

New report reveals the stark impact of the coronavirus pandemic on parents and key workers

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Experts from the Mile End Institute at Queen Mary University of London have contributed to new research published today which reveals

the stark reality of the coronavirus pandemic for parents and key workers.

The research, carried out by gender equality charity the Fawcett Society, the Women's Budget Group, Queen Mary University of London and the London School of Economics (LSE) shows that 51 percent of parents with young children will struggle to make ends meet in the next three months. It also reveals that 57 percent will face higher levels of debt after the crisis.

Disproportionate impact on women

The research also finds that women are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Women who are working outside the home are more likely to be key workers, with six in ten (61 percent) compared with four in ten (43 percent) men saying their work is essential at this time.

Women were more likely to say they have to continue going out to work because they cannot afford to stay at home than men. They were also twice as likely as men to say they feel under pressure from their employer to continue going out to work.

Women are more likely to report the highest levels of anxiety, with 36 percent of women compared with 27 percent of men reporting above a 7 on a 0-10 scale. Women on the frontline report some of the greatest levels of anxiety. 56 percent of those who are working outside the home report anxiety levels of 7 or more, compared with 30 percent of men in that group.

Levels of happiness falling

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's well-being is

significant. Women's and men's satisfaction with life has fallen dramatically, by more than half (from 32 percent to 12 percent) for women and down from 29 percent to 15 percent for men.

Professor Sophie Harman, Professor of International Politics and global health expert at Queen Mary said: "We know health emergencies have harder immediate and long-term impacts on women than men and that such emergencies exacerbate inequalities within society. COVID-19 is no different.

"The needs of women and their economic and social well-being must be a key factor in every level of decision—making around COVID-19. The government needs far greater inclusion of women and gender experts in key advisory groups to assess and address the differential impacts of their decision-making on COVID-19 on women."

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive of the Fawcett Society said: "The impact of this crisis on our wellbeing is significant and profound. But [women](#) are hit harder than men in terms of their financial security and mental wellbeing. Parents of young children and key workers are experiencing anxiety about the virus, huge money worries and work pressures.

"The Government needs to step in to provide additional financial support for parents and ensure decent pay and conditions for key workers too, who themselves also more likely to be parents. A significant increase in child benefit of £50 per week per child and setting pay for all key workers at real living wage levels would make a real difference. Government could do this now."

The survey was conducted by Survation on behalf of the Fawcett Society via online panel, with fieldwork conducted 15—21 April 2020.

The sample size was 1,783. Data were weighted to the profile of all adults in the UK aged 18+. Data were weighted by age, sex, region, household income, education and 2019 general election vote. Targets for the weighted [data](#) were derived from Office for National Statistics Data and the results of the 2019 UK general election. Data tables can be found on the [website of Survation](#).

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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