

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Fatherhood Institute Fathers' Day Press Release 2020

What has been happening during lockdown?

We have seen a very large increase in childcare by men (58 per cent) thanks to less travel to work, more working from home and a small drop in men's overall hours of paid work (11 per cent drop in working hours), according to the Government's [Office of National Statistics](#).

Could it be duplicated after lockdown?

The ONS figures show that men have reduced their paid work and travel time by 1 hour and 37 minutes a day on average during lockdown. That's 8 hours and 5 mins for a 5-day working week. Here is how they could retain that gain that time post-lockdown...

We know from other research that men's average commute in England is 65 minutes¹. By working 3 days a week from home and avoiding such commuting times, they could save themselves 3 hours 15 mins per week.

The ONS data say that men reduced their overall working hours by 11 per cent during lockdown. If, in the 'new normal', they worked 11 per cent less (assuming the average 43-hour week worked by full-time working fathers), they would gain a further 4 hours 44 mins per week.

So via more home-working (and therefore less travel) and shorter (but not hugely shorter) working hours, they would gain 7 hours 59 minutes per week – almost exactly the 8 hours 5 mins achieved in lockdown.

HOWEVER, it is worth noting that working from home allows for much greater flexibility in terms of fitting work around children (e.g. working very early mornings or later in the evening). If fathers were to gain childcare time from such flexibility, then to maintain gains experienced during lockdown, they would not need to reduce their working hours even by as much as the 4 hours 44 minutes calculated above.

How does men's childcare and men's paid work compare with women's in the ONS data?

The numbers, in terms of minutes, from the ONS data, are an average that covers all *men* and all *women* – not just *mothers* and *fathers*. That's why the numbers look so low for both sexes: the great majority of women and men don't have dependent children at home.

¹ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/annual-commuting-time-21-hours-compared-decade-ago-finds-tuc>

The important learning from the ONS figures is the change in *ratios* nor *minutes*, which are not informative.

During lockdown men have been doing two thirds (66%) of the childcare done by women (see Table 1 below). That's a big change compared to pre-lockdown, when men were doing less than two fifths (39%) of the childcare done by women. The continuing gender care gap reflects that, even during lockdown, men have continued to do more paid work (a third more – see Table 2 below) than women: so they have had a lot less time to look after children.

Table 1: Childcare by All Women + All Men (ONS)

Remember: these numbers do not refer to 'mothers' and 'fathers' so the 'minutes' figures are much smaller than they would be if we were able to look only at mothers and fathers. The key issue here is the overall trend, as shown by the lockdown vs pre-lockdown ratios between men and women.

	Women (mins)	Men (mins)	Men's childcare time compared with women's
Pre-Lockdown	45.58	17.38	Men were doing 0.39 (about two fifths) of women's childcare
Lockdown	42.58	27.44	Men are doing 0.66 (two thirds) of women's childcare

Table 2: Paid work by All Women + All Men (ONS)

	Women (mins)	Men (mins)	Men's paid work time compared with women's
Pre-Lockdown	131.99	198.11	Men were doing 1.5 times as much paid work as women (50% more)
Lockdown	129.24	175.79	Men are doing 1.36 times as much paid work women (a third more)

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