

Longer careers 'will hit child care' [GB]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Increased pressure to work beyond the age of 60 could deprive young families of adequate child care, according to a report.

Grandparents - at the sharp end of the UK's deepening pension crisis - will be unable to give up work in order to help with the care of their grandchildren, says the study.

Without more resources to support carers, both in and out of work, their contribution may not be sustainable.

Early retirement is fast becoming a thing of the past, the report's authors said.

Falling numbers of younger people in the UK is persuading employers to retain the services of the over 50s.

Meanwhile, the widespread closure of final salary company pension schemes and lack of personal savings mean that many people in their 50s and 60s are choosing to work on.

However, many of the 1,000 people aged over 50 canvassed by the IOE said that they are finding it increasingly difficult to juggle work and caring for grandchildren and elderly relatives.

At present, one in three looked after an elderly relative or friend, one in six provided care for a grandchild and one in 10 did both.

Almost as many men as women said they provided care, although women's caring was more intensive.

One quarter of women carers and one eighth of men were providing 20 or more hours of informal care a week.

June Statham, co-author of the report said: "Staff over 50 can increasingly expect to find themselves pressurised between employers who want them to stay on, working longer hours, and growing pressure to care."

As a result, Ms Statham warned that "without more resources to support carers, both in and out of work, their contribution may not be sustainable".

Flexible working came top of the wish-list for the over 50s struggling to juggle work and caring duties.

The importance of grandparents as child carers has been demonstrated by a government pilot scheme which pays them for the role.

Ministers are studying a project in Nottingham which gives single parents looking to find work a cash sum to pay their parents to mind the children.

It is estimated that British families save themselves £1bn a year by using grandparents as child carers.

-Reprinted from BBC News.

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