

British grandparents shouldering childcare burden ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Research across 12 countries shows that almost two thirds of people with grandchildren under the age of 16 in England and Wales provide some regular childcare.

Almost one in five British grandmothers provide at least 10 hours care a week, helping support their own children's careers.

In southern European countries known for their strong family ties such as Italy, Greece and Spain around 40 per cent of grandparents provide regular care, although this is often more intensive.

Meanwhile in Sweden, France and Denmark, where state childcare provision is more readily available, only around 20 per cent of grandparents are called upon.

Despite this, grandparents in Britain are more likely than their counterparts in many countries still to have their own jobs, as they are younger on average.

One in four British grandparents over 50 has a job, in contrast with an average of one in seven in the other countries in the study.

Despite this several other countries had provisions for parents to transfer leave or benefits for those looking after children to grandparents.

The figures emerge as part of an ongoing study of data from across Europe by researchers at King's College London, supported by the charity Grandparents Plus.

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive of Grandparents Plus, said: "One in four working parents in the UK rely on grandparents for childcare, and one in five of grandmothers are spending at least 10 hours a week looking after grandchildren.

"The high percentage of grandparents in the UK who are themselves still working underlines the need for the Government to introduce a right to request flexible working for all, to enable grandparents to balance employment with caring for grandchildren."

-reprinted from the Telegraph

Region: Europe ^[2]

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