

MAKING IT POSSIBLE

Voices of Parents & Carers in the UK Film and TV Industry

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#MakeItPoss

**"Women who are
carers simply get lost
from the industry.
The investment in
their training is lost.
Their voices are lost
from production."**

Female, freelance producer,
South West, 45-64

Raising Films



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Executive Summary

"When I was pregnant I had contracts pulled. Then people wouldn't see me and I couldn't get the same jobs as before. Then it was just too sporadic to afford suitable childcare."

— Female, former director, now part-time in academia, South East, 45-64

This UK-wide survey reveals very clear barriers for parents and carers who work in film and TV, which do not only affect women, but continue to affect them disproportionately. 640 respondents participated, with over half living outside Greater London, across the UK. 72% of both male (21%) and female (78%) respondents are or have been parents or carers, of whom 11% are sole parents or carers. 63% of respondents are freelance or self-employed in roles across the industry from crew to exhibition: this is indicative of the nature of the industry, but also a response to its demands. Many describe being limited in the work available, as the industry relies on long hours, often at short-notice; others needed to change roles entirely.

"I wish people wouldn't presume that because I've had a break to have children that I am no longer good at my job – the truth is I'm better than I was before. Opportunities are zero."

— Female, actor, South East, 25-44

The frustration was palpable – from active discrimination to the difficulty (or impossibility) of trying to juggle caring roles with a TV/film career, resulting in limited participation. Financial uncertainty and the economic impact of family life are a major concern, particularly for freelancers, as childcare is expensive and pay can be low. Tax relief is thus high on the agenda for carers, as is flexible childcare that can fulfil often ad hoc or last minute needs. Legislation for gender equality and for fair hours would also be welcome.

There is a strong desire for cultural change within the industry to support these structural changes towards a more equal workplace, in order for parents and carers to have genuine and fair access. Changes such as the reduction of anti-social hours are seen as being beneficial for all – including audiences, who will reap the benefit of a more diverse creative cohort working in film and television.

— Danielle Porter, Leah McCabe, and Kylie Grant, Centre for Gender and Feminist Studies, University of Stirling.

"My partner and I have to take turns looking after our child. We have both had to give up jobs in the industry as we cannot afford full time care and our work is 24/7 once we start."

— Female, director, Greater London, 25-44

Foreword

Twelve years ago, my partner Steven was making horror films and I was six months pregnant when my first film *Teenland* (60 minutes) was commissioned for BBC4. I was an interloper into film from the art-world, and making the transition to parenthood and to filmmaking was daunting – and incredibly exciting. Since then we have made ten features between us, which have been released internationally. We have been as single-minded about planning our childcare and life as we are about planning an independent film production, guided by two simple principles:

1. The happier and more fulfilled we are in our lives, the better parents that makes us.

We chose to continue living in Nottingham away from the high costs of London, and we have had some support from our families, made use of subsidised local childcare, and found a tight community of fellow parents who support each other with after-school care.

2. We have parity in the amount of childcare we do, and have learnt to be flexible: if one of us needs to go away on a shoot or edit, the other person steps up and take on more childcare responsibilities. Neither of us should have to put their career on hold for that to happen, and our daughter should know us both equally.

We urge funders and financiers to support childcare and make it a budget line in all productions. Childcare is not inherently a gendered role so why are more women left holding the baby? Is this at the heart of why the number of women making films is so low?

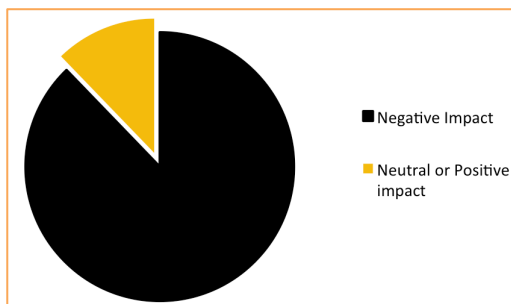
Our 12 year old daughter has just started making films of her own. Fiercely independent, she does not want our input; picking up a camera and expressing her thoughts is the most natural thing in the world. She fills us with hope, everyday.

— Jeanie Finlay and Steven Sheil



Headlines

"There is no reason that flexible working cannot be implemented through job shares. It shows a lack of flexibility and forward thinking that lets the industry down." — Female, freelance crew, London, 25-44



i: 79% of respondents say their caring role has had a negative impact on their role within the industry.

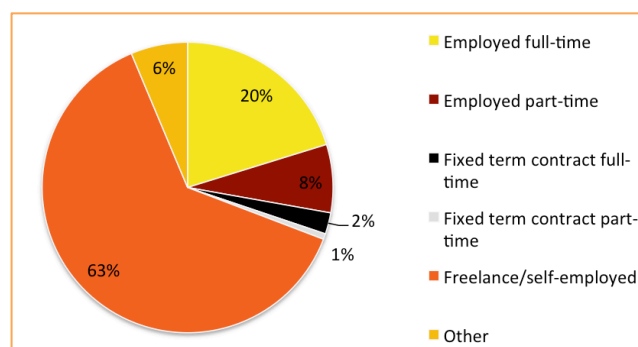
i: 75% say financial or in-kind assistance is somewhat or absolutely crucial to their ability to perform/develop their role in the industry.

i: 63% of respondents work freelance or are self-employed, and financial uncertainty is a major concern.

i: 86% of women who responded earn less than £50k from film & TV industry, with 28% earning less than 10k a year, whereas 66% of men who responded earn less than £50K, and only 15% earn under £10k.

i: 68% of respondents find accessing flexible childcare difficult, and the cost is also a significant issue.

i: The biggest challenge respondents face, across all roles and types of employment, is long and/or weekend hours required, with little flexibility.



"Nursery hours and days are fixed but freelance bookings are variable. Freelancers need to be available all the time and there can be a negative impact when you are not available." — Male, freelance crew, London, 25-44

Solutions

i: Personal tax relief for child/elder care expenses

"Being able to claim childcare as a business expense would at least make it slightly more affordable and help justify my work, which barely covers the cost of childcare."

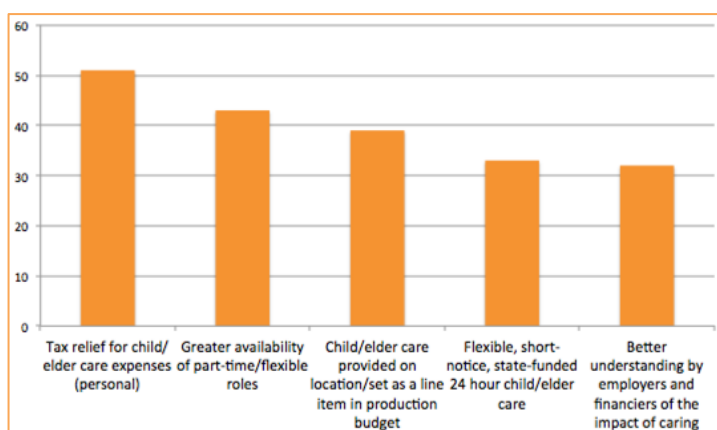
— Male, freelance development, London, 25-44

i: Greater availability of part time/flexible roles

"Many women don't want to return to full time work in the early years – or their usual role has long, unpredictable hours. Part-time options are vital to stop women simply leaving the industry through lack of options." — Female, seeking work, South West, 45-64

i: Child care on location/set as a line item in budget

"Crèches and childcare solutions that deal with the ad hoc, all-or-nothing nature of the work would help. Genuine buy-in, with funding, is essential to make it work at the highest levels." — Female, freelance producer, South West, 45-64



Afterword

We started Raising Films to have a conversation about being parent filmmakers. We soon heard that many of our colleagues were frustrated with the structural challenges they face, not least due to the high number of freelance contracts and the prevalent long hours culture in our industry. It became clear that to effect change, we needed to show how widespread and thoroughgoing the challenges are. And to do that, we needed data.

The data speaks to the actions the film and TV industry must take to serve its parent members better, and to increase their number. We will keep working with our partner organisations to address the equality, diversity and inclusion issues raised by their recent studies, in order to shape sustainable careers. Many are making it possible, despite challenges: respondents told us that these role models are a crucial inspiration, so Raising Films will continue to share their stories.

We know our greatest challenge is the wider context: a society that doesn't value the caring work that it relies upon. As filmmakers we make work within this society, but also have the power to change society through our work. It is essential, therefore, that the film industry aspires to the best possible practice, to make it possible for all our voices to be heard.

— Nicky Bentham, Hope Dickson Leach, Laura Giles, Line Langebek, Jessica Levick, Sophie Mayer, Erin McElhinney, and Samantha Ward, Raising Films.

Call to Action

"There is an assumption that the industry can't change, and that parents need to find ways of participating full-time or not at all. Wanting to divide time between creative/work and parenting does not show lack of interest in or commitment to the industry." — Female, freelance and part time development, Scotland, 45-64

We believe the industry can change, by committing to the following actions:

- ii: Enable financial assistance for child and elder care
- ii: Encourage industry-wide adoption of flexible working and access to child and/or elder care
- ii: Formalise a way to combat discrimination
- ii: Normalise conversations around caring commitments with employers

From our Partners

"This year has seen the publication of three key reports on the shocking lack of gender equality in our industry, from Directors UK, the European Women's Audiovisual Network, and the University of Southampton. There is no doubt that, in an increasingly casualised industry, having children is a career killer for women much more than for men. This timely report drills down into the practical problems faced by women and provides some excellent recommendations for the way ahead. This is essential reading for everyone interested in maximising the talent pool in our creative industries." — Kate Kinninmont MBE, CEO, *Women in Film & Television (UK)*

"This important and timely piece of research makes it clear that financial provisions, whilst desperately needed, are not going to solve inequality in the film industry. Working practices must also change. Those who cannot or do not want to work excessive hours or full time must be understood as no less committed or capable. In 2016 the film industry can no longer expect workers to have someone else at home who can do the childcare, but must make it possible for parents, particularly mothers, to be involved in all aspects of filmmaking." — Dr Natalie Wreyford, *"Calling the Shots", University of Southampton*

"Raising Film's report offers statistics to back up the anecdotes. It's the kind of crucial information that makes the issue that much harder to ignore. Yes, this is definitely happening, here and now. And not only the workers/carers lose out – so does the industry, on their skills, intelligence and life experience. The Raising Films report give us the hard and unpalatable facts in easy-to-digest form, but also practical and tenable suggestions as to how the situation could be improved." — Olivia Hetreed, President, *Writers' Guild of Great Britain*

"Raising Films' Making it Possible Report makes an important and timely contribution to continuing research into gender inequalities in the film industry. It identifies not only the many challenges of care in this sector, but also several potential solutions, by gathering detailed responses directly from industry professionals across a range of roles, including those working in UK film production, exhibition and distribution." — Dr. Susan Berridge, Lecturer in Film and Media, *Centre for Gender and Feminist Studies, University of Stirling*

"This research is proof that the future of the British film industry depends on our ability to embrace new ways of working. We must take the lead from other sectors that have identified workforce development as key to success, and find our own creative solutions. Imagine the diverse wealth of talent and experience if these barriers to work were removed?" — Cassie Raine, *Parents in Performing Arts*