



Government  
Equalities Office

# **Rapid evidence assessment: parents' decisions about returning to work and child caring responsibilities**

**Research review**

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## Executive Summary

The Government has committed to take action to close the gender pay gap. Its flagship policy, gender pay gap reporting, came into force in April 2017 and requires large employers to publish their gender pay data. Government also recognises the need to tackle the drivers of the gender pay gap, and is introducing policy changes to make it easier for men and women to balance the demands of work and family life. For example, the Women and Equalities Select Committee (2016) identified that caring responsibilities remain a significant barrier to women's pay and progression opportunities and as long as women take disproportionate responsibility for childcare, pay differentials will persist. To address these issues, initiatives such as the extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees (after 26 weeks service); tax free childcare; and free early education places for 3 and 4 year olds have been introduced (GEO, 2015). The same Select Committee (2016) also identified that sharing childcare between mothers and fathers was crucial to reducing the gender pay gap. While Shared Parental Leave (SPL) was designed to give parents more flexibility and more choice, this has yet to deliver substantial change.

To understand more about parents' decisions to return to work, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to undertake a rapid evidence assessment (REA) on this theme. The research was commissioned in December 2016 and reviewed literature published up to end of January 2017.

This research found that *the point in time* at which parents return to work, or wish to return to work is influenced by a range of factors, including, but not limited to, social attitudes, the age of the child or children, ethnicity, and the availability of maternity pay and maternity leave (section 2.1). Although there has been a change in social attitudes relating to mothers as primary care-givers, popular belief is that women should be available to their children in the pre-school phase. There is evidence that such highly gendered attitudes have a strong influence on decision-making, despite some variation by level of education and socio-economic status. However, even once the youngest child starts school, the prevailing view in society remains that women should work part-time as opposed to full-time (see Park et al., 2013).

A child's age, particularly in the case of low-income parents, is a significant influencing factor for when (or if) a parent returns to work (section 2.1.1). This effect has diminished over time although it is apparent that parents vary in their views on the optimum age at which to return: whether this occurs at the commencement of primary or secondary school, or the point at which a child can attend nursery for free. Low pay, lack of job/work flexibility and other child associated factors including health or behavioural problems with children, may all negatively affect the decision whether to return to work.

The availability and extent of parental leave is another important factor influencing the point in time at which parents decide to return to work (section 2.1.2). For example, the

provision of longer durations of paid maternity leave increase the probability of mothers remaining at home during the first year of their child's life, although maternity pay also increases the likelihood of women returning to work within a couple of months following the cessation of this pay. Unpaid maternity leave entitlements have also been shown to have a strong effect on women's decisions to return to work, and encourage women either to extend their time away, or conversely — if they had intended to remain at home longer — to shorten their leave in order to return to their previous job. Overall, the provision of support by employers, including policies such as enhanced parental leave rights, increase the likelihood of a parent returning to the same employer.

Whilst *the point at which* a parent returns to work is influenced by a number of factors, the reasons *why* parents return to work appears even more complex (section 2.2). These include factors noted by parents that are predominantly financial in nature, for example, with mothers who have high-earning partners less likely to return to work for financial reasons. However, mothers may also comment that they return to work sooner than they had wanted, out of fear of either losing their jobs or missing out on promotion opportunities (section 2.1: work characteristics). Other reasons for returning to work include deriving a sense of personal fulfilment from work, as well as finding work interesting, meaningful and providing aspects of personal identity, enjoyment, and social contacts outside of parenting (section 2.1: maternal identity).

When parents do return to work, there is a strong likelihood of returning to the same employer, though not necessarily to the same role, and once returned, mothers are less likely to return to, or be promoted to, senior roles than fathers (section 2.4.2). In addition, new mothers are most likely to move from full-time to part-time work compared with other groups of women, although there is some variation by occupation, and new mothers often cite part-time work as a means of maintaining a 'balance' between work and childcare (section 2.4.1). Moreover, a mother's age, the age of the youngest child and maternal educational attainment are all positively associated with *number* of days worked, whilst the number of dependent children is negatively associated with *hours worked* (section 2.4.2). Overall, career breaks appear to be more detrimental to women than men.

Parents use a variety of childcare arrangements that may be categorised as either formal or informal (section 2.5). Formal childcare arrangements include the use of nurseries, day-care and childminders (section 2.5.1), whilst informal arrangements involve parents drawing on their immediate and extended family (i.e. their own parents/grandparents) and broader social networks (friends/neighbours) to provide childcare (section 2.5.2). In cases where childcare is being provided by a parent, whether this is provided by the mother or father is strongly influenced by gendered attitudes favouring women as primary carers; although there is evidence such attitudes are diminishing over time, and those with higher levels of education and/or employed in higher level occupations are less likely to hold gendered attitudes (section 2.5.3). Other significant factors influencing childcare arrangements include parental income (section 2.5.1), which not only determines

whether formal childcare arrangements can be accessed, but also influences the quality and quantity of care.

Having a child offers up many complex decisions to be made by parents, and mapping the choice architecture helps clarify this complexity and promote understanding of the nature of factors affecting return to work decisions amongst parents (chapter 3). The evidence suggests that some parents will return to work when they would have preferred to stay at home, whilst others will stay at home when they would have preferred to return to work. This is a result of the variety of opportunities and constraints that need to be considered by parents as whether or not to return to work, such that some families will have several options available to them from which to choose, whilst the choices of others will be restricted by a mixture of circumstances and other characteristics.

# 1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief account of the context that led to the commissioning of this study, considering some key policy directives and their effect on parents' decision to return to work following the birth of a child and the associated effect on the gender pay gap.

## 1.1 Policy context – the gender pay gap

The Government has committed to take action to close the gender pay gap. Its flagship policy, gender pay gap reporting, came into force in April 2017 and requires large private, voluntary and public sector employers to publish their gender pay data. While transparency is key to driving changes in behaviour, Government also recognises the need to tackle the drivers of the gender pay gap, and is making changes to policy to make it easier for both men and women to balance the demands of work and family life.

Equal pay and the gender pay gap are both concerned with the 'disparity of pay women receive in the workplace' (EHRC, 2017). Equal pay demands that men and women in the same employment, performing equal work receive equal pay, whilst the gender pay gap is the difference between men and women's average earnings within an organisation or across the labour market, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings (Ibid.).

The UK's overall gender pay gap, or the difference between men and women's median hourly earnings, is 18.4% and progress in closing this gap has slowed in recent years (ONS, 2017a). The change in the pay gap is an important measure for understanding the impact of legislative and policy interventions aimed at reducing inequality between men and women (Hicks and Thomas, 2009). Many UK government interventions to date have targeted employers, for example, the launch of compulsory pay gap reporting for large organisations; the drive to increase the number of women on boards; and the increase in the National Minimum Wage (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). The latter should go some way to closing the gender pay gap at the bottom of the earnings distribution (Azmat, 2015) as women hold the majority of minimum wage jobs (over 60% of minimum wage workers in 2016 were female, see LPC, 2016).

However, as highlighted by the 2016 report on the gender pay gap by the Women and Equalities Select Committee, caring responsibilities remain a significant barrier to women's pay and progression opportunities, and as long as women take disproportionate responsibility for childcare, pay differentials will persist (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). Government policy has sought to address these barriers by attempting to support parents' return to work after having children through initiatives such as the extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees (after 26 weeks service); tax free childcare; and free early education places for 3 and 4 year olds (GEO, 2015).

The Women and Equalities Select Committee (2016) also identified that sharing childcare between mothers and fathers was key to reducing the gender pay gap. Research by the IFS (2016) indicates that the gender pay gap gradually widens in the years after the arrival of the first child and, by the time the first child is aged 12, women's hourly wages are a third below men's (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2016), due to women taking time out of paid employment. The Government's flagship policy to tackle this issue – Shared Parental Leave (SPL) – is designed to give parents more flexibility over childcare arrangements, more choice for women wishing to return to work, and enable both parents to retain a strong attachment to the labour market (BIS, 2013a). However, SPL has not yet delivered substantial change, with only 2-to-8% of fathers predicted to access the entitlement (BIS, 2013b).

In January 2017, the Women and Equalities Select Committee launched an inquiry into fathers and the workplace. This was in part informed by and coincided with findings from the Modern Families Index 2017, which showed that many fathers do not feel supported in the workplace to care for their children and are less comfortable requesting formal flexible working arrangements. The research further found that twice the number of fathers (as compared to mothers) believe that flexible working would have a negative impact on their career (Working Families, Bright Horizons, 2017).

The sharing of childcare responsibilities and parents' decisions about returning to work are not only equality issues but are also linked to economic and productivity concerns. Successive inquiries and reports (Wild, 2017) have shown that 'tackling the underlying causes of the gender pay gap can increase UK productivity, address skills shortages, and improve the performance of individual organisations' (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016).

### **1.1.1 Trends and patterns in employment**

#### **Changes over time in employment rates**

A 2013 bulletin by the ONS (ONS, 2013) on the theme of women's employment explored the position of women in the labour market at that time via the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey. These findings show increasing rates of employment amongst women with 67% of women aged between 16 and 64 in work in 2013, compared to 53% in 1971. The latest available labour market statistics (ONS, 2017) indicate this trend towards increasing levels of employment amongst women has continued with 70% of women aged 16-64, being in work in the period between October and December 2016. The rise in employment rates amongst women is in part due to an increasing proportion of mothers being in work. For example, in 1996<sup>1</sup>, 67% of women who were married or cohabiting and who had dependent children were in work compared to 72% by 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> The first point at which comparable records are available

Employment amongst lone mothers also increased in the same period from 43% to 60% (ONS, 2013).

This trend for women does not however also hold true for men; the rates of male employment fell over the same period (1971 to 2013) from 92% to 76%. Although, the October to December 2016 data (ONS, 2017) show an increase, male employment has not returned to former levels, and is now reported to be at 79.3%.

The rate of inactivity among men has also increased, which the ONS suggests might be accounted for by men taking earlier retirement, leaving work due to ill-health or taking a greater role in childcare (ONS, 2017).

Exploring the data in more detail, ONS figures from April to June 2013 show that 42% of women in work were employed part-time, compared to 12% of men. Rates of part-time work amongst women have fluctuated over the past 30 years between 42% and 45%. Where women were in full-time jobs, they worked slightly fewer hours than men (40 hours on average compared to of 44 hours per week on average for men).

### **The contribution of changes in labour market conditions**

The ONS suggests that a changing labour market may account at least in part for these changes, particularly in light of the gendered nature of work. The service sector has grown, potentially increasing opportunities for women, while the decline in the manufacturing sector has decreased opportunities for men. Changes to employment legislation throughout the period may equally have had an impact<sup>2</sup>.

### **Changes over the life course**

The ONS also highlight age-related dimensions to these trends. For example, the employment rate amongst men and women is broadly similar up until the age of 22. After this an employment gap opens which ONS suggest may indicate decisions by women to start a family and not work. The employment gap narrows again with age although does not close, suggesting that some, but not all women return to work once children are older.

It would seem that having children adversely affecting employment rates for women whilst the opposite appears to be the case for men. For men at all ages those with

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<sup>2</sup> Since the 1970s there have been several pieces of new legislation that may have impacted on the employment rate for women:

1970 Equal Pay Act – this prohibited any less favourable treatment between men and women in terms of pay

1975 Sex Discrimination Act – promoted equality and opportunity between men and women

1975 Employment Protection Act – made it illegal to sack a woman due to pregnancy and introduced statutory maternity provision

2008 Lone parent income support changes – conditions of eligibility for lone parent income support were changed

2010 increase in State Pension Age for women - women now retiring later than previously

children have higher rates of employment than those without, and this gap increases for men over 35 due to the negative effect of long term health conditions and disabilities (ONS, 2013). It is notable that the employment rates of men with children are very similar to those of women without children at all ages.

### **Spatial considerations**

There are also spatial dimensions to male and female employment rates; with above average rates of female employment being seen in East of England, South West and South East, and particularly low rates in Northern Ireland, London and North East (ONS, 2013). Examining geographic rates more closely, analysis suggests that the composition of local populations may have an effect as lower rates of employment are seen amongst women aged between 25-to-64<sup>3</sup> in areas with high density BME populations, such as Birmingham, Nottingham, Coventry and Leicester. This may reflect cultural and ethnic traditions in respect of women, childcare and/or work.

### **Relationship status**

There is also an employment gap between coupled and lone mothers (ONS, 2013), particularly when children are younger. For example, when the youngest child is aged three or younger, 39% of lone mothers work compared to 65% of coupled mothers. Once the youngest child is in primary school, this gap narrows to 13 percentage points with 74% of coupled mothers working compared to 61% of lone mothers. The gap narrows further as children get older. By the time the youngest child is aged between 11 and 18, this employment gap has reduced to 6% with 80% of coupled mothers working compared to 74% of lone mothers.

### **Career choices**

The gendered nature of work plays a significant part in the gender pay gap. The ONS finds that whilst similar proportions of men and women (19% of men and 21% of women) work in professional roles, there is a gender divide in the type of work done. The most common professional occupation amongst women is nursing whereas for men it is IT – programmers and software developers. The average pay of the latter is found to be £20.02 per hour whereas for nurses it is £16.61 per hour (based on the 2012 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings).

The ONS analysis (ONS, 2013) also shows that women are slightly less likely than men to work in the highest skilled jobs and at each skill level, gender differences exist. While similar proportions of men and women undertake lower skilled work, the jobs they do are often different with men performing roles such as loading/unloading cargo or warehouse operations while women are more likely to take on roles as cleaners. It is within middle skill level jobs that the differences between men and women are most pronounced,

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<sup>3</sup> An age range selected to mitigate the effects of high student populations causing decreased rates of employment

women predominate in lower middle roles and perform administrative and secretarial, caring or leisure, sales or customer service occupations whereas more men work in upper middle skilled roles and are employed in technical occupations and skilled trades.

This pattern is further reflected among higher skilled people, with female higher education (HE) graduates more likely to be in lower middle skilled jobs compared to male HE graduates who are more likely to be in upper middle skilled jobs (ONS, 2013).

Whilst there are clear differences by gender, whether women have dependent children compared to non-mothers appears to make no additional difference to the picture for graduates and non-graduates. This suggests that whilst being a graduate has a significant effect on the job a woman has, whether or not she has dependent children does not appear to have much of an effect on the skill level of the job.

Levels of pay vary depending upon a range of factors (for example, experience, age, qualifications and most critically, the type of work) and therefore there are often differences between men and women stemming in part from these career choices. To investigate this further, ONS explored the situation for the top 10% of earners by age using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. This showed that the majority of top earners in each age group were male (31% female to 69% male), although there was a more even split between women and men in the two younger age groupings; 16-24 and 25-29 years, (45% female, 55% male and 47% female, 53% male, respectively). The ONS suggests that as the proportion of women in highly paid jobs reduces after the average age at which women have a first child, women may be choosing family life over careers although data is not available to state this categorically.

It has to be noted that these data do not capture the evidence on the length of time mothers – or fathers - take out of the labour market following the birth of a child. Relevant surveys were conducted before recent policy changes<sup>4</sup> and some limited relevant evidence is captured indirectly from employers without comparable information gathered from employees<sup>5</sup>. There are some sources that provide an indication but these have limitations of lack of sampling information and may therefore contain hidden bias. Nonetheless, this evidence cumulatively supplies insight into some of the causes and effects of the gender pay gap. The particular effect of becoming a parent, and in the case of mothers taking time out of the labour market, provide the rationale for the review reported here.

## 1.2 About the research

In order to understand more about parents' decisions to return to work, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to undertake

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<sup>4</sup> The most recent maternity and paternity rights and women returners survey was undertaken in 2009/10

<sup>5</sup> For example, The Fourth Work-Life Balance Employer Survey (BIS, 2014) provided data on the provision of parental leave by employers but the equivalent employee survey did not capture the same information.

a rapid evidence assessment (REA) on this theme. Below we provide an overview of the key research questions as well as more detail on the approach used. The research was commissioned in December 2016 and considered literature published up to end of January 2017.

### **1.2.1 Research aims and questions**

The aim of this study was to systematically identify and critically review evidence on how parents in the UK make decisions about returning to work and child caring responsibilities. The particular arrangements for childcare were not the focus; rather the intention was to explore the distribution of caring roles and responsibilities between parents and the associated gender balance, and implications for how this might be addressed. As such, the main objectives of this research were to:

- critically analyse patterns and trends in: how, when, and why parents return to work following maternity/parental leave; and how child caring responsibilities are distributed by gender and the reasons for this
- clarify how decisions about return to work and gender roles in childcare relate to the gender pay gap
- critically review and synthesise evidence on how parents make these decisions, exploring the wider context, particularly relating to the:
  - information parents draw on when making these decisions
  - extent to which parents are aware / not aware of the long-term impact on career earnings of taking time out of the labour market or working part-time hours
  - extent to which there is evidence that parents need help/information/advice in determining how/when to return to work
  - variations in need for information among different groups of parents
  - sources of influence on parents' decisions and why, including the sources that parents view as relevant and trustworthy in informing their decisions.

From the review, a model of these factors was developed, highlighting those most important in parents' decisions. The search also sought to identify examples of possible solutions to the 'problem' available within the evidence as well as to identify evidence gaps.

### **1.2.2 Research approach**

To capture relevant published and grey literature, a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was undertaken (see the Appendix for further details of the approach). This included a 'review of reviews and research syntheses' as a means to explore developments over time as well as the comparative experience in other countries. The GEO provided guidance that, while it was commissioning an REA, it also wanted the research team to

be flexible and include pertinent information from materials not generated by the search strategy, where such evidence met the quality criteria for inclusion.

The search was limited to evidence that was readily accessible online through academic databases as well as national and international policy sources. It was targeted towards sources that were published in English. The REA element was time limited and explored the evidence from 2006 until the end of January 2017. Search terms were agreed with the GEO before the search for relevant literature was undertaken. Clear criteria for inclusion of evidence sources were developed. These included: an assessment of the quality of methodology as well as whether the study was published in English; publication date; whether the study reports on factors in the decision rather than the broad trends related to the return to work or childcare arrangements, and the relevance/transferability of lessons if they are drawn from other contexts.

Through this approach, 37 articles and reports were identified for detailed review, using a standardised pro-forma to extract evidence in a way that ensured consistency across the research team.

### 1.2.3 Evidence map

Table 1 provides an assessment of how well this evidence covered the research questions posed for this review. A key finding was that very few studies considered the decisions on the return to work and childcare responsibilities in relation to the gender pay gap. There is also limited evidence on the decisions made in respect of caring responsibilities and these are not linked to the gender pay gap.

**Table 1: Overview of the evidence gathered and coverage of the research questions**

Question	Coverage
Return to Work following maternity/ paternity/ parental leave: (1) How (2) When (3) Why	Multiple sources on trends, dynamics and factors that prompt return and childcare decisions; some quantitative information available although different sampling periods and strategies, and biased samples undermine robustness
How child caring responsibilities are distributed by (1) gender (2) reasons	Some sources on decision architecture that leads to the arrangements made; some sources on gendered decisions
How decisions about return to work and gender roles in childcare relate to the gender pay gap	Lack of data on how/whether the gender pay gap is a factor in couple's decisions about how the return to work is achieved; but wealth of evidence on impacts of decisions on gender pay gap

Question	Coverage
How parents make decisions	Some sources; generally on the decision architecture and 'trade-offs' made. Decisions not static. Lack of detailed insights into process
Variation in experiences and needs among different groups of parents	Various subgroups covered in multiple sources: coupled/lone; high/low skill; age; one/more children; children's age; employment status and security

Source: IES 2017

### 1.3 Report structure

This report contains findings synthesised from the rapid evidence assessment (REA) on how parents in the UK make decisions about returning to work and child caring responsibilities.

**Chapter 2** provides critical analysis of patterns and trends in: how, when, and why parents return to work following maternity/parental leave; how child caring responsibilities are distributed by gender and the reasons for this; and whether decisions about return to work and gender roles in childcare are related to the gender pay gap.

**Chapter 3** establishes a model of how parents make these decisions, exploring the wider context, particularly relating to knowledge and information and the role of the gender pay gap.

**Chapter 4** concludes the report with a brief discussion of key findings and their implications.

## 2 When, why and how parents decide to return to work

This chapter begins by examining evidence concerning the point at which parents decide to return to work and their decisions on how childcare responsibilities will be distributed, focusing on factors that influence their decision-making. These factors relate to policy mechanisms such as parental leave and childcare support, the policies and practices of employers, personal identities and concepts of self as well as household and financial circumstances. Beliefs about child welfare and their health and wellbeing are also factors in the decisions.

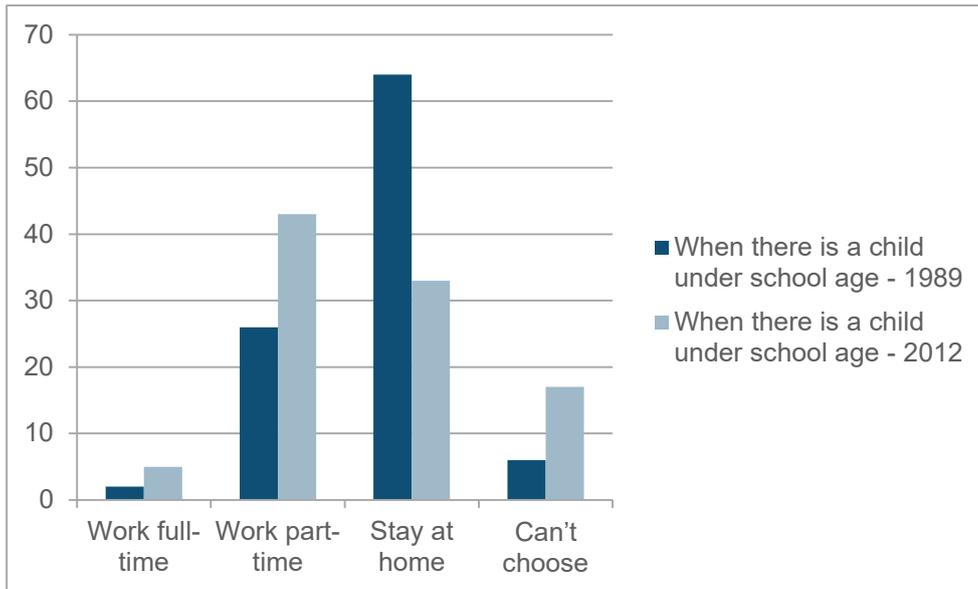
### 2.1 When parents return to work following the birth of a child

The literature indicated a range of factors feed into decisions on *the point in time at which* parents do, or would wish to return to work, although the availability and extent of parental leave is predominant amongst these.

At a broad level, there are societal expectations regarding the behaviours of parents in this respect, especially for mothers. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, Park et al (2013) show that there has been a significant downward shift in the proportion of respondents to the British Social Attitudes Survey who believed that a mother should stay at home while children are under school age. It is noticeable that at both time points, few believed that women should work full-time before their child is at school and there has been less of a shift in attitude on this point. There has been a similar shift in attitudes to mothers working when their youngest child has started school; in this case towards working full time (although still the minority view).

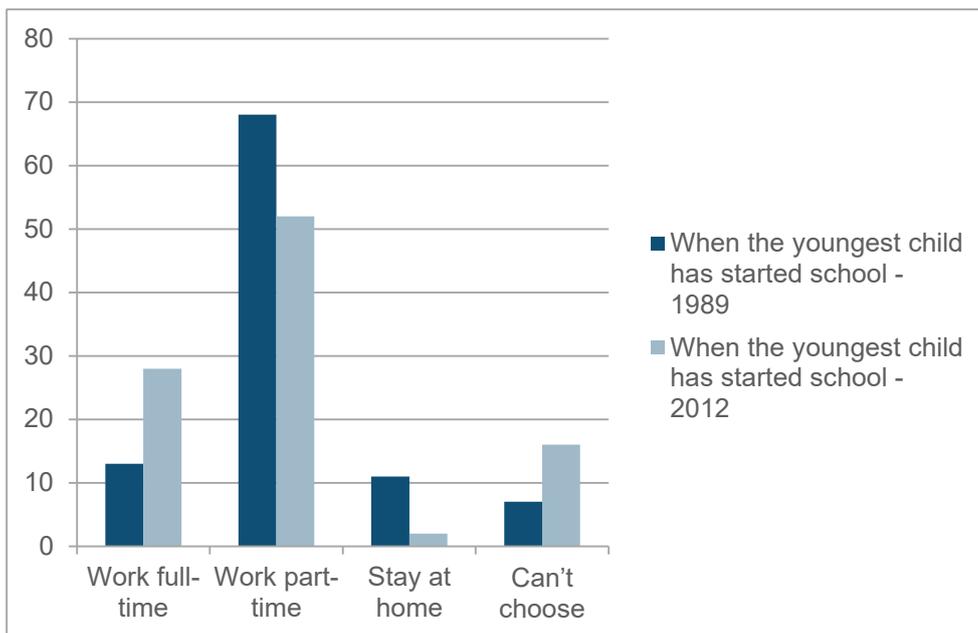
Whilst there has been a change in social attitudes regarding the acceptability of working mothers there is still a prevailing attitude that women should be available to their children pre-school. Even once the youngest child starts school, the prevailing view is that women should work part-time, not full-time. A childcare model in which the father works full-time and the mother works part time was the option most commonly selected as preferable by most respondents to the 2012 BSAS (parents and non-parents) (Park et al., 2013).

**Figure 1: Attitudes to Mother's employment with a child under school age, 1989 and 2012**



Source: Adapted from Park et al. (2013)

**Figure 2: Attitudes to Mother's employment when youngest child at school, 1989 and 2013**



Source: Adapted from Park et al. (2013)

### Attitudes to parenting

Attitudes to parenting can have some influence. A small scale US study of 16 US public school teachers found that where couples attach high importance to the mother-child bond, mothers are more likely to return to work later (Barnes, 2014).

### 2.1.1 Child's age

The age of their child was low-income parents' most common consideration in deciding when to return to work (Bashir et al., 2011) although families had differing opinions about the optimum age at which to return. Some said the most appropriate timing was when the child could attend nursery for free, which is notable given that recent policy changes have improved the availability of free childcare in the pre-school phase. Others focused on school as the trigger with some saying that mothers should re-commence employment once children were at primary school; and others saying the appropriate point was when children were at secondary school.

Analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) by Connolly et al. (2016) found that in recent years the probability of full-time employment of both parents has become less sensitive to the *age of the youngest child* so parents with younger children are more likely to be returning to the workforce sooner than parents of children in previous generations

### 2.1.2 Availability of maternity leave and pay

Other studies consider the actions that follow from such attitudes, and these suggest a significant effect stemming from government policy levers, particularly maternity leave entitlement, as well as the way in which these are enacted and supported within employing organisations.

For example, Paull (2006) finds that maternity pay affects the length of absence from work in two ways: the first is a substitution effect to reduce the monetary loss of not working and the second is an income effect which enables mothers to afford more time off work and possibly incentivise the taking of leave beyond the end of maternity pay. Eligibility for maternity pay increases the likelihood of mothers returning to work within a couple of months following the termination of that pay. Paull also finds that unpaid maternity leave rights have a strong impact, encouraging women either to extend their time away, or – if they had planned on staying longer – to shorten their leave so that they can return to their previous job.

#### Duration and opportunity costs of maternity pay

Countries where parents return to work most rapidly following childbirth are those with that offer the shortest periods of paid maternity leave (Pronzato, 2009). Accordingly, the provision of a longer duration of paid maternal leave increases the probability of mothers remaining at home during the first year of their child's life.

### 2.1.3 Ethnicity

Pakistani, Bangladeshi and mixed race women are less likely to be employed than white women when their child is three years old, but Indian mothers are more likely to be employed than white women (Fagan and Norman, 2014).

## 2.2 Why parents return to work following parental leave

While the point of return is affected primarily by the availability and extent of paid and unpaid maternity leave, the reasons for return appear more complex.

Easter and Newburn (2014) for example, report a range of factors that affect the decision to return to work<sup>6</sup>. Overall, they find that this decision is dominated by a balance between the needs of the child, childcare options, and household finances.

Similarly Leach et al. (2006) identifies four main themes (finances, work characteristics, maternal identity and child characteristics), themes that are broadly supported by other evidence too.

### Finances: the cost of maternity leave

Finances such as pressures on family income, and a mother's desire to maintain some financial independence play a role in influencing return to work decisions. Both Easter and Newburn (2014), and Leach et al. (2006) found many women named a financial need for paid employment at the end of paid maternity leave. Similarly, Baxter (2008) found two-thirds of a sample of 200 Australian women with children under three returned to work earlier than they would have liked for financial reasons. Those who returned to the same job were more likely to have returned early for financial reasons.

Unsurprisingly, mothers with higher-earning partners were less likely to return for financial reasons. Pronzato (2009) also finds higher household/family income appears to delay the return to work and Barnes (2014) identifies that the length of maternity leave taken is affected by household finances.

Some low-income women also found financial considerations to be important in order to provide "extras" for their children such as holidays and treats in a small scale qualitative study (Bashir et al. (2011). Mothers with low-paid partners and mothers with mortgages were more likely to return to work (Smeaton and Marsh 2006, cited in Metcalfe and Rolfe 2010).

Maternity leave may not only incur immediate financial costs for parents but also longer term costs if jobs and or roles are not protected. For example, Pronzato (2009) finds that longer periods of job protection (while women take maternity leave) increase the likelihood of women returning to work i.e. when their job roles are protected, women appear more confident to take time out of work to care for their children but also to return to their job. However, Pronzato also finds evidence that 'women who have access to jobs with maternity rights may have unobservable characteristics which also affect their post-birth decisions'.

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<sup>6</sup> Note their sample was of first time parents whose child was around 8 months of age and includes those who were working and those not currently working.

## **Work characteristics**

Some mothers reported feeling pressure of responsibilities that led them to return to work despite wishing to remain at home to care for their child and some were fearful of losing their job or promotion opportunities if they did not return as soon as possible (Leach et al., 2006; Baxter, 2008).

Work pressures vary across employment sectors and occupations, and are related to both levels of responsibility and the time demands of work according to a qualitative study of 57 mothers (Wattis and James, 2013). Mothers working in higher-level managerial occupations in the private sector were most likely to prioritise work. Rahim (2014) also finds that those employed in the private sector tend to return to work more quickly.

Other work factors that accelerate return to work include being self-employed or a business owner, or working as part of a family business (Wattis and James, 2013). In support of this finding, a large survey of women with children aged under five in Australia found that women who work in small businesses felt a 'pull' from their employer wanting them to return (Baxter 2008). Similarly, Barnes (2014) finds that some women feel pressure to limit the time they take off because colleagues have previously taken more lengthy periods of leave, which has put their employers under pressure. This suggests another important factor affecting women's decisions on the return to work is their view of how employers perceive the operational impact of the period of maternity leave that they take.

Pronzato (2009) also finds an increased probability of return and quicker returns amongst those with higher human capital (i.e. skills), and therefore it may be inferred that job quality also has a role in the decision to return. Similarly, Easter and Newburn (2014) find that age and education level affect the likelihood of return to work – women who are older and more highly educated are more likely to return to work.

Potentially extending the above point, Rahim (2014) finds that factors which increase the opportunity cost of maternity leave (such as job satisfaction or job tenure) are likely to speed up the return to work. Others similarly have found that a positive attitude to work makes mothers more likely to return work (Leach et al., 2006; van Gameren and Ooms 2009 survey of 700 Dutch mothers with children under four).

### **Type of contract/working time**

A large scale Australian study by Baxter (2008) found little variation in reasons for returning to work by job type (i.e. permanent, casual or contract. Casual workers were "somewhat more likely" than permanent workers to say that they returned to work for financial reasons. In the UK, women were more likely to find it difficult to find suitable work if they wish to curtail working time to less than four days per week (Easter and Newburn, 2014).

## Maternal identity

Personal career orientation, the need for relationships outside motherhood, and work enjoyment also shape mother's decisions about working. In a sample of 16 US public school teachers, being a teacher was a significant part of their adult identity (Barnes, 2014) and two thirds of the women said that they loved their jobs and would miss teaching if they did not do it for an extended period. Similarly in another small qualitative study, women's decisions on return to work were influenced by the sense of personal fulfilment and self-identity derived from their working life (Redshaw, 2016). In a sample of 200 Australian mothers, 21% said that they returned to work because "they prefer to be working" (Baxter 2008). For mothers who were not employed prior to having children, their main reasons for return to work were needing a break from home, opportunities arising from a previous employer, or helping with a family business (ibid.).

## Infant characteristics

To a lesser extent, some women report that their child's needs and characteristics influenced their decision to return to work. Leach et al (2006) found only a small minority of women in their sample mentioned temperamental issues, such as "clinginess" or "sociability", or infant characteristics such as a need for the companionship of other children, and when they did so, usually linked them to the infant's age and stage of development.

## Family resources and relationships

Barnes (2014) finds that the availability of informal childcare support, such as from a family member are key within decision making and suggests the quality of care is a more important consideration than lower costs.

Easter and Newburn (2014) find that relationship status affects the likelihood of return to work – women who are in a relationship are more likely to return to work. Rahim (2014) finds the same - that married women return more quickly.

Finally, there is some evidence (Brewer and Paull (2006), cited in Metcalfe and Rolfe 2010) that the time taken to return to work increases with each subsequent child, but is quicker for women who are employed prior to their child's birth.

## 2.3 Why do some parents not return to work?

Inevitably, any research that explores reasons *not* to return to work has to seek views at a specific point in time and that decision can be reversed later as the various influencing factors change. Research tends to be cross sectional rather than longitudinal and so chooses a point in time after the birth of a child to explore factors influencing decisions to return or not. Each study sets different parameters depending on their sample and can vary from as little as six months after the birth of their child up to two years in other research.

Factors which influence parental decisions not to return to work include: low pay or lack of part-time hours, health or behavioural problems in the child and beliefs that parental care is best placed to support the child's personal development.

These factors might be considered as an interplay between preferences regarding parental versus other forms of care and barriers to working.

### **2.3.1 Preferences regarding parental care**

A large survey of recent mothers in the UK found that 19% of mothers were not working and 75% of these stated this was because they had chosen to look after their child themselves (IFF, 2016<sup>7</sup>). In a small scale qualitative study by Bashir et al. (2011), some low-income parents reported that staying at home was a conscious choice allowing the parents to support their children to develop; these parents valued the time with their children more highly than the potential financial gains. Similar arguments were heard in the Easter and Newburn (2014) research from mothers who did not want to return to work, where "driving factors" were meeting their child's needs, and not wanting to leave them. Women in a small scale US study with strong beliefs about taking personal responsibility for childcare rather than using formal care were more likely to seek informal care from family or friends, or to take extended leave from work (Barnes et al., 2014).

Bashir et al (2011) also found that for some parents, staying out of work is a necessity – for example, when the child has health or behavioural issues (some low-income parents highlighted the risk of their child becoming involved in gangs if they were not around).

### **Gendered variations in attitudes to parenting**

Discussions around returning to work remain highly gendered with some variation by level of education and socio-economic class. Overall however, attitudes are complicated and can be contradictory. Bashir et al (2011) found that while low-income women spoke about parenting and childcare responsibilities, low-income men did not. In a small sample of middle- to upper-class US families, it was regarded as "natural" for motherhood and fatherhood to be "unequal concepts" as a result of biological differences between genders, such as breastfeeding and carrying the baby (Barnes, 2014). In a mixed gender sample of 100 physician-researchers, work-life balance issues were regarded as greater for women due to traditional societal gender roles (Strong et al., 2013). However, research has also shown that attitudes can be apparently contradictory. Easter and Newburn (2014), for example, found some people simultaneously believed that "men and women are equally good at caring for a baby" while also agreeing that "a mother is naturally better than anyone else at comforting her distressed child".

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<sup>7</sup> Mothers in Great Britain who had a child between nine and 24 months, who had worked during pregnancy, were eligible for interview

Overall, two large scale studies found that highly educated women were less likely to agree to statements emphasising traditional gender roles (Easter and Newburn, 2014; van Gameren and Ooms, 2009).

Paternal attitudes are also important. A large scale survey of 1,371 Finnish fathers showed that those men who consider the mother to be the primary carer of children, are only a third as likely as other men to have taken parental leave (Lammi-Taskula, 2008). A small scale study of 25 couples with children under seven and a mother earning a low wage in the East Midlands found that some men are cautious about the effect family has on their career and “express ambivalence” at caring for very young children (Fox et al., 2009), preferring instead to take a more active role when the child is a little older. This is associated with family size and education level with fathers of one child and those with higher levels of education less likely to express these views (Paterna and Martinez, 2006). For some men, their identity is primarily derived from activity outside the home and the concept of being ‘a good father’ is bound up in the gendered view of being the ‘breadwinner’. In the Finnish study noted above, in families with this more traditional view, women are far more likely to stay at home longer and return to work on a part-time rather than full-time basis (Lammi-Taskula, 2008). However, Bashir et al. (2011) found that, in some cultural groups, attitudes valuing a full-time parenting role can persist in low-income groups even when households no longer have a “breadwinner”

### **2.3.2 Barriers to return**

Bashir et al (2011) found that lack of available part-time work to fit around school hours prevented parents from returning to work, particularly for low-income parents in low-skilled occupations. Other difficulties include geographical constraints due to travel to work time which could not easily be combined with childcare responsibilities, and low pay from such work not making return worthwhile. Seeing negative experience of friends who had returned to work and were struggling with low pay, trying to find affordable child care, losing benefits and not seeing enough of their children, also led some mothers to perceive there were insufficient incentives to return to work (Bashir et al., 2011).

These difficulties are echoed in the findings from a large survey of mothers with at least one child aged under two. Among the 19% who had not returned to work after childbirth, 52% said this was because they could not find a job which paid enough to cover childcare costs and 45% said that they could not find suitable childcare (IFF, 2016).

These challenges are exacerbated by structural labour market constraints affecting women. Many part-time jobs characterised by gender segregation and dominated by female workers offer limited autonomy over working hours and workplace flexibility. Wattis and James (2013) found in a qualitative study that working-class mothers are most likely to experience low pay, limited progression, little autonomy, and limited access to flexible working. Part-time work is also less likely to offer training or progression, making it “central to gendered labour market inequalities” (Wattis and James, 2013). In

contrast, mothers in technical, professional and managerial occupations had more authority and control, but combining work and care was still difficult.

### 2.3.3 Interplay between preferred care and barriers to work

La Valle et al. (2008, via Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010) explored the interplay between the two dimensions affecting decisions on return to work: the preference towards parental care of children (as opposed to other forms of care) versus perceptions of barriers to working (specifically around availability and affordability of childcare and access to flexible working options). They found five types of mothers who did not return to work within 12-18 months of childbirth using the 2007 Maternity Rights Survey. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Typology of mothers not returning to work within 18 months after childbirth <sup>8</sup>

<b>Orientation towards parental care (e.g. desire to care for children themselves or through close friends/family members)</b>	<b>Barriers to working (e.g. transport difficulties, health issues, suitable job opportunities, lack of confidence etc.)</b>
Group 1 High	Saw barriers to working (e.g. childcare and flexible working). A third say that they would work if this was addressed
Group 2 Low	High barriers to working (e.g. lack of qualifications or lack of incentive due to welfare state and fear of losing benefits). Generally lone mothers, people with limited qualifications and income, and younger people. Some said they would return if barriers were addressed.
Group 3 High	No intention to return irrespective of barriers. Generally older, highly qualified, high income, and partnered.
Group 4 Low	Saw high barriers to working (e.g. childcare and flexible working). Again, many would return if barriers were addressed. More younger people in this group.
Group 5 Low	Low barriers to working. Generally lone mothers and people with limited qualifications. A minority said they would return if barriers were addressed.

Source: La Valle et al. (2008)in Metcalf and Rolfe, (2010).

<sup>8</sup> Based on Latent Class analysis of a card sort exercise of various statements depending on whether each statement was a big factor, smaller factor or not a factor in participants' decision to stay at home

One large Dutch survey of 700 women with children aged less than four found that when other income sources are high (e.g. from a partner or income from sources other than labour), mothers are more likely to leave the labour force (Gameren and Ooms, 2009). This may reflect the wider range of options and reduced reliance on personal earnings available to women with other sources of income.

## 2.4 How do parents return?

### 2.4.1 Job and hours

IFF found that 83% of returning mothers in their large scale sample returned to the same job title and description with their current employer following maternity leave (IFF, 2016). In contrast, 6% reported returning to the same job with some role changes that they had not agreed to. These included either reduced responsibilities or perceptions of having a lower value to the employer. 4% returned to the same employer but to a different role which they did not want to do.

Paull's (2006) analysis of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) found that mothers are most likely to move from full-time to part-time work compared with other groups of women. Many new mothers do this to maintain a "balance" (Wattis and James, 2013). However, there is variation by occupation (Fagan and Norman, 2014): while one-third of employed mothers work full-time, this rises to 44% of mothers in managerial or professional occupations.

### 2.4.2 Demographic variations

#### Gender

One piece of research including 100 fathers and an unspecified number of mothers found that organisational barriers to taking up flexible working affect both men and women (Gatrell et al. 2014). Although men in the study often felt women were advantaged in accessing flexible working, the reality for many women was that their experiences did not match the rhetoric of the organisation.

According to a study of 45,000 nurses in Scotland (McIntosh et al., 2012), career breaks for women were more detrimental to progression than they were for men, and the greater the cumulative career break, the greater the detrimental impact. The researchers suggest that career breaks for women are more likely to be skill reducing (e.g. taking women out of work for caring responsibilities), whereas for men they are more likely to be skill enhancing (for further study or to work in private practice). Motherhood has a detrimental impact on career progression as measured by grade of mother and age of children although mothers appear more likely to make career progress once the child reaches school age and to move into higher graded posts once the child is in secondary school although the gap never completely closes. According to Paull (2006)'s analysis of the

BHPS, becoming a mother inhibits promotion. Whilst some 21% of both women and men without children move to a supervisory position between successive waves of the BHPS, just 16% of new mothers and 13% of mothers giving birth to an additional child will be promoted to a supervisory position in the twelve months following the birth. Fathers do not suffer such a penalty, with 26% of new fathers and 21% of those fathering a subsequent child being promoted to a supervisory position in the same time period. Similarly in a study of nurses in Scotland, female nurses taking a career break of more than two years “see their careers depressed and restricted” (over an unstated time period), as it makes it more difficult to gain recognised skills and human capital (McIntosh et al 2012). Male nurses taking career breaks were not negatively affected.

### **Job status, education and skill**

There is a broad association between education and skills and women’s return to work (Connolly et al., 2016). One UK survey found a positive linear relationship between the number of days that women returning to employment worked, and their age and educational attainment (Easter and Newburn, 2014). Mothers with post-secondary qualifications are more likely to return to work to maintain skills and qualifications than those without post-secondary qualifications (Baxter, 2008)<sup>9</sup>.

Mothers in managerial and professional occupations are most likely to be employed during pregnancy and return to work following childbirth; Fagan and Norman (2012) found that very few mothers moved from non-employment in pregnancy to employment post-childbirth. Mothers returning to part-time, as opposed to full-time, jobs are more likely to work in semi-routine or routine occupations, or in self-employment (Fagan and Norman, 2012).

According to a large scale study of nurses in Scotland (McIntosh et al., 2012), those working part-time tend to work in lower graded roles. A small scale qualitative study involving two cohorts each containing 15 women working in professional roles also found that low-status part-time work has implications for women’s employment progression as it does not offer the same opportunities for training (Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016). The same study found a specific lack of provision for part-time roles at senior organisational levels, thus forcing women to downgrade roles and accept reduced salaries in order to accommodate family needs.

### **Age of parents**

The age of parents affects the nature of their employment; analysis of the LFS by Connolly et al (2016) found that under 25s and over 45s are more likely to work in a non-standard fashion defined as arrangements where at least one partner is not working full–

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that parental education has improved in recent years. In 2001, 35% of mothers had low qualifications; in 2013, this was just 16%. The number of highly-qualified mothers rose from 26% to 47% in the same period (Connolly et al., 2013).

time. This included couples with at least one member of the pair working part-time or one sole breadwinner.

### **The number of children**

According to a large scale analysis of the BHPS (Paull 2006), the average number of hours worked per week by women varies by number of children. After the first birth, average weekly hours worked falls by 12.1, and there is a further fall of 3.6 hours after a subsequent birth. This decrease is significantly larger for new mothers than new fathers. 2011 data from the ONS showed that 37% of mothers with dependent children were working part-time compared with 6% of fathers (Woolnough and Redshaw 2016).

## **2.5 Childcare distribution**

The literature review identified a range of childcare arrangements that can be categorised as:

- formal (nurseries, day-care, childminders) or
- informal (parents, grandparents, friends, neighbours).

Parents opt for one or multiple methods of childcare, with choices influenced by the individual context of the family unit. The decision making process is highly practical, with the need to balance work and family life a driving force combined with characteristics of (each) child (Leach, 2006). As Ellison finds from an online survey of 4,500 UK parents of children aged under 16, decisions are made “within a framework of opportunities and choices [that are] dependent on a long list of factors” (2009).

### **2.5.1 Formal**

Leach (2006) found that respondents most often mentioned convenience (63%) and availability (58%) when asked about factors influencing choice of formal childcare, with cost, quality and flexibility of care also mentioned.

Parental income is a clear driver of behaviour as it determines not only whether formal childcare can be accessed, but what type, quality and number of hours per week (Fagan, 2012). Choices are also influenced by the number of children within the family.

Respondents in a small qualitative study of 30 mothers noted that the cost of childcare for two children or the logistics of managing a child at school and one at nursery made formal childcare impractical (Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016). Within two years of the birth of the second child, all 15 respondents in cohort two of the study had either reduced their working hours or had withdrawn from the workforce entirely.

### **2.5.2 Informal**

When families choose one or both parents to stay at home and care for children, reasons include wanting to care for their children themselves, feeling that parental care had the

most positive impact on the child's development, distrusting other sources of childcare or the cost of childcare being unaffordable (Ellison, 2009).

Care for children both within and outside working hours is often distributed unevenly within the family unit. Research by McGinnity et al. using data from over 11,000 families with nine month old children from Ireland found that "there are marked gender inequalities in the care of children in Ireland, with mothers doing the vast majority of caring" (2013). Ellison's study also found that 76%% of mothers have primary responsibility for childcare in the home (2009).

The literature demonstrates the continuance of gendered notions of parenting which may be one factor resulting in mothers bearing the greater load of childcare responsibilities which affect their time available for paid work.

### **2.5.3 Demographic variations**

How childcare is managed within families is highly individual and influenced by numerous parental characteristics including: education level, occupation and ethnicity.

#### **Education and occupation**

Parents' level of education is a strong predictor of the extent to which gender norms play a role in guiding division of labour within a household. Research from Nordic countries has shown that parental leave is shared between parents more often among those with higher education levels. One large scale survey found that those who were more highly educated have a higher potential income and are more likely to think both partners should play a role in childcare (van Gameren and Ooms, 2009). This is consistent with LFS analysis by Connolly et al. (2016), which that finds mothers with low qualifications are more likely to be in households with a sole male breadwinner or non-earner household.

The occupation of both parents is a significant influence on gender roles and return to work choices. A large Finnish study found that when the mother is in an upper white collar position (i.e. has an expert or managerial job), the father is twice as likely to take parental leave compared to those whose partner is in a blue-collar position (Lammi-Taskula et al., 2008).

#### **Pre-birth pay levels**

When it comes to deciding which parent should reduce/stop work in order to care for children, the literature identifies a number of inter-related factors. Finances play a core role and the parent who is better paid, most often the father, is most likely to remain in work in order to maximise the household income according to a large scale Finnish study (Lammi-Taskula, 2008). Gender imbalance in income is also identified by Lammi-Taskula as a main obstacle for sharing parental leave between mothers and fathers for the same reason. Subsequently, the gender pay gap presents itself as a potential cause for

households to favour the mother reducing/ceasing work. Similarly, the IFS identify a pre-birth gender pay gap in the UK (IFS, 2016).

### **Flexible working**

Access to flexible working in terms of annual leave policies and childcare policies was another common factor in decision-making about childcare in a large scale Irish study (McGinnity et al., 2013). A small scale study notes that women are more likely to request workplace adjustments in order to balance work and care and these are more likely to be accepted by organisations (Wattis and James 2013). This is partially endorsed by the large scale survey of employer work-life balance practices (IFF and IES, 2014) where 65% of workplaces had not received any requests for flexible working from men in the last 12 months and employers said that on average requests from men represented only a quarter (25%) of all requests.

The literature highlighted the contrasts of international policies relating to maternity, paternity and parental leave which have successfully influenced the behaviour of parents. In Quebec for example, fathers are offered a three-week (75% wage replacement) or five-week (55% wage replacement) period of paid paternity leave that is non-transferable to the mother. This policy was enacted in 2006 and early evidence suggests that it has encouraged men to take leave and participate more in parental responsibilities when the children are very young (Tremblay et.al. 2011). This policy is based on policies enacted in Norway, Sweden and Iceland where 'fathers' quotas' have led to greater take-up of parental leave by fathers, and increased the sharing of parental leave between fathers and mothers (Lammi-Taskula et al. 2008). Parents in Sweden, Norway, and Iceland receive benefits that compensate from 80% to 100% of lost earnings.

## **2.6 Factors that support or inhibit the return to work**

The literature has tended to focus on the potential impact of policy levers at the national level and the ways in which employers can support return to work at the organisational level.

### **Policy levers: (un)paid maternity/paternity leave/ shared leave**

The last 10 years has seen the introduction of a number of policies which have directly and indirectly affected gender equality and labour market mobility. The Equality Act 2010, in particular, brought together all strands of employment equality legislation.

A 2013 survey of work-life balance policies in over 2,000 employers with more than five staff (IFF and IES, 2014) found that take-up of parental leave was less common than either maternity or paternity leave. Overall, 14% of workplaces reported a worker taking unpaid parental leave in the previous 12 months (a level that has not changed since 2007) compared to 32% to 39% (2007 and 2013 respectively) workplaces with a worker taking maternity leave and from 29% to 36% (between 2007 and 2013) experiencing

paternity leave. The lack of payment for parental leave was believed to be to be a reason for the relatively low and unchanged level of use.

In 2015, Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) were introduced to give parents greater flexibility over childcare arrangements in the first year of a child's life by increasing the share of leave that fathers can take. There was also the hope and expectation that such a policy would enable both parents to retain a strong link to the labour market and that the new rules would "challenge the old-fashioned assumption that women will always be the parent that stays at home".<sup>10</sup>

Initial estimates of take up were set between 2% to 8% (HM Government, 2013) whilst estimates on actual take up of shared parental leave has been variable, with figures between 1% and 4% quoted depending on the source which several commentators have noted as being lower than anticipated (Allen, 2016) but some have queried interpretations of available statistics<sup>11</sup> and it may be that good data is not currently available. Various factors that might inhibit uptake have been suggested including the rate of statutory pay for parental leave at £139.58 per week which might be of particular significance for fathers in well-paid jobs and in households where financial factors are central to decision-making (Allen, 2016). In a study conducted in Canada, where few employers currently provide enhanced payments above the statutory rate for paternity pay, shared parental leave was found to be a financially unattractive offer (Tremblay et al., 2011). Employee attitudes and perceptions of support offered by employers are also important, influencing whether employees will seek to use these policies. Half of men in a recent UK study of 1,000 parents said they thought taking leave was perceived negatively at work (My Family Care/Women's Business Council, 2016).

In June 2014 the statutory right to request flexible working was extended and government statistics suggest more than 20 million employees are eligible to request flexible working (after 26 weeks service<sup>12</sup>), regardless of parental or caring responsibilities. The employer is under no obligation to meet the request.

According to a large survey of mothers with at least one child under two, 68% made a request for at least one type of flexible working practice on returning to work (IFF, 2016). Just under half (45%) of these requests were for part-time hours while a quarter wanted some other kind of flexibility in working time patterns. Most (84%) of mothers reported that their requests for flexible working were granted by their employers. The impact of having a request refused was not investigated explicitly within this study.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-how-mums-and-dads-can-use-new-shared-parental-leave-system>

<sup>11</sup> My Family Care (2016) reported take up of 1% but this was employers' assessment of the percentage of ALL male employees who had taken SPL. As new fathers are only 5% of the male population this could indicate something like 20 per cent of eligible men have taken up SPL

[http://www.yearofthedad.org/shared\\_parental\\_leave\\_myth](http://www.yearofthedad.org/shared_parental_leave_myth)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/flexible-working-rights-extended-to-more-than-20-million>

## Employer practices

Work environment and organisational culture can be key factors shaping return to work decisions. Some organisations may unknowingly harbour structures which make the work/family balance more challenging; others may purposely create cultures that encourage parents into particular roles or to exit the organisation all together.

A large survey of mothers who returned to work after having children found that 74% felt their employers supported their needs as mothers of a young child but one in four felt employers did not support their needs (IFF, 2016). Over a third of those earning over £60,000 per year and those who were single parents reported that their needs were not met (ibid). Having an unsupportive line manager had more impact on forming these perceptions than having unsupportive HR staff, possibly because women have more day-to-day contact with line managers who are more likely to influence their work content, volumes and implement (in)formal support mechanisms.

Qualitative studies of mothers and fathers find that those working within organisations with a dominant masculine culture are likely to find working and caring particularly challenging (Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016; Strong et al., 2008). Opportunities for flexible working may be more restricted and where available, mothers find themselves marginalised, downgraded or having to downplay their identity as mothers (Gatrell et.al. 2014 and Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016). A study of 100 parents within the medical profession found that although policies existed within their workplaces, there was intense stigma around utilising them (Strong et al., 2008). Similarly in a study of 100 fathers (in one public and one private sector organisation) fathers experienced organisational resistance when applying for flexible working or wanting to work part-time (Gatrell et al., 2014). This evidence demonstrates the need for organisations to promote cultures that enable flexible working mechanisms to be used by both men and women.

In contrast, some employer practices influence return to work decisions positively. These include shaping culture and introducing schemes and programmes to support mothers returning to work. A study of 138 women in the technology industry highlighted the value of mentoring, workshops and training which to help bridge skills gaps and build women's confidence in returning to work (Panteli and Pen, 2009). A similar programme at Goldman Sachs over 10 weeks for women out of the workplace for at least two years resulted in over half returning to work full-time, although it is not clear whether this success rate exceeds typical outcomes (Sullivan, 2015). Morgan Stanley ran a pilot programme offering coaching and support for women who had been out of the workplace for several years, aiming to build confidence and provide mentoring with 150 hours of free back-up childcare provision. This resulted in 13 out of 19 participants being offered senior roles although it is not clear how this compares with typical rates of success on such programmes (Sullivan 2015 cited in Brown et al., forthcoming 2017). These examples simply show that where employers offer well-structured and organised support, some women can feel more confident and capable in their ability to return to work. This

kind of employer support is often concentrated in organisations with a high skilled workforce or elsewhere targeted at high-skilled women in organisations with more diverse occupational groups.

### **Availability of free childcare via informal family sources and formal policy levers**

The availability of affordable childcare is a key component of whether, when and how mothers return to work (e.g. Easter and Newburn, 2014; La Valle 2008 in Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010). Free childcare, whether it be informal (family or friends) or formal (subsidised through government) is likely to make a return to work more practical, affordable and achievable for mothers.

Tax free childcare and free early education places for three and four year olds in England have attempted to support women's return to work after having children. Places are also available for two year olds from low income families and those receiving state benefits. This gap in free childcare provision for higher earning families may delay return to work for mothers from these groups but evidence would be needed to demonstrate this.

### 3 The choice architecture

The evidence presented in Chapter 2 illustrated that when, why and how parents make decisions about returning to work following childbirth is influenced by a range of factors. This chapter draws these findings together and aims to synthesise the evidence on how parents make these decisions, exploring the wider context to illustrate the dynamism of return to work decisions, alongside identifying potential policy levers.

In order to illustrate where policy can create a decision-point and influence the decision-process, this chapter first maps out the timing of key employment rights and benefits for families and notes where parents are in contact with other government services related to their pregnancy, such as healthcare. This represents some of the choice architecture and potential government policies and levers to influence parents' return to work behaviour.

Second, the factors identified in Chapter 2 that influence parents' return to work decisions are illustrated in a choices and constraints decision-model intended to show the dynamism and variety of influences and the complexity of their decision-making about returning to work.

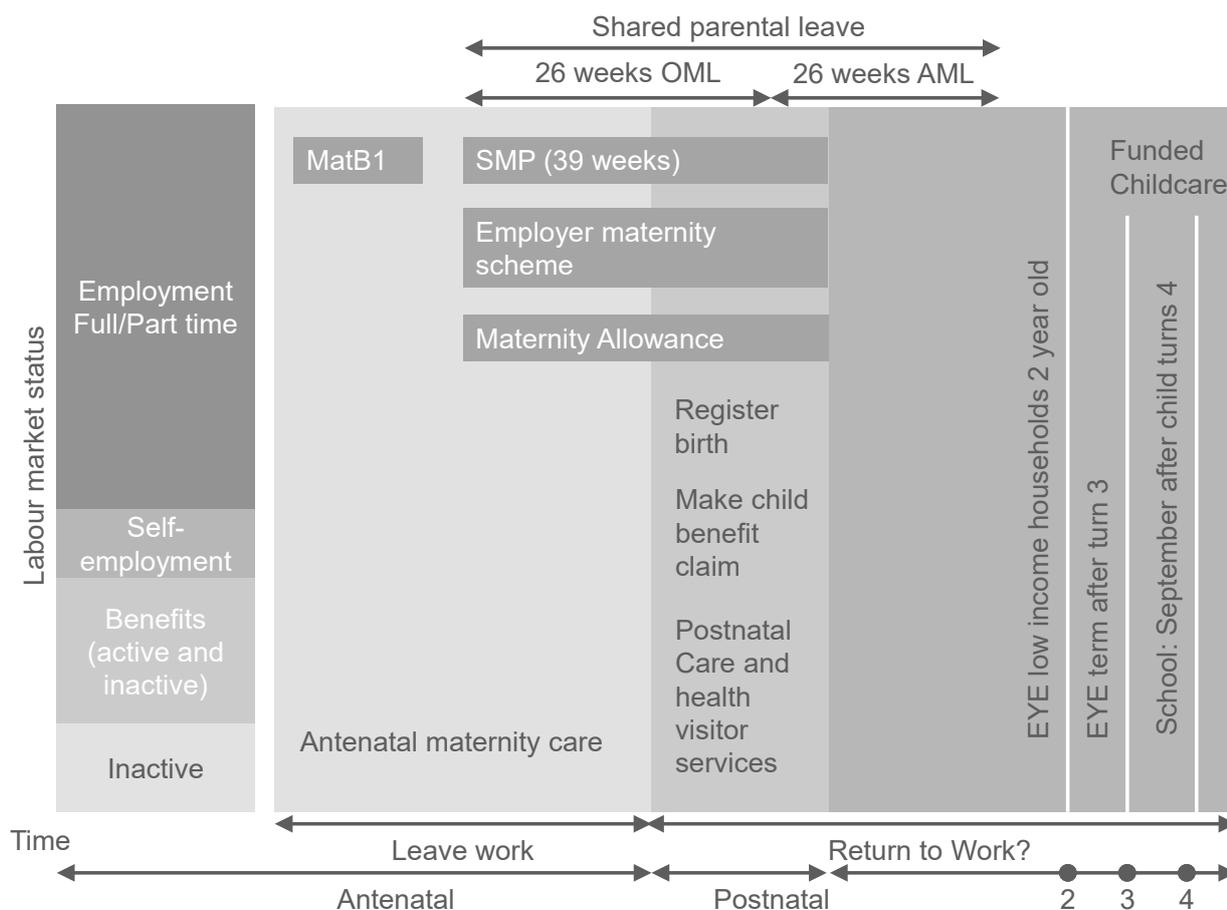
Third, these decision-making factors are overlaid onto the Capabilities, Opportunities, Motivations, Behaviour (COM-B) model (Michie et al., 2011) in order to illustrate how the various decision-making factors can then combine to directly influence return to work behaviour.

Finally, gaps in the evidence and further areas for exploration are drawn out in the conclusions.

#### 3.1 When: policy-led decision points

Figure 3 maps out the timing of some of the current central employment rights and benefits for families and notes where parents are in contact with other government services related to their pregnancy and birth, such as healthcare. This gives an overview of the architecture within which parents decide whether, when and how to return to work. It illustrates how government policy creates and influences the decision points at which parents return to work, as well when there are potential opportunities for government to build on their existing contact and interaction with new parents in order to inform parental choices and potentially influence behaviour, including through providing information.

**Figure 3: Timing of employment policies and interactions with government for non-adoptive parents**



Source: IES, 2017

Notes: AML = Additional Maternity Leave  
 EYE = Early Years Entitlement (15 hours per week in term time only)  
 MatB1 = A Maternity Certificate which enables a pregnant woman to claim Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) from her employer, or Maternity Allowance (MA) from Jobcentre Plus. Doctors or registered midwives must issue form MAT B1 free of charge to their pregnant patients for whom they provide clinical care.  
 OML = Ordinary Maternity Leave  
 SMP = Statutory Maternity Pay

The financial maternity benefits available to women will depend on their pre-pregnancy labour market status. For example, for women in employment, this relates to how long they have been with their current employer, and therefore whether they are entitled to SMP, and also whether their employer offers any maternity benefits over and above the statutory minimum via an employer maternity scheme. The generosity of these benefits combined with other household income and outgoings will determine the household budget over the period of maternity leave. There are several points determined by employment legislation where entitlements to maternity pay changes and therefore where there will be a step change in household income, such as the end of SMP after 39 weeks. As the evidence has shown, these step changes in policy clearly influence and trigger return to work decisions, as there are peaks in the number of women returning to work when various maternity entitlements end (see Section 2.1).

Self-employed parents have a different system of maternity benefits from their employed counterparts. They can receive Maternity Allowance and will not be eligible for an Employer Maternity Scheme. For individuals claiming benefits prior to having children, it is less likely there will be a marked change in income before and after birth as eligibility for benefits remains constant over this period. For example, women may (continue to) receive Income Support if they are pregnant, or a carer or a lone parent with a child under 5. Some women may transfer from benefits where they are required to actively look for work (e.g. Jobseekers' Allowance) to inactive benefits during pregnancy.

Figure 3 also illustrates the range of state services that individuals may engage with during pregnancy. For example, health monitoring of the mother and baby will take place through pre- and then post-natal care and health visitor services. Parents have to register the birth of their child, and depending on their income, are also likely to make a claim for child benefit to HMRC.

Lastly, government childcare policy also affects household finances and decisions about when, whether and how to return to work among new parents. Figure 3 illustrates the current points at which households become eligible for some free hours of childcare. For low income households<sup>13</sup>, once a child is two, free childcare is available for 15 hours per week. There is a universal entitlement to 15 hours of free childcare per week for all three and four year olds during each school term from the school term after they turn three. This Early Years Entitlement (EYE) creates points at which there are step changes in family finances throughout children's' early years, and when considered alongside maternity leave highlights the gap between the end of maternity benefits at a maximum of one year after birth and the start of free childcare for low income families when a child is two and for all families the term after a child is three.

## 3.2 The opportunities and constraints model

Figure 4 adapts the model of factors that influence the career decision-making process developed by Gloster et al (2013) and grounds it in the evidence presented in Chapter 2. The opportunities and constraints decision-model is intended to show the dynamism and variety of influences that affect parents and the complexity of their decision-making about returning to work, as well as the individual nature of each decision.

The model has two halves, denoting factors that are internal to the individual and their personal situation and influences that are more external, such as labour market

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<sup>13</sup> Parents with a two year-old can receive free childcare if they get one of the following: Income Support; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); Universal Credit; tax credits and you have an annual income of under £16,190 before tax; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

opportunities and cultural norms. The arrows between each factor and decision-making at the centre illustrate how the factor interacts with the decision of whether, when and how to return to work after having a child. The sets of opportunities and constraints tend to be more factual and relate to an individual's circumstances. These are illustrated in relation to decision-making by a zigzag showing the individual has less direct control.

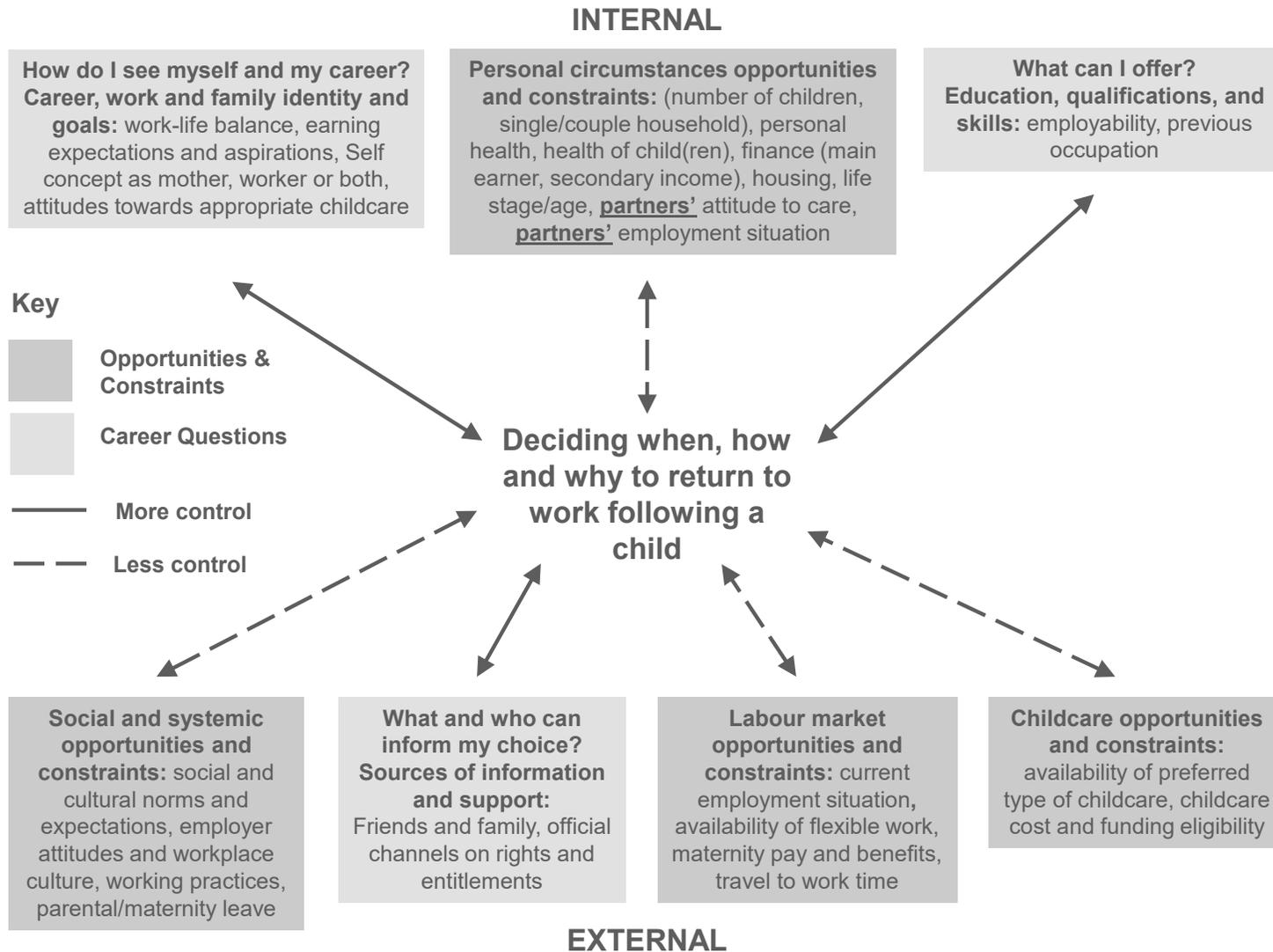
The four dark grey boxes represent key sets of opportunities and constraints. One set relates to the individual, and encompasses personal opportunities and constraints, such as the age of the child, and finances (see section 2.1) and attitudes towards childcare distribution by gender (see section 2.4). The second and third draw together evidence about the world of work (such as working practices and rights see Section 2.1) and childcare (such as access to informal childcare Section 2.4). The fourth set of opportunities and constraints relates to wider social and systemic opportunities and constraints (such as maternity pay, and employer attitudes and workplace culture, see Section 2.1).

The three lighter grey boxes illustrate three career questions that individuals address in their decision-making process. The evidence relating to parents' return to work decisions shows that 'What can I offer?' is frequently considered with skills and education levels strongly linked to return to work decisions (see Section 2.1) and this is determined prior to having a child. The question of 'How do I see myself and my future career?' is also found in the evidence (see Section 2.2, attitudes to work and family). Previous evidence about career decision-making has found that people use a range of sources to inform career decisions. The evidence reviewed in this REA has not found that parents' draw on specific sources of information or advice when making decisions, and this could be an area for further research.

The literature suggests that the decision-making process is complex and the outcome of the decision will depend on the relative importance of each element which will vary between individuals. The evidence presented in Section 2.2 suggests that financial dimensions of any decision are crucial, yet determining an acceptable level of household income will depend on family outgoings, their lifestyle and aspirations. Defining a clear income threshold that makes return to work decisions viable is relative to familial needs, wants and aspirations. Faced with the same set of material circumstances and opportunities, individuals may make different return to work choices depending on their set of personal preferences and motivations.

The evidence suggests that some of the factors that influence decision-making are long-term opportunities or constraints that cannot be quickly or easily altered, but instead may change over generations. These include attitudes to the balance of responsibility for work and family in the household as highlighted in Section 2.1 with evidence from the British Social Attitudes Survey between 1989 and 2012. Other factors can be more readily altered by a change in circumstances, such as when financial support for childcare becomes available through the Early Years Entitlement.

**Figure 4: Opportunities and constraints affecting parents' return to work decisions**



Source: IES, 2017, adapted from Gloster et al (2013)

### 3.3 How return to work decisions are made

The opportunities and constraints affecting parents' decision-making found in the literature can be analysed using the Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour (COM-B) system. The COM-B system was developed following a systematic search of the evidence and consultation with behaviour change experts to identify frameworks of behaviour change interventions. A new framework was developed that shows behaviour is part of an interacting system involving three components: capability, opportunity, and motivation (Michie et al., 2011).

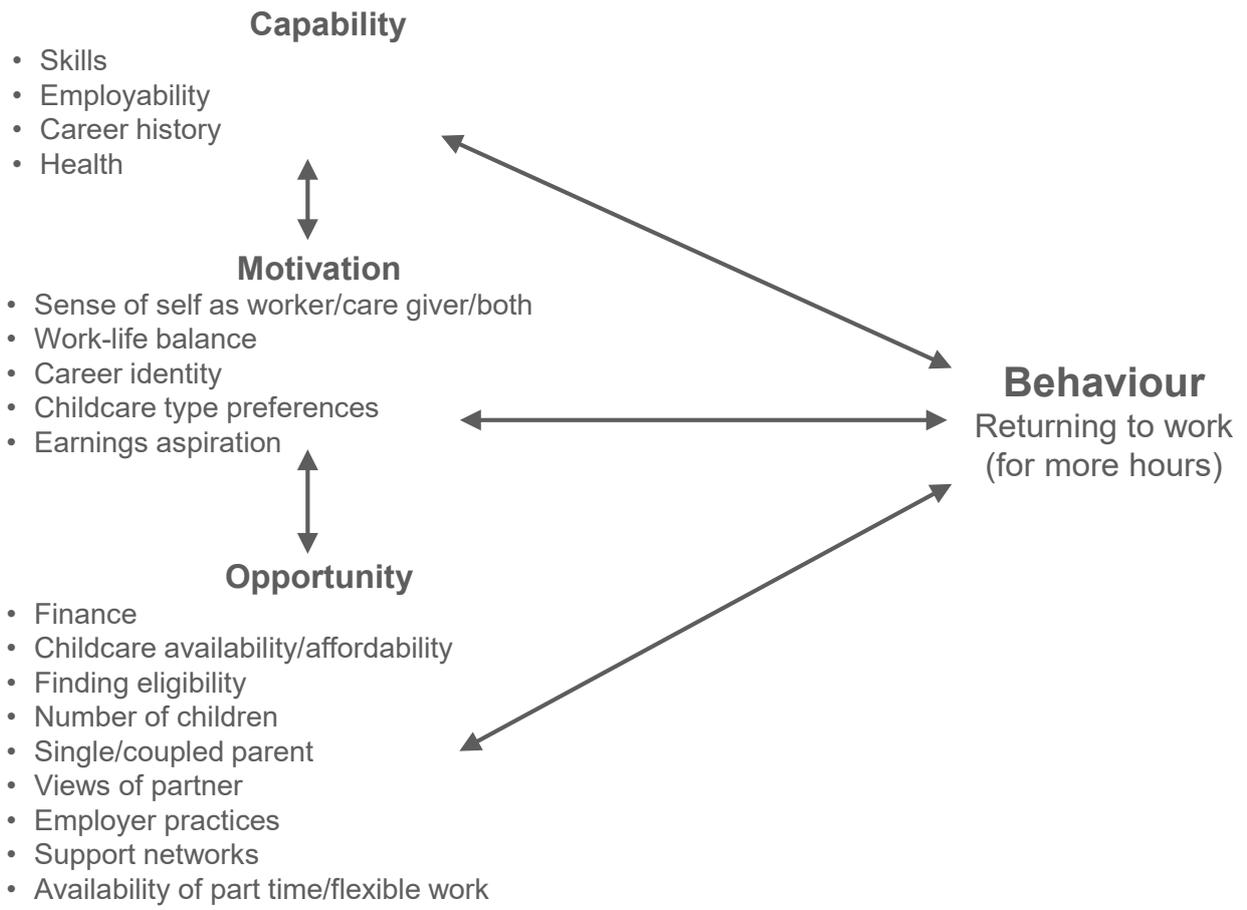
The authors define the aspects of the framework as follows:

- **Capability** is the individual's psychological and physical capacity to engage in the activity concerned. It includes having the necessary knowledge and skills.
- **Opportunity** is defined as all the factors that lie outside the individual that make the behaviour possible or prompt it. Opportunity can be either social or physical.
- **Motivation** is brain processes that energise and direct behaviour, not just goals and conscious decision-making. It includes habitual processes, emotional responding, as well as analytical decision-making. Motivation is therefore automatic or reflective (Michie et al., 2011, p. 4).

Through using this framework we are able to bring together a number of relevant factors covered in the evidence reviewed and to understand how they might interact to drive return to work behaviour. These are summarised in Figure 5.

The three components affecting behaviour are multi-faceted and different aspects of the same dimension may influence decision-making either positively or negatively. For example, looking the dimension of opportunity, the availability of childcare may be received positively if it matches with the parents' working hours. However, the same childcare could be perceived negatively if it is provided in a setting that the parent does not view as satisfactory, or takes up a significant amount of their hourly income from work. In addition, some elements of a dimension may override others in decision-making. In the example above, the parent could either decide that the marginal rate of pay after taking into account childcare and travel costs is too low and outweighs the potential benefits of returning to work.

**Figure 5: Understanding parents' return to work behaviours**



Source: IES, 2017, adapted from Michie et al., 2011

## 4 Key points and implications

The evidence base on parents' decision making regarding return to work and child caring tends to be quite fragmented across a highly disparate literature with some gaps in the evidence base which makes firm conclusions more difficult to draw.

### 4.1 Evidence gaps

Key gaps can be seen as:

- We could find no research on the information parents utilise when making decisions or even the factors that are taken into account and therefore research which explored the influences on decisions more explicitly would be helpful. This could include the experimental provision of information and parents responses to it
- There is relatively little evidence on the considerations of the longer term impact of career breaks on careers and life time earnings
- There is poor evidence on the take up of Shared Parental Leave or of the reasons for of for not taking up by eligible parents
- There is little evidence on the reality of experience of the right to request flexible working; specifically by parents to support childcare arrangement and who is refused leave and on what grounds
- the evidence base appears to be is either small scale studies of factors affecting decisions or large scale reviews of behaviour. Larger studies of the various factors affecting behaviour would enable the choice architecture model to be tested. They would also allow exploration of the relative weight given by different parents to the various influencing factors

Longitudinal research exploring changing views on return to work over time would be helpful in exploring how the different factors influencing choice play out over time.

### 4.2 Factors affecting decisions

Despite the fragmented literature, specific factors have emerged which taken together present a picture of the network of considerations which influences parental decision-making. We have summarised the key studies and their contribution to these findings in Appendix 1.

From the literature we have identified factors that influence:

- **when** parents return to work
- **why** parents return to work
- **contractual features** of the kinds of work they return to (i.e., *how* they return)

- choices regarding **childcare**
- the range of factors that inhibit or support the **likelihood** of returning to work

#### 4.2.1 When

The decision on whether and when to return to work are strongly interrelated in that a decision **not** to return is rarely permanent but is located within a set of conditions that are applicable at a point in time.

There is strong evidence that the factors influencing decision making are highly gendered and men and women have different experiences influenced by the degree to which women are seen as the primary carer. There are also differences in attitudes to the role of parenting and childcare.

The point at which parents decide to return to work is affected by a range of pull and push factors including social attitudes (which can be influenced by ethnicity), the age of their child(ren), their child's emotional or physical health, maternity provision in terms of length of leave entitlement and amount of statutory and employer provided maternity pay, job factors (such as satisfaction, tenure, pay levels, the availability of part time working), employer attitudes to flexible working (or perceptions of employer attitudes), the quality and availability of childcare, household resources, relationship status, and the parent's human capital.

A child's age is the most common determinant on when (if) to return although its effect has diminished over time. Parents may therefore not wish to return to work whilst their child is pre-nursery, pre-primary school or pre-secondary school. Larger families may therefore further delay return. Low pay, lack of job/work flexibility and other child associated factors including health or behavioural problems with children, may all negatively affect whether to return to work.

The ease of return is important. The support or anticipated support of employers through policies, such as enhanced maternity rights, increases the likelihood of return to the same employer/job whilst factors such as labour market attachment and job quality also affect decisions on whether to return to work. Poor employment conditions and practices including low pay and lack of flexibility make return less likely.

Push factors for return can reduce the time spent away from work and include shorter durations of maternity pay or curtailed rights to parental leave. In contrast the point of return is likely to be delayed for those who are entitled to higher levels of maternity pay and leave, or have high levels of household income.

Pull factors include higher levels of education and qualifications; higher levels of job satisfaction and/or tenure. Return is also supported by having family members to help with childcare, and having a partner as opposed to being a single parent.

## 4.2.2 Why parents return

The studies indicate that parents return for two main reasons: extrinsic factors which are normally financial, or for intrinsic reasons such as finding work interesting and meaningful. Work provides aspects of personal identity, enjoyment, and social contacts outside parenting. Parents also return because of a sense of responsibility to their employer (and therefore by implication because of attachment to their employer) and because of concerns to preserve job security or promotion prospects.

## 4.2.3 How do parents return

There is a considerable draw to return to the pre-pregnancy employer but not necessarily to the same role or the same hours as before. Mothers tend to return to part-time work when they return.

Women returners are less likely to return to, or be promoted to, senior roles. The younger the child and the greater the number of children, the greater the penalty on career progression.

Maternal age, the age of the youngest child and maternal educational attainment are all positively associated with number of days worked, although it is worth noting that the likelihood of returning to full time employment has become less sensitive to the age of the youngest child over time. The number of dependent children is negatively associated with hours worked.

## 4.2.4 Childcare choices

If childcare is being provided by a parent, decisions on whether that should be the mother or father are strongly influenced by gendered attitudes on whether mothers should be the key carer. We note evidence that such attitudes are diminishing over time. Those with higher levels of education and/or in higher level occupations are less likely to hold gendered attitudes.

Which parent stops work is also affected by relative pay levels and access to flexible working arrangements (including beliefs around employers' likely reactions towards any such request). There is evidence that policy levers such as levels of paternity leave and paternity pay can affect the likelihood of fathers sharing care.

When parents return to work decisions on **what** alternative forms of childcare to use are influenced by accessibility of informal forms of childcare (grandparents, friends etc.), convenience, availability, cost, quality and flexibility of care. More formal forms of childcare are more likely to be used by those earning higher levels of pay.

## 4.2.5 Factors that support or inhibit return

Policy provision for maternity leave and pay can independently affect the decision to return and the length of absence. Shorter periods of pay encourage early return while job protection increases the likelihood of return.

Policy provision for parental leave has the potential to encourage a more even distribution of childcare responsibilities amongst mothers and fathers and therefore encourage more women to return to work. However, current attempts to encourage more fathers to take parental leave have not been particularly successful, probably because the financial compensation is insufficient and relatively few employers enhance statutory pay levels. As it is early days this picture may change.

The attitudes and approaches of employers towards people with childcare responsibilities is a key factor. Care friendly cultures including access to flexible working, sympathetic managerial attitudes, and non-gendered views on caring all seem to help both return and a better distribution of care among mothers and fathers.

The availability of affordable childcare is an important consideration and becomes harder to access with successive children.

Personal and social attitudes to caring mediate the impact of other factors.

### Conclusion

The greatest influences on parents' decision making appear to be those factors that are relatively immediate rather than long-term. There is greater attention to current financial pressures, or the need to decide on return at the end of parental leave, or the availability of childcare than to considering the gender pay gap or future promotion prospects. This suggests that parents may use incomplete knowledge and information when making decisions but we do not know whether possession of perfect information would alter their choices.

The relative lack of consideration of longer term financial benefits or penalties of caring is consistent with economic and psychological evidence that people prefer immediate returns above longer-term returns (temporal discounting). The low level of influence exerted by factors such as the gender pay gap may occur if information is not readily available to parents on the likely long- term impact of their decisions.

There is also a greater attention to emotional considerations than might be expected from a purely logical decision making model. If parents believe that it is very important that a child is cared for full time by one of its parents this may well have a very strong restraining effect on other factors supporting return to work. Similarly beliefs that a woman should be the primary care giver will limit if, when and how she returns to work. In contrast, if work is an integral part of a woman's identity and is enjoyable and meaningful, return to work is more likely.

These emotional factors are broadly influenced by cultural shifts in gendered expectations and beliefs about caring. This means they may therefore be less amenable to the provision of information sources couched in terms of maximising earnings, unless a link can be made to personal identity and acceptable norms of parental caring practices.

### **4.3 The choice architecture**

Choice architecture helps map the complexity and interconnected nature of the factors that affect decisions and therefore the inherent challenges in creating a typology of parents or hierarchy of factors affecting return to work decisions for different groups based on the available evidence. Further primary research would be required to establish this. The existing evidence suggests some dimensions of difference that are likely to affect return to work behaviour, some of which are determined by an individual's labour market attachment and skills developed prior to pregnancy, as embodied by the factors that are captured in capability in the COM-B model, and others that may only become important during a child's early years, such as consideration of an employer's workplace culture. The evidence suggests that given the variety of opportunities and constraints, some parents' are likely to return to work when they would have preferred to stay at home, and others will stay at home when they would have preferred to return to work. When balancing decision-making factors some households will have several options available to them from which to choose, such as whether or not to return to work (for example if they are supported financially by a partner) and whether to return to work full or part-time, while the choices of other individuals will be restricted by their circumstances or other characteristics.

This report has not found evidence that parents' draw on specific sources of information or advice when making return to work decisions, or whether they are seeking information and advice to inform their decisions at this point. Earlier research about career decision-making has found that individuals can require sources of information and support, but the extent and nature of the any requirements is not known for this group. This could be an area for further research and the points at which government has contact with new parents illustrated in Figure 3 could provide points at which to signpost to existing information sources, such as gov.uk or the National Careers Service.

Another gap based on the evidence reviewed relates to the gender pay gap. There is little evidence to suggest that families consider the long-term impact of return to work decisions specifically on their career earnings. As noted, the factors that are most prevalent in the literature relate to concerns that are more immediate, such as balancing household finances or meeting the needs of their child.

These factors provide a complex set of influences on parents' decision making. One approach to summarising these different effects is to see parents decision-making grounded within an opportunities and constraints framework. This recognises that there

are broadly external influences around labour market context and internal influences of personal circumstances. Within these broad dimensions there are opportunities and constraints (personal, social, childcare and labour market considerations). Finally there are career and work attachment orientations. The relative importance of these elements will vary, so while short-term financial considerations are core, their impact in each individual case is embedded within personal preferences and motivations.

Another approach is to ground decision making within a capability (skill levels, experience etc.), opportunity (finance, childcare, access to flexible working), motivation (a balance of desires between parenting and working) and behaviour system whereby the first three factors influence return to work behaviour.

The overall balance of factors will influence return to work decisions and there is potential for this balance to be shifted by the actions of policy makers and employers to make return more or less likely.

## 4.4 Implications for policy

The literature has highlighted highly gendered influences affecting parents' decisions on whether and when to return to work. To help consider the range of factors we use the Capability, Motivation and Opportunity model shown in Figure 5 to structure the implications of these.

### 4.4.1 Capability

■ Educational level, career decisions, gendered careers
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The capability element of the model refers to skills which influence return to work behaviour and the subsequent impact of parenthood on career and monetary progression.

There are three issues at work here:

- Research suggests that higher skilled, higher educated women are more likely to return to work than their lower educated or skilled peers and to do so more quickly;
- Fathers are also more likely to take parental leave if their spouse has a well-paid/high-skilled job;
- A gender pay gap combined with a low maternal income pre-pregnancy is likely to push women into becoming the primary carer for very young children which in turn contributes to a widening pay gap over time;

This means that the *initial* education and career choices women make are not only important for the likelihood and speed of returning to work but also help shape long-term

career paths and allocation of childcare responsibilities. Specifically, the gendering of career choices often takes men and women in different career directions and this plays a significant role in opening up a gender pay gap before children are born. Any gap in pay influences family decisions on who should take time off to care for very young children and time away from work and reduced working hours then both contribute to widening pay differentials over time.

This suggests a need to counter gender stereotypes and optimise use of careers information, advice and guidance to girls and young women. This could encourage them to raise their aspirations and raise gender pay gap awareness to inform career choices. Such information could flag likely earnings attached to different kinds of education and training courses in further education (FE), HE, and the new 15 occupational routes for technical and professional roles. It may be worth considering drawing out the implications for family income and future opportunities. Influencing young women in their career choices requires careful selection of messengers who are sufficiently similar to the target group and represent stretching but achievable career targets. Positive and accessible role models and engagement of employers to help girls and young women see typically 'male' occupations as open to them is likely to be important.

#### 4.4.2 Motivation

- Lack of consideration of longer term impacts
- Gendered views of primary caring role (related to educational levels)
- Importance of and interest in work
- Employer affiliation

Motivation refers to the emotional and psychological factors that affect decisions parents make regarding return to work. These factors can pull in either direction to encourage or discourage return. Enjoyment of work, having greater investment in work from long tenure with the same employer, running your own business, having a senior role, and wanting interests outside of motherhood all encourage return. Personal identity as a carer, wanting to spend time with their children, gendered beliefs regarding the role of women, and family views on who should be the primary carer, can all discourage return.

More broadly the literature has not produced any strong evidence that parents make their return to work decisions on the basis of information that they seek or receive, especially about outcomes. This suggests parents lack information and may not fully consider the long-term consequences of their decisions, although the absence of data means we do not know if they would behave differently if such information was given.

Given the impact of emotions on decision-making about returning to work, providing information to parents about shifting social attitudes towards working women and any evidence that can be found on men taking parental leave, the proportion of women who return to work, and the impact of working parents on children's emotional and physical

wellbeing could help ensure that their choices are grounded in data rather than assumptions. Promoting role models of working parents including the sharing of childcare may help to offset embedded social attitudes to women as primary carers. Messages may need targeting for those in different circumstances and with different kinds of concerns. It is worth noting that messages may need to appeal to emotional and affective perspectives and anchors as much as rational and economic utilitarian ones.

Further research is required to investigate whether parents need further information and whether they seek it as studies do not examine this question directly. Targeting such information and seeing if this information resulted in changed behaviours would provide evidence as to whether lack of information contributes to sub-optimal decision-making. This could be done at key points such as those identified in Figure 3 in Chapter Three.

Similarly employers can support return by a raft of policies and practices which provide good information and support to support new parents, maintain engagement with and attachment to employment and their employing organisation. This might include information and promotion of shared parental leave, regular updates and methods of keeping in touch for people taking parental leave, and information on rates of return, management training and support to ensure consistent messaging and behaviours across organisations. Employers may also welcome further information to help build a business case for initiatives to retain new parents.

### 4.4.3 Opportunity

- Financial need
- Employer attitudes to parental leave and availability of flexible work options
- Relationship status
- Availability, cost, and quality of childcare

Opportunity considerations cover aspects of the physical and social environment that enable return to work. The literature has identified that financial considerations are a dominant feature. Other opportunity factors include the availability and cost of childcare, the flexibility of employers and whether the parent is in a relationship or not.

Financial considerations have multiple effects, not only on the speed of return but also influencing which parent will take time off to care for children and whether fathers will share parental leave.

Introducing Shared Parental Leave and Statutory Shared Parental Pay has sought to increase the share of leave fathers can take but has had low take up to date. It seems likely that low rates of SSPP and low levels of employer enhancement have failed to provide sufficient incentives. The evidence from other countries suggests that more generous schemes can have a greater impact (see section 2.4) affecting not only take up

of leave to care for very young children but ongoing willingness to share parental responsibilities.

Employers once again have a strong role to play ensuring their policies and practices provide sufficient financial incentives to fathers and that flexible work options are equally available to fathers as well as mothers. Evidence suggests that line managers need to be supported or trained so that they fully understand and support company policy in this regard.

Systematic evidence on rates of return to work for women and men in different sectors is lacking. One option would be to conduct specific analysis of Understanding Society if a sufficient subsample is available. Another option would be to draw on HMRC data linked to data on maternity-related benefits to track rates of return by sector and occupation. This kind of analysis may then help identify those employer segments in most need of targeted action.

Support to facilitate access to and affordability of childcare is also a key potential action. Government support for free childcare for low income families (from 2 years of age) and 15 hours of care for children from 3 years of age have had some effect. However the gap for higher income families may delay speed of return. This needs to be complemented with employers providing sufficient pull factors for return; flexibility, positive attitudes and line manager skills especially for higher income earners. Given the importance of affordable childcare, further work to examine the benefits of subsidising/ reducing childcare costs may help identify its role to support returning to work for parents at different income levels.

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## Appendix 1: Literature grid

Broad consideration	Evidence on influencing factors	Identified studies
When parents return to work	Societal expectations	Park et al., 2013
	Attitudes to parenting	Barnes, 2014
	Child's age	Bashir et al., 2014 Connolly et al., 2016
	Availability of maternity leave and pay	Paull, 2006 Pronzato, 2009
	Ethnicity	Fagan and Norman, 2014
Why parent's return	Balance of factors	Easter and Newburn, 2014 Leach et al., 2006
	Finances	Leach et al., 2006 Baxter, 2008 Pronzato, 2009 Barnes, 2014 Bashir et al., 2011 Smeaton and Marsh 2006, cited in Metcalfe and Rolfe 2010
	Work characteristics	Leach et al., 2006 Baxter, 2008 Wattis and James 2013 Rahim, 2014 Barnes, 2014 Pronzato, 2009 Easter and Newburn, 2014 van Gameren and Ooms 2009

Broad consideration	Evidence on influencing factors	Identified studies
	Maternal identity	Barnes, 2014 Redshaw, 2016 Baxter 2008
	Infant characteristics	Leach et al., 2006
	Family resources/relationships	Barnes, 2014 Easter and Newburn, 2014 Brewer and Paull, 2006, cited in Metcalfe and Rolfe, 2010
Why do some parents not return	Preferences regarding parental care	IFF, 2016 Bashir et al., 2011 Easter and Newburn, 2014 Barnes, 2014
	Gendered views on parenting	Bashir et al., 2011 Barnes, 2014 Strong et al 2013 Easter and Newburn, 2014 van Gameren and Ooms, 2009 Lammi-Taskula, 2008 Fox et al., 2009 Paterna and Martinez, 2006
	Barriers to return	Bashir et al., 2011 IFF, 2016 Wattis and James, 2013
	Interplay of factors	La Valle et al., 2008, via Metcalf and Rolfe 2010 Gameren and Ooms, 2009

Broad consideration	Evidence on influencing factors	Identified studies
How do parents return	Job and hours	IFF, 2016 Wattis and James, 2013 Fagan and Norman, 2014 Gatrell et al. 2014 McIntosh et al., 2012
	Demographic variations	IFF, 2016 Paull, 2006 Wattis and James, 2013 Fagan and Norman, 2014 Gatrell et al. 2014 McIntosh et al., 2012 Connolly et al., 2016 Easter and Newburn, 2014 Baxter, 2008 Fagan and Norman, 2012 Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016 Park et al., 2013
Childcare distribution	Balance of choices	Leach, 2006 Ellison, 2009
	Formal	Leach, 2006 Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016
	Informal	Ellison, 2009 McGinnity et al. 2009

Broad consideration	Evidence on influencing factors	Identified studies
	Demographic variations	van Gameren and Ooms, 2009 Connolly et al. 2016 Lammi-Taskula et al., 2008
	Flexible working	McGinnity et al., 2013 Wattis and James, 2013 IFF and IES, 2014 Tremblay et.al. 2011 Lammi-Taskula et al., 2008
Factors supporting or inhibiting return to work	Policy levers	IFF and IES, 2014 Allen, 2016 Tremblay et.al. 2011 My Family Care/Women's Business Council, 2016 IFF, 2016
	Employer practices	IFF, 2016 Woolnough and Redshaw, 2016 Strong et al., 2008 Gatrell et.al. 2014 Panteli and Pen, 2009 Sullivan, 2015, cited in Brown et al., forthcoming 2017
	Availability of free childcare	Easter and Newburn, 2014 La Valle 2008 in Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010

## Appendix 2: Research method

To capture relevant published and grey literature, a **Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)** was undertaken. This limited the search to key databases, websites and publications, and by date (2006-2016); applied sifting criteria to ensure that only the most relevant, informative studies were reviewed in full, and extracted key information from the ‘best’ examples of evidence. In addition a ‘Review of Reviews’ was used as a means to explore developments over time, and comparative experiences in other countries.

### Search

The search was limited to evidence which was readily accessible online and was targeted toward English evidence. The search strategy was two-pronged with searches of databases and searches of websites as follows:

- Searches were conducted on a restricted number of relevant, academic databases (Table 1).
- Websites of relevant government departments and agencies were examined such as those of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and gov.co.uk.

Primary and secondary search terms are shown in Table 3. These were agreed with GEO during the project’s inception phase; however, were used pragmatically, and refined to ensure search time was maximised.

**Table 1: Recommended databases for search**

Name of database	Description
ProQuest	Database of academic journals, with extensive coverage across social science disciplines including education, political science, psychology, social work, and sociology
CORE	Aggregates all open access research outputs from repositories and journals worldwide
Scopus	Includes abstracts and cited references of over 16,000 peer-reviewed titles from 5,000+ international publishers in the sciences and social sciences

Source: IES 2016

**Table 2: Example search terms**

Primary Search Term(s)	Secondary Search Term(s)
Parental leave	Return to Work
Maternity leave	Childcare
Paternity leave	Decision making
Gender Pay Gap	Roles
Labour Market Outcomes	Responsibilities
	Pay and Conditions

Source: IES 2016

**Table 3: Example combinations of literature search terms and results for selected databases**

Primary search term 1	Secondary Search Term 1	Primary search term 2	Google Scholar	ProQuest		Scopus	University of Brighton
				T	A		
Parental Leave	Return to Work	Gender Pay Gap	c17,200	59	5	9	62
Maternity Leave	Childcare	Labour market outcomes	c17,200	64	7	14	71
Paternity Leave	Decision making	Parental Leave	c17,500	40	4	3	74
Gender Pay Gap	Responsibilities	Maternity Leave	c17,100	65	5	2	26
Labour Market Outcomes	Pay and conditions	Parental Leave	c25,100	12	13	4	32

Source: IES 2016

## Sifting

A long list of articles was sifted by assessing the abstracts and summaries against a set of inclusion criteria agreed with the client. Additionally the sift criteria included a) an assessment of the quality of methodology and b) relevance of findings to the research questions.

From this, a list of articles and reports were prioritised detailed review..

### Weighting and methodological details of literature reviewed

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Weight 14
Allen, V (2016) 'Low shared parental leave take-up is due to pay rate' <a href="http://www2.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2016/09/09/low-shared-parental-leave-take-up-is-due-to-pay-rate-says-research.aspx">http://www2.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2016/09/09/low-shared-parental-leave-take-up-is-due-to-pay-rate-says-research.aspx</a> (accessed 28 February, 2017).	Trade press article. Refers to survey data from <i>My Family Care/Women's Business Council (2016) Shared Parental Leave: Where are we now?</i> (see entry further down). Reason for selection of material included not stated.	Reviews opinion on Shared Parental Leave on the anniversary of its introduction	*
Barnes M (2014) Deciding on Leave: How US women in dual-earner couples decide on maternity leave. <i>Families, Relationships and Societies</i> , 3, 1, 3-18	A series of three in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 heterosexual married couples (16 men and 16 women) in the USA during the transition to parenthood. Eight couples were having their first child and eight were having their second child. Semi structured interviews were conducted at three points in time: (1) during the final trimester of pregnancy, (2) 8-21 weeks after the baby's birth and (3) close to the baby's first birthday. As part of the larger study the husband and wife were each interviewed separately and then a joint interview was conducted, at each interview point. This resulted in a total of three interviews per interview point (and nine interviews per couple).	Findings indicate that although financial reasons played a large role in women deciding to return to work more quickly, issues of professional identity and personal happiness were also important. Additionally, holding gendered parenting ideologies and being uncomfortable with available childcare options were important in the decision to take extended leave.	**

<sup>14</sup> \* equals lowest rating of relevance and \*\*\* equals highest rating of relevance. Relevance assessed according to the following criteria:

**Quantitative research** – sample size (+500 most preferable to allow for subgroup analysis); age of data set (preference given to newest and those in last 10 years); type of survey (preference given to bespoke over large-scale broad); sample frame (objectivity and implications of sampling method); conclusions drawn supported by the data, sample size and framed appropriate to this.

**Qualitative studies** - Scale (ideally 30+ depth interviews); Sample frame (clearly stated, pros and cons, objectivity, diversity); limitations of the method stated; age of data set (preference given to newest and those in last 10 years); conclusions supported by the data and framed appropriate to the sample/approach

**Literature reviews hierarchy** – Systematic, Semi-systematic, REA, Narrative selective, Literature review (criteria: has some structure been applied (e.g. search terms, strategy inclusion exclusion criteria); Is the method clear and limitations understood/set out; Are conclusions reliable given the data gathered?)

<p>Bashir N, Crisp R, Gore T, Reeve K and Robinson D (2011) Families and work: Revisiting barriers to employment, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report 729</p>	<p>The report is based on fieldwork conducted in 2009 for a study into worklessness among people in the social rented sector. It included 67 participants from eight low income neighbourhoods across four LA areas (Derby, Islington, Peterborough and Sheffield). The authors reanalysed data collected from a previous study, revisiting the transcripts looking specifically at the interaction between parenthood and work. The authors tried to get a range of respondents, including in different household situations, with children of different ages and people who were both in and out of work.</p>	<p>In exploring the enduring significance of barriers to work, analysis focussed on the situations and experiences of mothers. This reflected the fact that, while parenting responsibilities rarely impinged on the relationship male respondents had with work, all the women interviewed explained their relationship with the labour market through reference to their role and responsibilities as a mother. This was true for lone parent and two-parent families from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, living in different locations, neighbourhood types and housing tenures. This finding reflects the gendered nature of parenting roles and responsibilities in the UK, most lone parents being women and women typically being the primary carer in two-parent families.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>Braun A, Vincent C and Ball S (2011) Working-class fathers and childcare: the economic and family contexts of fathering in the UK, Community, Work and Family, 14:1, 19-37</p>	<p>This study forms part of a small-scale qualitative UK-based research project on working-class families and their engagement with pre-school childcare in two different localities in inner London: Stoke Newington and Battersea. The study was carried out between spring 2005 and spring 2007. National and local economies were fairly buoyant at the time of the study, with both locales providing easy access to other parts of London and their respective labour markets. Seventy families were interviewed for the study, 36 in Battersea and 34 in Stoke Newington. This paper concentrates on 163 fathers in the study, of whom five were interviewed alone and the others were interviewed together with their female partners. We asked about fathers' involvement and division of household chores in the interviews with the mothers.</p>	<p>The domestic arrangements for caring for young children identified in this study and an earlier study of middle-class families overwhelmingly follow traditional gendered divisions, irrespective of social class background. The pervasiveness of discourses that construe a 'good' family man as financially successful means that the men in this study, whose link to the labour market can be tenuous, are vulnerable to charges by themselves and others of not being a 'good' father. We suggest that beyond the provider discourse, there is a lack of alternatives to conceptualise possible understandings of being and doing fatherhood, which renders fathering an individualised practice, highly dependent on contextual factors.</p>	<p>**</p>
<p>Brown D and Rickard C (forthcoming 2017) Tackling gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps: a progress review, Research Report 107. Equality and Human Rights Commission</p>	<p>The paper used a survey with Likert-type options and open-ended questions to measure both perceived and real impact of motherhood on a woman's professional advancement in a sample of 91 out of 200 women approached (response rate 45%). The sample was purposive and built using snowball techniques among working mothers in professional fields at the managerial level and</p>	<p>The purpose of this paper is to explore the perceptions and realities regarding professional advancement following motherhood. Results show great conflict between work and home life regardless of employer support or family-friendly policies. The paper also seeks to assess conflicting societal attitudes relating to work/family responsibilities and roles, with a</p>	<p>**</p>

	<p>above, all of whom with children requiring some level of care. Survey candidates were encouraged to pass along copies of the survey to colleagues and friends who fit the sample guidelines.</p>	<p>focus on the endemic stereotyping and discrimination towards women in the workplace following motherhood. Working mothers who strive to continue an upward career track following motherhood acknowledge that motherhood has an extreme impact on professional advancement. Many mothers chose to slow down their career path, even when employer policies are family-friendly. One of the most compelling findings in this paper is the disparity between women's perception of their situations and the reality of their actual experiences and behaviours.</p>	
<p>Connolly S et al. (2016) 'Britain's slow movement to a gender egalitarian equilibrium: parents and employment in the UK 2001-13', Work, employment and society, Vol. 30(5), pp. 838-857</p>	<p>The study uses the EU Labour Force Surveys (EU-LFS) 2001-2013 which cover entire populations aged over 15 and provide sample weights (used in this analysis). The dataset provides detailed coverage of employment status, working hours and patterns for all adults within the household. Sample strategy: adult couples aged 16-64 with co-resident dependent (biological, step or adopted) children within their household. Lone parent households are excluded. Sample size: 11,809 couples of working age, of which 4,644 had at least one child under the age of 15 living in the house hold. In 2013 the sample was 11,552 couples of which 4,900 had at least one child under the age of 15 living. Response rate: 60.6%</p>	<p>This article examines the working lives of British couple families across the first decade of the millennium using EU Labour Force Survey data (2001-13). Some growth in dual full-time earners, increased working hours of mothers in part-time employment and a growing proportion of households with 'non-standard' working patterns are all identified, suggesting both a convergence and greater diversity in economic provisioning within parent couple households. Household employment patterns remain strongly associated with maternal education and family size but are becoming less sensitive to the age of the youngest child. The dual full-time earner model is growing in significance for British parents of young children but a new gender egalitarian equilibrium has not yet been reached.</p>	<p>**</p>
<p>Costa Dias M, Elming W and Joyce, R (2016) The Gender Wage Gap. IFS Briefing Note BN186. Institute for Fiscal Studies and ESRC</p>	<p>The analysis uses two data sets: the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) to assess the size of the gender wage gap for different groups and how it has changed over time. Data from LFS is used from 1993 up to the third quarter of 2015. To analyse the dynamics of the gender wage gap as individuals move through their life cycle, we use the BHPS, which ran from 1991 to 2008 as a 'panel' survey which follows the</p>	<p>Differences in hourly wages between men and women remain substantial, despite some convergence. The gender wage gap widens gradually but significantly from the late 20s and early 30s and has not been falling among graduates or those with A levels. The arrival of children accounts for this gradual widening of the gender wage gap with age.</p>	<p>**</p>

	<p>circumstances of the same representative sample of people over time and yields a sample of several thousand individuals each year.</p>	<p>The gradual nature of the increase in the gender wage gap after the arrival of children suggests that it may be related to the accumulation of labour market experience.</p> <p>Taking time out of paid work is associated with lower wages when returning, except for women who are low educated.</p> <p>Working low numbers of hours is associated with slower hourly wage growth for women.</p>	
<p>Easter A and Newburn M (2014) Working it out: New parents' experiences of returning to work, National Childbirth Trust</p>	<p>Online survey completed by 1,162 first-time parents (866 women and 296 men) when their babies were around 8 months old. The sample was spread across all major occupational groups, education levels and ethnicities. However, the sample are older than the average for first-time parents, and there is less representation among women with fewer qualifications. The data are not weighted. The sample was via the NCT (which tends to attract more affluent families).</p>	<p>The survey asked about use of maternity and paternity leave, patterns of employment, and attitudes to parenting roles and work. Key findings provided on the following topics: feelings about returning to paid employment; access to flexible working arrangements; men's views of work demands and fatherhood commitments; attitudes towards parenting roles, work, home and gender.</p>	<p>**</p>
<p>Ellison G, Barker A and Kulasuriya T (2009) Work and care: a study of modern parents, Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 15, Manchester</p>	<p>An online survey of 4,500 parents of children under 16 was conducted and supplemented by 18 qualitative immersion interviews with a range of parents and six online discussion forums with groups of parents who were under-represented in the interviews.</p> <p>A sample of 6,000 parents in GB was taken from the YouGov online research panel and 4,443 parents responded (74% response rate). Results figures are weighted for gender, age, family type, employment status, socio-economic classification and industry sector.</p> <p>Eighteen immersion interviews were conducted which involved in-depth interviewing and 'contextual observation' with parents (together and on their own) and with the family around.</p> <p>Six online forums supported the survey. Each forum had up to 15 people logging into the discussions</p>	<p>This report presents the 'State of the Nation' in regards to parents and their working and caring responsibilities in 2009. The study was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This research project, along with a range of other studies, contributes to new thinking on the future of work, work-life balance issues including parental leave, the role of fathers, employment flexibility, family well-being and the concept of choice.</p>	<p>***</p>

	bulletin board answering questions and interacting. The purpose was to enhance the range of parents taking part - and these groups included gay and lesbian parents, young families, and new families.		
Fagan C and Norman H (2012), "Trends and social divisions in maternal employment patterns following maternity leave in the UK", International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, Vol. 32 Iss 9/10 pp. 544 - 560	<p>Longitudinal data from the UK's Millennium Cohort Study which is a nationally representative survey that follows a cohort of children born around the year 2000 in the UK. Through cross-sectional interviews with the parents or guardians of the cohort children, the MCS covers issues of poverty and wealth, education, employment, parenting and the quality of family life, in the context of changing family forms, labour markets and social attitudes. The first MCS sweep was carried out in 2001-2002 with a cohort of babies aged nine months; the second sweep in 2003-2004 followed the same cohort.</p> <p>Sample strategy: For this analysis, we take the subset of mothers present in both sweep one and two and excluded the small proportion of families (0.43%) headed by a lone father, where the grandmother was the carer of the cohort child or where the mother had a partner of the same sex in either sweep. This produced a final sample of 14,651 households (i.e. 76% of the original merged sample). Of these, approximately 15% were lone mother households in both sweeps[2] with the remainder consisting of mothers living in heterosexual couple households.</p>	<p>The purpose of this paper is to examine whether the social divisions in maternal employment patterns post-childbirth, recorded by earlier studies have persisted for a later cohort of mothers that had a pregnancy in the early 2000s, in the context of an expansion of childcare and other improvements in reconciliation measures.</p> <p>It found that mothers are more likely to be employed, and employed full-time, when their child is aged three if they were employed during the pregnancy and resumed employment within nine months of the birth. The mothers' occupational class, ethnicity, household composition and the working hours of a partner also have independent associations with the probability of maternal employment once the child is aged three.</p>	***
Fox E et al. (2009) Work-family policies, participation, and practices: fathers and childcare in Europe, Community, Work and Family, 12:3, 313-326	<p>The paper draws on qualitative data from a larger project that examined whether a range of innovative social policies from Europe might be applicable to the lives of couples in England. We recruited a purposive sample of low-waged mothers and fathers of children in primary schools in the East Midlands, England and conducted an additional 10 interviews with couples where the mother was not low paid for comparison. The primary criterion for the sample was low-waged mothers in two-parent heterosexual families with children aged 7 or younger. Low-waged was defined according to the adult rate of the 'National Minimum Wage' (NMW):</p>	<p>This paper asks about social policies for fathers' participation in childcare in Europe, and fathers' work family reconciliation practices and ideals, with special reference to the UK. Our qualitative research asked how fathers managed reconciliation between work and family, and how alternative social policy strategies would fit with their practices and ideals. The paper concludes that social policies supporting men's care particularly parental leave dedicated to fathers are needed to enhance gender equality</p>	*

	<p>if women were earning at or below the NMW adult hourly rate (£4.20 per hour in 2003) plus 0.25%. Schools in two counties were selected on the basis of their socio-demographic characteristics: experiencing a severe decline in the local economy during the 1970s and 1980s, followed by a significant growth in service sector occupations, including the growth of retail outlets which are major employers of part-time, low-waged women. Interviews were conducted separately with each parent in their homes; all were tape recorded and fully transcribed. (The total sample size was not stated)</p>	<p>and work family reconciliation for men and for women. The paper concludes that social policies supporting men's care particularly parental leave dedicated to fathers are needed to enhance gender equality and work family reconciliation for men and for women. Proactive work family policies in Europe have effected some change in fathers' commitment to and experience of work and family reconciliation, particularly in Nordic countries. However, there is evidence from Europe that fathers may lack information about their rights to parental and paternity leave. Combined with workplace cultures and practices that discourage men's take up of leave, this may limit the impact of work family policies on fathers' work/family conflict. The evidence suggests that significant social change requires vigorous and proactive policy making that engages with fathers, mothers, employers, and the labour market, and the development of positive models for fathering and men's care across the European Union. The paper concludes that social policies supporting men's care particularly parental leave dedicated to fathers are needed to enhance gender equality and work/family reconciliation for men and for women.</p>	
<p>GEO (2015) Closing the Gender Pay Gap- Government Consultation. Government Equalities Office, 14 July 2015</p>	<p>The consultation received nearly 700 responses, including over 200 from employers and business organisations.</p>	<p>This consultation asked for public views on how to implement the Government's manifesto commitment to require larger private and voluntary sector employers in Great Britain to publish gender pay information.</p> <p>A further report of findings and the Government's response was published in February 2016. They can be summarised as follows: greater gender pay transparency that allows for the publishing and comparison of data from employers; developing gender pay gap regulations. Discussion included the frequency</p>	<p>*</p>

		of publication, implementation costs, scope, publication timetable, supporting employers, compliance, alternative measures and implementation risks. Wider work to close the gender pay gap including girls aspirations, women returning to work, older working women	
Gloster R, Pollard E, Bertram C, Williams J, Hirsh W, Buzzeo J and Henderson L (2011) Adult Career Decision-making: Qualitative research, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Research Paper 132	A sample of approximately 250 individuals that had used the NCS face-to-face and telephone channel between August and November 2012 was drawn at random from all NCS telephone and face-to-face users in the five fieldwork areas. The sample was then checked to ensure that it included a balance of leads with the types of characteristics that the study sought to include and where necessary additional individuals were added to the sample (e.g. to increase the number of people who were employed).	<p>This research aimed to improve the understanding of how adults make career decisions and to explore the awareness, use and satisfaction with the information and support available to adults making career decisions (including, but not limited to that provided by the National Careers Service). The review of literature found that the decision-making process is a complex construct and one that individuals do not undertake using 'rational' behaviour. Behavioural science describes this by separating information processing done by System 1 (which is automatic) and that done by System 2 (which is cognitive). Individuals are not aware of what the automatic part of the brain is doing and when they make decisions, much of the information processing has been done by System 1 before System 2 starts. Therefore people can rule out pieces of information and options before they start to consciously think about making a decision.</p> <p>While some approaches to career decision-making are more planned than others, most respondents were weighing up and assessing the range of influences on career decision-making to some extent and were trying to make the most of their circumstances and constraints. Chance and unplanned events played a role in many interviewees' careers, and how individuals responded to that was captured by the opportunistic decision-making style.</p> <p>Individuals that were most constrained tended to find it more challenging to have a longer-term horizon with regards to decision-making. Indeed some individuals did not actively seek information, and this limited the decision-</p>	***

		making styles they used. Individuals that did not seek information were most likely to make passive or impulsive decisions.	
Gow L and Middlemiss S (2011) Equal pay legislation and its impact on the gender pay gap. International Journal of Discrimination and the Law, 11 (4), pp. 164-186	Discussion paper/literature review. No information provided on the methodology of the literature review including the selection, sifting and screening of papers.	Equal pay legislation has been in existence for over forty years in the UK and the legal rules dealing with equal pay have been consolidated and amended recently with the implementation of the Equality Act 2010. However, despite this problems can still be identified with equal pay in the UK most notably the continued existence of a sizeable gender pay gap. This article outlines the current legal rules on equal pay and analyses their effectiveness in addressing the issue of the gender pay gap. It is clear that a problem such as the gender pay gap is often caused in society by deeply held stereotypical, discriminatory views and in employment by employers (and some employees) with institutionalised discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. These causes of the gender pay gap militate against it being tackled solely by the law (specifically equality legislation). The authors concluded that equal pay reporting should be extended to the private sector, that employers should be held to account for discrimination relating to pay but that the underlying causes of the gender pay gap need to be addressed for any of this to have an impact.	*
Hicks S, Thomas J (2009) Presentation of the Gender Pay Gap, ONS Position Paper, Office for National Statistics, 4 November	The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) principal source for structural earnings statistics is the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees in all industries and occupations. ASHE is based on a 1% sample of employee jobs taken from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) PAYE records. Information on earnings and hours is obtained from employers and treated confidentially. ASHE does not cover the self-employed nor does it cover employees not paid during the reference period.	Monitoring the difference in men's and women's pay is important for understanding the impact of equal pay legislation and other policies aimed at reducing inequality between men's and women's pay. The review finds that there is no one measure that is appropriate as a single measure of such a complex issue. ONS will headline a set of measures to look at the differences in men's and women's pay, rather than concentrating on just full-time employees, in both the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and the annual Civil Service Statistics statistical bulletins.	*

		<p>The set of measures will comprise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All female employees' average pay compared with all male employees' average pay</li> <li>• Female full-time employees' average pay compared with male full-time employees' average pay</li> <li>• Female part-time employees' average pay compared with male part-time employees' average pay</li> </ul>	
<p>House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2016) Gender Pay Gap, Second Report of Session 2015-2016, March 2016</p>	<p>ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2015 provisional results</p>	<p>Structural factors are the key cause of the gender pay gap. These include occupational segregation; the part-time pay penalty; women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid caring; and women's concentration in low-paid, highly feminised sectors.</p> <p>There is clear evidence flexible working benefits the UK economy and individual employers. However, a culture of presenteeism and a lack of creative thinking about job design are hampering progress towards flexibility as the norm. Too few employers are considering the benefits of offering jobs as open to flexible working.</p> <p>If Government is to achieve its objective of reducing the gender pay gap it needs a more effective policy on shared parental leave (SPL). Current weaknesses can be addressed by three months paid paternal leave for second parents.</p> <p>The first task of the Government's new ministerial group on the gender pay gap should be to create a National Pathways into Work scheme for harnessing the skills and experience of women over 40.</p> <p>The Department for Business and Skills should develop industrial strategies for low paid highly feminised sectors, beginning with the care sector.</p>	<p>*</p>

<p>IFF (2016) Pregnancy and Maternity Related Discrimination and Disadvantage: Experiences of Mothers, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Manchester</p>	<p>Survey interviews with 3,254 mothers and 60 follow-up in-depth interviews covering the experiences of mothers working while pregnant, on maternity leave and returning to work as the mother of a young baby. A separate strand of research was also undertaken with employers across Great Britain involving 3,034 survey interviews with employers and 49 follow-up interviews.</p>	<p>There have been significant changes in the regulation of family-friendly working arrangements over the last decade, which also have had an impact on workplace management of pregnancy and maternity. Despite the legislation, there is some evidence that women still experience discrimination because of pregnancy or maternity; that some employers may not fully understand their obligations towards pregnant women, those on maternity leave, or those returning from maternity leave; and that employees may not be fully aware of their rights or able to secure access to redress.</p> <p>Many mothers experienced barriers to raising complaints and concerns with employers; and experiences of those who had were often negative. Three in four mothers (77%) reported a negative or possibly discriminatory experience. Around one in five mothers (22%) reported raising these issues.</p> <p>Despite the prevalence of mothers reporting any negative or possibly discriminatory experience (77%), two thirds of mothers (66%) reported that their employer willingly supported their needs as both a pregnant woman and as a mother of a young baby.</p> <p>Three in five mothers (62%) reported that their employer initiated a discussion about potential risks arising from their pregnancy.</p> <p>The majority of mothers felt they had or were having the right amount of contact with their employers while on maternity leave. However a quarter of mothers (26%) were more likely to report too little contact with their employer while on maternity leave</p>	<p>***</p>

		<p>Most mothers returned to the same employer following maternity leave. This was generally to the same job title and description they held before maternity leave (83% of returners).</p> <p>Around one in 20 (6%) mothers reported being made redundant at some point during pregnancy, maternity leave or on return from maternity leave.</p> <p>Over two thirds (68%) of mothers made a request for at least one flexible working practice. The most popular type of flexible working requested was to work part-time instead of full-time (45%). For most types of flexible working, the majority of mothers from their perspective (around three in four) had their requests approved.</p> <p>One in five mothers (22%) who returned to work from maternity leave continued breastfeeding. One in five mothers (19%) that had stopped breastfeeding stated that returning to work had influenced their decision.</p> <p>The majority of mothers surveyed reported that they were currently in work (77%). Among respondents who were not in work, one in 12 mothers (8%) said that they were not looking for work. The main reasons given were that mothers wanted to look after their children themselves (75%), they could not find a job that pays enough to pay for childcare (52%), they could not find suitable childcare (45%), mothers could not find a job with the right hours (36%) or they could not find a job in a suitable location (24%).</p>	
<p>IFF and IES (2014) The Fourth Work-Life Balance Employer Survey (2013), BIS Research Paper No. 184, BIS</p>	<p>The Fourth Work-Life Balance Employer Survey (WLB4) involved 2,011 telephone interviews conducted in 2013 with establishments in Great Britain with at least five employees on the payroll.</p>	<p>The main aims of the 2013 survey were to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated, reliable data on awareness, provision, take-up and demand in relation to</li> </ul>	<p>***</p>

	<p>The interviews were conducted with the most senior contact at the site with responsibility for human resource and personnel issues or for general management issues.</p>	<p>work-life balance arrangements and on employers' perceptions of positive benefits and detrimental impacts arising from the provision of these arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• robust evidence for evaluation of the Government's initiatives on the work-life balance framework since the previous survey, particularly those covered by the Work and Families Act 2006. These include the extension of the right to request flexible working to parents of children under the age of 17 (2009), to co-resident carers (2007) and the introduction of Additional Paternity Leave implemented from April 2011</li> <li>• a robust baseline from which to monitor and evaluate anticipated legislative initiatives in this area, including the planned extension to the right to request flexible working, a new system of shared parental leave</li> </ul> <p>Statistical analysis shows that: the number of flexible working arrangements available primarily depends on the size of the establishment; job sharing has decreased reducing hours for a limited period and the use of flexitime have increased. Employers were most likely to have experienced requests for working reduced hours for a limited period. Most employers who had received requests were able to accept all of those received.</p> <p>Occupational maternity pay schemes consisted of an average of 15 weeks full pay and six weeks part pay. 10% of employers with female employees returning from maternity leave in the previous two years had experienced difficulties in keeping open jobs for women on maternity leave</p>	
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<p>Lammi-Taskula, J (2008) Doing Fatherhood: Understanding the Gendered Use of Parental Leave in Finland, <i>Fathering</i>, 6, 2, 133- 148</p>	<p>Survey data collected in 2001 from 1371 fathers who had children born in 1999. The sample is drawn from parents surveyed in the Parental Leave Study by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health in Finland 2001-2002. The respondents were selected from the registers of the National Insurance Institute (NII). Two samples were constructed: a random sample of 5500 mothers who had received maternity and parental benefit, and a partly targeted sample of 2960 fathers of children born in 1999. The response rate among fathers was 48% (N = 1413). Compared to national statistics, the fathers in the sample are older than the general population of benefit recipients. The fathers' age ranges from 21 to 57 years, and the mean age was 35 years. In order to make the fathers' data more representative of the population, an age weight was applied in the analysis.</p>	<p>In families with young children, parental practices are usually gendered: mothers do more unpaid care work, while fathers spend more time in paid employment. Recent efforts in the Nordic countries to promote equal sharing of childcare responsibility between parents have resulted in increases of fathers' take-up of parental leave. The parents' reports suggested that the division of labour in families was negotiated between socio-economic rationality and prevailing ideologies of motherhood, fatherhood, and gender equality. Two aspects were significant for the likelihood of fathers' sharing parental leave with mothers: the mother's position in the labour market (the higher her position in the labour market the more likely the father is to share parental leave and child rearing responsibilities) and gender ideology related to care and breadwinning responsibilities (where the father's role is seen as one of breadwinning and the mother a full-time carer as opposed to a more modern ideology of equality across both spheres)</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>Leach P et al. (2006) "Child Care Before 6 Months of Age: A Qualitative Study of Mothers' Decisions and Feelings About Employment and Non-maternal Care", <i>Infant and Child Development</i> 15: 471-502</p>	<p>Sample size: 57 employed mothers of infants less than seven months old in the UK. Sample strategy: The sample of 57 mothers with children aged less than seven months was drawn from the main sample of 1201 mothers taking part in a five year prospective study of child care. (<a href="http://www.familieschildrechildcare.org">http://www.familieschildrechildcare.org</a>). The mean age of the mothers interviewed was 32.0 years, just over half had a boy, 7 were from ethnic minorities and English was not the first language of 5. The majority were in two parent families and they were predominantly in managerial or professional occupations, reflecting the fact that English mothers who use child care relatively early are more likely to be in higher status occupations</p>	<p>Employment of women while their children are infants has increased in the UK in the last decade. This study examined retrospective reports of planning child care and contemporaneous feelings about the child care they were using. Issues addressed included mothers' reasons for returning and time of return to employment, their theoretical preferences among a range of child care types and providers and the process of making actual choices, including the range and types of advice received and the involvement of fathers. Mothers were also encouraged to discuss their feelings about how child care was working out once the infant was settled.</p> <p>Almost three-quarters of the mothers 71% reported having chosen their child care type before their child was born and most 96% said</p>	<p>***</p>

		<p>that the choice they had made earlier still felt right. The most common sources of information selected from a list of choices, were leaflets from the clinic or library 30%; or other print media such as books, magazines and newspapers 26% (see Table 3). Information was also obtained from friends, at mother and baby groups and from family members, but not very often from antenatal classes 7%: Almost a third of the mothers obtained information after their babies were born by talking to health visitors 32%:</p> <p>Continuing concerns expressed by mothers included the importance of open communication with caregivers, their desire to keep control over infants' daily lives and upbringing, worries about infants' safety and concerns about the levels of cognitive stimulation they received.</p>	
<p>McIntosh, B., McQuaid, R., Munro, A. and Dabir-Alai, P. 2012, "Motherhood and its impact on career progression", <i>Gender in Management: An International Journal</i>, vol. 27, no. 5, pp. 346-364</p>	<p>This study used the Scottish workforce database of 46,565 registered nurses in the NHS from the start of October 2000 to the end of September 2008, supplied by the ISD of the Health Department of the Scottish Government. The data analysed included all registered nursing grades from entry level (Whitley council grade "D") to the most senior (grade "I") in both full-time and part-time employment. Part-time working is defined by the NHS as anything less than 30 hours worked per week (ISD, 2009). The analysis excludes temporary "bank" nursing staff or external agency staff working on an ad hoc basis.</p>	<p>After many years of equal opportunities legislation, motherhood still limits women's career progress even in a feminized occupation such as nursing. While the effect of motherhood, working hours, career breaks and school aged children upon career progression has been discussed widely, its actual scale and magnitude has received less research attention. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of these factors individually and cumulatively. The results indicate: motherhood has a regressively detrimental effect on women's career progression. However, this is a simplistic term which covers a more complex process related to the age of dependent children, working hours and career breaks. The degree of women's restricted career progression is directly related to the school age of the dependent children: the younger the child the greater the detrimental impact. Women who take a career break of greater than two years see their careers depressed and restricted. The</p>	<p>***</p>

		results confirm that whilst gender has a relatively positive effect on male career progression; a women's career progression is reduced incrementally as she has more children, and part-time workers have reduced career progression regardless of maternal or paternal circumstances.	
McGinnity F, Murray A and McNally, S (2013) Mothers' Return to Work and Childcare Choices for Infants in Ireland, Growing Up in Ireland	The primary sampling unit was the nine-month-old infant born between December 2007 and May 2008 who were randomly selected from the Child Benefit Register. Interviews with the mother of the infant were conducted in the home during the period September 2008 to March 2009. The response rate was 65% and a total of 11,134 infants and their families took part in the survey, representing approximately one-in-seven of the total infant population for that cohort. The sample was reweighted to ensure that it is representative of the full population of 73,600 nine-month-olds resident in Ireland at the time of the fieldwork.	<p>This report investigates three key research questions relating to the care of infants in Ireland: the characteristics of those mothers who take up paid employment before their infant is nine months old, and when exactly they do so; the extent and nature of non-parental childcare for infants; and the association between childcare and infant health. The report considers key features of the labour market and maternity leave and childcare policy in Ireland. This research found that relatively few mothers in Ireland returned to work before the infant was six months old. More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early returns (before 6 months) were more likely to be by self-employed mothers, young mothers or lone mothers.</li> <li>• Those who returned in the 8-9 month period were more likely to be highly educated, older, Irish and mothers living in a couple.</li> <li>• Those who had not yet returned at nine months tended to be low-educated mothers, and either very young or older mothers, and lone mothers.</li> <li>• Highly educated mothers were more likely to return to work than low-educated mothers, but only when paid leave had ended.</li> <li>• Mothers of three or more children were much more likely to have been out of the labour market prior to childbirth, and their employment rates at nine months were lower than those with one or two children.</li> </ul>	***

<p>Michie S, Van Stralen M and West R (2011), 'The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions', Implementation Science, 6:42</p>	<p>A systematic search of electronic databases and consultation with behaviour change experts were used to identify frameworks of behaviour change interventions. These were evaluated according to three criteria: comprehensiveness, coherence, and a clear link to an overarching model of behaviour. A new framework was developed to meet these criteria. The reliability with which it could be applied was examined in two domains of behaviour change: tobacco control and obesity</p>	<p>Improving the design and implementation of evidence-based practice depends on successful behaviour change interventions. This requires an appropriate method for characterising interventions and linking them to an analysis of the targeted behaviour. There is a plethora of frameworks for behaviour change interventions, but it is not clear how well they serve this purpose. This paper evaluates these frameworks, and develops and evaluates a new framework aimed at overcoming their limitations.</p> <p>At the centre of a proposed new framework is a 'behaviour system' involving three essential conditions: capability, opportunity, and motivation (what we term the 'COM-B system'). This forms the hub of a 'behaviour change wheel' (BCW) around which are positioned the nine intervention functions aimed at addressing deficits in one or more of these conditions; around this are placed seven categories of policy that could enable those interventions to occur.</p> <p>Interventions and policies to change behaviour can be usefully characterised by means of a BCW comprising: a 'behaviour system' at the hub, encircled by intervention functions and then by policy categories. Research is needed to establish how far the BCW can lead to more efficient design of effective interventions</p>	<p>***</p>
<p>My Family Care/Women's Business Council (2016) Shared Parental Leave: Where are we now?</p>	<p>Combined survey of over 1,000 parents and 200 businesses (HR Directors). No further information was provided on the demographic characteristics of the parents, size and sector of the businesses or representativeness of the sample.</p>	<p>Over half the employers surveyed enhance Shared Parental Pay (SPP) and most of these match SPP with their Maternity Pay; the majority of employers enhance both Maternity and Paternity Pay. The main reasons cited for enhancing SPP are the importance of being consistent with their organisation's culture, talent retention, and employee engagement. For those employers who do not enhance SPP the potential costs involved and the view that they would be better off 'waiting and seeing' were the main reasons.</p>	<p>**</p>

<p>ONS (2013), Full Report - Women in the labour market, UK September 2014</p>	<p>Longitudinal Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey data is the largest household study in the UK. Data are used from 1971-2013.</p> <p>A sample of households is selected at random from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File. Once selected, a household cannot be replaced by another household as this would affect the representativeness of the sample.</p> <p>The charts and all related figures from the Annual Population Survey (APS) and the Labour Force Survey from charts 1-3 use person datasets. The charts and all related figures from the remaining Labour Force Survey charts use the household datasets as most of the analysis has comparisons with and without children.</p> <p>Most of the data in this report is not seasonally adjusted so may differ slightly to the headline figures published monthly. The exception is the first paragraph and chart that uses the headline seasonally adjusted figures from 1971 onwards.</p>	<p>The key points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising employment for women and falling employment for men over 40 years</li> <li>• Men have consistently higher employment rates than women above the age of 22</li> <li>• Employment rates for women are lowest in Northern Ireland and London</li> <li>• Birmingham has the lowest employment rate among the smaller areas</li> <li>• Men with children are more likely to work than those without - opposite picture for women</li> <li>• The employment rate gap between mothers in a couple and lone mothers is smaller for those with older children</li> <li>• Men tend to work in professional occupations associated with higher levels of pay than women</li> <li>• Women dominate employment within caring and leisure occupations</li> <li>• The number of women working within managerial roles is slightly higher than the EU average</li> <li>• Female graduates are more likely to work in a slightly lower skilled occupation group than men</li> <li>• Men make up the majority of workers in the top 10% of earners for all employees but the gap is lower for those under 30</li> </ul>	<p>*</p>
<p>ONS (2017) Statistical bulletin UK labour market: Feb 2017. Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment related statistics for the UK</p>	<p>Labour Force Survey data</p> <p>The sample consists of approximately 40,000 responding UK households and 100,000 individuals per quarter. Respondents are interviewed for 5 successive waves at 3 monthly intervals with 20% of the sample being replaced every quarter. The LFS is intended to be representative of the entire UK population.</p>	<p>1. Main points for October to December 2016</p> <p>Estimates from the Labour Force Survey show that, between July to September 2016 and October to December 2016, the number of people in work increased, the number of unemployed people was little changed, and the number of people aged from 16 to 64 not working and not seeking or available to work (economically inactive) decreased.</p> <p>There were 31.84 million people in work, 37,000 more than for July to September 2016 and</p>	<p>*</p>

		<p>302,000 more than for a year earlier.</p> <p>There were 23.29 million people working full-time, 218,000 more than for a year earlier. There were 8.55 million people working part-time, 84,000 more than for a year earlier.</p> <p>The employment rate (the proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 who were in work) was 74.6%, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.</p> <p>There were 1.60 million unemployed people (people not in work but seeking and available to work), little changed compared with July to September 2016 but 97,000 fewer than for a year earlier.</p> <p>There were 877,000 unemployed men, little changed compared with July to September 2016 but 48,000 fewer than for a year earlier.</p> <p>There were 720,000 unemployed women, little changed compared with July to September 2016 but 50,000 fewer than for a year earlier.</p> <p>The unemployment rate was 4.8%, down from 5.1% for a year earlier. It has not been lower since July to September 2005. The unemployment rate is the proportion of the labour force (those in work plus those unemployed) that were unemployed.</p> <p>There were 8.86 million people aged from 16 to 64 who were economically inactive (not working and not seeking or available to work), 31,000 fewer than for July to September 2016 and 61,000 fewer than for a year earlier.</p> <p>The inactivity rate (the proportion of people</p>	
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		<p>aged from 16 to 64 who were economically inactive) was 21.6%, slightly lower than for July to September 2016 (21.7%) and lower than for a year earlier (21.8%).</p> <p>Latest estimates show that average weekly earnings for employees in Great Britain in nominal terms (that is, not adjusted for price inflation) increased by 2.6%, both including and excluding bonuses, compared with a year earlier.</p>	
<p>Panteli N and Pen S (2009) Empowering women returners in the UK high- tech industry, Personnel Review, Vol. 39 Iss: 1, pp.44 - 61</p>	<p>The research focusses on the evaluation of the impacts that 138 beneficiaries experienced when participating in the various support schemes in information technology, engineering and communications (ITEC) sector.</p> <p>(1) Mentoring circles.  (2) Career workshops.  (3) Job-based training - placement.  (4) Funded postgraduate study (MSc degrees).  (5) Training courses and other professional qualifications</p> <p>The evaluation incorporated a six-pronged approach, which included feedback questionnaires, focus groups, logbooks, documentation and informal interviews. Feedback questionnaires were given at the end of a workshop, training or other events. In addition, observations took place during the organised workshops.</p>	<p>The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the effectiveness of “return to work” schemes by examining their perceived usefulness and their impact on beneficiaries’ attempts to return to employment. The diverse schemes delivered both individually and collectively, allied with the opportunities to explore, interact and share experiences, concerns and ideas, have helped to empower participants and increase their opportunities to return to work.</p> <p>Equalitec had recruited 138 beneficiaries over the course of the programme. At the time of writing, there were still 70 active beneficiaries of whom three were on placement. 24 women went back to employment.</p> <p>The study can be used by employers, government and industry associations to influence socially-responsible and ethically aware practices that would advance women’s employment in high-tech jobs.</p>	<p>**</p>
<p>Park A, Bryson C, Clery E, Curtice J and Phillips M (eds) (2013), British Social Attitudes: the 30th Report, London: NatCen Social Research</p>	<p>. Sample size equals 3248. The structure of the questionnaire can be found at <a href="http://www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk">www.bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk</a>. The people selected to participate in the survey are chosen using a technique called random probability sampling. This</p>	<p>Female participation in the labour market has increased markedly over the past 30 years. Both men and women in Britain’s couple families now tend to work, albeit with women often working part-time when children are young. This paper addresses whether this change has been</p>	<p>***</p>

	<p>technique ensures that everyone has a fair chance of being picked to take part and the results are representative of the British population. Once selected, participants are interviewed in their homes by one of NatCen's interviewers.</p>	<p>accompanied by a decline in support for a traditional division of gender roles in the home and workplace and whether women's involvement in unpaid labour within the home declined at the same time as their participation in the labour market has risen.</p> <p>Gender equality in terms of who does the bulk of the chores and who is primarily responsible for looking after the children has made very little progress in terms of what happens in people's homes. Men's uptake of unpaid domestic work is slow, and women continue to feel that they are doing more than their fair share.</p>	
<p>Paterna C and Martinez C (2006) Fathers and Gender Traditionalism: Perception of Inequality and Life Roles, <i>The Spanish Journal of Psychology</i>, 2006, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 171-181</p>	<p>Survey of 95 fathers out of 130 questionnaires distributed to those employed in the service sector (51.25% as follows: 8.75% in educational centres, 2.5% in health centres, 16.25% in administrative posts, and 23.75% in business), in industry (43.19%), and in building (5.57%). In terms of educational level, 45% completed compulsory secondary education, 37.5% had completed intermediate level, and 17.5% had university degrees. The mean age was 42 years (SD = 9.92), and the average number of children was two.</p> <p>Questionnaire was used to measure gender roles made up of 24 Likert-type formatted on the following variables: sociodemographic and socio-work variables; traditional gender roles (or traditionalism); paternal feelings; perception of inequality; Work centrality: and life roles.</p>	<p>This work analyses the traditional view of gender roles and the perception of inequality, as well as levels of satisfaction with other life roles and their relevance as a function of some gender and sociodemographic variables. The results show that men do not maintain a very traditional gender ideology with regard to role distribution and they still consider the paternal role and feelings as the most important thing in their lives. However, the couple relationship gives them the most satisfaction. Level of traditionalism and age were the two significant predicting variables of perception of inequality of men and women.</p>	*
<p>Paull G (2006) The impact of children on women's paid work, <i>Fiscal Studies</i>, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 473-512</p>	<p>The analysis uses data from the first 13 waves of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), covering the years 1991 to 2003.</p> <p>One section focuses on employment changes around the time of childbirth using a sample 2070 of mothers with a child born in the last 12 months or who have taken part in a previous interview (1651 of the sample) The sample also includes step, adopted and fostered children currently living in the household with a date of birth since the previous</p>	<p>This paper investigates how and when differences in work behaviour between men and women develop, focusing on the evolution of the gender gaps over the period of family development. The findings support the theory that gender differences in the formal labour market stem from the presence of children in the home and that childbirth and children entering school are critical times in women's employment. Births mark a dramatic decline in</p>	***

	<p>interview or in the previous 12 months in the absence of a prior interview.</p>	<p>participation in work for women, while school entry marks an important, but not dramatic, rise in work participation . The length of absence from work following a subsequent birth is closely related to whether the mother was in work between births, while maternity pay and leave entitlements appear to influence the precise timing of the return to work. In addition, a return to work following birth is often only temporary. The gradual decline in women's relative wages following the first birth appears to stem from the accumulation of several shorter periods of unusually low wage growth for women around the times of birth and school entry. There is also a sharp movement into part-time work for women following childbirth and a transition towards non-permanent positions and non-supervisory roles at both critical points.</p>	
<p>Rahim F (2014) Work-family attitudes and career interruptions due to childbirth, Review of Economics of the Household, Vol.12, Iss. 1, p:177-205</p>	<p>Study uses latent class analysis of The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth of 1979 (NLSY79) which consists of a sample of individuals in the United States who were between 14 and 22 years of age in 1979 and the Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (C-NLSY79) are the children born to female respondents of the NLSY79. The NLSY79 contains information about a mother and her partner or husband including age, race, education, marital status and work history (annually from 1979 to 1992 and biennially onwards). It also contains information about her attitudes on gender roles collected in 1979, 1982, 1987 and 2004 and her attitudes on work and the family collected in 1979 and 1982 during teenage years before entering the labour market and becoming mothers.</p>	<p>This paper examines the impact of attitudes on gender roles, work and the family on the duration of career-interruptions due to childbirth. Three different classes of mothers are identified based on their attitudes: home-oriented, adaptive and career-oriented mothers. Controlling for observable individual and family characteristics as well as the institutional and economic environment, home-oriented mothers have more children and take longer leaves for each child than adaptive mothers, who themselves take longer leaves than career-oriented mothers. The difference is more marked among mothers who have been working during the last quarter before giving birth: while 80% of the career-oriented mothers return to work after 6 months, only 70 % of home-oriented mothers do so. Pre-motherhood and pre-labour-market attitudes of mothers are used in the determination of classes to avoid reverse causation of motherhood and work experiences on attitudes. These results cast doubts on the effectiveness of one-size-fits-all-policies and</p>	<p>*</p>

		make the case for flexible policies that allow for different combinations of wages and maternity-leaves.	
Strong E. A., De Castro R, Sambuco D, Stewart A, Ubel P.A, Griffith K. A, Jagsi R (2008) Work-Life Balance in Academic Medicine: Narratives of Physician-Researchers and Their Mentors, Journal of General Internal Medicine 28 (12): 1596-1603	In-depth, semi-structured interviews with 128 selected recipients (men and women) of prestigious K08 and K23 career development awards from the USA NIH between 1997 and 2009, (100 recipients) and their academic mentors (28) generating 54 interviews with members of matched mentor-mentee pairs. Purposive sampling was used to select individuals from a variety of medical specialties and academic institutions including those who remained at their original institution at time of K award, those who had changed institutions, and those who had left academic positions (as determined by internet searching), as well as those who had gone on to attain R01 funding and those who had not.	Five themes emerged related to work-life balance: (1) the challenge and importance of work-life balance for contemporary physician researchers, (2) how gender roles and spousal dynamics make these issues more challenging for women, (3) the role of mentoring in this area, (4) the impact of institutional policies and practices intended to improve work-life balance, and (5) perceptions of stereotype and stigma associated with using these programmes. In academic medicine, in contrast to other fields in which a lack of affordable childcare may be the principal challenge, barriers to work-life balance appear to be deeply rooted within professional culture. A combination of mentorship, interventions that target institutional and professional culture, and efforts to destigmatize reliance on flexibility (with regard to timing and location of work) are most likely to promote the satisfaction and success of the new generation of clinician-researchers who desire work-life balance.	**
Tremblay, D and Genin, É (2011). Parental leave: An important employee right, but an organizational challenge. Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 23(4), 249-268	The case presented is based on qualitative and quantitative methods.. The survey was carried out in 2007-8 amongst the members of a metropolitan police service in Québec (Canada); The questionnaire was e-mailed to all members of the PS, but not all employees use their professional email so some employees would not have received the message. 200 completed questionnaires were received, 104 from men and 96 from women.  Qualitative data was gathered from 53 semi-structured 60-minute interviews with police service employees. Interviews were conducted individually and confidentially. The sample was made of 28 women - of which 20 were policewomen, 3	While parental leave is considered an important right for employees, its application in different work environments is not always straightforward. It is worthwhile to study the implementation in the workplace of the parental leave policy introduced in Québec, since this policy has unique characteristics not found anywhere else in North America.. Our results, both quantitative and qualitative, outline significant differences between the perception of all types of parental leave by respondents who have already taken it up and those who have not yet done so. Analysis of these differences brings to light the fact that formal support is not enough: management	***

	supervisors or sergeant, 2 managers, and the others office workers - and 26 men - of which 16 were policemen and the others commanders, supervisor or chief of division. Respondents were aged between 26 and 55.	needs to make sure that employees really feel supported by their work environment when they taking up leave and that they do not feel that they have to pay for it in terms of career opportunities or advancement.	
van Gameren, E and Ooms, I. (2009). Childcare and labor force participation in the Netherlands: The importance of attitudes and opinions. <i>Review of Economics of the Household</i> , 7(4), 395-421	Data comes from the “Use of childcare” survey organised by The Netherlands Institute of Social Research (SCP) and held in March 2004 covering 737 two parent households., which contains information on number of working hours of both parents, number of childcare hours for different modes of care, prices paid for these different modes, net income of the household, mother’s age, level of education, mothers’ intentions, attitudes and opinions with regard to childcare and labor force participation. The analysis is restricted to two-parent households with at least one pre-school age child (children up to and including 3 years old). Children of 4 years of age or above are not included, since they attend school during the day and hence decisions with regard to childcare in their case are essentially different. Comparison with information from other statistics shows that this dataset is representative of our research population.	'We analyze the joint decision of participating in the labor force and using paid childcare made by mothers in two-parent households with pre-school age children in the Netherlands'. Both the choice to use paid childcare and the number of hours taken up are analysed. While acknowledging potential endogenous selection effects and bidirectional causality implying problems of endogeneity with the attitudes and opinions, our results show that, in addition to economic factors, attitudes and opinions are important when explaining the decision to participate in the labour force and to use paid childcare services, but they are less important when it comes to the decision on the number of hours for which childcare is used.	***
Wattis, L and James, L. (2013) Exploring order and disorder: Women’s experiences balancing work and care <i>European Journal of Women’s Studies</i> 20(3) 264-278	The article is based on qualitative interview data (and focus groups) from a European Social Fund project (ESF) research project which explored working mothers’ experiences of work-life balance and employment progression, and their engagement with government and workplace family friendly policies in the UK and the Netherlands. This article is based on data from the UK interviews. Sixty-seven interviews and three focus groups were carried out in the UK with mothers working in different occupations and industrial sectors. Of the women interviewed, 62% worked full-time with the remaining 38% working part-time (30 hours a week or less). Middle-class women were easier to access and more willing to be interviewed; consequently, the majority of participants were middle-class and employed in professional and associate professional	This article explores how working mothers negotiate the often competing spheres of paid work and unpaid domestic and care work. Drawing upon qualitative data from a varied sample of women, it discusses the impact of workplace demands on home life, women’s attempts to contain the domestic sphere so as not to disrupt paid work, and the emotional conflicts inherent to combining dual roles. In addition, the article applies Bauman’s concepts of order and disorder to women’s experiences of work-care negotiation. Whilst it is recognised that Bauman’s work largely ignores gender, his discussion of solid modernity with its emphasis on order and the transition to liquid modernity with its emphasis on disorder provide a useful theoretical lens through which to illuminate	**

	<p>occupations. Approximately one-third of the sample worked in administrative, service and retail occupations; 20 women in the sample were located in categories 5 to 7. Although the sample of women working in lower-level occupations is smaller, it is nevertheless sufficient to discuss their experiences in some depth and provide points of comparison. Ages ranged from 27 to 50 with the majority of participants in their early to mid-thirties. Interviews were carried out with women from the South East and North West of the UK. Most women identified as white British (82%).</p>	<p>women's accounts of managing dual roles. Our findings show how it is working-class women who have an external order imposed upon them most forcibly because their work is more likely to be spatially and temporally rigid. Up to a certain point this enables work and home to be sequestered and managed effectively; however, the cost is low pay, limited employment progression and employee autonomy, and little opportunity to alter working hours and access family-friendly flexible working practices.</p> <p>Occupational level and organizational cultures, women in technical, professional and managerial occupations had the dubious privilege of being agents of their own order-creation. In these occupations women often had more autonomy and control over when and where they work, but the prioritising of paid work and the acceptance of work as potentially disordered rendered combining work and care problematic for many women.</p>	
<p>Woolnough H and Redshaw J (2016) The career decisions of professional women with dependent children What's changed? Gender in Management: An International Journal Vol. 31 Issue 4 pp. 297 - 311</p>	<p>The research compared two cohorts of 15 professional women in each with children at different stages of the lifespan to identify the extent to which the experiences of women have changed (or not) in the past 15-20 years. Professional women were defined as those who have acquired professional knowledge through high levels of experience and/or extensive study. Cohort 1 consisted of 15 women whose first child was born between 2011 and 2006; essentially, these were women whose first child was five years old or younger (pre-school age in the UK). Cohort 2 consisted of 15 women whose first child was born between 1990 and 1995; for these women, their first child was approximately 18 years old. Mothers were identified through snowball sampling (Symon and Cassell, 2012), and data were collated through semi-structured and face-to-face interviews.</p>	<p>The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate anticipated and real career decisions made by two cohorts of professional women in the UK at differing stages of the lifespan.</p> <p>The study revealed much similarity between the two cohorts. The decisions women make regarding whether to return to work or not and the extent to which they are satisfied with their working arrangements are constrained by similar individual and organisational factors (despite the 15-20 year gap) influencing whether or not they felt they could combine their professional lives with caring for their child or children. These included: flexible working; a supportive boss and colleagues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an involved and "hands-on" partner; and</li> <li>• satisfaction with the childcare they had in place in the form of either family</li> </ul>	<p>***</p>

		support and/or private nursery  The findings stress the importance of understanding the complex issues faced by mothers in the workforce and providing appropriate organisational support.	
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