

## 2. 妊娠と出産が仕事に与える影響

子どものいる女性の殆どは、初めて妊娠する前、フルタイムで働いており、妊娠によって働き方を変える必要はなかった。一人の女性は、妊娠の後半になってからは、週に2日間家で働けるように交渉することができた。仕事を休む際には、妊娠出産一括法案(in-house maternity packages)、法定妊娠給与(Statutory Maternity Pay(SMP))、これらの組合せなどの政策を利用しており、特別アレンジをする必要のあった人はいなかった。

最も早く仕事から離れた回答者は、妊娠20週目で仕事を休んでいる。予定日より早く子どもが生まれたため、驚いた女性も何人かいた。雇用者にいつから産休をとりたいかを通知する際、大抵の女性は、出産予定日より一ヶ月前かそれ以降も働くことを選んでいった。2人は妊娠39週目まで働くことを選んでいった。インタビューを受けた女性全員が、子どもが生まれる前、十分な休暇をとることができたと感じていた。5人の女性は出産後の1年間は仕事に戻らなかった。その理由としては、あまりに楽しく過ごしていたので戻りたくなかった、時間と給料を考慮すると戻るに値するほどではないと思った、子どもが学校に入る年齢までは家にいたかったことなどが挙げられた。最初の子どもが生まれて1年以内に仕事に戻った女性の殆どは、出産前と同じ仕事についていた。しかしながら、家族生活を考慮して、仕事や職場を変えた女性も数人いた。女性が仕事に戻った際の子どもの年齢は3ヶ月半から9ヶ月の間であった。

2人目の子どもが生まれた時についてみると、ほとんどの回答者がパートタイムまたはフルタイムで仕事を続けていた。女性が仕事に戻った主な理由は、産休が終わったからであった。他には、経済的な理由、個人的自己実現そしてキャリアを続けたいということが影響した。

母子家庭、新しい仕事を始めたばかりの父親、そして、休暇をとる余裕のない自営の父親の家庭は例外として、大抵の父親は子どもが生まれた後、休暇をとっている。父親がやすんだ日数は3日から2週間で、殆どの場合、何らかの他の休暇も含んでいた。父親が休日をとれることはほとんどの職場の制度の一部であったが、それでも、経営者に難色を示され、父親産休の代わりに休暇を使うように言われた者、十分に長く働いていなかったが為に、休暇をとるために特別にアレンジしなければならなかった者などもいた。インタビューされた女性のほとんどが、夫・パートナーのとった休暇は十分でなかったと感じていた。7週間仕事から離れていた夫を持つ2人の女性はその長さに満足していたが、その内1人の夫は父親休業と無給の休暇を合わせてとっており、もう1人の方はちょうど仕事が変わるときであった。

## 3. 保育施設の利用

フォーマル保育施設を利用していた女性は、チャイルド minder、ナニー、またはナーサリーに子どもを預けていたが、殆どの回答者はこれらの費用が高いという点を指摘し

ていた。7人の回答者は日中の保育を親戚に頼み、そのほとんどが子どもの祖母にあたる人であった。チャイルド minder が1日 28.50 ポンドから 35 ポンドで、最も経済的な選択肢であり、イングランドとウェールズでは好まれていた。

ナーサリーの費用は London, Surrey と Essex で違いがあるものの、1人の子どもあたり 30.00 ポンドから 53.00 ポンドであった。2人目以降の子どもに対しては若干少なかった。また、15.00 ポンドから 21.50 ポンドを払い、半日だけ子どもを預けることも可能であった。母親に1時間 6.50 ポンド払ってもらった女性もいた。プロのナニーの料金が最も高く、ある家庭では、1日 60 ポンドである。大抵の女性は予想外の苦勞をすることなく、好みのタイプの保育を見つけている。しかし、13ヶ月にも及ぶ空き待ちのリストや、選択肢を調べるのにかかる時間や、パートタイムのナニーを探す大変さを指摘する女性はいた。5歳以下の子ども 100人に対して8つの日中託児所、5歳から7歳の子ども 100人に対して7つの保母施設というように、フォーマル保育の施設が不足しているという他の研究結果と一致している。

女性たちは保育の選択にあたり、様々な情報源を使っている。ある女性は友人にチャイルド minder がいたので、そこから、その他は友人や幼児グループ(toddler group)、地元の公立当局(local council authority)、全国チャイルド minder 協会(National Childminding Association(NCMA))、ナニー斡旋団体、そして“The Lady”という保育雑誌から情報を得ていた。大多数の母親は、どんな保育が好みと予算に最もあうのか、知識のある決断をするに十分な情報を持っていたという。殆どの場合、女性は彼らが選んだ保育の質についての不安はなかった。

大抵の女性は子どもが病気になった場合、休暇をとることが出来た。近所にある2歳以下の子どもを対象とした保育の選択肢が十分であるかどうかを尋ねたところ、London, Surrey, Essex と、地域によって回答が異なった。費用は、幅があるものの、回答者を驚かすほど高額であった。ナーサリーを選んだ女性たちは、子どもが他の子どもたちと一緒にいる中で友達を作る機会を得ることが出来る点を理由としてあげた。チャイルド minder やナニーに子どもを預けると母親の代理人をあてがっているようで落ち着かない、また、親と子どもの関係を他人で代用しようとする考えが気に入らないと語った女性もいた。彼女らは、子どもに全く新しい異なる経験を与え、他人と食べ、グループで行動する機会を得られることをナーサリーに預けた理由としていた。ナーサリーでは常にスタッフが行動を監視しているのに対し、監視が出来ないという安全面での問題点をチャイルド minder やナニーを雇わない理由として挙げていた。ナーサリーの大きな欠点は、高い費用であった。

他の女性は、一対一で世話をしてもらえらることと家庭での保育という点を、ナニーを選んだ理由としてあげた。その他、ウイルスなどへの接触が少ないことを理由とする母親もいた。また、London という土地柄、チャイルド minder が経済的にその地区に住むことが出来ず、結果としてナーサリーが一杯となり、ナニーに頼らざるを得ない女性もいた。

チャイルドマインダーの欠点には、家で遊びに限られることがあげられた。

#### 4. 仕事と家族

##### (1) 就労している女性

12人の女性は、現在または一番最近の職場について、ファミリーフレンドリーであったと感じていた。子どものいる同僚のいることは、問題を理解してもらえるため、有利な点として見られていた。柔軟な労働時間やある程度の自主性も評価されていた。しかしながら、3人の回答者はファミリーフレンドリーでなかったと感じていた。その理由として、子どもを持つ同僚が1人もいなかったため、彼女の状況を理解してもらえなかったこと、彼女の望む仕事時間や、仕事のタイプが得られなかったことがあげられた。現在の労働市場が、幼い子どもを持つ女性にとって、安全なまたは安定したものかどうかについては、多くの女性が何処で働くか、どれだけ職場が柔軟でファミリーフレンドリーかによろ感じていた。何人かの女性は、パートタイムにするなど、雇用形態を変えることが出来た。しかしながら、パートタイムとして職場復帰した女性の1人は、専門職の市場では以前より重要視されなくなったと感じた。企業社会では、ポジション争いが激しく、特に安全ではないと述べた。大学で働く女性は、平等の機会と平等の権利があるため、比較的安全と答えた。安全性があるかないかという認識は、何人かの女性にとって、個人のまたは家族の生活をどう計画するかに影響を与えていた。職業市場の安全性の認識は、将来の労働生活に関する決定にも影響を及ぼしていた。

仕事をしながら幼い子どもの世話をしている女性は2つの役割の間で悩まされていた。多くの女性は全般的な肉体疲労を経験しており、家事と買い物が続いていくことに困難を感じていた。朝、仕事前に子どもに支度をさせることも疲れる原因であった。

##### (2) 就労していない女性

子どもが生まれて最初の1年目に仕事に戻らなかった4人の女性は、将来は戻ることを計画していた。1人の女性は、子どもが生後6ヶ月経ってからフリーランスの仕事を始めつもりであったが、その他の女性は、1番幼い子どもが2歳半で保育園に入るか4歳半でフルタイムの学校に入るまでは、家にいたいと語った。しかしながら、他の調査で、末子が学校に行き始めても、就職率に急な増加はないことを示しており、学校が保育の問題を期待通りに解決しきれていないことを指摘している。柔軟でない労働時間、会社に勤めることで生じる制限や、仕事柄、職場が都市中心になってしまうことなどが、彼女達の理想的な仕事と相反していた。

## 5. 家族生活

### (1) 子どもを持つ決断

子どもを持つかどうかは、様々な要因に影響されていたが、8人の女性にとっては仕事とキャリアへの影響が考慮すべき点として重要であった。また、多くの回答者にとって、特に、大学にかかる教育費のような長期的なものを含め、子育て全般の費用が考慮すべき点として重要であった。保育の費用を考慮すると答えたのは2人のみであった。保育施設があるかどうかを考慮したのもやはり(別の)2人であった。7人の女性は、子どもが産まれることで、自分と夫やパートナーとの関係にもたらされる影響について考えていた。7人の女性にとって、サポートネットワークがあるかどうかを考慮すべき点であった。子どものいる大抵の女性は子どもの費用が何人持つかを決めると答えた。

### (2) 子育ての経験

出産の肉体的な負担と同様、全ての女性が出産と同様、出産後の自宅で過ごした際に、より大きい精神的衝撃を経験した。8人の女性は孤独感と孤立感を経験した。9人はフラストレーションを、14人はストレスを経験し、1人以外は疲労を感じ、6人は憂鬱で苦しみ、4人はある程度の経済的な困難を経験した。大抵の女性は助けを求めることの出来る家族や友人といったサポートネットワークを持っていた。保健師(health visitor)や助産婦(midwife)からの助言も役に立ったと4人が言及している。

フラストレーションやストレスの原因の一部は、恐らく、子どもの世話を超えて、彼女らの生活への制約を経験させられた為であった。11人の女性は出産後、経済的制約を経験していた。ほとんどの女性は、出産後、社会的制約も経験していた。どんなに小さな用事でも家を出るには計画を立てなければならなくなった。親や、義理の親と同居あるいは近所に住んでいる場合、そして、ベビーシッターの準備が整っている場合は、こうした社会的制約を受けずにすんだ。

仕事の面での制約もまた、多くの回答者に影響を及ぼしていた。仕事に復帰した大抵の女性は、以前ほど、時間的に許されず、前ほどはできなくなった。パートタイムに戻った場合は、昇進の機会なども含め選択肢が狭まったと感じていた。5年のブランクが空いた女性は、地元で柔軟な時間帯の仕事を見つけることはほぼ不可能であり、自分自身も労働市場に戻る自信がないと述べた。

個人的な制約もほとんどの女性が経験していた。運動、水泳、読書、化粧といった単純なことは、何人かの女性にとって不可能なことになっていた。自分の時間・ひとりになれる時間が全くないことや、パートナーとの時間が少なくなったとの報告もあった。

### (3) 家事と育児の分担

11人の女性は、出産後、家事と一般的な家周りの仕事の分担が変わったと報告した。4

人の女性は、家に前よりいるようになったために、負担が増えた。2,3人の女性は、初めて子どもが生まれた時は特に、夫やパートナーが家周りの仕事をするようになった。全ての夫やパートナーは多かれ少なかれ、様々な面で子育ての手助けをするようになった。

## 6. 意識、考え方、価値観

### (1) 子どもを持つことに対する望みと基準

5人の母親は、自分が若かった時は子どもを欲しいと思わなかったと語った。6人の女性は、これ以上子どもを持つ計画はなかった。その理由は経済面の考慮、仕事の見通し、そして、個人的経験にもとづくものであった。今日の少子化について質問したところ、多くは子どもにかかる費用が要因となっていると答えた。人々が仕事により多く興味を持っているということも言及された。その他の理由として、大家族の不便さ、大家族の住宅費用、高齢出産の傾向があげられた。また、ほとんどの女性が、イギリス社会では、子どもの数が少ないことは良いことであると感じていた。子どもたちに、質の良い時間、より多くの世話や注目、教育など、より多くの機会を提供することが可能であるという点が理由としてあげられた。

結婚したら子どもを持つようにというプレッシャーを受けることについては、子どものいる6人と、子どものいない1人は、子どもを持つことについて、何か言われたことがあった。何人かはそれらのコメントに苛立ち、傷ついていた。

### (2) 子どもの費用についての考え

子どもを持つことの費用は回答者のほぼ半数にとって、考慮すべき点となっていた。例えば大学に子どもが行きたくなった場合などの将来的な費用の方が、乳児や幼児のときに必要な費用よりも大きな関心ごとであった。しかしながら、子どもにかかる費用が受け入れられないほどのものだと感じていたのは、2人のみであった。

### (3) 子どもと働く母親についての考え

ある回答者は、子どもと1日中家にいることが出来ることは、特権であり、経済的に裕福かどうかによると感じ、他のものは、働くことを選ぶか選ばないかは、個人的な決定であると感じていた。パートタイムで仕事に戻ることは、フルタイムに戻るよりも容認できると考える回答者が数人いた。中には、フルタイムで戻るが無意味で、自分勝手のように思えると述べる者がいた。パートタイムの仕事は、一般的に容認されており、母親と子ども両方にとって、良いことだと感じる人が多かった。イギリス社会は女性の仕事と家族の両立を支援している、と見なすのは7人に限られていた。住む地域によって異なる、職種によって異なると思う人もそれぞれ数人いた。そして、イギリス社会は、幼い子どもを持って仕事に戻る女性に対し、ある程度は支援していると感じている女性たちもいた。

政府も、協力的であると考えられているが、北欧諸国と比べ、仕事に復帰する女性に対して協力的ではないという女性もいた。

幼い子どものいる女性が仕事に戻りやすくなるための社会的・経済的変化として、より幅広い保育の選択肢の他に、より安く、多くの補助金の支給される保育があげられた。保育へのより大きい税金の控除は、児童手当(child benefit)同様、効果があると考えられていた。会社や企業は、柔軟な労働時間や、より長い出産育児休業、父親休業、そして職場内に託児所(in-work crèche)を提供することなどがよいと考えられていた。

イギリスが子育てに良い場所かどうかについては、9人の女性が良い場所であると信じていた。教育、旅行、経済的そして、就労の機会といった子どもが利用できる機会の豊富さを理由としてあげていた。しかしながら、6人の女性は、英国を子育てに良い場所とは思っていなかった。都会の治安の悪さや、教育の質の低さ、子どもに対する施設の乏しさなどが理由としてあげられたが、イギリスのどこに住むか、経済的にどれだけ余裕があるかによっても違うとの意見もあった。

## REPORT ON QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW STUDY OF CHILDREN, CHILD-REARING AND THE FAMILY IN U.K.

**Research Staff:** Helen Cairns, Susan Harris, Lynda Clarke

**Institution:** Centre for Population Studies  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
49-51 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3DP  
England

Work on the above project took place over a four-month period. Susan Harris began the project the second week of February and worked two days a week. Helen Cairns joined the project the beginning of March and also worked two days a week.

Twenty interviews have been completed and transcribed. The women interviewed were not working, working part-time or working full-time. The number of children within each family ranged from 0 to 2+.

### Women Interviewed, by Work Status and Number of Children

	not working	part-time	full-time
0 children	1		2
1 child	3	3	3
2+ children	3	3	2

The report organisation and headings follow those of the questionnaire. It is fair to say that because of the small number of respondents, it was impossible to generalise over categories such as income, education and age. Therefore the report mainly consists of examples under each of the questionnaire headings based on individual women's experiences.

Annex A Respondent Information  
Annex B Entitlements and Benefits

### Introduction

All new parents have a difficult choice to make upon the birth of their first child. They must decide whether to put their career on hold in order to spend time with their new family or whether to continue in pursuit of their career. In either case, babies are expensive. Staying at home can mean making a number of financial sacrifices. The transition from being a two-salary household to a single earner family can have enormous implications including a drastic change of lifestyle. Family holidays, meals out or new clothes can become unattainable luxuries. On the other hand the high cost of good quality childcare means that a childcare bill could take up a large proportion of a families monthly income. For some mothers the choice to work is not even an option because their salary would not cover the cost of childcare or would leave them with only a small amount of money. There is, therefore, no financial incentive to

return to work. The financial and career implications of having children are far reaching and may affect the decision on whether to have children and how many to have.

The British government established the National Childcare Strategy to demonstrate its commitment to supporting families and children. The aim is to ensure that good quality, affordable childcare is available for all children aged between 0 and 14. As a result parents, particularly women, should be able to re-enter the labour force. To attain this a number of initiatives, including the Working Families Tax Credit and the guarantee of a free early education place for all four-year-olds, have been put into place. A recent report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) showed, however that the reality for many families falls far short of the goals of the Strategy (Paull et al, 2002). The IFS report has two important conclusions: having children remains a significant barrier to the employment opportunities of mothers; and the lack of accessible and affordable childcare is having an adverse impact on mothers returning to the labour market.

The aim of this study was to look at the choices women make in determining whether to have children and how many, particularly in relation to their career, and the availability of, and access to childcare facilities. The financial impact of having children is also assessed.

### **Effect of Pregnancy and Childbirth on Employment**

Most of the women with children were working full-time before they became pregnant with their first child. The woman in exception had taken a year off to travel and fell pregnant upon her return to Britain (6). In general, the women did not have to change their work arrangements during their pregnancy although one woman was able to negotiate working at home for two days a week towards the end of her pregnancy (5).

The women left work under established policy with either in-house maternity packages, Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), or a combination of both. None of the women had to make special arrangements in order to leave work due to pregnancy. One self-employed woman wanted to complete the project she was working on before she had her baby (4) while another woman decided to quit her job (5).

The earliest any of the respondents left work was the 20th week of pregnancy (18). Early births caught several women by surprise. One woman worked until the 35<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, having gone to work that day and giving birth to her child that evening (20)! Her second baby was also early, born at 37 weeks after the mother had a normal workday the day before. Another respondent was working up to two days before the birth of her baby at 36 weeks (10). As far as informing their employers of when they would like to start their maternity leave most chose to work until a month or less before their due date. Two women chose to work into their 39<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy (4, 17).

All of the women interviewed felt that they had had enough time off work before their baby was born including the women whose babies were born before the intended date



of starting maternity leave. They felt that this gave them more time with the baby after the birth.

Five women did not go back to work during the first year of their baby's life (5, 6, 13, 15, 18). One of them said that she was enjoying herself too much to go back to work (5). Another felt that the time spent getting into work combined with the money she would earn meant that it would not be worth going back (13). Plus she wanted to be at home with the children until they were old enough to go to school. Another woman who was not working at the time of interview spoke about taking on some freelance work once her child was 6 months old, mainly for financial reasons (4).

Most of the women who returned to work in the first year of the first child went back to the same job. A couple of women, however, changed employers in order to have a job more suited to family life in terms of work load and the possibility of working part-time (8, 14). One of these women switched employers because she felt she could not continue working in an environment driven by tight deadlines (14). Another respondent changed her place of employment well in advance of getting pregnant (12). She chose to work a lot closer to her home rather than have a long commute to work. This made it more convenient for her to eventually return to work after her baby was born.

The age of the child upon the women's return to work ranged from 3½ months to 9 months old. Upon the birth of the second child, most respondents continued to work in either a part-time or full-time capacity, although one woman decided to quit working entirely (14).

The women returned to work for a number of reasons but principally because their maternity leave had finished. Other factors influencing women to return to work included financial reasons, personal self-fulfilment and a continuation of their career path. One of the women felt she did not have enough time off after her second baby was born (16). She would have preferred to return to work when her baby was nine months old rather than seven months old. This would have given her the same amount of maternity leave as she had for her first child.

Most of the fathers had time off after the baby was born. The exceptions include a single mother whose partner was not involved in the birth (10) and a father who had just started a new job (8), and a self-employed father who could not afford to take time off (18). Paternity leave ranged from 3 days to 2 weeks and in most cases included some holiday days. The fathers' ability to take time was often part of the established workplace policy although the amount of paternity leave varied by place of employment. However, one father, who worked at a large corporation, was told by his manager that it would be frowned upon if he took his allotted paternity leave and was advised to take holiday time instead (6). Another father had to make special arrangements to take time off after the birth of his child because he had not worked at his place of employment long enough to entitle him to paternity leave (11). One father was self-employed and therefore had no paternity leave benefits (4) while another was a student at the time of his child's birth (20).

Most of the interviewees felt that their partner did not have enough time off after the baby was born. The women would have liked their partners to have had more time with them during the early weeks, and one woman felt it would have been helpful if her husband's employer could have worked out a part-time situation for a month (7). Two women were happy with the amount of time their husbands spent at home, as both men had seven weeks off work after the baby was born (12, 19). One husband had paternity leave plus unpaid leave that he was able to take (12) and the other husband was changing jobs (19).

### **Use of Childcare Facilities**

Those women using formal childcare placed their children with a childminder, a nanny or in a nursery. Most of the respondents commented on how expensive these options were. Seven of the respondents had a relative, mostly the child's grandmother, who helped by providing care during the day. In one case, the grandfather picked up the child from the childminder (10).

The amount the respondents paid for childcare ranged widely. The most economical choice tended to be a childminder. They charged from £28.50-£35 per day. Childminding has been shown to be the favorite form of childcare in England and Wales (National Childminding Association, NCMA, <http://www.ncma.org.uk>).

The cost per day of a nursery place ranged from £30.00-£53.00 per child decreasing slightly for subsequent children, bearing in mind price differentials between London, Surrey and Essex. Nurseries tended to provide discounts for children in full-time care, while children who were enrolled part-time paid a higher rate per day. Several families enrolled their children in a nursery for half-days, which ranged from £15.00 – £21.50 per session. One family employed a 'mother's help' for two mornings a week for £6.50 an hour (6). Private care by a professional nanny was the most expensive form of childcare. Only one family chose this option at a cost of £60 per day (14).

Most women did not experience any unforeseen difficulties in finding their preferred type of childcare. In fact, one woman found she was given priority in obtaining her child a place at the local private nursery because she was looking for a full-time position (9). However, women did complain of discovering long waiting lists of up to 13 months (13), the amount of time it took to research one's options (17), difficulties in finding part-time nannies (6), and problems finding local care facilities. One woman looking for a childminder would have liked a more comprehensive list of availability, the age of children for which places were available and whether places were full or part-time (11).

The difficulties the respondents experienced reflect the finding of research which has shown that the availability of formal childcare places falls far short of those required to offer a place to every child of a working mother. There are only 8 day nursery places for every 100 children under the age of 5 and 7 childminder places for every 100 children aged 5 to 7 (Paull et al, 2002).

Women found information about the range of childcare choices from various sources. One woman was lucky enough to have a childminder as a friend already, which made her decision quite easy (10). Others got their information from friends, toddler groups,

local council authorities, the National Childminding Association (NCMA), nanny agencies and childcare magazines such as "*The Lady*". Two women placed their own ads in childcare magazines, mainly because they were looking for private care (6, 14).

The majority of mothers had enough information to make an informed decision about which form of childcare suited their personal preference and budget best. One woman stated she had to do quite a lot of research herself (20). Another mother replied she was not sure if she was making an informed choice about her nanny, but she felt sure enough to "take the risk" (14).

In most instances, women had no concerns about the quality of childcare that they chose. One of the respondents felt that the question was quite strange. As she put it,

'If I did (have concerns) I would take him out'. (16)

One woman, who had initially placed her child with a childminder and later obtained a nursery place, preferred the nursery because she felt the standards were higher (20). While safety was not a concern for one woman who had a nanny care for her child, she was unhappy that the activities she engaged in seemed to be more geared towards her interests than those of the child (14). She subsequently employed a new nanny. Another respondent whose child was being cared for by the grandparents worried about her son being lonely because he was not mixing with other children (12).

Most women could take time off work if their child was sick. However, one mother worked too far away from her childminder, so she would need to rely on her husband to pick up their child if he was ill (7).

Women were asked for their opinion regarding the range of childcare options available for children under two-years old in their neighborhood. These varied according to area, that is London, Surrey and Essex. The childcare options mentioned were a childminder, a nursery or a nanny. The cost of childcare, despite having a spectrum of choice, surprised respondents.

'It makes it difficult for the woman to go back to work because it is so costly.' (14)

One of the women stated that the nursery facilities were,

'Very poor for under two's. A lot of nursery's do not take under two's at all and if they do the baby room is quite small.' (17)

Another said,

'For under 2's it's really good, but there should be more of it. Kingston (Surrey) has a lot of nurseries but they all have waiting list and you can be waiting for a year, so if you don't know an area and you are desperate to go to work and you've just arrived new, you'd find it pretty tough to get in straight away. So you might have to get a nanny or something.' (13)

Women chose the childcare option that suited their ideals best. Women who chose to enrol their children in a nursery liked the fact that their child was with other children, giving them the opportunity to make friends (13). One woman felt that placing her child with a childminder or nanny would mean providing her daughter with a 'substitute' for the mother which she did not feel comfortable with (9). Another mother did not like the idea of replicating the parent/child relationship with somebody else (17). Both of these women advocated the nursery because it provided the child with a 'completely new and different experience' and the opportunity to learn about eating with others, group behaviour and group dynamics (9). Another reason mentioned for not hiring a childminder or nanny was the issue of safety, and not knowing what the carer was doing during the day. One mother felt better knowing that her children were never on their own with just one person (16). At a nursery there would always be staff to monitor behaviour,

'I would be worried leaving my children on their own with someone with no-one else (there). Well, if you're in a nursery there's someone to sort of, if they're having a bad day or something there's somebody else there, they're never on their own with just one person.' (16)

The cost of nurseries, however, was seen as a major disadvantage,

'The problem is that all the nurseries in this area are privately run, there is no help. It's all right if you're a city worker and earning a lot of money and you can afford to pay out £150 a week or whatever it costs. But for someone who wants to just go and get a little part-time job or even a full-time menial job you just couldn't do it, you couldn't afford the childcare costs.' (18)

Other women chose to hire a nanny because they wanted the 'one-on-one' care and to be home based, especially when the child was still quite young (6, 14). One mother mentioned that her child would be less exposed to germs (11). For another woman a childminder was the 'number one choice' because she wanted one carer versus a nursery (7).

'I'm lucky because we chose our childminder on the basis that every morning she takes Tom, and whatever other children she is looking after, to a childminder centre where they have a play worker who does activities with the children. It's quite a combination of childminder and nursery.' (7)

One woman found that because she lived in an expensive area of London, she was limited in her choices of childcare because childminders could not afford to live there (6). As a result the nurseries were quite full and most families resorted to hiring a nanny.

One woman felt that her local council was making 'a good effort' to provide a range of childcare (20). She placed her first-born child with a childminder who lived on the same road as her because she thought it would be more convenient. When her child turned two years old she received a subsidised placement in the local nursery. At this

point she discovered that nurseries took babies, and subsequently enrolled her second child as well. One disadvantage of a childminder that she mentioned was the limited resources they have in their houses.

‘Even if they have a nice garden or somewhere to play it’s not as good as having all the sort of messy play and the playground and everything the nursery has.’ (20)

## **Work and Family**

### Women in the workforce

Twelve of the women felt that their current or last workplace was family friendly (7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20). Having colleagues with children of their own was seen as an advantage as they were more understanding of possible problems encountered. Flexible work hours were also highly valued. Several of those interviewed managed to negotiate part-time work hours. A certain amount of autonomy at work was also appreciated. One woman felt her workplace,

‘Treats people as adults, able to manage their workloads. If you leave early or come in late there is a level of trust there that you will get your work done.’ (17)

In one case, the workplace “was equally as understanding of the father” in terms of having to leave at a certain time to pick up children (20). The company also provided financial assistance to their employees returning to work after the end of their maternity leave. Women received,

‘Childcare allowance on top of salary – pro rata based on salary, about £40-50 pounds a week, the less you earn, the more you get.’ (20)

Three of the respondents felt, however, that their workplace was not family friendly (4, 6, 9). One woman mentioned that since none of her colleagues had children the attitude towards her situation would probably not have been very understanding (4). Another could not get the hours or type of work that she would have wanted (5).

The attitude of work colleagues was also important. One woman, a teacher, felt that other teachers tended to get ‘*a bit huffy*’ if she had to take time off for her children (16). Her boss, who did not have children, was equally unsympathetic.

‘If they (children) were sick I would have to take time off work. I would actually lie and say I was sick because I think they would dock your pay.’ (16)

When asked how safe or secure the current labor market was for women with young children, many felt it depended on where you work, the type of job and how flexible and family friendly the work environment was. One woman felt that the public sector is probably fine, but the private sector could be more difficult (9). Some women were able to change their terms of employment.

'Most of the friends I have managed to fairly well negotiate their terms of employment to be part-time or do fewer hours than they used to, but still continue.' (17)

However, one woman who had returned to work part-time after the birth of her first child felt that as a part-time employee she was taken less seriously by the professional market (14). She found her job to be increasingly difficult due to the amount of work she had to catch up on for the days she was not in the office, and she did not feel she was 100% effective working part-time. She felt that some jobs can lend themselves to part-time conditions but she did not feel this to be the case in her career.

Speaking more generally, one woman with no children, stated that,

'The job market is much less secure because lots of companies are making people redundant. It means that those that stay have more work, as a result more pressure and feeling less secure in your position.' (1)

Another woman mentioned women are not particularly safe in corporate environments, because unless the employee is prepared to work very rigid hours and set times, their job is probably at risk since too many people are out there competing for positions. (14) However, one woman working at a university felt relatively safe because such organizations 'have got to be seen as promoting equal opportunities and equal rights' (7).

One woman found that upon her return to work from maternity leave her position had changed considerably (9). Having had quite a large portfolio of clients before she went on maternity leave, she found they were not returned to her when she went back to work. Due to the nature of her work in public relations, her job security, in conjunction with her salary, was based on the number of client accounts she was responsible for. The company, which had had a round of redundancies whilst she had been on maternity leave, had another round 4 months after her return. Unfortunately, because of her small portfolio, she was made redundant.

Another woman felt that the current labour market is not very sympathetic towards women with children and as a result options are limited,

'I think actually lots of women don't go to their full potential as far as careers and work because of children and childcare. They'll always opt for something that suits their family rather than something they're really good at. The labour market loses out drastically. There'd be a lot more high powered women out there doing jobs that they are well able to do if they had the flexibility to have a family.' (18)

A sense of security or lack of security affected how some of the women organised their personal and family lives. One respondent talked about the timing between children and not leaving it too long for fear of losing touch (11). One respondent, however, stated that she wanted a certain number of children and concerns about the safety of the labour market would not affect this (16)

The perceived safety of the job market also affected decisions concerning future working life, as did past experience. For example, one woman with no children, who had worked for a small company stated,

‘There tends not to be the same framework or support you tend to get from a larger company. Say maternity leave or paternity leave just didn’t exist at the last company I was with other than what’s required by law.’ (1)

One woman found that having children gave her,

‘A completely different perspective in work in that it makes you realize that work is important but it’s not the most important thing in life.’ (20)

She never left the office earlier than 7pm before she had children, whereas she now finds she uses her time more effectively in order to leave by 5:30pm (20). Despite working less hours, she felt she gets the same amount of work done.

Another woman believed that her child will give her the incentive to work a little harder because as he gets older and starts school he will be more demanding about what he wants (7). To keep the family finances in balance, the woman foresaw taking up freelance projects, which she used to do before she had her child, to supplement her part-time income. Another woman viewed her part-time job situation as ideal, and will try to continue until her children start school (17).

Women combining work and the care of young children described ‘feeling torn’ between the two roles. One woman, a teacher, found it difficult to attend evening school activities (11). Many women experienced general physical fatigue and found it difficult to maintain the housework and keep up with food shopping. The organisation it takes to get the children ready in the morning before work was also tiring. Another mother complained of,

‘Feeling like nothing is quite complete because you are not giving everything to work and you are not giving everything to family so you are running between the two – constantly chasing your tail.’ (14)

#### Women Not in the Workforce

Four women, who did not return to work within the first year after the birth of their child, plan to do so in the future. One woman, whose child was under 1 at the time of the interview, foresaw starting freelance work when her child was around 6 months old (4). The others stated that they would like to stay at home until their youngest child started either nursery school at age 2 ½ (14) or started full-time at school at age 4 ½ (6, 13, 15). Surprisingly, however, research has shown that there is no sudden increase in employment when the youngest child starts school. The authors conclude that school does not then entirely resolve the childcare issue as expected (Paull et al, 2002).

One mother quit her job, as she could not go back on the terms she wished with flexible hours (5). She said that when she returned to work would depend on how

many children she had. She felt there was no point starting work and then having to stop again to have another child.

Two of the women currently at home with their children felt that the ideal job would be working for themselves (13, 14). As one of them stated,

‘You are too restricted to work for a company when you have small children wanting to do this, that, and another. I want something I could do at home or locally and minimal stress, something that is enjoyable’ (13)

The other mother stated,

‘I would want to have flexibility – so be able to work when I wanted and how I wanted. I don’t want to answer to anyone in terms of that because my priority would still be my family.’ (14)

One of the other mothers who lived outside London felt professionally restricted, as her ideal job would be based in the city (5). Previously she worked as an insurance underwriter and did not feel that there was the same opportunity for this kind of work locally. Her ideal job would be flexible and local, both factors that she felt unable to attain in her career without travelling into London. Another mother’s ideal job would also be local so that it would be convenient for dropping off and picking up children (15). Another option mentioned was a switch of careers, to work as a teacher, citing the work hours and school holidays as obvious perk (6).

## **Family Life**

### Decision on having children

The decision to have children was affected by various factors for almost all of the women. The affect on work and career was an important consideration for eight of the women (4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20). For one mother, a teacher, having a child meant having to potentially leave her current school, as they would not be able to offer her part-time work there. This was a great disappointment (11). For another it meant having to think about working part-time when she preferred to work full-time (19).

For many respondents the overall financial cost of raising children was an important consideration (4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). Particularly the longer term costs such as university (4, 16). The costs of childcare were a consideration for just two of the respondents (4, 20) and the availability of childcare was again a consideration for only two women (5, 11). Seven women thought about the effect children may have on their relationship with their husband or partner. One respondent, for example, felt that her husband may direct all his attention towards the child rather than focusing on their relationship,

‘I was worried about being number two because you’re number one. Now it’s forgotten but at the time when I was pregnant it was, I thought I’m not going to be number one’. (12)



The availability of a support network was a consideration for seven women, (4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 20). Only one woman planned the likely cost of the first few years of having a family (8). Although she made a realistic estimate, she was still surprised by costs she had not anticipated, such as the amount of clothing needed. The majority of women with children said that the cost of children might determine how many they have.

#### Experience of child rearing

As well as the physical trauma of giving birth all of the women experienced a more psychological impact following the birth(s) of their children and the subsequent time spent at home. Eight of the respondents experienced loneliness and isolation, nine experienced frustration, fourteen stress, only one woman did not experience tiredness (10) and six suffered from depression (5, 8, 12, 15, two of these suffered from post-natal depression, 9 and 11). Four of the respondents also experienced some level of economic pressure (5, 11, 18, 20). Most of the women had a support network in place made up of family and friends to whom they could turn to for help, even if only for a limited time. Just one of the women did nothing about the frustration, stress, tiredness and depression she was experiencing. She spoke to nobody about her feelings including her husband (15).

Most of the other respondents turned to family members for help including mothers/in-law, fathers and sisters. Eleven women also mentioned talking to their husbands - one woman reported 'screaming' at hers as a way to relieve stress (9). Health visitors and midwives were cited as useful in providing advice in four cases (4, 7, 11, 12) and one of the women also had five weeks of professional assistance at home provided by a maternity nurse (6). Another woman, who was having a second child, hired a nanny for one week to entertain her eldest child after her husband returned to work (13).

Perhaps part of the reason for the above feelings of frustration and stress was the fact that restrictions were experienced by most of the women in aspects of their life beyond simply caring for a child. Eleven of the women experienced economic constraints after having children. Some reported feeling stressed about money, not liking to worry about whether there was enough in the bank account every time something was purchased and being generally more aware of how much money is being spent (4, 5, 11). Others mentioned having to cut back on things such as holidays abroad and buying things, for example shoes, on a whim (8, 14, 18). On the other hand, a couple of mothers stated that although they need to watch how much they spend, they no longer spend as much money as they used to going out in the evenings (4, 5). Economic constraints after having children was still a concern for some women in the highest income bracket (5, 14). Others in this income bracket did not experience financial constraints (6, 9, 13).

Most of the women experienced social constraints after having children. It was reported that getting out of the house was difficult because finding babysitters could be a problem. It was no longer possible to just leave home either during the day or evening because any trip, however small, even just running out for a newspaper, had to be planned (5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20). As a result of these restriction many of the women had greatly reduced their social life in the evenings, rarely going out and

visiting friends less often since having children. Five women with children experienced no social constraints (7, 10, 12, 13, 19). They were living with other family members (10, 12, 19), either their parents or in-laws, or lived near other family members (13) and so had a ready supply of babysitters. Only one respondent, with no extended family in her household, stated that she experienced no social constraint (7).

Career constraints also affected many of the respondents. Most of the women, who did go back to work, reported being restricted in what they could do. For example, not being able to do as much, having less time for extra activities such as seminars, and not being able to give their job the same kind of energy or commitment as previously (4, 14, 17). Going back to work on a part-time basis also proved limiting for some women in terms of the options open to them including the opportunity for promotion (11, 16, 17, 18). Two of the women could not carry on with the job they wanted (4, 5). One woman was also made redundant after having a child (9). One of the respondents who decided that she wanted to stay at home and look after her two children until school age was currently looking for work after a five year break and was finding it extremely difficult (15). Not only did she report it as being almost impossible to find local work with flexible hours but she also reported a lack of confidence after being out of the labour market for so long.

'Well I used to do computer training...but I don't think, my confidence has gone completely because I have been out of work so long, I don't think I could go back into doing what I did. But that's not anybody's fault that's just the fact that I've been out of the market for so long and I just you know, some people probably do keep their confidence but I can't see how you can when you've been a mum for five years. I mean I'm looking at like receptionist and admin type work which you know I'm not saying is beneath me at all because it isn't but you know seven years ago I was running a training department and doing very nicely you know, but I couldn't do that now'. (15)

For this woman opting to be a full-time mother has had an impact on her long-term career prospects including having to take a substantial drop in status.

Personal constraints were experienced by most of the women. Being able to do simple things such as exercise, go swimming, read a novel, put on make-up were no longer possible for some women (4, 6, 15, 16, 17). One of the respondents could no longer even go to the toilet alone or have a bath, she bemoaned the total lack of 'personal space' (7). Just three of the respondent mentioned having less time to spend alone with their partner (9, 14, 17). One also reported being constrained in her sex life because of being constantly tired and the fact that the baby sleeps in their bedroom (9).

#### Division of housework and childcare

Eleven of the women reported a change in the division of housework and general jobs around the house following the birth of a child. Four women found their load increased principally because they were at home more (6, 10, 13, 16). For a few women their husband/partner tended to do more around the home (4, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19) particularly when the baby was first born (4, 11). All of the husbands/partners were involved in helping out with various aspects of childcare to a greater or lesser degree.

Two of the respondents were fortunate that their husbands/partners took an active role in childcare during the day, partly because they were not confined to traditional work hours (4, 20). One woman, whose husband is a musician and therefore works odd hours, has agreed to take care of the child a few days during the week when the mother resumes full-time work (4). Another partner, who was pursuing a post-graduate degree, was able to drop off and pick up their children from school since he could arrange his course hours accordingly (20). This meant that the mother could go directly from home to work without the added stress of getting her two children to school. It also meant she did not have to worry about being late to work.

## **Attitude, Ideas and Values**

### Desire and norms about having children

When asked about their expectations regarding children when they were growing up, five of the mothers we spoke to stated that they did not want to have any children when they were younger (4, 6, 8, 12, 15). With regard to future plans six of the women interviewed did not plan to have any more children. Several reasons were given for this and included financial concerns (4, 8, 15, 18, 19), career prospects (4) and personal experience, for example,

‘I’m going to stop at two because my poor stomach can’t cope with any more caesarians...I think two is nice and they get on well’. (13)

More generally, when asked why people are having fewer children today the respondents gave a number of possible reasons. Many suggested that the cost of children was a factor (1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20) so couples were limiting the number of children in order not to be financially stretched,

‘People can’t afford to pay out for a decent standard of living with more than say a couple of children’ (3).

One woman also mentioned a change in attitudes,

‘It’s very expensive and very time consuming and people are getting much more selfish and much more self-absorbed and much more sort of, they’re much more materialistic, they’d rather buy things for themselves or just the one child than have two and not have the things they might want.’ (12)

The fact that people are more interested in their careers was also mentioned (8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 19, 20) as well as the need to perhaps compromise to be able to commit to a job,

‘People like to be in a job to free them up financially. So to bring up a child, I don’t think you can do both and do justice to both.’ (19)

The practicalities of having a large family was also mentioned by one respondent with six siblings,

'It's difficult to do anything with a large family, you can't go out, you can't do anything. Imagine taking seven of us around, we didn't do normal things, we never went on holiday, we never went out as a family.' (15)

The cost of housing was also mentioned to be limiting factor to having a big family, especially in London (7, 13, 20).

'...to have a house big enough for 3 or 4 children, well, to live where I live it's £500,000 for a 3 or 4 bedroom house, so that precludes a lot of people from having more children.' (20)

It was also stated that because women are tending to have children at a later age they might have fewer children as a result of nearing the end of their childbearing years (2, 11, 14).

One woman found that having smaller families also had implications socially and in terms of family values. She said,

'I think we miss out somewhat by not having close families nearby and everybody helping with the children and the childcare. When I have children my mum won't be helping out because she lives too far away. And if you don't have any children at all, then you don't have that family bond as you do when there are a lot of children around – I think it has consequences like that.' (2)

Two of the women without children plan to have them (2, 3). One would like to have children "as soon as possible" (2) while the other is waiting until her husband finishes his PhD and gets a well-paid job (3). She hopes that this will mean that they are financially stable,

'I mean at the moment I'm the main earner, there's no way I'd want to have children until we know we're going to have enough money from his job coming in.' (3)

The third woman had no immediate plans to have children partly because she financially supports her younger sister and brother (1).

'I can imagine that potentially I'd change my mind in 3-5 years but sort of never say never, but I am not interested. Also, because I am looking after my sister and my brother I sort of feel like I already have two children for whom I have responsibility – worrying about them, worrying if they are eating, do they have enough money, are they going to be OK. I feel if I am going to focus my efforts I'd rather make sure they are OK....' (1)

Most of the respondents felt that having fewer children is a good thing for British society. A few felt that the world was already overpopulated (3, 11, 16). One woman saw pros and cons to having a large family having grown up with four siblings but has personally decided that two children are enough (13). Three woman chose not to define having fewer children as being either a good or bad thing for society (7, 9, 14).