at home

Housework remains unequally distributed between women and men. It includes tasks such as cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, grocery shopping, managing finances, planning household activities and home or garden maintenance. The survey asked about the frequency and type of housework respondents perform, the time they spend on it each week and how these responsibilities are shared within the household.

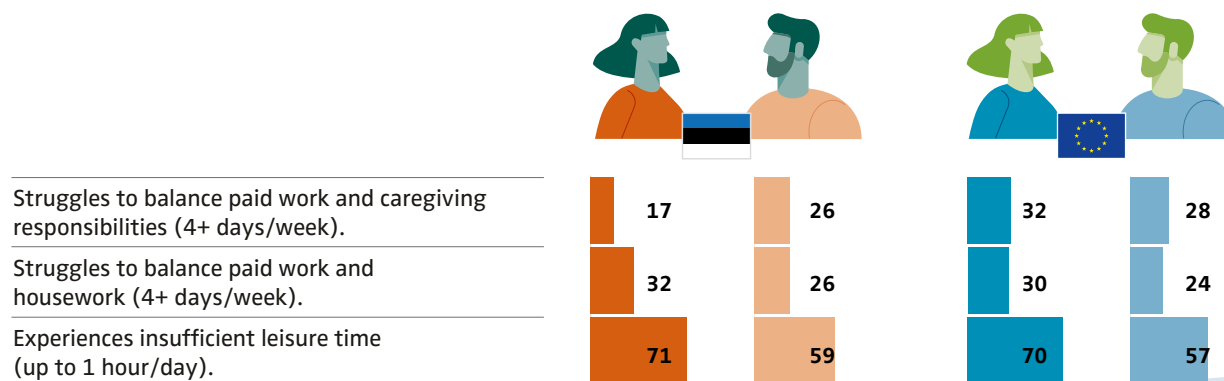


NB: Percentages based on all respondents.



## Work–life balance: removing barriers

Balancing paid work with caregiving and domestic responsibilities is a common challenge, especially for those providing regular care. The survey explored how often people experience difficulties combining paid work with childcare, long-term care or housework. It also examined the impact of these responsibilities on employment patterns and time for rest and leisure.



NB: Percentages based on respondents who are employed and have caregiving or housework responsibilities, except leisure time, which is based on all respondents.

## Policy actions for change

1. **Encourage shared responsibility.** Challenge traditional gender norms and expectations to promote equal involvement of women and men in caregiving and household chores.
2. **Reinforce care services.** Increase the availability, affordability and quality of childcare and long-term care services and improve the working conditions and attractiveness of the care sector.
3. **Ensure workplaces support carers.** Enforce equal and non-transferable parental leave, encourage men to take parental leave, strengthen flexible working policies and enhance employer-supported caregiving leave.

## Survey overview

- **Responses.** Estonia – 1 060 respondents | EU total – 65 202 respondents.
- **Survey period.** 21 October 2024–5 December 2024 (wave 2).
- **Respondents.** People aged 16–74.
- **Topics covered.** Childcare, elder and disability care (long-term care), housework, work–life balance, leisure activities and gender roles.
- **Inclusive sample.** The survey reflects diverse family situations, including single-parent and same-sex-parent households. It also allowed respondents to self-identify their gender and sexual orientation, ensuring broader representation.

## Learn more

Dive deeper into EIGE’s work on gender equality in care by accessing the following resources.

- [Sharing care, closing gender gaps: CARE Survey 2024.](#)
- [Gender Statistics Database – Survey of gender gaps in unpaid care, individual and social activities.](#)
- [Gender Equality Index 2025: Sharper data for a changing world.](#)
- [Return to the labour market after parental leave: A gender analysis.](#)
- [A better work–life balance: Bridging the gender care gap.](#)

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) produces independent research and shares best practice to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination based on gender. As the EU agency for gender equality, we help people achieve equal opportunities so everyone can thrive, independent of their gender and background.

European Institute for Gender Equality

EIGE Gedimino pr. 16  
LT-01103 Vilnius  
LITHUANIA

[eige.europa.eu](http://eige.europa.eu)

Follow us



An EU Agency



Publications Office  
of the European Union