

# Men less likely than women to cite impact of parental leave on career <sup>[1]</sup>

Campaigners say system is set up to fail mothers after Ipsos Mori survey results

**Author:** Perraudin, Frances

**Source:** The Guardian

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 3 Aug 2019

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Men are significantly less likely than women to think that taking time off to look after a child has had a negative impact on their career, polling has found.

According to research by Ipsos Mori shared with the Guardian, almost three in 10 women (29%) thought that taking maternity leave had a negative impact on their career, while less than half the proportion of men (13%) noticed the same impact after paternity leave.

In a survey of 1,119 adults conducted in June, 45% of both parents and non-parents agreed that "taking time off work to care for a child has a negative impact on a person's job". A similar proportion of men and women agreed with the statement – 44% and 47% respectively.

Older people were more likely to agree, with more than half (52%) of 55- to 75-year-olds doing so and only 38% of 18- to 24-year-olds feeling the same.

As one of her final acts as prime minister last month, Theresa May launched a consultation on changes to parental leave entitlements. The proposal envisaged a longer period of paternity leave.

The Ipsos Mori survey found that only a third (34%) of working respondents thought their employer was supportive of shared parental leave, with men more likely to feel this way than women (38% versus 30%).

Claire Timmins, the director of HR at Ipsos Mori – which offers equal time off to new mothers and fathers – said the research highlighted the need for employers to address continued inequality in parental leave.

"Levels of awareness and understanding of the different policies on offer need to be significantly increased and it is clear that responsibility here lies with employers," she said.

Joeli Brearley, the founder of Pregnant Then Screwed, which works against maternity or pregnancy discrimination, said taking time off to care for a child was still likely to have a negative impact on a person's job.

"With child-rearing being disproportionately done by women it means that mothers are losing out on pay rises and promotions. Parental leave is just the start of it, with the IFS [Institute of Fiscal Studies] estimating that by the time a woman's first child is 12 years old, her hourly pay rate is 33% behind a that of a man," she said.

"The whole system is set up to fail mothers – firstly because our parental leave system very much favours women to take time out of the workplace to care, rather than men. Secondly, because we have the second most expensive childcare system in the world forcing many mothers into part-time work and some to give up their paid jobs altogether; and finally because part-time work is hard to find and is undervalued. This means that hundreds of thousands of parents (usually mothers) are working well below their competency level."

**Related link:**

**Region:** Europe <sup>[3]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/08/men-less-likely-women-cite-impact-parental-leave-career>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/08/men-less-likely-women-cite-impact-parental-leave-career> <sup>[2]</sup>

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