

# Women and work

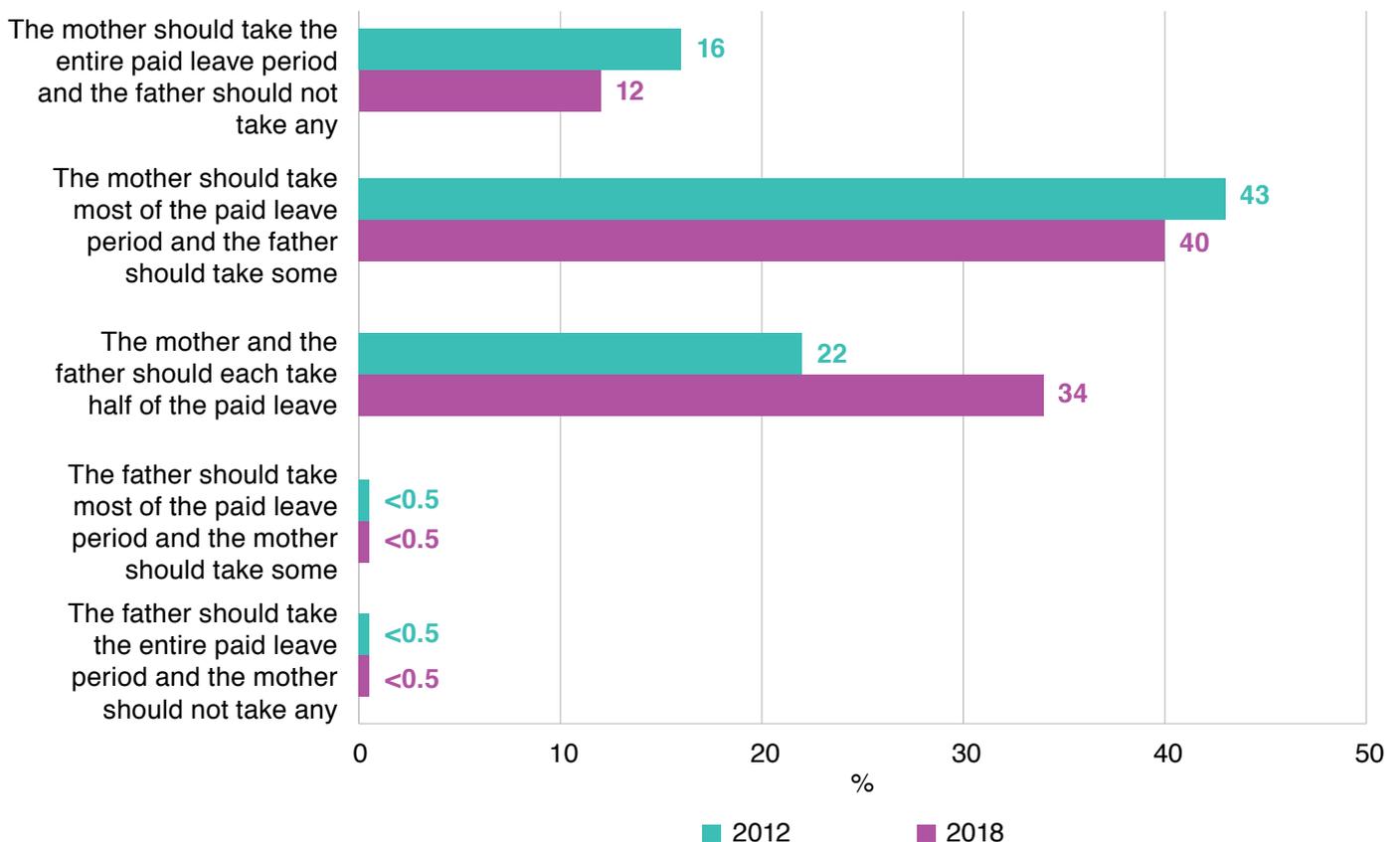
## Do attitudes reflect policy shifts?

This chapter examines whether the recent introduction of policies to improve the representation and progression of women in the labour market and facilitate a more equitable sharing of childcare between parents reflect, or have influenced, people's attitudes and behaviour. While the introduction of Shared Parental Leave and the extension of the right to request flexible working are in tune with people's attitudes, views about the gender pay gap are more mixed. Levels of awareness of and support for these policies vary, with the views of women being more closely aligned with the aims of these policies, than those of men. Those in lower socio-economic groups are less supportive of sharing parental leave, less aware of and comfortable asking about flexible working, but also are most opposed to the existence of a gender pay gap.

### Spotlight

The principle of sharing parental leave, in some configuration, is well supported. Since 2012 people's preferences have shifted towards shared leave arrangements, as opposed to leave being taken solely or predominantly by the mother.

**Views on how paid leave following the birth of a child should be divided between the mother and the father, 2012 and 2018**



## Overview

---

### Sharing parental leave

**The introduction of Shared Parental Leave reflects the direction of long-term changes in attitudes towards gender roles.**

- 40% think for a working couple with a newborn child, the mother should take most of the paid leave and the father should take some. 34% think the parents should divide the leave equally. Support for this view has increased from 22% in 2012 and it is most popular among the youngest age group, graduates, and those with a socially liberal outlook.
  - In 2012, 31% thought that the best way for a family with a child under school age to organise their life was for the mother to stay at home and the father to work full-time; just 19% think this now.
- 

### Flexible working

**Awareness of eligibility for flexible working is relatively high and there is little evidence that the extension of the right to request flexible working has altered employees' attitudes to requesting a flexible working arrangement or perceptions of its potential impact on their careers or behaviour.**

- 79% correctly believe that workers with caring responsibilities for adult family members can request flexible working, while 74% know this is the case for workers with children. 57% know that any employee has the right to request flexible working.
  - 18% of employees think that asking for a flexible working arrangement would have a positive impact on their career prospects, while 52% do not think it would have a positive or negative impact and 29% think it would have a negative impact.
- 

### Gender pay gap

**While almost everyone supports the principle of equal pay, the public is more divided about the gender pay gap.**

- 89% think that it is wrong for men to be paid more than equally qualified women, working in the same job for the same company, suggesting almost universal support for the principle of equal pay.
  - 43% consider it wrong for the average earnings of men to be higher than those of women, in a company where most senior staff are male and most junior staff female. 31% consider this to be right, and 20% view it as neither right nor wrong.
  - Women (48%), those with no qualifications (55%) and those in the lowest occupational grouping (53%) are most likely to regard this situation as wrong.
-

## Authors

### Hannah Jones

Senior Researcher, The National Centre for Social Research

### Nancy Kelley

Deputy Chief Executive, The National Centre for Social Research

### Katariina Rantanen

Researcher, The National Centre for Social Research

## Introduction

There is a substantial body of evidence that parenthood has a significant impact on women's participation, progression and remuneration within the labour market. Although women's employment rate has increased steadily for decades and is now at a record high, at 72% the proportion of women in the UK in employment is still lower than the proportion of men (80%) (ONS, 2019). Similarly, although the hours worked by women have increased steadily since records began in 1971, women are still more likely to work part-time than men (41% of all women in employment, compared with 13% of all men in employment) (ONS, 2019).

The connections between labour market outcomes and parenting are clear. While, for men, parenthood is associated with higher levels of employment, for women the opposite is the case: mothers of all ages are less likely to be in work than women without children (ONS, 2013). Similarly, mothers are less likely to work full-time than fathers, with 50.5% of mothers working full-time in 2018, compared with 93.2% of fathers (ONS, 2018a). This inequality in labour market participation is also reflected in pay, although it is not the gender pay gap's only cause. The UK's gender pay gap (the difference between men's and women's average hourly earnings) is currently 8.6% for full-time employees. Analysis of the drivers of the gender pay gap suggests that differences in the labour market histories of men and women, with women having spent less time working full-time and more time undertaking unpaid care work, is the main driver of this difference, with other major drivers being discrimination or gendered behaviour and occupational segregation (Olsen et al., 2018).

The last decade has seen the introduction of a suite of policies designed to tackle under-representation of women in the labour market, support increased pay and progression for female workers and enable parents to share childcare responsibilities more equitably<sup>1</sup>. In this chapter we draw on data from the 2012 and 2018 British Social Attitudes (BSA) surveys to examine attitudes in relation to three of these policies: Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP); the extension of the right to request flexible work; and the mandatory reporting of the gender pay gap for businesses with more than 250 staff. In each case we examine, as far as is possible given the data collected, whether these policies appear to be working as intended and if they reflect, or appear to have had an impact on, people's attitudes and their actual or anticipated labour market outcomes. Given the fact that these policies were partly devised to address differences between the labour market outcomes of men and women, we consider how far perceptions and impacts vary by sex. We also examine how far attitudes vary by a range of

**The last decade has seen the introduction of a suite of policies designed to tackle under-representation of women in the labour market, support increased pay and progression for female workers and enable parents to share childcare responsibilities more equitably**

<sup>1</sup> These policies sit within a wider government strategy to promote economic growth through a labour market that is flexible, effective, and fair. Consultation on Modern Workplaces (2011) <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-modern-workplaces>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-42918951>

other demographic characteristics which have historically been associated with attitudes to gender roles or employment policies, or where we might theoretically expect variation to exist.

## Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) were introduced in December 2014 for the parents of children who were due or placed for adoption from 5 April 2015, replacing Additional Paternity Leave and Statutory Additional Paternity Pay. SPL gives both parents the right to take and share leave after the birth or adoption of a child by allowing mothers to transfer some or all of their maternity leave and pay to the father or their partner<sup>2</sup>. Couples can take SPL together or one at a time, and leave can be taken in up to three different blocks of time (more if the employer allows). The policy was introduced to give parents greater choice and flexibility in childcare, to encourage more fathers to play a greater caring role, and to increase flexibility for employers and employees in balancing work and other commitments (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, February 2013). Critically, the intention of the policy was to promote women's participation and progression within the workplace and to contribute to closing the gender pay gap (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012a).

**Since coming into force in 2015, take-up rates for Shared Parental Leave and Pay among eligible parents have been low, but this was expected**

Since coming into force in 2015, take-up rates among eligible parents have been low, but this was expected. Government estimated take-up as being between 2% and 8% when the policy was introduced<sup>3</sup>. A 2018 survey of expectant mothers found that finances and worries over potential negative consequences on fathers' careers were the primary barriers to take up (Twamley and Schober, 2018) – although it is worth noting that comparable concerns may need to be navigated in the one third of households where women are the main wage-earners. More recent qualitative research with both men and women entitled to SPL identified additional barriers including lack of awareness and understanding of the policy among employers and employees as well as different expectations of how work and care should be divided between men and women (Birkett and Forbes, 2019). Both studies noted that parents with higher levels of education were more likely to take up shared parental leave.

In the following section we examine attitudes to parental leave, including sharing parental leave, and assess whether these may have changed as a result of the introduction of SPL in 2015, although we do not measure attitudes to the policy specifically. Given the short time since the policy was introduced, and the fact that attitudes in this domain are driven by wider attitudes to gender, work and caring, we might anticipate there to be minimal evidence of change. We

<sup>2</sup> Except for the mandatory two-week maternity leave (four if the mother works in a factory) that all mothers must take.

<sup>3</sup> Oral questions, Kelly Tolhurst, Parliamentary Under Secretary, BEIS, HC Deb, 14 March 2019, c513

then examine which sections of society are more supportive of these policies, our expectation being that they are likely to be most popular with groups who are best positioned to take advantage of them (such as those with higher incomes) and least popular among groups with more traditional views on gender, work and caring (such as older age groups and those with fewer educational qualifications). We also anticipate that women and men might have different views, given they have traditionally adopted distinct roles in relation to work and caring.

## Attitudes towards sharing parental leave

To measure support for the principles underpinning paid parental leave, we ask respondents:

*Consider a couple who both work full-time and now have a new born child. One of them stops working for some time to care for their child. Do you think there should be paid leave available and, if so, for how long?*

*And who should pay for this leave?*

*[The government, the employer, both the government and the employer, other sources]*

Among the public, the consensus remains that paid leave should be available for the parents of a newborn child. Almost nine in ten (88%) support paid leave for new parents with just one in ten (10%) saying that parents should not be eligible for any paid leave. This division in views has not changed significantly since 2012. Similarly, views about who should pay for parental leave have remained stable since 2012. The most popular option, supported by two-thirds (61%) is for the responsibility for paying to be shared between the government and the employer. Similar proportions think that the government alone (16%) or the employer alone (17%) should pay for the leave. These data suggest considerable support for the availability of paid parental leave that is, at least in part, publicly funded.

To understand attitudes to sharing parental leave, we ask respondents a follow-up question:

*Still thinking about the same couple, if both are in a similar work situation and are eligible for paid leave, how should this paid leave period be divided between the mother and the father?*

Respondents have the options of stating that either the mother or the father should take the entire paid leave period, should take most of the leave period (with the other parent taking some of it) or that the mother and father should each take half of the leave period. The three most popular answers provided are presented in Table 1, alongside those recorded when the question was asked in 2012.

**The majority of people are of the opinion that parental leave should be shared, to some degree, between the mother and the father**

Clearly, the majority of people are of the opinion that parental leave should be shared, to some degree, between the mother and the father. Four in ten (40%) feel that the mother should take most of the leave period (with the father taking some), while a third (34%) think the leave period should be equally shared between both parents. Around one in ten (12%) feel that the mother should take the entire leave period, while almost nobody supports the view that the father should take most or all of the leave. These data indicate that the principle of shared parental leave is well supported, with three-quarters of people favouring mothers and fathers sharing parental leave, in some configuration. However, the fact that only one third support an equal division of leave suggests that the default path prior to the introduction of SPL, for the mother to take all of the leave, may still be exerting some influence on attitudes. Given the increase in support for this option, this influence may have reduced since the introduction of SPL.

**Table 1 Views on how paid leave following the birth of a child should be divided between the mother and the father, 2012 and 2018<sup>4</sup>**

	2012	2018
	%	%
The mother should take the entire paid leave period and the father should not take any	16	12
The mother should take most of the paid leave period and the father should take some	43	40
The mother and the father should each take half of the paid leave	22	34
The father should take most of the paid leave period and the mother should take some	*	*
The father should take the entire paid leave period and the mother should not take any	*	*
Can't choose	8	13
<i>Unweighted base</i>	808	1302

\* = fewer than 0.5% of respondents

## Have views shifted following the introduction of Shared Parental Leave and Pay?

By comparing results from the 2018 survey with those obtained in 2012, presented in Table 1, we are able to explore whether there has been a shift in attitudes towards sharing parental leave since the introduction of SPL and ShPP. A number of changes are evident. Most markedly, the proportion supporting the mother and father sharing the leave period equally has increased by 12 percentage

<sup>4</sup> A larger proportion of respondents did not answer this question in 2012 compared with 2018 (10% and 1% respectively); however, exclusion of these cases from the analysis would not impact on our substantive conclusions or result in any of the identified changes over time no longer being significant.

**People's preferences have shifted, to some degree, in line with the direction of policy change, with support reducing for options where leave is taken solely or predominantly by the mother, to an arrangement where it is shared equally**

points. At the same time, support for arrangements where the mother takes the majority of the leave has reduced; support for the propositions that the mother should take the entire leave period or most of the leave period has fallen by 4 percentage points in both instances, although the latter difference is not significant. At the same time, the proportion indicating that they cannot choose one option has risen by 5 percentage points. Clearly then, people's preferences have shifted, to some degree, in line with the direction of policy change, with support reducing for options where leave is taken solely or predominantly by the mother, to an arrangement where it is shared equally. However, it is unclear to what extent these changes can be directly attributed to the introduction of SPL and ShPP; given they may be part of a longer-term shift in attitudes to gender roles, which has contributed to the development and implementation of new policies in this area. This is a possibility we examine in the next section.

### Are views linked to broader attitudes to gender roles?

We can assess the impact of this policy change, by considering whether attitudes to the division of caring responsibilities have changed markedly in relation to a child in the first year of their life, or whether there has been comparable change in relation to caring for children under school age more generally (a group not impacted, in the main, by these specific policy changes). We have tracked views about family and working lives for families with children under school age since 1987, by asking respondents the following question:

*Consider a family with a child under school age. What, in your opinion, is the best way for them to organise their family and work life?*

*The mother stays at home and the father works full-time.*

*The mother works part-time and the father works full-time.*

*Both the mother and the father work full-time.*

*Both the mother and the father work part-time.*

*The father works part-time and the mother works full-time.*

*The father stays at home and the mother works full-time*

*Can't choose*

The responses provided, along with those obtained when this question was asked in 2012, are presented in Table 2. Strikingly, there is little consensus regarding how a family with a child under school age should best organise their work and family life – to the extent that almost one third of people are unable to select one of the arrangements. The most popular arrangement, favoured by one third, is for the mother to work part-time and the father to work full-time.

Around two in ten favour the mother staying at home and the father working full-time. No more than one in ten respondents support any of the other options.

**Table 2 Views on the best way for a family with a child under school age to organise family and work life, 2012 and 2018**

	2012	2018
	%	%
The mother stays at home and the father works full-time	31	19
The mother works part-time and the father works full-time	38	32
Both the mother and the father work full-time	4	6
Both the mother and the father work part-time	5	9
The father works part-time and the mother works full-time	-	*
The father stays at home and the mother works full-time	*	*
Can't choose	19	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	950	1504

\* = fewer than 0.5% of respondents, and - = zero

Analysing data collected in 2012 and focusing on changes in attitudes since 1987, Scott and Clery (2013) demonstrated that attitudes have grown steadily less-gendered since the question was first asked, with declining support for arrangements where the mother plays the main caring role. The authors attributed this change to a generational shift, with older generations, holding more traditional views on gender roles, being replaced by younger, more liberal generations, and anticipated that this trend would continue, (although might slow down slightly). By comparing the most recent data with responses from 2012, we can see that this trend has indeed continued. The proportion of people favouring the father as the sole or main breadwinner (the two top rows in Table 2) has decreased from around two-thirds (69%) in 2012 to a half (51%) now. In contrast, the proportion of people who think that both parents should work part-time has almost doubled, from 5% to 9%.

Interestingly, however, the decrease in favouring the father as the sole or main breadwinner has not translated into an equivalent increase in the proportion of people favouring mothers and fathers sharing work and caring responsibilities equally. Instead, the proportion selecting the “can’t choose” option has grown from just under two in ten in 2012 to three in ten now. Attar Taylor and Scott (2017) have previously interpreted this growing uncertainty as being driven by a more nuanced interpretation of the question, acknowledging that the right answer might be context-dependent (for example, depending on the job prospects and earning potential of the mother and father). Nevertheless, these data suggest that the shifts in preferences for sharing paid leave in the first year of a child’s life have not occurred in isolation (being replicated, to some degree, in attitudes to sharing

work and caring for families with children under school age), and therefore cannot necessarily be attributed to the related policy changes.

In order to understand how far attitudes to sharing parental leave are driven by broader attitudes to gender, we ask respondents the following question, exploring attitudes to gender and work:

*Here is a list of jobs, generally speaking do you think men are better suited, women are better suited, or are both equally suited to the following roles?*

*Civil engineer*

*Primary school teacher*

*Doctor*

*Local councillor*

*Member of Parliament*

Respondents have the option of saying that men are “much better” or “slightly better” suited than women to each job role, that women are “much” or “slightly better” suited, or that men and women are “equally suited”. The responses provided demonstrate that clear majorities think that men and women are equally suited to each of these roles, with neither gender appearing to ‘own’ the roles of doctor, local councillor or Member of Parliament. The public is more divided in the case of a civil engineer and a primary school teacher; around two in ten (19%) consider men better suited to the former role while a similar proportion (18%) consider women better suited to the latter role. Across the board, men are slightly more likely than women to think jobs are more suited to either men or women.

To compare preferences for the sharing of parental leave with views on gender roles in the sphere of work, we divided respondents into two groups – those who indicated that all of the jobs asked about are equally suitable for men and women, and those who indicated that this is not the case in at least one instance. The proportions of these two groups who express preferences for each of the approaches to sharing paid leave following the birth of a child are presented in Table 3 (with the exception of those options stating the father should take all or most of the leave period, given these are each selected by fewer than 1% of respondents).

**Table 3 Views on how paid leave following the birth of a child should be divided between the mother and father, by attitudes to gender and occupations**

		The mother should take the entire paid leave period and the father should not take any	The mother should take most of the paid leave period and the father should take some	The mother and the father should each take half of the paid leave	Can't choose	<i>Unweighted base</i>
All	%	12	40	34	13	1302
<b>Attitudes to gender and occupations</b>						
Some job roles are more suited to men or women	%	19	44	26	8	382
All job roles are equally suited to men and women	%	9	39	37	14	813

Clearly, there is some association between views about the suitability of men and women for different job roles and preferences for paid parental leave. Around two in ten of those who think some of the job roles are more suited to one of the genders think that the mother should take the entire leave period, compared with one in ten of those who hold a gender-neutral view. Similarly, people with a gender-neutral view of job roles are also more likely to feel that the mother and father should split parental leave equally. There is, therefore, some overlap between groups who appear to believe women are more suited to caring for a child in the first year of their life, and who believe men or women are more suited to certain occupations – suggesting that attitudes to shared parental leave have developed in the context of wider attitudes to gender. However, the fact that preferences vary substantially among both those who think some jobs are more suited to one gender, and those who do not, suggests other influences may be at play here; it is to these which we turn next.

### Who is in favour of sharing parental leave?

As noted at the outset, a number of demographic characteristics are known to be associated with attitudes to gender roles, and so might be expected to link to attitudes to parental leave specifically. Older people, people with fewer educational qualifications and those with lower incomes have historically advocated more traditional gender roles (Taylor and Scott, 2017). Attitudes to gender are also known to be correlated with attitudes to a range of other social issues, with those holding liberal views on gender roles being more likely to hold liberal attitudes across the board (Scott and Clery, 2013). Finally, men and women might be expected to hold different views, reflecting

individual preferences for working and caring responsibilities, while parents – who will have experienced dilemmas associated with this issue in practice, rather than simply thinking about them in theory – might also be expected to hold different views.

Interestingly, there are no differences in the views of men and women when it comes to how parental leave should be split. While the lack of a difference by sex may seem surprising, it reflects earlier analyses by Taylor and Scott (2017) and Scott and Clery (2013). Our analysis also found only very slight differences in views between parents of young children and those who were not parents of young children.

Instead, as shown in Table 4, differences in attitudes are associated with age, level of education, occupational status and income.

Younger people are more likely than older people to support the sharing of parental leave: over four in ten 18-34-year olds think that parental leave should be split equally, while less than three in ten of those aged 55 or over take this view. In contrast, almost six in ten (59%) of those aged 55 and over think that the mother should take most or all of the leave, while only just above four in ten of 18-34-year olds think this. Views also differ by education level, with almost a quarter of people with no qualifications feeling that the mother should take all the leave, compared with less than one in ten graduates. Similar differences, of a lesser magnitude, are evident by occupational grouping and household income although, given the known association between education levels, income and occupational status, these may simply result from the link between education levels and attitudes in this area. In each of these instances then, we see that the social groups which tend to hold more liberal views per se, do so in relation to parental leave specifically.

**Differences in attitudes to sharing parental leave are associated with age, level of education, occupational status and income. In each of these instances, we see that the social groups which tend to hold more liberal views per se, do so in relation to parental leave specifically**

**Table 4 Views on how paid leave following the birth of a child should be divided between the mother and father, by demographic characteristics**

		The mother should take the entire paid leave period and the father should not take any	The mother should take most of the paid leave period and the father should take some	The mother and the father should each take half of the paid leave	Can't choose	Unweighted base
All	%	12	40	34	13	1302
<b>Age</b>						
18-34	%	7	35	42	14	244
35-54	%	8	44	33	12	443
55+	%	20	39	27	12	615
<b>Education level</b>						
Degree	%	7	39	41	13	370
A-level equivalent	%	10	45	30	14	387
GCSE equivalent	%	13	41	34	10	307
No qualification	%	23	30	28	15	223
<b>Household income quartile</b>						
Highest	%	8	44	35	14	252
2nd highest	%	12	41	33	14	258
2nd lowest	%	11	45	32	11	297
Lowest	%	18	33	36	8	265
<b>Occupational status</b>						
Managerial and professional occupations	%	8	42	38	11	576
Intermediate occupations	%	10	43	25	21	176
Employees in small organisations and own account workers	%	22	35	24	17	121
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	%	12	47	25	13	90
Semi routine and routine occupations	%	15	37	38	8	299
<b>Social outlook</b>						
Socially conservative	%	20	42	28	9	440
Socially liberal	%	5	34	44	16	447

To explore this link further, we also investigated whether views on sharing parental leave differ between those with a ‘socially liberal’ outlook and those with a ‘socially conservative’ outlook. Each year respondents to BSA are asked a series of questions designed to ascertain whether they are more inclined to the libertarian or the authoritarian end of the ideological spectrum. Details of these questions are given in the Technical details of this report. Differences can be detected here as well: a fifth of the most authoritarian group think that the mother should take all paid leave, compared with only one in twenty of those with the most liberal outlook.

Based on these results, it appears that broader values as well as attitudes to traditional gender roles may play a role in determining attitudes towards sharing parental leave. However, from Table 4 it is also clear that other factors are at play here.

From the analysis presented thus far, it seems likely that changing attitudes towards sharing parental leave are reflective of a wider trend towards less gendered attitudes to work and caring responsibilities. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that the relationship between responses to the two questions on work and family life appears to be consistent over time: among those who expressed each view about how a family with a pre-school child should organise their work and family life we found a similar range of responses to the question about how a couple with a newborn child should divide their paid leave in 2012 and 2018. However, it is also clear that SPL and ShPP are policies that are broadly in keeping with both the current views of the public, and the trajectory of change in attitudes to traditional gender roles. The challenge for SPL is one of uptake, as recognised by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which has made substantial investments in promoting awareness of the policy, including through the ‘Share the Joy’ campaign, costing £1.5 million, and subsequent activities to raise awareness of SPL in 2019. Given SPL is a relatively new policy, the coming years will determine whether positive attitudes, in combination with higher levels of awareness, will be sufficient to drive uptake, and ultimately change women’s labour market outcomes, or whether further policy change is needed to bring the UK closer to a model where men and women share early childhood care more equally, as seen in the Nordic countries, which have made use of interventions including ‘daddy quotas’ for leave as well as higher levels of compensation for parental leave (Atkinson, 2017; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018). It should, however, be noted that the Nordic countries differ from the UK in a number of other respects, that might encourage take-up of shared parental leave.

**Given SPL is a relatively new policy, the coming years will determine whether positive attitudes, in combination with higher levels of awareness, will be sufficient to drive uptake, and ultimately change women’s labour market outcomes, or whether further policy change is needed**

## Flexible working

The Right to Request Flexible Working for parents caring for a child under the age of six or a disabled child under the age of 18 was introduced in 2003 (Pyper, 2018) and was extended to employees

who care for dependent adults in 2007 and those with parental responsibility for children under 17 in 2009. The aims of the policy were to support parents to balance work with caring responsibilities, reduce child poverty and increase productivity. A 2006 study by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) suggests that this policy change was followed by a substantial increase in uptake of nearly all forms of flexible working, including a trebling of the use of flexi-time and doubling of the use of home working by fathers (Smeaton and Marsh, 2006). Similarly, data from the Work-Life Balance Survey of Employees has shown that the take-up of flexible working arrangements among employees to whom these were available increased from 56% in 2006 to 60% in 2011 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012).

**In 2014 the ‘right to request’ flexible working was extended from parents to all employees who had worked with the same employer for 26 weeks**

In 2014 the ‘right to request’ was extended from parents to all employees who had worked with the same employer for 26 weeks. As well as aiming to increase productivity and support longer working lives, this extension of the right to request flexible working was intended to combat the ‘cultural belief that flexible working is only of benefit to parents and carers and consequently for women, as they continue to deliver the majority of the caring role.’ (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012b). In introducing the policy, the government explicitly recognised the stigma associated with flexible working which drives negative consequences including lower pay and damaged career prospects, primarily for women (Chung, 2019).

In the next section, we examine perceptions around flexible work in light of these policy aims. We first look at whether the take-up of flexible work has changed following the extension of the right to request. Subsequently we examine awareness of the policy, whether there is any evidence that the stigma associated with flexible working has reduced, and people’s attitudes to requesting a flexible working arrangement themselves.

## Take-up of flexible working

Take-up of flexible working has traditionally been monitored by the government through BEIS’ Work-Life Balance survey series<sup>5</sup>. In order to understand whether the extension of the ‘right to request’ has increased, or indeed normalised flexible working we ask BSA respondents in employment the following question:

*Thinking about your job, in the last 12 months have you done any of the following...*

*Worked part time*

*Worked term time only*

*Job shared*

*Worked flexitime*

<sup>5</sup> Findings from this survey series in relation to flexible working are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-life-balance-survey-number-4>

*Worked a compressed working week*

*Worked reduced hours for a limited period*

*Worked from home on a regular basis (either all of the time or part time as part of their normal working hours)*

*Worked annualised hours?*

**Forty-two per cent of employees report using at least one flexible working arrangement in the last 12 months. This proportion has not changed significantly since the question was asked in 2012**

The responses obtained are presented in Table 5, alongside those given when the question was first asked in 2012. Forty-two per cent of employees report using at least one of these flexible working arrangements in the last 12 months. This proportion has not changed significantly since the question was asked in 2012.

Table 5 Take-up of flexible work, 2012 and 2018

	2012	2018
	%	%
Part-time	27	21
Flexi-time	12	12
Work from home	8	11
Term-time only	7	6
Reduced hours	3	4
Compressed week	2	2
Jobshare	1	1
Annualised hours	1	2
None of the above	54	57
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1341</i>	<i>779</i>

*Base: all employees*

Take-up rates for most types of flexible working have not changed significantly between 2012 and 2018, although significant differences might have been detected had bigger sample sizes been available. Home working increased slightly from 8% in 2012 to 11% in 2018. Interestingly, take-up of part-time working decreased from 27% in 2012 to 21% in 2018. It seems likely that, rather than representing a decline in the popularity of part-time working, this decrease is the consequence of the strengthening labour market enabling people to move from 'underemployment' (part-time work among people who would like to work full-time) to full-time roles.

Consistent with the long-term pattern, women are more likely than men to have worked flexibly in the last 12 months with half of working women (50%) reporting flexible working, compared with just over a third (36%) of men. Older workers are more likely than younger workers to have worked flexibly, with over half (56%) of those aged 55 and over reporting flexible working, compared with over a third

(36%) of 18-34-year olds. Differences by education levels are also apparent, with nearly half (48%) of employees who are graduates having used a flexible working arrangement in the last 12 months, compared with around one third of those with O levels (or equivalent) (35%) or no qualifications (33%) – though caution needs to be applied in the latter case, due to the small number of respondents in this category<sup>6</sup>. Between 2012 and 2018 the proportion of women who report working flexibly has declined by ten percentage points (from 60%), while the proportion of men using such arrangements has risen slightly by three percentage points. The proportions of those with different levels of qualifications and in different age groups working flexibly have remained stable, however.

**There is little evidence that the extension of the right to request has substantially altered the take-up of flexible working although rates of take-up of flexible working for men and women appear to have converged to some extent**

On this basis, there is little evidence that the extension of the right to request has substantially altered the take-up of flexible working, with women remaining significantly more likely to work flexibly than men (although rates of take-up of flexible working for men and women appear to have converged to some extent – suggesting that the flexible working policy is moving in the right direction, in terms of narrowing the gender gap). However, the assumption underpinning the policy was that by extending the right to all employees, the ‘stigma’ associated with flexible working, and the associated negative consequences would be reduced. In the following sections we explore employees’ perceptions of flexible working, to test whether the policy may have altered attitudes to flexible working, and in particular, reduced the perception that flexible working impacts negatively on individuals’ careers.

## Awareness and understanding of flexible working

Awareness of the right to request flexible working is a necessary precondition for influencing take-up or reducing the associated stigma. To gauge levels of awareness, we ask employees:

*Do you think the following people currently have or do not have the legal right to request to work flexibly?*

*Employees with children under the age of 17*

*Employees who need to care for a family member with long-term mental or physical ill health*

*Any employee regardless of their circumstance*

A majority think that those with familial caring responsibilities have the legal right to request flexible working. Interestingly, the proportion of people who believe the legal right covers workers with caring responsibilities for adult family members is higher than the proportion who believe it covers childcare (79% and 74% respectively).

<sup>6</sup> There is also a relationship between take-up of flexible working and income – here, however, the latter is partially a product of the former, as the reduction in hours associated with some forms of flexible working results in a corresponding decrease in salary.

**Fewer than six in ten (57%) understand that any employee, regardless of their circumstances, has the right to request flexible working**

However, fewer than six in ten (57%) understand that any employee<sup>7</sup>, regardless of their circumstances, has the right to request flexible working. These findings are unsurprising, given the length of time for which right to request was available to specific groups, prior to its extension to all employees.

We anticipated that certain groups of employees would be more likely to be aware of which groups have a legal right to request flexible working. It was envisaged that graduates would be likely to be more knowledgeable about this area, along with those with higher incomes, as these groups have a stronger labour market position, where flexible working may be more accepted. Alternatively, we anticipated that those working for smaller employers might have lower levels of awareness, as these employers might be less likely to promote and publicise these schemes, as their take-up would have greater organisational impacts and be harder to accommodate. The data confirms that each of these assumptions is correct. Those with higher levels of education and income are more likely to be aware that the right to request flexible working does not depend on having caring responsibilities. Sixty-five per cent of graduates think that all employees have the right to request flexible working, compared with 49% of those with no qualifications. Interestingly, the fourth Work-Life Balance Employee survey detected a similar pattern of difference by level of education, in relation to the 2009 extension of the right to request to parents which children caring for children aged under 17 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012c).

However, awareness is lowest among those working for small employers, with just over half (52%) of people working in organisations with less than 50 employees being aware of the right to request flexible working, compared with 63% of people in organisations with a staff of more than 200. This suggests that promoting the right to request flexible working is likely to be particularly important in small and medium employers (SMEs) – especially given these employers may be less enthusiastic about doing so (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2013). Interestingly, however, there were no significant differences between male and female employees' understanding of these rights.

### Has the stigma associated with flexible working reduced?

A key ambition for extending the right to request flexible working was that employers would start to be more open to their employees working in different ways, and that employees would feel comfortable asking for a working arrangement that best suited their circumstances. To examine employees' perceptions of their employers' attitudes, we ask them the following questions:

<sup>7</sup> The extension of the right to request was for all employees who had worked with the same employer for 26 weeks.

*Do you think working flexibly would change your employer's perception of you as an employee?<sup>8</sup>*

*Do you think asking for a flexible working arrangement would have any impact on your career prospects or likelihood of promotion?<sup>9</sup>*

The responses obtained to the first question overall, and for those with different levels of education (who we might anticipate holding different views) are presented in Table 6. Perceptions of employers' attitudes appear to be, on balance, neutral. Around one fifth of employees feel that working flexibly has had, or would have, a negative impact on their employer's perception of them as an employee. Half perceive neither a positive nor a negative impact, and around one quarter feel that working flexibly has had or would have a positive impact. A comparison with responses obtained in 2012 indicates that there has not been a significant shift in perceptions since the extension of the right to request flexible working, suggesting that the policy has had little impact in this regard.

**Table 6 Whether thinks working flexibly has had or would have an impact on employer's perception of them as an employee, by level of education**

	Degree	Higher education below degree/ A level	GCSE, O level or equiv / CSE	No qualification	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely or probably positive impact	31	20	24	29	26
Neither positive nor negative impact	46	55	51	50	50
Definitely or probably negative impact	21	24	24	19	22
Don't know / Refusal	1	1	2	2	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	269	247	183	69	776

*Base: all employees*

Employees who have used a flexible arrangement in the last 12 months are more likely to feel that their employers viewed flexible working positively, with one third (33%) saying flexible working had

<sup>8</sup> Those who had worked flexibly were asked whether they think this has had or will have an impact.

<sup>9</sup> Those who had worked flexibly were asked whether they think this has had or will have an impact.

had a positive impact on their employer's view of them, compared with 20% of people who had not worked flexibly. Additionally, as shown in Table 6, graduates are more likely to feel the impact would be, or has been, positive, compared with those whose highest qualification is at A-Level or equivalent. The pattern by level of education is not straightforward, as just under three in ten (29%) of those with no qualifications also report a positive impact – although we should be cautious about this finding, given the small sample size involved. It is possible that this relatively positive view of the impact of flexible working is a direct consequence of the very high concentration of part-time and other forms of flexible working in the low pay / low skill end of the labour market<sup>10</sup> (ONS 2018b).

Turning to the second question measuring employees' perceptions of employers' attitudes, as shown in Table 7, employees feel similarly about the impact of flexible working on career prospects or likelihood of promotion, with three in ten believing it has had (or would have) a negative effect, around half anticipating neither a positive nor a negative impact, and under two in ten experiencing or anticipating a positive effect. Once again, attitudes appear to have remained static since 2012, suggesting that the extension of the right to request flexible working has not had a discernible impact on employees' perceptions of their employer's attitudes to this policy to date, although we did not test this link directly.

People who have worked flexibly in the last 12 months are again more likely to believe this would have a positive impact on their prospects of progression, compared with those who have not (25%, compared with 13%). Age also makes a difference, with younger employees more likely to think that working flexibly has had, or would have, a positive impact. Just under a quarter (23%) of 18-34-year olds hold this view, compared with 10% of those aged 55 and over. Interestingly, there was no difference in the proportions of male and female employees perceiving a positive or negative impact on their employer's perception of them, or on their career prospects, as a result of working flexibly.

---

<sup>10</sup> Analysis undertaken on the basis of occupational class (known to be correlated with number of educational qualifications) obtained similar, though less pronounced, results, although the sizes of a number of the sub groups were too small for these differences to be treated with confidence.

**Table 7 Whether thinks working flexibly has had / will have any impact on career prospects, by age**

	18-34	35-54	55+	All
	%	%	%	%
Definitely or probably positive impact	23	17	10	18
Neither positive nor negative impact	45	52	65	52
Definitely or probably negative impact	31	30	22	29
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	3	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	197	367	166	731

*Base: all employees*

**The employee view of flexible working is relatively positive: the majority, and particularly those who have worked flexibly, feel flexible working has no negative impacts on employment prospects or employer perspectives**

The fact that there has been no significant change between 2012 and 2018 in employees' perceptions of their employers' attitudes on either measure indicates that the extension of the right to request has not altered employees' perceptions of its potential impacts on their work and careers. However, it is important to recognise that the employee view of flexible working is relatively positive: the majority, and particularly those who have worked flexibly, feel flexible working has no negative impacts on employment prospects or employer perspectives, and, while a significant minority do fear the 'stigma' of flexible working, a larger group believe it will help, or have a neutral impact on, rather than harm their careers.

### Attitudes to requesting a flexible working arrangement

To explore whether perceived stigma affects employees' views about making a request to work flexibly, we ask employees who had not worked flexibly in the last 12 months how comfortable they would feel asking their employer for a flexible working arrangement, using the following question:

*How comfortable would you feel asking your employer for a flexible working arrangement?*

In addition, for the first time in 2018, we ask those employees who had indicated they were already working flexibly a comparable question:

*Suppose you needed to move to a new flexible working arrangement. How comfortable would you feel asking your employer for this new flexible working arrangement?*

The responses obtained are presented in Table 8. Given the responses of employees who have and have not worked flexibly in

**67% think that they would feel comfortable making a flexible working request. 13% say they would feel neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, and 18% would feel uncomfortable making such a request**

the past 12 months are not significantly different, these have been combined for this and subsequent analyses<sup>11</sup>. Sixty-seven per cent think that they would feel comfortable making such a request. Thirteen per cent say they would feel neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, and 18% would feel uncomfortable making such a request. Female employees are more likely than male employees to say that they would feel comfortable asking their employer for a (new) flexible working arrangement (72%, compared with 63% of male employees).

In 2012, when only the first question was asked (of those who did not have a flexible working arrangement), 63% said they would be comfortable asking for flexible working; this proportion has not changed among this group significantly in the six years to 2018 (65%).

**Table 8 How comfortable would feel asking employer for a new flexible working arrangement, by education level and income quartile**

	Highest education level				All
	Degree	Higher education below degree/ A-level	GCSE, O level or equiv / CSE	None	
	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly comfortable	74	68	63	54	67
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	12	11	15	17	13
Very or fairly uncomfortable	14	19	20	22	18
<i>Unweighted base</i>	269	247	183	69	776
	Income quartile				All
	Lowest	2nd lowest	2nd highest	Highest	
	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly comfortable	60	66	61	75	67
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	13	12	12	11	13
Very or fairly uncomfortable	20	22	22	14	18
<i>Unweighted base</i>	58	180	188	231	776

*Base: all employees*

We might anticipate those with a greater number of qualifications, higher incomes and in higher occupational groupings being more comfortable making a flexible working request as a consequence

<sup>11</sup> Those who have worked flexibly in the last 12 months are not significantly more likely to report feeling comfortable making a request, compared with those who have not (71% compared with 65%).

of them having a strong position in the labour market. These assumptions were all borne out by the data. As shown in Table 8, around three-quarters of graduates, compared with over half of those with no qualifications, anticipate feeling comfortable although, given the small number of respondents with no qualifications, we should be cautious about the latter finding. Similarly, this is the case for three-quarters of those in the highest quartile of household incomes, compared with 60% of those in the lowest quartile although, once again, caution needs to be applied, as the number in the latter category is small. Similarly, we find that just under three-quarters (73%) of those in managerial and professional occupations anticipate feeling comfortable, compared with 59% of those in semi-routine and routine occupations.

We ask those who are not currently working flexibly the following question to ascertain whether they think their employer would be likely to approve such a request:

***Suppose you wanted to move to a flexible working arrangement to improve your work-life balance. How likely do you think your employer would be to agree to you working flexibly?***

Four in ten employees who are not currently working flexibly (40%) think that their employer would be either very or quite likely to approve such a request. Thirty four per cent think this is very or quite unlikely, while 19% express a neutral view – that this is neither likely nor unlikely. These proportions have not significantly changed in the years since the extension of the right to request flexible working: in 2012, 38% of employees expressed this view (this group is too small in size to enable further analysis).

From the data on flexible working reviewed in this section, there is little evidence that the extension of the right to request has substantially altered the level or pattern of take-up of flexible working arrangements; while a greater number of differences may have been detected from larger samples of employees with different characteristics, it should be noted that this tentative conclusion is reflected in analysis of the Labour Force Survey (Beatson, 2019). Nor can we see any significant impact on employees' perceptions of flexible working and its impact on their standing or future career prospects. On the other hand, it is also clear that the majority of employees see flexible working as having (or having the potential to have) neutral or even positive impacts on their work and career, that is to say, if there is a stigma associated with flexible working, it is not one that is universally felt.

**Concern about the gender pay gap has grown. The pay gap has come to be seen as critical not only to gender equality, but also to addressing poverty, and building a more productive economy**

## Gender pay gap

Concern about the persistent gap between men's and women's hourly wages (the gender pay gap) has grown considerably over the last decade. Over that time, the pay gap has come to be seen as critical not only to gender equality, but also to addressing poverty, and building a more productive economy (Dias et al., 2018).

The gender pay gap arises from the fact that women are over-represented in less well-paid job roles and working arrangements than men. Studies have identified a number of causes of the gender pay gap, in particular the impact of parenting with the associated shift to part-time work (Olsen et al., 2018) and reduction of years of working experience (Dias, 2018). Other major drivers include differences between men and women in their behaviour, their distribution across different occupations and their experience of discrimination (ibid).

Data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings shows a steady decline in the size of the pay gap among both full-time and part-time workers since 1997 (ONS, 2018c). Although the gap has declined, the most recent data, from 2018, shows that it is still the case that there is a considerable gap (of 8.6%) among full-time employees, which rises to an overall gap of 17.9% among full and part-time employees (due to the concentration of women in part-time roles, and the association between part-time roles and low pay).

In addition to the introduction of SPL and the extension of the right to request flexible working, the government, in 2017, introduced mandatory annual reporting of the gender pay gap for organisations with more than 250 employees as a direct intervention designed to influence pay and progression within larger employers. Accounts of the impact of this 'name and shame' approach at the employer level are inconclusive, with no systematic investigation yet available. Announcing the publication of this year's data, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) noted that while 3,736 employers saw their pay gap improve, 3,387 employers saw their pay gap worsen and 645 employers reported no change (GEO, 2019).

This section explores attitudes to the gender pay gap, placing them in the broader context of attitudes to equal pay<sup>12</sup>.

## Views about equal pay

Equal pay is the legal right for men and women to be paid the same for doing the same work, or work of equivalent value, introduced in the Equal Pay Act of 1970. On BSA, we examine attitudes towards equal pay by asking respondents the following question:

*We would like you to imagine a situation in a large company*

<sup>12</sup> As the question about the gender pay gap was asked for the first time in 2018, we are unable to examine change over time.

**Around nine in ten (89%) say that it is either “wrong” or “very wrong” for men to be paid more than equally qualified women working in the same job for the same company**

*where equally qualified men are being paid more than women for doing the same job.*

*How right or wrong do you think it is for men to be paid more than women if working in the same job, for the same company?*

The responses provided suggest a clear consensus in favour of equal pay, with around nine in ten (89%) saying that it is either “wrong” or “very wrong” for men to be paid more than equally qualified women working in the same job for the same company. Education levels are associated with attitudes, with more than nine in ten graduates (92%) expressing this view, compared with under eight in ten (78%) of those with no qualifications. There are also differences in the attitudes of men and women, particularly in their strength of opinion; while 78% of women consider pay inequality “very wrong”, just 57% of men express this view.

### Attitudes to the gender pay gap

In order to understand how people feel about the gender pay gap, we present respondents with a scenario describing one of the key structural causes of the pay gap. We ask respondents to:

*Now imagine a large company where most of the senior jobs are done by men, and most of the junior jobs are done by women. As a result of this, the average hourly earnings of men in the company are higher than the average hourly earnings of women.*

*How right or wrong do you think it is that men are paid more than women in this company?*

The overall responses, along with the views of groups with different demographic characteristics, are presented in Table 9. In contrast to the question about equal pay, where we find a consensus among the public, people appear to be divided on the question of the gender pay gap. Just over four in ten consider the situation described to be wrong, around three in ten consider it to be right, with two in ten viewing it as neither right nor wrong<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Very similar patterns exist in the answers to a question where the same situation is mapped to the staff of a supermarket.

**Table 9 How right or wrong thinks it is for men to be paid more than women in a large company where most of the senior jobs are done by men, and most of the junior jobs are done by women, by sex, age, education and occupational class**

		Right	Wrong	Neither right nor wrong	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b>All</b>	%	31	43	20	2269
<b>Sex</b>					
Men	%	35	38	22	948
Women	%	28	48	18	1321
<b>Age</b>					
18-34	%	37	38	21	394
35-54	%	28	45	21	732
55+	%	30	46	18	1138
<b>Education level</b>					
Degree	%	41	33	21	617
A-level equivalent	%	35	40	20	613
GCSE equivalent	%	26	49	21	552
No qualification	%	19	55	17	453
<b>Occupational status</b>					
Managerial and professional occupations	%	41	35	20	951
Intermediate occupations	%	30	43	21	320
Employees in small organisations and own account workers	%	26	45	23	228
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	%	31	46	15	166
Semi routine and routine occupations	%	21	53	20	533

As is the case with equal pay, the views expressed by men and women are significantly different, with 38% of men regarding the scenario as wrong, compared with just under half (48%) of women. Younger people are less likely than older people to consider the gap in pay to be wrong (38% of 18-34-year olds express this view, compared with 46% of those aged 55 years and over). In addition, higher levels of educational qualifications, occupational status and income are all clearly associated with attitudes to the pay gap – with those with lower incomes, those with fewer educational qualifications and those in lower occupational groupings being more likely to describe the gap in pay as wrong. Most markedly, 33% of graduates consider the gap in pay to be wrong, compared with more than half (55%) of those with no qualifications.

These findings are somewhat surprising and there are two underlying factors that may be contributing to these distributions of attitudes. The first is that, while pay equality engages a direct comparison between men and women, the pay gap requires us to take account of an interconnected set of drivers that, taken together, result in an unfair outcome (Dias et al., 2018). Given this, it is unsurprising that views are more mixed. The second is that there is a clear pattern in attitudes: pay gap ‘winners’ – men, people with higher levels of education, higher pay and so on are more likely to see the gap as justified than pay gap ‘losers’. This is in spite of the fact that many of these groups historically tend to express more liberal views in a range of related areas. Attitudes to the gender pay gap, to some extent, are therefore something of an anomaly in the sphere of attitudes to gender roles.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined attitudes to a set of policies that are highly relevant to women’s participation, progression and remuneration in the labour market, as well as the gendered nature of care. It should be recognised that these policies are driven by challenging goals, seeking to change not just the way in which we work, but also, and perhaps most importantly, the way in which we parent and relate.

In the case of parental leave and flexible working, the policies introduced in recent years appear very much in tune with the public’s attitudes: the majority of people are supportive of (some) sharing of paid parental leave and feel positively about flexible working and its career impacts. While there is limited evidence of further marked shifts in attitudes following the introduction of these policies, particularly in relation to the extension of the right to request flexible working, this is perhaps unsurprising as attitudes to gender roles have been shown to evolve slowly over time. However, given the fact that views on balance, are positive, we might expect to see increasing uptake of SPL or flexible working particularly among men, but as yet there is little evidence of this: estimates of SPL uptake are very low, and women continue to be overrepresented in the flexible workforce, particularly in part-time, low paid roles. Attitudes to the gender pay gap are more mixed, indicating that, for a substantial group, this disparity is perceived as being warranted on merit. Given the drivers of the gap, as well as the mechanics of organisational employment policies, it is perhaps unsurprising that early indications are of slow progress at the employer level.

In each policy area, we can see significant differences in attitudes between different groups. Unsurprisingly, women have attitudes that are more congruent with the aims of all three policies, including being substantially more likely to perceive the pay gap as unfair. But, as well as gender, we also see clear associations between attitudes and socio-economic status (as indicated by levels of education,

**In the case of parental leave and flexible working, the policies introduced in recent years appear very much in tune with the public’s attitudes**

occupational grouping and income). The group with the lowest socio-economic status are less likely to support sharing parental leave, which might be attributed both to more traditional attitudes to gender, but also the significantly lower returns to work for low-income mothers. Similarly, while levels of 'flexible working' are very high in this group, as a consequence of the strong correlation between low pay and part-time working, this group is less likely to know they have a right to request flexible working, or to feel comfortable making a request, potentially as a consequence of the distinction between choosing part-time work, and being underemployed. This group is also more likely to see the gender pay gap as unfair.

There is a risk then, not only that these policies will not make a significant difference to the gendered pattern of work and care in the UK, but also that they may do most good for the women who need them least: highly educated women, who already have a relatively privileged position in the labour market. While this will deliver greater equality for (some) women, it will leave the intractable problems of equality for low income women, as well as poverty and productivity unchanged. However, in the longer-term, take-up of these policies by women in higher socio-economic groups might begin to shift social norms, removing some barriers that may currently be preventing a wider range of women taking advantage of them.

## Acknowledgements

The National Centre for Social Research is grateful to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and to the Government Equalities Office (GEO) for their financial support which enabled us to ask the questions on gender and flexible working on the British Social Attitudes survey reported in this chapter.

## References

- Atkinson, J. (2017), 'Shared Parental Leave in the UK: can it advance gender equality by changing fathers into co-parents?', *International Journal of Law in Context*, **13(3)**: 356-368
- Attar Taylor, E. and Scott, J. (2017), 'Gender: new consensus or continuing battleground?', in Phillips, D., Curtice, J., Phillips, M. and Perry, J. (eds.) (2018), *British Social Attitudes: The 35th Report*, London: The National Centre for Social Research
- BBC (2017), *Theresa May in renewed effort to close gender pay gap*, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41783188>
- BBC (2019), *Gender pay: Fewer than half of UK firms narrow gap*, available at: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47822291?intlink\\_from\\_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cg41ylwvxy5t/gender-pay-gap&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47822291?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cg41ylwvxy5t/gender-pay-gap&link_location=live-reporting-story)
- Beatson, M (2019), *Megatrends: The trends shaping work and working lives*, CIPD
- Birkett, H. & Forbes, S. (2019), 'Where's dad? Exploring the low take-up of inclusive parenting policies in the UK', *Policy Studies*, **40 (2)**: 205-224, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01442872.2019.1581160?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=cpos20abs/10.1080/01442872.2019.1581160?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=cpos20>
- Chung, H. (2019), 'Flexible working can reinforce stereotypes', *The Conversation*, available at: <https://theconversation.com/flexible-working-can-reinforce-gender-stereotypes-109158>
- CIPD (2019), *Gender pay gap reporting – Analysis of data after the deadline of midnight 4/4/2019*, available at: [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Community/blogs/b/policy\\_at\\_work/posts/gender-pay-gap-reporting-analysis-of-data-after-the-deadline-of-midnight-4-4-2019](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Community/blogs/b/policy_at_work/posts/gender-pay-gap-reporting-analysis-of-data-after-the-deadline-of-midnight-4-4-2019)
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012a), *Modern Workplaces – Government Response on Flexible Parental Leave*, London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/82969/12-1267-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-parental-leave.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82969/12-1267-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-parental-leave.pdf)
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012b), *Modern Workplaces Consultation – Government Response on Flexible Working*, London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/>

[uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/82793/12-1269-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-working.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82793/12-1269-modern-workplaces-response-flexible-working.pdf)

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012c), *The Fourth Work-Life Balance Employee Survey, Employment Relations Research Series 122*, London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/32153/12-p151-fourth-work-life-balance-employee-survey.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32153/12-p151-fourth-work-life-balance-employee-survey.pdf)

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2013), *Modern workplaces: Shared parental leave and pay administration consultation – impact assessment*, London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/110692/13-651-modern-workplaces-shared-parental-leave-and-pay-impact-assessment2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/110692/13-651-modern-workplaces-shared-parental-leave-and-pay-impact-assessment2.pdf)

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2014), *The Fourth Work-Life Balance Employer Survey (2013)*, London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398557/bis-14-1027-fourth-work-life-balance-employer-survey-2013.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398557/bis-14-1027-fourth-work-life-balance-employer-survey-2013.pdf)

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills., Acas., and Swinson, J. (2014), *Parents Can Now Apply for Shared Parental Leave*, (press release), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-shared-parental-leave-regulations-come-into-effect>

Dias, M.C., Joyce, R. and Parodi, F. (2018), *The gender pay gap in the UK: children and experience in work*, IFS working paper, 18/02, The Institute for Fiscal Studies, available at: [https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/MCD\\_RJ\\_FP\\_GenderPayGap.pdf](https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/MCD_RJ_FP_GenderPayGap.pdf)

Government Equalities Office (2019), *Private sector employers report second year of gender pay gap data* (press release), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/private-sector-employers-report-second-year-of-gender-pay-gap-data>

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (2013), *Who's breadwinning in Europe? A comparative analysis of maternal breadwinning in Great Britain and Germany*, London: IPPR, available at: <https://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/whos-breadwinning-in-europe-oct2015.pdf>

Nordic Council of Ministers (2018), *Shared and paid parental leave: The Nordic Gender Effect at Work*, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers, available at: <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1240186/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Office for National Statistics (2013), *Women in the Labour Market 2013*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/womeninthelabourmarket/2013-09-25>

Office for National Statistics (2018a), *Families and the labour market 2018*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2018>

Office for National Statistics (2018b), *Low and high pay in the UK: 2018*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/lowandhighpayuk/2018>

Office for National Statistics (2018c), *Gender pay gap in the UK 2018*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2018>

Office for National Statistics (2019), *Labour market economic commentary: April 2019*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/labourmarketeconomiccommentary/previousReleases>

Office for National Statistics (2019), *Labour market economic commentary: June 2019*, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/labourmarketeconomiccommentaryjune2019>

Olsen, W., Gash, V., Sook, K. and Zhang, M. (2018), *The gender pay gap in the UK: evidence from the UKHLS (DFE-RR804)*, London, UK: Department for Education, Government Equalities Office

Pyper, D. (2018), *Flexible Working, Briefing Paper No. 01086*, London: House of Commons Library, available at: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01086#fullreport>

Scott, J. and Clery, E. (2013), 'Gender roles. An incomplete revolution?' in Park, A., Bryson, C., Clery, E., Curtice, J. and Phillips, M. (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: the 30th report*, London: The National Centre for Social Research, available at: [http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38723/bsa30\\_full\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38723/bsa30_full_report_final.pdf)

Smeaton, D. and Marsh, A. (2006), *Maternity and Paternity Rights and Benefits: Survey of Parents 2005*, London: Department of Trade and Industry, available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121106135417/http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file27446.pdf>

Twamley, K. & Schober, P. (2019), 'Shared Parental Leave: Exploring variations in attitudes, eligibility, knowledge and take-up intentions of expectant mothers in London', *Journal of Social Policy*, **48(2)**: 387-409, available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-social-policy/article/shared-parental-leave-exploring-variations-in-attitudes-eligibility-knowledge-and-takeup-intentions-of-expectant-mothers-in-london/A357F46EB1DA21E2CE2C9F54DFE0CA39>

## Publication details

Curtice, J., Clery, E., Perry, J., Phillips M. and Rahim, N. (eds.) (2019),  
British Social Attitudes: The 36th Report, London: The National  
Centre for Social Research

© The National Centre for Social Research 2019

First published 2019

You may print out, download and save this publication for your non-commercial use. Otherwise, and apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to The National Centre for Social Research.

The National Centre for Social Research  
35 Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0AX  
info@natcen.ac.uk  
ISBN: 978-1-5272-4448-1