

# Supporting Working Parents to create a Flexible, High-Performing Workforce

Jane van Zyl, Chief Executive, Working Families

[workingfamilies.org.uk](http://workingfamilies.org.uk)



# What do we do?

## **Empower working parents and carers**

3,200 individuals – phone line, emails

1.6 million unique views of our website advice section

## **Support employers**

145 employer members

630,000 employees

## **Drive meaningful, positive policy change**

Employment Bill

Flexible Working as default (Zurich, Behavioural Insights Team)

Job Share

Part time

Team rostering

Compressed hours

Working from home



# Covid-19... unburying



“A disaster is a lot like a revolution when it comes to disruption and improvisation, to new roles and an unnerving or exhilarating sense that now anything is possible.”

Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*, 2016



# By the numbers

**13 million** working parents in the UK, more than a third of the UK workforce. (*ONS*)

**9 in 10** people want to work flexibly, but only **2 in 10** jobs are advertised with flexible options. (*Timewise*)

**7 in 10** of working parents consider their childcare needs before applying for a new job or promotion. (MFI 2019)

**71%** of parents who were senior managers or directors work flexibly, compared to **48%** of parents in junior-level roles. (*MFI 2020*)

**54,000** pregnant women and new mothers lose their jobs each year because of maternity discrimination. (*EHRC*)

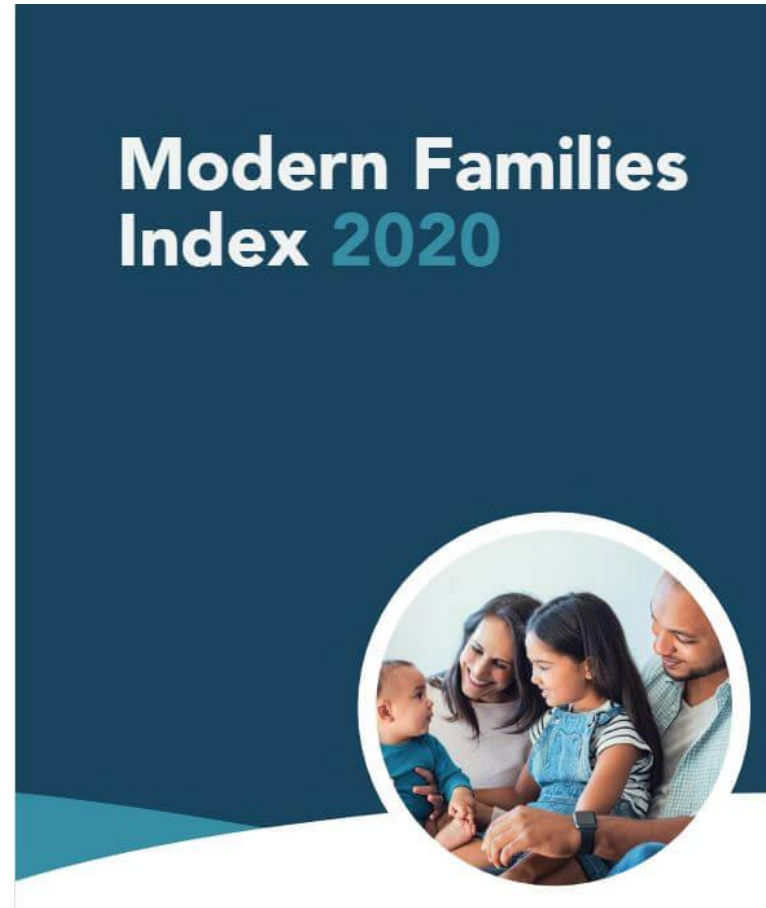
**1 in 5** working parents felt they had been treated less fairly at work due to their childcare responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. (*Working Families*)

**Women** – take on majority of unpaid care and more likely to be low paid and in insecure employment



# Working parents in January 2020

- The number of parents working flexibly appeared to have stalled. Fifty-eight per cent of parents in the 2015 *Index* said they work flexibly, falling to 55% in 2020.
- 77% of parents who didn't work flexibly would have liked to.
- Almost a third (32%) of parents that don't work flexibly reported that flexible working was 'not available' where they work.
- Flexibility was linked to seniority. Seventy-one per cent of senior managers or directors worked flexibly, compared to 48% of parents in junior-level roles.



# COVID-19 – looking different...



- The visibility of the work and family juggle has never been higher
- Homeworking is demonstrably possible in many, many more jobs than before
- The 9-5, in-the-office-every-day model is looking even more outdated





# Employers

*pre Covid-19*

50% - 50% staff flexed their hours

25% - 50% staff partly remote

65%

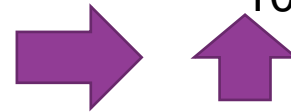
*post Covid-19*

85% - 50% staff flexed their hours

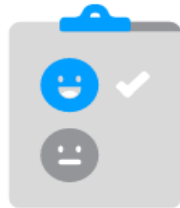
84% - 50% staff totally remote

100%

Productivity



## Biggest challenges of COVID-19 for employers



Employee morale



Engagement



Communication



Avoiding burnout



Mental wellbeing



working families



working families

# Working Families member case studies: Superdrug, Santander, EY



*"We know that the usual 9-5 doesn't apply in this situation and we're comfortable letting our teams find ways of working that suit them, their families, and the business."*



+16%

+19%

+33%

How six words in  
our job ads has led  
to a more diverse  
#LifeatZurich

#PTJobs



# Flexistability - beyond COVID-19

- A why not? approach to flexible working in the long term. It is demonstrably possible in many, many more jobs than previously offered, particularly homeworking
- To support this, employers need to look an organisation-wide, strategic approach to better job design – otherwise flexibility simply enables parents to manage too much
- Advertise vacancies flexibly, opening up opportunities in the labour market for the UK's working parents



# Flexistability - beyond COVID-19

- A rapid response to supporting part-time and flexible working is also demonstrably possible – the Right to Request Flexible Working looks very rusty
- Ensure employers are, wherever possible, advertising jobs flexibly as the norm
- Reform unpaid parental leave – so all parents have a paid right they can rely on if suddenly childcare breaks down
- All parents need secure, predictable jobs with access to all employment rights



# Thank you



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