

Gender roles

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British Social Attitudes 40



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Change and continuity at work and at home

Significant shifts to women's participation in the labour market have taken place in the 40 years since the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey began, with mothers' participation the highest it has ever been and with a slight majority of working mothers now working full time. In addition, policy developments mean that the provision of childcare, and to a lesser extent parental leave, is more likely to facilitate female labour market participation than has been the case in the past. Given these changes, this chapter examines how attitudes and behaviour in relation to men's and women's roles at work and at home have changed over the past four decades.



Decline in support for a traditional division of labour

Support for a traditional division of working and caring roles has declined markedly since 1983, while support for women's participation in the labour force has increased.

- Agreement that a man's job is to earn money and a woman's is to look after the home and family has declined by 39 percentage points since 1987, from 48% to 9% in 2022.
- Only around 1 in 10 (12%) people now agree that 'a job is all right but what most women really want is a home and children,' compared to 1 in 3 (31%) in 1989.
- Agreement with the view that a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works has declined from 46% in 1989 to 21% now.

Increasing support for both parents working when children are young

People are more likely to support arrangements for caring for pre-school children which involve both parents working, compared with a decade ago.

- In 2012, 31% felt the best arrangement with pre-school children was for the mother to stay at home and the father to work full time; 18% now think this.
- There has been a significant growth in the belief that both the mother and father working part time is the best option; support for this view more than tripled from 5% in 2012 to 18% now.
- However, the most frequently selected preference for organising work and care while children are small is the mother working part time and the father working full time (33%).

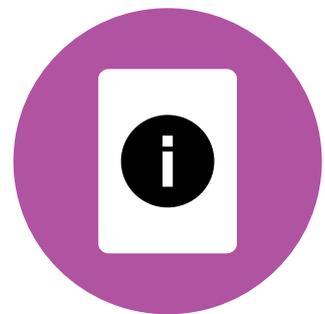
Behaviour in division of domestic labour has not shifted in line with attitudes

While attitudes increasingly support the sharing of household chores, women continue to do more domestic labour than men.

- 63% of women report doing more than their fair share of household labour, compared with 22% of men.
- Women are more likely to do the washing and ironing: 65% say that this is mainly done by the woman, compared to 27% who say it is shared equally and 7% who report that it is mainly done by the man. Yet, 76% think that this task should be shared equally and just 16% think it should be mainly performed by the woman.

Introduction

Since the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey began in 1983, dramatic shifts have taken place in relation to gender roles in societies across the world, including in the UK (Sullivan et al., 2018). Women’s labour market participation has increased since the early 1980s across all European countries (Daly, 2020). There have been a number of clear drivers of increased female labour market participation. These include the fact that women have become increasingly highly educated. Women with degrees tend to have higher employment rates than those without (Roantree and Vira, 2018), and higher education is associated with lower overall fertility, through later parenthood, higher levels of childlessness, as well as smaller completed family sizes (Berrington, 2004; McMunn et al., 2015; Rendall and Smallwood, 2003; Ratcliffe and Smith, 2006) – thus reducing potential constraints on women’s participation in the labour market. Shifts in the policy landscape have also facilitated greater female labour market participation. Work-family policies to promote female labour force participation did not emerge until the late 1990s (Lewis, 2002; Moss and O’Brien, 2020), when the government aimed to maximise employment for all adults and move both women and men away from welfare, via an ‘adult worker model’ (Lewis, 2002). This shift in government ambition was underscored by a series of family policies designed to enable the reconciliation of work and caring responsibilities, including tax credits, changes to parental leave, the right to request flexible working, and increased investment in childcare.



However, despite these significant shifts in behaviour and policy, women's labour market participation continues to differ in substantive ways to that of men. It has been argued that the policies outlined above, while reducing some of the barriers to female labour force participation, did not eliminate them entirely – with a 'modified male breadwinner' model emerging, due to women's less advantageous labour market position and greater responsibility for domestic and caring labour (Crompton, 2006; Lewis, 2002). The gender participation gap in the labour force and the gender pay gap both persist (Dias et al., 2016; Gehringer and Klasen, 2017; ONS, 2022a) and women work part time to a greater extent than men, particularly while children are young (ONS, 2023d), with part time work being associated with low pay and limited opportunities for career progression (Lyonette et al., 2007; Nightingale, 2021). Moreover, within the home, men's and women's roles have been slower to shift compared with women's evolving role in the workforce (Churchill et al., 2023; England et al., 2020). Women continue to shoulder the majority of domestic and childcare labour in addition to participating in the labour market – a phenomenon known as the 'second shift' (Hochschild and Machung, 2003).

Given this context, in this chapter we explore how people's attitudes towards, and behaviour pertaining to, women's roles at home and at work have changed over the past four decades, focusing on women within heterosexual relationships¹. We examine whether, and how, attitudes towards men's and women's division of labour in terms of caring and earning have evolved over time, and how people feel couples should organise work and care when children are small. We investigate attitudes towards two key policy measures designed to assist in this area – parental leave and childcare – exploring whether people have become more supportive over time.

1 BSA chapters on gender roles have historically focused on the roles of men and women in relation to work and caring. Thus, for purposes of historical comparison, as well for methodological factors (specifically, small lgbtq+ respondent sample sizes), this chapter focuses on gender roles in the context of heterosexual partnerships where children are present. These are the circumstances where, historically, traditional gender roles were most likely to act as a barrier to securing paid employment. Our analysis does not break down responses by sexuality or partnership status. While analysis of labour market participation, barriers and gender norms is important for both single women with children and those in same-sex partnerships, these issues are not the focus of this chapter.

We then turn to examine how far attitudes and behaviours have changed in relation to one of the key constraints on women's participation in the labour market, that is, the division of domestic labour. In conclusion, we consider what trends in attitudes and behaviour pertaining to gender roles over the past four decades might tell us about future developments in this area, including women's future labour market participation and men's engagement in the domestic sphere.

Women's labour market participation

We begin by setting out how women's labour market participation has changed over the past four decades, using data from the government's Labour Force Survey (LFS), presented in Table 1. In 1983, when the BSA survey began, the female employment rate for those aged 16–64 stood at 54%. By 2023, this had slowly risen to 72%, meaning that female labour market participation over the past 40 years has risen by around one third. (Over the same period, men's labour market participation remained stable, standing at 78% in 1983 and 79% now.)

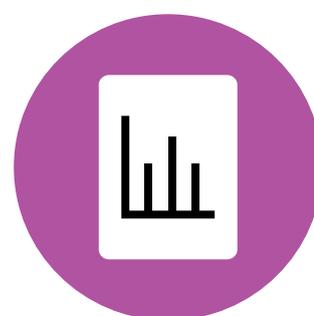


Table 1 Labour force participation (LFP) rate for men and women overall, men and women with dependent children, and men and women without dependent children, 1983-2022

	1983	1993	1996	2003	2013	2022
Male LFP	77.7	75.1	76.7	79.2	76.4	78.9
Paternal LFP	n/a*	n/a*	87.5 [^]	91 [^]	90.6 [^]	93.3 [^]
Men without dependent children	n/a*	n/a*	71.1 [^]	74 [^]	69.6 [^]	72.2 [^]
Female LFP	54.2	61.8	63.5	66.4	66.7	72.2
Maternal LFP	n/a*	n/a*	66.7 [^]	70.8 [^]	72.2 [^]	78.2 [^]
Women without dependent children	n/a*	n/a*	65.1 [^]	67.2 [^]	65.4 [^]	69.6 [^]

Source: ONS, 2023a; ONS, 2023b; ONS, 2023c

* 1996 is first year data is available via ONS

[^] Data for quarter April-June only

n/a = not available

At the same time, the participation of mothers in the labour market has increased significantly. In 1996, the maternal labour force participation rate stood at 67%. It grew gradually throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, reaching 71% in 2003 and further increasing to 78% per cent in 2022. Maternal employment rates are currently higher than those for both women and men without dependent children. In addition to the fact that the maternal employment rate has increased, this is likely to result from the fact that those without dependent children are more likely to be younger and in education or older and less active in the labour market due to health reasons or retirement (Murphy et al., 2022).

However, those mothers with the youngest children are less likely to be participating in the labour market or are more likely to be doing so on a part time basis. Parenthood is known to reinforce gendered patterns of time-use, with men strengthening their attachment to the labour market, and women allocating more time to caring and domestic labour (Bianchi et al., 2006; Budig, 2014; Dribe et al., 2009; Knoester and Eggebeen, 2006). Following childbirth, women's employment fluctuates to a far greater degree (Chung and van der Horst, 2018), and the age of the youngest child is an important factor that shapes patterns of female labour market participation. Data for 2023 (ONS, 2023d) shows that, while the overall participation rate for women with children aged 0–2 is 69%, 35% of mothers are working full time and 32% part time². When children are aged 3–4 years and qualify for part time 'free' childcare support, the overall participation rate is higher at 73%, but just 28% of mothers work full time while 42% work part time. Women's overall and full time participation rates increase with the age of dependent children: for mothers of children aged 5–10, the labour force participation rate is 80% (39% full time, 38% part time) and for mothers of children aged 11–15, the labour force participation rate is again 80% (46% full time, 32% part time). For men, overall participation rates, and the proportion working full or part time, change very little with the age of the youngest dependent child.

2 The full time rate is likely higher than the part time rate for this group because time taken out on parental leave is still classified as in employment in UK statistics. Therefore, a woman on maternity leave with a 6-month-old infant, who worked full time before going on maternity leave, would be classified as working full time.

These patterns clearly demonstrate the prevalence of the gender participation gap and the modified male breadwinner model, both of which are particularly pronounced while children are young. However, it is interesting to note that, of all women with dependent children, the larger proportion of those employed now work full time (39%, compared with 35% who work part time), compared to 35% working full time and 38% working part time in 2018 (ONS 2023d, 2023e). This change may be the result of a declining birth rate over the past 10 years (ONS, 2022b), given that mothers of older children demonstrate patterns of greater participation in the labour market, or reflect the increased availability of hybrid and flexible working policies since the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. Chung and van der Horst, 2018).

Attitudes to gender roles

Given women’s increasing participation in the labour market, how have people’s attitudes towards their roles as carers and earners changed over the past four decades? Since its inception, BSA has regularly asked a series of questions that measure attitudes to gender roles, seeking to understand how people feel about men and women’s roles in relation to paid work outside the home and unpaid work focused on the home and family.



Since 1989, we have asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following two statements which measure views regarding women’s preferences in relation to caring roles versus working and earning a salary:

A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.

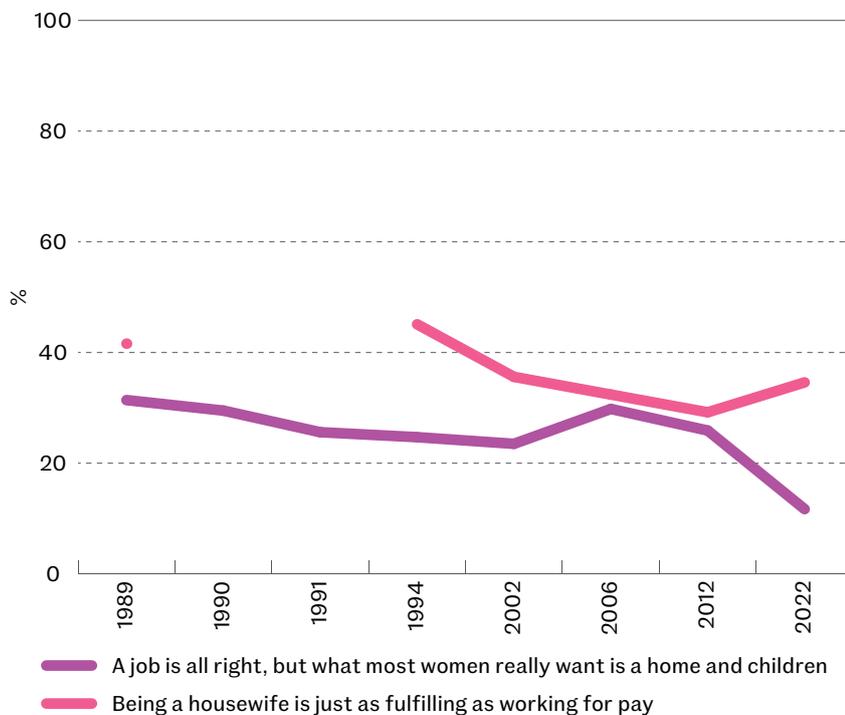
Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

As shown in Figure 1, in 1989, almost one third of people (31%) thought that women tend to desire a caring role over earning a salary, agreeing that “a job is all right but what most women really want is a home and children”. Men agreed slightly more than women (35% compared to 28%). By 2022, 33 years later, this proportion has dropped by almost 20 percentage points to 12%, and men’s and women’s views have converged (12% and 11% agreed respectively). However, the decline in agreement is not reflected by a substantial rise in disagreement. Rather, disagreement with this statement has increased by just 5 percentage points since 1989. Instead, the proportion of people selecting “neither agree nor disagree” has almost doubled, from 19% in 1989 to 36% now.

This could suggest an increasing inability or unease about generalising in relation to women’s preferences, perhaps reflecting the wider range of working and caring arrangements that people may have encountered now, compared to in 1989. The lack of clear disagreement with the statement could also point to the prevalence of the ‘modified breadwinner model’ in the UK, where the majority of mothers work, but a large proportion work part time (Lyonette et al., 2007) – an arrangement that might suggest many mothers do not have a clear preference for working over caring, or vice versa.

However, attitudes regarding the idea that “being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”, have not shifted so substantially. In 1989, 41% of people agreed with the notion that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay, with women agreeing slightly more than men (45% compared to 37%). By 2022, this proportion had dropped to 33%, again with women agreeing slightly more than men (36% compared to 29%). The more gradual decline in agreement with this statement is likely to reflect the fact, noted above, that many women and mothers combine part time working with caring roles, especially when their children are young. It may also reflect ‘post-feminist’ values, in which a woman’s right to choose to be a housewife is as important as her right to receive equitable treatment in the workplace (e.g. Genz, 2008).

Figure 1 Attitudes to women’s preferences regarding working and caring, 1989-2022



The data on which Figure 1 is based can be found in Appendix Table A.1 of this chapter

Since 1984, we have also measured people's perceptions regarding the respective roles of men and women in relation to work and the family. These questions measure what people think men and women should do, whilst the previous items considered what women would prefer to do. Specifically, we ask respondents whether they agree or disagree that:

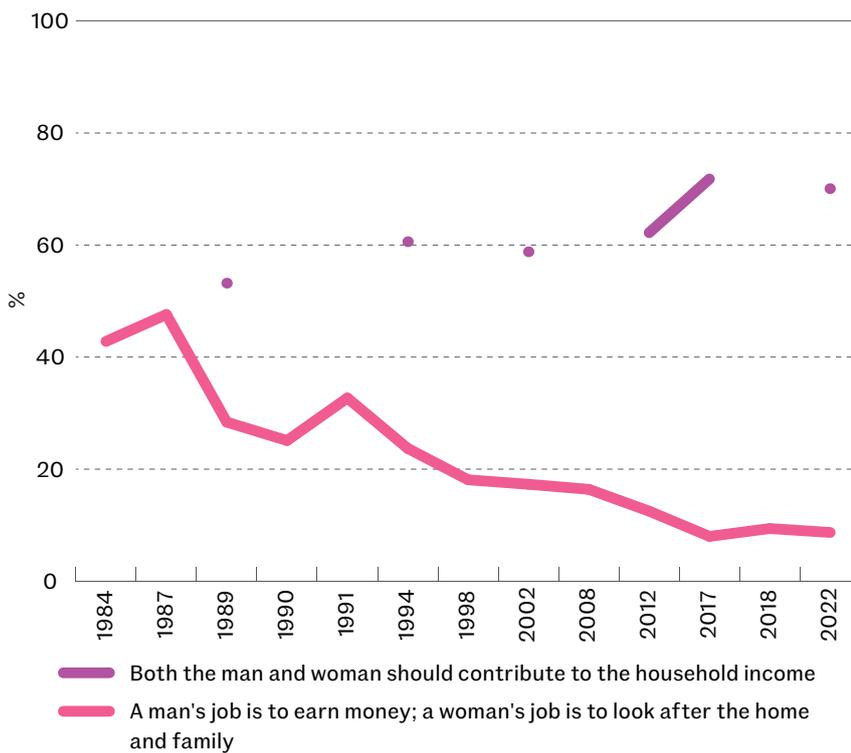
Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income.

A man's job is to earn money, a woman's job is to look after the home and family.

The responses obtained in 2022, and on the previous occasions on which these questions were asked, are presented in Figure 2. They show that, over time, support for a clear division of work versus caring between men and women has declined noticeably. At its peak, in 1987, just under half of people (48%) agreed with the notion that a man's job is to earn money and a woman's job is to look after the home. This proportion has subsequently declined by 39 percentage points, with 9% expressing this view now.

Over the same period, attitudes towards dual earner households have also shifted considerably. Since 1989, the share of people agreeing that both the man and woman should contribute to the household income has increased from 53% to 70% in 2022, with agreement among men and women increasing at a similar rate.

Figure 2 Attitudes to men’s and women’s roles in relation to working and caring, 1984-2022³



The data on which Figure 2 is based can be found in Appendix Table A.1 of this chapter

Taken together, these shifts in attitudes reflect a move in practice towards a dual-earner model. People are, on balance, less clear about women’s preferences regarding working and caring and are less likely to support traditional gender roles in relation to the family and work. Such repositioning is consistent with the idea that a ‘gender role revolution’ – in which the ideology of ‘separate spheres’, whereby fathers are attached to work and earning a wage and women are responsible for care of the home and children (Williams, 2012), is eliminated over time – is underway in the UK (Goldscheider et al., 2015). But what do people think the impacts of these shifts have been on a mother’s relationship with her children and family specifically?

³ In 1984, 1987 and 1989 the questions referred to “husband” and “wife” rather than “man” and “woman”.

Since 1989, we have asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following three statements, to tease out attitudes towards this issue:

A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

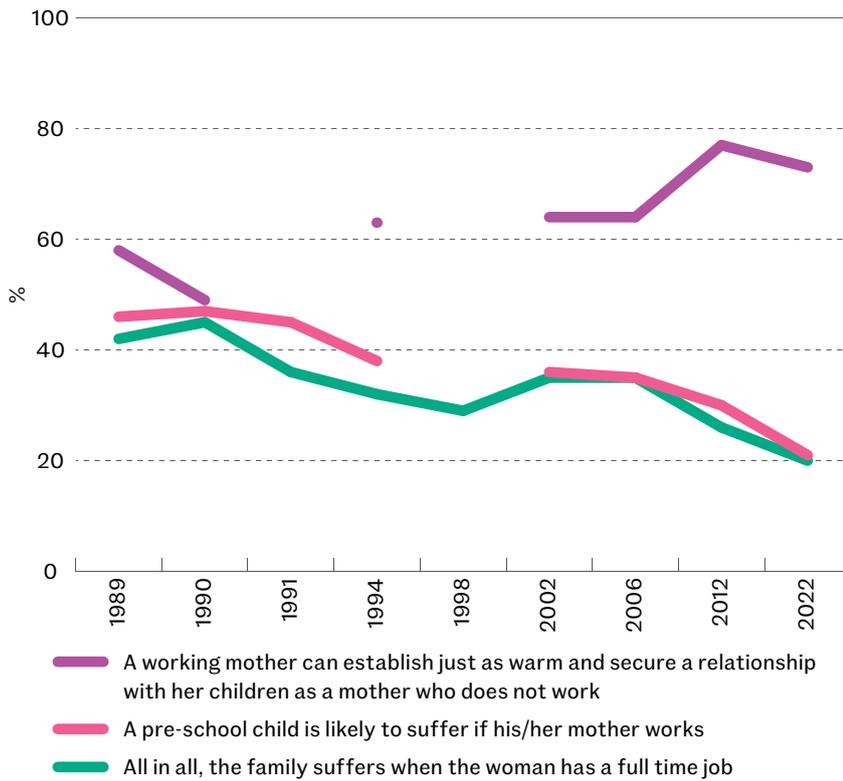
A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works.

All in all, the family suffers when the woman has a full time job.

The data provided in relation to these items is presented in Figure 3. It shows that attitudes in relation to the impact on children of mothers working have become substantially less negative over the past three decades.

In 1989, 58% of people agreed that “a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work”. Over the following three decades, support for this view increased substantially, with 73% expressing this view now – an increase of 15 percentage points. Similarly, support for the view that, “A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works,” has declined considerably over the same period. In 1989, 46% of people agreed with this position. However, this level of agreement has declined, first gradually and then more steeply, to stand at 21% today. Interestingly, men’s level of agreement has declined more steeply than women’s (by 29 percentage points, compared with a decline of 23 percentage points among women). This shift supports the idea of an increasing normalisation of women working outside the home, as part of the transition away from the male breadwinner or ‘separate spheres’ paradigm. Attitudes towards the idea that a family suffers when a woman has a full time job have also changed significantly over the past three decades. In 1989, people were relatively evenly split in relation to this idea (with 42% agreeing and 40% disagreeing). Since then, agreement with the notion that the family suffers when a woman works full time has dropped to 20%. Now, less than half as many people agree that women working full time is bad for family life as did in 1989, again supporting the idea of an increasing acceptance of women’s roles as earners outside the home.

Figure 3: Views regarding the impact of mothers working on children and family life, 1989-2022



The data on which Figure 3 is based can be found in Appendix Table A.1 of this chapter

Dividing caring and working with young children

The previous section showed that people are increasingly positive about the idea of mothers working, even when their children are young, and are less likely to regard it as having negative impacts on family life. However, how do people think families would ideally divide responsibilities for working and caring, in this scenario?

Since 2012, we have asked respondents what they think is the best way and the worst way for parents to arrange work and care when their children are young, presented in Tables 2 and 3. The alternative options offered cover a range of potential configurations, ranging from the mother staying at home and the father working full time, to both parents working full time, to the father staying at home and the mother working full time.

As shown in Table 2, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of people who believe that the best way of arranging work and care around young children is for the mother to stay at home and the father to work full time. In 2012, 31% felt that this was the best arrangement, a proportion which has dropped by 13 percentage points and stands at 18% now. At the same time, there has been a significant growth in the belief that both the mother and father working part time is the best option; support for this view has more than tripled from 5% in 2012 to 18% now. Similarly, the proportion thinking that the best option is for both the mother and father to work full time has more than doubled, from 4% to 9%.



Across all years, however, the category most commonly regarded as the “best” option has been for the mother to work part time and the father to work full time. Between 2012 and 2022, there has been a decrease of five percentage points in the proportion of respondents selecting this option, dropping from 38% to 33%. The consistent selection of the “don’t know” response by at least one in five suggests that, for a sizable minority, this is not an area where the “best” option is clear. Moreover, men and women express similar views in relation to this issue.

Overall, the proportion who consider that the breadwinner/homemaker model is best has dropped significantly, while the proportion who consider that both parents working full time is the best way to arrange work and care when children are young has increased, albeit with just one in ten holding this belief. Once again, these attitudes are likely to reflect the prevalence of the modified breadwinner model, as well as relatively low, but increasing, levels of support for the dual earner model in British society.

Table 2 Views on the best way to arrange work and care when children are young, 2012-2022

	2012	2018	2022 ⁴
	%	%	%
The mother stays at home and the father works full time	31	19	18
The mother works part time and the father works full time	38	32	33
Both the mother and the father work full time	4	6	9
Both the mother and the father work part time	5	10	18
The father works part time and the mother works full time	0	0	0
The father stays at home and the mother works full time	0	0	0
Don't know	19	31	22
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>1504</i>	<i>3387</i>

4 Please note that this question was not included in the BSA 2022 survey. However, due to the inclusion of these questions in the 2012 BSA report on gender roles, we wanted to examine the data and explore any shifts. The data reported here was collected by NatCen on behalf of the International Social Survey Programme 2022.

Limited support for the dual earner model is also evidenced in people’s attitudes towards the least good way to arrange work and care while children are young. As is clear from Table 3, the configuration most frequently selected as representing the worst way to arrange work and care when it comes to young children is for both partners to work full time. Moreover, while a small decline in selection of this option since 2012 is visible in the data, this change is not statistically significant, suggesting attitudes towards this configuration remain stable. These attitudes clearly reflect, and potentially contribute to, the relatively low level of female full time labour force participation among mothers of young children in the UK.

Table 3 Views on the least good way to arrange work and care when children are young, 2012-2022

	2012	2018	2022 ⁵
	%	%	%
The mother stays at home and the father works full time	7	8	10
The mother works part time and the father works full time	4	3	4
Both the mother and the father work full time	47	40	44
Both the mother and the father work part time	4	4	5
The father works part time and the mother works full time	3	2	2
The father stays at home and the mother works full time	11	10	12
Can't choose	22	30	24
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>1504</i>	<i>3387</i>

5 Please note that, as above, this question was not included in the BSA 2022 survey. However, due to the inclusion of these questions in the 2012 BSA report on gender roles, we wanted to examine the data and explore any shifts. The data reported here was collected by NatCen on behalf of the International Social Survey Programme 2022.

Policies to enable female labour force participation

Another way in which we can measure support for mothers and fathers sharing responsibility for work and care is by analysing attitudes towards policy measures designed to facilitate an easier reconciliation of work and caring duties, such as parental leave and childcare. The BSA surveys have collected data on these issues since 2012. If people have become more supportive of models among families with young children where mothers work, and fathers are more involved in caring, we might expect attitudes towards these policies to have become more positive over the past decade.



Parental leave

Parental leave is a particularly important policy measure for gender equality, given its potential to shift caregiving roles in the household and reshape gender norms for future generations (Farré et al., 2023). The availability and characteristics of parental leave have evolved substantially since the BSA survey began in 1983. At that point, maternity leave was the only policy in place in the UK, comprising a 40-week leave (18 weeks paid), first introduced in 1975. Reforms in 2003 extended the total length of maternity leave to 12 months, with payment comprising 6 weeks at 90% of earnings, 33 at a flat rate (£172.48 for the tax year 2023–24) and 13 weeks of unpaid leave. At the same time, two weeks of paternity leave was introduced, paid at the same flat rate.

In 2015, Shared Parental Leave was introduced, enabling the transfer of maternity leave to the birth or primary adoptive parent's partner (Allen, 2021) – paid at the same flat rate as paternity leave. Despite these changes, the UK continues to have longer maternity and shorter paternity leave entitlements than much of Europe and the OECD (Chzhen et al., 2019), with implications for men's participation in care work, gendered norms around caregiving, and the division of labour (Miller, 2017; Faircloth, 2020). Furthermore, due to both financial and deeply embedded cultural barriers, take up of Shared Parental Leave has been very low (around 3.6% of eligible fathers in 2019/20) (Birkett and Forbes, 2019; Dunstan, 2021), limiting the potential impact of this policy to shift both attitudes and behaviours in respect of men's participation in childcare and domestic labour. In light of this, several organisations have called for a more effective policy framework to replace the existing combination of Shared Parental Leave and paternity pay (Fatherhood Institute, 2023; Fogden et al., 2023; Roscoe, 2023). Has the introduction of the Shared Parental Leave policy in 2015, or shifts in the tone of contemporary discussions about parental leave, alongside declining support for a 'traditional' division of labour, made a difference to people's attitudes towards parental leave?

Since 2012, we have measured support for the basic concept of parental leave – as well as exploring how much leave people think should be allowed in practice. Respondents are asked to:

Consider a couple who both work full time and now have a new born child. One of them stops working for some time to care for their child. Do you think there should be paid leave available and, if so, for how long?

The data obtained is presented in Table 4. It clearly indicates that most people think that a period of paid leave should be available: 88% said this in 2012, a proportion which has increased by 4 percentage points, standing at 92% now. Since 2012, the proportion who consider that paid leave should be available for less than 6 months has remained relatively stable. However, the proportion who consider that the period of paid leave should last between 6 and 12 months has dropped by 14 percentage points, in spite of this being the current UK policy entitlement to paid leave for birthing parents and primary adopters. At the same time, the proportion who believe that the period of paid leave should last for 12 months, the most popular choice, has increased by 7 percentage points, whilst the proportion who believe a longer period should be allowed, whilst small (at 13%), has increased by 8 percentage points – more than double.

These trends suggest that support for parental leave, in particular for policies that are more generous than the current UK parental leave policy framework, has grown over the past decade.

Table 4 Attitudes towards length of parental leave by gender, 2012-2022

	2012	2018	2021	2022 ⁶
	%	%	%	%
There should be no paid leave	10	10	12	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>1504</i>	<i>3138</i>	<i>3388</i>
Less than 6 months	14	14	12	12
At least six months but less than 12	44	42	32	30
12 months	37	38	42	44
More than 12 months	5	6	14	13
<i>Unweighted base*</i>	<i>678</i>	<i>1137</i>	<i>2703</i>	<i>3068</i>

*Base: Respondents who think paid parental leave should be provided

We also ask how parental leave would ideally be shared by couples, all else being equal, using the following question:

If a mother and a father are in a similar work situation and are both eligible for paid leave, how should this paid leave period be divided between them?

6 Please note that, as above, this question was not included in the BSA 2022 survey. However, due to the inclusion of these questions in the 2012 BSA report on gender roles, we wanted to examine the data and explore any shifts. The data reported here was collected by NatCen on behalf of the International Social Survey Programme 2022.

The data obtained in response to this item are presented in Table 5. Clearly, the most substantial change has been a rise in the proportion of people who believe that the mother and the father should share the paid leave equally. Over the past decade, this proportion has close to doubled, from 22% in 2012 to 39% now – an increase of 17 percentage points. This change has been accompanied by a decline in the proportion who believe that the mother should take the entire paid leave period and the father should not take any leave, which has halved, from 16% in 2012 to 8% now. Taken together, these data point towards attitudes moving in the direction of a more egalitarian outlook on gender roles and a dual-earner/dual-carer model via couples' shared responsibility for working and caring. They also suggest that the introduction of Shared Parental Leave in 2015, whilst not widely taken up, may have incrementally shifted the public's attitudes as to what is desirable in this area.

Table 5 Trends in attitudes towards how couples should share parental leave, 2012-2022

	2012	2018	2021	2022
	%	%	%	%
The mother should take the entire paid leave period and the father should not take any paid leave	16	12	8	8
The mother should take most of the paid leave period and the father should take some of it	43	40	43	42
The mother and the father should each take half of the paid leave period	22	34	47	39
The father should take most of the paid leave period and the mother should take some of it	0	0	0	0
The father should take the entire paid leave period and the mother should not take any paid leave	0	0	0	-
Don't know/Can't choose (2022 only)	8	13	2	12
Prefer not to answer	10	1	1	-
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>808</i>	<i>1302</i>	<i>2704</i>	<i>3069</i>

Childcare

A second policy measure that enables women to remain in the workplace, and which supports couples to reconcile their working and caring responsibilities, is formal childcare. Publicly funded daycare provision for pre-school children is central to enabling women to remain within the labour market.

The policy landscape in terms of childcare has shifted enormously since the early 1980s, with notable policy changes taking place over the past decade. An initial introduction of childcare vouchers across all local authorities in 1997 has been followed by numerous changes to childcare policy (West and Noden, 2016), the most significant of which has been the launch of the 30 free hours childcare scheme for working parents in autumn 2017, and the introduction of the tax-free childcare entitlement earlier that year. However, the 30 hours free childcare policy does not offer a full time childcare option, leaving in place a barrier to the full time participation of women in employment and further reinforcing the modified breadwinner model. In addition, just 57% of local authorities have levels of provision that meet local needs, falling to 23% for disabled children and those with special educational needs (Cory, 2020).

The UK's childcare system is among the most expensive in the world (Jarvie et al., 2023) and an estimated 1.7 million women are prevented from taking on additional hours of paid work due to problems with childcare availability (Reis and Stephens, 2023). The mismatch between demand and supply is a factor in the prevalence of part time working among women with young children, while this labour market behaviour further reinforces the norm of women with young children working part time rather than full time (Cory, 2020; Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004). Given this context, who do people think is responsible for caring for pre-school children? And who should fund the costs of childcare for this age group?

To answer these questions, we can analyse responses to the following questions included in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) survey in 2022 and previously in 2012⁷:

Who should primarily provide childcare for children under school age?

Who should primarily cover the costs of childcare for children under school age?

⁷ As above, 2022 data for this question was collected by NatCen on behalf of the International Social Survey programme 2022.

The answer options available and the responses provided in relation to these two questions are presented in Tables 6 and 7 respectively. As shown in Table 6, there has been limited change over the past decade in people's perceptions of who should provide childcare to children below school age. In both 2012 and 2022, family members were most frequently selected as the category which should primarily provide such childcare, with slightly less than half selecting this category on each occasion. Although there has been a slight increase in the proportion who feel that government agencies should be responsible for providing childcare to pre-school children – from 16% in 2012 to 20% now, overall we see that, in spite of some fairly robust changes to attitudes around the gendered division of labour and shifts towards attitudes that support the dual-earner model, much of the public adhere to the view that family, rather than public daycare, should be where pre-school children are looked after.

Table 6 Views on who should provide childcare for children below school age, 2012 and 2022

	2012	2022
	%	%
Family members	46	45
Government agencies	16	20
Non-profit organisations	3	2
Private childcare providers	17	14
Employers	3	6
Can't choose	13	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>3390</i>

However, people are more supportive of government agencies having a role in terms of funding childcare for children of pre-school age, than they are in relation to its provision. As shown in Table 7, people are fairly evenly split between thinking that government agencies (45%) and family members (39%) should primarily cover the costs of childcare for children under school age, although slightly more people believe that government should be responsible for these costs. Importantly, the proportion of people who think that government should primarily fund childcare has increased by 50% since 2012, from 30% to 45%. These two differences point to the existence of greater support for policy provision that facilitates the dual-earner model, indicating a shift away from values that adhere to a 'traditional' division of work and care in the family.

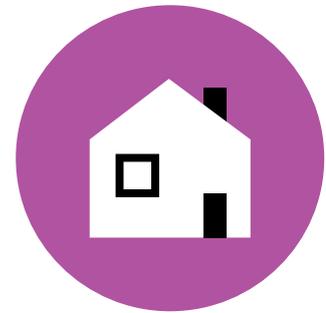
Table 7 Attitudes regarding who should primarily fund childcare for children below school age, 2012 and 2022

	2012	2022
	%	%
Family members	53	39
Government agencies	30	45
Employers	3	6
Can't choose	13	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>3384</i>

In summary then, while there is some evidence of increasing public support for the provision and extension of parental leave, people's views regarding childcare for pre-school age children have remained somewhat stable over the past decade, with a sizable group retaining the view that its provision should primarily be a matter for families themselves. This view, however, is not necessarily at odds with the data regarding the best way for a couple with a young child to arrange their work and care, with the majority advocating approaches where one or either parent would be able to undertake childcare on at least a part time basis.

Domestic work: attitudes and behaviour

We have seen in the previous sections that people’s attitudes to women’s and men’s roles in relation to work and caring have become more egalitarian over the past four decades. We might therefore logically expect a similar change in relation to attitudes to, and behaviour regarding, domestic work within the home. It is on this topic which the remainder of the chapter focuses.



Since 1984, the BSA has periodically measured attitudes to domestic labour by asking respondents whether six distinct household tasks should be undertaken by “mainly the man”, “mainly the woman”, or whether they should be “shared equally”. The six tasks asked about are listed in Table 8, along with the proportions who selected each answer option on each occasion since 1984 that the question has been asked.

Over the last 40 years, attitudes towards domestic work have clearly become more egalitarian. In 1984, views on the divisions of labour largely aligned with traditional gender roles, however these views have shifted considerably. In 2022, irrespective of the household task asked about, a majority of people consider that the responsibility to carry it out should be shared between the man and the woman.

Aligning with gender stereotypes, in 1984, women were predominantly seen as being responsible for meal preparation, cleaning, and washing and ironing whereas men were seen as being responsible for household repairs. Household shopping and organising household payments and bills were viewed as jobs that should be shared. Over the years, views have become more progressive for all tasks, for instance: 75% of people in 1984 thought that the responsibility for washing and ironing should mainly lie with the woman; today, 76% think that this task should be shared. However, there is evidence of some stereotypes enduring: while 55% believe that household repairs should be shared, 32% retain the view that these should mainly be performed by the man (a view expressed by 78% in 1984).

Opinions differ marginally between men and women across all years (as shown in Table A.2 and Table A.3 in the appendix). However, in general women are, and have been, more likely to hold the attitude that household tasks should be shared equally. The biggest difference can be seen in attitudes towards household repairs. Women were more likely to report that the chore should be shared across all years, with the largest gender gap in attitudes in 2022, where 61% of women support shared responsibility, compared with 48% of men. These findings suggest that, alongside significant departures in attitudes towards conventional gender roles, women are more likely to reject traditional gender role beliefs than men.

Table 8 Attitudes toward who should undertake household tasks, 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	2022
Household shopping	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	1	1	2
Mainly the woman	34	30	22	9
Shared equally	63	68	76	82
Makes the evening meal	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	0	1	1
Mainly the woman	57	52	39	10
Shared equally	38	44	57	80
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	1	1	1
Mainly the woman	49	44	36	9
Shared equally	48	54	62	82
Washing and ironing	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	0	0	1
Mainly the woman	75	69	58	16
Shared equally	22	30	40	76
Household repairs	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	78	73	66	32
Mainly the woman	2	1	1	1
Shared equally	19	24	31	55
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	21	22	17	9
Mainly the woman	16	15	14	5
Shared equally	59	61	66	78
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1675</i>	<i>1437</i>	<i>1473</i>	<i>1063</i>

Have these shifts in attitudes translated into changes in what happens in practice? The BSA survey has explored this issue in two ways. First of all, since 2002, respondents have been asked their views regarding whether or not they do a fair share of the housework, with the available response options, and the data collected in relation to this item, presented in Table 9.

A number of patterns are evident. For women, the most consistently selected response has been that they do more than their fair share of the housework, with around 6 in 10 declaring this across all three years for which data has been collected. The responses provided by men also suggest that they do less than their fair share of housework (and consequently that women do more) although this view has declined over time (whilst it has not among women). So, in 2002 we see that 44% of men reported doing less than their fair share of housework whilst, today, 32% report this. This affirms the notion that, even though there is a prevailing belief (noted above) that household work should be split equally, in practice, women and, to a lesser extent, men, view the distribution of household labour to be unjust.

Table 9 Self-reported share of housework by sex, 2002-2022

	2012		2018		2022	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
I do more than my fair share of the housework	10	63	15	60	22	63
I do roughly my fair share of the household work	45	31	46	31	46	30
I do less than my fair share of housework	44	4	37	6	32	7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>619</i>	<i>311</i>	<i>263</i>	<i>694</i>	<i>817</i>

Base: Respondents married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner

Similarly, when we ask men and women living in heterosexual couples what actually happens in relation to the six household tasks presented in Table 8, we see a considerable disparity between what people say should happen, and what happens in practice⁸. Table 10 presents data reporting who typically undertakes each household task today, and on each previous occasion that this question has been asked. Whilst the degree of gendered division in household chores within heterosexual couples has diminished over the past four decades, when looking at who typically undertook each task in 2022, none of the tasks receives “shared equally” as the most common response. The responses reiterate that women are still largely responsible for the majority of unpaid domestic work. In more than half of households, women mainly handle cleaning, laundry and meal preparation, all stereotypically feminine tasks. On the other hand, the smallest shift in gendered practice can be seen in who does the household repairs, which remains as the man’s domain (in 77% of households, this task was mainly performed by men in 2022).

Interestingly, the data reveals that, in relation to certain tasks, less equity is displayed in practices in 2022, compared even to attitudes regarding what should happen in 1984. For instance, in 1984, 34% of people believed that women should take charge of household shopping, while 63% endorsed shared responsibility. However, today, a slightly higher proportion (43%) report that women predominantly take care of the shopping, compared with those who report that this task is shared (41%).

Nevertheless, albeit at a much slower rate than has occurred in relation to attitudes, there have been marked decreases in the proportions of people reporting that women are mainly in charge of most of the specific tasks. These decreases correspond to increases in these household chores being shared, accompanied by smaller increases in households where mainly the man is responsible for them. Though there is still a large gender disparity, those reporting washing and ironing is mainly done by the woman declined from 88% in 1984 to 65% now. During the same period, those stating that laundry is shared has tripled from 9% to 27%, while those attributing the main responsibility to the man increased seven-fold to 7% in 2022.

⁸ It is important to note here that we cannot rule out the possibility that the difference between attitudes and practices is the result of asking different groups. While the questions about who *should* carry out each task were asked of all respondents, we have not disaggregated data by those in partnerships and those not in partnerships. In comparison, the questions about who *does* carry out each chore have been asked only of people in couples. It could be possible that the contrast between attitudes and practices is therefore the result of different values held by those in partnerships and those not in partnerships.

Table 10 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, 1984-2022⁹

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Household shopping¹⁰	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	6	7	8	6	8	8	9	16
Mainly the woman	54	50	45	41	45	41	45	43
Shared equally	39	43	47	52	45	47	43	41
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>601</i>	<i>1146</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>598</i>	<i>678</i>
Makes the evening meal¹¹	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	5	6	9	4	11	11	15	18
Mainly the woman	77	77	70	59	58	58	55	54
Shared equally	16	17	20	35	29	27	27	26
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>601</i>	<i>1146</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>598</i>	<i>678</i>
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	3	4	4	n/a	5	6	8	9
Mainly the woman	72	72	68	n/a	59	58	57	54
Shared equally	23	23	27	n/a	29	30	29	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>1146</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>599</i>	<i>678</i>
Washing and ironing¹²	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	2	3	1	6	5	6	7
Mainly the woman	88	88	84	79	78	74	70	65
Shared equally	9	9	12	18	15	17	20	27
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>601</i>	<i>1146</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>678</i>

9 In 1994 and earlier, the answer categories were “always the woman”, “usually the woman”, “equal or both” “usually the man” and “always the man”. From 2002 onwards, answer categories were “always me”, “usually me”, “about equal” and “usually spouse/partner”. The data presented in the table has been re-classified so that all years match the original question. In 2022, respondents were able to state the gender of their partner for the first-time: only those in heterosexual relationships have been included in the data for table 10.

10 From 1994 to 2012 this question asked “who shops for groceries”.

11 In 1994 this question asked “who decided what to have for dinner”.

12 From 1994 to 2012 this question asked “who does the laundry”.

Table 10 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Household repairs	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	83	82	82	75	71	73	75	77
Mainly the woman	6	6	6	5	7	8	8	6
Shared equally	8	8	10	18	17	14	10	11
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>601</i>	<i>1146</i>	<i>1147</i>	<i>596</i>	<i>678</i>
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	32	32	31	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	39
Mainly the woman	38	38	40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	32
Shared equally	28	30	28	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	29
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1120</i>	<i>1005</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>678</i>

Base: Respondents living in heterosexual couples
n/a = not available

NB: Percentages do not add up to 100 as we have not shown responses for “someone else”, “other” and “can’t choose”

In summary then, we find that views in relation to domestic labour are far more egalitarian than they were 40 years ago, and a majority of people believe that most household tasks should be shared equally. Yet, when it comes to what happens in practice, both men and women report an imbalance in how much domestic labour they perform, with women tending to report more domestic work, both in general and in relation to most specific categories of task. Such a pattern indicates that a significant transformation in gender roles within the household – the second part of the gender revolution (Goldscheider et al., 2015) – has yet to reach its full potential in the UK.

Conclusion

Since the early 1980s, marked shifts have taken place in both women's and mothers' participation in the labour market, as well as in people's attitudes towards gender roles. Public support for a 'traditional' division of labour based on the model of a male breadwinner has declined considerably, at the same time as women's participation in the labour force has increased. The public are now much less likely to believe that women desire domesticity more than they value career achievements, and much less likely to believe that a man's role is to earn and a woman's role is to care. Yet, these changes in attitudes have taken place incrementally over time, and we are yet to see a complete revolution in views – as well as practices.



Views towards women's participation in the labour market, in particular while raising small children, have become more progressive. The decrease in support for mothers staying at home, and for mothers working part time while children are small, alongside the increase in support for arrangements based on equal labour force engagement by both parents point towards movement in the direction of the dual-earner model. However, there is evidence of only limited support for this model: over one third of the population demonstrate that value continues to be attached to the role of the housewife, and there are continuities in the public's imagination that mothers should hold main responsibility for providing care to young children. At the same time, the increases in support for paid parental leave, for a period of 12 months or more of paid parental leave, for an equal division of parental leave entitlements as well as for the government's role in providing and funding childcare, also demonstrate small steps towards a dual earner/dual carer work-family balance configuration.

Since the 1980s, then, attitudes towards fixed gender roles as well as towards the impact of women working outside the home on children and family life have become increasingly egalitarian. Views on the sharing of household labour have seen similar changes, with a majority of respondents considering that most household chores should be shared. Yet there remains a chasm between attitudes and practice, with women continuing to take on more domestic labour relative to men. Despite some progress, the UK is therefore a long way from seeing a complete gender role revolution in the household, with impacts on gender equality in both work and the public domain. The factors underpinning this are likely to be the structural forces that govern our everyday lives and shape the decisions we are able to make in relation to how families reconcile work and care (Scott and Clery, 2013). The unequal gendered division of labour, which is reinforced by workplace norms and public policy, prevents women from participation in the labour force on the same terms as men, with knock-on effects for wider gender equality in society (Sullivan, 2019). This ‘final frontier’ of gender equality is therefore something that needs to be tackled through policy design and shifts in social norms.

Ultimately, the story unveiled by this chapter is one of a continual but gradual decline in norms that uphold a traditional gendered division of labour, as well as some small steps in the direction of a dual-earner, dual carer model. These gains are likely to be precluded from further growth by the UK’s policy framework and the related normative environment. Research has shown us that family policy can shift both gendered behaviours and gendered norms (Duvander and Johansson, 2012; Duvander et al., 2019; Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004). What is needed to foster more support for the dual-earner model is investment in family policy, including childcare as infrastructure (Reis and Stephens, 2022) and greater access to flexible working arrangements for both men and women (Chung and van der Horst, 2018; Chung, 2022; Sullivan, 2019). In addition to better parental leave policy design, which is particularly important for recalibrating the gendered division of labour (Sundström and Duvander, 2002), governments should consider the wider impact of caring responsibilities on workers throughout the life course, and introduce a new statutory carer pay policy framework (Thompson et al., 2023). Given the new legislation around flexible working, which provides the right to request flexible working from day one of employment rather than after 26 weeks (Department for Business and Trade, 2023), and the introduction of new legislation around childcare provision (Department for Education, 2023), alongside the possible spectre of a new government on the horizon, perhaps slow steps towards the dual earner model may be possible in the coming years.

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The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) is run by a group of research organisations in different countries, each of which undertakes to field annually an agreed module of questions on a chosen topic area. Between 1985 and 2019, an International Social Survey Programme module was included on BSA as part of the self-completion questionnaire. Since 2021, ISSP fieldwork in Great Britain has been conducted using sample from the NatCen Opinion Panel and a sequential mixed-mode (web/telephone) fieldwork design. Each ISSP module is chosen for repetition at intervals to allow comparisons both between countries (membership is currently standing at 44) and over time. Further information on ISSP is available on their website: www.issp.org.



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Appendix

Table A.1 Attitudes towards men’s and women’s roles in the home and work, 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1989	1990	1991	1994	1998
Attitudes towards women’s preferences	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree “ A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children”	n/a	n/a	31	30	26	25	n/a
Men:	n/a	n/a	35	33	27	27	n/a
Women:	n/a	n/a	28	26	24	23	n/a
% Agree “ Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”	n/a	n/a	41	n/a	n/a	41	n/a
Men:	n/a	n/a	37	n/a	n/a	41	n/a
Women:	n/a	n/a	45	n/a	n/a	42	n/a
	2002	2006	2008	2012	2017	2018	2022
Attitudes towards women’s preferences	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree “ A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children”	23	30	n/a	26	n/a	n/a	12
Men:	26	30	n/a	25	n/a	n/a	12
Women:	21	30	n/a	43	n/a	n/a	11
% Agree “ Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”	44	44	n/a	45	n/a	n/a	33
Men:	40	38	n/a	41	n/a	n/a	29
Women:	47	49	n/a	49	n/a	n/a	36

Table A.1 Attitudes towards men's and women's roles in the home and work, 1984-2022 (continued)

	1984	1987	1989	1990	1991	1994	1998
Attitudes towards couple gender roles	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income"	n/a	n/a	53	n/a	n/a	60	n/a
Men:	n/a	n/a	50	n/a	n/a	63	n/a
Women:	n/a	n/a	56	n/a	n/a	58	n/a
% Agree "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family"	43	48	28	25	33	24	18
Men:	45	52	32	28	35	26	21
Women:	41	43	26	23	31	21	16
	2002	2006	2008	2012	2017	2018	2022
Attitudes towards couple gender roles	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income"	59	n/a	n/a	62	72	n/a	70
Men:	60	n/a	n/a	61	70	n/a	66
Women:	58	n/a	n/a	63	73	n/a	74
% Agree "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family"	17	n/a	16	12	8	9	9
Men:	21	n/a	18	13	10	10	10
Women:	15	n/a	15	12	6	9	7

Table A.1 Attitudes towards men’s and women’s roles in the home and work, 1984-2022 (continued)

	1984	1987	1989	1990	1991	1994	1998
Attitudes towards the impact of women working on children and family life	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree “A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work”	n/a	n/a	58	49	n/a	63	n/a
Men:	n/a	n/a	51	43	n/a	57	n/a
Women:	n/a	n/a	63	54	n/a	69	n/a
% Agree “A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works”	n/a	n/a	46	47	45	38	n/a
Men:	n/a	n/a	53	52	53	43	n/a
Women:	n/a	n/a	42	42	38	34	n/a
% Agree “All in all, the family suffers when the woman has a full time job”	n/a	n/a	42	45	36	32	29
Men:	n/a	n/a	45	49	39	32	34
Women:	n/a	n/a	39	42	24	33	26
	2002	2006	2008	2012	2017	2018	2022
Attitudes towards the impact of women working on children and family life	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Agree “A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work”	64	64	n/a	77	n/a	n/a	73
Men:	58	58	n/a	74	n/a	n/a	69
Women:	69	70	n/a	80	n/a	n/a	77
% Agree “A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works”	36	35	n/a	30	n/a	n/a	21
Men:	42	41	n/a	34	n/a	n/a	24
Women:	31	29	n/a	25	n/a	n/a	19
% Agree “All in all, the family suffers when the woman has a full time job”	35	35	n/a	26	n/a	n/a	20
Men:	36	36	n/a	28	n/a	n/a	19
Women:	34	35	n/a	25	n/a	n/a	21

Table A.1 Attitudes towards men's and women's roles in the home and work, 1984-2022 (continued)

	1984	1987	1989	1990	1991	1994	1998
<i>Unweighted bases, total</i>	1562	1281	1307	2430	1257	984	807
<i>Unweighted bases, men</i>	727	600	587	1093	573	448	320
<i>Unweighted bases, women</i>	835	681	720	1337	684	536	487
	2002	2006	2008	2012	2017	2018	2022
<i>Unweighted bases, total</i>	1960	1845	1986	950	2474	1552	2326
<i>Unweighted bases, men</i>	852	834	854	438	1126	690	1016
<i>Unweighted bases, women</i>	1108	1011	1132	512	1348	862	1309

n/a = not available

Table A.2 Attitudes toward who should undertake household tasks, male respondents, 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	2022
Household shopping	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	1	1	3
Mainly the woman	31	30	23	8
Shared equally	65	68	75	81
Makes the evening meal	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	0	1	2
Mainly the woman	58	54	39	12
Shared equally	37	42	57	73
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	1	1	1
Mainly the woman	45	43	37	10
Shared equally	50	55	61	78
Washing and ironing	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	0	0	1
Mainly the woman	73	69	58	17
Shared equally	23	30	40	73
Household repairs	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	80	78	69	38
Mainly the woman	1	1	1	1
Shared equally	16	20	28	48
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	22	24	17	13
Mainly the woman	17	16	16	6
Shared equally	56	57	65	70
<i>Unweighted base</i>	780	665	669	458

Table A.3 Attitudes toward who should undertake household tasks, female respondents, 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	2022
Household shopping	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	1	1	2
Mainly the woman	37	30	21	10
Shared equally	61	68	77	83
Makes the evening meal	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	0	1	1
Mainly the woman	57	50	39	8
Shared equally	40	47	57	86
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	0	1	0
Mainly the woman	53	46	34	8
Shared equally	45	53	64	86
Washing and ironing	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	0	-	0	1
Mainly the woman	77	69	58	15
Shared equally	21	29	40	79
Household repairs	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	75	68	64	26
Mainly the woman	2	1	1	1
Shared equally	21	28	34	61
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	20	19	17	5
Mainly the woman	16	14	13	5
Shared equally	61	65	67	85
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>895</i>	<i>772</i>	<i>804</i>	<i>605</i>

Table A.4 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, male respondents 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Household shopping	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	6	7	7	7	9	10	13	19
Mainly the woman	52	48	43	38	41	38	35	36
Shared equally	40	44	48	53	47	49	50	43
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>318</i>	<i>317</i>
Makes the evening meal	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	6	6	8	5	14	14	20	19
Mainly the woman	75	74	71	52	55	54	46	49
Shared equally	16	20	21	43	29	29	32	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>318</i>	<i>317</i>
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	3	4	5	n/a	7	8	12	10
Mainly the woman	72	71	67	n/a	54	49	49	45
Shared equally	23	24	27	n/a	31	38	32	39
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>317</i>
Washing and ironing	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	2	3	2	8	6	9	8
Mainly the woman	86	85	84	76	74	70	64	59
Shared equally	10	11	12	21	16	21	22	31
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>317</i>
Household repairs	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	87	87	84	81	78	81	84	87
Mainly the woman	4	5	5	2	4	5	3	3
Shared equally	6	7	9	15	12	11	9	7
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>318</i>	<i>317</i>

Table A.4 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, male respondents 1984-2022 (continued)

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	34	32	34	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	47
Mainly the woman	37	37	37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26
Shared equally	26	30	28	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>542</i>	<i>489</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>317</i>

n/a = not available

Table A.5 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, female respondents 1984-2022

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Household shopping	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	6	7	8	4	7	6	4	12
Mainly the woman	55	52	46	44	48	44	57	49
Shared equally	38	41	45	50	43	45	35	39
<i>Unweighted base</i>	578	516	466	316	619	592	280	361
Makes the evening meal	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	5	5	10	4	8	8	10	17
Mainly the woman	78	79	70	67	61	63	67	60
Shared equally	16	15	20	27	29	25	20	22
<i>Unweighted base</i>	578	516	466	316	619	592	280	361
Household cleaning	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	3	3	3	n/a	4	4	3	7
Mainly the woman	72	73	68	n/a	64	67	67	64
Shared equally	23	22	27	n/a	28	21	24	21
<i>Unweighted base</i>	578	516	466	n/a	619	592	280	361
Washing and ironing	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	1	1	2	0	4	4	2	6
Mainly the woman	90	90	84	81	81	78	77	71
Shared equally	8	7	12	15	14	13	17	22
<i>Unweighted base</i>	578	516	466	316	619	592	281	361
Household repairs	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	79	78	80	68	64	65	64	66
Mainly the woman	9	7	7	7	10	10	14	9
Shared equally	10	10	10	21	21	18	12	15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	578	516	466	316	619	592	278	361

**Table A.5 Household tasks undertaken by men and women, female respondents 1984-2022
(continued)**

	1984	1987	1991	1994	2002	2006	2012	2022
Organises the household money and bill payments	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the man	30	32	29	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	31
Mainly the woman	40	38	43	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38
Shared equally	30	30	28	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	31
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>578</i>	<i>516</i>	<i>466</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>361</i>

n/a = not available

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