

Almost a third of fathers lack access to flexible work arrangements

April 10 2018, by Tony Trueman

Almost a third of working fathers in the UK lack access to flexible work arrangements, new research says.

The British Sociological Association's annual conference in Newcastle heard today [Tuesday 10 April] that 30 percent of employed [fathers](#) surveyed could not work part-time, have flexible employment hours or work in a job share.

The rate for women without flexible working was lower –10 percent, the researchers, from the UCL Institute of Education, the University of East Anglia, and the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) found.

The researchers examined data on 3,965 mothers and 4,211 fathers who were in employment and had children aged 16 or younger. They found that:

- 42 percent of fathers and 78 percent of mothers had the opportunity to work part-time
- 19 percent of fathers and 31 percent of mothers had the opportunity to work in a job share
- 13 percent of fathers and 28 percent of mothers could work during term-time only
- 38 percent of fathers and 37 percent of mothers could work in a flexi-time arrangement
- 23 percent of fathers and 19 percent of mothers could work from home

- 30 percent of fathers and 10 percent of [mothers](#) reported that none of these options were available.

All staff who have worked for at least six months in a job have the right to ask for flexible working arrangements, and employers can only refuse if they have a good business reason.

Fathers in lower status occupations, in the private sector, and in non-unionized workplaces had less access to flexible working, compared to fathers in professional and managerial occupations, the public sector, and unionized workplaces.

The researchers were: Rose Cook and Professor Margaret O'Brien, of UCL Institute of Education; Professor Sara Connolly and Dr. Matthew Aldrich, of the University of East Anglia; and Dr. Svetlana Speight, of NatCen.

Ms Cook told the conference: "This research underscores both a striking lack of access among fathers in general, and that flexible working is not being made sufficiently available to all groups of working fathers.

"For fathers, both individual characteristics and features of workplaces are important in determining lack of access to flexible working.

"Fathers' lack of access to flexible working is associated with a combination of disadvantages relating to low education, lower status occupations, [private sector](#) employers and lack of union presence."

By analysing the data, the researchers found that fathers in technical occupations were almost three times more likely to lack access to [flexible working](#) than those in professional and managerial positions.

Provided by British Sociological Association

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