

Women doing more childcare under lockdown but men more likely to feel their jobs are suffering

July 1 2020



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Women in the UK are doing more childcare under lockdown—but men are more likely to say their caring or domestic responsibilities are

negatively impacting their paid jobs, according to new research by King's College London and Ipsos MORI.

While women (33%) and men (31%) are equally likely to say their caring and domestic responsibilities have increased since lockdown, female parents say they spend seven hours in an average weekday on childcare, compared with five hours for male parents.

Despite this, 43% of working fathers say their caring or domestic responsibilities are negatively impacting their ability to do their paid job by at least a fair amount, versus 32% of working mothers who say the same.

Overall, a quarter of all men in work, parents and non-parents (26%), say this is the case, compared with just under one in five working women (17%).

54% of working women say their responsibilities under lockdown haven't impacted their paid work at all, compared with 43% of working men. But there is little difference among working parents, with 31% of mothers and 27% of fathers saying there has been no impact.

Women are also more skeptical that the pandemic will lead to new ways of working: 49% of women in work think their work patterns will not change when their workplace is fully open again, compared with 39% of men.

The research is based on 2,254 interviews with UK residents aged 16-75, and was carried out online between 20 and 22 May 2020.

Coping with lockdown

Away from the world of work, there are indications that the pandemic

and lockdown are affecting women more:

- 37% of women vs 25% of men say they find coronavirus stressful.
- 53% of women have felt more anxious and depressed than usual, compared with 43% of men.
- Women (72%) are more likely than men (61%) to disagree that too much fuss is being made about the risk of coronavirus.

Community-minded behavior

While men and women report volunteering during the crisis at roughly the same rates, there are some differences in other behaviors:

- 69% of women say they've offered help to friends, family and neighbors during the pandemic, compared with 59% of men.
- Women are also more likely to have taken part in the weekly "Clap for Our Carers," with 70% reporting that they've done so, versus 59% of men.

Returning to normal

- 39% of women in work say they're comfortable returning to the workplace when allowed, while 49% of working men say the same.
- Although women and men who are parents are similarly likely to be comfortable sending their children back to school when it happens, 35% of women parents are very uncomfortable with the idea, compared with 25% of male parents.

Professor Rosie Campbell, director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London, said:

"Women have always done more childcare than men, and our survey reveals this is continuing under lockdown. Despite the pandemic putting home and work lives under strain, fathers don't appear to be helping out with the children more. But they do seem to be getting a bigger shock from having to balance their caring and domestic responsibilities with new ways of working—which may reflect the fact they are simply less used to combining both types of work. These findings also reveal that men and women have different concerns and responses to the uncertainties and disruptions we are currently facing, which to some extent reflects what we already know about the gendered division of labor and gendered patterns in mental health. Taking an optimistic view, this unexpected disruption of roles could be a catalyst for a more equitable sharing of paid and unpaid work. Less optimistically, women's greater vulnerability to stress and anxiety may be linked to the heightened economic and [social impacts](#) many are experiencing as a result of this crisis, as revealed by other research."

Kully Kaur-Ballagan, research director at Ipsos MORI, said:

"Our research confirms that women are once again bearing the brunt of the childcare, even in our locked down households. At the same time women are feeling more stress and anxiety during the lockdown. Childcare is one of the foundations of gender inequality, with the burden falling unduly on women and the [lockdown](#) is making that ever more clear. If men want to help in the fight for gender equality this research shows the hard work starts at home. Some men are taking on more responsibilities, which is positive, but it is sad that they are made to feel it is harming their work."

Technical details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a sample of 2,254 adults aged 16-75 in the UK, including 315 [women](#) who are parents or guardians and 272 men who are

[parents](#) or guardians, using its online i:omnibus between 20 and 22 May 2020. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age within gender, government office region, working status, social grade and education. All surveys are subject to a range of potential sources of error.

More information: Tracking UK Public Perception:
www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/aphic-ipsos-mori.pdf

Provided by King's College London

Citation: Women doing more childcare under lockdown but men more likely to feel their jobs are suffering (2020, July 1) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-07-women-childcare-lockdown-men-jobs.html>

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