

Govt exploring grants, incentives for firms to offer flexible-load jobs

Employers could also get help to redesign certain roles into bundles of tasks: Jasmin Lau

Wong Yang

The Government is studying how to encourage employers to offer fractional work to people who need greater flexibility in their careers, said Acting Manpower Minister Jasmin Lau on Oct 14.

This will involve offering grants and incentives to employers and helping them redesign certain jobs into bundles of tasks, she added.

Fractional work refers to arrangements in which employees provide their skills on a part-time basis, working a fraction of the hours of a full-time employee.

Lau was responding to a question from a young woman during a 20-minute dialogue at the Young Singaporeans Conference 2026: Future Makers organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

The conference focused on the

Republic's declining total fertility rate and its marriage and parenthood policies.

The woman asked if discussions around family-friendly job opportunities should focus on creating such roles rather than insisting that existing roles be made family-friendly.

Lau told about 80 participants aged between 18 and 35 that the Government is working on "a couple of ideas" around flexible-load jobs, which are also referred to as fractional jobs or part-time jobs.

Her comments come after a workgroup studying how to help senior workers be productive and employable concluded its discussions. The group will release its recommendations soon, said Minister of State for Manpower Dinesh Vasu Dash in an Oct 9 social media post.

The tripartite workgroup, announced at Budget 2025, convened employers and organisations to explore multi-stage careers for mature workers, including pilots for seniors to take on fractional work.

At the Oct 14 dialogue held at Temasek Shophouse, Lau said the authorities are studying how to help

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employers redesign roles by bundling tasks differently for employees, allowing them to work at different rhythms.

They are identifying the industries and job roles most suited to such efforts, and will start with them before scaling up nationwide, said Lau.

Those doing fractional work must understand they may be paid differently depending on the tasks and outcomes they deliver, added Lau, who is also Senior Minister of State for Digital Development and

Information.

"This is not just a marriage and parenthood policy or intervention. This is something that supports anyone who needs flexibility in their working life, and it also doesn't have to be permanent," she added.

Lau said fractional work could be an option for those caring for young children or elderly parents. They could move on to different roles when their children are older, or when they have fewer caregiving duties.

Lau is part of the Marriage and Parenthood Reset Workgroup, formed in April to address Singapore's record-low fertility rate, which will share its full report in early 2027.

Proposals for the Government to lead by example on flexible and fractional work were floated by the Singapore Business Federation earlier in 2026, while MPs have sought updates on government efforts to roll out such arrangements.

The Manpower Ministry said in September in a written answer to a parliamentary question from Cassandra Lee (West Coast-Jurong West GRC) that it would consider expanding fractional work models to younger caregivers and parents. It said then that fractional work trials were ongoing and would conclude later in 2026.

Other dialogue participants on Oct 14 asked how Lau juggles work and family, and whether the public service could take the lead in setting norms on work-life balance.

Lau said that as a large employer, the public service can be a good role model, but being too prescriptive with fixed hours may not accommodate different lifestyle routines.

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Acting Manpower Minister Jasmin Lau (above, left) speaking at a dialogue moderated by Institute of Policy Studies senior research fellow Gillian Koh at the Young Singaporeans Conference 2026: Future Makers at Temasek Shophouse on Oct 14. Lau said fractional work could be an option for those caring for young children or elderly parents. ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG