



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

in partnership with



EQUAL LIVES

Parenthood and caring in
the workplace



EQUAL LIVES RESEARCH

Foreword from Business in the Community

Over the last thirty years, Business in the Community's Gender Equality Campaign has published a series of landmark reports showing why and how employers should support women in work. But gender equality is also a men's issue. We believe that until caring and parenting responsibilities are better shared between women and men, we won't close the pay gap or achieve gender equality in the workplace.

Until now, most research in this area has focused on women. We made assumptions about what men wanted or needed but didn't have the facts or knowledge to support this. Equal Lives sets out to fill this gap. We commissioned a team of leading academics to find out what men actually think, do and want in relation to work and care across the UK.

We heard from over 10,000 employees, both men and women, who told us about their experiences and their aspirations.

Men said they wanted to be more present for their children and elderly parents, but that current public policy, perceived expectations and organisational practices stood in their way.

Equal Lives tells us that while attitudes towards caring amongst both men and women have shifted, behaviours often haven't. This lack of flexibility is preventing employees from reaching their full potential both at home and at work. It is also clear that those businesses that can create more family-friendly environments, supported by a flexible working culture, will better attract, engage and retain their talent.

We believe that in 2018, any employee should be able to balance job and family responsibilities, without either being compromised and want to ensure that both men and women feel able to live more balanced lives.

There is plenty to be done to act upon the findings and accelerate progress towards modern working and family lives. We hope this report offers both insight and practical recommendations as to how employers can support all employees and all families.

We are extremely grateful to our sponsor Santander UK for their dedication and involvement in this critically important study. We would also like to say a huge thank you to the 10,000 people who took time out of their already busy lives to complete the survey and participate in our focus groups and interviews. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Dame Helena Morrissey, Chair of Business in the Community's Gender Leadership Team and Chloé Chambrud, Gender Equality Director, Business in the Community



Foreword from Santander UK

Equal Lives are an ambition for our society as a whole – ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities, and is treated with equal expectation and respect. This is particularly important in the workplace, which should help and not hinder productivity and personal fulfilment.

When it comes to balancing caring and careers, many assumptions are made about what employees want, but there is little research into their practical experiences and needs. Recent years have seen significant social change in family structures and responsibilities, yet many working environments have not kept pace. Supporting a truly diverse and inclusive workforce is in all our interests, and Santander sponsored this study in order to inform and assist all employers to make effective change.

We recognise that there is no 'one size fits all' solution, but that doesn't mean we can't look to adapt and improve. It goes without saying that those replicating past approaches are fitting square pegs into round holes – to the cost of individuals and their business as a whole. There have been many positive changes over recent decades; including greater diversity of our workforce across every level, reforms such as Shared Parental Leave, and increased adoption of new technologies to improve our connectivity and output. These changes both necessitate and facilitate new ways of flexible working.

The words 'flexible' and 'agile' appear often in conversation, but are too little evident in reality. And yet, true agility will ensure organisations focus on achieving the right result, without perpetuating ineffective practice. This is particularly important when supporting employees to manage responsibilities to children, parents and others; increasing take-up of current caring policies, as well as creating

new ones. Many feel pressure to conform to rigid notions of care-giving which are weighted towards women. This is impeding gender equality at senior levels, and in the home.

We believe there is a better way, as our Equal Lives research suggests. Equalising an organisation's policies and culture of care would enable more men to share caring duties; a strong desire amongst younger workers.

This would in turn facilitate better representation and progression of women in the workplace – supporting more equal lives in both professional and personal terms.

This report is the first comprehensive evaluation of its kind. Employers across Government and Industry should draw on these employee-led recommendations to continue creating the healthy and constructive working environments which will benefit us all.

Nathan Bostock, CEO, Santander UK



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HOW MEN AND WOMEN BALANCE WORK AND CARING RESPONSIBILITIES: THEIR ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOURS, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES AND HOW EMPLOYERS CAN HELP

Equal Lives reveals that men and women have very similar attitudes and desires in relation to balancing work and caring responsibilities. During 2018, over 10,000 employees told us about their experiences, attitudes and aspirations in relation to balancing professional employment with personal caring responsibilities for both children and adults.



Their responses, both to surveys and via in-depth focus groups and interviews, uncover the existence of a gap between aspirations and reality. Traditional views of gender roles have shifted, but this has not yet significantly impacted on behaviours, although there are clear signs of change. Women are eight times more likely to play the primary role in caring for children and are one and a half times more likely to take the lead in caring for adults.

Equal Lives shows that caring responsibilities affect the ability of both men and women to progress in their careers, and their satisfaction

with their employer. Both male and female employees are clear in their desire for more support to balance work and caring responsibilities and on what works (and what doesn't). The research identifies an array of barriers – societal and organisational – that prevent them from achieving this.

The research findings are presented in two parts, followed by a set of recommendations for employers and the Government.

The first section summarises what we have learnt about attitudes to caring and the reality of how this manifests itself for both men and women in the workplace in terms of stress, engagement levels and intention to leave – in short, why employers should care about caring.

- The majority of men (85%) agree they should be as involved in all aspects of childcare as women. At the same time, over nine in ten men believe it is equally acceptable for both women and men to take time out from employment in order to care for their family.
- For a growing number of people, caring is not just about childcare but about looking after dependent adults. Many may have needs around illness or disability that are complicated and unpredictable to manage. Respondents consequently report hiding adult caring responsibilities from their team, and employers.

- Employees needing to take on more caring responsibilities outside of work correlates to employee stress as well as intention to leave their current employer.

The second section looks in more detail at organisational cultures and behaviours as well as how key policies such as Flexible Working rights and Shared Parental Leave can be most effectively implemented. The research also offers insights on practical steps that organisations can take.

- Even in organisations which have family-friendly policies, men report concerns for career, progression, finances and a feeling that their caring duties are not as recognised as women's and less appreciated by organisations.
- The ability to work flexibly is the organisational policy that both men and women find the most important when it comes to balancing work and care. However, take-up is significantly lower than its perceived importance.
- Many men say they would be encouraged to use policies to support them with balancing work and care if they were confident that it would not impact their career prospects or if there were more visible examples from senior leaders in their organisation.
- Just over a third of men with caring responsibilities say they have discussed these with their line manager. If employees feel their

line manager is supportive, they are more likely to take up family-friendly policies.

- Organisations are already taking steps to approach traditional gender roles differently. For example, the experiences of same-sex fathers offer insights into how social and organisational barriers around caring can be broken; providing greater opportunities for equality and flexibility amongst heterosexual couples balancing parenthood and caring responsibilities.

Finally, there are lessons within the findings for both employers and Government which are summarised as recommendations. There is much that both can do; proactively promoting policies, providing training and support for line managers, and updating and amending legislation.

Equal Lives reveals that the roles of women and men in caring responsibilities are not yet equal, and this research provides evidence that men themselves are looking for change. Men want to do more and organisations that enable that will unlock greater engagement, loyalty and more fulfilled and productive employees. Removing societal and organisational barriers to equality in caring responsibilities will enable more women to progress in their careers and achieve senior roles; helping all employers and Government realise their ambition to reduce the gender pay gap and to achieve improved gender balance.

THE BALANCING ACT



WHY DO ORGANISATIONS NEED TO CARE ABOUT CARING?

Equal Lives shows that caring responsibilities outside of work impact how engaged employees are at work, their ability to progress and impetus to leave, as well as relationships within teams at work.

It suggests that if employers are to create healthy and productive workplace cultures they will need to recognise individual employee needs and aspirations outside of work; taking steps to reduce the gap between their employees' attitudes and the reality of day-to-day organisational behaviours.

Currently in the UK, nine in ten households with dependent children have working parents.ⁱ Helping parents to combine caring and work – in jobs that match their skills – is seen by HM Treasury as key to long-term UK productivity.ⁱⁱ

However, the findings of the Equal Lives research illustrate clearly that supporting carers in the workplace is not just about parents or enabling women's participation in the labour market. As the UK's population continues to live longer, often with illness or disability, it is estimated that one in nine people (6.5 million) are currently caring for someone who is older, disabled or seriously ill. Moreover, 42% of carers are men.^{iiiiv}

Lead or Main Role in Caring: Gender

Lead or main role in caring for children



Lead or main role in caring for adults

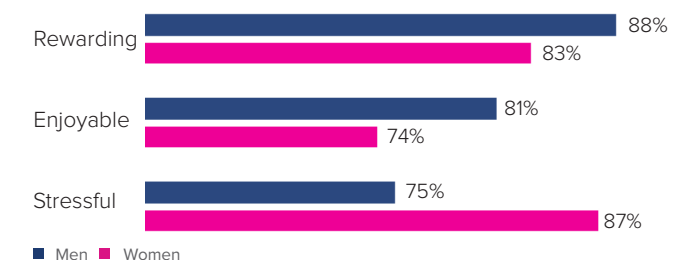


Who cares?

Equal Lives shows there are clear gender differences in who cares for adults versus children. In working families in the UK, women are eight times more likely to take the primary role in caring for children and are one and a half times more likely to take the lead in caring for adults.

Men are more likely than women to see their caring responsibilities as rewarding and enjoyable and are significantly less likely to describe them as stressful. Our research found that women are also more likely to be the primary carer than men, which suggests that having greater caring responsibilities is related to higher levels of stress.

Reward, Enjoyment and Stress of Caring Responsibilities: Men and Women



Currently, only 37% of men and women with caring responsibilities feel that they have the right balance between care and work, suggesting that nearly two-thirds believe they don't.

The findings confirm that men and women still play largely traditional roles, particularly when it comes to caring for children. This research found a clear contrast between the equality of attitude, belief and aspiration of both men and women, and the more unequal behaviours which are still prevalent in practice.

I need to be a good dad, I need to be good husband. I need to be a good son as well. And I need to be a productive employee. But if everybody's not signed up to that, it doesn't work.

Man with mixed caring responsibilities

Who wants to care?

Over nine in ten men believe it is equally acceptable for both women and men to take time out of work to care for their family. Many fathers view their family as their priority and work as secondary, whilst the majority of women do not feel men should have to be the breadwinner.^v

Crucially, men want to do more – over half (56%) would like to be more involved in their caring responsibilities. Men under 35 are significantly more likely than older groups to want to do more when it comes to caring.

Men also expect their employer to support them in that choice – 81% of men believe their organisation should provide considerable support for people who have to look after children or dependent adults.

Does experience match expectation for carers?

Caring for Adults

One in four UK adults will experience 'sandwich caring' at some point in their lives – a caring responsibility for both a dependent child and adult.^{vii} This has long been the case, but the demographic of dependents has shifted as societal and economic factors have supported people to live longer. Caring for older parents, partners or relatives is therefore becoming increasingly common.

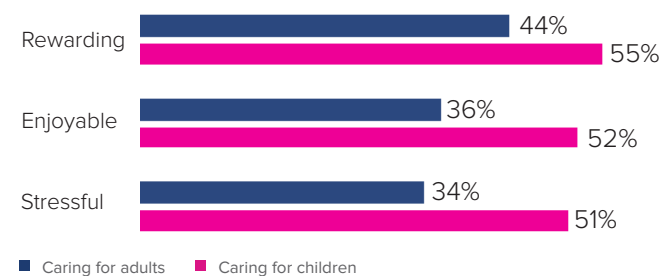
Caring for dependent adults presents different challenges than caring for children – with carers often citing the additional unpredictability posed by a variety of social, physical, medical or other needs.

51%

of respondents who are caring for dependent adults intend to leave their current organisation in the near future.

Those caring for adults or with mixed caring responsibilities, report feeling greater financial pressures and lower satisfaction with their mental and physical health.

Satisfaction with financial situation and health: Type of caring responsibility



Employees report that caring for adults is more complicated, unpredictable and less understood or empathised with in the workplace. Overall, there is seen to be less visibility for carers of adults and, often, less support from policies and managers. More employees caring for adults feel that their organisation expects everyone to put work before family commitments and fewer think that their organisation ensures that employees with care responsibilities have the opportunity to progress.^{viii}

I started in a new role just before my mother became dependent. I haven't been honest, as I don't want to be labelled flaky in my new team.

Man with adult caring responsibilities

Discussing responsibilities and demands outside of work with their line manager and joining an internal employee network are more important amongst employees caring for adults than those caring for children.

What would make the most difference? If caring for ageing parents was given the same status as caring for children.

Woman with mixed caring responsibilities

IMPACT STORY

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: PAID CARERS' LEAVE

Centrica's Carers' Leave Policy allows individuals to match their annual leave entitlement with Paid Carers' Leave of up to 30 days. This allows employees to juggle their annual leave, work and care responsibilities in a way that works for them. On average, Centrica employees with caring responsibilities take just over three days of 'paid, matched carers leave' each year. This designated leave aims to help employees meet their caring commitments and maintain an active career.

Caring for children

There is very little difference in attitude between men and women regarding how involved men

should be in childcare. The vast majority of men and women believe that both should be involved in caring responsibilities, with 86% of employees agreeing men should be as involved in all aspects of childcare as women.

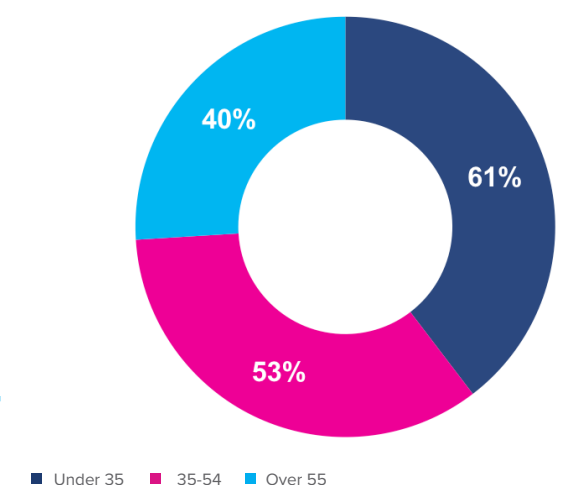
x2

more men than women with caring responsibilities believe their organisation expects them to put work above family commitments

More significantly perhaps for employers, 84% of employees feel that women are not necessarily better placed to take the lead on home and family responsibilities.

The research confirms that fathers feel strongly about being physically present in their children's lives; wanting to be daily role models, as opposed to 'weekend fathers'. However, fathers talked about difficulties in achieving the right balance for themselves, their partner and their employer.

Prefer to be more involved in caring: Age



Under 35 35-54 Over 55

Many wanted to be more involved in parenting but were not sure how to go about this, and felt they lacked the time and resource to learn and develop these skills.

The insight of many mothers and same-sex parents gathered during this research, suggests that the time spent caring is critical when building a feeling of confidence in caring.

For example, mothers noted that extended maternity leave strengthened their bond as they became more familiar with their baby's needs and routines, often further excluding fathers.

Similarly, same-sex parents stressed the important role of routine and continuous engagement as critical to growing in confidence and competence, rather than this being a gender predisposition.

Recent research also shows that the habits that are created in the first year of parenthood set up a pattern of care-giving that persists two years later.^{ix}

This suggests that if fathers are to become more involved in their children's upbringing and take on a greater share of childcare responsibilities, employers need to improve the parental leave entitlements for fathers during a child's first year. In turn, two in three employees agree that if employers support men to care at home, this will help women with caring responsibilities to remain and progress in the workplace.

However, the gap between attitudes towards caring and actual allocation of caring responsibilities on a day-to-day basis, reveals that there are still significant barriers to be overcome before employees can make a real choice over how caring responsibilities are shared between individuals, and balanced with work.

Overall, there seems to be greater expectation on women than men to give up work for care. Whilst nearly one in three men report that they

31% of men and 9% of women

feel that a man's main role is to provide money and resources for his family.

still feel the pressure to be the breadwinner, women feel much less strongly that it is a man's main role. However, in practice, couples often report that 'it made sense' for the division of care to be split along more traditional lines.

As a result, women are more likely than men to change their work schedule, change their role or change their line of work, to help balance their work and caring responsibilities.^x Twice as many women say they stopped working altogether to help to balance work and care responsibilities.^{xi}

These findings correlate with research from both the TUC and Fawcett Society which shows that women are more likely to take career breaks, be underemployed,^{xii} work part-time, or work in 'family-friendly' sectors or casualised forms of employment which are typically lower paid, with fewer career progression opportunities.^{xiii}

Costs of care are an important factor when deciding the division of care. Childcare costs in the UK are amongst the highest in the world – equivalent to 41% of a family's income.^{xiv} This research found that both men and women felt that, therefore, it sometimes worked out better financially for the mother to work part-time or leave her job. Often this decision was made after couples realised the costs of childcare – having planned previously for the mother to return to work.

Amongst these considerations is also, of course, a physical rationale in the early stages for mothers to take on primary childcare responsibilities for children, if recovering from the birth or breastfeeding. However, this does not explain why this uneven division of care continues later on.

When my wife was talking about taking 9 months off, there was a lot of people judging - why didn't you take the full year? Why is it only 9 months?

Man with caring responsibilities, main earner

Women also say they are often judged on their choices between childcare and employment responsibilities, and whether they are returning to work too early. Certainly, this research shows that when returning to work, women with childcare responsibilities are likely to express guilt about being 'a good mother'.

I put her in nursery. Now I feel like they've taught her things, or her personality is being built by somebody else. So, I feel like she's not as much part of me.

Woman with caring responsibilities, main earner

Many men also experience and express guilt with regards to their caring responsibilities but this manifests in a different way to women. Generally, men feel guilty for the additional pressure they feel they are placing on colleagues if they take time off to care. They fear colleagues would suffer an increased workload, and would consequently feel resentful towards them. This trend points towards a trade-off that is clearly not

working – men feeling guilty about caring and women feeling guilty about working. Interestingly, there is less inequality in expectation between men and women when caring for adults. While women are slightly more likely to take the lead or main role, there seem to be significantly fewer societal expectations attached and, as a consequence, more men play an active role in caring for adults. This will become increasingly relevant to employers as the number of carers in their workforce increase.

Same-sex couples

Discussions and interviews with same-sex couples, as part of this research, provide valuable insights into the impact of societal norms and expectations of gender roles within heterosexual couples.

We found that for same-sex couples, the decision process for how to balance work and caring responsibilities is less influenced by wider societal factors and determined more by personal choice and circumstance.

For example, men in same-sex couples feel they can decide their carer roles, and as a result, seem to balance work and care more equally from the start. There seems to be less concern of 'depriving their partner' by encroaching on the time they wanted to take off – a common reason for playing a lesser caring role cited by heterosexual men.

This distinction suggests that when there are no preconceived gender roles, caring responsibilities are shared more equally – providing opportunity for both carers to develop their skillsets and relationships in the home and at work.

It's nothing really based around gender and tradition of roles... it's just really practicalities.
Father in a same-sex relationship

Unequal influence on progression

One of the main barriers to men taking a greater share of caring responsibilities is concern that it may affect their career progression. This belief may originate in the fact that over half (55%) of heterosexual men feel the demands of their own job has adversely affected the career of partners who have taken on the primary responsibility of care.

x3
More women than men feel that their partner's work affects their careers as they take on a greater share of care.^{xv}

Couples report making choices together which knowingly impact the woman's career progression. Pre-existing differences in wages between men and women mean there is often a financial motive for women to take a career break after a child is born or when an adult dependent requires care – exacerbating gender differences still further and ensuring career sacrifices are disproportionately made by women.

The gender pay gap does not exist solely because women take on the majority of caring responsibilities, but does increase significantly when there are children in the family. This gap is greater when there is more than one child. It is an accepted truth for both men and women:

if men were more involved in caring, women could progress further in their careers.^{xvi}

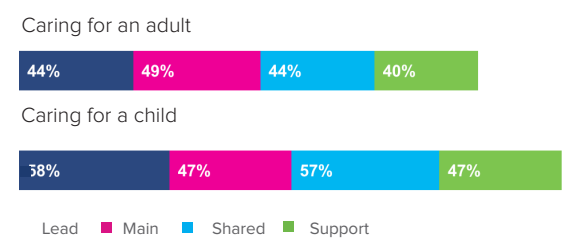
Intention to leave

Whilst nearly half of employees said they intend to leave their organisation in the next few years, this figure is higher amongst all those looking after dependent adults, those who feel they spend too little time with their family, and men who want to be more involved in caring.^{xvii}

1 in 6
men report that they have changed their role within the current organisation or moved to a different organisation to help balance work and caring responsibilities

Over half (58%) of men who take a lead role in caring for dependent adults say they wish to leave their current organisation. Given both the number of dependent adults and the proportion of men wanting to be more involved in caring is rising, addressing these trends is essential for employers to attract and retain talent.

Men looking to leave their organisation: Role in caring



CULTURE AND POLICIES: FROM BARRIERS TO ENABLERS

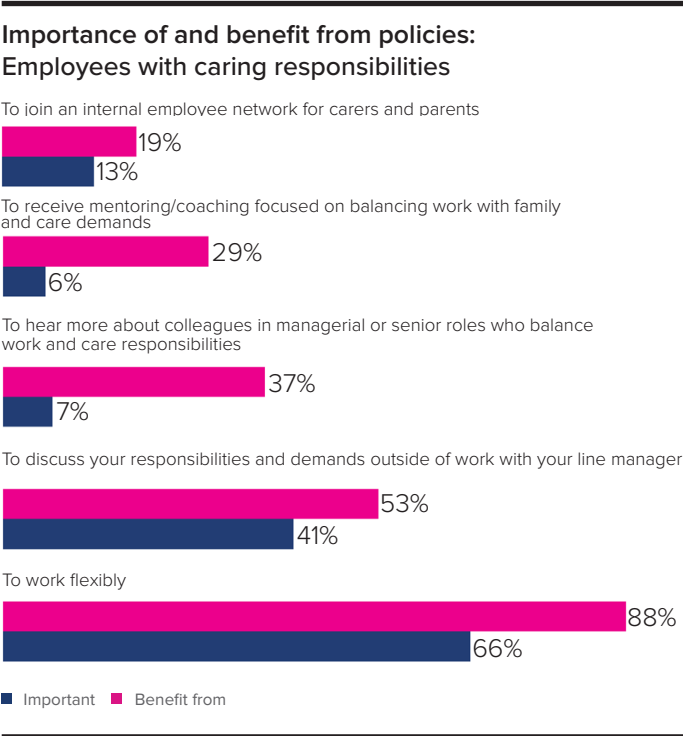
Over the last two decades, employers have increasingly adapted to the fact that a supported, healthy and happy workforce is more engaged and productive. However, the findings of the Equal Lives research on both attitudes and behaviours reveal there is more to be done to support those struggling to balance work and caring responsibilities.

In addition to expanding our knowledge on men and caring responsibilities, Equal Lives also aims to understand their needs and gather insights on effective solutions. It also provides analysis and insights on the two key pillars of family-friendly policy in the UK – Flexible Working and Shared Parental Leave.

83% of men with caring responsibilities believe that organisations should provide considerable support for employees who look after children or dependent adults but only 43% believe their employer does this

A number of organisations already provide policies to help employees balance work and care. These include flexible working around time and location; leave for parents and carers – both planned or in an emergency; career support, such as mentoring and coaching; and line manager training and advice.

However, this research found a notable disconnect between the policies that are available, the policies men and women are currently using, and the policies which they value. For example, 37% of employees with caring responsibilities feel it’s important to see and hear about senior managers balancing work and caring responsibilities, yet only 7% feel they have done so.



The ability to work from home is valued by employees with caring responsibilities and is utilised equally by men and women.

However, fewer men than women take-up other family-friendly policies, and more women than men feel they benefit from these policies as a whole. Indeed, one in five women feel they reap the benefit from an employee network, compared to one in ten men.

Our research shows that the reasons for this include wider societal and cultural pressures along with specific internal barriers; such as the role played by line managers. Whilst flexible working policies and Shared Parental Leave are designed to overcome some of these barriers, they are not currently being communicated effectively by many organisations and are consequently not being utilised widely.

IMPACT STORY

Enabling men to balance care

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: TIME OUT

Deloitte’s Time Out scheme enables employees to take a four-week block of unpaid leave in addition to their holiday entitlement to achieve a better balance between their career and personal commitments. Time Out can be taken every year, at a time which suits both the individual and the business. Although it is unpaid, benefit allowances are ongoing during these periods of leave. Introduced in 2014, Time Out has proved popular across the organisation – with over 700 employees so far benefitting from the initiative.



Introducing family-friendly policies is just the beginning. If organisations want to attract and retain talent, they need to consider how their organisational culture is impacting men; particularly those with caring responsibilities. This research found that men with caring responsibilities are much less satisfied with their health, wellbeing and financial security than those without.^{xviii}

This is particularly important in the context of evidence which demonstrates that men are likely to under-report how they are feeling,^{xix} and that both organisations and the wider public currently expect little change in men’s workplace behaviour or attitudes when they have children or take on care for dependent adults.

When the twins were born, there was a lot of support around my wife. I was working very hard, it was full on at home and I was probably depressed when I look back. But nobody would even have asked me if I was alright.

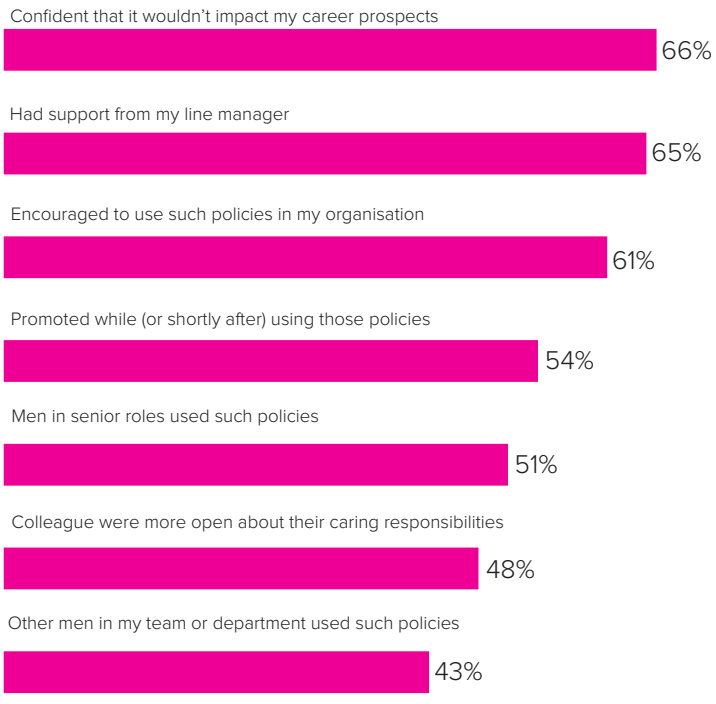
Father

Despite feeling they spend too little time with their family,^{xx} men are warier of taking up policies on offer and find them more geared towards, designed for, and expected to be taken up by, women.

Single fathers are particularly vocal about the fact that many policies are targeted to women, describing having to fight to access their rights. In fact, research from the Fawcett Society finds that fathers are twice as likely as mothers to have requests for flexible working turned down.^{xxi}

2 in 3 men said they would be encouraged to use family-friendly policies if they were confident it would not impact their career

Organisational practices that would encourage men to use more family-friendly policies



Men also report feeling the need to explain policies to their line managers, rather than the other way around. Despite support from HR, fathers in same-sex relationships spoke about the assistance they needed to give HR to interpret policies such as adoption leave.

This research found that the most important factor for men in using family-friendly policies was having the confidence that these would not impact their career prospects. To alleviate these concerns, men would like to see more men in senior roles using such policies, and evidence that promotion prospects will not be hampered.

This would be particularly beneficial to those caring for dependent adults, as there is seen to be less visibility of these responsibilities by those in senior roles.

IMPACT STORY

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: PROMOTING SUPPORT

Santander UK's 'Becoming a Parent' toolkit unites all relevant policies for parents in one place. It provides a checklist of practical support, gives guidance to the line manager and signposts employees to the Parents and Carers network, in order to ensure everyone receives the support they need. It brings together useful information with clear pointers for employees on what to do, by when. To develop the toolkit, Santander UK used their employee-led networks to engage families and individuals who had chosen to adopt or foster, or had gone through IVF, pregnancy, maternity and paternity; ensuring they represented a true diversity of perspectives from their employees.

Enablers and barriers – the role of the line manager

Line Managers are one of the most important enablers in an organisation but are currently inconsistent in their support, according to our research.

Two in three men with caring responsibilities feel that they would be more likely to take up family-friendly policies if they had the support of their line manager. However, only 37% men and 44% of women with caring responsibilities currently discuss their responsibilities outside of work with their line manager. The degree of support employees receive to their first request affects their willingness to make further or additional requests. When line managers are supportive, men are more likely to feel comfortable requesting and using further policies.

This research shows that line managers themselves need more organisational guidance. Many are unaware of their bias and inability to provide consistent support.

While, 93% of line managers feel that they are confident in encouraging agile and flexible working where possible, employees report line managers lacking both awareness of what is possible, and the understanding to implement and tailor policies appropriately.

According to this research, the quality of support from line managers often relies on their personal experience of caring responsibilities. Line managers without caring responsibilities are less likely to value or encourage flexible working, or believe that balancing care and work affects career progression. This belief leads to inconsistent behaviour towards individual employees.

I'm certainly more tolerant of requests than I was a few years ago. Now I have a greater appreciation of the different bonds people have in their life.

Male line manager

Overall, men feel that line managers do not recognise or accommodate their caring responsibilities on a par with female employees. Of course, personal experiences vary significantly. Many fathers in same-sex relationships felt their line managers and HR worked hard to accommodate their parenting needs, although some felt this may be driven by a sense of 'political correctness'. Meanwhile, many heterosexual fathers reported that they received comparatively little support and guidance.

Line Managers

Have received training/advice on how to better support employees who need to balance work and care responsibilities



Encourage agile and flexible working where possible



Feel confident responding to the needs of employees with caring responsibilities



My manager needs to stop assuming that men do not have the primary responsibilities for caring for children and treat staff equally.

Father

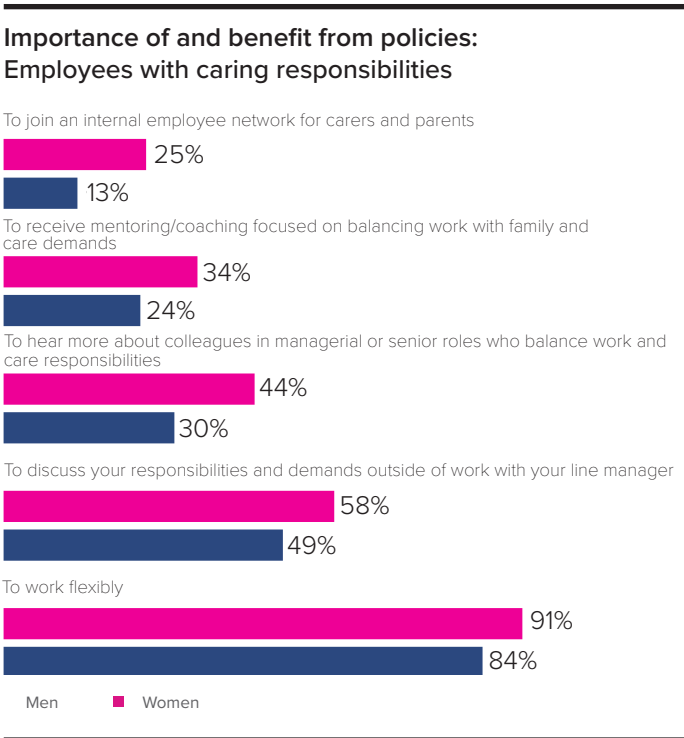
The inconsistency of support provided by line managers is partly down to lack of training. While confidence is high, only one in three line managers have had any training on the broad and changing spectrum of policies available to employees. In-depth and ongoing training is required in order for line managers to provide consistent, unbiased, effective support to their employees.

IMPACT STORY

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: CIVIL SERVICE CARERS’ PASSPORT

A Civil Service-wide Carers’ Passport has been developed to support carers and their managers by documenting their caring responsibilities and flexible working arrangements. This tool is designed to minimise re-negotiation when employees change roles or when line managers leave their post. The Carers’ Passport includes information of an employee’s role within the organisation, and their personal caring responsibilities. As a live document, it prompts further conversations on an annual basis; checking whether circumstances have changed, and whether new flexibilities should be considered in order to combine caring and work.

84% of men with caring responsibilities feel it is important to be able to work flexibly, but only 59% feel they are able to.



Flexible Working

When provided with different options for family-friendly policies, the ability to work flexibly is seen as the most important to balance employment and care. Flexible working can enable employees to shift their work patterns or work from home, in order to accommodate other responsibilities such as caring.

Flexible working is seen as particularly important for lead carers of children, and those with responsibilities for dependent adults.

When I’m not travelling I can work from home almost as much as I want. If it wasn’t for that I would be trying to move jobs, so the agile working is keeping me in my job.

Man with caring responsibilities

Different types of flexible working appeal to different people. For example, men aged 35-55 value working from home more than their older male colleagues. Overall, men based in London value working from home more than elsewhere in the country; keen to reduce commuting times and increase time with their families.

Some men stated that the ability to work from home increases their loyalty to their employer; others told us they remain in post rather than seeking promotion elsewhere because of the balance they can achieve with their current employer.

In the public sector, 77% of men report that they can work flexibly, compared to 68% of men in the private sector. Men in the public sector are also more likely to say they are able to discuss caring responsibilities with their line manager.

I think the big difference now is that I can do a lot of my work remotely. So my work is output-focused. You don’t need to be in a physical location a lot of the time...so I’m kind of never off.

Man with caring responsibilities

Women are more likely to have adapted their way of working with flexible working than men (83% and 70% respectively). This gap seems to be driven by a lack of awareness of the possibilities by both line managers and male employees, or confidence among men to enquire.

This research found that three in five respondents do not rely on a wider network to provide additional support and flexibility. Employers therefore risk isolating and losing employees by assuming others can share the load. This is particularly challenging for single parents who might not have a partner willing to assist, or those who don’t have financial resources to pay for extra support.

Part of the problem is a perceived culture of presenteeism, which impacts on employees’ ability to work flexibly to accommodate caring. Men frequently cite long working hours and working above and beyond what they are contracted to do, in order to get the job done.

This ‘always on’ culture interferes with work-life balance and adds additional strain when trying to balance being a good employee, a good parent and/or a good carer. This is true for employees across both the public and private sectors, and for women as well as men.

Some fathers had concerns that not being in the office as much as their colleagues would affect their professional reputation, regardless of company policy. As a result, they don’t feel

comfortable using family-friendly leave options or flexible working.

Working part-time is not always a fix, as many find this makes them more ‘invisible’ to their organisation. Men say that their lack of presence in a physical office environment means they are more likely to be passed up for promotion or interesting projects.

On the other hand, fathers who do work part-time value the extra time they can spend caring for their child or children and are less likely to believe that work interferes with their family and caring responsibilities.

Overall, flexible working is seen as a helpful policy which can provide support to those with caring responsibilities. It is seen as most effective where it is attached to outputs rather than hours and never-ending availability.

IMPACT STORY

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: JOB SHARING

At Aviva, two male employees have a shared role as Group Director of Sustainability & Public Policy; both deciding they wanted to spend more time with their children. Their manager was open to trialling the idea for an initial period of six months. It proved a success and was made permanent. Will and Sam each work three days a week and abide by their self-designed thirteen principles of their job share. They believe the ability to interpret flexible working in this way is an important way for organisations to hold on to talent. Their job share enables them to spend quality time with their children while young, whilst also maintaining a successful career.

IMPACT STORY

EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE: FLEXIBLE WORKING IN CLIENT-FACING ROLES

Capgemini UK’s Active Inclusion programme introduced a new approach to flexible working, overcoming the challenges associated with flexible working in client-facing roles. Emphasising the need to challenge the workforce and its clients rather than just introducing internal flexible working policies, Capgemini UK’s delivery director wrote a guide to enable client managers to have similar dialogues based on providing their clients with the best talent. Examples of senior leaders’ flexible working arrangements have been shared internally as part of wider internal communications showcasing what works. Overall, there has been a 16% increase in people offered flexible working, which has also translated into clients promoting flexible working in their own organisations too.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is designed to help equalise care between parents immediately after the birth of a child, reduce the impact of leave on women in heterosexual couples, and influence routines of care later on. Indeed, when fathers share early-life caring responsibilities, they are more likely to continue doing so.^{xxii} However, there has been little take-up of SPL since its introduction in 2015, with approximately 2% of new fathers choosing to exercise this right.^{xxiii}

Nevertheless, this research reveals that these policies do make a difference to how engaged men feel at work. Men who make use of policies like SPL report that they are more satisfied with their financial situation, mental health, and are slightly less likely to want to leave their organisation.

I think we both wanted to play a full part in our child’s life and have the opportunity to continue our careers. So, splitting it half way between us just seemed like a logical way to do it.

Man taking Shared Parental Leave

However, despite the intention of SPL to equalise caring responsibilities, some heterosexual men view the utilisation of this policy as a women’s prerogative regarding maternity leave as a whole.

Financial barriers and enablers

The key barrier to take-up of SPL is seen to be affordability; 37% of men say they could not afford to reduce their earnings, which rises to 48% among those under 35. This applies to bonuses as well as salaries – one in eleven men in the private sector cite this as a reason for not

I’ve had a few women say to me, ‘I wouldn’t give my partner any of my leave’. The wording of the policy is such that it feels like if men want to participate you have to persuade your partner to give you her leave.

Man with caring responsibilities

taking SPL. The question on whether bonuses are affected is a fairly complex area for both SPL and maternity pay, which adds to the financial barriers preventing take up.

Enhanced Shared Parental Leave can mitigate some of these financial barriers for employees, but it is offered by a limited number of organisations. According to the Women and Equalities Committee report on fathers in the workplace, public and voluntary sector organisations are more likely to enhance paternity pay provision than the private sector.^{xxv} While a trend to offer enhanced Shared Parental Pay is seen in some larger organisations, this is often restricted to the first few months post-birth, when the mother is also most likely to be on leave. This encourages both partners to care for the child at the same time, and could still disincentivise men from becoming the primary or equal caregiver.

Current organisational policies on enhanced Shared Parental Pay and Adoption Pay can be revised and made more flexible. For example, enabling parents to utilise SPL and adoption leave at any point within the first year after a child’s birth or adoption, with access to enhanced pay, is likely to increase uptake.

Workplace barriers: managers & colleagues

In the workplace, 17% of men cite superiors viewing SPL negatively as a barrier to taking-up the policy, coupled with guilt for burdening other colleagues with their work. Men also question the potential impact on their future progression as a reason for not taking it up.

Line managers clearly face challenges in implementing and supporting family-friendly policies such as SPL and have clear preferences for some policies over others, whilst, the ability to accommodate requests depends on the job role and capacity of the organisation.

Aside from affordability and perceived workplace stigma, decisions are also driven by personal and individual considerations. Over a quarter (29%) of men said their partner wanted to take the full amount of entitled leave. Some men cited the preference of women to take the lead role and did not want to encroach on the time they wished to take off. Many heterosexual fathers felt mothers have a natural bond with children, and their presence was therefore more important in early years' development.

SPL and the Gender Pay Gap

Research from Scandinavia demonstrates that SPL and subsidised childcare can contribute to decreasing the gender pay gap. National parental leave policies in Sweden and Norway are considered highly effective - with high wage replacement when an employee is on leave, flexible leave arrangements and designated leave for fathers. A Swedish study revealed that a mother's future earnings increased on average 7% for every month the father takes leave.^{xxvi}

IMPACT STORY

**EQUAL LIVES IN PRACTICE:
SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE**

Accenture's Shared Parental Leave policy offers equalised 32-week fully paid parental leave to all employees - equal to its maternity provision. Accenture have shared stories of its positive experiences to promote the policy, as well as providing added support for both parents and line managers. Through this policy, Accenture aim to encourage men to play a more active role in childcare at home and to engage their male workforce in the opportunities and challenges of taking a primary child caring role, at the same time allowing a greater level of support for working mothers.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Equal Lives provides a significant new body of insights into the needs of all employees with caring responsibilities.

For the first time, the needs of men in caring roles are identified and articulated – both in terms of their aspirations in relation to the role they want to play within their families, and what they need from employers in order to achieve this.

This research reveals significant challenges and barriers to equality at home and at work, whilst providing positive insights into what can be done to support those with caring responsibilities. Many organisations have already introduced policies and practices which have led to positive outcomes. Together, these have been used to develop the following set of recommendations for all employers and for Government.

Recommendations for Employers:

Be Pro-Active:

- **Introduce family-friendly policies** that are aimed at men, women, and those caring for dependent adults as well as children.
- **Review, amend and relaunch** policies to encourage changes in culture regarding all varieties of flexible working. Allow teams and individuals to tailor flexibility and mobility to suit their own needs.
- **Showcase positive male and female role models** and communicate stories of how and when these policies have helped to balance work and care across your organisations.
- **Encourage leaders** to be open and honest about their own experiences. Examples of senior role models can illustrate that it's not a hindrance on progression.

- **Evidence career progression** and attrition rates for those with caring responsibilities by measuring and monitoring data on carers, policy requests and approvals.
- **Introduce a Carers' Passport** which highlights employee needs and agreed solutions.
- **Publish information** on parental leave, carers' leave and pay arrangements to attract a more diverse workforce.

Responsible Flexible Working:

- **Implement flexible working** into all job roles, at all levels, unless there is a clear reason why a job cannot be done flexibly. Ensure this is regulated across the organisation.
- **Set up a network of 'Flexible Working Champions'** to build up knowledge and expertise for employees with caring responsibilities, offering coaching and support for staff and managers.
- **Encourage a culture focussed on outputs** not inputs and ensure flexible working is a team approach; reducing the need to work beyond contracted hours.
- **Monitor the take-up of flexible working**, including by gender and type of caring responsibility.

Empower Line Managers:

- **Train line managers** in policies, practices, and how they can be implemented within different departments of the organisation.
- **Provide regular support and advice** so line managers are able to support staff and feel

comfortable having sensitive conversations.

- **Showcase managers** who create agile teams and highlight the business benefits.

- **Change the onus** – to line managers providing a business case for declining requests for flexible working, rather than on the applicant to justify requests.

Shared Parental and Carers Leave:

- **Allow emergency provision and bereavement policies** so that employees can respond to care emergencies or make alternative arrangements.
- **Offer paid leave for carers** (in hours). Even a small amount of paid leave could make a big difference.
- **Implement the Shared Parental Leave package with pay**, if an organisation can offer an enhanced Shared Parental Leave package, implement with pay equivalent to maternity leave and communicate it widely.
- **Make sure Shared Parental Leave can be taken at any point and simultaneously** within the first year so men and women are equally able to remain visible across the organisation during time off.

Recommendations for Government:

Increase access to flexible working:

- **Make offering flexible working from day one a statutory right** so that all employees have the right to request flexible working from the start of the job. Flexible working legislation stipulates that all employees can make a statutory application for flexible working, but only after working for the same employer for at least 26 weeks. Flexible working should be made a 'day one'

statutory right. Government should encourage organisations to see flexibility as the norm, rather than the exception.

Improve Shared Parental Leave:

- **Introduce a quota system for Shared Parental Leave similar to the Swedish model** where a portion of leave time is allocated to partners, which will result in a loss of paid leave if they don't use it. The Shared Parental Leave policy highlights the fact that men and women are equally responsible and capable of caring for their children. However, men are not taking Shared Parental Leave for financial reasons. Government support of a quota would encourage men in the UK to feel they can take the leave to which they are entitled.
- **Incentivise organisations to offer enhanced Shared Parental Leave.** Consider different options, such as tax incentives, for employers to provide more financial support to parents to share this time off. There are examples of best practice from organisations pioneering this offer, and the current Shared Parental Leave legislation is having a positive impact. However, organisations don't always feel financially motivated to take this further. Government can encourage organisations to bring SPL in line with their maternity leave policies.

Collaborate:

- **Carry on the conversation about carers and parents with businesses.** UK plc's creative power is unique: Government should work with responsible businesses to ensure that the country continues to lead the way on innovative working practices. Continue the dialogue with businesses and use examples of best practice to better encourage organisations to support carers and parents.

GLOSSARY

Agile working:

Agile working gives employees more autonomy over where, when and/or how they complete their work, so that the business can maximise results and productivity.

Agile working comprises a range of different working styles and working environments which are intended to increase productivity, innovation and commitment to the organisation.

- Working patterns and hours are fluid, not rigid, and do not necessarily need to be written into contracts or formalised.
- Autonomy is given to employees on rotas, so that they can organise their own working hours or shifts between them.
- Technology and hot desking enables people to move around and work from different places.
- Communication with colleagues and customers is possible from home or other remote locations

Caring:

Caring involves providing care and support to people that is not part of a paid job. Caring can include: helping a person with shopping, preparing their meals and feeding, doing household chores, filling in forms, managing money, dressing and washing, attending appointments, as well as providing emotional support.

Caring responsibilities:

A responsibility to care for another person, who is dependent on them – this can be a child or an adult.

Lead carer or parent:

A carer or parent who looks after a dependent themselves with little or no support from anyone else.

Main carer or parent:

A carer or parent who takes the lead role for caring with some support from their partner or others (e.g. ex-partner, family, child minder, nursery).

Mixed responsibilities:

Caring responsibilities for both a child/children and an adult/adults.

Nuclear family:

A traditional social unit of a heterosexual couple with children.

Family-friendly policies:

Policies introduced by organisations to support employees balancing work and caring responsibilities.

Flexible working:

The Government definition of flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee’s needs, e.g. having flexible start and finish times, or working from home. Employees must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks to be eligible.^{xxvii}

Shared Parental Leave:

A legal entitlement for eligible parents of babies born, or children placed for adoption, on or after 5 April 2015. It provides both parents with the opportunity to consider the best arrangement to care for their child during the child’s first year.

Government stipulates that couples can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them. They need to share the pay and annual leave in the first year after their child is born or placed with their family.

Couples can use SPL to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work or take it all in one go. They can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.^{xxviii}

SURVEY RESPONDENTS’ PROFILE

Where total responses on a question do not add up to 100%, this may be due to multi-coding or rounding to whole figures.

| Gender | |
|-------------------|------|
| Male | 57% |
| Female | 42% |
| Other | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 1% |
| Total | 100% |

| Type of caring responsibilities | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Children | 61% |
| Adult | 14% |
| Mixed responsibilities | 11% |
| No caring responsibilities | 15% |
| Total | 101% |

| Age Group | |
|-----------|-----|
| 18-24 | 2% |
| 25-34 | 18% |
| 35-44 | 38% |
| 45-54 | 29% |
| Over 55 | 11% |
| Total | 98% |

| Work Status | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Employed full time | 79% |
| Employed part time | 19% |
| Self-employed | 1% |
| Total | 99% |

| Location | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| East Midlands | 5% |
| East of England | 5% |
| London | 21% |
| Northern Ireland | 3% |
| North East England | 4% |
| North West England | 9% |
| Scotland | 11% |
| South East | 19% |
| South West | 8% |
| West Midlands | 5% |
| Wales | 3% |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 5% |
| Outside of UK | 1% |
| Total | 99% |

| <i>Ethnicity</i> | |
|---|------------|
| White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | 78% |
| White: Irish | 3% |
| White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0% |
| White: Other white | 6% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean | 0% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African | 0% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian | 1% |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other mixed | 1% |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 3% |
| Asian/Asian British: Pakistani | 1% |
| Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi | 0% |
| Asian/Asian British: Chinese | 0% |
| Asian/Asian British: Other Asian | 1% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African | 1% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean | 1% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black | 0% |
| Other ethnic group: Arab | 0% |
| Other ethnic group: Any Other ethnic group | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 3% |
| Total | 99% |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Other ethnic group: Arab | 0% |
| Other ethnic group: Any Other ethnic group | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 3% |
| Total | 99% |

| <i>Sexual orientation</i> | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Bisexual | 1% |
| Gay Man | 2% |
| Gay Women/ Lesbian | 0% |
| Heterosexual/ straight | 87% |
| Other | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 5% |
| Total | 95% |

| <i>Sector</i> | |
|---|------------|
| Private sector firm or company (e.g. limited companies and PLC) | 60% |
| Public sector employer (e.g. NHS, police) | 33% |
| Charity/voluntary sector | 1% |
| Other | 2% |
| Prefer not to say | 1% |
| Total | 97% |

| <i>Industry</i> | |
|---|-------------|
| Manufacturing | 2% |
| Construction | 3% |
| Retail | 3% |
| Financial services | 21% |
| Hospitality and leisure | 1% |
| Accountancy | 2% |
| Legal | 4% |
| IT & telecoms | 15% |
| Media/ marketing/ advertising/ PR & sales | 5% |
| Medical & health services | 1% |
| Education | 2% |
| Transportation & distribution | 4% |
| Property | 1% |
| Other | 27% |
| Professional services | 10% |
| Total | 101% |

METHODOLOGY

The Equal Lives research, in partnership with Santander UK, was conducted by the independent research agency, Avenir Consulting Ltd, consisting of specialist academics in this area.

Following a comprehensive literature review, the Equal Lives fieldwork took place between February and May 2018. The qualitative phase comprised nine focus groups in London and Manchester, six in-depth interviews of male line managers who also had caring responsibilities, and a detailed case study analysis of a large UK organisation, which included 19 semi-structured interviews. Specific focus groups were conducted with both male and female main earners and carers, same-sex fathers, men who took Shared Parental Leave and single fathers. This organisation was selected because it had family-friendly policies in place but take-up was low. In total, there were 82 people interviewed. All interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically. Avenir Consulting also conducted two action-based research groups with employers from the private and public sector. These included discussions with HR and Diversity & Inclusion professionals to discover best practice and examples of what works well in their organisations.

This was followed by an online quantitative study which was primarily targeted at working men over 18 years with caring responsibilities. Two control groups were also surveyed: men without caring responsibilities and women with caring responsibilities. A total of 10,225 participants completed the survey, which included responses from some BITC partner organisations who received unique links to the survey. Responses also came directly, driven by its profile, through social media and other partners such as charities. This approach means that while this offers an extraordinary insight, data cannot be claimed to be

representative of the UK employee population.

This study is limited by an emphasis on people’s interpretations of how their partner feels about decisions over work and care. Although there are women’s views drawn from focus group data, we did not speak to any women who had changed careers or left employment entirely to care for their families. An over-representation of employees working professional roles for large organisations may have influenced the research.

- The research focused on the following questions:
1. What are men’s attitudes and behaviour regarding paid work and care work?
 2. What factors influence men’s desire to become more engaged in caring responsibilities?
 3. To what extent would the perception of “balance” and “fairness” be enhanced by men playing a more active role in care?
 4. What policies have been shown to be effective in supporting men in successfully combining paid work and care work?
 5. Why are policies and practices designed to support male caring and gender equality not taken up by men?
 6. What is the impact of men’s work choices on their partner’s careers?

The Equal Lives research was conducted by Avenir Consulting Ltd, consisting of:

- Nadia Nagamootoo – Director, Avenir Consulting
- Dr Laura Radcliffe – University of Liverpool
- Dr Simon Walne – Imperial College London
- Dr Claire Hardy
- Anneke Schaefer – University of Liverpool

- Daniella Mokhtar – University of Sheffield
- Daniel Godsall – WOMBA Group
- Victoria Nowak

BITC was supported in managing the research and writing the report by Charlotte Turner, Bean Research.

BITC also has rich data and insights into women at work. If you would like to find out more, please read the Project 28-40 report.

The Equal Lives report was launched in September 2018.



ENDNOTES

ⁱ Working and workless households in the UK: January to March 2017, ONS, 2017

ⁱⁱ Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation, HM Treasury, 2015

ⁱⁱⁱ Carers UK, 2018

^{iv} Business Case, Employers for Carers, 2013

^v 70% of women disagree that a man’s main role is to provide money and resources for his family. Equal Lives, 2018

^{vi} 56% of men would like to be more involved in caring – 56% of men under 35, 46% aged 35-55, and 29% of men over 55. Equal Lives, 2018

^{vii} Family Resources Survey 2015/16, DWP and ONS, 2017

^{viii} 26% of employees caring for adults and 28% with mixed responsibilities said their organisation expects everyone to put work before family commitments, compared to 22% caring for children. 31% of employees caring for adults and 28% with mixed responsibilities said their organisation ensures that employees with caring responsibilities have the opportunity to progress, compared to 22% caring for children. Equal Lives, 2018

^{ix} Which fathers are involved in looking after their children? Dr Helen Norman (PI), Professor Colette Fagan (Co-I), Professor Mark Elliot (Co-I), 2017

^x 83% of women changed their work schedule, compared to 70% of men; 24% of women changed their role within their current organisation or a different organisation, compared to 17% of men; 14% of women changed their line of work, compared to 11% of men. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xi} 9% of women said they stopped working to balance work and care responsibilities, compared to 4% of men. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xii} Women and Work, TUC, 2012

^{xiii} Parents, Work and Care: Striking the Balance, The Fawcett Society, 2016

^{xiv} Childcare Support, OECD, 2017

^{xv} 45% of female respondents agree that their partner’s work affects their career as they have to take on more of theburden of care compared to 17% of men. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xvi} The gender pay gap, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017

^{xvii} 44% of employees said they intend to leave their organisation in the near future. This was 50% for men who want to be more involved in caring; 51% of employees caring for adults; and 47% of people who said they spend too little time with their family. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xviii} 62% of men without caring responsibilities are satisfied with their financial situation, 58% with their physical health and 62% with their mental health; 54% of men with caring responsibilities are satisfied with their financial situation, 50% with their physical health and 50% with their mental health. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xix} Survey of people with lived experience of mental health problems reveals men less likely to seek medical support, Mental Health Foundation, 2016

^{xx} 57% of men with caring responsibilities feel they spend too much time at work; 64% of men with

caring responsibilities feel they spend too little time with their family. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xxi} Parents, Work and Care: striking the balance, The Fawcett Society, 2016

^{xxii} ‘What makes fathers involved? An exploration of the longitudinal influence of fathers’ and mothers’ employment on father’s involvement in looking after their pre-school children in the UK’ in Crespi, I., Ruspini, E. (ed): Balancing work and family in a changing society: the father’s perspective, Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, Fagan, C., Norman, H., 2016

^{xxiii} New ‘Share the joy’ campaign promotes shared parental leave rights for parents, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2018

^{xxiv} 48% of men under 35 years old said they did not take SPL as they could not afford to reduce their earnings. Equal Lives, 2018

^{xxv} Fathers and the workplace, House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2018

^{xxvi} The effect of own and spousal parental leave earnings, IFAU, 2010

^{xxvii} Flexible Working, GOV UK

^{xxviii} Shared Parental Leave and Pay, GOV UK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Business in the Community would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their involvement and support:

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|---|--|---|
| Dame Helena Morrissey DBE (Chair) Head of Personal Investing, Legal & General Group Plc | Vicky Wallis Chief HR Officer & Executive Committee Member, Santander UK | Mandy Beech Director Branch Network, Nationwide |
| Emma Codd Managing Partner for Talent, Deloitte LLP | Laura Hinton Executive Board, Chief People Officer, PwC | Leigh Lafever-Ayer HR Director UK and Ireland, Enterprise Rent-A-Car |
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| Jessica Chu Santander UK | Tuvia Borok The P3 Network | Prof Colette Fagan University of Manchester |
| Joanne Keatley & Clare Sandling Government Equalities Office | Dr Susan Milner University of Bath | Siobhan McKenna Greater London Authority |
| Sumi Rabindrakumar Gingerbread | Jonathan Swan Working Families | Dr Holly Birkett & Dr Sarah Forbes Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham |

Businesses committed to supporting Equal Lives

- BBC
- BT
- Paddy Power Betfair
- Royal Navy
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Inmarsat
- Vodafone
- LondonMetric Property
- Ministry of Justice
- OCS Group
- Standard Chartered

Finally, thank you to all of the staff within Santander UK, Business in the Community and others involved in this project for their tireless work and support.



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