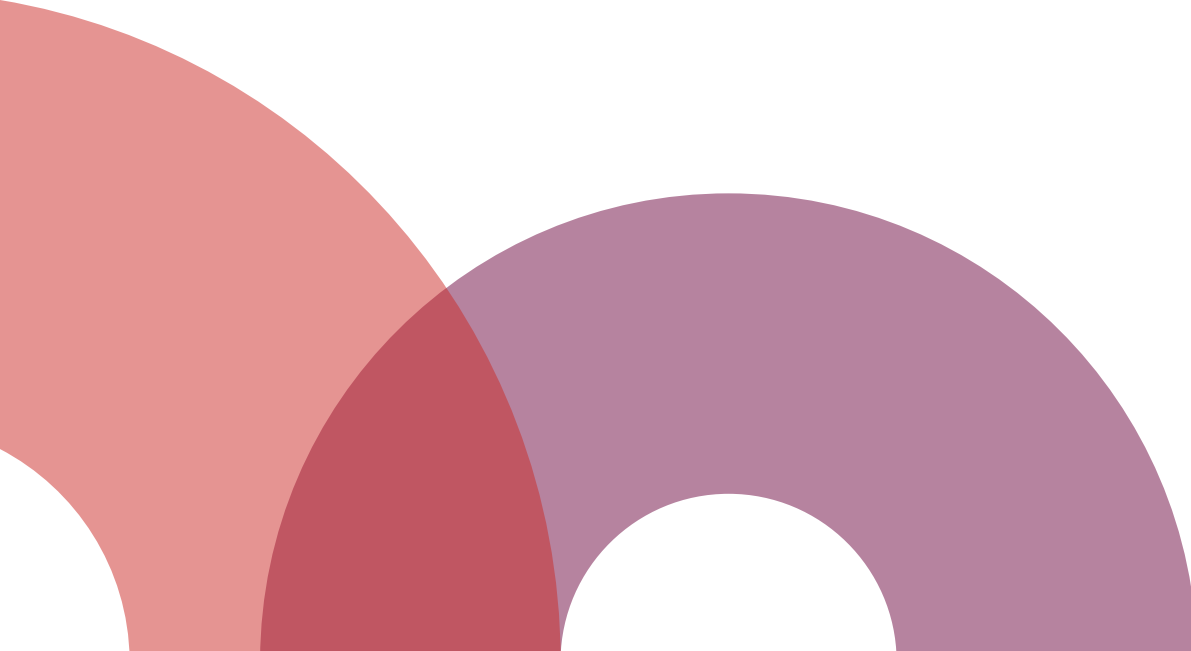




BALANCING ACT-TAKE TWO:

*THE EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS
AND CARERS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC
PERFORMING ARTS*



PARENTS & CARERS
IN PERFORMING ARTS



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT. 4

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2018 IN THE PERFORMING ARTS? . . . 5

REPORT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES 6

WHO TOOK PART 7

HOW PARENTS AND CARERS NAVIGATE THE ‘NOW’ 8

UNSUSTAINABLE WORK – TODAY’S CHALLENGES 8

MANAGING CARING RESPONSIBILITIES. 9

PARENTS AND CARERS ARE UNDEREMPLOYED 9

**DOWNWARD TRENDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH, WORK-LIFE
BALANCE AND WELL-BEING 11**

INCREASED PAY PENALTY AND DECREASED HOUSEHOLD INCOME 12

DELAYING PARENTHOOD 14

THE GAP WIDENS: WOMEN’S CAREER SACRIFICES. 16

THE UNSUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCE OF FREELANCERS. 17

WOMEN LEAVING THE INDUSTRY 17

INCREASED FLEX / EMPLOYER SUPPORT. 18

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS 20

RECOMMENDATIONS 22

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 22

EMPLOYER RECOMMENDATIONS 23

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS 23

Birkbeck, University of London commissioned by **Parents & Carers in Performing Arts**

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In 2018, Parents & Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA) published its groundbreaking **Balancing Act** report. Based on compelling data from over 2,000 people working across theatre, music, and dance, it documented:

- An annual pay penalty of £3,000 for parents and carers (with an average income of £20,000 – 13% lower than the £23,000 average income of those without caring responsibilities in 2018)
- Average earnings for freelance parents and carers of £15,000 a year
- Parents and carers had to rely on work outside the industry to boost household income
- The work of parents and carers was highly precarious, with one in three reporting that they did not, at the time of the survey, have a contract in place
- Parents and carers were more likely to work part-time and without job security as self-employed people
- They lacked appropriate support, with 76% of parents and carers having to turn down work

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2018 IN THE PERFORMING ARTS?

There is no doubt that the arts in the UK have suffered sector-wide. In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, a 2021 report revealed that **the UK arts, culture, and heritage sector suffered a 60% decline in output, a far higher proportion of furloughed jobs, and was particularly affected by the contact restrictionsⁱ.**

The context has not improved since. Funding cuts persist, and many organisations are compelled to take drastic measures in response. The performing arts are thus under unprecedented pressure, despite being vital to health, well-being and the UK Economy. The UK government estimates that, in 2022, creative industries contributed £126bn gross value and provided work to 2.4 million people. The arts are important for the population at large by supporting public health interventions . Their intangible impact on supporting culture and identity is profound.

Since 2016, PiPA has spearheaded initiatives in collaboration with the industry to work towards inclusive employment for parents and carers to ensure diversity that is reflective of society. This report documents how parents and carers in the industry are faring today. The findings are challenging and concerning. Work opportunities are vanishing and the impact on the workforce urgently needs to be investigated and documented.



ⁱ[Covid-19's impact on arts, culture and heritage sector revealed by landmark report | News | The University of Sheffield](#)

REPORT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To address these urgent issues, a research team from Birkbeck, University of London, have worked with PiPA, to investigate:

- How work experiences of parents and carers post-pandemic have changed since PiPA’s benchmark Balancing Act research in 2018
- Changes in mental health and work-life balance
- The impact of these changes on earnings and sustainable ways of working
- Whether people’s reproductive choices are influenced by working in the performing arts
- Whether employers are supporting their workforces
- Which groups have been most affected by any changes



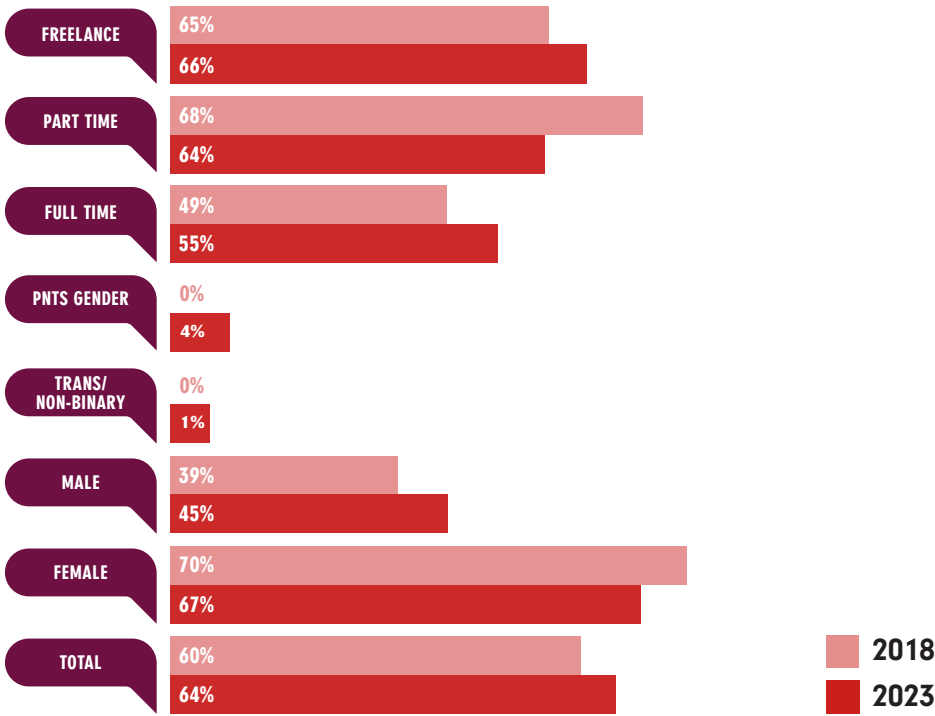
WHO TOOK PART

We created a bespoke online survey building on the previous research and added new sections formulated in close consultation with performing arts stakeholders. The survey remained open over several months in the autumn of 2023 and we worked with employers and employee representative organisations to promote participation.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (1275 OVERALL)



- 1,275 people responded to the survey
- Half of the participants held freelance roles (51%), with 27% working full-time and 20% part-time
- More people who responded to our survey (80%) had caring responsibilities than before (57% in 2018).
- There was an increase in primary caregiving responsibility. In both 2023 and 2018, a majority of respondents reported being primary caregivers, with an increase from 59% in 2018 to 70% in 2023
- There was no notable shift in stereotypical gender roles (79% of women identified as the primary caregiver, so taking on more than half of caring responsibilities compared to 78% in 2018)
- More men who responded to the survey were primary carers (21%) than in 2018 (16%)



Our survey sample was self-selecting. This needs to be taken into account when interpreting the findings. The following groups were underrepresented in our survey, most likely due to limitations in reach: men; carers for sick, elderly, and disabled people (with only 44 respondents); people without caring responsibilities, and those with additional protected characteristics. Nevertheless, the overall sample was robust and provided much needed insight into work experience in this crucial sector.

HOW PARENTS AND CARERS NAVIGATE THE ‘NOW’

One of our key objectives for the research was to investigate how work experiences of parents and carers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, have changed since PiPA’s benchmark Balancing Act research in 2018.

We know, from PiPA’s COVID research¹, that women were disproportionately affected by the increased burden of caregiving responsibilities, which is also reflected in other sectors. This report is a first step towards identifying some of the medium-term impacts of the pandemic on parents and carers in the performing arts in the context of the UK’s cost-of-living crisis.

UNSUSTAINABLE WORK – TODAY’S CHALLENGES

As the cost-of-living crisis continues and families face escalating costs, parents and carers are struggling to navigate their careers whilst supporting their families. The overall top five challenges facing parents and carers employed full-time today are:

- Finances / insufficient earnings 74%
- Working / life balance 69%
- Lack of flexible working / scheduling issues 60%
- Touring / working away from home 59%
- Lack of access to flexible childcare 57%

The findings highlight differences between people who are employed and freelancers. Freelancers are impacted most on measures such as earnings and work opportunities, the challenges of touring away from home, and a lack of access to flexible childcare.

Ongoing instability in live performance in the wake of the pandemic is reflected by the fact that freelancers are twice as likely to report the impact of Covid as a challenge (34% compared to 17% of those employed full-time). Of those working part-time, 22% said this.

Notably, the cost of childcare is creating immense strain, particularly for part-timers (53%) compared to those working full-time (45%):

- Accessible, flexible childcare is a major barrier for part-timers (47% versus 43% of full-time employees) which suggests a correlation between the affordability of childcare and the decision to work part-time
- The impact of working fewer hours is balanced with improved well-being: part-timers are slightly less likely than full-timers to report well-being as a concern (48% compared to 54%).
- However there is a significant financial cost, as part-timers earn, on average, just under half as much (£18,500) as their full-time peers (£35,000)
- Part-timers are the only group where career progression is a top-five concern (49%)

Top five challenges facing parents and carers

FULL TIME	%	PART-TIME	%	FREELANCE	%
Work/ life balance	75%	Work/ life balance	75%	Finances/ insufficient earnings	92%
Finances/ insufficient earnings	64%	Finances/ insufficient earnings	64%	Touring/ working away from home	84%
Lack of flexible working/ scheduling issues	56%	Cost of childcare	56%	Lack of flexible working/ scheduling issues	77%
Mental and physical well-being	54%	Career progression/ opportunities	54%	Work/ life balance	77%
Family/ relationships	49%	Mental and physical wellbeing	49%	Lack of access to flexible childcare	76%

¹<https://pipacampaign.org/research/covidreport?referrer=/research>

MANAGING CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to better understand the pressures facing parents and carers, we asked people what they relied on to help them manage their caring responsibilities:

- For those in employment, slightly more people relied on school as a primary means of childcare (37% versus 31% in 2018) but were slightly less likely now to rely on family for support (34% in 2023 versus 38% in 2018)
- For freelancers, however, in the absence of affordable, ad-hoc childcare provision, 63% rely on friends and family, compared to only 8% of employees - indicating potentially significant barriers for those who do not have substantial social capital (help and support from people in their immediate environment)
- Flexibility continues to be essential in enabling parents and carers to manage work and family life: 44% of self-employed respondents were reliant on working from home, 31% on part-time work, and 26% on flexible hours
- Job shares are still rare, with only 2% of respondents citing them as helpful

In 2018, we asked respondents an open-ended question about what they had needed to do to manage their parent- and care-related costs. Based on those responses, for this survey, we asked people what they had to do to manage parent- and care-related costs, allowing for multiple responses. 83% of respondents had reduced their working hours and / or availability (compared to 71% in 2018) and almost half had to give up a job (49% versus 35%) with a likely detrimental impact on earnings. One in four people had to borrow money from friends or family.

Only a few people reported drastic actions such as using food banks (4% of people) or selling their house (2% of people). However, it is nevertheless eye-opening to note such impact on families and households.

63% OF FREELANCERS RELY ON FRIENDS AND FAMILY FOR SUPPORT, COMPARED TO 8% OF EMPLOYEES

PARENTS AND CARERS ARE UNDEREMPLOYED

Despite all the above efforts, nearly nine out of ten parents and carers (88%) had turned down work because of their caring responsibilities, compared to 81% in the previous report. These are clear signs of growing underemployment.

Furthermore, respondents who said they would like to increase their working hours if they could, rose from 48% in 2018, to 66%, a strong indicator of increasing underemployment, suggesting parents and carers want to work more but are not enabled to do so.



TURNED DOWN WORK DUE TO THEIR CARING RESPONSABILITIES



SAID THEY WANT TO WORK MORE

60%

ARE CONCERNED
ABOUT LOSING THEIR
JOB IN THE NEAR FUTURE

56%

WORRY THEY MIGHT
HAVE TO LEAVE THEIR JOB

60%

ARE DISSATISFIED WITH
THEIR WORK-LIFE BALANCE



DOWNWARD TRENDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH, WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WELL-BEING

Compared to the findings in 2018, the data reveal an increasingly challenging landscape for parents and carers who are working hard to balance careers and family life in the face of growing underemployment and decreased access to sustainable career opportunities.

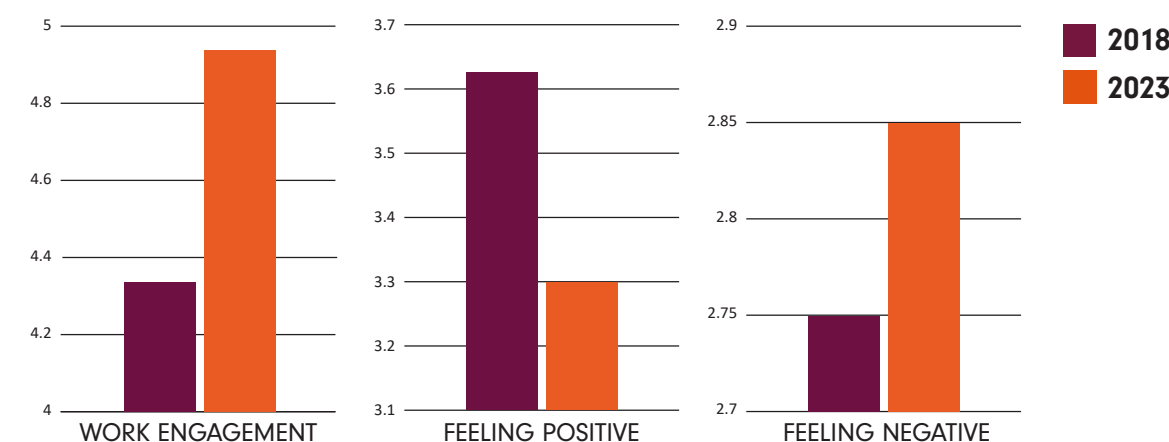
This section outlines the central findings from our analysis. It starts with the downturn in mental health, which provides context for the subsequent findings. These include the effects of increased pay penalties, how working in the performing arts affects choices relating to starting a family - and how all this impacts gender equality, and the role of employer support.

All indicators related to well-being and career experiences showed strong downward trends, particularly regarding fears about job insecurity. The number of people who were concerned about losing their job in the near future was significantly higher in 2023 (60% 'somewhat' or 'strongly' agreed) compared to 2018 (44% 'somewhat' or 'strongly' agreed). This suggests that individuals felt more secure in their jobs in 2018 than in 2023.

Finally, concerns about having to leave a job earlier than planned are present in both years, with over half of respondents (56%) reporting this as a worry in 2023, compared to less than half (47%) in 2018. It suggests ongoing and increasing anxiety related to job stability for parents and carers.

Work-life balance also declined, as a greater percentage of people are now reporting dissatisfaction and difficulty managing work and family responsibilities. For example, 60% now 'disagree' that they are satisfied with work-life balance, compared to 48% in 2018. The percentage of people who feel they manage the demands of work and family life well has also dropped from 42% in 2018 to 31% in 2023. Work-life balance is an important perception – if this is low, people are less likely to be fully functioning at work and at home.

We also looked at key indicators of well-being: how engaged people feel at work (the extent to which people feel invested in and are invigorated by work); positive affect (how positive people feel); and negative affect. Participants reported feeling significantly less positive and more negative in 2023 than in 2018. However, they report being more engaged at work. The increased engagement may not necessarily be positive – people could be putting on a 'brave face'. Such an increase could represent an inflated sense of gratitude at being back on stage after the hiatus of the pandemic, or from heightened job insecurity, motivating individuals to give their best to keep their jobs.



Note. n/s = no significant difference; ***p<.001²

We note that baseline levels for engagement were unusually high in 2018 and have continued to increase in 2023. Our interpretation is that these findings show that people are always highly invested in their performing arts work, and there is an element of performativity – one has to be seen as highly engaged in a very competitive and fast moving industry.

² These numbers indicate that we compared averages from 2018 and 2023 to see if the difference had occurred by chance or not. A 't-test' is a comparison of means.

INCREASED PAY PENALTY AND DECREASED HOUSEHOLD INCOME

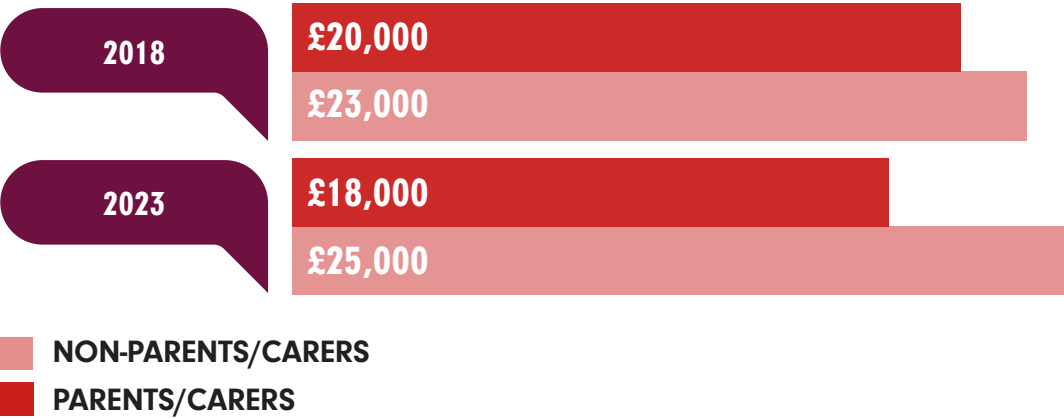
Personal incomes from the performing arts have decreased by 20%, with the greatest decrease by sector seen in the theatre at £16,000 (£5,000 less than 2018).

The pay penalty faced by parents and carers has more than doubled to £7,000. The median salary for parents and carers in 2023 is £18,000 versus £25,000 for those without caring responsibilities, compared to 2018, when parents and carers earned £20,000 compared to £23,000 for non-parents / carers.

We also looked at overall household income and individual earnings: household income actually grew by 10% (£60,000 in 2023 versus £54,683 in 2018). However, individual income fell for most categories of performance except music, which showed a £1,000 increase. The largest falls were in:

- dance (from £24,000 in 2018 to £20,000 in 2023)
- theatre (from £21,000 in 2018 to £16,000 in 2023)

INCOME



86% of respondents with caring responsibilities reported working part-time, including freelancers. The majority of those are women (82%) who earn 53% less (£18,500 per annum) than parents and carers who are employed full-time (£35,000).

Work in the performing arts is less likely to cover basic needs and unexpected expenses in 2023 compared to 2018. In 2018 38% of respondents said that their performing arts income did not cover, or rarely covered, basic needs, a figure that rose to 50% in 2023. We found that the differences were statistically significant, which means that they are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

PAY PENALTY FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



50% SAID THEIR PERFORMING ARTS INCOME DID NOT COVER, OR RARELY COVERED, BASIC NEEDS - COMPARED TO 38% IN 2018



DELAYING PARENTHOOD

This year, we asked people whether working in the performing arts affected their decision to start a family. 63% of respondents said that it did, with the overwhelming majority of freelancers saying that working in the performing arts affected their decision-making process (71%).

71% OF FREELANCERS SAY THEIR REPRODUCTIVE DECISIONS WERE IMPACTED BY WORKING IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

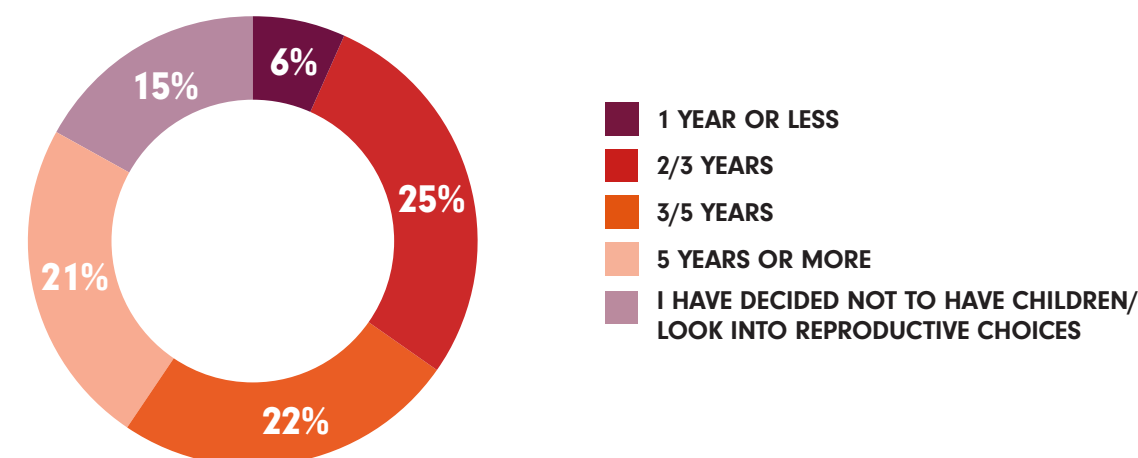
My partner and I are self-employed artists, and neither of us would want to stop working if not absolutely necessary. We love our work and it's part of who we are, so doing work is also being ourselves. At the same time, being unavailable can be detrimental for our careers. I once lost an agent when my daughter was a baby because I wasn't fully available.

Most respondents indicated that their reproductive decisions were impacted by working in the sector and freelancers were impacted the most (71%) compared to employed respondents (57%). These responses were consistent and indicate that working in the industry prompts people in general to delay having children or to not start a family at all. However, there is little to no comparable data that we can find to benchmark against other sectors, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions without further research.

The majority (68%) said they were inclined to delay these decisions by two to five+ years, with 21% of this group planning to postpone having children for five years or more, and 15% reporting that they had decided not to have children:

I felt it would be impossible to gain work and go on theatre tours if I had children. The vast majority of my work has been away from home.

How long are you planning to delay reproductive choices/ family planning (or how long did you delay it)? [n.486]



Delaying reproductive choices could have a profound impact:

As a result of delaying we won't be able to give our child a sibling as we have reached a non-fertile age. I feel life would be too hard with another child and navigating work.

Throughout the qualitative data, many respondents report that they have chosen to have one child only. Preliminary findings suggest a strong link between working in the performing arts and reproductive choices:

I am unable to consider having a second child due to the impact I know it will have on my career. I feel I have to choose between my job/career or a second child.

I didn't ever think that I would be able to do my job and have children so I delayed the decision for many years. I am lucky enough to now have one child but the juggle of work and parental duties plus the cost of childcare prevented me to have more children.

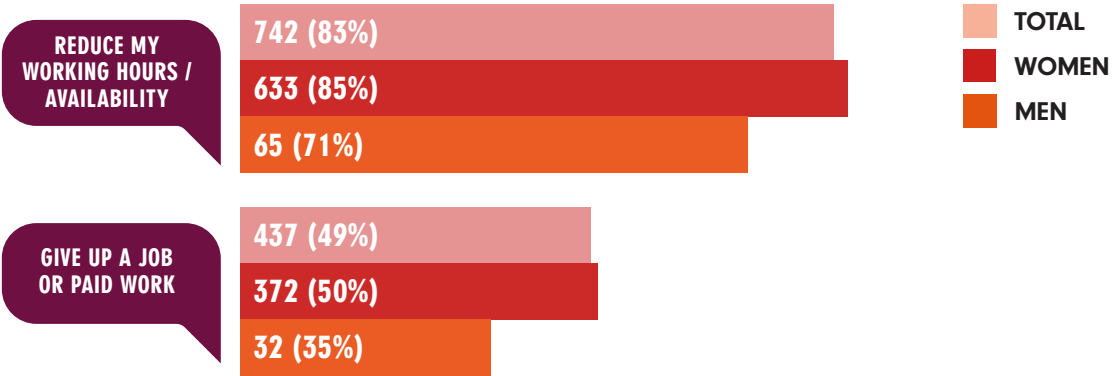
Respondents report that they are having one child (rather than more) out of necessity, curtailing their reproductive choices. Qualitative data from our respondents suggests that people don't feel supported during pregnancy and the transition period after. Further investigation is required to gain a deeper understanding of the contributing factors relating to that specific period of pregnancy and maternity. This should encompass both an individual experience and also employer perspectives, given that pregnancy and maternity is a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010.

THE GAP WIDENS: WOMEN’S CAREER SACRIFICES

The disproportionate number of responses from women, compared to men, underscores a crucial point in both our data analysis and the wider socio-political context. It highlights the necessity for structural changes to address gender disparities.

Women continue to be the primary caregiver (77% of women versus 21% of men). They were far more likely to reduce working hours or give up work altogether.

Which of the following have you had to do to manage your parenting and caring-related costs in the past (2023)?



Women were more likely than men to say that work in the performing arts affected family choices, and freelancers significantly more than those working full or part-time.

A significant number of respondents felt that parental leave would limit career opportunities. Women were nearly twice as likely as men (45% versus 24%) to say that parental leave would limit career options. Anecdotally, there can be an assumption that when women are pregnant they don’t want to work, and therefore don’t get booked. In some cases, it stops women disclosing their pregnancy until they can no longer hide it.

One-fifth of respondents said that pregnancy would be too physically demanding. 45% felt that they would get less support from their employer. The biggest difference was worry about personal identity, which was three times as high for women. Overall, differences by gender identification were greater than differences in caring status. Further research is required to identify the potentially complex circumstances and experiences underlying different outcomes.

The qualitative data also signposts a need for caring to be divided more equally in families to support sustainable ‘balancing acts’ as documented in this quote:

I am in favour of parental responsibility being shared as equally as possible. I also feel that in terms of the long term career impact of taking on less work when children are very small, sharing this between parents is better - it took an inadvertently long time for fixers to start booking me again when they knew I had young children, but my husband didn’t have to negotiate this.

45% OF WOMEN SAID A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING IN THE INDUSTRY IMPACTED THEIR FAMILY CHOICES

THE UNSUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCE OF FREELANCERS

Finances were the main concern for all freelancers, with over 80% citing it as influential, closely followed by 77% who reported their work pattern to be a barrier to having children.

Freelancers were more likely to say that becoming a parent would limit work options (64%). They anticipate a potential significant lack of childcare (47%), a lack of understanding from the employer (51%), and they were more likely to worry about their professional identity.

77% FREELANCERS SAID THEIR WORKING PATTERN WAS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO HAVING CHILDREN

WOMEN LEAVING THE INDUSTRY

We collected data from 50 participants who have left the industry. They were almost all women (46); most were from theatre (36), but this is because we had more respondents overall from this sector. Different circumstantial influences were reported as challenging:

Despite excelling at a conservatoire at masters level, I could never establish enough performance opportunities to thrive as an artist. The combination of Covid, relocation and 2 sets of maternity leave have meant I’m no longer in the game

The qualitative findings highlight a compound impact of the pandemic: the difficulty in gaining sufficient traction to maintain a career, and lack of personal resources which made work in the arts no longer sustainable for many women. Leavers included people from all areas of the performing arts, including performers, people working in costume, and administration.

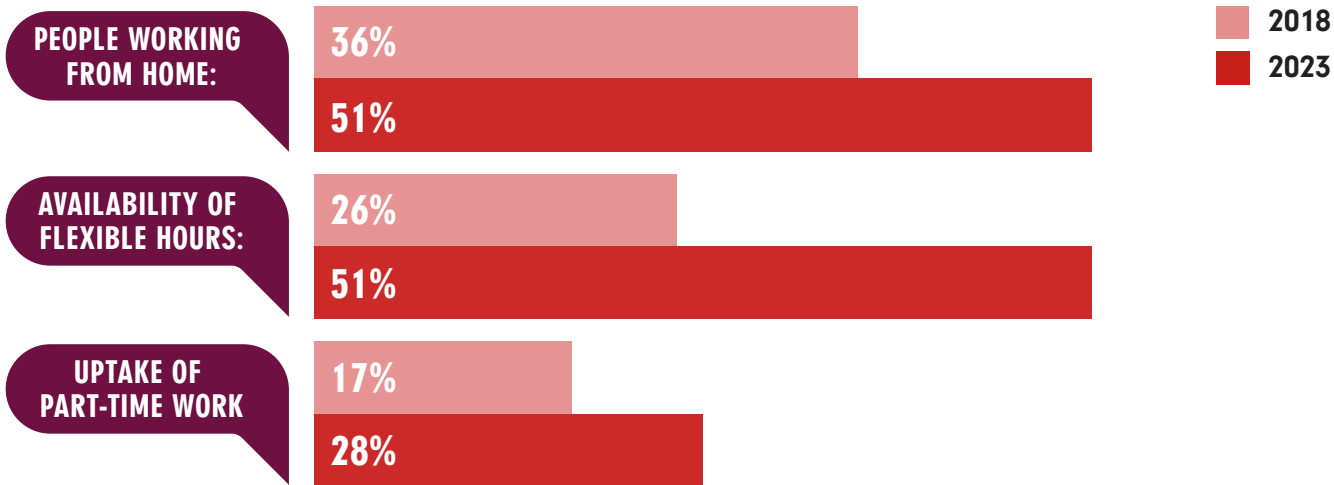
INCREASED FLEX / EMPLOYER SUPPORT

As a final positive message, we found some evidence of better employer support. Flexible working now features strongly, and levels of help from a supportive employer have risen substantially: 4% of respondents in 2018 reported that support from employers helped them continue working, rising to 21% in 2023.

The number of people working from home has increased, as expected, post-pandemic from 36% to 51%. Availability of flexible hours has increased to 46% in 2023 (compared to 26% in 2018). There has also been an increase in part-time work, up from 17% in 2018, to 28% in 2023, although these figures may signpost underemployment.

While good practice is increasing, the findings suggest that a widespread shift in attitudes and practices towards supporting parents and carers has not yet happened. Fostering an authentic cultural transformation is the next step.

SINCE PANDEMIC



Regarding a shift in hearts and minds, this quote from a freelancer illustrates what the sector could be working towards:

“Although I am a freelancer my main employer is [name withheld], my Company Manager is supportive and approachable and makes every effort for adjustments to be made to enable me to work and parent in ways I am deeply grateful for - I have received cover in rehearsals when I have had no childcare, supported in finding a theatre childminder for weekends and when life and job clash unexpectedly I can have the children with me at work for short periods of time.”

IN 2018, ONLY 4% OF RESPONDENTS REPORTED THAT EMPLOYER SUPPORT ENABLED THEM TO MANAGE WORK AND CARING RESPONSIBILITIES. BY 2023, THIS FIGURE HAD SURGED TO 21%



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Working in the performing arts as a parent or carer remains fraught with challenges. Already marked in 2018 by precarious work conditions, and a significant pay penalty for parents and carers, such challenges have been exacerbated by the post-pandemic context and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

The findings of this report reveal the impact on parents and carers of an industry grappling with declining output, increased job insecurity, and financial strain exacerbated by funding cuts and organisational restructuring. Despite the vital role of the performing arts for society and the economy, the sector finds itself under unprecedented pressure, with ramifications experienced most keenly by parents and carers, and by freelancers.

The findings presented here underscore the urgent need for action at multiple levels. From policy recommendations for government and funding bodies to employer initiatives and individual strategies, concerted efforts are required to address the systemic barriers hindering the inclusivity and sustainability of the performing arts sector.

Key findings highlight the deepening pay penalty for parents and carers, the prevalence of underemployment, and the profound impact of work-life imbalance on mental health and well-being. Moreover, the report sheds light on how working in the performing arts influences individuals' reproductive choices, often leading to delayed family planning or difficult decisions about parenthood.

Women and freelancers emerge as especially vulnerable, facing the brunt of unpredictable, insecure employment, limited access to flexible childcare, and financial instability. As well as the significant impact on the parents and carers, the findings document a lack of representation and visibility of women working in the industry. If women are turning down jobs and working less then they are less likely to be seen in positions of power, for example, in senior orchestral positions.

While some progress is noted in terms of increased employer support and flexible working arrangements, there is still much ground to cover in ensuring equitable opportunities and support for all individuals in the industry:

1. The Pay Penalty has more than doubled for parents and carers from earning £3,000 less than others in 2018 to £7,000 less in 2023. They are having to reduce their working hours or give up paid work to manage their caring responsibilities:

- 88% of respondents have had to turn down work due to caring responsibilities
- 85% of women have had to reduce their working hours and availability to manage caring responsibilities
- Almost half of respondents (49%) have had to give up a job or paid work with women impacted the most (50% versus 35% of men)

2. Parents and carers in performing arts are having to take drastic measures to make ends meet:

- Over half (54%) of respondents have had to cut back on household items to manage parent and carer related costs
- One in four people had to borrow money from friends or family
- 4% of respondents have had to use a food bank and 2% of respondents have sold, or released equity from their homes

3. Working in the Performing Arts is influencing people's reproductive choices:

- 63% of respondents said that working in the performing arts affected their decision-making about starting a family, with the **overwhelming majority of freelancers (71%)** saying that it did. 69% said they were inclined to delay these decisions by two to five years
- 64% of freelancers reported feeling that having a child would limit their career opportunities and half (51%) said that lack of support from the industry was a key consideration
- Anecdotally, many respondents reported that they had only one child out of necessity, curtailing their reproductive choices
- Qualitative data that suggests that people don't feel supported during pregnancy and the transition period after. Further research is required to gain a deeper understanding of the contributing factors relating to that specific period of pregnancy and maternity

4. Decrease in well-being and work-life balance and increasing job insecurity:

- The number of people concerned about losing their job in the near future was significantly higher in 2023 (60%) compared to 2018 (44%)
- 60% of people reported dissatisfaction and difficulty managing both work and family responsibilities compared to 48% in 2018. The percentage of people who feel they manage the demands of work and family life well has also dropped

5. The research has found some evidence of more supportive employer work practices such as increased flexibility:

- 46% of employees and 26% of self-employed people report working flexibly
- 29% of respondents reported that a supportive employer had helped them to continue working in 2023 compared to 4% in 2018
- More needs to be done to offer a wider range of support strategies, particularly for freelancers, 84% of whom still rely overwhelmingly on family and friends (social capital) to deliver on their caring responsibilities



RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations arise, most of which are at a policy level. These need to be addressed by government stakeholders, including the Arts Council, working with large employers, unions, and professional associations for the sustained success of the performing arts.

The industry is dependent on a whole range of dedicated and flexible freelancers supporting the gig economy, ensuring that large and small scale productions happen across the UK. Without urgent action, there is a significant risk to the long-term sustainability of the industry and to its contribution to the UK economy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government, Arts Council England, Arts Council Wales, Creative Scotland, employer representatives, and membership organisations to monitor and publish data on caring responsibilities and people metrics across sector workforce, including freelancers
- Equitable parental and caring policies for freelancers including paternity allowance, shared parental leave, and carers leave
- Provision of flexible, ad-hoc childcare that is subsidised and accessible for freelancers
- Deliver an intersectional and cohesive approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Parents and carers are a likely sub-group of all protected characteristics
- Sustained funding for advocacy and support organisations that offer direct help to parents and carers as well as continuing to improve sustainable working practices and infrastructural development
- Require organisations to monitor and make transparent well-being data and other 'people metrics'
- Funding bodies have transparent and inclusive funding criteria that are applied consistently to ensure applicants are not penalised for including the cost of care in applications
- Introduction of a universal basic income, which can support parents and carers through periods of unpaid caring-related absence
- Employers, membership organisations, and funders engage with PiPA's programmes to harness support and increase awareness of the challenges facing their employees and beneficiaries
- Return to work provision for freelancers after pregnancy and / or other caring-related leave
- Mental health and well-being support including access to parent and carer networks would promote better outcomes for employed and self-employed people as well as talent retention for the industry

EMPLOYER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sign up to one of PiPA's programmes to support culture change within your organisation
- Embed a positive approach to the right to request flexible working for all, right from the beginning of the recruitment cycle, and actively support innovative practice
- Collect and publish data on the parent and carer workforce, including freelancers, current workforce, job applicants, and leavers
- Share examples of supporting working practices, and champion parents and carers
- Embed inclusive working practices, and additional support for freelancers with caring responsibilities
- Better support parental and caring leave, career breaks, and return to work, and signpost through policy and action that this is a priority

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Those facing multiple barriers to work due to protected characteristics are underrepresented in this research. There is an urgent need for further research to illuminate intersectional experience
- Research is needed looking specifically at the experiences of people who are freelancers during pregnancy and maternity



PARENTS & CARERS
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