

CARER LEAVE POLICIES IN ITALY

Authors: G Lamura, A Magnaye, J Eales & J Fast (January 2022).



Caring for family members alongside paid work is increasingly common and the global longevity revolution means this will continue. Combining care work and paid work has well-known consequences for carers, their employers, the labour force and economies. Some governments have introduced strategies that let carers take time away from their jobs to fulfill care responsibilities while still being able to return to their job afterwards. To inform development of carer leaves in the UK, an international policy scan was carried out in nine other countries (Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden) as part of the Sustainable Care program.

This Policy snapshot provides an overview of carer leave initiatives in Italy. These policies and their implications for working carers are part of a forthcoming edited book J Fast, J Heyes, and K Hamblin, **Combining Work and Care**, that will be published by Policy Press.

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ITALY'S POLITICAL CONTEXT

Prior to Constitutional reform in 2001, carer leave policy was regulated at the national level. Since then the Italian care system has taken a federalist approach with the 19 regional and 2 provincial governments of the country responsible for carer leave policy¹. Now the national government can only intervene after negotiating with regions/provinces.

As a result, care policies vary substantially across regions, further exacerbating North-South differences. For example, Italy's traditional preference for cash benefits rather than in-kind services is more widespread in the North.

Italy has a familistic welfare system, where care is delivered mainly by care recipients' family members, increasingly supported by privately hired care assistants².

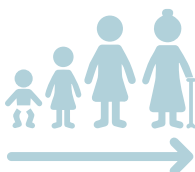
ITALY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT



64.2% of Italians of employment age were in the labour force in August 2021 up from a pandemic low of 61.6% in April 2020.



Italy's unemployment rate changed only marginally during the pandemic: 9.8% in February 2020; 10.2% in January 2021; and 9.2% in September 2021.



23.3% of Italians were aged 65+ in 2020, an increase from 20.4% in 2010.



According to the 2015 European Union ISTAT report, there were over 7 million (14%) Italians providing care to a relative. Other studies estimate the prevalence to be as high as 26%.

1. Jessoula M., Pavolini E., Raitano M. and Natili M. (2018) ESPN Thematic Report on Challenges in long-term care – Italy. European Commission.

2. De Luca M., Tronchin C., Di Pasquale E. (2019) Primo Rapporto Annuale Sul Lavoro Domestico. Analisi, Statistiche, Trend Nazionali E Locali. Rome: Osservatorio Nazionale DOMINA Sul Lavoro Domestico.

PERMESSO LAVORATIVO (WORK PERMITS)

INTENT

Entitles relatives to a leave of up to three days per month to provide care to a family member who is assessed as "severely disabled"^{3, 4}.

DURATION

Maximum length of leave is 3 days per month (36 days per year).

The leave may be taken on an hourly basis (to a maximum of 18 hours per month).

BENEFITS

The employer pays the worker as usual, and is reimbursed by the national social welfare institute (INPS).

Applies to workers across all sectors; self-employed, and household and domestic service workers are excluded.

Worker must be caring for any first or second degree relative (including grandparents, grandchildren and siblings).

Living with the care receiver is no longer a requirement (since 2000).

Care recipients must be assessed as "severely disabled".

Care receivers may live outside of Italy, but care receivers' entitlement has to be certified by the Italian authority (i.e. INPS).

The employee's job is protected during the leave.

The leave request should specify what time will be taken as leave in each month.

Requires a medical certificate based on an assessment performed by a specific regional Commission comprising four physicians from relevant disciplines.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Family member includes any first or second degree relative, including grandparents, grandchildren and siblings.

Severely disabled refers to those who are assessed as having a physical, psychological or sensory impairment, either stable or progressive over time, that reduces a person's learning or working ability.



3. Handylex (2020) Permessi lavorativi Legge 104 (http://www.handylex.org/disabili/permessi_legge_104.shtml).

4. Jessoula M., Pavolini E., Raitano M. and Natili M. (2018) ESPN Thematic Report on Challenges in long-term care – Italy. European Commission.

CONGEDO STRAORDINARIO (TWO-YEAR PAID LEAVE)

INTENT

Offers the possibility for co-resident close relatives of people reporting a severe disability to benefit from up to two years of paid leave⁵.

BENEFITS

The employee is paid based on their last month of wages, to a maximum equivalent annual wage of 48,000 Euros.

DURATION

Maximum length of leave is 2 years or 730 days during the worker's entire working life.

The leave can be split into single (full) days, and taken as often as needed, no matter the number of co-resident care receivers an individual worker may assist.

Applies to workers across all sectors; self-employed and household and domestic service workers are excluded.

Only one employed family member may take the leave, prioritized in this order: spouse or legally recognized partner; parents; children; siblings; other third degree relatives (e.g. great grandchildren).

More distant relatives are eligible only if closer relatives are deceased, disabled, divorced, legally separated or missing.

Caregivers and care receivers must live in the same household (and not hospitalized full-time). However, if they live temporarily outside of Italy, they may be eligible for up to one year.

Care receiver must be assessed as "severely disabled".

The employee's job is protected unless the leave is improperly used.

Requires a medical certificate based on an assessment performed by a specific regional Commission comprising four physicians from relevant disciplines.



5. Giacobini C. (2020) I congedi biennali retribuiti. Handylex (<http://www.handylex.org/schede/congretribuiti.shtml>)