

## **Summary**

A family assistant is a person who is appointed to work with a family in order to overcome the difficulties the family is facing and which affect the improper fulfilment of social roles. The range of these difficulties is wide. Family assistants work with different units to achieve the best possible results. This is one of the many tasks incumbent on family assistants.

These tasks, rights or issues of employing family assistants are regulated, inter alia, by the Act on Family Support and the System of Foster Care of 9 June 2011.

The subject of this study is the experience of assistants acquired in the course of their professional activities, determining the course of their careers. The main aim of the research was to identify ways of implementing the assumptions of family assistantship in Poland in the light of the experience of those implementing it and, on this basis, to propose a recommended model. It took into account the formal assumptions of the legislation and the experience of family assistants. The research was carried out using the biographical method, with a narrative interview technique. Interviews were conducted with 24 family assistants from all over Poland. They were individuals with different educational backgrounds and professional experience.

After obtaining the empirical material, I analysed the experience of family assistants concerning different areas of their work: circumstances of professional adaptation, working conditions, working with the family, professional duties, cooperation for the benefit of the family, organisation of own work and specific work in the pandemic, as well as expectations and motives for entering the profession and further plans of the study participants.

The research carried out showing the actual professional paths of family assistants and the conditions of their course indicate the need for numerous changes in the implementation of the assistantship, concerning the formal requirements for candidates, the procedures for the assignment of a family assistant and the length of the period of cooperation with the family. Family assistants signal the need for changes regarding working conditions not limited to the level of remuneration and measures related to undertaking family cooperation. The specific nature of the family assistant's work and the scarce access to supervision make it a profession with a high risk of professional burnout. The family assistant is a profession of the future, but it requires the creation of favourable conditions for those who choose it to pursue their careers.