What Women Really Want…

WOMEN'S POLICY CENTRE
The Missing Piece

…and how tweaking the tax and benefit systems and employment law will help them get it

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The ©Women's Policy Centre is a national think tank dedicated to addressing issues concerning women without any radical ideology. We are an independent, non-profit organisation aiming to promote and develop new policy ideas to create a world that works for women. We believe in building a more dynamic, flexible economy and ensuring a thriving and happier community. Our approach to policy development is based on evidence, and we rely on surveys, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and expert interviews to inform our work. We collaborate with senior data analysts, economists, and other experts to conduct rigorous empirical research on innovative policy outcomes. We maintain complete editorial control over all our written research and retain copyright.

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It is time for a change in the way we discuss women's issues. Feminism has been hijacked by doctrinaire zealots and abstruse academic fashions; the result is irrelevance at best, at worst outright harm. Our new research and advocacy centre is rooted in the political and cultural mainstream, steering clear of can't and dogma. It provides the missing piece in our discussion of work, life, family and neighbourhood. This report, our first, is a manifesto for change, highlighting how women's ambitions are frustrated by an economy, employment law, and tax and benefits system designed without women in mind—and with results that harm our country's future.

Executive summary

- New thinktank promoting mainstream women's issues launches its first research report
- Landmark YouGov survey shows how women's ambitions are frustrated by badly designed fiscal and legal systems; International comparisons highlight where Britain lags.
- Women are politically orphaned. The political party that offers a female-friendly economy will get their votes.
- The British birth rate is too low. Women want more babies but are penalised for having them. The economy and society suffer as a result.
- The first 1001 days in a child's development are crucial, but mothers are penalised for the time they spend on this.
- Better paternity leave brings better outcomes.
- Reward mothers of larger families with earlier pensions.
- Align tax and benefit systems to treat families as households not individuals.
- Establish time-banks to deliver childcare.

The UK has witnessed some striking progress among women over the past 13 years: the gender pay gap has shrunk to 7.7% for fulltime workers (and for part time workers it has reversed: women earn 3.3% more than men).[1] Women run more of the country's small and medium enterprises (19%), more women than ever (39.6%) hold FTSE directorships and a larger proportion of women (27%) than men (26%) is employed in a "professional occupation", as engineers, doctors, accountants, lawyers etc.[2]

Governments have come to recognise that women's participation in the workforce benefits the rest of us, and not only by boosting GDP. Women invest more of their income in their families and communities than men, leading to better education and health outcomes.[3] Companies with gender-diverse leadership teams are more successful.[4]

These trends highlight the contribution women make to the UK economy – investing in this half of the population will bring significant benefits and should be a priority for the next Budget.

With this launch manifesto the Women's Policy Centre focuses on women's ambitions and the suite of policies that government and business can deliver to help realise them. From flexible working to birthrate boosts, these should be recognised as investments rather than outlays, securing long-term economic and societal gains. A landmark YouGov survey allows us to establish the areas where improved support for women at work and home would expand our economy to increase the number of female employers and

[1] House of Commons Library Briefing, The Gender Pay Gap, 8 January 2024
[2] House of Commons Library Briefing, Women and the UK Economy, 3 March 2023.
[3] https://www.prowess.org.uk/facts/#:~:text=Women%20are%2037%25%20of%20entrepreneurs,but%20is%20half%20the%20size.
[4] https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters

employees while strengthening our society by increasing the number of mothers and carers. We look at international examples of best practice and explore initiatives that promise better outcomes.

Women in Britain are ambitious, professionally and personally. As our polling shows, a significant majority (82%) of women of all political stripes and ages (ranging from 18 to 65 plus) value financial prosperity. But their ambition is not exclusively focused on financial gain: today's women seek more than that. A woman's idea of success is multi-faceted in contrast to the model of success that men have routinely applied and lived by.

Women's fulfilment instead comes from roles across a far wider arena. Asked about what success in life means to them as a woman, an overwhelming majority (91%) of our respondents answered that they seek a good work-life balance. Views were consistent across different groups, including age, location and political leanings.

Women are not just economic actors. In their roles (often overlapping) as mother, partner, wife, daughter, neighbour and carer, women increase social capital, strengthening communities, fostering mutual support and building trust. They discharge tasks that underpin services as wide-ranging as adult social care, youth services, and Early Help. Many of these supporting roles do not bring in an income, but offer purpose, identity and self-realization.

Their roles as mothers and (often) principal family carers of a disabled or older relative

mean that women are more likely to need time off work at some stage. Such career breaks currently carry such a heavy pension penalty: at retirement men typically will have accumulated a twice-larger pension pot.[5] Additional roles also mean women have different demands of their employers in terms of flexibility, benefits, and professional development.

Business and government should recognize that women engage differently with the labour market, having different trajectories, demands, and life goals.

The political party that understands the difference between a man-focused economy and one that works for women will win women's votes.

At present these votes are up for grabs. Although historically more likely to support parties of the right, Britain's women have, since 2017, turned leftward. [6]

This switch should alarm the Conservative government— but Labour cannot afford to be complacent. This new party allegiance is about policy positions[7] rather than ideology.

Women are politically orphaned.

Our landmark YouGov poll brings this message home: three in five women (62%) think that politicians place too little focus on their needs, and this is particularly high amongst those who voted Labour in 2019 (77%). ABC1 women between 25 and 49 years old feel particularly strongly that politicians are not taking them into consideration. This cohort, which is

[5] https://www.legalandgeneral.com/retirement/pensions/guides/gender-pension-gap/
[6] https://theconversation.com/women-used-to-be-more-likely-to-vote-conservative-than-men-but-that-all-changed-in-2017-we-wanted-to-find-out-why-214019
[7] National Centre for Social Research, British Social Attitudes Survey 2023.

of child-bearing age, is more likely to be struggling with work-family balance.
A similar proportion of women feel that the economic system is skewed towards men's needs and lives (64%), while 72% feel that inequality in employment and employment opportunities for women such as career progression represent a big problem.

Policy makers and politicians ignore this message at their peril.

Violence against women, health diagnosis and provision, and housing are among the issues that disproportionately (and negatively) affect women. This paper however looks at women's experience through the lens of work and family formation and proposes a suite of policies that could support women in the workplace and beyond it. These include:

- Using the pension system to boost birthrates
- First 1001 days – statutory entitlement to flexible and remote work;
- Extending paternity leave;
- Switching tax and benefit criteria from individuals to households; and
- Childcare timebanking.

Pension boosts for Birthrates

Britain's birth-rates are plunging. Already, women in the UK are having only 1.62 babies per woman [8] –below the replacement rate of 2.1 per woman. Half of women born in 1990 remained childless by their 30th birthday.

The impact of this demographic trend is alarming: a shrinking workforce, a smaller tax base and slower growth. Worse, this comes as the population ages. Within the next 20 years there will be 10m more pensioners and by 2050 a quarter of Britons will be over 65, up from a fifth today.[9] This ageing population puts enormous pressure on the pension, health and social care systems. Already, the Office for Budget Responsibility has found, age-related spending on public services such as care homes, health care, etc already represent more than 4% of GDP – and this is set to rise dramatically.[10]

Yet the birth-rate crunch stems from necessity not choice. Many men and women who want a baby cannot afford to have one. Across OECD countries with available data, men say they want 2.2 children, women, that they want 2.3, above the replacement rate. This soul-destroying fertility gap is the direct result of bad policy.

As our poll shows, raising a family remains a priority for most women (58%), who regard having children as a key factor to a successful life.
In 1971, the Office for National Statistic shows, just 18% of women were childless at 30, today 50% of them are.

Women blame equally financial insecurity and the difficulty of balancing work and family

[8] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsummarytablesenglandandwales/2021/previous/v1#:~:text=5.-,Fertility%20rates%20by%20geographic%20area,in%20TFR%20in%20three%20years.
[9] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03#:~:text=2.-,Population%20ageing,from%2016.4%25%20to%2018.6%25.
[10] https://obr.uk/cross_cutting/ageing-population/

responsibilities for this dismal decision.

Other countries do it better.

Estonia's Pension and Babies Scheme

In 2001 Estonian demographics were dire, with the UN reporting it was one of the fastest shrinking nations on earth, at risk of losing half its population by 2050. The average fertility rate was 1.3.

The government decided to introduce a suite of family friendly policies. During the next two years, the number of third births increased by more than 20 percent compared with the period before the measures.[11]

- A baby bonus of 60 euros per month for first baby
- An additional 60 euros per month for second baby
- 300 euros per month for three babies
- Fully paid parental leave for a year and half
- Daddy Month –a full month of paid paternal leave
- Mothers' previous job retained for at least three years

A particularly striking innovation was to link pension payments to the number of children raised. Pensions are paid one year early for raising three children for at least eight years; three years early for raising four children for at least eight years, and fully five years early for raising 5 or more children. To mitigate the economic costs and risks of caring for a disabled child, a parent engaged in full-time care also gains a five year start on their pension.[12]

[11] https://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/en/family-benefits-and-allowances/family-allowances#multiple
[12] https://www.lm.gov.lv/sites/lm/files/data_content/ettekanne_riia1.pdf

Today the Estonian childbirth strategy continues to incentivise family formation: [13] a one-off childbirth allowance of 320 euros when a child is born. To promote and support more numerous families, child allowance is linked to the number of children in the family: those with one or two children will receive 80 euros per child until each child turns 19. Families with three or more children are paid 100 euros per month, per child, paid until the eldest is 19 years old.

Estonian parental leave is the most generous, world-wide, offering 1.5 years at full pay. Mothers or fathers are given 85 weeks at full pay, and fathers have the right to a total of ten working days of free time within two months prior to the expected due date as determined by a doctor or midwife, and within two months of the birth of the child.

Implementing an Estonian-style birth-rate policy is unlikely to appeal to a cash-strapped Treasury. Policymakers however should weigh the long-term benefits against the short-term costs. Paying maternity leave for a total of 21 months is more than compensated if a woman's three children 21 years later are economically active, paying taxes and boosting GDP. Thinking long-term may prove a challenge for politicians caught in five-year election cycles, but our population crisis needs an urgent response.

[13] https://www.unicef-irc.org/family-friendly
[14] https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/

First 1001 Days Statutory Flexible Working

Neuroscience show the importance of attachment in the early years.[14] A nurturing and stimulating home environment fosters children's positive cognitive development and healthy growth.

Advances in neuroscience have confirmed how crucial a child's first 1001 days are: this is when the baby's brain grows by one per cent each day, with every experience shaping the architecture of the brain including its limbic system, known as the "emotional brain", which affects fear, learning, and memory. [15]"Attachment", when a baby bonds with their parent(s), expands the brain. Neuroscientists have found that the hormone oxytocin sets in motion attachment. As mother and baby bond, the interaction between them can be framed within a "serve and return" metaphor: the baby's expectation that their cry, cooing or smile prompts the carer's caress, cooing or smile. This "serve and return" provides an important buffer against stress; it also provides a template for the child's future relationships: an expectation of being valued and having their needs met. [16] Securely attached children are more likely to attain higher academic grades, have greater emotional regulation, social competence, willingness to take on challenges and have lower levels of ADHD and delinquency. This new understanding of our brain function has driven the government to roll out its Best Start for Life programme[17] and prompted several initiatives including the Princess of Wales's Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood.

[15] https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/
[16] https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/
[17] https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/

Poor attachment, instead, when there is an absence of or negligence by a principal carer, manifests itself in the baby's stress and anxiety. Without the back-and-forth communication the brain's architecture does not form as expected, which can affect learning and behaviour long-term. This cohort, with its poor prospects, costs the taxpayer in terms of specialist support services ranging from A&E admissions to the criminal justice system. [18]

The cost-of-living crisis means that most families currently cannot afford to have even one parent stop working to provide childcare. Almost one in three mothers (30.8%) with a child aged one year worked full time.[19] Recent analysis by the ONS found that 9 in 10 parents with a child aged zero to four years was worried about the cost of living[20] and almost half of all parents reported that they could not afford an unexpected but necessary expense. [21]

Working women want to balance the competing demands on their time: asked about what success in life means to them as a woman, an overwhelming majority (91%) voiced the need for a good work-life balance. Views were consistent across different groups, including age and political leanings. But almost the same proportion (86%) of our respondents report that the pressure for women to balance work and having children is a problem, with almost half (42%) saying that society puts similar expectations on having children and working for women. It is interesting to note that this far outweighs other work-related issues considered to most likely prevent women from having children like

[18] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days
[19] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021#employment-rates-for-parents-in-the-uk
[20] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021#employment-rates-for-parents-in-the-uk
[21] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/articles/impactofincreasedcostoflivingonadultsacrossgreatbritain/november2021tomarch2022#characteristics-of-adults-who-are-unable-to-afford-an-unexpected-expense

career progression (19%), or more attitudinal and cultural factors such as waiting until it is too late (17%) to conceive , or social trends promoting a childless life (11%).

Mothers who seek to balance work with raising their child find barriers in their way: inflexible employers and complicated government childcare offers deter women from successfully combining work and raising children.

This accounts for one in four working age women being economically inactive (compared to 18% of men)[22]; ONS figures show that "looking after family or home" was one of the key drivers of record levels of economic inactivity, [23] with more than one in four working-age women reporting that their caring responsibilities were keeping them from paid employment; this is in contrast to men, only 7.1% of whom were economically inactive because of looking after family or home. [24]

Recent research found that more than 3 in 4 (79%) mothers reported facing barriers to advancement in the workplace because of their caring role and almost one in four (23%) avoided mentioning "their childcare responsibilities for fear of looking less committed or capable".[25] This is borne out by our YouGov poll, which found that 72% of women feel that employment inequality and employment opportunities for women represents a big problem.

The Government has already agreed that flexible working is a statutory right and that employers must deal with requests for flexible

[22] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/unemployment-and-economic-inactivity/economic-inactivity/latest/#by-ethnicity-and-gender
[23] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/economicinactivity/datasets/economicinactivitybyreasonseasonallyadjustedinac01sa
[24] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/previousReleases
[25] https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d73d0c92-19af-479c-a206-0807ec008bf1

working “in a reasonable manner” and that as of next month, employees may ask for flexible working from day one of their employment. This process, however, is lengthy and complicated and therefore likely to deter or delay mothers’ requests. Currently the employee must apply to the employer with a written statement explaining that theirs is a statutory request; details of how the employee wants to work flexibly and when they want to start; plus a statement reporting if and when they’ve made a previous application. Recent research found that less than a third (31%) mothers had access to flexible working.[26]

We propose instead that in companies with over 10 employees, working mothers should be automatically entitled to flexible work for the first 1001 days of their children’s lives. This proposed policy is hugely popular among women, with 78% of women agreeing that working from home during the first years of their child’s life would be very helpful (50%) or fairly helpful (28%).

Flexible working for older mothers and carers

Mothering goes beyond the first 1001 days, of course. Seven in 10 mothers with children aged 0-14 are in work [27]. Employees should be able to access good flexible work throughout their workplace journey as and when their personal circumstances change: from mothering to informal or family carer, women in particular come under pressure to fill other roles. An economy that enables them to do so reduces pressure on them and their families, but also on health and social care services, as these unpaid carers step up to support a

[26] The Fawcett Society, Paths to Parenthood: Uplifting New Mothers at Work, 6 November 2023
[27] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents/2021

relative affected by old age or a disability.

Women also supported a flexible working schedule built around school start/finish times: 65% found this very helpful and 26% fairly helpful. A survey in early 2021, however, showed that only 14.5% of mothers have been able to secure flexible working schedules.[28] This may in turn explain the more than 10% of mothers who are working only during school term-time, enabling them to care for their children outside of school hours.[29]

Flexible working can also help meet women's changing expectations as they strive to balance their job with other responsibilities such as caring for an older or disabled member of their family.[30] By the time she is 46 the average woman in the UK stands a 50-50 chance of being a carer.[31] As a recent CSJ report found, in the financial year 2021-2022, more than 400,000 carers left their employment because of caring responsibilities.[32] If the government is to address the record levels of economic inactivity (which now stands at almost 9 million), supporting this cohort should become a priority. The CSJ report suggests that even modest measures such as employers offering five days' paid leave for caring responsibilities would enable almost half (40%) of working age carers to return to paid employment.[33]

Employers should regard flexible work as part of their recruitment and retention strategy, as family-friendly workplaces enjoy better retention and higher productivity.[34] The World Economic Forum's Good Work Alliance[35] undertook a study of

[28] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021#employment-rates-for-parents-in-the-uk
[29] The Fawcett Society, Paths to Parenthood: Uplifting New Mothers at Work, 6 November 2023
[30] https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/carer-friendly-workplace/
[31] https://www.carersuk.org/media/5btnaenj/prepare-for-the-act.pdf
[32] https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/a-britain-that-works-and-cares
[33] Ibid.
[34] https://www.businessinsider.com/data-great-place-to-work-maven-paid-parental-leave-benefits-2020-12?r=US&IR=T
[35] https://www.futureworkappg.org.uk/events/flexible-work-companies-policy

organisations that were growing faster than their peers, and found that they were committed to understanding worker preferences with flexible working as part of a health and wellbeing approach. The Alliance recommended transparency about their position on topics such as the working from home, or in a hybrid way.
Post pandemic, attitudes towards part-time and flexible working have markedly changed, with the CBI Employment Trends survey[36] finding that 99% of all businesses surveyed believe that a flexible workforce is vital or important to competitiveness and the prospects for business investment and job creation.

Flexible workers are also more likely to be engaged, potentially generating 43% more revenue and improving performance by 20%, compared to disengaged employees.[37] Moreover flexibility can improve retention and reduce costly staff turnover.[38]

[36] https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/43jeauh4/cranfield-the-future-of-flexible-working.pdf
[37] https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/flexible-hybrid-working-practices/
[38] Ibid.

Boost Paternity Leave

Women want men to step up to the plate when it comes to raising a family. Sharing work and caring responsibilities 50/50 with their partner is seen as "very helpful" by 54% and "fairly helpful" by 31% of our polled respondents. Interestingly, this sentiment is not confined to younger women but is the same across the age groups.

Currently, mothers deliver more than twice as much childcare as fathers, resulting in a 15% pay gap[39]. Equal labour force participation rates could increase per capita GDP growth by 0.5% points a year.[40]

This is not only about equality, however; it is about securing children's best possible outcomes. Fathers involved in their newborn's care are more likely to stay involved with their child as they grow up.[41] The child of an engaged father as a toddler will show greater problem-solving skills and by age 3 will have a higher IQ.[42]The effect is long term too, preventing or reducing offspring's involvement in health-risking behaviours during adolescence.[43] Longitudinal data show an association between father involvement and reduced behavioural problems and enhanced cognitive development in adolescent boys as well as reduced psychological problems in adolescent girls. Other benefits of father involvement for adolescent girls include reducing early sexual experiences and teenage pregnancy, and for boys improvement in sexual health through better communication.[44]

Paternal leave schemes foster the father-baby bond. Data show that getting fathers involved early in their children's lives predicts their

[39] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/358/358.pdf
[40] Parental Leave Report, Centre for Progressive Policy, June 2023
[41] S. Shorey, L. Ang, E.C.L. Goh, M. Gandhi, Factors influencing paternal involvement during infancy: a prospective longitudinal study, J. Adv. Nurs., 75 (2) pp. 357-367, 2019
[42] Gareth Davies, MP, Paternity Leave, CSJ Discussions, March 2022
[43] J Chio, HK Kim, DM Capaldi, JJ Snodgrass, Long-term effects of father involvement in childhood on their son's physiological stress regulation system in adulthood, Dev Psychobiol, September 2021
[44] BJ Ellis, GL Schlomer, EH Tilley, EA Butler, Impact of fathers on risky sexual behavior in daughters: a genetically and environmentally controlled sibling study, Dev Psychopathol. 2012;24(1):317-332.

later involvement. [45] Engaging fathers with their baby form the outset ensures they feel they are an integral figure in their child's life. Paternity leave also allows mothers to recover after delivery, and to step back into work should they wish to do so.

Crucially, also, fathers asking for paternity leave means that employers will not associate parental leave (and its attendant cost to the employer) always and exclusively with mothers.

For this welcome shift of perception to take place however, more fathers must be encouraged to take paternity leave. Currently, only 170,000 fathers took it in 2022 and only one in four first-time fathers did. [46]

The UK has the least generous paternity leave entitlement in Europe.

The statutory entitlement to paternity leave is two weeks and the weekly rate for paternity pay is £172 a week.[47] An average-earning, full-time working man who takes the two weeks' statutory paternity pay would be £1,021.04 worse off, compared to what he'd usually earn in that time.[48] Statutory paternity pay represents less than half (47%) of the new National Living Wage at £11.44 per hour.[49] A 2022 survey found that 76% of employers were only offering the two-week statutory leave.[50]

Research found that fewer than one in five (18%) prospective parents say they or their partner could afford to take six weeks of paternity leave at the current statutory rate of pay. [51]By contrast, 57% of prospective

[45] Michael Yogman MD, Craig F Garfield MD, Fathers' Roles in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians, American Academy of Pediatrics, Vol 138 No1, July 2016
[46] https://www.progressive-policy.net/publications/new-research-uncovers-economic-and-health-benefits-of-boosting-paternity-leave#:~:text=New%20CPP%20analysis%20of%20OECD,have%20less%20than%20six%20weeks.
[47] https://workingfamilies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Working-Families-Index-Spotlight-Report-2023-final.pdf
[48] https://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/post/what-price-for-time-with-dad-the-uk-s-1k-per-father-paternity-leave-gap
[49] https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates
[50] https://www.korukids.co.uk/blog/paternity-league
[51] https://www.hrgrapevine.com/content/article/2024-02-20-paternity-policies-need-urgent-revision-heres-why#:~:text=The%20research%20also%20found%20that,paternity%20leave%20within%20the%20UK.

parents said they or their partner could afford to take six weeks of paternity leave if it was paid at 90% of their income, as statutory maternity pay is for women.[52] 8 in 10 fathers say their employer is not doing enough to support fathers in the workplace[53].

One in five fathers aren't eligible for paternity leave, because they haven't worked for their employer for the 26 weeks needed to qualify, or are not employees, or are self-employed. [54]

Paternity Leave: International Comparisons

Spain Either parent can take up to 16 weeks parental leave at 100%; the first six weeks to be taken at the baby's birth.
Norway The father chooses to take up to 10 weeks or no leave at all, depending on the wife's income.[55]
Germany Mothers are initially guaranteed 14 weeks of fully-paid maternity leave after which either parent can request a whopping 3 years of parental leave for their natural or adopted child.[56]
Japan offers 12 months of paternity leave to new fathers but only 1 in 20 took it up in 2017.
Iceland A total of 12 months, split equally between the mother and father (six months each). However, parents are also allowed to transfer up to one month of leave to the other parent, so that one takes seven months and the other takes five. The entire leave is paid at 80% of the person's average salary.[57]

[52] https://www.progressive-policy.net/publications/new-research-uncovers-economic-and-health-benefits-of-boosting-paternity leave#:~:text=New%20CPP%20analysis%20of%20OECD,have%20less%20than%20six%20weeks.
[53] Ibid.
[54] https://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/post/our-call-for-a-rethink-on-paternity-and-parental-leave-sign-and-share-our-new-parliamentary-petitio
[55] https://vacationtracker.io/blog/countries-with-the-best-maternity-and-paternity-leave/#:~:text=All%20the%20Scandinavian%20countries%20are,49%20weeks%20at%20full%20pay.
[56] https://vacationtracker.io/blog/countries-with-the-best-maternity-and-paternity-leave/#:~:text=All%20the%20Scandinavian%20countries%20are,49%20weeks%20at%20full%20pay.
[57] https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190615-parental-leave-how-rich-countries-compare

The UK's ungenerous paternity leave affects mothers of all income levels. Unless they can rely on an extended family, new mothers may be left to recover from birth on their own; given that one in five women risk post-natal

depression, [58] this isolation can have significant and long-term implications for mothers' health and well-being. A survey of new mothers found that they sought their partner's presence during childbirth as their support [59].

The Government should widen eligibility to paternity leave by demanding that any business with more than 10 employees include this as a working father's right from day one of their employment. We echo the Women's and Equality Select Committee in calling for paternity leave to be paid at 90% of earnings (capped), similar to maternity pay which is paid for six weeks at 90% (uncapped).[60]

Boosting paternity leave would have the added bonus of acting as an incentive for increasing birth-rates. When Austria introduced a policy reform in 1990 increasing the duration of job-protected paid parental leave from 12 to 24 months, the policy change resulted in an increase of birth rates.[61]

[60] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/358/358.pdf
[61] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10322813/#:~:text=While%20several%20empirical%20studies%20have,leave%20on%20fertility%20is%20less

Tax and Benefits for families

Current tax policies have a clear objective: driving as many women as possible into paid work without recognising any wider contribution they may make as mothers, carers, or community builders.

The UK taxes every adult individually, rather than taking into account total family or household income. Families with children face a disproportionately high income tax burden, with high marginal tax rates. Of the eight million households with children, one in three, will have an effective marginal tax rate of 69% or higher because of the way the income tax and benefit systems overlap and interact. A 7.8% pay rise may as a result only increase a family's disposable income by 2.4 %.[62]

This results in an penalty for motherhood: on a salary of £30,000 a year, a mother with three children will pay the same amount of tax and National Insurance as a single adult without dependents. Moreover, among low income families, benefits are reduced depending on hours in paid employment, so that parents find that increasing their hours of paid employment does not increase their earnings.

The UK benefit system recognises children (and households) but the tax system does not. Changing our tax system to recognise children as an investment not an inconvenience would allow mothers past, present and future, to feel that their role matters. At present taxes take no account of children as extra cost (raising a child to age 18 in the UK costs £166,000 for a couple and £220,000 for a lone parent)[63] and in effect penalizes those families where one parent stays home to raise children: families where one parent earns £60,000 a

[62] Donald Draper, Tax and the Family, Analysis Paper Report No: 002/2023, Autumn 2023
[63] https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/crsp/news/2023/cost-of-a-child-in-2023/

year or more receive no child benefit at all, whereas families where both parents separately earn up to £50,000 a year are entitled to receive the full amount for their children.

A recent survey by Family Hub Network found that almost 78% of Conservative respondents supported making child benefit entitlement dependent on family income rather than the income of individual parents.[64]

[64] Lord Farmer and Dr Samantha Callan OBE, Parents don't think government is on their side, Family Hubs Network, February 2024

Childcare offers

As our poll has shown, almost half (47%) of the women surveyed feel that one of the greatest barriers preventing women from having children in Britain today is the difficulty in balancing work and looking after children . The current childcare system has failed to deliver the support they need: it is costly, complicated and patchy.

One in five parents are spending a third of their income on child-care, making ours the most expensive child-care in the OECD. (For comparison, in Spain, childcare is capped at 5% of parents' income).[65] It is so complicated, with a host of different offers available, some of which are paid to parents and some directly to providers, that a recent survey found only half of low-income parents knew how to navigate the system. It is also patchy: only 57 per cent of local authorities in England reported having enough childcare on offer to support full time working parents. [66]

Yet formal childcare represents the only route for many mothers into work and a recent Department of Education survey suggests[67] that almost one in three (29%) working mothers with children aged 0-4 (554,000) would prefer to work more hours if they could arrange 'good quality childcare which was convenient, affordable and reliable'. Almost half a million (411,000) mothers of children aged 0-4 currently not in employment would prefer to go out to work if they could find good quality childcare. This is equivalent to half (54%) of non-working mothers with children aged 0-4.

[65] The New Economics Foundation, Quality Childcare for All, 2020
[66] Childcare Survey 2019.
[67] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents

Successive governments have attempted to resolve the childcare crisis and next month will see—supposedly—all working parents with two year old children getting 15 hours free childcare. From September 2024 this will be extended to working parents of 9 month olds to 2 year olds. From September 2025 all eligible parents with children from 9 months to 5 years will have 30 hours free child care per week. There's also support for childcare that comes through the new tax-free childcare scheme, which offers up to £2,000 a year per child towards childcare costs, including nursery, and childminder.

This in principle is a welcome step. Our survey shows that women would welcome new tax deductions for working mothers specifically designed to cover childcare costs. But providers face issues of sufficiency and closure. As noted earlier, less than half of LAs can care for all the children of their working age population; in addition, the National Day Nursery Association's analysis of nursery closures in England found that closures increased by 35 per cent 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. Worryingly, the highest number of closures (13.4 per cent) were found in the 10 per cent most deprived areas.[68] The rate of funding the government pays providers for each hour of free childcare is too low to cover all costs, and some providers have charged parents top-up fees for food and activities. [69] To put this in context, a recent survey of 1,242 providers (predominately private, voluntary and independent settings) found that 75% said funding provided per hour for the 30-hour entitlement did not meet their costs.[70]

[68] NDNA, 2021. Nurseries and the impact of closures in the first year of the pandemic.
[69] Social Mobility Commission 2018-19; Work and Pensions Committee, UC Childcare 2017-19.
[70] The Sutton Trust, 2021. "A Fair Start".

Intriguingly, several recent surveys have highlighted parents' preference for informal childcare – delivered by family, friends, or neighbours. This option would represent considerable savings, ensure greater flexibility, and reduce the stress attendant with formal childcare settings' schedules. It could also stoke social capital: this, at least would be the result of adapting the "caring vouchers" popular in Japan for elder care to look after children as well.

Japan's caring vouchers

"Fureai Kippu", or caring vouchers, is a multi-generational domiciliary care scheme. The vouchers allow volunteer members to earn credits for caring for an older or disabled individual which they can then exchange for their own care later in life or the care of a relative. As a member of this time bank system, the volunteer can earn credits in one part of Japan and send them home to their parents to use, in an altogether different part of the country, getting another scheme member to care for them; or alternatively they can keep the credits to be redeemed years later, when they themselves need a carer. The scheme supports older people to live independent lives, integrated within their local community. It has also been shown to stoke social capital, connecting one generation to the next in a virtuous cycle of mutual support. There were more than 910 time banks recorded across Japan before 2012. When the service recipients do not have sufficient time credits to exchange for the service, they have to pay a modest fee to the organisations rather than the care providers.

While “Fureai Kippu” is used primarily for the care of older people or those affected by a disability, a UK model could incorporate the basic principles of this scheme to support childcare as well. In all instances, the system relieves pressures on families, formal service provision and on community service resources. To incentivize time bank organisations to set up their schemes, Government should offer them a tax rebate.

Conclusion

Our survey shows that UK women are hugely ambitious: they want to succeed financially, have children, and balance their personal and professional lives. They feel short-changed by successive governments that have designed policies to press for participation in an inflexible labour market at the expense of participation in the wider relational network. Financial security only partly fuels women's aspiration, because they prize the opportunity (time, as much as resources) to raise a family and to form and sustain a web of personal connections. Women measure success in terms of purpose not just promotion, closer bonding not just a pay rise. In short, they want it all.

Because women's route to self-realisation is different from men's, forcing women into systems designed for and by men can never work. And as we have seen both political parties, by failing to recognize this difference, risk losing their vote. What women seek is a workplace that allows for more flexibility and delivers better support for raising children; a benefits system that enables those in a caring role, whether they are looking after a child or a disabled or older loved one, to stay in paid employment.
For government, and employers, catering for women's needs represents a shrewd investment by bucking the present demographic trend, increasing productivity, and reducing pressure on formal services. These changes would benefit us all. Let's make a world that works for women.

YouGov / Women's Policy Centre Survey Results

FIELDWORK DATES: 29TH FEBRUARY - 1ST MARCH 2024

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Prepared by YouGov plc
On Behalf of the Women's Policy Centre

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BACKGROUND

This spreadsheet contains survey data collected and analysed by YouGov plc. No information contained within this spreadsheet may be published without the consent of YouGov Plc and the client named on the front cover.

Methodology: This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered members of the YouGov Plc GB panel of 185,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample according to the sample definition, inviting them to take part in the survey and providing a link to the survey. (The sample definition could be "GB adult population" or a subset such as "GB adult females"). YouGov Plc normally achieves a response rate of between 35% and 50% to surveys however this does vary dependent upon the subject matter, complexity and length of the questionnaire. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

YouGov plc make every effort to provide representative information. All results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to statistical errors normally associated with sample-based information.

For further information about the results in this spreadsheet, please contact YouGov Plc (+44)(0)20 7 012 6000 or email enquiries@yougov.com quoting the survey details

EDITOR'S NOTES - all press releases should contain the following information

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,240 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th February - 1st March 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB women (aged 18+).

NOTE: All press releases or other publications must be checked by YouGov Plc before use. YouGov requires 48 hours to check a press release unless otherwise agreed. Please note, multiple press releases will require longer.

- YouGov is registered with the Information Commissioner
- YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council

Any percentages calculated on bases fewer than 100 respondents do not represent a wide enough cross-section of the target population to be considered statistically reliable. These figures should not be used.

YouGov / WOMEN'S POLICY CENTRE Survey Results

Sample Size: 1182 Women in GB
Fieldwork: 29th February - 1st March 2024

		Vote in 2019 GE			EU ref 2016		Age				Social Grade		Country			Region in England			
	Total	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	England	Wales	Scotland	North	Midlands	London	Rest of South
Weighted Sample	**1156**	363	292	98	419	429	116	470	282	287	635	520	1006	57	92	282	190	132	402
Unweighted Sample	**1182**	369	293	96	467	421	111	501	287	283	689	493	1034	59	89	290	203	137	404
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
How important, if at all, do you think the following are to your own personal success in life?																			
Financial prosperity																			
Very important	**27**	26	30	22	25	25	36	34	23	18	29	25	28	32	18	25	23	45	27
Fairly important	**55**	55	55	60	61	54	52	50	58	62	56	54	55	46	59	61	52	45	56
TOTAL IMPORTANT	**82**	**81**	**85**	**82**	**86**	**79**	**88**	**84**	**81**	**80**	**85**	**79**	**83**	**78**	**77**	**86**	**75**	**90**	**83**
Not very important	**11**	14	11	10	10	15	3	9	14	14	10	11	10	19	15	9	14	6	10
Not important at all	**2**	1	1	4	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	3	2	0	3	2	1	1	2
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	**13**	**15**	**12**	**14**	**11**	**17**	**4**	**10**	**16**	**17**	**11**	**14**	**12**	**19**	**18**	**11**	**15**	**7**	**12**
Don't know	**5**	4	3	4	3	5	7	6	4	4	3	7	5	3	5	4	10	3	4
Having children																			
Very important	**33**	34	33	38	34	34	28	34	31	34	32	35	34	31	25	31	38	27	36
Fairly important	**25**	26	23	20	24	25	20	25	25	26	25	24	24	20	34	23	23	26	25
TOTAL IMPORTANT	**58**	**60**	**56**	**58**	**58**	**59**	**48**	**59**	**56**	**60**	**57**	**59**	**58**	**51**	**59**	**54**	**61**	**53**	**61**
Not very important	**14**	15	13	11	13	15	19	12	12	16	16	11	15	5	10	15	12	14	15
Not important at all	**21**	18	25	27	24	20	23	21	23	20	21	22	20	35	28	24	19	25	16
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	**35**	**33**	**38**	**38**	**37**	**35**	**42**	**33**	**35**	**36**	**37**	**33**	**35**	**40**	**38**	**39**	**31**	**39**	**31**
Don't know	**7**	8	5	5	5	6	10	7	8	5	6	8	7	8	3	7	8	8	7
Having a good work-life balance																			
Very important	**65**	64	69	68	70	61	59	72	64	57	68	62	65	63	70	62	62	68	68
Fairly important	**26**	26	24	23	24	29	33	20	27	32	26	27	27	23	23	29	25	27	25
TOTAL IMPORTANT	**91**	**90**	**93**	**91**	**94**	**90**	**92**	**92**	**91**	**89**	**94**	**89**	**92**	**86**	**93**	**91**	**87**	**95**	**93**
Not very important	**2**	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	8	4	1	2	1	1
Not important at all	**2**	2	1	4	1	3	2	1	2	4	1	3	2	2	0	4	2	1	2
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	**4**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**5**	**4**	**10**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**2**	**3**
Don't know	**5**	4	3	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	3	6	5	3	3	4	9	3	4

Women's Policy Centre

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Thinking about the lives and well-being of women in Britain. In your opinion, how much of a problem, if at all, are the following?																			
Violence against women (e.g. domestic abuse, harassment, misogynistic behaviour)																			
A very big problem	**45**	39	56	46	48	43	51	42	48	45	43	48	46	47	37	47	37	64	43
A fairly big problem	**41**	47	32	41	42	43	34	42	39	43	43	39	41	33	49	42	48	25	42
TOTAL BIG PROBLEM	**86**	**86**	**88**	**87**	**90**	**86**	**85**	**84**	**87**	**88**	**86**	**87**	**87**	**80**	**86**	**89**	**85**	**89**	**85**
Not much of a problem	**6**	9	5	3	6	8	4	7	6	8	8	4	6	13	5	8	4	4	7
Not a problem at all	**1**	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL NOT A PROBLEM	**7**	**10**	**5**	**3**	**6**	**9**	**5**	**7**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**5**	**7**	**13**	**5**	**9**	**4**	**4**	**8**
Don't know	**7**	4	6	10	4	5	11	8	7	4	6	8	7	8	9	4	11	7	7
Pressure on women to balance work and looking after children/family																			
A very big problem	**46**	35	58	43	54	38	45	51	44	39	45	46	45	53	49	44	40	55	45
A fairly big problem	**40**	48	32	42	36	47	38	34	44	47	42	38	41	31	38	41	42	30	43
TOTAL BIG PROBLEM	**86**	**83**	**90**	**85**	**90**	**85**	**83**	**85**	**88**	**86**	**87**	**84**	**86**	**84**	**87**	**85**	**82**	**85**	**88**
Not much of a problem	**7**	11	3	7	6	10	4	7	6	12	6	9	8	7	6	9	7	5	7
Not a problem at all	**1**	2	2	0	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1
TOTAL NOT A PROBLEM	**8**	**13**	**5**	**7**	**7**	**12**	**5**	**9**	**8**	**13**	**8**	**10**	**9**	**8**	**8**	**10**	**9**	**8**	**8**
Don't know	**6**	3	6	7	3	3	12	7	5	2	5	6	6	8	5	5	9	7	4
Employment inequality and employment opportunities for women (e.g. gender pay gap, career progression)																			
A very big problem	**29**	23	36	26	32	28	28	28	29	29	29	28	29	26	29	26	26	35	30
A fairly big problem	**43**	43	45	52	51	38	38	43	46	41	45	40	43	42	44	46	37	43	43
TOTAL BIG PROBLEM	**72**	**66**	**81**	**78**	**83**	**66**	**66**	**71**	**75**	**70**	**74**	**68**	**72**	**68**	**73**	**72**	**63**	**78**	**73**
Not much of a problem	**17**	24	11	12	13	24	17	15	15	22	16	18	17	23	14	19	22	11	15
Not a problem at all	**3**	6	2	0	2	5	1	4	2	3	3	4	3	1	4	2	3	3	4
TOTAL NOT A PROBLEM	**20**	**30**	**13**	**12**	**15**	**29**	**18**	**19**	**17**	**25**	**19**	**22**	**20**	**24**	**18**	**21**	**25**	**14**	**19**
Don't know	**8**	5	6	10	3	6	16	9	7	5	7	10	9	7	9	8	13	9	7
Thinking about the economic system in the UK, do you think it is skewed more towards men's needs and lives, women's needs and lives or is it not skewed towards either?																			
More skewed towards men's needs and lives	**64**	56	75	72	76	58	58	67	65	62	69	58	64	63	69	67	62	67	62
More skewed towards women's needs and lives	**4**	2	5	4	3	4	7	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	8	3	5	3	3
Not skewed towards either	**18**	30	10	16	14	24	10	14	22	23	15	20	19	11	9	17	19	16	21
Don't know	**15**	11	11	8	7	14	25	16	9	13	12	18	14	22	15	13	14	14	15

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Which of the following factors, if any, do you think are most likely to prevent women from having children in Britain today? Please select up to three factors.																			
Financial insecurity	**47**	40	50	50	55	39	39	55	46	38	48	46	46	44	53	48	38	48	49
Balancing going to work and looking after children	**47**	43	46	50	49	45	39	49	45	47	47	47	46	47	50	48	44	50	46
Concerns about the future of their children's future	**28**	28	29	27	32	28	24	29	26	30	27	29	29	27	20	30	29	27	28
Lack of financial support available for mothers	**27**	21	31	31	30	23	32	36	24	14	26	28	27	21	32	28	25	32	26
Concern about career progression	**19**	19	19	27	24	17	21	22	16	17	23	15	20	12	19	13	22	27	21
Finding the right partner	**19**	20	20	15	21	19	21	17	27	16	23	15	20	14	14	22	23	22	17
Lack of high quality childcare	**17**	16	20	26	22	16	12	17	16	20	19	15	17	21	17	16	16	16	19
Women are leaving it to late to conceive	**17**	22	14	15	15	20	14	12	22	20	17	16	17	18	16	16	18	21	16
Social trends promoting a childless life free of responsibilities	**11**	11	8	11	9	12	19	9	8	13	12	9	11	10	5	13	12	11	9
Spending time away from home due to work commitments	**10**	8	9	8	8	10	9	9	9	12	9	11	10	12	11	11	7	9	10
Other	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Not applicable, nothing prevents women having children today	**6**	10	6	4	5	9	2	4	8	12	5	9	6	5	12	7	4	4	7
Don't know	**6**	6	7	5	4	6	11	6	4	6	5	7	6	11	3	6	9	3	6
Thinking about societal expectations of women today, which of the following, if any, comes closest to you view?																			
Society puts more expectation on women taking care of their children/family than having a successful career	**39**	33	45	36	39	35	45	40	35	36	38	39	38	43	42	36	39	43	37
Society puts more expectation on women having a successful career than taking care of their children/family	**20**	24	14	18	15	22	20	15	22	24	16	24	20	12	15	22	21	18	20
Society puts a similar level of expectation on women to have a successful career as it does on women taking care of their children/family at the same time	**42**	43	42	45	46	43	35	45	42	40	46	37	42	45	43	42	40	38	43
How helpful or unhelpful do you think the following would be to support women in maintaining a good work-life balance whilst having children?																			
Having the option to work from home during the first 6 years of your children's life																			
Very helpful	**50**	42	60	48	56	41	52	60	44	39	49	52	49	49	59	46	45	62	49
Fairly helpful	**28**	29	24	32	28	30	26	24	33	34	29	28	29	25	24	32	36	16	28
TOTAL HELPFUL	**78**	**71**	**84**	**80**	**84**	**71**	**78**	**84**	**77**	**73**	**78**	**80**	**78**	**74**	**83**	**78**	**81**	**78**	**77**
Fairly unhelpful	**8**	12	6	10	7	11	5	7	10	10	9	8	8	11	4	9	5	10	9
Very unhelpful	**3**	5	3	3	2	5	3	2	4	4	4	3	3	7	2	2	5	2	3
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**11**	**17**	**9**	**13**	**9**	**16**	**8**	**9**	**14**	**14**	**13**	**11**	**11**	**18**	**6**	**11**	**10**	**12**	**12**
Don't know	**10**	12	8	8	6	13	14	8	9	13	9	11	10	8	10	10	9	11	10

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Extended parental leave for their partner following childbirth																			
Very helpful	**43**	27	56	51	51	29	51	58	35	23	42	44	42	55	48	40	36	50	43
Fairly helpful	**35**	41	29	34	36	39	32	27	41	45	38	32	36	26	31	38	38	32	35
TOTAL HELPFUL	**78**	**68**	**85**	**85**	**87**	**68**	**83**	**85**	**76**	**68**	**80**	**76**	**78**	**81**	**79**	**78**	**74**	**82**	**78**
Fairly unhelpful	**8**	12	6	4	5	13	3	5	11	13	7	9	8	7	8	10	9	7	7
Very unhelpful	**3**	6	1	1	2	5	1	1	3	5	2	4	3	4	2	1	2	1	5
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**11**	**18**	**7**	**5**	**7**	**18**	**4**	**6**	**14**	**18**	**9**	**13**	**11**	**11**	**10**	**11**	**11**	**8**	**12**
Don't know	**11**	13	8	10	7	13	13	9	10	13	10	11	11	8	10	11	15	10	10
Flexible parental leave for their partner (e.g. moving paternity leave later)																			
Very helpful	**39**	31	48	46	48	30	45	51	31	27	41	37	38	50	45	41	36	44	35
Fairly helpful	**41**	45	37	40	39	44	32	34	49	47	40	42	42	34	33	39	43	40	44
TOTAL HELPFUL	**80**	**76**	**85**	**86**	**87**	**74**	**77**	**85**	**80**	**74**	**81**	**79**	**80**	**84**	**78**	**80**	**79**	**84**	**79**
Fairly unhelpful	**6**	7	5	2	4	9	4	6	6	8	7	5	6	5	6	7	8	7	5
Very unhelpful	**2**	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	3
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**8**	**10**	**6**	**3**	**6**	**12**	**5**	**7**	**7**	**12**	**9**	**7**	**8**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**9**	**7**	**8**
Don't know	**12**	14	8	11	8	15	18	8	13	15	10	14	12	8	15	12	13	9	12
Child-friendly, flexible working hours (e.g. around school start/ finish times)																			
Very helpful	**65**	59	70	67	74	59	57	72	62	61	66	65	65	70	69	64	64	61	67
Fairly helpful	**26**	30	22	23	21	30	30	19	30	32	26	26	27	20	22	28	30	27	25
TOTAL HELPFUL	**91**	**89**	**92**	**90**	**95**	**89**	**87**	**91**	**92**	**93**	**92**	**91**	**92**	**90**	**91**	**92**	**94**	**88**	**92**
Fairly unhelpful	**2**	3	2	5	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	5	2
Very unhelpful	**1**	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**3**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**3**
Don't know	**6**	7	6	4	3	7	12	6	5	4	6	7	6	8	8	6	5	7	5
Parenting-friendly workplaces (e.g. workplace creche, spaces for rest or breastfeeding)																			
Very helpful	**48**	41	59	48	56	41	42	54	43	44	47	50	47	49	58	43	44	55	49
Fairly helpful	**36**	38	29	36	35	38	33	32	41	39	36	36	37	34	29	39	40	29	36
TOTAL HELPFUL	**84**	**79**	**88**	**84**	**91**	**79**	**75**	**86**	**84**	**83**	**83**	**86**	**84**	**83**	**87**	**82**	**84**	**84**	**85**
Fairly unhelpful	**5**	7	3	7	3	7	8	4	6	5	6	4	5	4	2	6	6	7	4
Very unhelpful	**2**	4	1	2	2	4	0	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**7**	**11**	**4**	**9**	**5**	**11**	**8**	**6**	**8**	**8**	**9**	**6**	**7**	**7**	**4**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**7**
Don't know	**9**	11	7	7	4	10	17	7	8	9	8	9	8	10	10	9	7	8	9
Sharing work and caring responsibilities 50/50 with a partner																			
Very helpful	**54**	44	60	61	62	49	54	55	53	52	55	51	52	62	60	55	50	56	50
Fairly helpful	**31**	34	28	30	29	31	31	30	33	32	31	32	32	21	27	34	37	30	29
TOTAL HELPFUL	**85**	**78**	**88**	**91**	**91**	**80**	**85**	**85**	**86**	**84**	**86**	**83**	**84**	**83**	**87**	**89**	**87**	**86**	**79**
Fairly unhelpful	**5**	10	2	4	4	8	2	5	4	7	5	5	5	8	4	4	2	5	7
Very unhelpful	**1**	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	4	0	0	2	0	2
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**6**	**11**	**4**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**2**	**6**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**7**	**6**	**12**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**9**
Don't know	**9**	11	8	4	5	11	14	9	9	8	8	11	10	5	9	7	9	10	12

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The introduction of tax deductions for working mothers specifically to be used to cover childcare costs																			
Very helpful	**49**	46	56	46	52	46	43	54	47	45	48	51	48	49	55	49	47	43	51
Fairly helpful	**34**	34	31	36	35	33	38	30	37	36	36	31	34	38	31	35	35	42	30
TOTAL HELPFUL	**83**	**80**	**87**	**82**	**87**	**79**	**81**	**84**	**84**	**81**	**84**	**82**	**82**	**87**	**86**	**84**	**82**	**85**	**81**
Fairly unhelpful	**3**	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	3
Very unhelpful	**2**	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	2	4	2	2	3	2	3
TOTAL UNHELPFUL	**5**	**8**	**4**	**5**	**5**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**6**
Don't know	**12**	13	9	13	8	14	14	12	11	11	11	13	12	8	8	10	13	11	14
Thinking about politicians in the UK, do you think there is too much, too little or about the right amount of focus on the needs of women?																			
Too much focus	**4**	6	3	3	2	8	3	3	4	8	6	3	4	4	5	7	4	3	3
Too little focus	**62**	52	77	67	72	54	62	68	61	53	65	59	62	50	71	63	54	69	62
About the right amount	**16**	24	7	14	14	20	13	11	16	23	15	16	15	25	13	14	17	15	15
Don't know	**18**	18	13	17	12	18	21	18	20	15	15	22	18	21	11	16	25	13	19

**Any percentages calculated on bases fewer than 100 respondents do not represent a wide enough cross-section of the target population to be considered statistically reliable. These figures should not be used.*

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