

Unpaid care and housework



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Even without a crisis, caring responsibilities usually fall heavily on women. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, women in the EU spent 13 hours more than men every week on unpaid care and housework^[1]. Now with the closure of schools and workplaces, and older relatives possibly getting sick, their unpaid workload is likely to further increase. On the other hand, with fathers spending more time at home, it could also be an opportunity for them to engage more in caring for their children.

The situation for single parents can be even more difficult, especially when having to juggle working from home and caring for children alone. Single parents are also more likely to be at risk of poverty, compared to single people, or people in couples with and without children^[2]. Women make up almost 85% of all single parents in the EU and almost half (48 %) are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared to a third (32 %) of single fathers^[3]. Covid-19 is likely to increase that risk.

What policymakers need to know

- Affordable and accessible childcare for parents who work in essential services is one

- Affordable and accessible childcare for parents who work in essential services is one important way to ensure that they can continue to engage in their work
- Dismantling gender stereotypes and ideas about traditional gender roles could encourage more men to pick up their fair share of unpaid work at home.
- Financial support for lone parents to assist with childcare, rent payments and other household expenses could help to alleviate some of the financial hardship, especially in light of potential job losses in relation to Covid-19.

For more information

[Gender Equality Index 2019 – domain of time](#)



[Beijing +25: Women and poverty: women at greater risk \(policy brief\)](#)



[Beijing +25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States \(report\)](#)



[Poverty, gender and lone parents in the EU \(factsheet\)](#)



Endnotes

[1] EIGE (2020), [Beijing +25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States](#), p. 3

[2] EIGE (2019), [Gender Equality Index](#)

[3] EIGE (2016), [Poverty, gender and lone parents in the EU](#)

Metadata

TOPICS: Health

KEYWORDS: gender distribution of paid and unpaid work, paid and unpaid work, unpaid work