

# The Condition of Britain: Interim report <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts from the press release:

Britain needs a new politics of the family, according to the interim report of IPPR's flagship Condition of Britain project. The report argues that Britain has become more family focused during the recession but that Britain is not yet family friendly. It argues that a new politics of the family is needed from both the Left and the Right.

...

The report argues that Britain has rediscovered the importance and value of the family during the recession. But it also finds families under real strain, pointing towards the major social problems faced by Britain today:

- Childcare is expensive and children's centres are retreating - a part-time nursery place now costs over £100 a week, having risen by 77% over the last decade, twice as fast as general prices; more than 400 children's centres are thought to have closed since 2010 and the number offering full-day care has halved since 2008.
- Long working hours are squeezing family time - nearly half of fathers (44%) work more than 45 hours or more a week, higher than in most other European countries. A third of parents say they wish they could spend more time with their children.
- Wages are lower, tax credits cut and prices are rising - average incomes have fallen by £1,200 since the recession in real terms, and half of people (52%) say they struggle to keep up with bills and loan repayments.

The report argues that a key priority should be universal childcare, advanced through community institutions such as children's centres that bring children and parents together, rather than cash benefits or tax-free vouchers. The report argues that universal childcare is a policy that will make Britain better off and help families deal with the squeeze on family incomes and our rising care needs as a result of our aging population.

The report shows that universal childcare could help more than a quarter of a million parents to get back to work, improve their family finances and boost the nation's balance sheet by as much as £1.5bn. IPPR analysis shows that couple families with a single earner are four times more likely to live in poverty than couple families with dual earners and three times more likely than couple families where parents work part time.

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

**Tags:** economics <sup>[4]</sup>

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