



# The Millennial Dad at Work

May 2019

In association with

**Deloitte.**

“ We are delighted to be able to support this important research which has highlighted the change still needed in many businesses when it comes to ways of working and support provided to working parents. A particularly striking finding in the report is that a third of fathers surveyed have changed their jobs since becoming a father – with a desire for greater flexibility being a primary driver. Agile working has long been a key priority and focus for Deloitte – enabling everyone to balance their commitments outside work with a successful career is critical to our ability to attract and retain the best people; these findings serve to show why this focus is so important.”

**Emma Codd**  
Managing Partner for Talent, Deloitte

“ The Millennial Dad at Work report tells my story. I was unable to get the flexibility I needed to be a hands-on, involved father to my children. Like a third of the men who were interviewed for DaddiLife’s report, I changed jobs before eventually leaving the workforce altogether. The number of men having flexible working requests turned down shows there’s a lot of talk, but little action. That said, I am hopeful for the future. Employers starting to create more family friendly working practices and reports like this strengthen the argument that these employers are doing the right thing and I hope others will follow.”

**John Adams**  
Dad of two and author of [Dadbloguk.com](http://Dadbloguk.com)

“ We have seen a dramatic rise in common mental ill-health conditions in the last decade. The demands on Dads in the workplace and at home have changed significantly during this time. The “always on” culture, economic uncertainty, social media and the evolution of the role of the Dad as a parent all contribute to an increase in pressure and stress. It is no wonder that 37% of those surveyed suggest that their mental health has been negatively affected by the need to balance work and parental responsibilities. I am really pleased and encouraged to see that the research has included the focus of the mental health of the Dads in our workplaces. With suicide being the biggest killer of middle aged men, it is imperative that employers find ways to address the inequalities men face and create cultures that allow our Dads to thrive in work and at home.”

**Rob Stephenson**  
Founder, [InsideOut](http://InsideOut)

“ We know from our own research that fathers are often not getting the support they need in the workplace. This important report from DaddiLife underscores the fact that many fathers—particularly millennial fathers—struggle to take control of their time and choose the balance that works best for themselves and their loved ones. At Working Families, we are tackling this problem through our work with employers to create more family-friendly, gender-equal workplaces.”

**Jane van Zyl**  
CEO, [Working Families](http://WorkingFamilies)

“ This research is vital and exciting in backing the feeling that men are changing in their attitudes to work-life balance, with a tilt towards how life fits with work rather than the other way round. We started workingdads precisely because more and more dads were coming to us looking for jobs that allowed them to combine a fulfilling career with an engaged family life. Millennials are no longer the future, they are the present and so any firm that wants to attract the best talent and flourish in these uncertain times needs to understand their expectations of work and how different they are to previous generations.”

**James Millar**  
Editor, [Working Dads](http://WorkingDads)

“ This report shows that over a third of millennial fathers struggle with their mental health when balancing their responsibilities as parents and workers. Having a healthy work-life relationship is important for everyone’s wellbeing and employers have a key role to play here.”

**Simon Blake OBE,**  
Chief Executive, [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) England](http://MentalHealthFirstAid.org.uk)

“ This research is an important step in recognising that employers are not keeping pace with the changing face of family life in Britain. A lack of flexible working opportunities means that too many Dads aren’t able to be as involved with their growing families as they would like to be. That has an impact on families but on businesses, too, as Dads seek out a better work-life balance. It’s time we recognise how big an issue this is for men nationwide and a timely reminder that flexible working isn’t only a female issue.”

**Sally Whittle**  
Founder, [Tots100](http://Tots100)



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# Introduction

There has been a generational shift for first and second wave Millennial fathers across their day-to-day parenting roles. Last year, we interviewed over 1200 dads across the UK for the first ever [Dad Index](#) and discovered just how far, and how quickly, this shift was taking place throughout the UK. We found that not only were the vast majority of Millennial dads more involved than ever across all areas of parenting, but this was heavily influencing their buying behaviour as well.

As encouraging as that picture was, we started to hear from more and more dads whose work-life wasn't reflecting this change. A clear picture started to emerge about a growing gap between dads' desire for a different shape of work and the age-old stereotypes and beliefs that 'dads should just be at work.'

With at least 1/3 of our lives spent at [work](#)<sup>1</sup>, we wanted to focus on the vital area of dads at work; specifically, to better understand the key issues experienced by this audience and where exactly organisations need to focus if they are going to successfully drive change for modern day fathers at work.

There has been a steady change for mothers at work over the past two decades (albeit there is still much to do there). This research complements that shift, with a realization that unlocking the change for this 'other 50%' now holds the keys to creating genuine equality at work for dads and partners at large.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.accountancyage.com/2018/10/02/how-long-does-the-average-uk-employee-spend-at-work/>





# About this report

The Millennial Dad at Work explores what the new generation of fathers think about work and life; any tensions they experience that stop them from performing at the peak of their abilities and, where such tensions exist, the impact it is having on organisations throughout the UK.

These unique insights have been gained through a survey of over 2000 working dads across every area of the UK, in every industry classification, with a clear direction about what this means about the future of work for Millennial Dads. As part of our research we also profiled the working status of their partners and how this is affecting the many facets of their working life.

The methodology behind our study:

Extensive quantitative survey with **2002** working dads across every region of the UK

Focussed on dads aged **24-40**

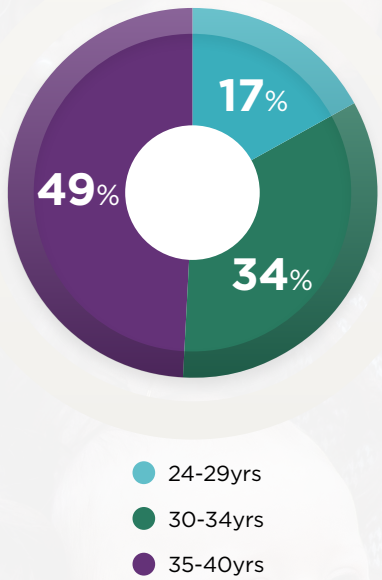
Across a combined **10,100** minutes in survey-time alone!

Over **280** hours of analysis <sup>1</sup>

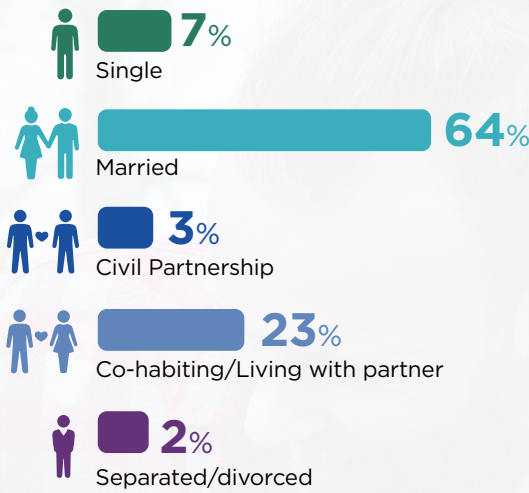
<sup>1</sup> To create the themes and question areas for the quantitative survey, 7 dads were interviewed in a 2 hour face to face focus group in March 2019. Our recruitment spec was exclusively focussed on Millennial Dads aged 24 - 40, across a nationally representative base across each region of the UK. The quantitative research took place from April 2019 - May 2019 with 2002 working dads.)

About the dads who have taken part in our research study:

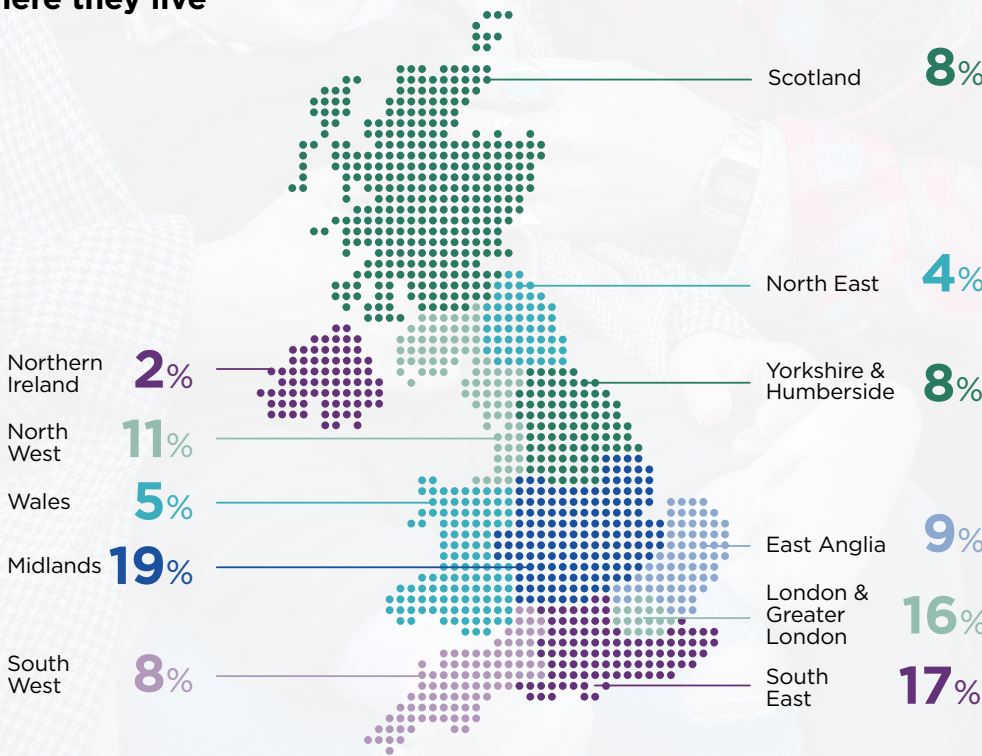
## Age range



## Relationship status

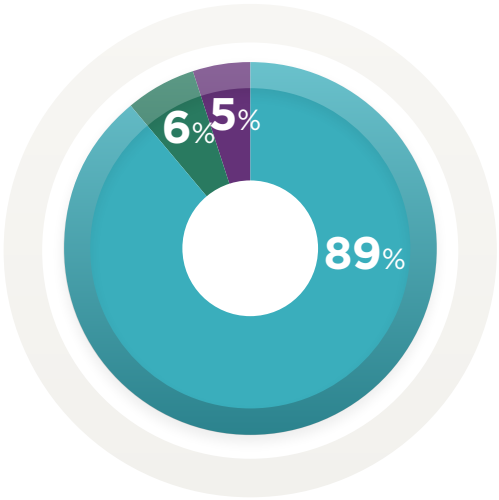


## Where they live





Working status

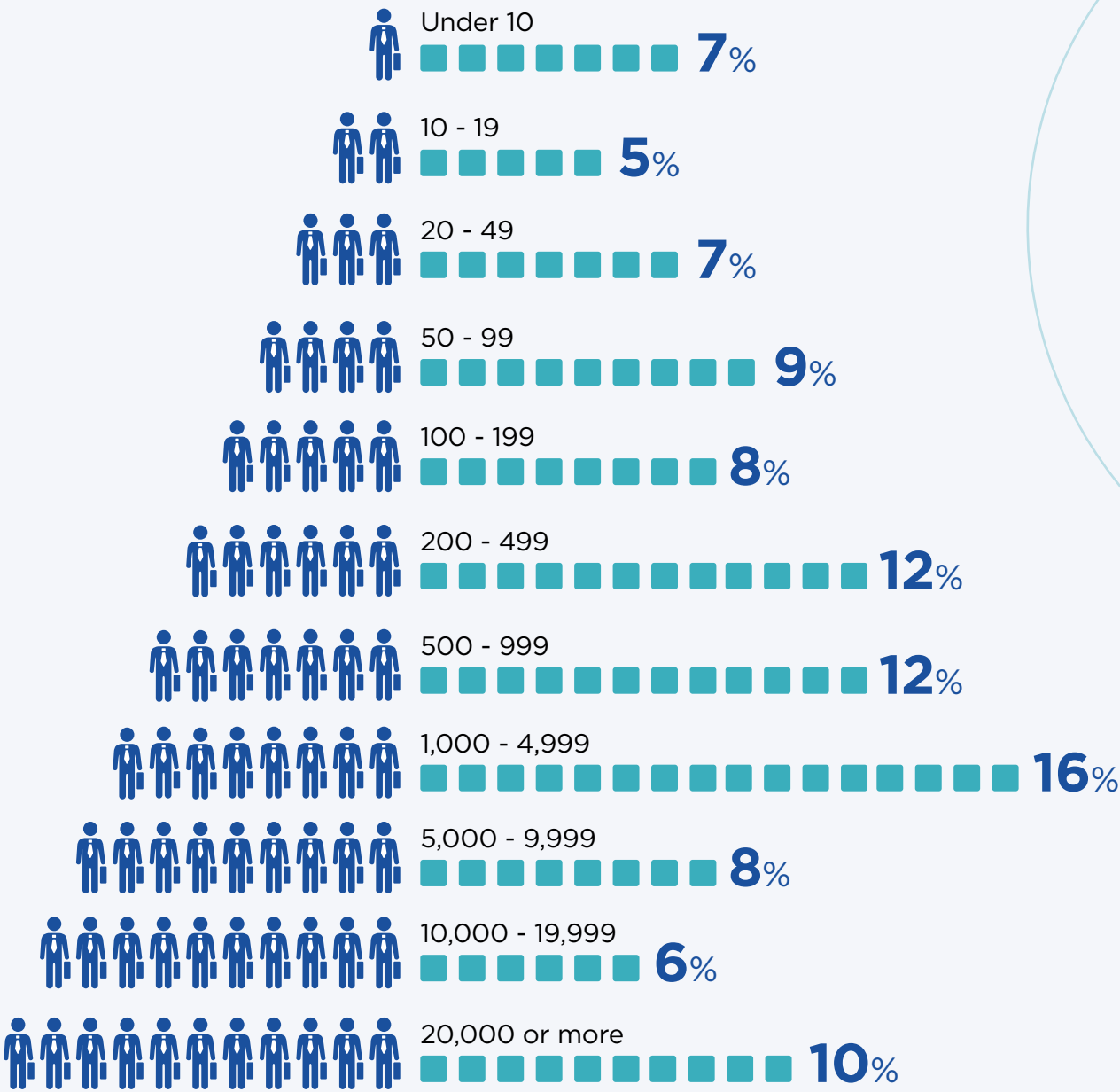


- Employed Full Time (35+ hours a week)
- Employed Part Time (1-34 hours per week)
- Freelance / Contractor

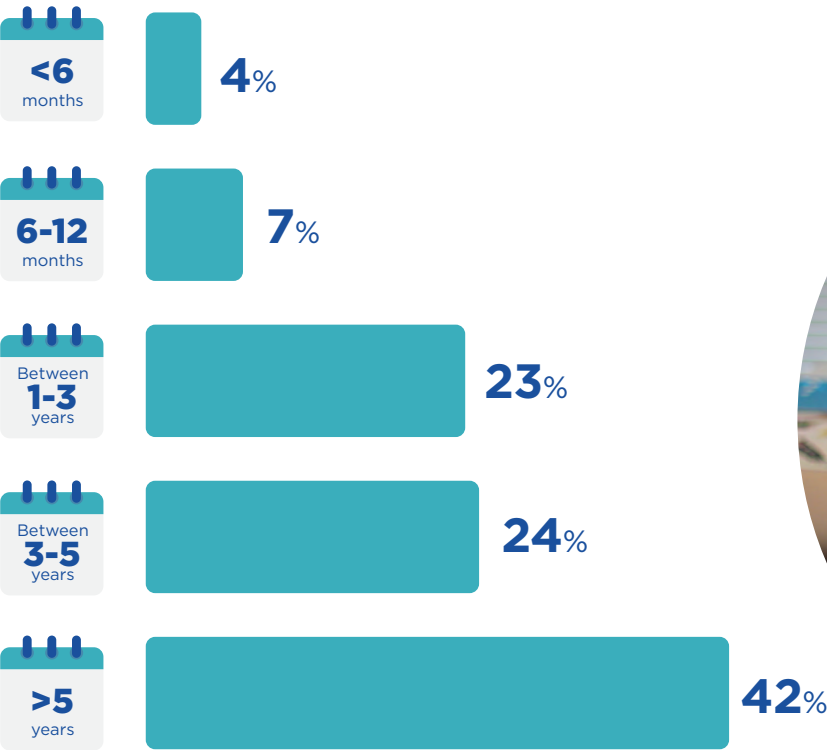
Partner working status



Size of organisation worked for



Length of employment with current organisation





## Executive Summary

In this report we expand on 8 key areas related to work / life success for Millennial Dads at work.

- 1. The majority of Millennial fathers have a different role at home to that which may have been the cultural norm for generations gone by.**

**87%** are either mostly or fully involved in day-to-day parenting duties. The vast majority of dads working full-time who are fully involved also have a partner who is working full time (**68%**) – reflecting the rise of dual income households, and the equalization of parenting occurring at the same time.

- 2. 67% of Millennial fathers believe that their workplaces as a whole recognize the role of more active fathers, but only just over 1 in 2 believe that fathers are treated equally to mothers.**

Almost 2/3 (**63%**) of all the fathers in this study have requested a form of flexibility at work since becoming a father, but there is a significant gap between what is requested and what is being granted to dads.

- 3. There is a flexibility gap emerging between higher income fathers and the rest, with fathers who earn more than £70,000 being granted significantly more flexible working on the whole than those who earn less than that.**

- 4. Fathers regularly experience tension from their employers in trying to balance work with their new parenting role. 45% say they sometimes or often experience this.**

**37%** of the dads as a whole also report regular tension from colleagues and **45%** report regular tension from their partners.

Leaving work 'on time' is the biggest single occasion of tension, with **1/3** of dads regularly experiencing tension here.

- 5. 1/3 of dads have changed jobs since becoming a father, with 39% of these dads pinpointing "flexibility to fulfil parental responsibilities" as a reason.**

This is an issue in particular for younger fathers, with **41%** of those aged 24 - 29 having changed jobs since becoming a father.

- 6. And another 1/3 are actively looking for a new job.** Flexibility is again highlighted as a key reason, and the number of dads actively looking for a new job jumps to **40%** for dads who are fully involved in day-to-day parenting

- 7. 37% say their mental health is negatively affected as a result of trying to balance work and parental responsibilities.**

Only **23%** report the impact on their mental health as somewhat or very positive.

- 8. The role of line managers and HR are key in starting to change this picture and drive genuine equality at work for parents.**

**62%** of all the fathers surveyed believe that more training is needed for line managers around dads in the workplace specifically.

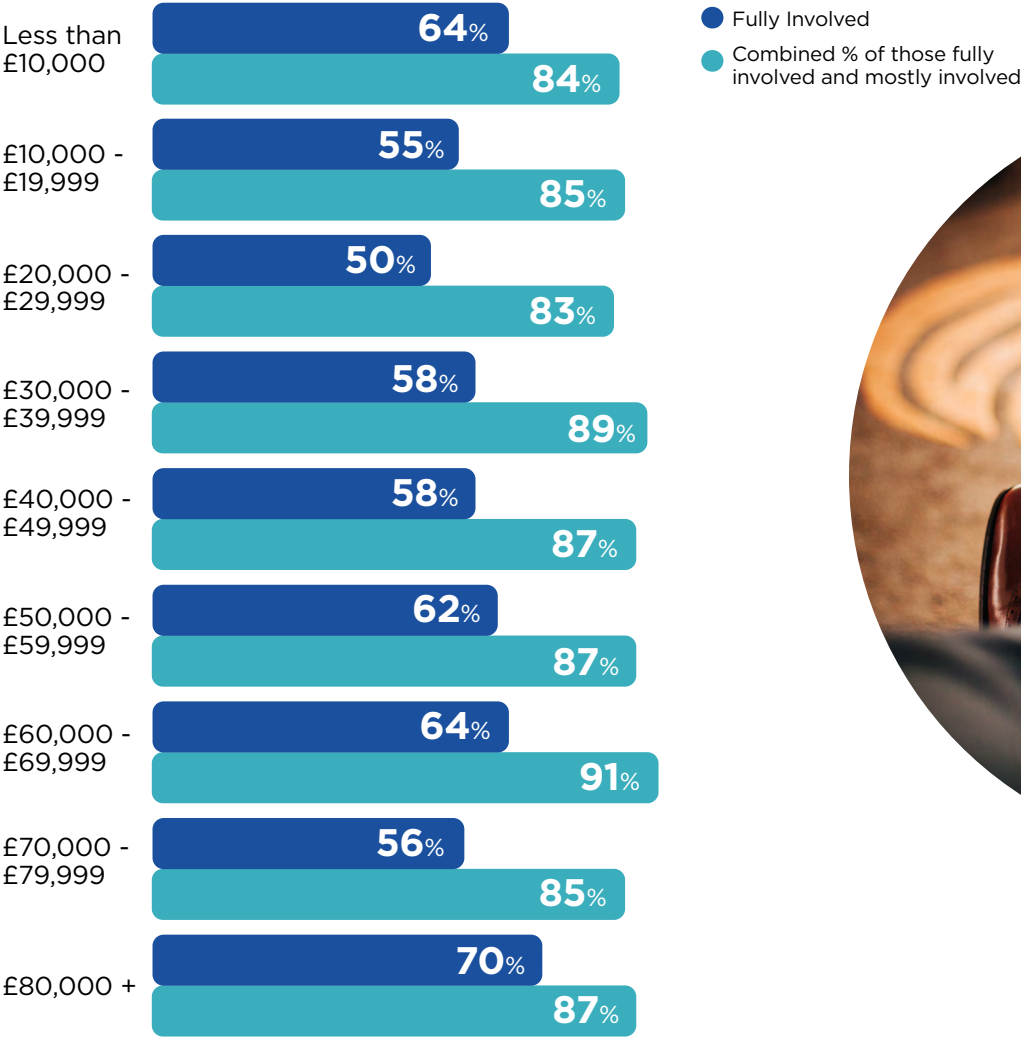


# The shifting role of dad at home

**87%** of Millenial dads are involved in the day-to-day parenting.

The majority (**58%**) are fully involved in day-to-day parenting, and **29%** are mostly involved. These figures match our previous analysis of involvement in [The Dad Index](#), and indicate how quickly Millennial fathers are becoming a truly equal parent with their partners across day to day parenting.

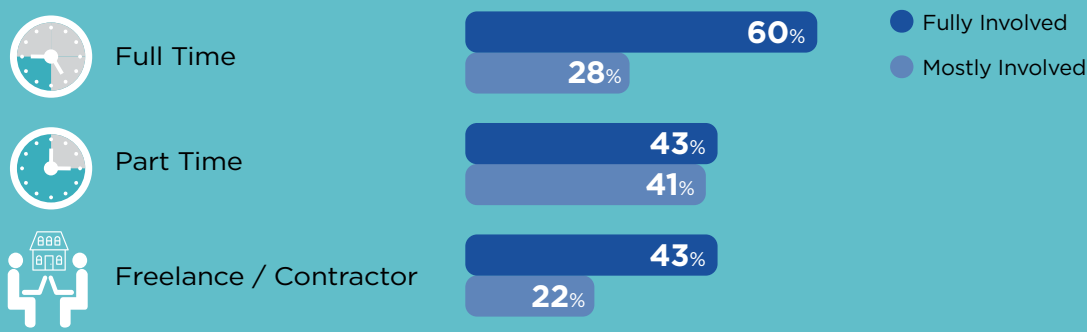
## How salary impacts involvement



The equalization of involvement is consistent across all income levels. **Over 80% of all dads** across all income splits are mostly or fully involved in day-to-day parenting. However, when it comes to those who are fully involved there is a trend upwards toward those who are earning £50,000+.

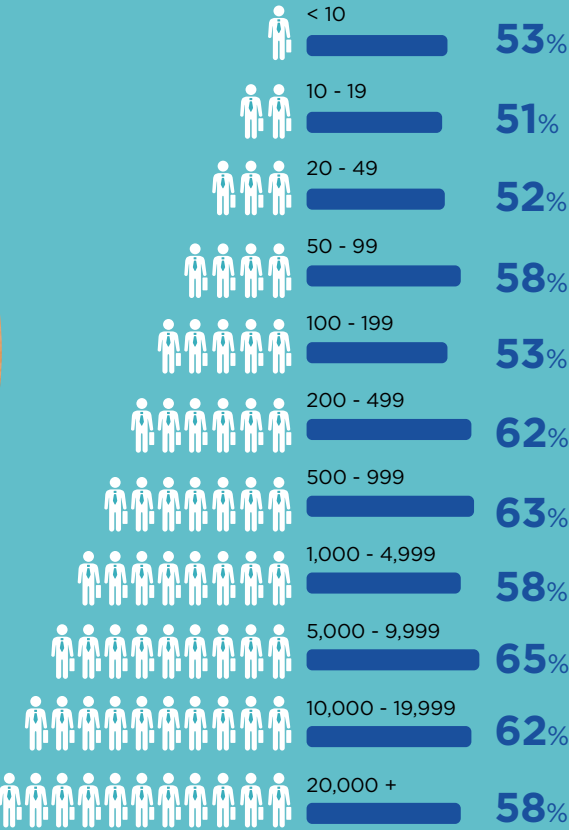


## How employment status affects involvement



The majority of dads who are employed full-time are fully involved in day-to-day parenting. The levels of full involvement are still significant for those working part-time and as contractors, but not as clear a majority as those working full time.

## How size of organisation affects involvement



The equalization of parental involvement for dads is not affected by organizational size. In every organization size band, the majority of Millennial dads are fully involved. There are higher numbers of fathers who are fully involved in large organisations, but there are notable majorities of 'fully involved' fathers within SMEs as well.

Reflecting the trend toward dual income households, 68% of dads who were fully involved also had partners who were working full time. **53% of dads had a partner working part-time and 40% had one working as a contractor.**



# Workplace attitude vs. Workplace practice

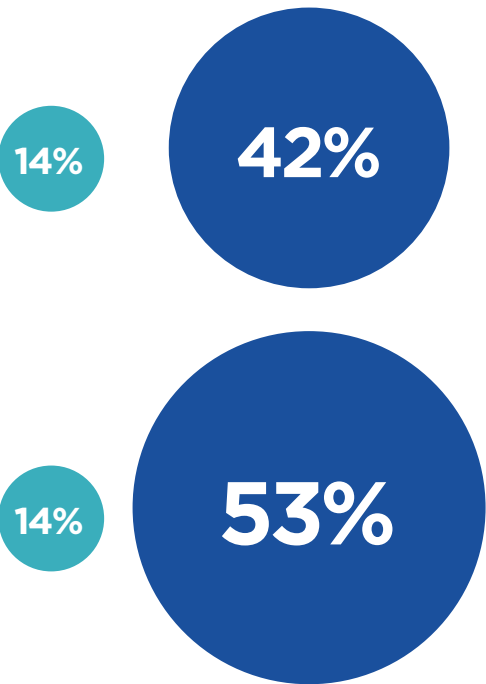
In our survey with the working dads, we wanted to explore the prevailing workplace attitudes. Specifically - the dads we talked to they feel that they were treated equally to mothers and what did they feel about their organisation's culture as a whole toward more active fatherhood?

## Measuring workplace attitudes

“Fathers are treated equally to mothers in my organisation when it comes to flexibility to allow parenting responsibilities to be fulfilled”

“The culture of my organisation is one that recognises and accommodates the needs of fathers to be actively involved at home”

% Strongly agree % Agree



More than **2/3** of the fathers in the study believed that their workplaces were ones that recognised their need to be more actively involved at home.



However, only just over **1 in 2** dads believed that fathers in their organisations were as a whole treated equally to mothers in regards of flexibility.



When we analyse how this is playing out in practice for Millennial fathers, an even more stark picture is emerging.

## Workplace practices

Change in working hours	39%	56%
Working from home (3+ days/week)	9%	12%
Working from home (1-2 days/ week)	14%	19%
Compressed hours	9%	10%
Job sharing	2%	2%
Other	1%	2%
None	37%	

% of dads who requested since becoming a father  
% of those dads who were granted it

**63%** of all the participants in the study have requested a form of flexibility at work since becoming a father -

be that working from home, changing work hours, compressed hours, job sharing or any other forms. But the proportions of those being granted their requests are substantially lower.

Over half of those who have requested a change in working hours were successful, but those requesting other forms of flexible working were significantly less so.. Working from home 1-2 days a week was the second most frequent request with 14% requesting it. However less than 1 in 5 of those were successful in their request (19%).

**74%** of those aged 24 - 29 have requested a change in working practice since becoming a father with **41%** of the same group requesting a change in working hours specifically.



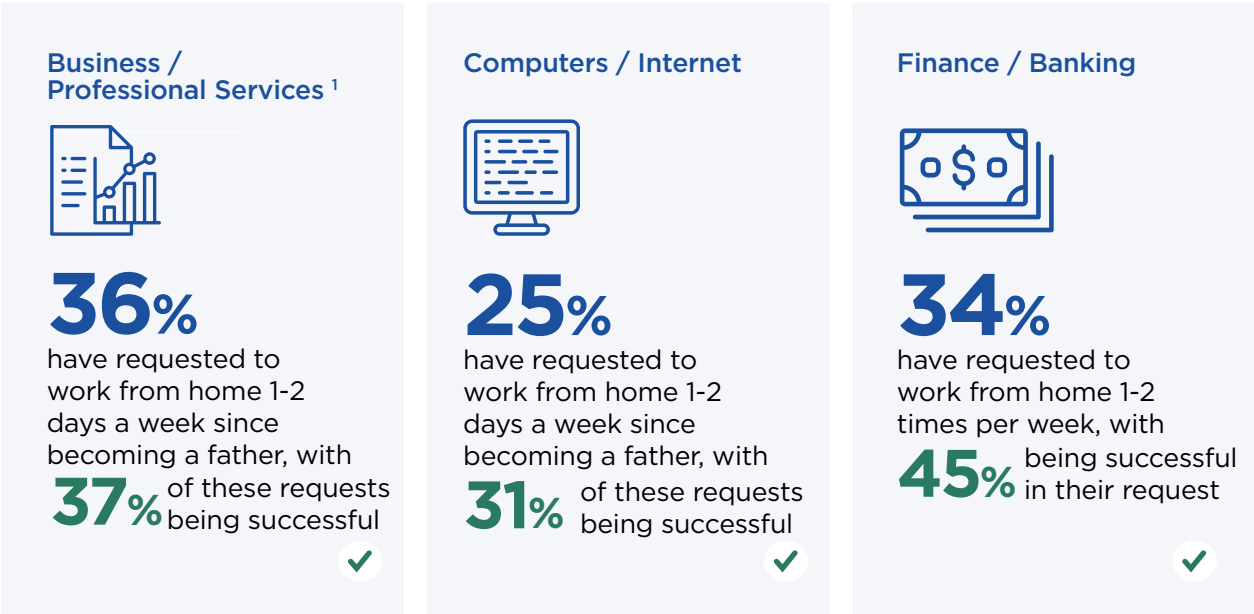


How does this gap play out in different industries?

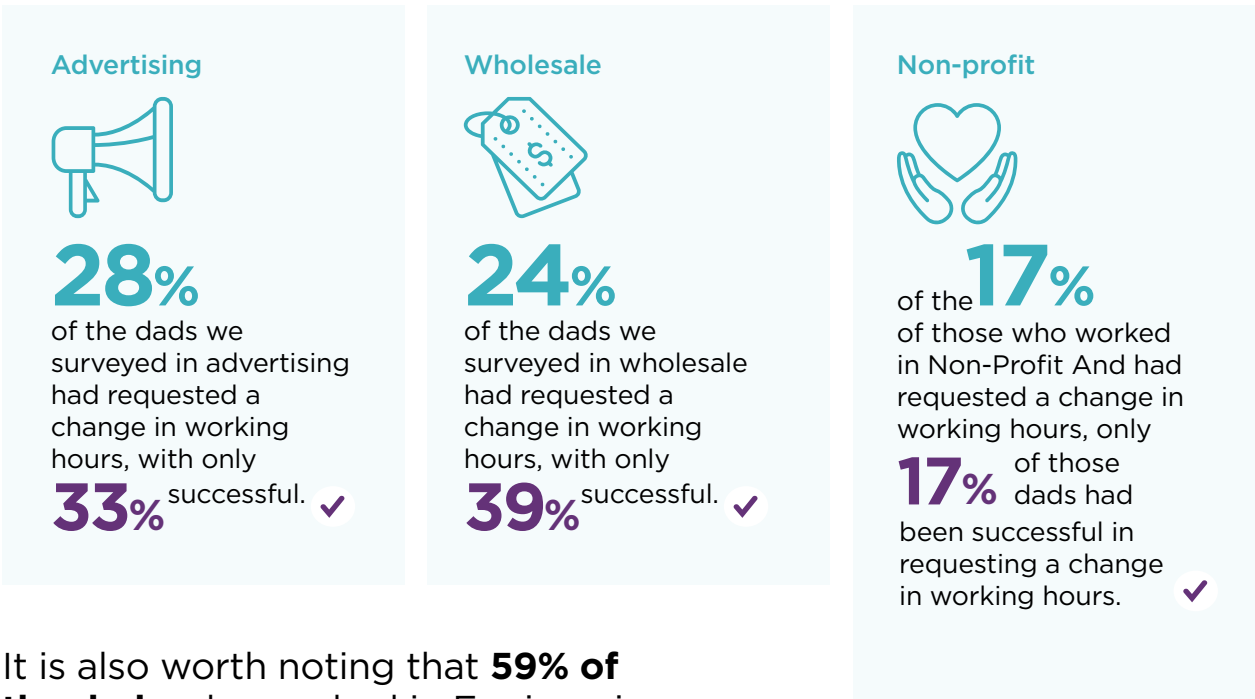
A change in working hours – the top ranking industries



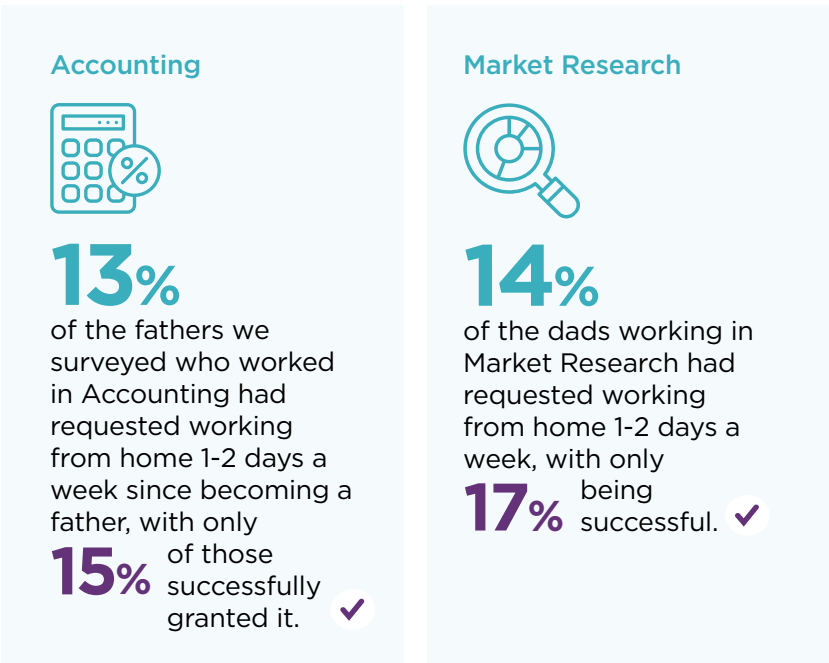
Working from home 1-2 days a week – the top ranking industries



A change in working hours – the bottom ranking industries



Working from home 1-2 days a week – the bottom ranking industries



It is also worth noting that **59% of the dads** who worked in Engineering, Architecture, and Biotechnology and **58% of the dads** who worked in business services (e.g. hotels, lodging) had been granted a change in working hours since becoming a dad.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes accounting

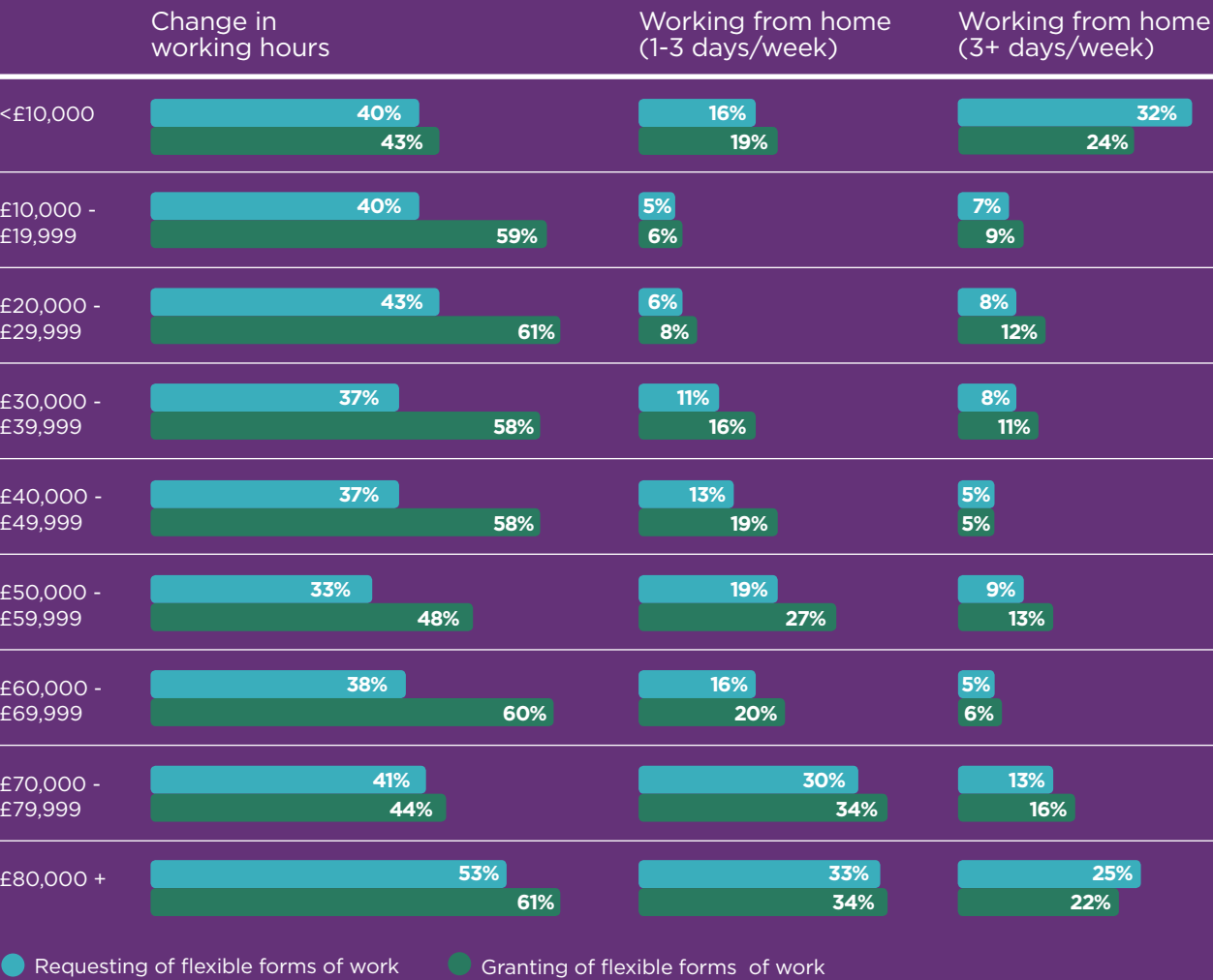
The flexibility gap

Fathers within each salary band who have requested a form of flexibility

<£10,000	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£29,999	£30,000-£39,999	£40,000-£49,999	£50,000-£59,999	£60,000-£69,999	£70,000-£79,999	£80,000+
84%	60%	60%	58%	59%	66%	60%	78%	84%

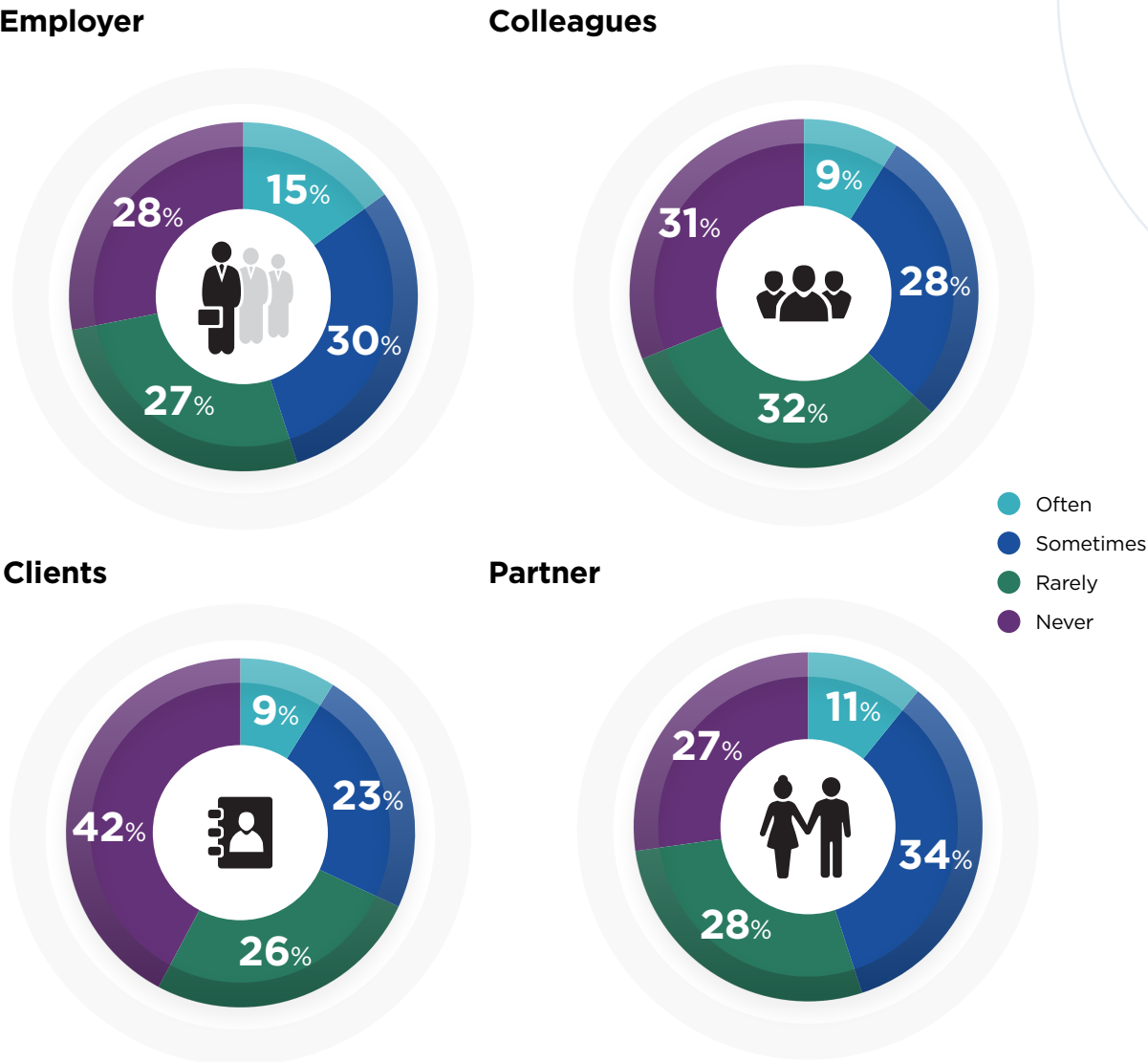
In line with our finding that dads who are earning more are more involved, the dads earning £70,000+ are significantly more likely to have requested a form of flexible working.

Whereas the majority of dads across all income brackets are requesting flexible forms of work, dads within lower income brackets are not being granted the same level of flexibility at work.



Father’s who earn more than £70,000 are granted significantly more flexible working on the whole than those who earn less than that figure.

Sources of tension at work



Q. Where tension is experienced from

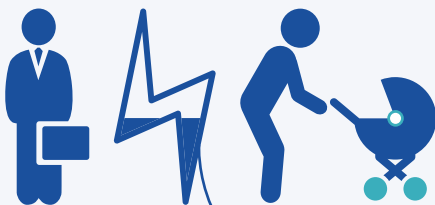




Employer

45%

of dads sometimes or often experience tension from their employer in trying to balance work and their family life.

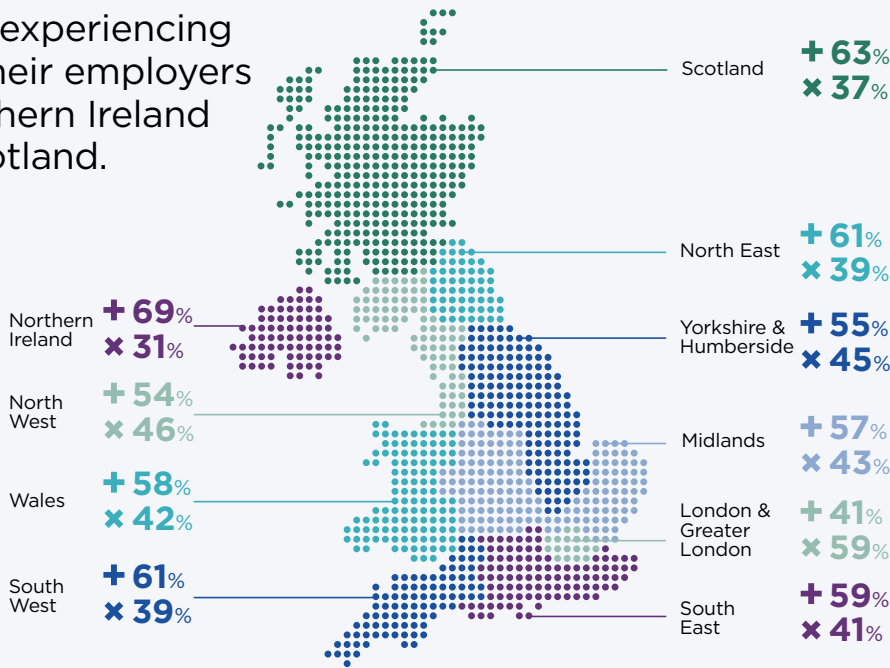


“Employer” in this study is defined as those individuals who were senior and had direct responsibility over the dad’s work – most commonly a direct line manager.

Fathers with children aged newborn to 12 months experience more tension from their employers.

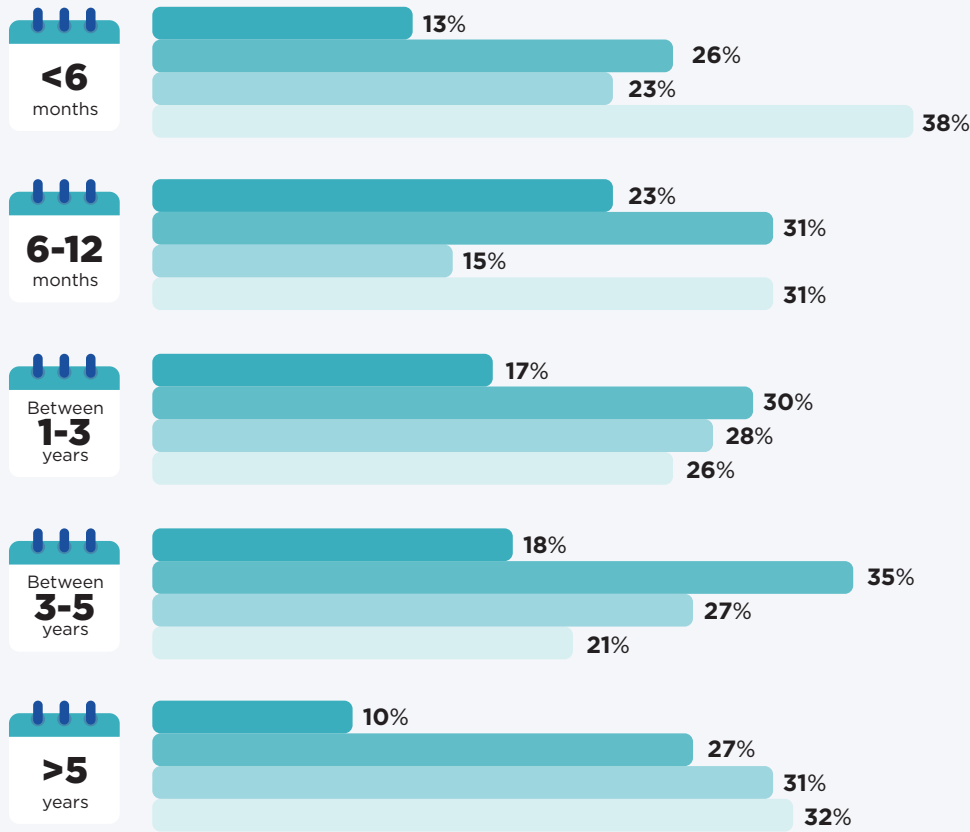
52% often or sometimes experience tension from their employer vs. 41 for those with children 1 - 3 years old.

There is also a notable regional difference, with 59% of Greater London dads and 48% of North West dads regularly experiencing tension from their employers vs. 31% in Northern Ireland and 37% in Scotland.



This is pertinent for younger dads in particular as 52% of those aged 24-29 reported that they sometimes or often experience tension with their employer, compared with 41% of dads aged 35-40.

Employer



It was notable though that the longer the dad has worked for their employer, the less tension they experience.



Colleagues

**37%**  
of working dads experience  
tension regularly with colleagues.

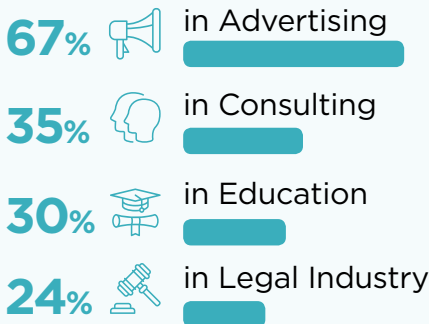


This is particularly pertinent for younger dads (24-29), as **49%** report often / sometimes experiencing tension from colleagues vs. **32%** of those aged 35 - 40. **57%** of single dads often or sometimes experience tensions from colleagues. Which is significantly higher than married dads (**36%**) and co-habiting dads (**29%**).

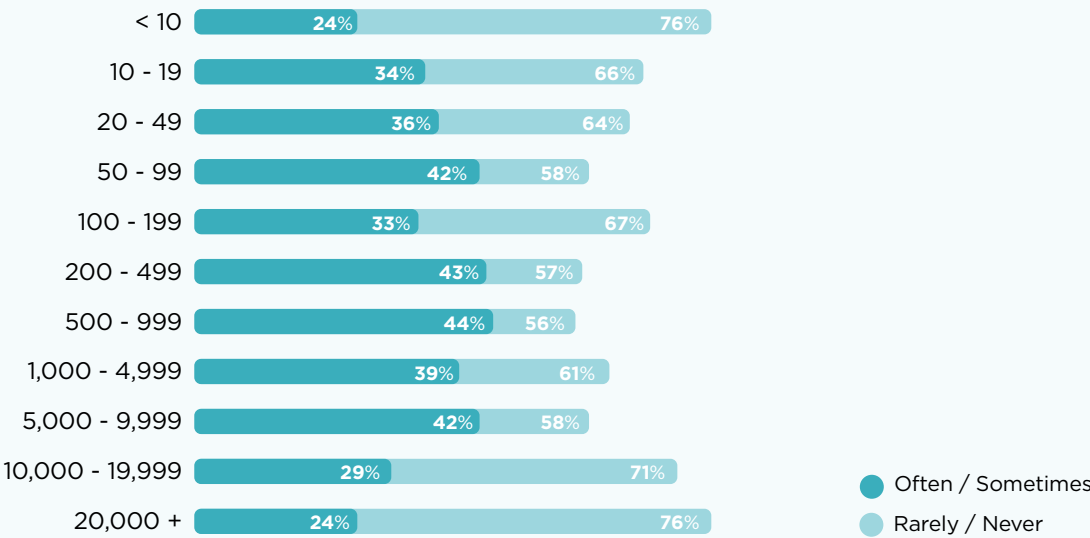
**53%**  
of those earning  
£80,000+ said they  
often or sometimes  
experience tension  
from colleagues.

Which industries are particularly affected?

**71%**  
of dads working in  
Biotechnology often or  
sometimes experience  
tensions from colleagues.



How this plays out in different sizes of organisation



Partners

**45%**  
said they experience  
tensions with their partners.

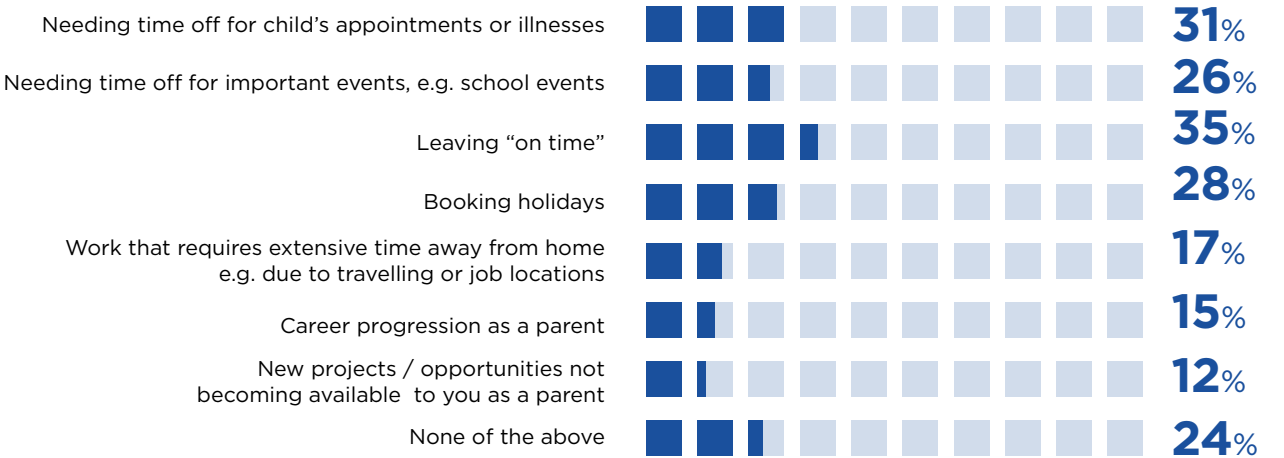


**47%** of those fathers who regularly experience tension from their partners, have a partner who also works full time - highlighting the different expectations and pressures around the modern day family.

This is particularly pertinent again for younger dads, with **49%** of those aged 24 - 29 experiencing regular tension from their partners

Where tensions are being experienced

We asked where tension was experienced most keenly and our findings indicate that dads don't experience just one tension - those in our study experienced regular tensions on multiple different occasions as follows:



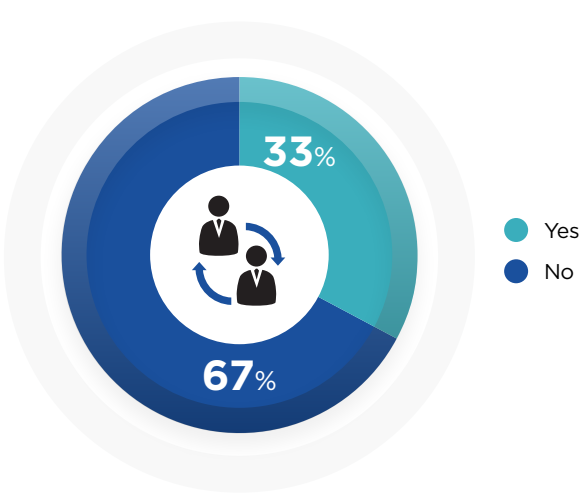
Q18.Experienced tensions at work

Leaving 'on-time' is cited as the single largest occasion of tension, with over 1/3 of dads experiencing this. Time off for their child's appointments and taking time off for holiday follow that closely on **31%** and **28%** respectively.



# The effect on the organisation

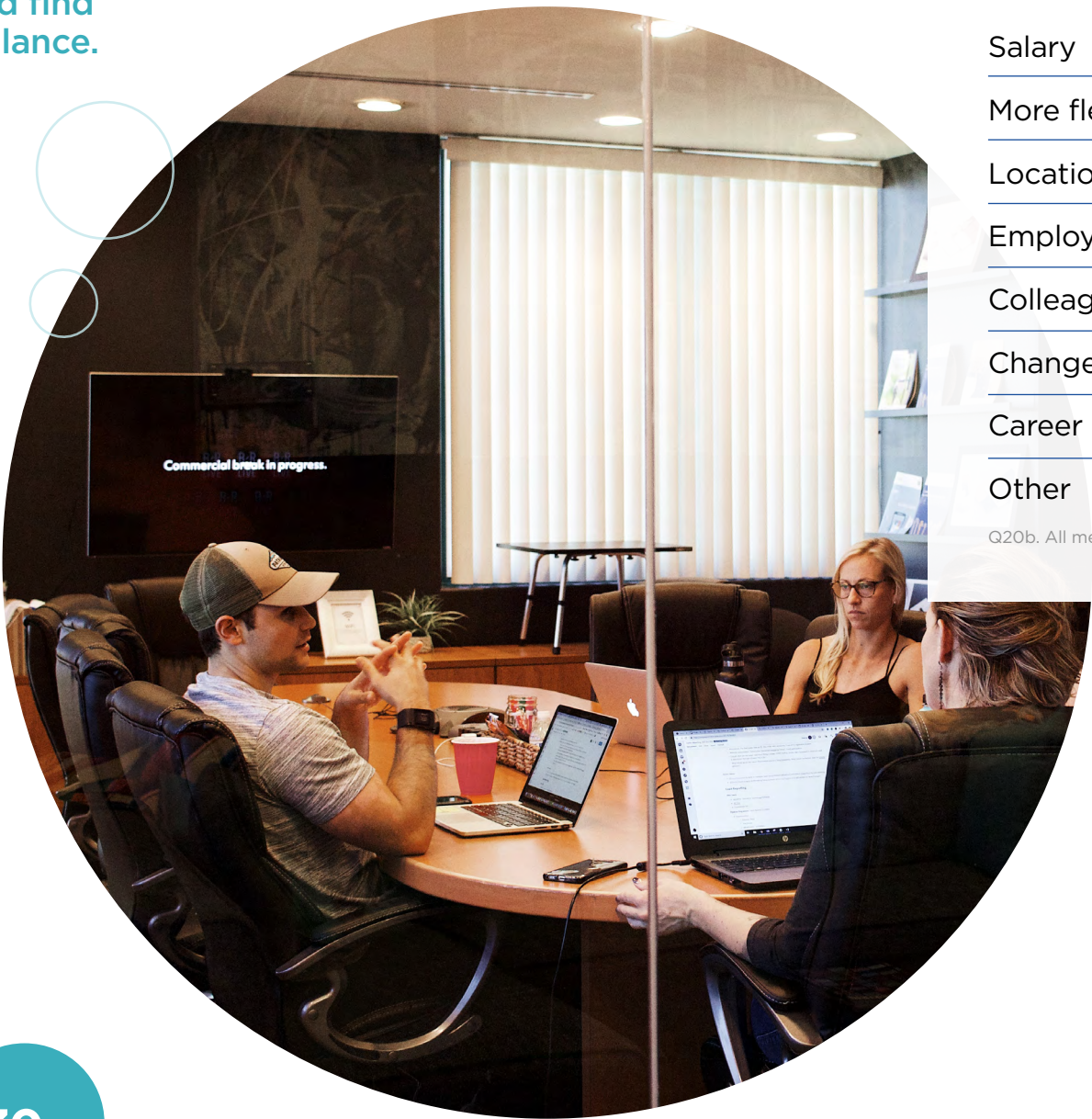
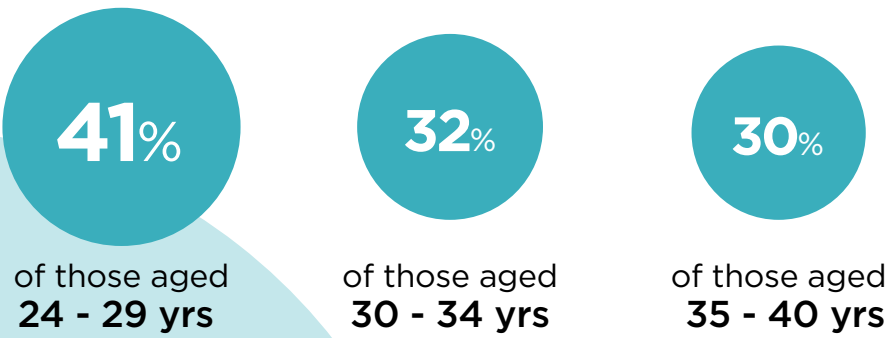
**1/3** of dads have changed jobs since becoming a dad to try and find their optimal work/life balance.



Q20a. Changed jobs since becoming a father

Although this skews more heavily towards younger dads, almost **1/3** of the oldest dads in our study have changed jobs since becoming a father.

% of dads who have changed jobs since becoming a father:



## Reasons for changing jobs

Salary	52%
More flexibility to accommodate parental responsibilities	39%
Location	37%
Employer relationships	26%
Colleague relationships	18%
Change of industry / role	27%
Career progression	36%
Other	6%

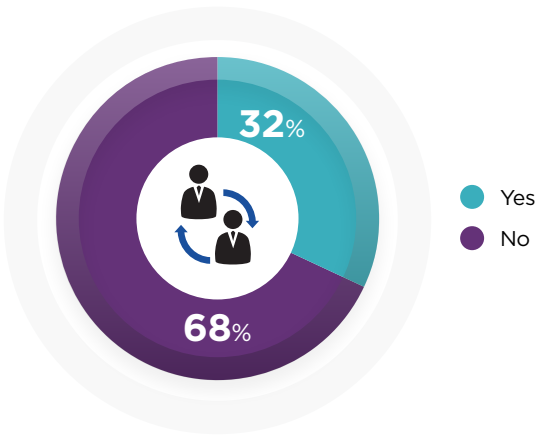
Q20b. All mentions

We gave the fathers in our study the opportunity to choose their top 3 reasons for leaving their role, and the table above is the summary of all mentions. Flexibility to accommodate parental responsibilities is the most consistent reason (**39%**) after salary (**52%**), and is notably higher than career progression (**36%**).



Actively looking to change jobs

For the fathers who hadn't changed jobs, we also asked whether they were actively looking for a new job. **Another 1/3 of all the fathers surveyed are actively looking for a new role.**



Q21a. Are you actively seeking a new job at the moment?



This, again is more pertinent for younger dads with **39% of those between 24 – 29** actively looking. This figure decreases to **28% amongst the 35-40 year old dads.** **37%** of those actively looking give the need for more flexibility to accommodate parental responsibilities as the reason. Salary still accounts for the majority of main reasons with **62%** of all first 3 answers, while **26%** say employer relationships. Unsurprisingly this figure increases to **40%** for those who are fully involved as dads.





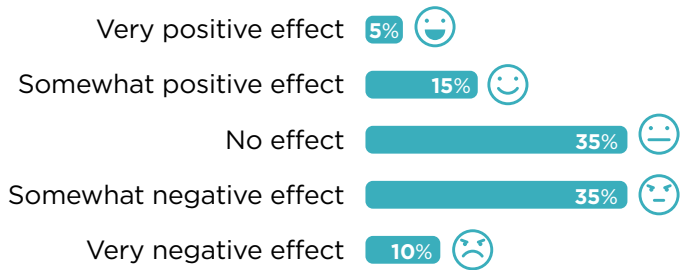
# The effects on the individual

Being “always on”

45%

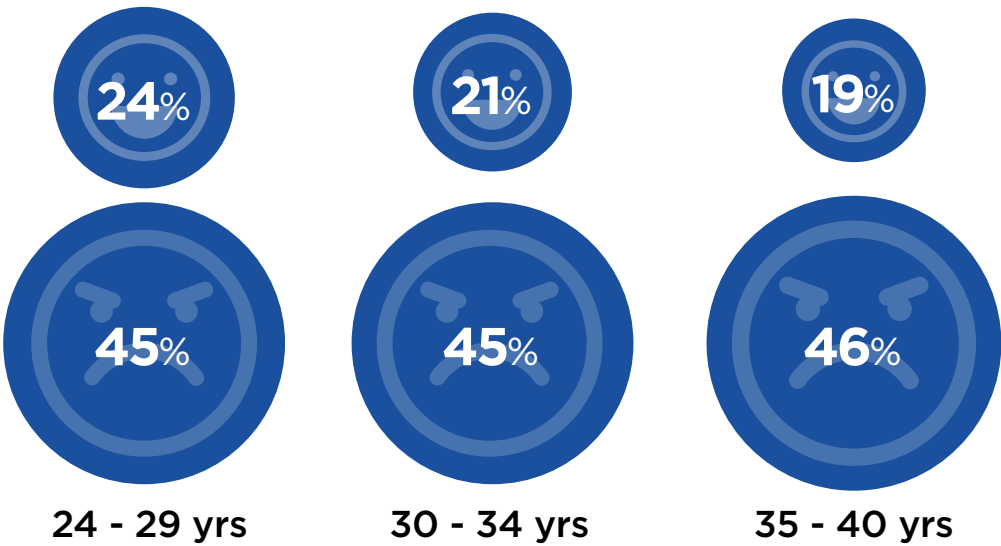
of the fathers in the study reported a negative effect when it comes to being able to switch off from work.

Only 20% of the fathers in the study reported a positive impact of trying to juggle work and parental responsibilities in their ability to switch off.



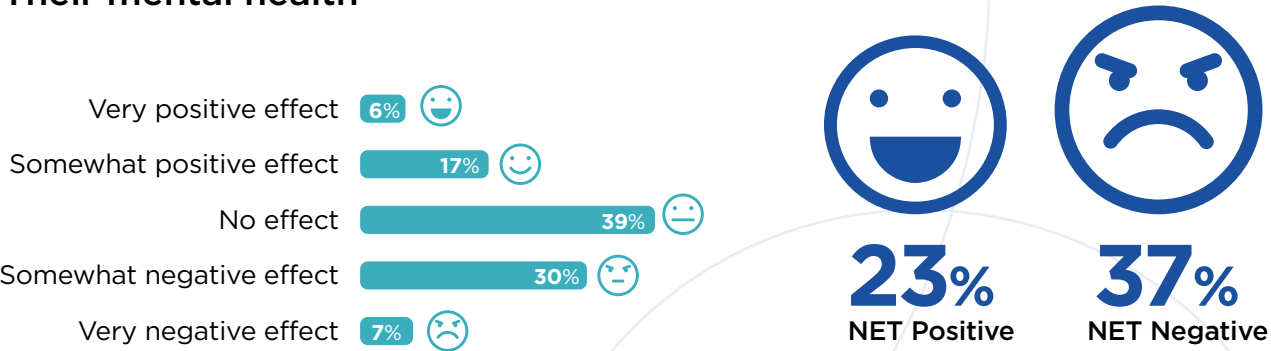
Q24. Your ability to 'switch off' mentally - Effects of juggling work and parental responsibilities

This affects more older dads in particular, and almost half of the dads aged 35 – 40 report the negative effect of trying to balance work and parental responsibilities meaning they are ‘always -on’ when it comes to work (46%).



Not only are dads ‘always-on’, this is also affecting their mental health.

Their mental health



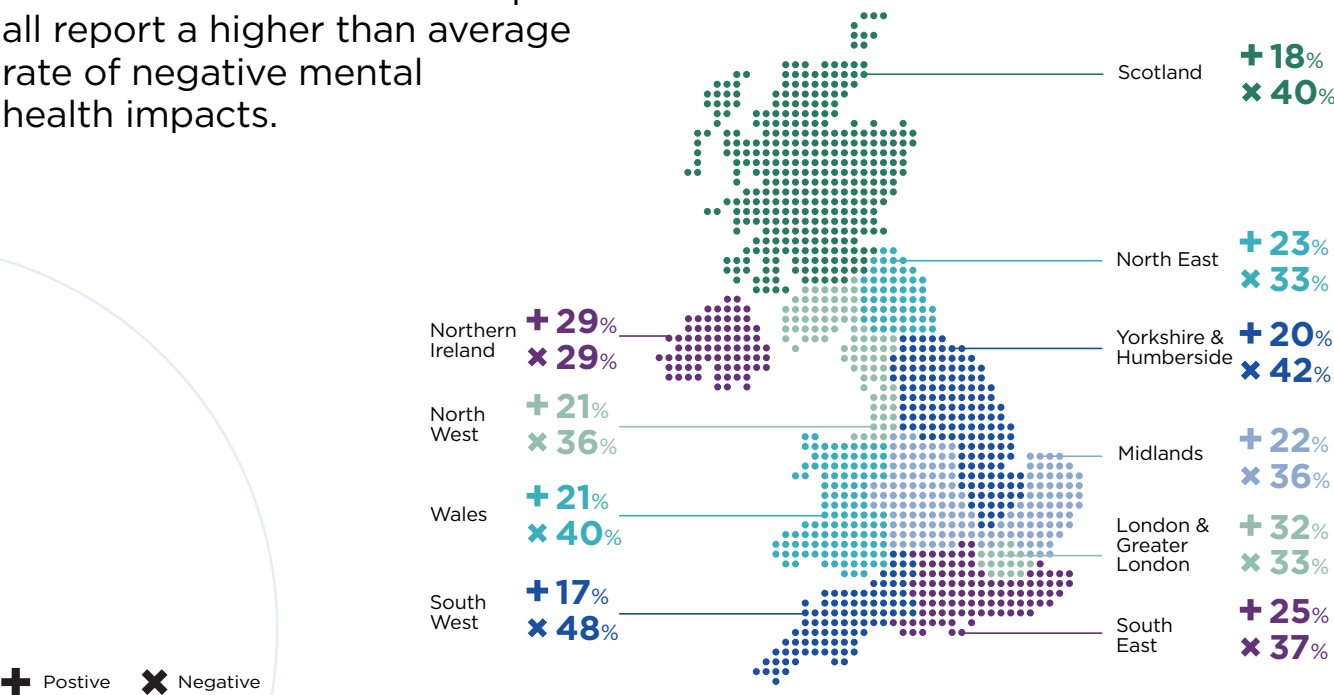
Q24. Your mental health - Effects of juggling work and parental responsibilities

37%

say their mental health is affected either very or somewhat negatively as a result of trying to balance work and parental responsibilities.

Only 23% report the impact on their mental health as somewhat or very positive.

The regional breakdown of net positive and negative response when it comes to dads’ mental health shows that those in Scotland, South West, Yorkshire & Humberside and Wales in particular all report a higher than average rate of negative mental health impacts.

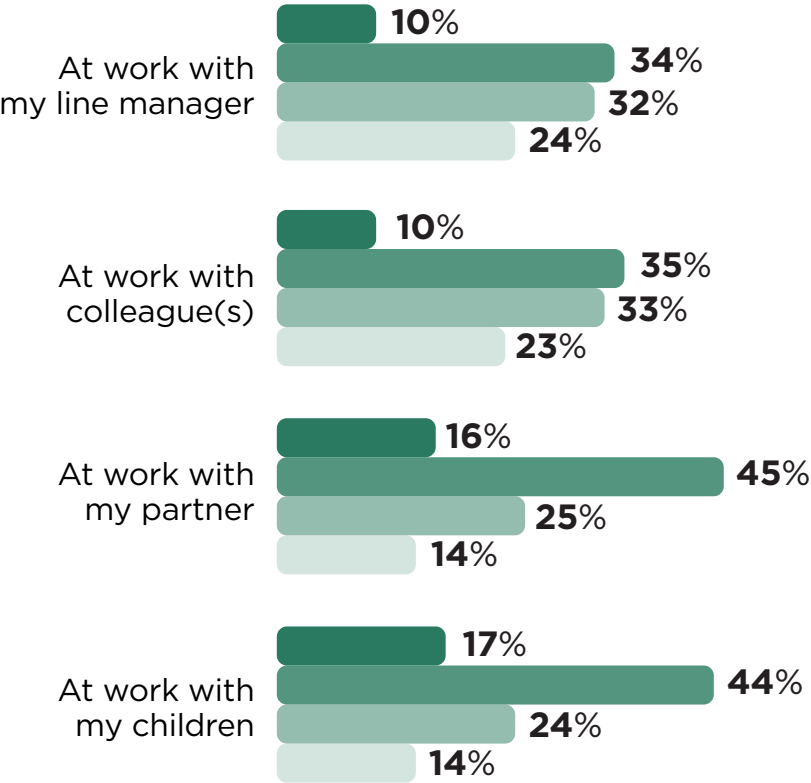


Guilt

44%

of dads often/sometimes experience guilt with their line manager.

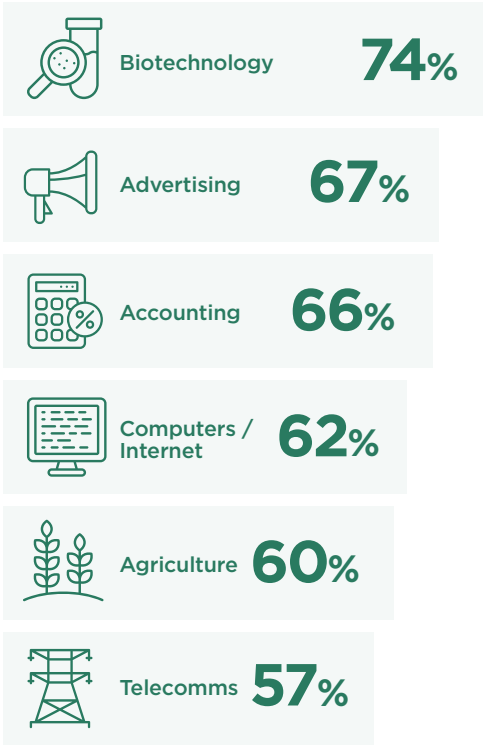
Only 24% of the fathers in the study said they never experienced some form of guilt with their line managers. Unsurprisingly dads feel more guilt in those workplaces where they experience more tension about balancing work and family life (see Chapter 4).



- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q18. Experience guilt

The most prevalent industries in which dads feel most guilt when it comes to their line managers



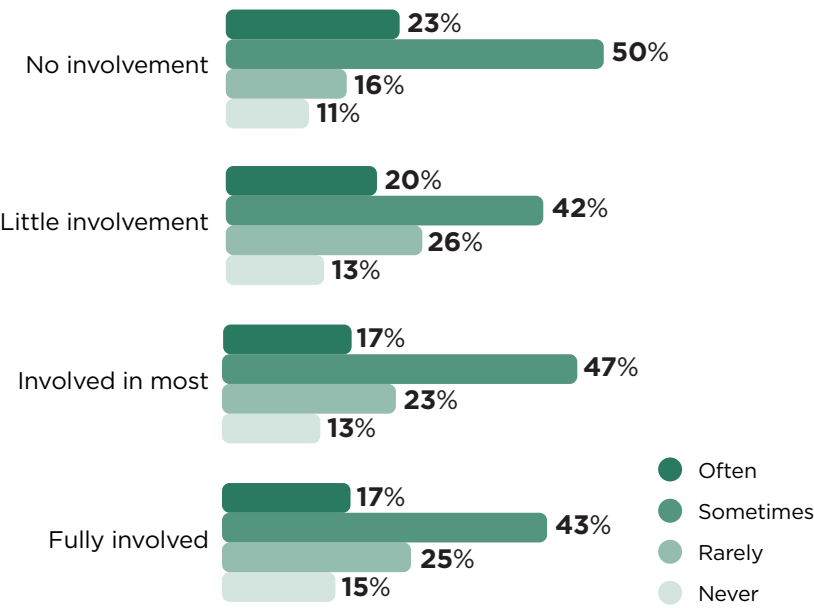
45%



experience guilt with colleagues while 61% experience guilt with their partners.

51% of fathers say that they experience guilt with their children at home.

When we analyse the correlation of the dads' own level of involvement against their feeling of guilt, we see that guilt plays out consistently across all levels of involvement.

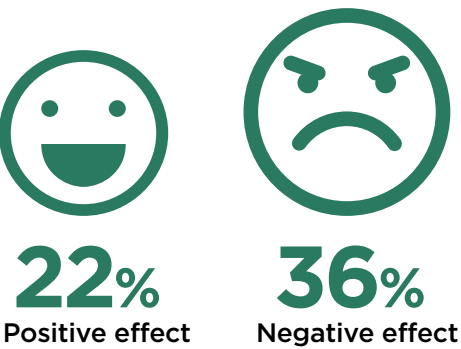


- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q25. At home with my child(ren) - Experience guilt

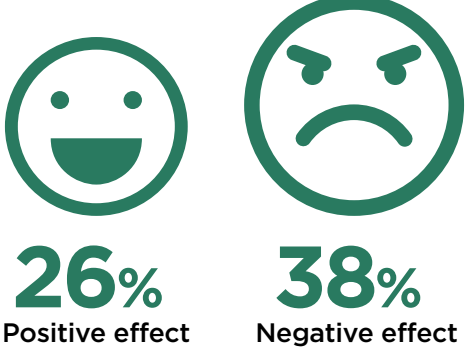
We also asked the fathers in the study about how their current work life/ parental involvement set up was affecting their physical health and relationships with their partners – both of which also paint a fairly negative picture.

Physical Health



Q24. Your physical health - Effects of juggling work and parental responsibilities

Relationship with partner



Q24. Relationship with your partner - Effects of juggling work and parental responsibilities

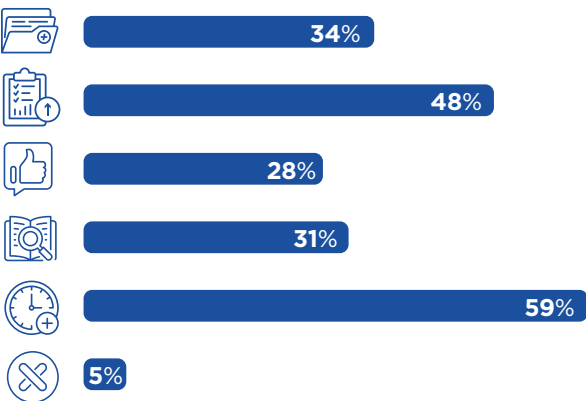




# A path ahead

## Employers as a whole

What do Millennial Fathers want to see change?  
We asked all the fathers in the study to name the key areas their employers need to improve in.



Average number of responses **2.05**

Q26a. Important for UK employers to improve

**KEY**

More information on parental leave

Changing the workplace culture

Improving paternity leave policy / benefits

More flexible working

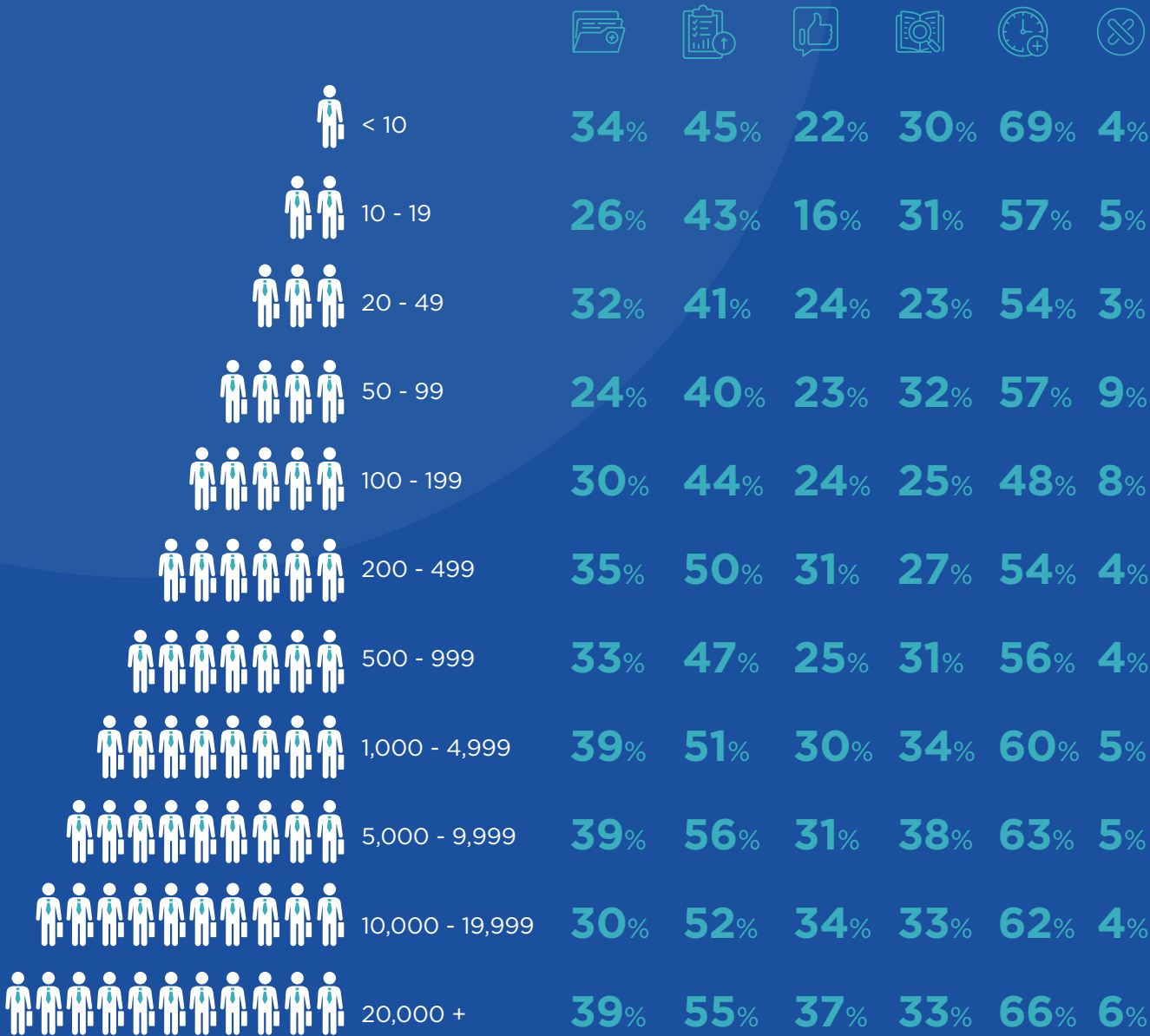
Line management attitudes / behaviour

None

**59%** say more flexible working is needed. This supports the insight from the ‘Workplace attitude vs. practice’ section, that Millennial fathers are struggling to get the level of flexible working that they are requesting, and more flexible working was by some distance the single most popular choice in this part of the study.

Almost 1/2 (**48%**) say that improving paternity leave is vital. At current time of writing, the UK statutory minimum is 2 weeks of paid leave, though we have [previously reported](#) that even this provision does not apply to a growing number of new fathers.

When we look at what this new generation of fathers are requesting against the size of organisation they work for – we can see that the calls to action are at consistently high levels throughout organisations of all sizes.



Q26a. Important for UK employers to improve



Within the organisation

Participants were given the option to pick multiple options to indicate what they felt needed to improve when it comes to line management and behaviours inside their organization.



**62%** said line managers need more training around how to support dads specifically, and **60%** said they needed more guidance from HR around available options and support. **51%** said they need reassurance around career progression.

When we consider that, as highlighted earlier in this report, the majority of fathers in the study believed their organisations as a whole recognised the active role of fathers at home, what seems to be the key missing link is how workplace policy plays out in reality, and the vital role of line managers in putting this into action for fathers.

Concluding thoughts

DaddiLife has been reporting on the Millennial dad shift for the last 3 years, but throughout this process the insights have surprised and at times shocked us as to the scale of change needed. More new dads want a different role at home compared to what may have been the cultural norm in generations gone by.

While organisations appear to be recognizing the greater role of dads in the home, it is clear that they now need to enable them to succeed both at work and in the home.

With 2/3 of dads having already either changed jobs or actively looking to change them, the need to genuinely act on this is now more urgent than ever.

Greater flexibility at work is at the heart of the Millennial father’s work/life balance goals, and in its absence, more than a 1/3 are feeling the effects, not just physically but mentally. We now need organization leaders, line managers and HR to converge on this topic if we want to strive for genuine equality at work.





## Credits

There are a number of people who have made this research possible.

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We also want to thank Linda Hancock from LH Qual, for bringing our research to life in the first phase, and to Johanna and Dan at Facefacts research for all their ongoing support as ever.

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For more information on this report and the research please contact [dad@daddilife.com](mailto:dad@daddilife.com)