

# Tackling in-work poverty by supporting dual-earning families <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Joseph Rowntree Foundation

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 1 Nov 2013

## AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

## Description:

This research reviewed employment trends among couples with children, and examined four areas affecting their employment rate: family leave, childcare, the labour market and the tax and benefit system.

## Key points:

- The risk of poverty is greater for children in couple families with only one earner; sole-earner families comprised 30 per cent of families with children in poverty in 2011/12.
- Although the share of sole-earner families has fallen considerably, around a quarter of couple families with children had only one earner in 2012.
- Most non-working partners are mothers, with lower employment levels among mothers with pre-school children compared to those with school-age children.
- Enabling more mothers to work would boost household incomes and help tackle in-work poverty.
- Paid family leave allows parents to spend time with young children while protecting incomes, helps keep mothers in the labour market and increases fathers' involvement in family life.
- However, family leave is badly paid in the UK and too short for fathers.
- Childcare enables parents with young children to work, particularly mothers, but remains expensive for many low-income families.
- Despite some improvements in the conditions of low-paid work, many mothers can only access poorly paid part-time jobs because of their childcare responsibilities.
- Many fathers work long hours, making it harder for them to get involved in family life and more difficult for mothers in low-income families to work.
- Universal Credit will raise incomes among many low-income couple families, but weaken work incentives for many second earners.
- To enable both partners in more low-income families to work, the study recommends: allowing second earners to keep more income before withdrawing means-tested benefits; expanding publicly funded affordable childcare; and more generous family leave, including longer paternity leave.

**Related link:** Traditional 'breadwinner' families more likely to be in poverty <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Europe <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[5]</sup>

gender <sup>[6]</sup>

work/life balance <sup>[7]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/11/tackling-work-poverty-supporting-dual-earning-families>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/11/tackling-work-poverty-supporting-dual-earning-families> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/tackling-work-poverty-supporting-dual-earning-families> <sup>[3]</sup> <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/traditional-breadwinner-families-more-likely-to-be-in-poverty> <sup>[4]</sup>

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