

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good

Better jobs for mums and dads

A photograph of three warehouse workers in a large warehouse. In the foreground, a man in a yellow safety vest and grey jacket looks towards the camera while holding a clipboard and pen. Behind him, another man in a similar safety vest looks slightly to the side. To the right, a woman in a yellow safety vest and grey hoodie carries a stack of boxes: three red boxes on top of a larger white box. The background is filled with tall stacks of cardboard boxes on pallets, creating a sense of a busy industrial environment.

Research
methodology

Methodology

The project comprised qualitative and quantitative research with young (aged 35 and under) working parents, all of whom had a combined household income of £28,000 or less

Stage 1: Qualitative

Dec 2016 – Jan 2017

56 participants

- 2-week diary tracking task to capture the experiences of parents, without influencing their stories
- 8 x 2 hour focus groups designed to understand their experiences, the role of their employers and their responses to the existing and amended rights

Stage 2: Quantitative

April 2017

1,050 respondents

- Online poll of 1,050 people from across the UK, all of whom fit the specification for young core working parents
- Insights from qualitative used to design questionnaire

Qualitative Sample

Qualitative conducted with parents aged 20-35 who are in low to median paid employment. All had at least one child aged between 1 and 16 years old, and none found it easy or very easy to organise childcare with their working hours.

Region	Gender	Sector	Regularity of hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coventry• Hull• Preston• Harlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 x groups with women• 2 x groups with men	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 x groups with retail workers• 2 x groups with social care workers• 4 x 'all sector' groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Groups were split by the respondents' perception of the regularity/ irregularity of their working hours

Quantitative Sample: Overview

- Quantitative research conducted with 1,050 young parents in April 2017:
 - All aged 35 or under
 - All with a household income of £28,000 or under
 - All with a minimum of 1 child under 18 living at home with them
 - Working in a range of different sectors

Methodological note: due to the targeted nature of this survey, and lack of sampling frame for the total young core worker population, findings should be treated as **indicative** rather than representative

A woman with dark hair is smiling and looking towards a young boy with light brown hair. Behind the boy, a young girl with dark hair is looking forward with her mouth slightly open. They are in a classroom-like setting with a window and some decorations in the background. A purple triangular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Why did we
commission
the research?

- Significant cohort (29%) of young core workers (21-30) are parents
- Unions reporting that young parents are struggling to manage childcare and work
- Unions represent around 300,000 young parents – but we want to support even more
- Significant developments over the last decade include:
 - Introduction of shared parental leave
 - Increase in maternity leave
 - Extension of unpaid parental leave
 - Introduction of right to request flexible working
- But these developments have fallen short of what is needed. Rights are often inaccessible and poorly constructed

A photograph of a woman in a light blue top smiling and a man in a grey sweater leaning over a baby in a stroller. The man is holding the stroller's handle. The scene is set indoors near a large window. A purple graphic overlay is in the bottom left corner.

The research findings confirmed what unions had told us...

- Common working practices make managing childcare even more difficult
 - Shift variability
 - Not knowing when shifts will end
 - Lack of advance notice of shifts
- Workplace culture is not supportive of young parents
 - Employers see it as the individuals problem – and don't speak to parents about policies that could help
 - Worse and/or fewer shifts
 - Put through disciplinary process
- Employment rights
 - Inaccessible and inadequate
 - Lack of awareness

Parents suffer because of lack of support – threefold consequences

A woman with curly hair is sitting at a desk, looking stressed and holding her head with her hand. She is wearing a dark top and a watch. A laptop is open in front of her. The background is blurred, showing an office setting with a person in the distance.

Managing childcare and work is a
“juggling act”.
Working practices throw another ball
into the mix

*"Not giving us our rota makes it really hard to plan. Christmas was a nightmare, we didn't know till 2 weeks before when we'd be working."
(Female, Social care, Less regular)*

Shift variability means parents can't plan

What does variability look like:

- Not being able to finish on time, shifts changed at short notice, given their rota less than a week ahead of time, requests for overtime
- 26% of young working parents have had their shifts changed at short notice
- 19% of parents being given their rota less than a week in advance

"I don't get a rota for the coming week till the Friday if I am lucky – this makes planning anything but work difficult. During quiet periods I will have no shifts so making ends meet is hard but then if it's busy I'm expected to work 70+ hours."

Dear Employer...

I feel that having a 1 month in advance rota [would be the biggest help] I will then be able to arrange the child care so that I do not have problems on working my shifts. At the moment I have these problems because the shifts that I have are only given in a few days notice.

(Male, All sectors, Less regular)

A man with a beard, wearing a white dress shirt and a blue patterned tie, is seated in a white office chair. He is looking towards another person whose back is to the camera. The man is holding a pen in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Workplace culture
is stuck in the past

Employer indifference

- Employers are not speaking to their staff about childcare needs. They're not keeping up with changing attitudes amongst young parents.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of young parents in our survey did not feel that their employer does anything to accommodate their childcare needs.
- 51% of young parents have an employer who has never spoken to them about policies that exist to help them better balance work with childcare

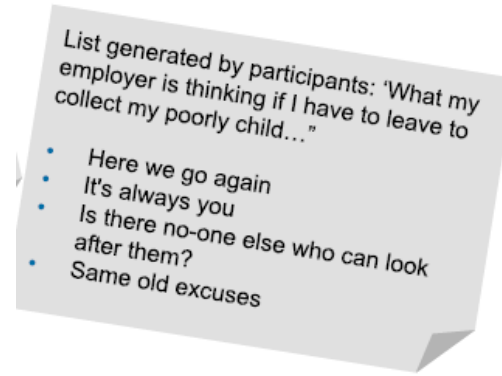
"They just see it like you're there to do a job, and they don't care."

(Female, All Sectors, More regular)

"I went to the union [after getting a disciplinary for being off for morning sickness] they were really nice and they said look they're not allowed to do this. It's right here, they're not allowed. So my union rep went and spoke to them and said this is wrong what you're doing, you're not allowed. There was no other word on it afterwards, it was dropped but there was no apology or anything. I just thought that's disgusting, they're not worried about your wellbeing, it's just about your hours."

Stigma of flexibility and repercussions of asking for support

- Parents are afraid to ask for help – for well founded reasons!
- Over a third of young parents felt stigmatised at work as a result of needing flexibility to help manage childcare
- 42% of young parents feel penalised at work when they need flexibility:
 - Fewer hours
 - Worse shifts
 - Loss of job



The fatherhood penalty

"My wife's got a better job than I do so we try to protect her work... so I'm the one who takes a day off if my kid is sick, and my female managers at work ask, 'doesn't your wife take care of her?' No, she doesn't. She's got a good job."
(Male, All Sectors, More regular)

- Gender stereotypes are still rife in the workplace. Young fathers' attitudes have shifted significantly over the last decade – employers need to catch up.
- 57% of fathers have employers who have never spoken to them about better work life balance policies
- 46% of fathers feel that their employers don't understand they have responsibilities outside of work
- 48% of men feel guilty when they bring up childcare issues at work
- Less likely to use legal rights - flexible working and time off for dependents

Vindictive behaviour from line managers

- Line managers can often exacerbate the problems that young parents face
 - Last minute shift changes, breaching confidentiality, and creating an atmosphere of fear
 - Line managers using disciplinary and health monitoring procedures against staff who had taken absences because of children's sick days.

"My baby stopped breathing and I had to go to hospital – I got threatened with a disciplinary."

(Female, Retail, More regular)

Most young parents (58%) feel they know little or nothing about what legal rights they have at work to help them balance work with childcare

1. Right to time off for dependents

This right allows parents to take unpaid time off at short-notice to deal with an emergency involving dependents (these can be children, or others who depend on them for care).

2. Right to request flexible working

This right means parents can ask for a change to the way they work for example, home-working, job sharing or changing your hours.

3. Right to unpaid parental leave

This right allows all parents to take time off work to look after their kids. This leave is unpaid and is available for each child up to their 18th birthday. Each parent qualifies for 18 weeks of leave per child in total. This can be used in blocks of a week, with up to 4 weeks a year being taken.

Most young parents (58%) feel they know little or nothing about what legal rights they have at work to help them balance work with childcare

- 63% knew little or nothing of right to unpaid parental leave
- 43% knew little or nothing of the right to request flexible working
- 50% knew little or nothing of right to time off for dependents
- 67% of young parents working part time say they know little or nothing about their rights.



What happens when support networks fail?

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Coping strategies have a time and financial penalty...

- 29% of parents have used annual leave, in the last 12 months, to cover a sickness day for a child
- 24% of young parents have taken unpaid leave, in the last 12 months, to cover a sickness day for a child
- 33% of parents have used a sick day, in the last 12 months, when it was their child who was sick and needed looking after...
 - Income is covered
 - Not asking for something for the kids

“Annual leave is for accidents and birthdays.”

(Male, All sectors, Less regular)

"When you are a mum and you are relying on others just the lack of control is very stressful as things are out of your hands."

(Preston, diary entry)

Impact on young parents

- Impact on health - feelings of anxiety, stress, tiredness and guilt
- Personal relationships damaged due to relying on informal networks
- Reputation tarnished at work, for example, taking sick days to look after child
- Impact on time – holiday leave being used to look after sick children
- Impact on income – 24% asked to take time off with no pay at short notice, 10% incurred penalty fees for picking up children late

"Part of the guilt is that while you're at work you're not with your kid and you think, 'I've not seen you since 8.45 this morning when I've dropped you off and you're in bed when I get back'. The other guilt is when you've had a bad night with a kid and you're understandably knackered at work, so you're not pulling your weight so there's guilt from that side as well."

(Female, Retail, Less regular)

My partner had to work late and so I had to ask my line manager again if I could leave early, I feel I am on quite thin ice now at work.. :(

(Preston, diary entry)



What should be done?

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Working practices

- Shift variability
 - Notice of shifts at least one month in advance
 - Compensation for shift cancellation
- Guaranteed hours and premium rate of pay
 - Premium rate of pay for non guaranteed hours

Cultural shift

- Promotion of business case benefits to employers
- Campaigns to raise awareness of employment rights – Taylor review
- Union strategies to negotiate policies and change culture in workplaces
- Jobs should be advertised flexibly as the norm – Working Families strapline
- Make it acceptable to use employment rights – lever to change culture

"The more your companies give you as an employee, the more you give them."
(Female, Social care, More regular)

What young parents told us they want from employment rights...

1. Income – regular and predictable

- Essential to this demographic, with even small losses resulting in serious consequences, especially when unexpected

2. To be able to plan in advance

- Important for organising childcare, which often requires advance booking, and routine and stability for children

3. To be able to 'react' on short notice

- Important because children (and life) are unpredictable, and because childcare can often fall through

4. No negative impacts at work

- In terms of job security, but also their relationships with their colleagues, and their ability to negotiate future 'give and take' arrangements

Enhancing employment rights

- Unpaid parental leave
 - Paid leave
 - Piecemeal
 - Less notice period required
- Right to request flexible working
 - Temporary change to terms and conditions
- Right to time off for dependents
 - Period of paid leave

Positive Trade Union Impact

- Employers with unions are more likely to implement work-life balance practices, over and above those that are required to do so by law.
- In addition, there are twice as many work-life practices (such as working from home or financial help with childcare) in unionised workplaces compared to non-unionised workplaces.
- the presence of a union recognised for bargaining significantly reduces the incidence of long working hours (over 48 hours per week)
- The presence of a recognised union also reduces the likelihood that the employer thinks it is the employee's responsibility to balance work and family life.

Inadequacy of Shared Parental Leave

- Take up of just 1% amongst eligible employees
 - The govt's own predictions were unambitious – between 2-8%
- Stat pay rate is too low – half the rate of NMW pay
- CIPD says their members are not promoting it as it is too complicated

Commission proposal for a new EU Directive, including parental leave...

- Will it apply? Transition arrangements? Future trade deals?
- Paid parental leave at SSP – 4 months per child
- Paid Carer's leave at SSP
- All working *parents* will be entitled to Right to Request (currently all employees)

New Bereavement Leave Bill

- Positive step – it doesn't go far enough
- 2 weeks paid leave for parents who suffer a bereavement of their child under the age of 18
- What is the rate of pay?
- Looks like it only applies to employees – so not an agency worker who suffers a bereavement
- Only for parents

The logo consists of the letters 'TUC' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is rendered with a 3D effect, appearing to be made of a translucent material with a white-to-purple gradient. The letters are slightly offset from each other, creating a sense of depth and movement. The 'T' is on the left, 'U' is in the middle, and 'C' is on the right.

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