

Better jobs for mums and dads ^[1]

A TUC Report

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AVAILABILITY

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Key findings

Half of young parents (51%) working in low-paid jobs like retail, social care and childcare have a boss who's never spoken to them about their workplace policies to time off to look after their kids.

Flexible working practices are causing young mums and dads real difficulties. This includes shifts changing at short notice, rotas being given out with less than one weeks' notice and uncertainty over shift finishing times. 19% of young parents reported that they had been given a rota with less than one weeks' notice, within the last 12 months.

There is a real lack of awareness of key employment rights which could help young working parents. For example, 63% of young mums and dads are not aware of the right to unpaid parental leave. Parents also reported that the existing rights could be improved.

Better jobs for mums and dads report is a window into the ordinary working lives of mums and dads. Its findings won't be news to those parents trying to give their kids a great start in life as well as do a good job at work. But it reminds the rest of us that, despite the advances of the last two decades in family-friendly rights, the combination of working and bringing up children is still too hard. And that's doubly so for those parents who are the focus of this report: younger workers with school-age children, earning less than the UK median income, many of whom work in jobs with unpredictable hours.

During this project, we heard lower income parents tell us over and over again that concepts like "work-life balance", "family friendly work" and "flexible working" didn't feel like they applied to them. They thought these were for other people - women with children who worked in offices, in better-paying jobs, who could afford to reduce their pay. When we talked them through the rights that they already have in law, they didn't know about them - and worse, they couldn't imagine taking them up, because they were afraid to do so.

This report is about those mums and dads - and it's intended to stimulate a conversation about how we change the world of work to make sure they can simultaneously be even better parents and do well at work. All the solutions we propose are grounded in what mums and dads told us would really work for them.

Recommendations

The TUC has made 16 recommendations for the government following this extensive research, including:

1. **Rights for all:** All working parents - including zero-hours contracts workers, agency workers and those in casual work - should have access to the same rights, from day one in their jobs. This includes all family friendly rights, which are often only available to "employees".
2. **Notice of working hours:** All workers should be given notice of their shifts at least one month in advance.
3. **Information about rights:** All workers should receive information about their workplace rights, including the rights which will help them manage their childcare needs.
4. **Parental leave and time off for dependants should be paid.** It is not affordable for many young parents to take time off unpaid. The government should start by introducing a period of 5 days paid parental leave. It should be paid at least at the rate of the relevant National Minimum Wage rate.

Region: Europe ^[4]

Tags: [work/life balance](#) ^[5]

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Links

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