

Temporary work comprehensively protects people in flexible working models against social risks

Study shows that 26% of workers were in flexible working models in 2020 – well-educated women are overrepresented in the service sector.

Many imagine young men working for an hourly wage on a construction site when they hear about flexible work or temporary work in Switzerland. A new study by swissstaffing, the industry association of recruitment agencies, shows that this image is skewed: the average person working outside of a high-percentage permanent position is in fact female, and tends to be older, a Swiss national, highly educated, and active in the service sector. Even more surprisingly, the study finds that one in four workers are now working in a flexible working model.

A new study by industry association swissstaffing shows that flexworkers contribute significantly to value creation in our country and reduce specialist and labor shortages. The contribution of people that work flexibly is often underestimated. Different working models satisfy the need for flexibility for both workers and companies alike. In addition to temporary work, there are also limited contracts, concurrent employment relationships, job sharing, self-employed work, on-call work and work for gig platforms. The swissstaffing study sheds light on different working models with regard to their prevalence and the framework conditions under labor law. The study also shows examples of people who work flexibly. The study simultaneously identifies the social risks for each working model and the possible solutions. According to Ariane M. Baer, author of the study and project manager at swissstaffing, the conclusion of the study is clear: “Of all of the flexible forms of work analyzed, people in temporary work have the greatest social security.”

Social security in flexible working models:

	Self-employed without employees	Concurrently employed	Workload <20%	Workload <50%	On call	Temporary
Illness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accident	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pension (BVG)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
OASI/DI/IC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ALV	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Further education	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

26% work outside of a high-percentage permanent position

If you take all of the employees that fall under the categories of “self-employment without employees”, “concurrent employment”, “part-time work at less than 50%”, “on-call work” or temporary work, then almost one in four people worked as a flexworker in 2020. As such, they operate outside of the model of a full-time permanent position with a single employer. The study builds on an evaluation of the Swiss Labor Force Survey (SAKE) and shows how the different groups of flexible workers are composed. Surprisingly, those working in flexible working models are mostly women, who tend to be older, Swiss nationals, highly educated and active in the service sector.

The study also illustrates which challenges the majority of flexworkers face when it comes to their occupational pension and social security. For example, insurance against social risks such as illness or unemployment is not obligatory for self-employed individuals and sometimes, they are either unable to take out such insurance or can hardly afford it. There are particularly large gaps in the occupational pension plans – which cover the standard of living in old age, as well as risks such as death and disability – of individuals with concurrent employment. This is an issue that individuals with low workloads also face.

This is where temporary work comes in as a solution: under the umbrella of temporary work, gaps in social security can be closed for people that work flexibly. Self-employed individuals, for example, can insure themselves against loss of earnings from illness by payrolling through a staffing service provider. On-call workers are protected from gaps in their pension by being placed in a temporary working relationship by a staffing service provider.

A proven instrument that works in social partnership

Temporary work offers the possibility to reduce many of the risks without losing any flexibility. Temporary work has adapted over the past 50 years, not least because of the wants of the working population and societal developments. In short, temporary work has adapted to the changing realities of life. Thanks to a tailored law and the CBA on Staff Leasing, staff leasing companies can offer customized solutions to insure against social risks.

For swissstaffing Director Myra Fischer-Rosinger, it is clear that, “In the wake of digitalization and globalization, we are observing an increasing number of alternative working models that deviate from the traditional employment contract with a single company.” swissstaffing estimates that the proportion of conventional employment relationships will decrease further in the future. The boundaries between work and free time, and between employee and employer will become ever more blurred.

But Myra Fischer-Rosinger considers something else to be important here, too: “Temporary work is a proven instrument that provides for flexible work within a legal and socially cooperative framework.” Temporary workers enjoy stronger protections than the self-employed because, as employees, they are subject to labor and social security law and have access to innovative, tailor-made solutions as regards

social security and further training. Compared to the conventional employment relationship, temporary work offers greater flexibility to both employers and employees. Myra Fischer-Rosinger notes that the study shows that the existing constructs of self-employment, employment relationships and staff leasing relationships cover the needs of a changing society and economy. Consequently, it is difficult to understand calls from politicians to restrict temporary work.

The full **white paper** “Temporary workers are in the best position: flexible working models in comparison” can be downloaded at www.swissstaffing.ch/whitepaper.

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swissstaffing is the center of excellence for staff leasing companies in Switzerland. As an employers' association, swissstaffing represents the interests of its 450 members in matters of policy, the economy and society. swissstaffing is a social partner of the CBA on Staff Leasing, the agreement covering more employees in Switzerland than any other.

Studies on temporary workers and staff leasing companies in Switzerland

The market research institute gfs-Zürich completes regular surveys on behalf of swissstaffing. The current studies can be found by clicking on [this link](#).