

Who's Breadwinning? Working mothers and the new face of family support

Over 2.2 million working mums are now breadwinners – an increase of 1 million since 1996/97 – which means that almost one in three of all working mothers with dependent children are now the primary breadwinner for their family. However, behind these numbers is a great diversity of experiences which reflect increasingly dynamic family lives as well as changing economic pressures. The analysis in this report explores these trends and how they affect different groups of women and different kinds of households. In doing so it demonstrates how vital mothers' incomes have become to the economic survival and wellbeing of a rising number of families. Yet despite this profound social change, many working mums – the majority of whom also take primary responsibility for care – still face significant barriers to entering and remaining in work. This report also considers the specific steps that could be taken to address these barriers, which include a lack of flexible work opportunities, unaffordable childcare and gendered parental leave entitlements based on outdated stereotypes.

Format: pdf-file

Weblinks

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Metadata

TYPE: Study / Survey

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PUBLISHER: London: Institute for Public Policy Research

LANGUAGE: English

SECTOR: Employment

FORMAT: Other - text

KEYWORDS: child care, division of labour, equality between women and men, equal treatment, flexibility of working time, gender, gender equality, gender relations, paid work, parental leave, unpaid/unremunerated work