

Childcare shortage excludes over 870,000 mothers from the workplace ^[1]

Half of all stay-at-home mothers in England want to work but cannot get the childcare they need, according to new figures.

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Research by Save the Children has estimated there are 872,800 stay-at-home mothers who would prefer to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which is convenient, reliable and affordable.

The figures, which are based on new analysis ^[3] of the Department for Education's Childcare and early years survey of parents in England, 2017, relate to mothers of children aged between birth and 14 years. Regional data from the survey was published last month.

According to the Save the Children analysis, in the North East, two thirds (67 per cent) of unemployed mothers would prefer to work if they could get the childcare they need. This is the highest proportion in England of the nine areas surveyed, followed by 56 per cent in the West Midlands and 53 per cent in the North West.

Respondents in every region except the South East and East Midlands said childcare issues were the number one barrier preventing them from working.

Steven McIntosh, Save the Children's director of UK poverty policy, said, 'Evidence that the childcare system in England is not fit for purpose keeps mounting up. We know that families with pre-school children are hardest hit. The cost and complexity leave them stressed and struggling to make ends meet at the most important time in their children's lives.

'The Government must urgently examine how to bring down childcare costs and ensure that families, particularly those on the lowest incomes, can get the support they need. It's time to make childcare work for families.'

Research by the charity published in January ^[4] found that childcare issues are costing mothers in England with children under the age of five £3.4m in lost earnings each day.

Save the Children has launched an online petition calling on the Government to deliver a more affordable and accessible childcare system.

-reprinted from Nursery World

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