

Parents feel stuck in jobs with no career progression

Submitted by: Working Mums

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Over three quarters of working mums [80%] feel stuck in the job they are in because they don't think they will be able to find a new one with the same degree of flexibility they now have, while 57% say their career has not progressed since they have had children, according to workingmums.co.uk's annual survey.

The survey of over 2,000 parents shows 59% of mums say flexible working is the one thing that would most help them to progress their careers. Yet, outside part-time jobs (<https://www.workingmums.co.uk/jobs/find/part-time/>), few have access to it. Some 22% of mums work full time with no flexibility at all. Only eight per cent work from home occasionally and 3% work fully from home. Just 1% work term time hours or compressed hours.

This compares to 46% of dads who say they work full time with no flexibility. Just four per cent of dads work part time.

The survey comes amid pressure in Parliament for flexible working (<https://www.workingmums.co.uk/jobseekers/flexible-working/>) to be made a day one right and for all new jobs to be advertised as being open to flexibility where possible. Currently, employees have to be in their job for 26 weeks before they can make a request to work flexibly.

For the first time workingmums.co.uk's annual survey has taken a life cycle approach to flexible working. It polled hundreds of under 21s and over 50s in addition to mums and dads. The results show that demand for flexible working is significant across all age groups with the young most likely to research flexible working before applying for a job and most likely to leave a job if it wasn't flexible enough.

The survey shows that, in a labour market marked by growing skills shortages, flexible working is becoming increasingly important to candidates seeking new jobs.

Thirty four per cent of working mums researched flexible working before applying for a job and 36% before accepting a job while 28% asked about flexible working at interview and 31% say they would not have accepted their current job if there was no flexible working.

The figures are similar for over 50s with 32% saying they had researched flexible working before applying for their last role and 46% having done so before accepting a new job. Twenty seven per cent asked at interview about flexible working and 22% would not have taken the job without flexible working. For under 21s, however, the figures are significantly higher. Forty one per cent had researched flexible working before applying for their last job; 54% before accepting it; and 41% asked about flexible working at interview. Thirty four per cent would not have taken the job if there was no flexibility.

The survey shows that 29% of working mums have had a formal flexible working request turned down, with 26% saying they were turned down for a reason not allowed under the legislation, showing the weakness of the current legislation. Forty two per cent had left their job as a result of flexible working being

turned down.

The survey also shows:

- 43% of mums say they don't have enough flex in their job
- Only 7% of parents who work full time are not in favour of a four-day week
- 33% feel discriminated against for working flexibly
- Of those parents on parental leave, 62% say they would consider another job if flexible working was turned down.

Gillian Nissim, founder of [workingmums.co.uk](https://www.workingmums.co.uk) and [workingdads.co.uk](https://www.workingdads.co.uk) (<https://www.workingdads.co.uk>), said: "Our survey shows how significant flexible working is becoming in job searches. The employers we work with recognise this and have been looking at ways to challenge existing working patterns in order to attract and retain the best talent. As skills shortages become larger in many sectors, employers should take note of the demand for flexible working and the push for greater flexibility, taking into account all the many forms it can come in."

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