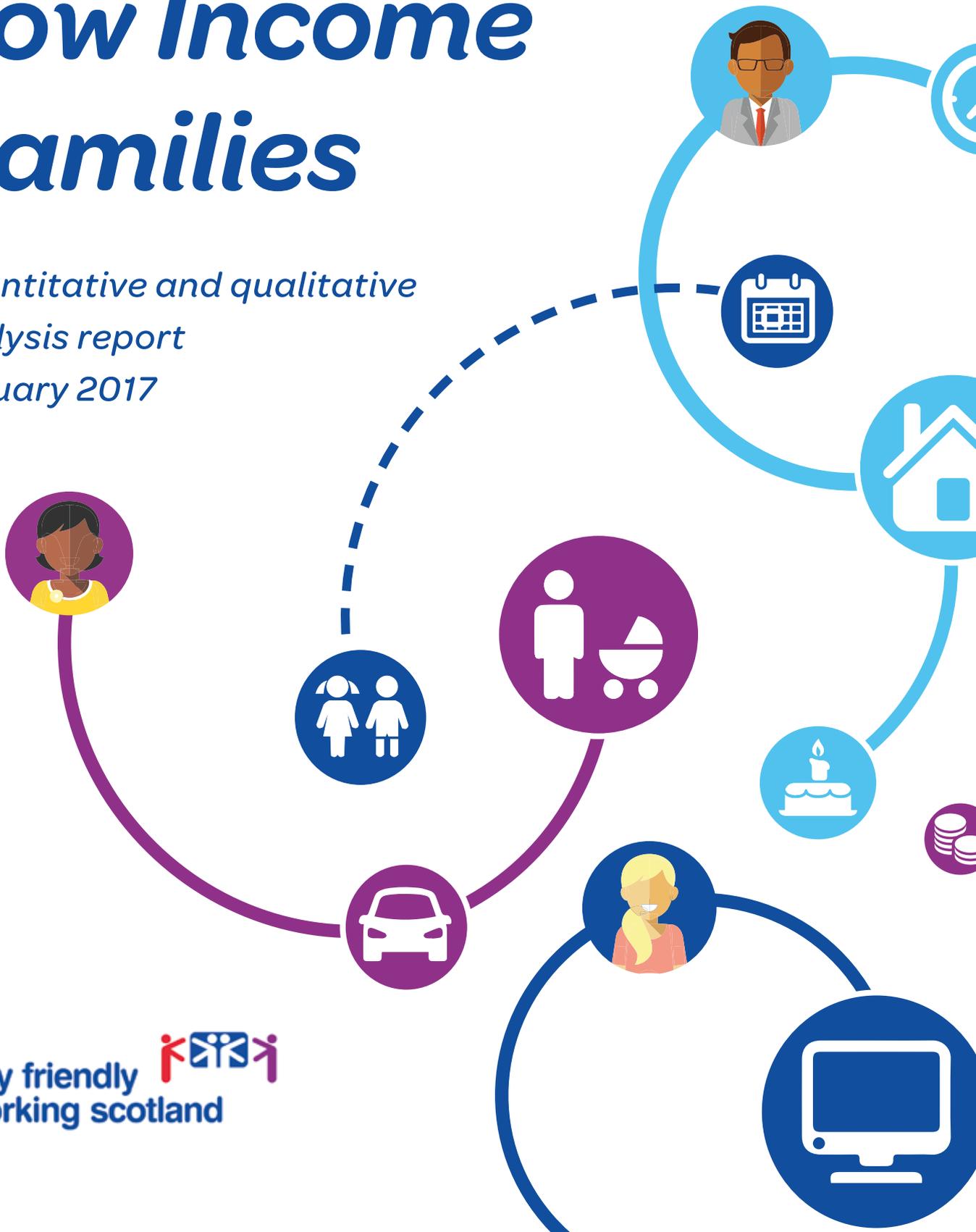


Family Friendly Working and Low Income Families

*Quantitative and qualitative
analysis report
January 2017*



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Family friendly working needs of low income family households

Quantitative and qualitative analysis report

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Executive summary

This report examines the family friendly working needs of low income families in Scotland drawing on data from the Growing Up in Scotland study and primary qualitative research including 22 interviews and 3 focus groups with parents from predominantly low income households. The key findings from the research are set out below within the key themes that informed the research and analysis.

Access to and awareness of flexible working

Access to family friendly flexible working

The quantitative data showed that in 2010/11, the majority of employed parents of 6-year-old children had access to at least one form of flexible working arrangement (83%)¹. There were no differences in the proportion of low income parents of 3-year-old children who had access to (or used) flexible working in 2013 compared with in 2007/08.

Differential access according to income

The quantitative data found that parents' access to flexible working varied by household income, with those in the highest income groups more likely to have access compared with those in the lower income groups.

Low income parents in the qualitative research showed limited recognition of formal family friendly working policies within their workplaces. The most commonly cited policies, when prompted, that parents were aware of or had access to were flexible hours and time off (usually unpaid) if children are sick. Some had not heard of job-share and other reasonably common opportunities, even when prompted. Those who *had* heard of such arrangements viewed them as more for 'managerial' staff than for people like themselves.

Parents on low incomes had experienced varying levels of support from employers when trying to change their working patterns and many encountered poor support for this. As a result, many ultimately opted to change job or stop working altogether. Overall, informal support was much more commonly accessed than formal arrangements, but was heavily dependent on the attitude of individual managers rather than organisational policy.

Differential access and perceptions according to gender

In the quantitative research low income mothers and fathers of 4-year-old children were equally likely to have access to flexible working. However, mothers were more likely to use flexible working arrangements compared with fathers.

The qualitative research found that among low income parents flexible working for family reasons was viewed as less of an option for fathers. Some indicated that they would be reluctant to ask for this as it is not an accepted norm at their place of work, in their industry or more generally. In couple households mothers tended to give up work or reduce their hours considerably to bring up children. There was some sense of

¹ This means that they had access to at least one of a variety of different flexible working arrangements listed in section 1.2.1 including paid and unpaid leave, flexible working hours and childcare vouchers.

acceptance that this is simply the norm, but some fathers wished they could spend more time with their family, while some mothers would like to work longer hours if they could.

Access to childcare and other benefits

Access to other employment benefits such as childcare vouchers also varied by household income, with those in the highest income groups more likely to have been offered childcare vouchers by their employer compared with those in the lower income groups. Where offered, support with childcare was taken up by just under one in three with those in the highest income households more likely to make use of childcare support compared with those in the lower income groups.

Many respondents in the qualitative research had changed their jobs or working patterns for family reasons, most frequently through going part-time or giving up work altogether. The rationale for these decisions was primarily to avoid or minimise the need for childcare, either because childcare is perceived as unaffordable or because it is an active choice to care for their children themselves. Few low income respondents had heard of childcare vouchers or similar benefits. Only one had ever accessed a childcare voucher scheme. This is perhaps not surprising given that most had arranged their working life so as not to need to use formal childcare. For some, childcare is not seen as an option because their job(s) involve shift work or evening or weekend work.

The findings indicate that most low income respondents would like to have more time where they are not working, but some (particularly single parents limited to 16 hours for benefit related reasons) would like to work more. Overall, the biggest barrier to more family friendly ways of working is financial (cost of childcare, cost of care in school holidays, loss of benefit).

Appetite for flexible working

Most of those whose employer offered flexible working used at least one of the arrangements offered¹ (83%) and this did not differ by household income. This suggests that parents have an appetite for family friendly flexible working regardless of their income. The discrepancies seem to lie in parents' access to and/or awareness of flexible working provision which seem to place lower income households at a disadvantage.

Differential access and uptake between sectors

In the quantitative data, among low income households access to flexible working was found to vary by occupational classification, with those in semi-routine or routine occupations less likely to have access to flexible working.

Among parents in the qualitative research, respondents who worked in the public sector were aware of a wider range of family friendly working options available to them than those who did not work in the public sector. It appeared to be more common among public sector employees to be paid if they had to take time off when their children are sick.

In the quantitative data, among low income households those in semi routine and routine occupations were less likely to use flexible working compared with those in managerial or professional occupations, and those working in retail were less likely to use flexible working compared with those working in finance, real estate and business,

manufacturing or construction. Those working unsociable hours were less likely to make use of flexible working compared with those who did not work unsociable hours. There may be a number of reasons for these differences which were not examined in this data. Therefore, further research may be beneficial to explore whether experiences differ according to industries and sectors and the reasons for this.

Impact on family life and wellbeing

Nearly one in three low income parents said they had missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities. This did not differ by either access to or use of flexible working arrangements. However, low income parents who had access to flexible working were more likely to have higher self-reported mental wellbeing compared with those who did not have access to flexible working and those who were unemployed. Those who had missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities were more likely to have low mental wellbeing.

The qualitative research found that, generally, parents wanted to work. Some wanted to improve their career prospects and many believed there are many benefits for the family, including more money for holidays and lifestyle and setting an example for the children.

Despite this, the struggle of juggling work responsibilities alongside family responsibilities can cause a lot of stress and can impact negatively on relationships. For example, some parents talked of the negative impact on their relationships with their partner or spouse, mentioning that they rarely spend any time together as a family due to having to take leave at different times to reduce the cost of childcare. Children can miss out on spending time doing after school activities with their parents and parents miss out on involvement with education.

Parents in low income households who had access to and used one or more flexible working arrangements were also more likely to rate their employer as 'good' in terms of family friendly working.

Put together, these findings suggest that provision of flexible working to meet family needs could improve not just employees' wellbeing but potentially also their goodwill and their motivation –thus being advantageous for employers as well as for families.

1 Introduction

Family Friendly Working Scotland are interested in understanding the family friendly working needs of low income families in Scotland and commissioned ScotCen Social Research to undertake research to examine this. A key aim of the research is to understand how access to and use of family friendly working impacts on the lives of low income households in Scotland.

The research consists of two strands:

A quantitative element consisting of secondary analysis of Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) data examining:

- The extent to which families have access to, and make use of, flexible working arrangements, and how this differs by household income.
- How access to and use of flexible working arrangements in low income households differs according to a range of household and employment factors.
- To what extent parents in low income families feel that their work impacts negatively on family life, and how this may differ according to access to and/or use of flexible working.
- How access to/use of family friendly working differs for low income parents of 3-year-old children in 2013 compared with 2007/08, and for mothers of 4-year-old children in 2006/07 compared with fathers.
- Whether self-reported mental wellbeing amongst parents in low income households is related to access to/use of flexible working, and to whether work impacts negatively on family life.
- How satisfied parents of 3-year-old children in low income households are with the family friendly working offered by their employer. This will include a comparison of 2013 and 2007/08 data.

A qualitative element consisting of one-to-one interviews and focus groups exploring:

- Understanding, knowledge, experiences and perceptions of family-friendly working.
- The extent to which family friendly patterns of working are accessed and perceptions of barriers to access.
- Perceptions of impacts of family friendly working on employment status, earnings capacity and wellbeing.

This report presents the findings from these two strands of research.

1.1 Data

1.1.1 Quantitative data

The quantitative analysis draws on data from the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS) - a large-scale longitudinal research project aimed at tracking the lives of several cohorts of Scottish children from the early years, through childhood and beyond. The study focused initially on a cohort of 5217 children aged 10 months old (birth cohort one or 'BC1') born in 2004/05, and a cohort of 2859 children aged 34 months (the child

cohort, CC) born in 2002/03. The first sweep of fieldwork with these cohorts began in April 2005 and annual data collection continued with both cohorts until BC1 children turned 6 years old. In 2011 a new birth cohort was recruited to the study consisting of 6127 children aged 10 months, born in 2010/11 (birth cohort two or 'BC2'). At this point the study stopped tracking the CC and the frequency of interviews with BC1 dropped to biennial. Parents in BC2 were interviewed again during 2013 when the child was nearly 3 years old.

On GUS, data is collected via a face-to-face interview carried out in participants' homes by specially trained social survey interviewers using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The interviewers read questions from, and enter responses directly into, a laptop computer. From the second sweep onwards interviewers seek to contact the participant from the previous sweep.

The participant is the child's main carer. In virtually all cases, this is the child's natural mother. Consequently, unless otherwise stated, throughout this report, when referring to the quantitative data, the terms 'parent', 'participant' and 'mother' are used interchangeably.

The majority of the analysis in this report uses data collected from the oldest GUS birth cohort in 2010/11 when the children were nearly 6 years old. Certain elements of the analysis, however, draw on data collected at different 'sweeps'. An outline of the data used is set out in Table 1:1 below.

Year	Who was interviewed	Age of cohort child	Cohort	Chapters in which data is used
2010/11	Main carer	6 years	Birth cohort 1	2, 3, 4
2013	Main carer	3 years	Birth cohort 2	5, 7, 8
2007/08	Main carer	3 years	Birth cohort 1	5, 8
2006/07	Main carer and partner	4 years	Child cohort	6

1.1.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative analysis uses data collected through primary research amongst a sample of predominantly low income parents. 22 telephone interviews were conducted; each lasting 30 minutes, as well as 3 focus groups; each lasting 1 hour, from March to May 2016. The parents that took part in the in-depth interviews were drawn from the GUS dataset and the sample covered locations across Scotland. The majority of the interviews were carried out with parents of children from the most recent birth cohort or children born in 2010/2011 therefore all of the sample have at least one child aged 5 or 6 and some also have children of other ages (as shown in the table below). Parents taking part in focus groups (16) were recruited using a free-find approach and lived in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Quotas were set to ensure the sample included single and couple parents, fathers and mothers and parents of a range of ages of children. The focus groups consisted entirely of parents from low income households (in the bottom 20 or 40% equivalised income brackets). The interviews consisted predominantly of parents from low income households (in the bottom 20 or 40% equivalised income brackets) with a few higher income for comparison. Different employment statuses and sectors were included. A profile of the achieved sample from the interviews and focus groups is set out in Table 1:2 below.

Table 1:2 Overview of data used in qualitative analysis

Household income (equivalised income quintiles for 2016) ²	Bottom Quintile	24
	2nd Quintile	9
	3rd Quintile	2
	4 th or 5 th Quintile	3
Parent interviewed	Mother	25
	Father	13
Household type	Couple	25
	Single	13
Respondent employment status	Full-time employed	17
	Part-time employed	18
	Self-employed	2
	Unemployed	1
Employment type (among those employed)	Public sector	13
	Private sector	21
	Self-employed	2
	Unclear	2
No. of children under 14	1	11
	2	15
	3	12
Age of children	At least one under 3	11
	At least one aged 3-4	13
	At least one aged 5-14	28

1.2 Methodology – quantitative analysis

The quantitative analysis undertaken consists primarily of simple frequencies of key outcome variables as well as cross tabulations with selected explanatory variables. Brief descriptions of the outcome variables are provided in section 1.2.1 below. On some key measures, comparisons by household income are provided, however, the majority of the analysis is carried out for low income households only. This is specified in the text. For the purposes of this report, ‘Low income’ has been defined as the lowest two quintiles (i.e. the bottom 40% on a scale of equivalised household incomes). For more information on the definition of low income utilised in monetary terms and descriptions of the explanatory variables used in the report please see Appendix A.

All percentages cited in the report are based on the weighted data and are rounded to the nearest whole number. All differences described in the text are statistically significant at the 95% level or above, unless otherwise specified. This means that the probability of having found a difference of at least this size if there was no actual difference in the population is 5% or less. The term ‘significant’ is used to refer to statistical significance and is not intended to imply substantive importance.

² See Appendix A for an explanation of how equivalised income is calculated

Estimates based on a small number of cases should be interpreted with caution. Throughout the report, low base sizes (<50) are indicated by the use of [...]. Where base sizes are below 30 no estimates are provided.

1.2.1 Outcome variables

Family friendly working

On GUS, a range of information is collected about the participant's employment. At the sweeps of data collection set out in Table 1:1, this includes questions about whether their employer offers one or more of a range of family friendly working arrangements, and if so, whether they make use of these³. These questions were not asked of participants who were self-employed.

The family friendly working arrangements asked about both flexible working arrangements and support with childcare. The main focus of the analysis presented in this report is the provision and use of flexible working arrangements. The flexible working arrangements asked about are as follows:

- Flexible working hours (i.e. changing times you start and finish) always possible
- Flexible working hours sometimes possible by arrangement
- [Employer] allows parents paid time off when a child is sick (in addition to normal holiday allowance)
- [Employer] allows parents unpaid time off when a child is sick
- [Employer] allows parents unpaid time off during school holidays
- [Employer] allows employees to work from home some or all of the time
- [Employer] allows employees to job share
- Other family friendly working policy or arrangement.

For the purpose of analysis, two composite measures of access to, and use of, flexible working arrangements were created. These indicate whether a participant had access to and, if so, used *any* flexible working arrangements. These composite measures include all the measures listed above apart from job share. Job share has been excluded from the composite measures because it was not asked about in 2006/07 and 2007/08, thus, excluding job share from the composite measures ensures consistency in the analysis.

Composite measures were also created for access to and use of any support with childcare offered by the employer. These measures include questions about the participant's access to and use of the following:

- Subsidised childcare
- Childcare vouchers
- Workplace crèche or nursery.

³ In the interviews with parents of 3-year-old children in 2007/08 only those whose job details had changed since the previous interview were asked the questions about family friendly working. Therefore, in cases where the respondent's job details had not changed since the previous interview, data from this previous sweep of data collection – which took place in 2006/07 – is used as a proxy.

Missing out on family activities due to work

In addition to questions about family friendly working, participants are also asked a series of questions about their work life balance. One of these measures has been selected for analysis, namely whether participants agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

“Because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in”⁴.

Mental wellbeing

As part of a self-completion module of the interview, participants were asked a series of questions about their mental wellbeing. These have been combined into a measure of mental wellbeing which distinguishes between below average mental wellbeing and average mental wellbeing and above. The individual measures included in the composite measure cover a range of indicators of both positive and negative mental health and wellbeing, including:

- Whether accomplish less due to emotional problems
- Whether not doing work or regular activities as carefully as usual due to emotional problems
- How often feeling calm and peaceful
- How often having a lot of energy
- How often feeling down
- Whether emotional (or physical) health interfering with social activities

Rating of family friendly working offered by employer

In addition to the questions about specific arrangements offered by their employer, all participants who were employed were also asked how they would rate their employer in terms of offering family friendly working, using a 5-point scale ranging from ‘Very good’ to ‘Very poor’.

1.3 Methodology – Qualitative analysis

The qualitative data was collected using bespoke topic guides administered by specialist interviewers and moderators. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded with the permission of respondents and subsequently transcribed for analysis purposes: transcripts, along with moderator/interviewer field notes and debrief form the qualitative dataset.

Data was organised into an analysis framework under themes emerging from the qualitative discussions. Detailed qualitative analysis was undertaken, identifying and

⁴ Another statement was also considered (*“Because of my work responsibilities my family time is less enjoyable and more pressured”*). Both questions measure of the extent to which participants feel that work encroaches on their family life. However, for the purposes of this analysis, the former measure has the advantage that the distribution of those who agreed vs. those who disagreed was more even. This means that comparisons of the two groups (those who agree vs. those who disagree) will be more robust due to larger base sizes.

exploring themes and issues, examining underlying factors and influences and exploring trends and links between ideas, attitudes and behaviour as well as any sub-group differences, documenting both explicit comment and implied views or reasons. Throughout this process, the emerging findings were related back to the original research objectives.

Throughout this report, we summarise the qualitative findings, examine how they relate to the quantitative findings and use anonymised verbatim quotes to illustrate key points.

2 Access to family friendly working

This chapter examines the extent to which parents in Scotland have access to a range of family friendly working arrangements. The quantitative findings in this chapter draw on data collected from parents of 6-year-old children in 2010/11. In the vast majority of cases, the participant was the child's mother. Qualitative findings are set alongside the quantitative data and the additional understanding they provide is outlined.

Please note that the tables referred to throughout this and subsequent chapters can be found in Appendix B.

2.1 Flexible working

The following provides an overview of the extent to which parents of 6-year-old children in 2010/11 had access to a range of flexible working.

Table 2:1 shows the proportion of parents who had access to one or more flexible working arrangements, by household income. The 'All' column reflects the proportion of all main carers of 6-year-old children in Scotland in 2011/11 whose employer offered the flexible working arrangements listed.

The table shows that in 2010/11, the majority of parents of 6-year-old children who were employed had access to at least some form of flexible working arrangements (83%). It also shows that access to flexible working varied significantly by household income: those in the highest income groups were more likely to work for an employer who offered flexible working arrangements compared with those in the lowest income group: 90% of those in households in the highest income quintile had access to at least some form of flexible working arrangements while this was the case for just 67% of those in the lowest quintile. This pattern is evident for most of the individual measures but is particularly evident for measures such as getting extra paid time off to care for a sick child and being able to work from home.

The table also shows that the flexible working arrangements most likely to be offered were flexible working hours and additional time off when a child is sick (paid and unpaid), with nearly half of parents saying their employer offered these arrangements.

The **qualitative** findings uncovered limited recognition of the term 'family friendly working'. Most respondents associated the phrase more with family arrangements than employment, though a few spontaneously mentioned flexible hours, or informal give and take with employer to accommodate family and workplace needs; for others 'family friendly working' meant changing job/career or working fewer hours.

"Just flexibility with your employer. A wee bit of give and take with having to take days off, or starting early, or finishing early."

Mother, couple, full-time

"Just if anything occurs to the family, or anything happens...they can give you discretionary time to go and, you know, sort out issues...It doesn't affect your work. You don't come back and there's no, you know, hassle or anything."

Mother, couple, full-time

“To me, it would actually mean that they would help you to still be in employment, but work it round your family life, so it would help make family life easier for you.”

Mother, single, part-time

“You're given the opportunity for the hours to be kind of like juggled to fit in with family commitments, child commitments, and hospital appointments and childcare.”

Mother, single, full-time

When prompted, some were aware of arrangements such as flexi-time, time off for dependants and part-time working as specific employer policies and one or two even knew of workplaces where there were crèches. However, others even with prompting had not heard of job-share and other reasonably commonly available arrangements.

“I don't know that much about stuff like that...I think you could cut your hours... You can drop your hours if you want. It doesn't affect obviously your job, but it would affect my pay, and I couldn't...I couldn't afford to do that.”

Mother, couple, full-time

The most commonly cited options available to qualitative respondents were flexibility in the hours of the working day (either formal flexi-time or informal give and take) and time off (usually unpaid, but occasionally in public sector paid) if children are sick.

Public sector employees were more aware of a wider range of options available to them, including childcare voucher schemes, flexi-time and opportunity to choose part-time working days or hours to suit. One focus group respondent works for a charity that offers a workplace nursery, also open in the school holidays for school aged children. Some knew of people who had access to more family friendly options than they did themselves: Marks & Spencer and local authorities were mentioned most often in this context and one respondent had seen an advert for a job with an employer who offered a wide range of family friendly policies and support, though she was reluctant to believe there was no 'catch' or that she could really apply for such a job.

Because flexible working for this income group generally means informal give and take, access is heavily dependent on the discretion of individual managers and some reported widely different practices even within the same organisation or department.

There were some examples of bad practice, including:

- A boss who ignored employees for several days after they had a day off for a sick child
- A private sector employee who was told she could work part-time on return from maternity leave, but only a minimum of 4 days a week
- Workplaces where time off for dependants was frowned on or warnings issued if more than 3 days were taken in a year

....and some of good practice:

- A boss who suggested an employee changed her arrival time to avoid rush hour traffic and to let her drop her children off before work
- Many examples of informal 'give and take' in both private and public sector environments

- One woman (charity sector) had her job held for a year so she could take time off to look after her son while he was being treated for leukaemia

Generally, the informal give and take approach to flexibility in the workplace for low income parents extended to colleagues. Most of the respondents in the qualitative research reported both giving and receiving support from colleague, with informal shift-swaps, cover, consideration over time off in the school holidays and so on the norm, especially amongst colleagues who are also parents.

“There's 2 of us with young kids – school age – and we're both the same grades, so like holidays and things, I'm off this week. She took last week off as a holiday, so we do that at the school holidays...We split it. The other two women, their kids are older, and they don't mind about school holidays, so they're very good to let us take the school holidays because of that”

Mother, couple, part-time

“They're more supportive than any...any employers, you know? They would rather say...like if you had to be away, “I'll cover your 10 minutes early. I'll cover your 10 minutes late”.

“Aye. I've swapped shifts.”

“I find that. People you work with are more flexible than employers.”

2 mothers in focus group

2.1.1 Differences by household factors among low income families

While Table 2:1 compared access to flexible working arrangements by household income, this section looks at differences in access to flexible working among low income families.

Table 2:2 shows the proportion of parents who had access to some form of flexible working by a number of household factors. It shows that access to flexible working arrangements did not vary significantly by any of the household factors examined. For example, single parents were just as likely to have access to some form of flexible working as parents in couple households (77% of single parents had access to some form of flexible working compared with 76% of parents in couple households).

2.1.2 Differences by employment factors among low income families

This section looks at differences in access to flexible working among low income families with a focus on employment factors.

Table 2:3 shows the proportion of parents who had access to some form of flexible working arrangements by a number of employment factors. It shows that access to flexible working varies significantly by occupational classification, with those in semi-routine or routine occupations least likely to have access to flexible working (69% in this group said their employer offers some form of flexible working arrangements compared with 82% of those in professional or managerial occupations). This is borne out by the **qualitative** findings, where perceptions emerged from some that arrangements like flexible working hours, home working and job-share were more for ‘managerial’ or ‘office’ staff than for people like themselves. One father in a focus group

talked about the office based staff in the public sector organisation he works for having access to paid time off if their children were sick, but claimed that the manual staff in his department had only found out about this right by accident. Those working shift patterns and in front line service delivery environments more often said that they could not work flexibly and clearly some jobs (care, retail for example) cannot be done from home.

"I think there is the kind of option for job share, but I think that's more for like kind of managerial rather than kind of on the floor.. type thing."

Mother, couple, full-time

2.1.3 Barriers to flexible working

The **qualitative** research explored barriers to more flexible working for low income households. Most respondents would like to have more time not working and/or more family time, though some (particularly lone parents working 16 hours or less to avoid loss of benefits⁵) would like to be able to afford to work more.

"I cut my hours...because if I work full-time, I would be paying everything – nurseries and... So I went part-time, although my mum keeps him just now 'cause... until he's 2, then I can get him...he'll get in to nurseries. So I had to cut my hours. I had to take a loss. Don't get me wrong. It's good that I get to spend time with my wee boy, but money-wise I'd obviously like to work full-time and provide for him, but I just had to."

Mother in focus group

For most, the biggest barrier to more family friendly ways of working is financial (cost of childcare, cost of care/clubs in school holidays, loss of benefit). Earnings and childcare costs have to be balanced carefully for this income group and many therefore change jobs, stop working or become self-employed in order to avoid the need for paid childcare. For these respondents this is a more viable approach than accessing flexible working with an existing employer.

"It all comes down to money really because we're looking at how much the nursery is going to cost and it's not really actually worth like working full-time to be honest."

Mother, couple, full-time

"I think private childcare's far too expensive. It would cancel out one of us working. We've never been able to work like the same sort of hours...With having 4 children, even for like the summer holiday clubs and stuff, it works out very expensive per day to have the children looked after, so – yeah – I mean that's why just one of us are working now, and the other one's at home with them all the time."

Mother, couple, self-employed

⁵ Receipt of different benefits are affected by whether someone works less or more than 16 hours per week as well as a number of other factors. Whilst eligible parents may still receive child tax credit and child benefit if they work more than 16 hours per week they will not receive income support or job seekers allowance. Working tax credits also varies according to this. More information can be found at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/in-work-or-looking-for-work/benefits-and-tax-credits-for-people-in-work/> and <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/help-with-childcare-costs#childcare-vouchers>

“Just now I'm getting income support and stuff, so see if I was to get a full-time kind of job, I'd have to pay all my bills on top of all the childcare, on top of everything else sort of thing. So it's not that I don't want to get a full-time. I enjoy my job and everything, but doing over 16 hours means...unless I get a really really good paying job, it's like it'll just go all to bills.”

Mother, single, part-time

Some workplace barriers were also identified:

- As already mentioned, many jobs in this income bracket are either face-to-face (receptionist) or manual and cannot be done from home
- For shift based employment, childcare cannot be arranged around either shift patterns or weekly/monthly notice of shifts
- In the public sector, 'archaic IT systems' limit options to work from home
- Employees are not made aware of their rights or of workplace policies or family friendly options they can access
- Even with an understanding manager, rigid HR policies can cause problems for those working in larger organisations where there has to be one rule for everyone.

“Yeah his work is fairly rigid because of what he does, it's very difficult for him to get...his patterns of work are set months in advance and because he works with children as well...so if there's a school show or something like that and I can't get to it because of work, there's very little chance he will.”

Mother, couple, part-time

Attitudinal barriers were identified and include:

- Respondents feeling that they cannot ask for flexibility or for time off, or that if they do, they then need to do extra work or hours to 'make up for it'
- Guilt over taking time off and the impact on colleagues
- Previous experiences with unsupportive employers: some had lost jobs because of taking time off to care for sick children
- Colleagues/managers who view maternity leave as a holiday and therefore are not perceived to be likely to be understanding about flexible working requests
- It is more acceptable to take time off sick than dependency leave, so many employees call in sick themselves rather than say their child is ill, knowing this will not be questioned – sick leave is also more likely to be paid than is leave for taking care of dependants
- As mentioned already, low expectation “this is the way it is for people like us....” or simply low awareness of rights and/or company policies in relation to flexible working

“Even if you're off for one day – they do what's called a 'return to work interview', and if you've got 3 instances of being off in the one year, then if you've got any more than that .. er .. I think it then goes to disciplinary.”

Mother, single, part-time

“Apart from the guilt that I have for having to take time off, and because... because of what's happened in the past with other employers, I do get quite anxious about taking time off, 'cause I'm scared the same thing's gonna happen again.”

Mother, single, full-time

“Well although we've got the flexitime, I don't like to like kind of ... If there's something on in the school at like say 10 o'clock, that's maybe a wee bit too late, 'cause then I wouldn't maybe get in to work till about 11.”

Mother, couple, full-time

2.2 Support with childcare

This section provides an overview of the extent to which employers offered support with childcare.

Table 2:4 shows the proportion of parents of 6-year-old children, in 2010/11, whose employer offered support with childcare. This is shown by household income as well as for all households.

The table shows that in 2010/11 more than a third (37%) of parents of 6-year-old children were offered childcare vouchers by their employer. This varied significantly by household income, with those in the highest income household much more likely to say they were offered childcare vouchers (57% amongst the highest income households were offered childcare vouchers compared with just 13% of those in the lowest income households).

The **qualitative** findings revealed a low awareness of availability of support with childcare. A few respondents had heard of childcare vouchers when prompted and a very few mentioned them spontaneously. Only one or two had ever accessed a childcare voucher scheme, perhaps not surprising in the context that most had arranged their working life so as not to need to use formal childcare.

3 Use of family friendly working arrangements

This chapter outlines the extent to which parents use any family friendly working arrangements offered by their employer. As above, this chapter draws on data collected from parents or carers of 6-year-old children in 2010/11. In the vast majority of cases, the participant is the child's mother. The quantitative findings are complemented with insights from the qualitative research.

3.1 Flexible working

Table 3:1 shows the overall proportion of parents who used any flexible working arrangements offered by their employer. For each individual facility only those who said their employer offered that particular facility are included in the base. For the composite measure of whether the participant used *any* flexible working arrangements, all those who said their employer offered at least some form of flexible working are included in the base.

The table shows that, overall, the vast majority of those who said their employer offers some form of flexible working used one or more of the arrangements offered (83%). This did not differ by household income.

Taking unpaid time off to care for a sick child was more common amongst lower income households compared with higher income households. A similar pattern applies for taking unpaid leave during school holidays. Those in the highest income households were most likely to work from home compared with those in the lower income households⁶.

The **qualitative** research revealed that many respondents had changed their working patterns for family reasons. Most frequently, either one partner or the sole parent had reduced working hours or given up working altogether. Others had changed job/career to something perceived to be more easily managed whilst caring for children and being there for them outside of school hours. Some had opted to become self-employed so that they could choose their working hours to suit family life.

"I changed career when I...when I had all my kids. I went and done beauty therapy so I could do it at home when they were wee and they were at nursery, just for a couple of hours in the morning."

Mother in focus group

Most often the rationale for these decisions was to avoid or minimise need for childcare, either because childcare is perceived as unaffordable or because it is an active choice not to have others care for their children. This was a prevalent attitude and many stated strong beliefs that they should be there and responsible for their children, not hand that to anyone else; some would not even want to be reliant on immediate family for childcare. For some, childcare is not seen as a viable option because their job(s) involve(d) shift work or evening or weekend work and continuing to work with a young family is therefore extremely difficult.

⁶ The low base size for the second lowest income group means that this estimate must be interpreted with caution.

“My wife stopped working... she feels that a mother should always be with her kids, especially when they're like pre-teen.”

Father in focus group

Because most respondents had re-arranged their job to suit their family, sorting out their own ‘family friendly approach’ by changing job or giving up work, this was perceived to be relatively easy to achieve. Very few said they had found it difficult to access an arrangement for working in a way that accommodates family needs. A few would prefer different hours with their current employer than they had managed to arrange.

For those who had reduced their working hours or changed shift or working patterns with their same employer, experiences vary. For example a woman returning from maternity leave wanted to work three days a week and was told she had to work a minimum of four or arrange her own job-share. Those who felt it would be difficult to arrange to work the days or hours they would like generally responded by changing or giving up their employment. Some respondents had experienced individual managers who made flexible working difficult, expecting them to have their children looked after by someone else if they were ill or even issuing warnings for taking ‘too much’ time off for sick children.

The small minority of respondents who had accessed some type of formal family friendly working arrangement with their current employer, tended to be in the higher income brackets in professional or semi-professional public sector jobs: for example a police officer and a teacher. These respondents were more likely to be aware of family friendly policies as a concept or in their workplace compared to the lower income groups.

3.1.1 Differences by household factors among low income families

The above compared use of flexible working arrangements by household income. This section looks at differences in use of flexible working among low income families.

Table 3:2 outlines use of flexible working arrangements by a number of household factors. It shows that take up of flexible working did not vary much by the household factors examined. The data does suggest, however, that those with three or more children were less likely to make use of flexible working arrangements compared with those who had one or two children. The data also suggests that parents who had at least one child in the household who had a disability or longstanding illness (the cohort child) were less likely to make use of flexible working arrangements⁷. There may be a number of reasons for lower uptake among parents of children with a disability or longstanding illness and with three or more children which this data did not examine. Further research may be beneficial to explore the experiences and needs of these families.

3.1.2 Differences by employment factors among low income families

This section looks at differences in use of flexible working among low income families.

⁷ These differences were bordering on being statistically significant and are therefore mentioned in the text.

Table 3:3 sets out the proportion of parents who used flexible working arrangements by a number of employment factors. It shows that use of flexible working varied significantly by occupational classification, by industry sector, and by whether parents worked unsociable hours. For example, those in semi routine and routine occupations were less likely to use flexible working arrangements compared with those in managerial or professional occupations, and those working in retail were less likely to use flexible working compared with those working in finance, real estate and business, and those working in manufacturing or construction. Those working unsociable hours were less likely to make use of flexible working compared with those who did not work unsociable hours.

3.2 Support with childcare

This section provides an overview of the extent to which parents of 6-year-old children, in 2010/11, used any support with childcare offered by their employer.

Table 3:4 shows the proportion of parents who used childcare support offered by their employer. For each individual type of support only those who said their employer offered the particular type of support are included in the base. For the composite measure of whether a parent used *any* type of childcare support offered by their employer, all those who said their employer offered at least some form of support with childcare are included in the base.

The table shows that, where offered, support with childcare was taken up by just under one in three (31%). Overall, those in the highest income households were more likely to make use of childcare support compared with those in the lower income groups.

Only a small minority of parents used subsidised childcare or workplace crèches (18% and 15%, respectively), while just under one in three of those whose employer offered childcare vouchers took up this offer (31%). Take up of childcare vouchers varied significantly by household income, with those in the highest income households more likely to say they had used childcare vouchers (47% compared with 10% in the second lowest quintile).

In the **qualitative** research (predominantly lower income respondents), very few were aware of any support available with childcare and only one or two had used any (a charity worker who had a workplace crèche, two or three respondents who had used childcare voucher schemes).

4 Missing out on family activities due to work

4.1 Perception of missing out on family activities

This section examines the extent to which parents in low income households have missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities. The findings draw on data collected in 2010/11 from main carers of children in the oldest GUS birth cohort when the children were approaching 6 years of age.

Table 4:1 shows the proportion of parents in low income households who agreed that, *“because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in”*, by whether they had access to and, if so, used any flexible working arrangements.

The table shows that in 2010/11, almost one in three parents of 6-year-old children living in low income households agreed that they had missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities. This proportion did not differ according to either access to or use of flexible working arrangements.

4.2 More about the impact of work on family life and vice versa

The **qualitative** research similarly found that working parents felt that they did miss out on family activities because of work. Many used examples such as school assemblies and shows, weekend time and evening time with younger children. For many, simply being able to either drop off or pick up their children at school would help them to feel more involved and less guilty. Where respondents had changed their work patterns to allow this to happen even once a week, they reported their children’s delight and a tangible impact on their own wellbeing.

Family holidays are rare for many of the respondents because working parents reported that they tend to use annual leave to cover childcare during the school holidays. This is the biggest thing that most would like to change if they could.

Respondents were asked to think about the positive and negative impacts that working has on family and that family has on work. Their comments are summarised in Table 4:2 in Appendix B.

Whilst there are both pros and cons of working as far as impacts on family life, it is clear that respondents feel that working parents are disadvantaged in many ways in the workplace, particularly those who work part-time. None of our respondents resented these disadvantages; rather they are simply accepted as the way life is and a consequence of a free choice to put family first and to work less for that reason.

"I've been working as a nurse for just over 8 years, and I can't really progress with more responsibility because I would be taking time away from the kids to give to my work."

Mother, couple, temp full-time

"I'm not working as much, so sometimes there's a lot of things that go on at work and I'm kind of a wee bit out of the loop! A wee bit because I'm not there as much as the other people in...the place."

Mother, couple, part-time

"So...in order to keep my professional heart beating I do a lot of things for which I don't get paid in order to keep trying new stuff and things like that. But in terms of career progression that's it, it's done. I'm not going anywhere any more I think, unless I'm prepared to return to work full-time."

Mother, couple, part-time

"I do feel like I'd lost a lot of the experience I did have."

Mother, single, part-time

The key positives of working relate to better income and modelling a good lifestyle and values to the children. For some, work is their 'sanity' break from the stresses of family life.

"It keeps us out there in the world not just thinking about ourselves."

Mother, couple, part-time

"I think the kids see that you're working hard to make sure that they're getting nice things and stuff like that."

Mother, couple, full-time

"But I'd just say the positive is obviously I have a bit more money than what I would if I wasn't working...Well, I think working actually helps like my children see that I'm working hard for... for them."

Mother, single, part-time

"I did want to pursue my career a little bit more. Yeah, I think career had to take a back seat really."

Mother, single, self-employed

"Oh, I think it's made a massive impact I think, 'cause I think I'd probably be doing full-time and being...being probably a lot further on than where I am the now, but I'm not because of obviously having my children. I'm only working part-time, and I'm probably not earning as much as what I could have because of me having the children."

Mother, single, part-time

Negatives include the impact on time with family and on relationships when there is less time together and for many, importantly, never having holidays together.

"I come back from work at night at 6 o'clock. I get back about half past 6 with my son. I make the tea. I do the housework. I'm tired. I get ratty and tired. Snap at him sometimes over the tiniest little thing, just because I'm so stressed out, because I don't get any time to myself."

Mother, single, full-time

"I just think I work too long. Like I said, don't really...don't get to see my son that much, so I'm never there for him, and he's...he misses me, but then I think he's...He's got a closer bond with his mum certainly."

Father, separated, full-time

"The only bad thing is it would be nice to maybe take a week off together and have a holiday or a break."

Mother, couple, self-employed

When asked how they feel about their current work/life balance, most respondents are reasonably content with the balance they have achieved for themselves, making the best of their own particular circumstances and taking into account their personal attitudes towards caring for their children. Most acknowledge that achieving a good balance is difficult. For some, their current balance is good or even the best it can be whereas for others it is skewed too far towards work. Those who work very little or not at all would ideally like to have work that fits with school hours, but a few would prefer not to be working at all.

"It kind of works out. Nobody feels particularly hard done by."

Mother, couple, full-time

"I've never relied on anybody else – like apart from my husband and that. But I've never relied on anybody, or they've never had to go to childcare."

Mother, couple, self-employed

"I just feel that I made the right choice switching jobs, 9 to 5, and I give it my all, and it's enough and I can, you know, I can be at home with the kids. I'd ... I ... I now get to take them to school, get to give them their breakfast in the morning. It's ... it's just a better balance."

Mother, couple, temp full-time

"We have to in effect split the...holidays between us to cover it all because childcare is expensive so um...we're rarely off at the same time."

Father, couple, full-time

"I mean probably the only thing that obviously that sometimes I do wish that I could work more maybe sometimes during the day, during school or nursery time."

Mother, couple, part-time

"We're probably working it to the best sort of situation that we can at the Moment; that there's always one of us available for the children, and the other one is working. .. But, as I say, once the little two are at school, then we'll be able to both work, and it'll be fine, and then we'll be able to have holidays and such."

Mother, couple, self-employed

Employers could help mostly by making sure that everyone has access to a bit of give and take flexibility when needed, for example varied start and finish times so that they can sometimes drop off or pick up their children, or allowing a couple of hours off mid-shift, rather than having to lose a whole shift for a child-related appointment. Term-time working or some sort of help with the cost of school holiday childcare would make the biggest difference to most families and in general more accessible, more affordable childcare at all times of day and days of week would support more people to continue to work after having a family.

"Like I can't even think of a solution round it. It's just something I've got to do. Being able to take time off when the kids were on holiday and not just have to snatch the odd bit of time with them"

Mother, couple, self-employed

"I think if they offered like kind of the term-time, like you mentioned, and you were able to like take that off, I mean that might be quite handy actually. And then you wouldn't have to worry about getting the holidays covered."

Mother, couple, full-time

"If you've got 2 adults you've got 8 weeks right between you in holidays. The schools get 6 weeks just alone in the summer, so maybe just offering you some extra holidays per year, or something so that you can get more time off when the schools are off"

Mother, single, part-time

Table 4:3 shows the relationship between missing out on family activities due to work and a number of employment factors. It shows that those who worked full-time were more likely to agree that they had missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities compared with those who worked part-time (52% of those who worked 35 hours or more per week agreed, compared with 27% of those who worked less than 35 hours per week). It also shows that those working in hotels, restaurants and transport and in health and social work were more likely to agree they had missed out on family activities, compared with those working in manufacturing and construction, or in public administration, education and community services.

5 Comparing flexible working over time

This chapter examines access to and use of flexible working for parents of 3-year-old children in low income households in 2013, compared with 2007/08. The chapter draws on data collected from the main carers (primarily mothers) of children in the two GUS birth cohorts. This chapter considers low income households only.

5.1 Access to flexible working

Table 5:1 shows that the proportion of low income parents of 3-year-old children whose employer offered unpaid time off to care for a sick child increased slightly between 2007/08 and 2013 (from 30% to 35%). There were no changes on any other measures.

The flexible working arrangements low income parents of 3-year-old children were most likely to have access to were flexible working hours, time off to care for a sick child (especially unpaid), and unpaid time off during school holidays.

5.2 Use of flexible working arrangements

Table 5:2 shows that, overall, take up of flexible working amongst low income parents of 3-year-old children did not change between 2007/08 and 2013. In both years, around three out of four made use of one or more flexible working arrangements offered by their employer.

6 Comparing flexible working within the household

This chapter examines access to and use of flexible working for main carers of 4-year-old children in low income households in 2006/07, and for their partners. The chapter draws on data collected from the main carers of children in the toddler cohort of the original GUS study, and from the main carers' partners. In the vast majority of cases, the 'main carer' is the child's mother and the 'partner' is the child's father. Only low income households are considered in this chapter.

6.1 Access to flexible working

Table 6:1 shows that, overall, around two thirds of both main carers and partners had access to one or more flexible working arrangements. Main carers (in the vast majority of cases, mothers) were more likely to always be able to work flexible hours, however: 31% of main carers said their employer offered this, compared with 21% of partners.

Table 6:2 shows the proportion of main carers and partners, respectively, who said their employer offered flexible working arrangements, broken down by industry sector. Due to low base sizes, estimates should be seen as indicative only.

6.2 Use of flexible working arrangements

Table 6:3 shows that main carers (in the vast majority of cases, mothers) were more likely to make use of one or more flexible working arrangements offered by their employer, compared with partners (in most cases, the child's father). Three quarters of main carers said they used one or more flexible working arrangement compared with two thirds of partners.

In the **qualitative** research it was clear that fathers are in general, and particularly in the lower income groups, much less comfortable with the idea of using flexible working arrangements than mothers. There is a prevalent expectation that women might need to have some flexibility but that it is much less accepted for a man to request it. Related to this, whilst some fathers expressed the view that they would prefer to work less and have more time to spend with their families, few seemed to have seriously viewed this as an option for them; and in the few cases where it had been briefly considered, a decision had been taken on the basis that the male partner earned a higher income than the female partner. One man in our sample (a police officer) had taken up flexible arrangements offered by his employer and reduced his working hours to spend more time with his family.

Table 6:4 shows the proportion of main carers and partners who made use of one or more flexible working arrangements, by industry sector. Due to the low base sizes, figures should be seen as indicative only.

7 Flexible working and mental wellbeing

This chapter examines the self-reported mental wellbeing of parents of 3-year-old children in low income households in 2013. The chapter draws on data collected from the main carers of children in the second GUS birth cohort. As above, in the vast majority of cases the participant is the child's mother. The chapter considers low income households only.

Tables 7:1 and 7:2 show the proportion of parents of 3-year-old children living in low income households who had low and average or high mental wellbeing. This is shown by whether parents had access to any flexible working arrangements (Table 7:1) and, if so, whether they used any of these arrangements (Table 7:2).

Table 7:1 shows that those who had access to some form of flexible working were more likely to have higher mental wellbeing: 66% of those with access to flexible working had average or high mental wellbeing compared with 57% of those who had no access to flexible working arrangements and 50% of those who were not in employment.

Table 7:2 shows that mental wellbeing amongst parents of 3-year-old children living in low income households did not differ significantly by whether they used any flexible working arrangements offered by their employer.

Table 7:3 shows the proportion of main carers in low income households who had low and average or high mental wellbeing, by whether they agreed or disagreed that they had missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities. It shows that those who agreed they had missed out on family activities were more likely to have low mental wellbeing compared with those who did not agree (47% of those who agreed had low mental wellbeing, compared with 32% of those who disagreed).

8 Satisfaction with employers' family friendly working policies

8.1 Rating of employers' family friendly working policies

This section examines how highly parents in low income households rate their employer in terms of family friendly working. The findings draw on data collected from the main carers (primarily mothers) of children aged 6 in the original GUS birth cohort, in 2010/11, and also on data collected from the main carers of children aged 3 in both birth cohorts, in 2007/08 and in 2013. The section considers low income households only.

Table 8:1 shows that those whose employer offered one or more flexible working arrangements were more likely to rate their employer's family friendly working policies as good: 80% of those whose employer offered flexible working rated their employer as 'good', while this was the case for just 46% of those whose employer did not offer any flexible working.

Table 8:2 indicates that those who made use of one or more flexible working arrangements offered by their employer were also more likely to rate their employer's family friendly working policies as good: 83% of those who had used one or more flexible working arrangements offered by their employer rated their employer as 'good', compared with 67% of those who had not used any of the flexible working arrangements offered by their employer.

Table 8:3 shows that in both 2007/08 and in 2013, around two thirds of parents of 3-year-old children in low income households rated their employer's family friendly working policies as 'very' or 'fairly' good. There was no change on this measure between the two cohorts.

8.2 Perceived supportiveness of employers

The qualitative research, whilst not uncovering a great deal of awareness of formal family friendly working policies, explored respondent's views on how supportive their employers are towards their family needs. Opinions and experiences vary widely, reflecting the context of varying awareness and availability as reported earlier in this document.

Some have found their employers to be very un-supportive and un-necessarily restrictive or inflexible, or claim they are made to feel guilty, particularly in relation to time off for dependents.

"I wouldn't say they're very supportive at all, and, considering that I work in a school, I wouldn't say they're supportive at all. I've... I've been off once this year, and that was because my son was really ill, and it kind of got frowned upon."

Mother, single, part-time

Those who felt their employers were supportive were mainly reporting informal flexibility to accommodate small amounts of time needed for family responsibilities, and also in some instances, a helpful and considerate approach to agreeing regular working hours. The majority had little support beyond this and many did not even have this level of informal support. There were examples of people being told by employers to arrange for someone else to care for sick children, having to use annual leave, losing shifts and being allowed no flexibility with rotas. There were one or two notable exceptions:

“My employer is amazing, and they don’t put me on a night-time shift, and they don’t put me on a weekend shift. They just have me on the day shift. Also, if my son has an appointment at the hospital...they will let me start a little bit later or finish a little bit earlier so I can fit in around those appointments.”

Mother, single, part-time

Appendix A.

Explanatory variables used in the quantitative analysis

Equivalent household income (quintiles)

The income that a household needs to attain a given standard of living will depend on its size and composition. For example, a couple with dependent children will need a higher income than a single person with no children to attain the same material living standards. "Equivalentisation" means adjusting a household's income for size and composition so that we can look at the incomes of all households on a comparable basis. After equivalentisation, the sample is split into five, equally sized groups – or quintiles – according to income distribution. Each group thus contains around 20% of families.

For the purposes of this report, 'Low income' has been defined as the lowest two quintiles (i.e. the bottom 40% on a scale of equivalent household incomes). In monetary terms, depending on the household composition, households defined as 'low income' would have annual incomes as follows (2010/11 data):

- Two adults and two children: up to £27,300
- Two adults and one child: up to £23,400
- One adult and one child: up to £16,965

This measure was used to define the equivalent income quintiles for both the quantitative and qualitative data (each was equivalentised for the year in which the data was collected therefore the income quintiles for the participants of the qualitative research was based on 2016 income quintiles).

Family type

This variable states whether the cohort child lives in a one-or two-parent household. Note that this variable makes no distinction between biological and non-biological parents/carers.

Number of children in the household

This variable gives the number of children living in the household at the time of the interview, including the cohort child. For the analysis conducted here, the number of children in the household has been grouped into three categories: 'One', 'Two', and 'Three or more' children.

Another variable states whether any pre-school-aged children were living in the household at the time of interview. Pre-school age is defined as 0-4 years.

A third variable outlines the number of primary school aged children (aged 5-11) in the household ('One' vs. 'Two or more').

Whether cohort child has any disabilities and/or longstanding illnesses

This measure indicates whether the cohort child has a disability or longstanding illness, as reported by their main carer. The range of disabilities and longstanding illnesses

included in the measure is wide and as such not all children identified in the GUS data as having a disability or longstanding illness will require the same level of care.

Employment status

Details on participants' and their partners' employment were collected at the first sweep of data collection and checked and updated at each subsequent sweep. For this report variables have been derived which denote an individual's employment status as either 'Working full-time' (defined as 35 hours per week or more); 'Working part-time' (defined as less than 35 hours per week), or 'Not working'.

The 'Household employment status' variable sets out how many adults in the household work full-time, work part-time, or do not work.

Occupational classification (NSSEC)

This variable draws on the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NSSEC). For the purpose of the analysis undertaken here, cases originally included in the 'Small employers and own account holders' category were added to the 'Intermediate occupations' category. Thus, in this report, four categories of occupational classification have been used, namely:

- Managerial and professional occupations
- Intermediate occupations and small employers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi routine and routine occupations

Industry sector

This measure has been derived based on the Standard Industrial Classification scheme (2003 version). To ensure base sizes were large enough for meaningful analysis to be conducted, the original measure was collapsed into six categories:

- Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining
- Retail
- Hotels and restaurants; transport
- Finance, real estate and business
- Public administration; education; other community and personal services
- Health and social work

Whether works unsociable hours

This measure has been derived based on four questions asked at Sweep 5 interviews with BC1 (in 2009/10). 'Unsociable hours' is defined as working between 6pm and 10pm and/or between 10pm and 7am at least once a week, and/or working Saturday or Sunday once a week.

Appendix B – Tables

Table 2:1 Access to flexible working, by income, 2010/11						
Base: All participants who are employed	Household income					All
	Lowest	2nd	3rd	4th	Highest	
Participant's employer offers flexible working arrangements ¹ :	%	%	%	%	%	%
Flexible working hours (always possible)*	41	41	44	45	54	45
Flexible working hours (arrangement)*	28	40	41	37	38	38
Paid time off when child is sick*	22	31	41	51	57	41
Unpaid time off when child is sick*	37	46	52	48	45	46
Unpaid time off during school holidays*	10	12	20	18	23	17
Working from home*	5	10	17	25	38	20
Job share*	10	15	25	33	36	24
Something else	1	2	3	1	2	2
Employer offers any flexible working arrangements*	67	81	87	86	90	83
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>228</i>	<i>443</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>501</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>2285</i>
<i>Weighted bases</i>	<i>257</i>	<i>458</i>	<i>427</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>462</i>	<i>2156</i>

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of flexible working.

Significance tested on "Mentioned". Measures marked with * vary significantly by income.

Table 2:2 Access to flexible working, parents in low income households, by household factors, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>		Employer offers flexible working	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>
All	%	76	671	715
Household factors				
Family type				
Two parents/carers	%	76	485	497
Single parent/carers	%	77	186	218
Household employment status				
At least one parent/carers working full-time	%	78	397	393
At least one parent/carers working part-time	%	74	274	321
Number of children in household				
One	%	81	135	163
Two	%	76	365	378
Three or more	%	73	171	174
Whether pre-school aged children in household				
No	%	76	409	434
Yes	%	76	262	280
Number of primary school aged children in household				
One	%	77	410	459
Two or more	%	74	261	256
Whether cohort child has a disability or longstanding illness				
Yes	%	77	128	133
No	%	76	543	581

Significance tested on "Mentioned".

Table 2:3 Access to flexible working, parents in low income households, by employment factors, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>		Employer offers flexible working	Unwtd bases	Wtd bases
All	%	76	671	715
Employment factors				
Participant's employment status				
Working full-time (35+ hours per week)	%	85	70	72
Working part-time (<35 hours per week)	%	75	600	641
Occupational classification*				
Managerial and professional	%	82	124	117
Intermediate occupations and small employers	%	84	184	188
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	%	80	55	57
Semi routine and routine occupations	%	69	308	352
Industry sector				
Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining	%	86	62	60
Retail	%	80	111	128
Hotels and restaurants; transport	%	72	101	113
Finance, real estate and business	%	80	61	69
Public administration; education; other community and personal services	%	74	145	149
Health and social work	%	75	168	173
Whether works unsociable hours¹				
No	%	82	327	343
Yes	%	75	231	251

¹ The larger number of missing cases on this measure is due to some participants not having taken part at Sweep 5.

Significance tested on "Mentioned". Access varies significantly by factors marked with *.

Table 2:4 Employer offering support with childcare, by income, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants who are employed</i>	Household income					All
	Lowest	2nd	3rd	4th	Highest	
Participant's employer offers support with childcare ¹ :	%	%	%	%	%	%
Subsidised childcare	2	1	3	3	4	3
Childcare vouchers*	13	21	39	48	57	37
Workplace crèche or nursery	3	3	5	6	7	5
Employer offers <i>any</i> support with childcare*	15	23	42	51	59	39
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	228	443	459	501	542	2285
<i>Weighted bases</i>	257	458	427	435	462	2156

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of support with childcare.

Significance tested on "Mentioned". Measures marked with * vary significantly by income.

Table 3:1 Use of flexible working arrangements, by income, 2010/11

Base: All participants who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements	Household income					All
	Lowest	2nd	3rd	4th	Highest	
Participant uses flexible working arrangements (where offered) ¹ :	%	%	%	%	%	%
Flexible working hours (always possible)	83	82	85	81	81	82
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	98	185	205	227	300	1054
<i>Weighted bases</i>	105	188	189	197	251	971
Flexible working hours (arrangement)	67	69	63	65	65	66
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	66	172	189	190	205	867
<i>Weighted bases</i>	71	182	174	162	174	811
Paid time off when child is sick	64	68	62	54	62	61
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	55	138	195	256	312	988
<i>Weighted bases</i>	57	140	177	220	262	888
Unpaid time off when child is sick*	56	51	42	38	30	42
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	90	199	239	242	245	1057
<i>Weighted bases</i>	94	210	221	209	208	983
Unpaid time off during school holidays*	[...]	36	40	22	25	31
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	23	55	92	93	127	409
<i>Weighted bases</i>	27	55	84	78	107	370
Working from home*	[...]	[64]	46	62	68	62
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	12	45	87	129	212	499
<i>Weighted bases</i>	13	44	74	107	177	429
Job share	[...]	27	25	26	18	24
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	25	68	114	164	190	576
<i>Weighted bases</i>	24	67	99	138	157	499
Something else	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[59]
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	2	9	12	7	11	41
<i>Weighted bases</i>	2	10	11	6	10	38
Uses any type of flexible working offered by employer	80	84	82	82	84	83
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	161	358	401	436	491	1926
<i>Weighted bases</i>	173	372	372	376	414	1787

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of flexible working.

Significance tested on “Mentioned”. * indicates that measure varies significantly by income. [Number] indicates a low base [...] indicates base size is too low to provide a meaningful estimate.

Table 3:2 Use of flexible working arrangements, parents in low income households, by household factors, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements</i>		Uses flexible working	Unwtd bases	Wtd bases
All	%	83	519	545
Household factors				
Family type				
Two parents/carers	%	83	373	377
Single parent/carers	%	84	146	167
Household employment status				
At least one parent/carers working full-time	%	84	311	308
At least one parent/carers working part-time	%	83	208	236
Number of children in household *				
One	%	83	111	133
Two	%	87	282	285
Three or more	%	76	126	126
Whether pre-school aged children in household				
No	%	82	315	331
Yes	%	85	204	214
Number of primary school aged children in household				
One	%	84	324	355
Two or more	%	81	195	190
Whether cohort child has a disability or longstanding illness *				
Yes	%	77	103	103
No	%	85	416	441

Significance tested on "Mentioned". Use varies significantly by factors marked with *.

Table 3:3 Use of flexible working arrangements, parents in low income households, by employment factors, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>		Uses flexible working	Unwtd bases	Wtd bases
All	%	83	519	545
Employment factors				
Participant's employment status				
Working full-time (35+ hours per week)	%	84	59	62
Working part-time (<35 hours per week)	%	83	459	482
Occupational classification*				
Managerial and professional	%	90	103	95
Intermediate occupations and small employers	%	86	154	159
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	%	[93]	45	46
Semi routine and routine occupations	%	77	217	245
Industry sector*				
Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining	%	92	53	52
Retail	%	72	90	103
Hotels and restaurants; transport	%	79	70	81
Finance, real estate and business	%	92	51	55
Public administration; education; other community and personal services	%	83	111	110
Health and social work	%	87	129	130
Whether works unsociable hours ^{1*}				
No	%	88	271	281
Yes	%	79	173	187

¹ The larger number of missing cases on this measure is due to some participants not having taken part at Sweep 5.

Significance tested on "Mentioned". Use varies significantly by factors marked with *. [Number] indicates a low base.

Table 3:4 Use of childcare support offered by employer, by income, 2010/11

Base: All participants who are employed and said their employer offers support with childcare	Household income					All
	Lowest	2nd	3rd	4th	Highest	
Participant uses support with childcare offered by employer ¹ :	%	%	%	%	%	%
Subsidised childcare	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	4	7	15	17	19	65
<i>Weighted bases</i>	4	6	13	15	17	57
Childcare vouchers*	[17]	10	18	32	47	31
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	32	96	184	244	312	889
<i>Weighted bases</i>	32	96	166	210	263	788
Workplace crèche or nursery	[...]	[...]	[...]	[22]	[6]	15
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	8	13	26	33	37	120
<i>Weighted bases</i>	7	12	23	26	30	102
Uses any type of childcare support offered by employer (all)*	[18]	15	18	33	46	31
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	37	104	199	256	323	943
<i>Weighted bases</i>	37	104	181	220	272	837

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of support with childcare

Significance tested on "Mentioned". * indicates that measure varies significantly by income. [Number] indicates a low base. [...] indicates base size is too low to provide a meaningful estimate.

Table 4:1 Whether missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities, by access to and use of flexible working, 2010/11

Base: All participants in low income households who are employed		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Unwtd bases	Wtd bases
"Because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in"						
All	%	30	14	56	740	779
Flexible working						
Has access to flexible working arrangements (any)						
No	%	32	18	50	152	170
Yes	%	30	13	57	519	545
Uses any flexible working arrangements						
No	%	32	13	55	86	91
Yes	%	30	13	57	433	453

Significance tested on 'Agree'.

Table 4:2 Impacts of work on family and family on work

<i>Impacts of work on family</i>	
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Good role models for children	Children miss out on out of school hobbies and interests
Better standard of living	Parents miss out on school activities
Parents more fulfilled and have wider perspective	Parents can't always be there for children when needed
Can afford holidays	Difficult to have holidays together
Self-employed people – time off when needed	Parents are stressed and this impacts on relationships
Parents (have to be) more organised about family and home life	Parents don't get time together – many describe themselves as 'passing ships'
	Having to rely on others for childcare
<i>Impacts of family on work</i>	
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Incentive/reason for working – good motivation	Limits career progression, especially if working part-time
Some said having their own children makes them better at their job (especially education and caring professions)	Impacts pension if working part-time, not working or not progressing
	Part-timers can feel 'out of the loop' at work
	Fewer opportunities to change job or move location
	Affects ambition and desire to progress up 'career ladder'
	Part-timers in particular do extra so as not to appear that family is impacting on work
	Deskilling through changing to lower paid, less skilled job
	Less flexible – e.g. to stay late to finish something

Table 4:3 Whether missed out on family activities due to work responsibilities, by employment factors, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>
"Because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would like to have taken part in"						
All	%	30	14	56	740	779
Employment factors						
Participant's employment status*						
Work full-time (35+ hrs/wk)	%	52	18	30	94	93
Work part-time (<35 hrs/wk)	%	27	13	60	645	685
Occupational classification						
Managerial and professional	%	37	15	49	134	125
Intermediate occupations and small employers	%	26	12	62	238	239
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	%	38	16	45	56	59
Semi-routine and routine occupations	%	29	15	57	312	356
Industry sector*						
Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining	%	21	14	65	69	67
Retail	%	27	19	54	115	133
Hotels and restaurants; transport	%	37	9	54	106	118
Finance, real estate and business	%	33	13	54	69	76
Public administration; education; other community and personal services	%	22	18	59	153	156
Health and social work	%	36	11	53	176	182
Whether works unsociable hours ¹						
No	%	28	14	58	360	370
Yes	%	34	14	52	270	282

¹ The larger number of missing cases on this measure is due to some participants not having taken part at Sweep 5.

Significance tested on 'Agree'. * indicates differences are statistically significant.

Table 5:1 Access to flexible working, parents in low income households, 2007/08 and 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>	2007/08	2013
Participant's employer offers flexible working arrangements ¹ :	%	%
Flexible working hours (always possible)	30	32
Flexible working hours (arrangement)	30	29
Paid time off when child is sick	25	25
Unpaid time off when child is sick*	30	35
Unpaid time off during school holidays	6	7
Working from home	5	4
Something else	2	1
Employer offers <i>any</i> flexible working arrangements	68	70
<i>Weighted bases</i>	839	787
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	906	832

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of flexible working.

Significance tested on 'Mentioned'. Arrangements marked with * vary significantly by cohort.

Table 5:2 Use of flexible working arrangements, mothers in low income households, 2007/08 and 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed and said their employer offered flexible working arrangements</i>	2007/08	2013
	%	%
Uses any flexible working arrangements	77	75
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	584	562
<i>Weighted bases</i>	619	582

Table 6:1 Access to flexible working, parents in low income households, 2006/07

<i>Base: All participants and partners in low income households who are employed</i>	Main cares (mothers)	Partners (fathers)
Employer offers flexible working arrangements ¹ :	%	%
Flexible working hours (always possible)*	31	21
Flexible working hours (arrangement)	30	33
Paid time off when child is sick	20	25
Unpaid time off when child is sick	33	34
Unpaid time off during school holidays	6	8
Working from home	3	3
Something else	1	2
Employer offers <i>any</i> flexible working arrangements	67	63
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	455	322
<i>Weighted bases</i>	479	350

¹Totals may add up to more than 100%, as participants were allowed to mention more than one type of flexible working.

Significance tested on 'Mentioned'. Arrangements marked with * vary significantly between main carers and partners.

Table 6:2 Access to any flexible working, parents in low income households, by industry sector, 2006/07

<i>Base: All participants and partners in low income households who are employed</i>		Main cares (mothers)	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>	Partners (fathers)	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>
Employer offers <i>any</i> flexible working arrangements							
All	%	67	455	479	63	322	350
Industry sector							
Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining	%	[71]	38	41	58	101	108
Retail	%	66	111	120	60	57	64
Hotels and restaurants; transport	%	64	76	81	55	63	70
Finance, real estate and business	%	[76]	35	35	[...]	21	22
Public administration; education; other community and personal services	%	72	80	84	74	52	54
Health and social work	%	64	114	117	[...]	28	32

Significance tested on "Mentioned". [Number] indicates a low base; [...] indicates a very low base.

Table 6:3 Use of flexible working, parents in low income households, 2006/07

<i>Base: All participants and partners in low income households who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements</i>	Main carers (mothers)	Partners (fathers)
	%	%
Uses any flexible working arrangements*	76	66
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	312	202
<i>Weighted bases</i>	323	220

Significance tested on 'Mentioned'.

Table 6:4 Use of any flexible working arrangements, parents in low income households, by industry sector, 2006/07

<i>Base: All participants and partners in low income households who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements</i>		Main carers (mother)	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>	Partners (fathers)	<i>Unwtd bases</i>	<i>Wtd bases</i>
Employer offers any flexible working arrangements							
All	%	76	312	323	66	202	220
Industry sector							
Manufacturing, construction, agriculture and mining	%	[...]	28	29	56	58	62
Retail	%	77	75	79	[67]	34	38
Hotels and restaurants; transport	%	[73]	49	52	[66]	34	38
Finance, real estate and business	%	[...]	27	27	[...]	16	17
Public administration; education; other community and personal services	%	76	58	60	[68]	39	40
Health and social work	%	76	74	75	[...]	21	25

Significance tested on "Mentioned". [Number] indicates a low base; [...] indicates base size is too low to provide a meaningful estimate.

Table 7:1 Mental wellbeing of parents in low income households, by access to flexible working, 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households</i>	No access to flexible working	Access to flexible working	Not in employment	All
Participant's mental wellbeing	%	%	%	%
Average / high	57	66	50	56
Low	43	34	50	44
All	100	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	224	559	851	1742
<i>Weighted bases</i>	249	577	1035	1964

Significance tested on 'Low'. Mental wellbeing differs significantly by access to flexible working and by employment status.

Table 7:2 Mental wellbeing of parents in low income households, by use of flexible working arrangements, 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements</i>	Does not use flexible working	Uses flexible working	All
Participant's mental wellbeing	%	%	%
Average / high	61	67	66
Low	39	33	34
All	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	138	421	559
<i>Weighted bases</i>	143	435	577

Significance tested on 'Low'. Mental wellbeing does not differ significantly by use of flexible working arrangements.

Table 7:3 Mental wellbeing of parents in low income households, by whether miss out on family activities due to work, 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>	Whether miss out on family activities due to work responsibilities			
	Agree	Neither	Disagree	All
Participant's mental wellbeing	%	%	%	%
Average / high	53	67	68	56
Low	47	33	32	44
All	100	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	286	93	512	1742
<i>Weighted bases</i>	295	100	533	1964

Significance tested on 'Low'. Mental wellbeing differs significantly by agreement with statement (missing out on family activities due to work responsibilities).

Table 8:1 Rating of employers' family friendly working policies by parents in low income households, by access to flexible working, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>	No access to flexible working	Access to flexible working	All
Rating of employer in terms of family friendly working	%	%	%
Very / Fairly good	46	80	72
Neither good nor poor	25	14	17
Very / Fairly poor	29	6	11
All	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	151	518	675
<i>Weighted bases</i>	169	544	718

Significance tested on 'Good'. Rating of employer's family friendly working policies varies significantly by access to flexible working arrangements.

Table 8:2 Rating of employers' family friendly working policies by parents in low income households, by use of flexible working arrangements, 2010/11

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed and said their employer offers flexible working arrangements</i>	Does not use flexible working	Uses flexible working	All
Rating of employer in terms of family friendly working	%	%	%
Very / Fairly good	67	83	80
Neither good nor poor	20	13	14
Very / Fairly poor	13	5	6
All	100	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	85	433	518
<i>Weighted bases</i>	91	453	544

Significance tested on 'Good'. Rating of employer's family friendly working policies varies significantly by use of flexible working arrangements.

Table 8:3 Rating of employers' family friendly working policies by parents in low income households, 2007/08 and 2013

<i>Base: All participants in low income households who are employed</i>	2007/08	2013
Rating of employer in terms of family friendly working	%	%
Very / Fairly good	66	67
Neither good nor poor	18	17
Very / Fairly poor	17	15
All	100	100
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	837	793
<i>Weighted bases</i>	904	839

Significance tested on 'Good'. Rating of employer's family friendly working policies does not vary significantly between the two cohorts.

Family Friendly Working Scotland

Family Friendly Working Scotland (FFWS) supports and promotes the development of family friendly workplaces across Scotland. Our ambition is to make Scotland a beacon of excellence in family friendly working. We work with employers and support them to embed family friendly working practices, which bring huge benefits to both employees and business. FFWS is a collaborative partnership between Working Families, Fathers Network Scotland, Parenting Across Scotland and the Scottish Government. FFWS was established in 2014 with Scottish Government funding and support.

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Family Friendly Working Scotland (FFWS) is a collaborative programme between the above partners. FFWS is funded and supported by the Scottish Government. Working Families is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 1099808) and Scotland (SCO45339)

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