

# WHAT DO FATHERS NEED AT WORK?

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Chaired by Sarah Jackson





# Parental leave in Iceland

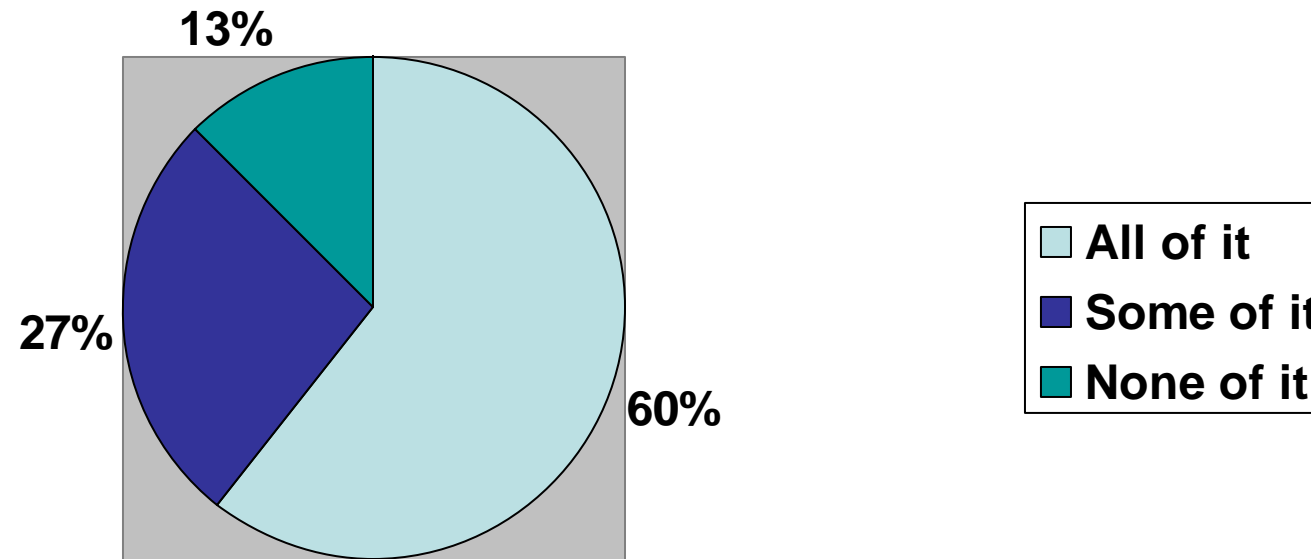
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# Iceland

- Inhabitants, 329.000 – around 80% live in the capital area – ethnically homogeneous
- Fairly peaceful society
  - – no domestic army – 0-2 murders a year
  - – 1.5% of women suffer violence in close relationship each year
- Fairly gender equal
  - – no. 1 on World Economic Forum Gender Gap list for 7 consecutive years

# Would you use a 3 months paternity leave? 1997 poll





## Main components in the law from 2000

- Parental leave extended from 6 to 9 months, to be used within 18 months
- From a low, flat rate, economic compensation to 80% of salary
- Protection of employment
- Accumulation of social rights
- Three months for the mother, three for the father and three that can be shared
- Financed by insurance levy, paid by employers



# Main arguments

- Traditional division of labour between mothers and fathers has often resulted in the **father being deprived of opportunities** to be with his child
- **Research** in both Iceland and other countries has shown that fathers **want to spend more time** with their children
- Equal participation of parents in the labour market calls for equal rights when it comes to **balancing family and work responsibilities**



# Social unity

- Introduced by a centre-right government
- Adopted unanimously in parliament (Alþingi)
- No real protests
- Gallup 2003: 85% say that it is positive that men use their right to 3 – 6 months paternity leave. Women are more positive than men, younger people are more positive than older, 73.7% of employers are positive

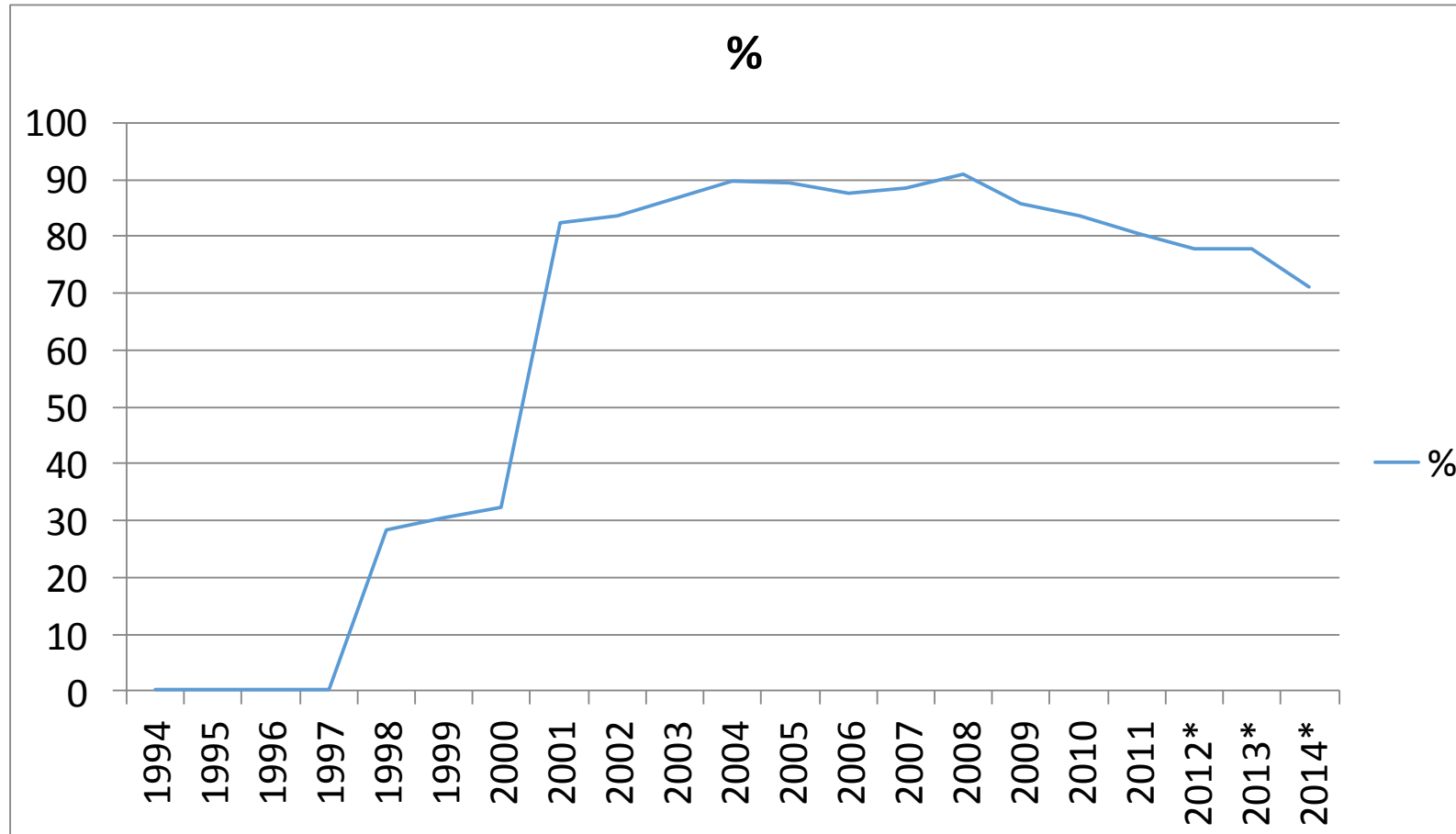


# Parental leave and austerity measures

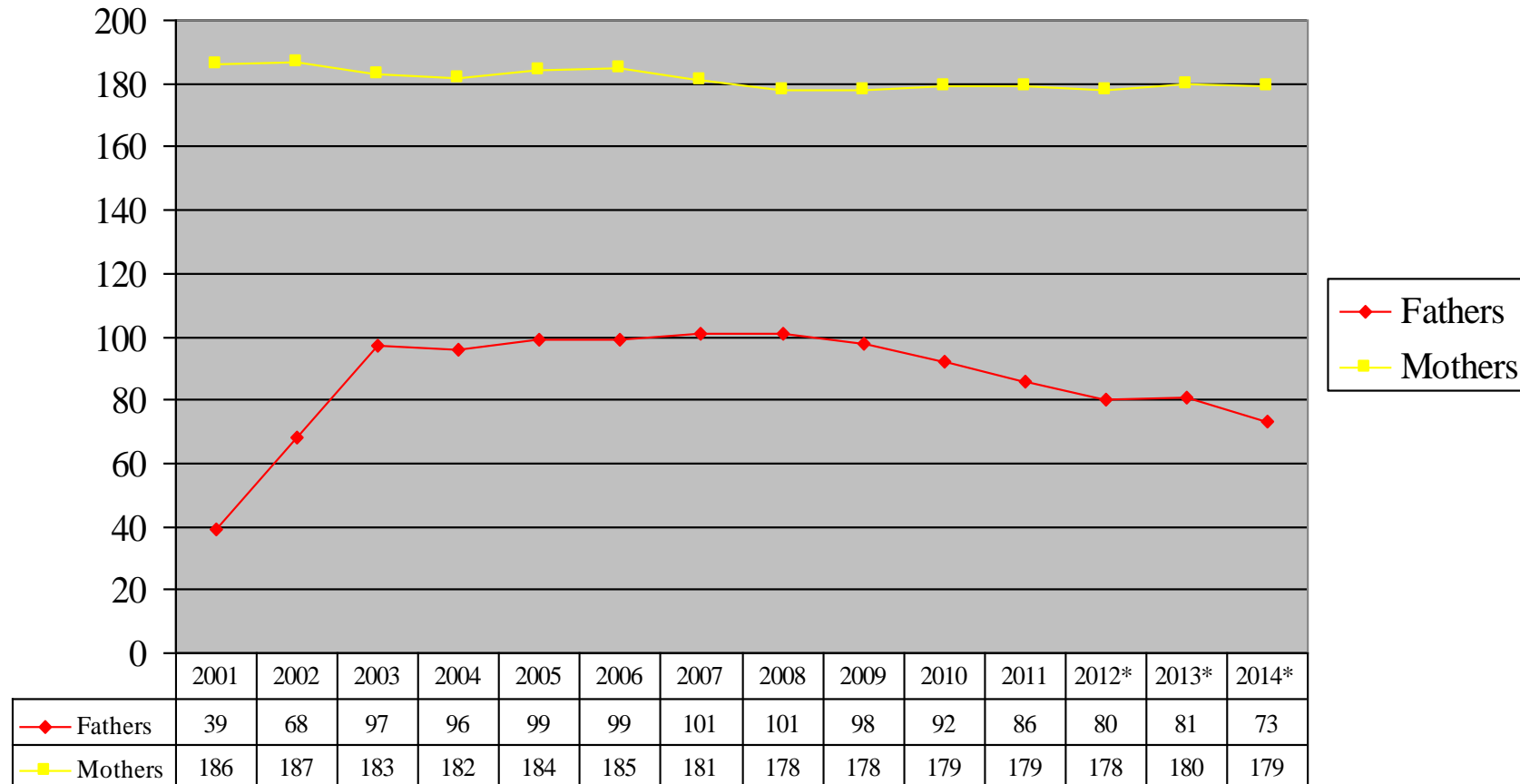
- A very high ceiling on compensation was introduced in 2004, affecting 2.6% of fathers and 0.4% of mothers
- Severe economic crisis in autumn 2008
- In 2008-2009 the ceiling was lowered three times and now affects 45.7% of fathers and 19% of mothers



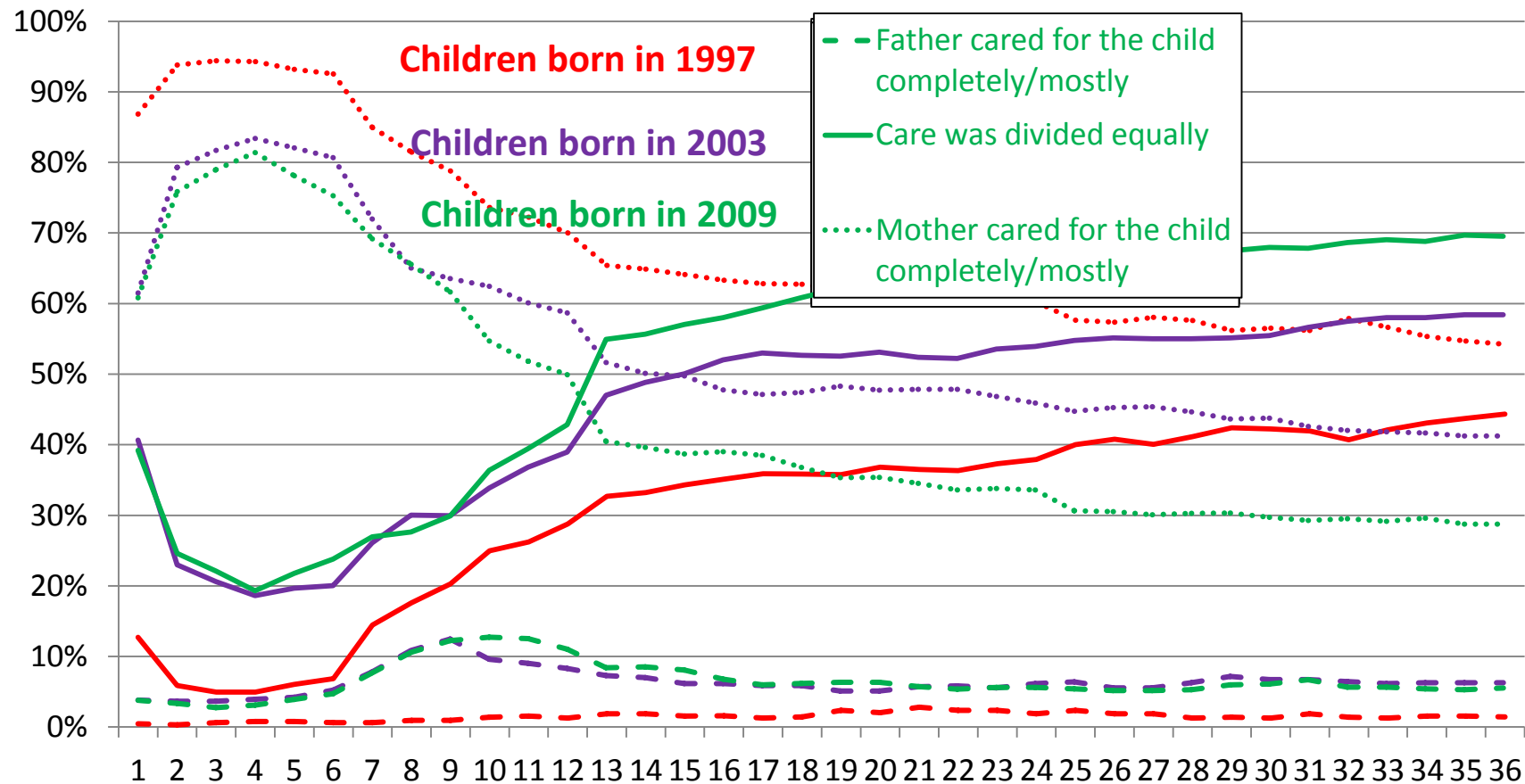
# Icelandic fathers on parental leave (\* = preliminary figures)



# Average number of days used (\*= preliminary figures)



# How did cohabiting and married parents divide care during the day?



Arnalds, Eydal and Gíslason, 2015





# Length matters

The longer that fathers have been on leave, the more they are likely to say that is has increased: Their understanding of a child's needs; their enjoyment in taking care of a child; their emotional attachment to the child; their understanding of how much work it is to care for a child; their participation in child care after the leave is over

(Auður Arna Arnardóttir 2008)



## A father in 2008

- “We don’t seem to have any attitude problem here, that people look down on men on parental leave, I think it is quite the opposite. Now you are regarded as weird if you don’t use the paternity leave.”
- (Equal Rights to Earn and Care)



# A father after three months on leave

- “I never experienced that this was something out of the ordinary. My friends and relatives were all with me in this, thought it was natural and fine... It’s just... this seems to be the view, at least with this generation, that this is natural and maybe some think that it is... yes it is more that people talk about this as a privilege... you know, to be able to do this and maybe there’s some envy connected to that, but I’ve never experienced any negativity or that this was something I should not do.”

- *(Fathers on leave alone, forthcoming)*



# Necessary conditions

- Economic compensation related to salary
- Non-transferable rights
- Flexibility
- Solid institutional support



# Icelandic results

- The only 'force' needed to get fathers on paternity leave is real social possibilities
- Paternity leave has positive effects on fathers, children and family co-operation
- Icelandic fathers are doing what they have said for many years that they want to do, namely spending time with their children!





# Thank you



# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

Professor Caroline Gatrell  
Lancaster University Management School

TRIPLE-ACCREDITED, WORLD-RANKED



# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- *'The child ... promises a tie which is more elemental, profound and durable than any other in society. The more other relationships become interchangeable and revocable, the more a child can become... the ultimate guarantee of permanence, providing an anchor for one's life' (Beck and Beck Gernsheim 1995: 73).*
- Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 1995

The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

Research on **Fathers** jointly with



**Working Families**

and **Lancaster University: Caroline Gatrell, Simon Burnett, Cary Cooper, Paul Sparrow**  
funded by **Lottery**.

**Purpose:** Understanding the relationship between flexible working and paternal well-being.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

## Working families/Lancaster University joint research 2009 – 2012 questioned

- How do today's working **fathers** experience work-life balance, and family life?
- How easily do modern **fathers** access flexible working?
- Does flexible working improve **fathers'** work-life balance and well-being?
- Does it enhance employee engagement among **fathers**?

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

**On-line quantitative survey (Robertson Cooper's ASSET).** Stress evaluation tool, considers well being and engagement.

- Two UK organizations: public and private sector; both offer flexible working
- 1066 working fathers across range of income levels (428 public sector / 638 private sector)
- Range of pay scales and positions
- Qualitative interviews 100 Dads (tele-con and face to face)

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- **Flexibility** gives lower paid workers greater sense of control in their working lives
- **Flexibility** improves Dad's overall well-being (physical and psychological health) in public and private sector.
- Healthier behaviours, less sickness absence.
- **However, most Dads felt discouraged from flexible working** Some contemporary fathers (Miller 2011), prioritise job and '*fall back*' into gendered patterns of breadwinner

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Need to understand more about how fathers in different circumstances perceive and experience fathering. Research gaps especially notable in relation to post-divorce/separated fathers (Philip, 2014)
- **Analysis of Qualitative data:** drew upon Eräranta and Moisander (2011) dual classification of ‘manly’ or breadwinner and ‘involved’ fathers. **Manly** fathering: paternal prioritisation of paid work over ‘hands on’ child care.
- **Involved** fathering aligned with paternal narratives giving precedence to engaged, ‘intimate’ fathering (Dermott, 2008)



# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Underpinning these ideas is David Morgan's (1996) concept of 'family practices' which has prompted a shift away from assumptions that families with dependent children are stable entities. 'Family practices' facilitates an understanding of families as fluid, adaptable, and with changing needs, depending on the status of adult relationships and the ages and health of children.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- The language of involved and masculine fathering was not introduced within the research interviews. Men were asked open questions about their family situations, followed by more specific questions about how child care tasks such as food preparation, bathing, and school or nursery transport were shared.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Men's households and child care arrangements varied, with some fathers jointly raising dependent children in intact adult relationships, some men in gay couples, some lone fathers operating as sole carers and some divorced/separated fathers sharing care with others (new wives/partners, ex-wives/partners, and grandparents).

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Findings: most men fell into either masculine or involved father category across a variety of family and working arrangements. Ability to work flexibly (or not) did not appear to impact on men's behaviour as 'manly'/breadwinner or involved fathers. Links between men's relationship status manly/breadwinning, or involved fathering, were less obvious anticipated.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Breadwinner/'manly' fathers:

Peter, who was divorced with resident children. Peter described his second wife as lead carer not only of their new baby and three children from her previous relationship, but also for his two children from a previous marriage. This was despite Peter's accessing a flexible working arrangement which allowed him to operate remotely from home.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- ‘We are a blended family, let’s put it that way. She has three, and I have my two, and then we have one between us. That makes up the six so it’s basically two separate families but [baby] binds them all together. She was going to become a teacher but that was impossible with a little one, because I can’t stop what I am doing to look after a little child’ Peter

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

Breadwinner/manly fathers:

Full time worker **Nick** 'quite happy' to leave to his wife (in paid work only one day per week) the main responsibility for child care and described himself as 'helping out'

**Trevor**: 'I work full time and my wife doesn't so inevitably there's a sort of ... if I can help out I will but it does depend on my timetable, so she does [most] and that's just the way it is'

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- **Involved fathers: partner absent**
- ‘I am a single parent; I have the kids 7 days a week, basically 24/7. I am contracted to work from 9am ... so I drop the kids off at school at 8.50. Then lunch times my daughter has to have medication so I scoot down there (5 – 10 minutes drive) administer it, then back to work, then I pick them from school at 3.15 ... (and work from home)’ [Matt](#)



# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- ‘What I do is start [work] at 8.30 am and finish at 4.15. So ... I tend to be rushing about at a hundred miles an hour all the time trying to get to work and back in the car. So I get home then and feed the kids. And it’s hard work.’

But although sole provider (as well as sole carer)

‘it’s the kids that come first with me – they are more important than work’ [Tony](#)

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- For some fathers, care of children was shared with ex-wives and partners. Sol explained:

‘We don’t, I mean we’re not together now but things are pretty amicable really, we live close and sort of, I mean, just sort it out between us. So I mean she is their mum but if she is working nights they stay with me and I’ll have them. It’s not official, I mean we never married or anything so it’s just shared.’

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

Rob shared care with grandparents:

Well, my son lives with me, I mean that's full time since he was four but I'm fortunate, my parents [are retired]...and they help me out. I have some lengthy journeys to get to work and they do help me out with regard to after school ... he may sleep round with them, so it allows me, I can leave in the morning any time I want'.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Many studies on fatherhood focus mainly on either men in intact relationships or non-resident fathers post-divorce. However, the situation of single fathers with resident children is less well documented. Experiences recounted above highlight the need for further investigation into changing family practices: fathers might be providing and caring for children full or part-time.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Some partnered fathers *chose to downshift careers* – mothers may be working full time

**John:** ‘I have worked for the department for years . I previously worked long hours. So when my son is old enough to go to school on his own, I’ll do longer days again (but for now) I work condensed days, work through lunch, so that allows me to do what I want to do with my son’.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- **Richard** and wife – work full time and share child care

‘the general sort of set up is, we share – she won’t be back till late tonight so I’ll do both of the boys tonight, but if I am off first thing to a meeting, then she’ll do it. There is a lot of flexibility in terms of who does what with no rigid kind of script, that suits us, we both want to share it’.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

**Ambivalence:** *career cost* of involved fathering: 'If I was to take promotion there would be increased pressure on me, more things I would have to do which might make it difficult to like, pick up kids up from school. So that's my choice as to whether I want to [prioritise] ... kids, or get the benefits of promotion. But *it comes at a price*. I worry about what I am losing, putting off promotion' Premen

## The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- ‘If I were to take promotion I would be expected to be available more. I have said directly to the managers, I wouldn’t want their job in my current circumstance Presently, I can do on-line or conference bridges so I don’t have to travel up and down the country. But that is less the case for senior staff. So I have put promotion on hold, at present. But that feels ...tough ’ [Alex](#)



# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- ‘My family is more important than my work. But I need my work to support my family. And my work, my income is, it’s *very* important to me. Part of who I am. But I will absolutely never consider a job that means spending time away from them while they are so young, I would just never consider it. So it’s... difficult’ **Mark**

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- **Future:** shifts in paternal desire to be involved fathers - suggests a need for more widely available flexible working and a for further research on fathering and family practices, especially among separated fathers where fathering practices may be fluid and unpredictable (Morgan, 1996) and dependent on relationships with previous and future partners, as well as men's personal attitudes

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- Tendency among some men to prioritise child care over paid work suggests some *men may be redefining masculine fatherhood* – a shift in the from ‘breadwinner’ fathering towards a more involved parenting style?
- Unclear whether experiences of lone fathers would be reflected in social statistics. Would Sol, sharing child care with ex-partner, be classified as a lone father household?
- Fathers and mothers both need and desire more imaginative and inclusive flexible working without detriment to career

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

- [Children become] ‘absolutely irreplaceable... Partners come and go, but the child stays [and] becomes the final alternative to loneliness, a bastion against the vanishing chances of loving and being loved. It is a private way of ‘putting the magic back’ into life to make up for general disenchantment. Children have never been more important’ Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 1995: 37.

# The Price of Love: The prioritisation of child care and income earning among UK fathers

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# Supporting fathers to make the most of their workplace entitlements to family leave and flexible working

Dr Alison Koslowski

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How could you do it better in your organisation?

# The puzzle

- UK fathers have access to more workplace entitlement to leave and flexible working options than ever before...
- UK fathers are more engaged with active childcare than ever before...
- **So why are so many fathers not making use of their workplace entitlements, as compared to mothers?**



- Perhaps some fathers don't want to use the entitlements

and/or

- **We still need to create the conditions to enable fathers to use entitlements** – entitlement is just the first step.

# It is useful to acknowledge two categories of entitlement

- Statutory
  - What the employer is obliged to provide (includes paternity, annual, shared parental, antenatal appointments, emergency leave, parental, right to request flexible working)
- Extra-statutory/occupational welfare/occupational benefits/employer provided
  - What the employer may choose to offer as an employee benefit alongside salary and other occupational benefits (e.g. redundancy, sickness, pensions)

# The main problem with UK statutory leave entitlements...

- They offer very low income replacements – well below minimum wage (£138 per week for a limited time period)
  - Employers need to top them up to make them a viable option (as they do for many mothers)
- Only two weeks is a non-transferable leave for the father
- There is no integration between leave and publically funded childcare systems

# Aims of UK statutory policy

1. To get more parents (mothers!) into paid work in order to diminish child poverty;
2. To enable every child to have “*the best start in life*” – child well-being

But less -

To achieve greater equality in the labour market outcomes and caring opportunities of mothers and fathers

## Shared parental leave (SPL)



Both parents  
take 25 weeks at  
the same time.



Mum takes 44  
weeks, Dad takes  
the first 6 weeks  
at the same time.



Mum takes the first  
12 weeks, then Dad  
takes the remaining  
38 weeks.

Start planning your **#sharedparentalleave** at [www.gov.uk/sharedparentalleave](http://www.gov.uk/sharedparentalleave)

# Aims of employer specific non-statutory policies

- Primarily economic drivers
  - To increase employee engagement
  - To reduce employee stress – improving their productivity
  - As part of the package offered alongside salary and other occupational benefits – improved staff retention
- Corporate specific culture & values also important

# The main problem with UK occupational benefits

- By their nature, these will not be offered by all employers and will vary widely in their provision
- Less likely to be available to those on low incomes
- Dependent on having a supportive and informed line manager

*“Everything boils down to people really. Relationships. I feel that I have got an open enough relationship with my line-manager to be able to ask these types of things [to access family friendly practices]”*



*“The flexibility afforded here helps me feel that I’m not a father that doesn’t see his children... I am a 7-day-a-week dad, not just a 2-day-a-week dad”*

# Recommendations for increasing father's uptake

- Review additional pay benefits for fathers
- HR delivery of awareness programmes
- Train and inform line-managers
- Target fathers in information
- Create a learning culture beyond HR programmes
- Reserve some leave for fathers

# Join the Work Care Share campaign!

- <http://www.workcareshare.com>

# Fathers in the early years: How do they balance their work and family life?

- Scottish Government publication with Dr Gitit Kadar-Satat and Fathers Network Scotland
- <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477645.pdf>

# DISCUSSION

