

PREGNANT THEN SCREWED

‘Childcare during the pandemic has damaged my career prospects’ say 57% of employed mothers

*Almost 50% of working mothers feel forced to send their children back to school or
childcare to save their job*

8th June 2020: New research from charity and campaign group, Pregnant Then Screwed, which has spoken to 3,686 pregnant women and mothers to understand what the impact of Covid-19 is having on their careers so far, found that 57% of employed mothers believe that their increased childcare responsibilities during the pandemic has impacted their career prospects or will harm them in the future.

After 11 weeks in lockdown as nurseries and childcare facilities have begun to open up, almost half of all working mums (48.6%) have admitted they feel forced to send their children back.

Joeli Brearley, Founder of Pregnant Then Screwed explains, ‘We know from the London School of Economics that women are more likely to deal with homeschooling, childcare and chores around the house than men. What’s terrifying is the volume of mothers that we have spoken to who after just 12 weeks already feel that this will negatively impact their career.’

This research has also found that a huge majority (78%) of working mothers have found it challenging to manage childcare and their paid work during lockdown, and a quarter (25%) of these mothers explained that their work hasn't been flexible to allow for them to complete their paid work and manage childcare duties.

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Joeli Brearley explains, 'It's utterly disgraceful that employers haven't recognised that working from home with children has been a case of absolute survival. Women are more likely than men to lose their jobs in the impending recession* and yet for a quarter of working mothers their employer has refused to give them the flexibility they need. This has resulted in women being pushed into unpaid leave, sick pay or furloughed as a direct result of having children. It's no wonder working mothers aren't thinking positively about their future careers.'

The survey also spoke to pregnant women, and found that 7.7% are expecting to be made redundant, of these women 20% believe their pregnancy is a factor. Not all pregnant women are able to adhere to social distancing measures, with 5% still going to work, rising to 6.4% for BAME pregnant women, in environments that are unsafe. 15% of pregnant women working in the NHS are still having face to face contact with patients who could have Covid-19, and 8.1% of pregnant women have been suspended from work on incorrect terms including sick pay, no pay, enforced annual leave or put on maternity leave early.

Joeli Brearley, Founder Pregnant Then Screwed, comments, 'If you are being treated differently in the workplace than other women or men because you are pregnant this is discrimination and it is illegal. If your work has not completed a health and safety risk assessment to prove that you are safe at work, and will not come within 2m of other people, this is illegal. Pregnant women are in the vulnerable category, they must be protected, not penalised, and not put in harm's way.'

The future could however be brighter where flexible working is concerned, as 58% of working mothers think that homeworking will be possible once normality resumes, this is an increase of 14.4% from pre-Feb 2020.

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Notes to Editor:

About Pregnant Then Screwed (www.pregnantthenscrewed.com) is a project and campaign which protects, supports and promotes the rights of mothers who suffer the effects of systemic, cultural, and institutional discrimination through our various schemes and activities, including: A free legal advice service, a website where women post their stories of discrimination anonymously, lobbying the Government for legislative change, and a mentor scheme that supports women who are considering legal action against their employer.

COVID-19 research:

Data from Pregnant Then Screwed Survey 2nd June 2019 completed online.

3686 responses to the survey, 1326 pregnant women

Pregnant women

1. 7.7% of pregnant women expect to be made redundant and 20% of those who expect to be made redundant believe their pregnancy is a factor
2. 4.6% of all pregnant women are going to work and are worried about their safety. This rises to 6.4% for BAME pregnant women.

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3. For women less than 28 weeks pregnant 6.1% are going to work and are worried about their safety. For women who are more than 28 weeks pregnant 2.2% are going to work and are worried about their safety
4. 3% are being furloughed when others are not
5. 15.4% of pregnant women working in the NHS are having face to face contact with patients who could have Covid19
6. 22% of pregnant women have been furloughed
7. 2% of pregnant women have already been made redundant
8. 8.1% of pregnant women have been suspended from work on incorrect terms including: Sick pay, no pay, told to take annual leave or told to take their maternity leave early

Mothers

1. 3010 mothers of children under the age of 11 completed the survey
2. 77.6% say they have found it challenging to manage childcare and their paid work during lockdown
3. 25% of employed mothers say that their employer has not been flexible to ensure they can manage their paid work and childcare responsibilities.
4. 56.5% of employed mothers believe that their childcare responsibilities during the pandemic have impacted their career prospects or will affect their career prospects in the future
5. 48.6% feel forced to send their child/ren back to school or childcare because of their job
6. 43.6% of mothers were able to work from home before February 2020 and 71.1% have been working from home during lockdown (an increase of 27.5%)
7. 58% think that homeworking will be possible once normality resumes – an increase of 14.4% from before February 2020 but a decrease of 13% from the percentage of mothers able to work from home during lockdown.
8. 55% of mothers say they will want to work or will need to work fewer hours in the future