



GROWING UP IN SCOTLAND: PATTERNS OF MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND BARRIERS TO PAID WORK



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GROWING UP IN SCOTLAND

PATTERNS OF MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND BARRIERS TO PAID WORK

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Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report, and for all interpretation of the data, lies solely with the authors.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) is a longitudinal research study which tracks the lives of thousands of children and their families in Scotland, from the early years, through childhood and beyond. This report draws on data collected from mothers in Birth Cohort 1 (BC1) and Birth Cohort 2 (BC2) when the cohort children were aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. For BC1, this means drawing on data collected in 2005/06, 2007/08 and 2009/10. For BC2 the corresponding data were collected in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

The report explores changes to mothers' employment status and trajectories over time, examines the characteristics of mothers who were unable to find paid work, and looks at the main barriers these mothers face. It also identifies a number of characteristics and circumstances which appear to be associated with an increased likelihood of mothers giving up paid work after having a child and not returning within five years. In doing so, it addresses a number of questions relevant to policy makers and others who are seeking to enable and support mothers with young children who want to work but face barriers to doing so. For example, what are the main barriers faced by mothers who want to work? Who are the mothers most in need of support and how can they be supported?

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:

Mothers looking for work: Mothers who were not in paid work at the time of interview and reported that they had looked for paid work in the last four weeks.

Mothers not looking for work: Mothers who were not in paid work at the time of interview and reported that they had not looked for paid work in the last four weeks.

Mothers who left work after having a child: Mothers who were in paid work while they were pregnant with the cohort child but were not in work either when the child was aged 10 months*, 3 years or 5 years.

*Mothers who were on maternity leave were defined as being in paid work.

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Changes in maternal employment between the two cohorts

- Mothers who had a child in 2010/11 (mothers in BC2) were more likely to be in paid work than mothers who had a child in 2004/05 (mothers in BC1). For example, when the child was aged 10 months, 62% of mothers in BC2 were in work compared with 58% of mothers in BC1.
- In both cohorts, the proportion of mothers who were in paid work increased as the cohort child grew older. In BC2, the proportion of mothers in work increased from 62% when the child was aged 10 months to 70% when the child was 5 years old.
- Mothers who had a child in 2010/11 were also more likely to remain in work after childbirth and during the first five years of their child's life. For example, in 2015, 21% of mothers of 5 year old children had not been in paid work at any of the three time points considered – i.e. they were out of work when the child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years – compared with 24% of mothers of 5 year olds in 2009/10.
- The analysis found no evidence of any change in the proportion of mothers who were not in paid work and looking for work between the cohorts¹, suggesting that barriers to maternal employment have not eased over time. For example, at the time the cohort child was aged 3, 6% of mothers in both cohorts were looking for work.

Characteristics of mothers looking for work and mothers who left work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child was aged 5

- Across all three child age points examined – 10 months, 3 years and 5 years – mothers who were looking for work tended to be younger than those who were in paid work and those who were not in paid work and were not looking for work. They also had lower educational qualifications and were considerably more likely to be in lower income households than other mothers.
- Mothers who gave up work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child was aged 5 tended to live in less advantaged circumstances than mothers who remained in or returned to work within the first five years after childbirth. For example, those who left work were more likely to be younger, to be single mothers, and to be living in the most deprived areas. They were also less likely to have a degree or to have been working in professional or managerial occupations.

¹ Mothers who were not in paid work were asked if they had actively looked for work in the last four weeks.

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- When controlling for the influence of other factors, being a single mother, having lower levels of educational qualifications, having another child before the cohort child turned 5, and the cohort child having a long-term health condition all independently predicted giving up work and not having returned by the time the child was aged 5.
- Interestingly, among mothers living with a partner who was in work, those who gave up work were more likely than those who remained in or returned to work to have a partner who was on a low income but were just as likely to be living with a partner on a high income.

Barriers to maternal employment

- Mothers in BC2 who were looking for paid work were asked – when their child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years – what they believed was the main reason why they had not managed to find work. The main reasons given were that no suitable jobs were available, childcare issues, and not having looked very hard (often because they preferred to stay at home to look after their child or children). A lack of qualifications and experience to be able to compete with others in the job market was also mentioned, as were issues with organising transport.
- At the time the child was aged 10 months, by far the most commonly referenced reason was a lack of suitable jobs (53% of mothers who were looking for work at this point quoted this reason). By the time the child was aged 5 this had dropped to around a quarter of the mothers looking for work².
- Issues with childcare were mentioned by a substantial minority of mothers at each age point. These included difficulties with arranging childcare as well as mentions of childcare simply being too expensive to make working worthwhile. There was some indication that childcare was perceived as more of a barrier as the child approached age 5 – while just 14% of the mothers of 10 month old children who were looking for work referenced childcare issues as a barrier to finding work, 26% of mothers of 5 year olds³ who were looking for work did so.
- Notably, childcare issues appeared to be a significant barrier among single mothers even when the child was a baby. For example, at the time the child was aged 10 months, 19% of single mothers who were looking for work quoted childcare issues as a barrier to finding work, compared with 10% of partnered mothers.

² Note that these are not necessarily the same mothers as those who were looking for work when the cohort children were aged 10 months.

³ At this age, around half of the children in the GUS cohort had started school.

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Implications for policy

- The findings suggest a number of ways in which mothers could be supported to enter, re-enter or remain in work after having a child.
- First, initiatives seeking to support mothers to enter, re-enter or remain in work need to take into account a mother's level of education and skills. In the short term, this could include efforts to support mothers to gain further skills and qualifications. Notably, however, any such initiatives would need to go hand in hand with efforts to ensure that mothers consider continuing their education or learning new skills to be a worthwhile pursuit.
- Second, ensuring that secure and well-paid part time positions are available across all skill levels is also likely to benefit mothers looking to enter, re-enter or remain in work after having a child.
- Other forms of family-friendly working are also likely to benefit mothers looking to work. For example, being able to work from home and/or to work only during school hours, and being able to take time off at short notice without pay penalties or other negative repercussions. This could be particularly important for mothers who care for a child with a long-term health condition.
- Third, ensuring that suitable childcare is available – including for children under the age of one – may help some mothers (back) into work after having a child. This could be of particular importance for single mothers who will in most cases be their child's primary and sole carer.
- In addition, a targeted approach to supporting the needs of young mothers may be warranted. Given the multitude of challenges young mothers often face, such initiatives would likely benefit from straddling a range of policy areas, including health, education, employment, housing, and welfare. Also, given the strong link between being in paid work during pregnancy and remaining in or returning to work after childbirth, promoting links between pregnant women and a potential future employer may be another avenue worth exploring.
- In conclusion, the needs of mothers who need support to enter, re-enter or remain in work are complex and diverse. Initiatives aiming to support these mothers need to take this into account and must consider the wider context in which mothers make their decisions about paid work. For example, support with job seeking on its own is unlikely to help many mothers into work.
- Thus, longer term initiatives to address the poorer working conditions often associated with low skilled work – such as low pay, insecurity and a lack of flexibility – are likely to be required. If the aim is to support all mothers who want

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to enter, re-enter or remain in paid work – irrespective of their level of skills or experience – paid work must be perceived as something that is worthwhile and which is not a source of stress or worry about how to combine paid work with other responsibilities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Supporting mothers who want to enter, re-enter, or remain in paid work after childbirth is an important objective for the Scottish Government. It feeds into wider goals to eliminate child poverty and to ensure the Scottish labour market works for everyone, thus helping lay the ground for a Fairer Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016a).

Across the UK the employment rate for women has increased over the last decades, and since the 1980s the employment rate for mothers has increased even faster than that for other women (Fagan and Norman, 2012). Currently, as many as seven out of ten (70%) of all adult women in Scotland are in employment (Nomis, 2017), and figures for mothers are higher still, at almost eight out of ten (77%) (Adams *et al.*, 2016). Nonetheless, inequalities and challenges remain: the pay gap between men and women persists and widens significantly as women reach childbearing age (Resolution Foundation, 2017). Furthermore, existing research has suggested that mothers living in disadvantaged circumstances are less likely than more advantaged mothers to enter or re-enter the labour market after having a child (Fagan and Nolan, 2012; Smeaton, 2006; Chanfreu *et al.*, 2011), and that mothers on lower incomes are more likely than those on higher incomes to struggle with balancing paid work and caring responsibilities (Dean *et al.*, 2017). These inequalities pose important questions about how best to address barriers to mothers' employment – who are the mothers most in need of support and what are the main barriers they face?

This report seeks to answer questions relevant to policy makers and others who are seeking to enable and support mothers with young children who want to engage in paid work but face barriers to doing so. The report uses data from the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS). GUS provides a unique opportunity to explore employment patterns of mothers in Scotland and to identify which mothers are more likely to be in need of support to enter, re-enter or remain in paid work after having a child. Through exploring questions of particular relevance to policy makers, the report also contributes to the wider evidence base on maternal employment. More specifically, it explores changes to mothers' employment status and trajectories over time, examines the characteristics of mothers who are looking for paid work and looks at the main barriers these mothers face. It also identifies a number of characteristics and circumstances which appear to be associated with an increased likelihood of mothers giving up paid work after having a child.

1.1 About the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS)

GUS is a longitudinal research study which tracks the lives of thousands of children and their families in Scotland from the early years, through childhood and beyond. The main aim of the study is to provide new information to support policy-making in Scotland but it is also intended to provide a resource for practitioners, academics, the voluntary sector and parents.

To date, the study has collected information about three nationally representative cohorts of children: a child cohort and two birth cohorts. Altogether, information has been collected on around 14,000 children and families in Scotland. This report draws on data collected from mothers in the two birth cohorts at the time the children were aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years⁴.

The first birth cohort (Birth Cohort 1 or 'BC1') comprised 5217 children born between June 2004 and May 2005 and living in Scotland when they were 10 months old. For this cohort, starting in 2005/06, data were collected annually from when the children were aged 10 months until they were just under 6 years old, and then biennially at age 8 and when the children were in Primary 6 (age 10). At the time of writing (2017), the ninth sweep of face-to-face data collection with this cohort is underway⁵.

The second birth cohort (Birth Cohort 2 or 'BC2') comprised 6127 children who were born between March 2010 and February 2011 and living in Scotland when they were 10 months old. For this cohort, data were collected when the children were aged 10 months, just under 3 years, and just under 5 years. Face-to-face data collection with this cohort took place in 2011, 2013 and 2015, respectively⁶.

At each sweep of GUS, a range of data is collected from the child's main carer. This includes information about their employment, education, income and health, as well as information about the household composition (e.g. whether they are living with a partner and the number of children living in the household). In the vast majority of cases, the respondent is the cohort child's mother. As such, GUS contains a large amount of information about mothers living in Scotland, and because information is obtained from the same mothers over a number of years, GUS is a useful source of

⁴ Data from the child cohort were not used for this report. The child cohort included approximately 3,000 children born between June 2002 and May 2003. In total, four 'sweeps' of data were collected from these families: first when the children were aged just under 3, and then annually until the children were just under 6.

⁵ In addition to the data collected through face-to-face in-home visits, data were also collected through the use of short online and telephone surveys with the child's main carer when the children in BC1 were in Primary 5 and Primary 7.

⁶ Additional data were collected through the use of short online and telephone questionnaires at the time the children in BC2 were aged 4.

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data for looking at mothers' employment 'trajectories' – that is, the way individual mothers' employment status changes over time.

Furthermore, the six year gap between the two cohorts means that it is possible to compare the employment status and trajectories of mothers with children born at different times. As the cohorts consist of nationally representative samples of Scottish children born in the respective time period, the findings presented in this report are broadly representative of mothers of children of particular ages living in Scotland in the years where data was collected. For example, the data collected from BC2 in 2011 are representative of mothers of 10 month old children living in Scotland at that time.

1.2 Scottish policy initiatives to support maternal employment

As already noted, ensuring that women are able to engage in rewarding work after having a child is an important priority for the Scottish Government, and one which ties in with wider efforts to address the pay gap between men and women and to eliminate child poverty. Both of these are key components of the Scottish Government's aim to create a Fairer Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016a).

A number of policies and interventions are in place, or being developed, which seek to help facilitate women's engagement in paid work after childbirth and/or overcome barriers to maternal employment. Key initiatives include efforts to combat pregnancy and maternity discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace, including ensuring access to flexible working, as well as increasing the provision of affordable and high quality childcare. A brief overview of the key initiatives is provided below.

1.2.1 Addressing pregnancy and maternity discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace

The Scottish Government's 2016-17 Programme for Government commits to the creation of an inclusive labour market through reducing barriers to employment and helping women, young people and other groups to overcome structural challenges to their participation in work (Scottish Government, 2016b). To assist work in this area, the Programme established the Workplace Equality Fund which aims to "...reduce employment inequalities so that everyone – irrespective of gender, age, race or disability – has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and improve Scotland's economic performance as a result" (Scottish Government, 2017a) and which will support delivery of a number of Scottish Government programmes, including the Programme for Government, the Race Equality Framework, the Disability Action Plan and the Labour Market Strategy.

As part of the commitment to the development of an inclusive labour market, and following on from recommendations by the Equality and Human Rights Commission,

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a Ministerial working group was established in December 2016 to examine issues around pregnancy and maternity in the workplace. The group aims to help reduce the number of women who have negative and discriminatory experiences during pregnancy and maternity and to increase positive experiences by sharing good practice and encouraging improved employment practices, communication and partnership working. This will be done by reviewing and developing governance and guidelines to help improve recruitment, retention and development of pregnant workers and increasing access to flexible working for mothers who enter or remain in paid work following childbirth. The recognition of flexible working as a key component in enhancing staff retention and recruitment is also reflected in the fact that the Scottish Government funds, and is an active partner in, the Family Friendly Working Scotland partnership. Through this partnership, established in 2014, the Scottish Government works with a number of third sector organisations to support and promote the development of family-friendly working across Scotland.

Furthermore, the Programme for Government also set out a commitment to establish a Returners Project so that women can get help updating skills and knowledge and employers can retain skilled staff after a career break. Building on initial funding to Equate Scotland to deliver the initiative in the STEM⁷ sector, the Scottish Government has announced additional funding to six projects extending the initiative across a variety of industrial sectors where occupational segregation and the lack of women in senior positions is a concern. Projects funded include supporting returners to the financial services sector, manufacturing, security and entrepreneurship, promoting the take up of flexible working practices and support for women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities (Scottish Government, 2017b).

1.2.2 Expanding childcare provision

Increasing the availability of affordable high quality childcare forms another key component of initiatives to support mothers' labour market participation. Recent years have seen the Scottish Government take a number of steps to increase the availability of childcare across Scotland. Most notably, the Children and Young People Act 2014 increased the entitlement to free early learning and childcare from 475 to 600 hours per year for 3 and 4 year old children. The government has pledged to further increase this entitlement to 1140 hours per year – equivalent to around 30 hours per week if delivered during term time – by 2020. A new framework for Out of School Care is also being developed by the Scottish Government, with support from the Scottish Out of School Care Network. This will replace the Scottish Government's previous 'School's Out' framework, published in January 2003. Out of School Care

⁷ Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

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includes breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday clubs (predominantly for primary school children but for some secondary school children too). This new framework will be an essential part of the Scottish Government's commitment to deliver early learning and childcare and out of school care which is accessible and affordable for all. The main aims of the new initiatives are to develop high quality childcare that not only improves children's outcomes and tackles inequalities but also enables parents to work, train or study. The development of the strategic framework will draw on learning from the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Model Trials which are taking place across Scotland at the time of writing.

1.3 Research questions and report outline

Existing Scottish policy initiatives which aim to support mothers into and to remain in paid work have largely been developed on the basis of evidence from the UK and internationally and shaped by specifically Scottish policy priorities. However, to inform the further development of new and existing policies it is useful to understand more about the specific experiences and circumstances of mothers living in Scotland. This report seeks to do so through addressing a number of key policy questions. It also aims to contribute to the wider evidence base on maternal employment by providing a picture of the circumstances of mothers of young children living in Scotland.

1.3.1 Policy questions

With a specific aim to support and inform policy making, the report seeks to address the following key policy questions:

- Which mothers need support to secure paid work⁸?
- What are the barriers facing mothers who want to work?
- How can mothers be supported to start or remain in paid work after having a child, and to remain in work as their child ages?

In addition to these, the report will also consider the following questions:

- To what extent would an expansion in the provision of affordable childcare support mothers into paid work?
- Has there been any progress in supporting maternal employment between 2004/05 and 2010/11?

⁸ 'Work' includes many forms of labour, including un-paid caring work. For simplicity, however, in this report the terms 'paid work' and 'work' are used interchangeably.

1.3.2 *Detailed analysis questions and report outline*

In order to answer these policy questions, the report is built up around a number of more detailed analysis questions:

- What proportion of mothers with children aged between 10 months and 5 years were out of work and looking for work between 2005 and 2015?

This question is addressed in chapter 3 and includes considerations about the extent to which mothers' employment status changed according to their child's age, and whether any changes are evident across the two cohorts.

- Who are the mothers that are out of work and looking for work?

Chapter 3 seeks to answer this question through the consideration of the socio-economic and demographic profile of mothers who were not in paid work but were looking for work. It does so by comparing, first, their profiles with that of all other mothers (i.e. all mothers who were not seeking work, including those already in paid work) and, second, with mothers who were also not in paid work but who were not looking for work. This chapter focuses on mothers of children born in 2010/11 only.

- What are the barriers facing mothers who are looking for work?

Barriers to mothers' working are addressed in chapter 4. The chapter draws on verbatim responses to a question asking why mothers who were looking for work believed they had not yet managed to find any. The analysis also looks at whether there were any differences in the reasons mentioned according to the child's age.

- What do employment trajectories for mothers of young children in Scotland look like? What proportion of mothers leave work after having a child and have not returned to paid work by the time their child is aged 5?

These questions are addressed in chapter 5 which looks at mothers' employment trajectories and compares these across the two cohorts. The analysis looks at two groups of mothers separately: all mothers, and mothers who had a paid job while they were pregnant with the cohort child.

- Who are the mothers that leave work after having a child and do not return before their child turns 5?

Chapter 5 explores socio-economic and demographic characteristics and circumstances of mothers who worked during pregnancy but gave up work after childbirth and were still not in paid work at the time the cohort child was aged 5.

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Finally, in chapter 6 we draw together findings from individual chapters and suggest what implications the research findings have for policy makers and others seeking to support mothers' employment in Scotland.

2 METHODS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides details on the methods used in the production of the report, including details about the data and the analytical approach. First, it provides details about the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) data, including detailed notes about the sample selected for the analysis presented here. Next, it outlines the analytical approach taken, including notes on how to interpret the findings.

2.2 Data and sample

The analysis presented in this report uses data from the two GUS birth cohorts. More specifically it uses data collected at the three age points where comparable data is available, namely when the cohort children were aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years⁹. For Birth Cohort 1 (BC1), this means the analysis draws on data collected in 2005/06, 2007/08 and 2009/10. For Birth Cohort 2 (BC2) the corresponding data were collected in 2011, 2013 and 2015 (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1 Sample overview

Child's age	10 months		3 years		5 years	
	BC1	BC2	BC1	BC2	BC1	BC2
Cohort	BC1	BC2	BC1	BC2	BC1	BC2
Year of data collection	2005/06	2011	2007/08	2013	2009/10	2015
Number of mothers	5147	6007	4131	4874	3759	4283

⁹ At each sweep interviews took place around six weeks before the child's next birthday. Therefore, in the first year of the study, children were around 10 months old. For the purposes of this report, beyond the first interview, the child's age is referred to in years. It is worth bearing in mind however that a 3 year old child was actually around 34 months old or just under 3, and a 5 year old child was actually around 58 months or just under 5.

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The main data collection on GUS takes place through annual or biennial ‘sweeps’ of face-to-face survey interviews with the cohort child’s main carer. In the vast majority of cases this is the child’s mother. At each sweep, information previously collected about the mother’s employment is checked and, where necessary, updated. If the mother has a resident partner their employment details are collected too. In addition to this, a range of information about the household is obtained including household income and the mother’s educational attainment.

This means that GUS data contains information about mothers’ employment as well as about a range of individual and household circumstances collected across a number of different time points.

Given the focus of the research, cases where information about the mother’s employment status was missing at one or more relevant sweeps were excluded from the analysis, and all analyses were restricted to cases where the main respondent was the cohort child’s mother¹⁰.

Analysis which used information about the mother’s employment during pregnancy was further restricted to cases where the respondent was the child’s biological mother. Furthermore, some analyses use data only from the youngest cohort (BC2). Finally, for the longitudinal analyses only cases where the cohort child’s mother was the main respondent at all relevant sweeps were included.

These restrictions mean that base sizes vary across and within chapters. Clear descriptions of the groups included in the analysis are provided in the text and base sizes are provided for all tables and charts.

2.3 Analytical approach and interpreting the findings

The report makes comparisons between mothers in the two cohorts, as well as comparisons between mothers within each cohort at different time points: at the time the cohort child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. It also looks at mothers’ employment status and certain employment trajectories according to a number of socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Details of key variables are provided at the beginning of the relevant chapters. Details of the remaining variables are available in Appendix A¹¹.

As already noted, the GUS sample design means that the data can be used to produce estimates about all mothers of children of a certain age living in Scotland.

¹⁰ In a small number of cases at any sweep of data collection, the main respondent is the child’s father, grandparent or another carer.

¹¹ Note that throughout the report, notions of ‘work’ and ‘paid work’ are used interchangeably. Note also that, unless otherwise stated, the term ‘in paid work’ includes mothers who are self-employed.

For example, based on GUS data we can estimate the proportion of mothers of 5 year old children living in Scotland in 2009/10 and in 2015 who were in paid work.

A substantial part of the analysis presented in this report consists of bivariate analyses comparing differences in outcomes or experiences for mothers according to their status measured using a single variable – for example, employment status or household income. Unless otherwise stated, only differences which were statistically significant at the 95% level or above are commented on in the text.

Not all families who initially took part in GUS did so for all of the subsequent sweeps. There are a number of reasons why respondents drop out from longitudinal surveys and such attrition is not random. Therefore, the data were weighted using specifically designed weights which adjust for non-response and sample selection. Different weights were applied for cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. All results have been calculated using weighted data and all comparisons take into account the complex clustered and stratified sample structures.

2.3.1 Multivariable analysis

Many of the factors we are interested in are related to each other as well as being related to maternal employment. For example, younger mothers are more likely to have lower educational qualifications, to be lone parents, and to live in areas with high levels of deprivation. Simple analysis may identify a relationship between maternal age and maternal employment – for example, younger mothers are more likely to give up work after having a child. However, this relationship may be occurring because of the underlying association between maternal age and education. Thus, it may actually be the lower education levels among younger mothers which are driving the association with giving up work rather than the fact that they are younger in age.

To avoid this difficulty, multivariable regression analysis was used. This analysis allows the examination of the relationships between an outcome variable (e.g. whether a mother gave up work after having a child) and multiple explanatory variables (e.g. the mother's age and education level, household income, whether she lived with a partner, etc.) whilst controlling for the interrelationships between each of the explanatory variables. This means it is possible to identify an independent relationship between any single explanatory variable and the outcome variable. In this report, this means, for example, that we can identify characteristics which are independently associated with being in the position of seeking work whilst having a young child, and characteristics independently associated with giving up work after having a child. Note, though, that the identification of associations between one or more explanatory variables and an outcome variable does not necessarily imply that the explanatory variable(s) *causes* the outcome.

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The multivariable analysis undertaken for this report uses logistic regression models. Full results of the models are included in the Technical Annex along with notes on how to interpret them.

Note that the statistical analysis and approach used in this report represents one of many available techniques capable of exploring this data. Other analytical approaches may produce different results from those reported here.

3

EMPLOYMENT AND WORK-SEEKING STATUS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS SEEKING WORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines, first of all, the proportion of mothers in each of the two birth cohorts who were in paid work; not in paid work and looking for work, or not in paid work and not looking for work when the cohort child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years old. It then moves on to explore differences between mothers who were seeking work and other mothers. It does so through examining the characteristics of mothers who were seeking work and illustrating the extent to which these mothers were different to those who were either in paid work or were not in paid work but not looking for work. For the latter parts of the chapter, analysis is restricted to data from BC2. The characteristics used describe a wide range of demographic, socio-economic and family circumstances including household income, mother's highest level of education, child and maternal health, family type and number of children in the household.

3.2 Key findings

- Mothers of children in BC2 were more likely to be in paid work than mothers of children in BC1. For example, when the child was aged 10 months, 62% of mothers in BC2 were in work compared with 58% of mothers in BC1.
- In both cohorts, the proportion of mothers who were in paid work increased as the cohort children grew older. In BC2, the proportion of mothers who were in work increased from 62% when the child was aged 10 months to 70% when the child was aged 5.
- Mothers who were looking for work tended to be younger than those who were in paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work. This difference was evident at all age points.
- Mothers looking for work also had lower educational qualifications than other mothers (including those who were in work). But among mothers who were not in

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paid work, those looking and not looking for work had similar levels of education.

- Mothers seeking work were considerably more likely to be in lower income households than other mothers. Even among mothers who were not in paid work, those seeking work tended to be from lower income households. For example, when the cohort child was aged 3 only 3% of mothers who were seeking work were in the highest income group compared with 21% of mothers who were out of work but not seeking work. Differences were similar at age 5.
- Mothers who were looking for work were more likely than other mothers to be single parents and less likely to be living in couples.
- Compared with mothers who were not in paid employment but not looking for work, those who were looking for work had fewer children, at all age points. Their children also tended to be older. At the time the cohort child was aged 5, 27% of mothers looking for work had a child aged younger than 3 compared with 40% of other mothers.
- When the child was aged 3, 15% of mothers who were looking for work reported a long-term health condition compared with 24% of those who were out of work and not looking. Differences when the child was aged 10 months and 5 years showed a similar pattern, but were not statistically significant.
- After controlling for other factors, younger maternal age (aged under 30 – and particularly aged under 20 – when the child was born) and lower household income were the two strongest and most consistent predictors of work-seeking across each of the age points.

3.3 Change in employment status between the cohorts

Mothers of children in BC2 were more likely to be in paid work than mothers of children in BC1 (Table 3-1). There was a four to five percentage point difference at each age point. For example, when the child was aged 10 months, 62% of mothers in BC2 were in work compared with 58% of mothers in BC1.

Mothers of children in BC1 were more likely to be out of work and not looking for work than mothers in BC2¹². Again, this difference was evident at each age point – although the comparison is not fully possible at age 10 months. When the child was aged 3, 32% of mothers in BC1 were out of work and not looking for work compared with 29% of mothers in BC2.

¹² In the BC1 10 month questionnaire, not all mothers who said they were not in paid work were subsequently asked whether they were looking for work. As such, the cohort comparison is not wholly possible at this age point.

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There were no differences in the proportion of mothers who were looking for work between the cohorts at any age point.

3.4 Changes in employment status according to the child's age

In both cohorts, the proportion of mothers who were in paid work increased as the cohort child grew older. For example, in BC2, the proportion of mothers who were in work increased from 62% when the child was aged 10 months to 70% when the child was 5 years old. The comparable figure in BC1 increased by a similar amount of around seven percentage points from 58% to 65%.

The corresponding decrease occurred in the proportion of mothers who were not in paid work and not looking for work. For BC2, this dropped from 32% when the child was aged 10 months to 25% when the child was aged 5.

In both cohorts, there was no notable difference in the proportion of mothers who were looking for work at each age point.

Table 3-1 Employment and work-seeking status, by cohort and by child age

		In paid work	Not in paid work – looking for work	Not in paid work – not looking for work	Not in paid work – unclear whether seeking work	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
10 months						
BC1	%	58	4	29	9	5147
BC2	%	62	6	32	N/A	6003
Age 3						
BC1	%	62	6	32	N/A	4190
BC2	%	66	6	29	N/A	4873
Age 5						
BC1	%	65	6	29	N/A	3829
BC2	%	70	5	25	N/A	4282

Bases: All mothers

3.5 Characteristics of mothers looking for work

This section explores characteristics of mothers in BC2 who were out of work and

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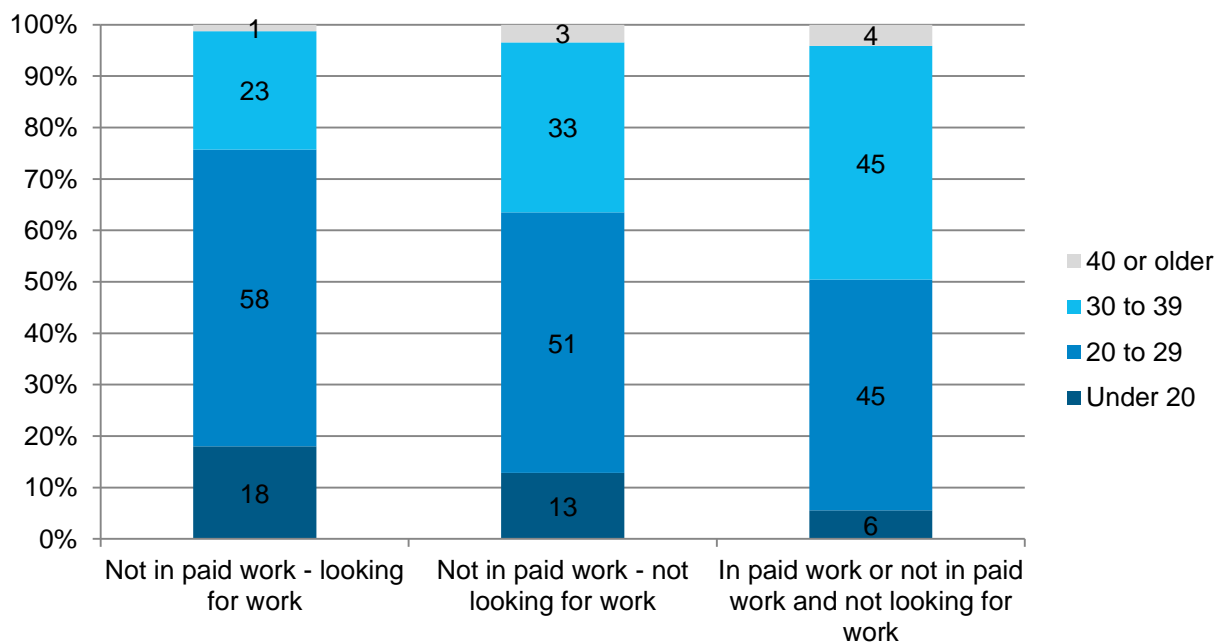
looking for work.

3.5.1 Age, education, income and social class

Compared with all other mothers – i.e. those who were either in paid work, or not in paid work and not seeking work – mothers who were looking for work tended to be younger. When the child was aged 10 months, 18% of those seeking work were under 20 when the cohort child was born compared with 6% of other mothers (Figure 3-1). In contrast, 49% of other mothers were aged 30 or older when their child was born compared with 24% of those looking for work. This difference persisted when the child was aged 3 and 5. At each age point, mothers who were looking for work were notably younger than other mothers.

When comparing more specifically with mothers who were not in paid work and not seeking work, those who were looking for work still tended to be younger, though the difference was less stark than when compared to all other mothers. For example, when the child was 10 months old, 13% of mothers who were not in paid work and not seeking work were aged under 20 at the child's birth and 36% were aged 30 or older compared with 18% and 24% of those seeking work as noted above.

Figure 3-1 Maternal age at child's birth, by mother's employment and work-seeking status when child aged 10 months



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=315/338; Not in paid work - not looking for work=1748/1831; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=5675/5647.

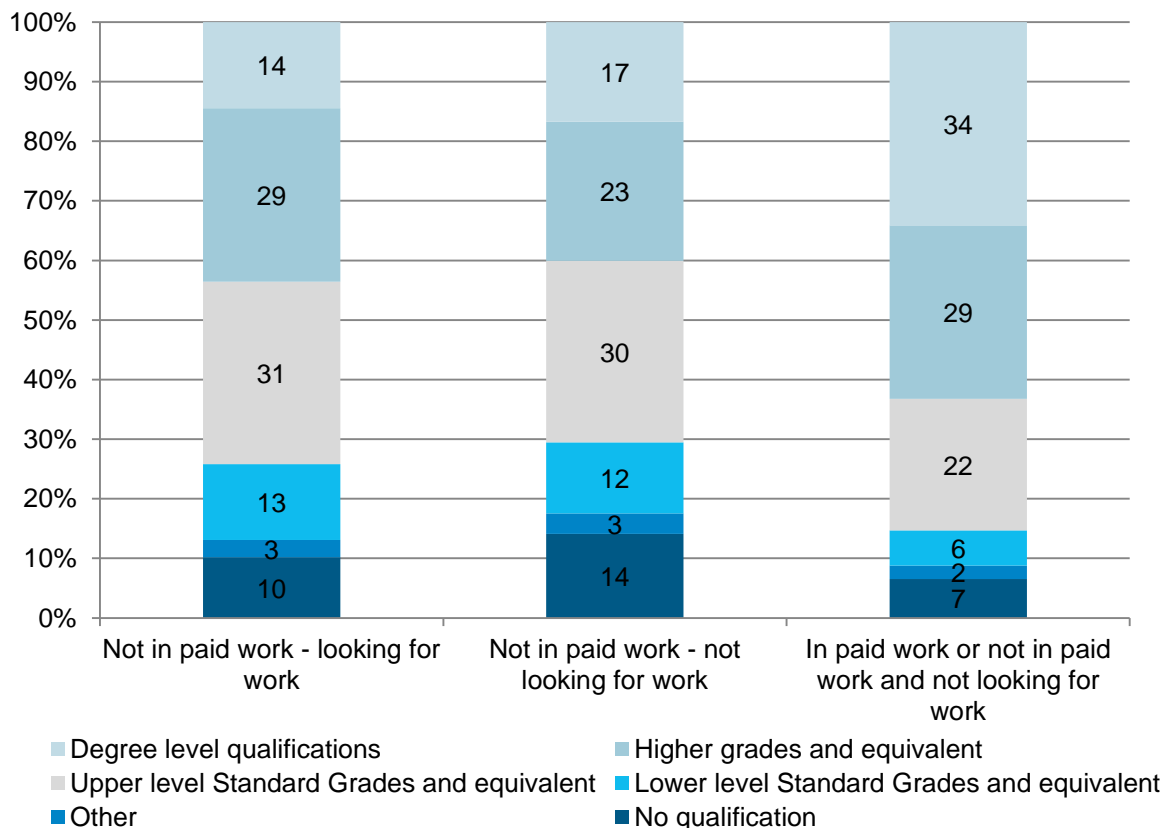
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Differences in the age of mothers who were not in paid work according to their job seeking status increased as the child grew older. By age 5, 22% of mothers seeking work were aged under 20 at the child’s birth compared with 8% of those out of work but not looking for work. This difference of 14 percentage points increased from a difference of 5 percentage points at age 10 months.

Mothers who were looking for work had lower educational qualifications than other mothers. When the child was aged 10 months, 26% of mothers looking for work had a highest qualification at or below lower standard grade level compared with 15% of other mothers (Figure 3-2). Only 14% of mothers seeking employment when the child was aged 10 months had a degree-level qualification compared with 34% of other mothers. These differences were similar when the child was aged 3 and 5.

Figure 3-2 Mother’s highest educational qualification, by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 10 months



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=315/338; Not in paid work - not looking for work=1746/1829; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=5671/5644.

There were no statistically significant differences in the highest qualification levels

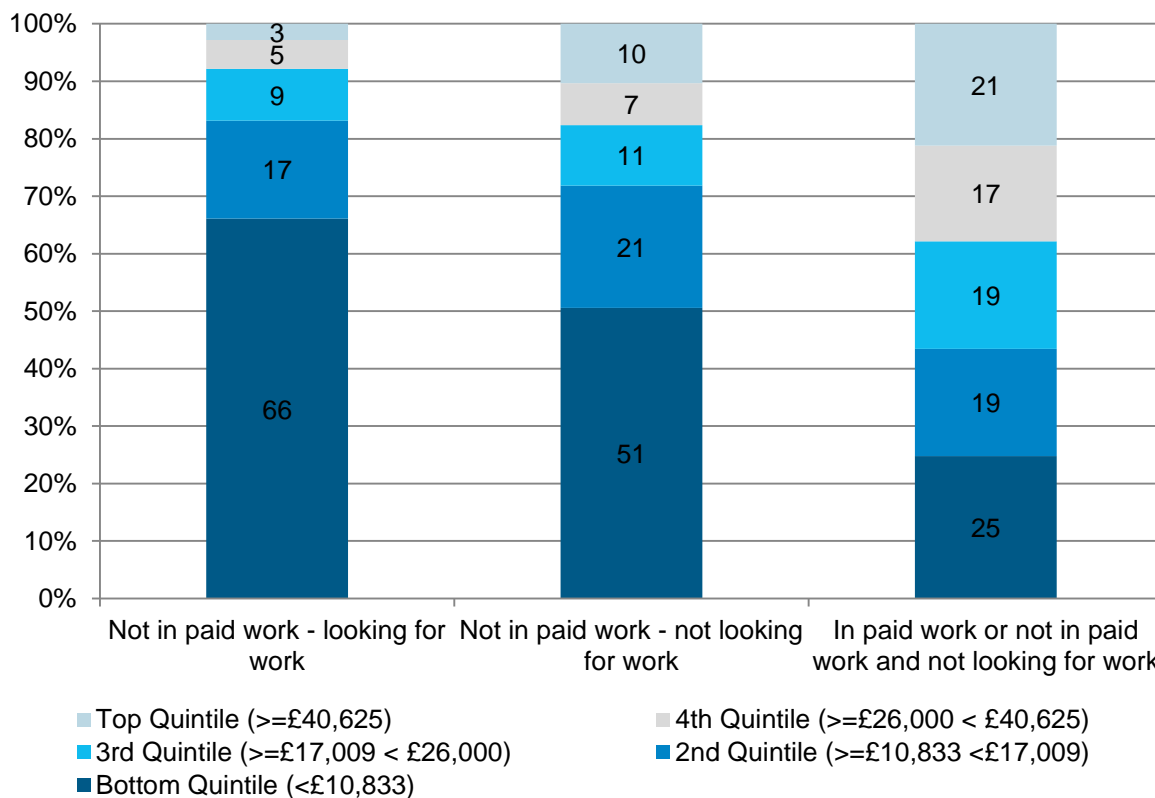
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held by mothers who were not in paid work according to their work-seeking status, at any age point.

As may be expected, mothers who were looking for work were considerably more likely than other mothers to be in lower income households at all age points. For example, when the child was aged 3, 66% of mothers who were looking for work were in the lowest income group compared with 25% of those who were in paid work or were not in paid work but not seeking work (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3 Equivalised annual household income (quintiles), by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 3



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=179/227; Not in paid work - not looking for work=997/1104; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=4072/3975.

Looking solely at mothers who were not in paid work, at the time the child was 10 months, in terms of income those who were seeking work did not differ significantly from those who were not. However, by age 3 a stark difference had emerged, with those seeking work considerably more likely to be in lower income households than those not seeking work. Only 3% of mothers seeking work were in the highest income group compared with 21% of mothers who were out of work but not seeking

work. The differences were similar at age 5.

Compared with other mothers (including mothers in paid work), those who were looking for work tended to have lower socio-economic classifications. When the child was 10 months, 50% of mothers looking for work had held routine or semi-routine occupations compared with 30% of other mothers. In contrast, 37% of other mothers were classed as managerial/professional compared with 17% of those seeking work. The differences between the two groups were similar at ages 3 and 5.

Interestingly, the proportion of mothers looking for work who were classed in the routine/semi-routine category increased as the child grew older, whereas the proportion classed in the managerial/professional decreased. When the child was aged 10 months, 50% of mothers looking for work were classed in routine/semi-routine and 17% in managerial/professional. When the child was aged 5, these figures had changed to 61% and 9% respectively.

When the child was aged 10 months, among mothers who were not in paid work, the only notable difference in the socio-economic classifications between those who were and were not looking for work was the proportion who had never worked: 19% of those not looking for work had never worked compared with 10% of those looking for work. There were no statistically significant differences in the socio-economic classification of mothers looking and not looking for work when the child was aged 3. By age 5, however, mothers seeking work were more likely than those not in paid work but not looking for work to be in the routine/semi-routine category (61% compared with 46%), and less likely to be in the managerial/professional category (9% compared with 17%).

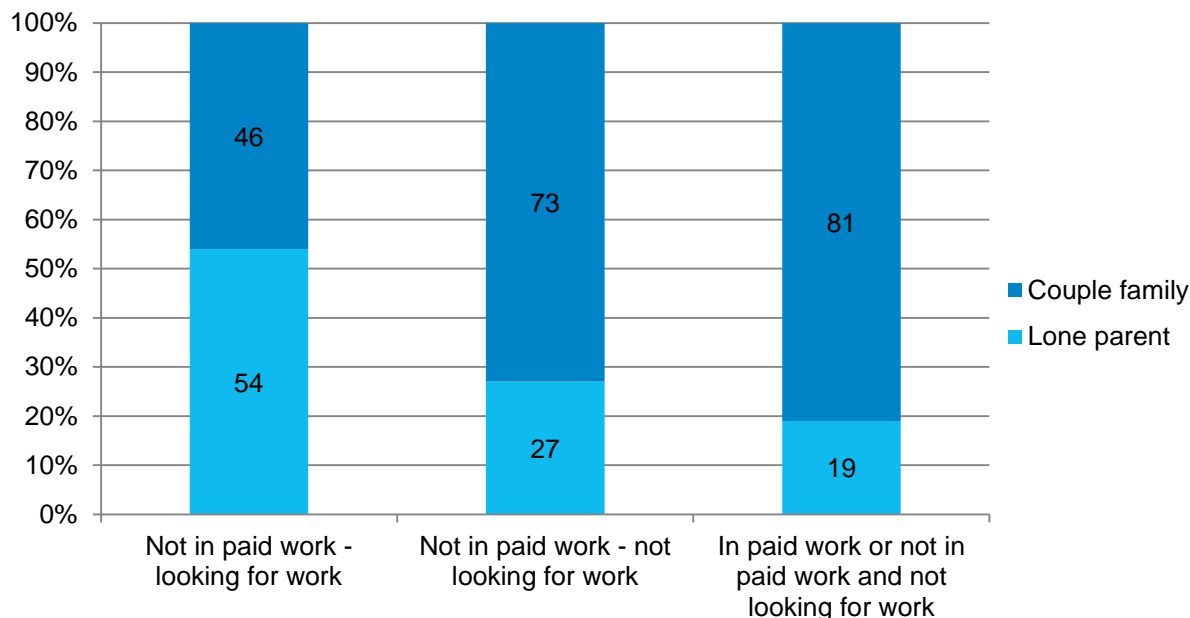
3.5.2 Family characteristics

Mothers who were seeking work were more likely than other mothers to be single parents and less likely to be living in couples. When the child was aged 10 months, 39% of mothers who were looking for work were living as single parents compared with 20% of other mothers. The proportion of those looking for work who were single parents increased as the child grew older. When the child was aged 3, 50% of mothers looking for work were single parents – compared with 20% of other mothers – rising to 54% at age 5, compared with 19% of other mothers (Figure 3-4).

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Figure 3-4 Family type, by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 5



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=173/232; Not in paid work - not looking for work=917/1067; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=4109/4041.

Initially, looking only at mothers who were not in paid work, those who were and were not looking for work were very similar in terms of single parent status. When the child was 10 months old, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups (37% of those not looking for work were single mothers, compared with 39% of those looking, as noted above). However, a notable distinction emerges at the time the child was aged 3 – 34% of mothers who were out of work and not looking for work were single parents, compared with 50% of those looking for work. This difference had increased by age 5, when 27% of mothers who were out of work but not looking for work were single parents compared with 54% of those who were looking.

When the child was aged 10 months and 3 years, mothers who were looking for work had a similar number of children in the household to other mothers – there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. When the child was aged 5, however, mothers who were seeking work had fewer children than other mothers. 30% had just one child compared with 21% of other mothers.

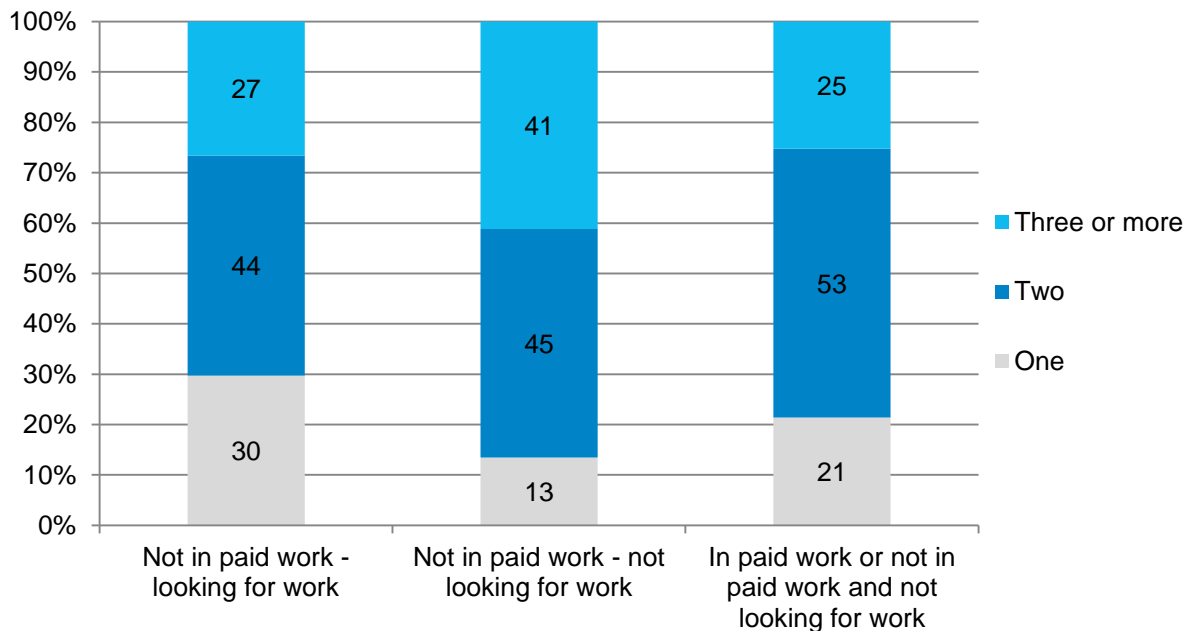
Among mothers who were not in paid work, those who were looking for work had fewer children, at all age points. When the cohort child was aged 10 months, 48% of

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mothers looking for work had only one child compared with 36% of those not looking for work. In contrast, 28% of mothers not looking for work had three or more children compared with 15% of those who were looking. Whilst, in both groups, the proportion of mothers with only one child decreased as the cohort child aged, the difference between them was maintained. Thus, when the cohort child was aged 5, mothers looking for work were more than twice as likely as those who were not in paid work and not looking to have only one child (30% compared with 13%, Figure 3-5).

Figure 3-5 Number of children in household, by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 5



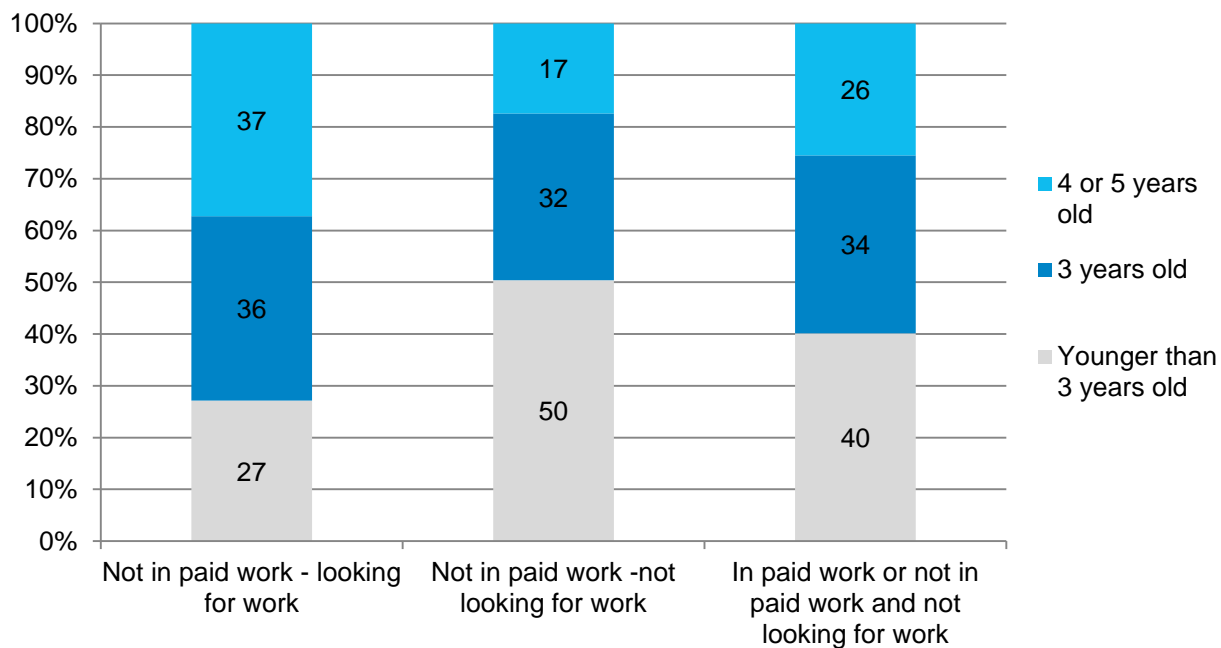
Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=173/232; Not in paid work - not looking for work=917/1067; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=4109/4041.

Patterns in the age of the youngest child in the household were similar. At age 3 there were no statistically significant differences between the proportion of mothers looking for work and of other mothers whose youngest child was aged up to 24 months. However, when the cohort child was aged 5, mothers looking for work were less likely to have younger children than other mothers. 27% of those looking for work had a child younger than 3 compared with 40% of other mothers and 50% of those not in paid work and not looking for work (Figure 3-6).

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Figure 3-6 Age of youngest child in household, by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 5



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=173/232; Not in paid work - not looking for work=917/1067; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=4109/4041.

3.5.3 Area characteristics

Compared with other mothers, those looking for work were more likely to live in areas of higher deprivation. When the cohort child was 10 months, 33% of mothers looking for work lived in an area in the most deprived quintile and 11% lived in an area in the least deprived quintile compared with 23% and 18% of other mothers. As the child grew older, mothers looking for work were more likely to be living in the most deprived areas. The proportion living in an area in the most deprived quintile rose from 33% when the child was aged 10 months to 41% when the child was aged 5.

Among mothers who were not in paid work, there were no statistically significant differences between those who were and were not looking for work according to area deprivation.

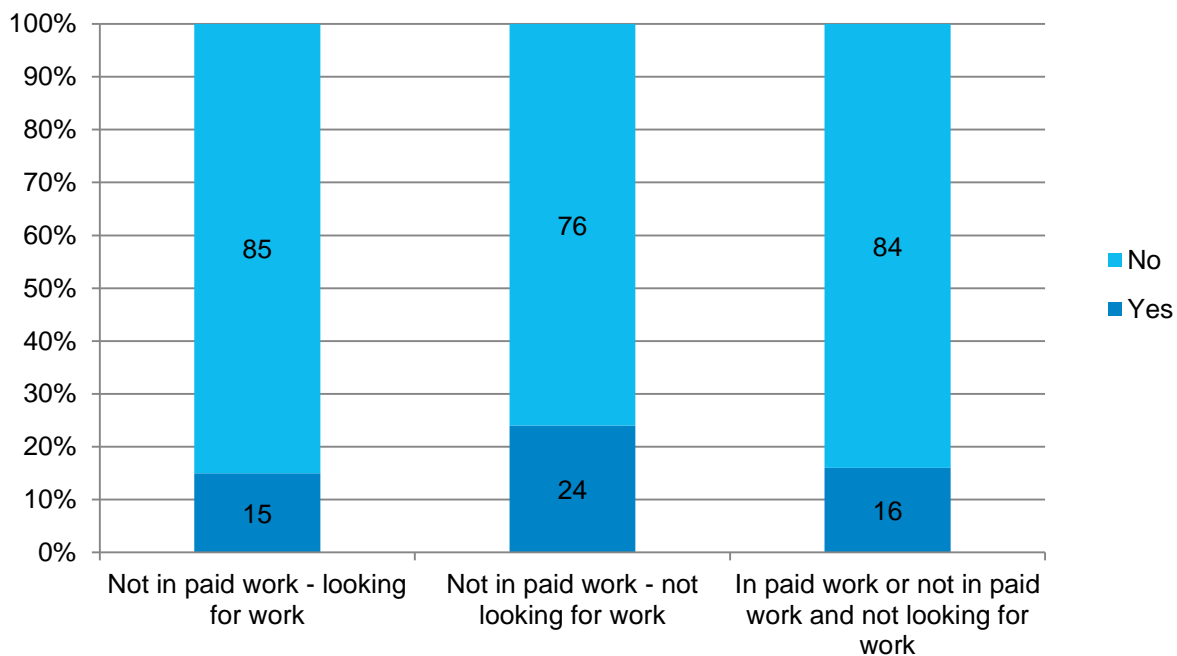
Mothers who were seeking work were not distinct from other mothers in terms of the urban-rural classification of their local area.

3.5.4 Child and maternal health

Looking at all mothers – including those in paid work – there were no statistically

significant differences between mothers who were looking for work and other mothers in terms of the prevalence of maternal long-term health conditions, at any age point. However, among mothers who were not in paid work, those who were and were not looking for work did differ on this measure – though only when the child was aged 3 when 15% of mothers looking for work reported a long-term health condition compared with 24% of those not looking (Figure 3-7). Differences when the child was aged 10 months and 5 years showed a similar pattern but differences at these age points were not statistically significant.

Figure 3-7 Whether mother had long-term health condition, by mother’s employment and work-seeking status when child aged 3



Base: All mothers. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Not in paid work - looking for work=211/266; Not in paid work - not looking for work=1231/1380; In paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work=4624/4558.

In terms of whether the cohort child had a long-term health condition or disability, there were no statistically significant differences either between mothers who were looking for work and all other mothers or those out of work but not looking for work.

3.5.5 Multivariable analysis

Logistic regression analysis was used to explore the independent associations between the characteristics described above and looking for work. Two sets of regression models were created. In the first set, the models explored characteristics

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associated with mothers looking for work compared with mothers who were either in paid work or not in paid work and not looking for work. The second set looked only at mothers who were not in paid work, comparing those who were looking for work with those who were not looking. The two models were run on data from each age point. Only variables which were statistically significant in the bivariate analysis described in the previous sections were included in the regression models¹³.

By far the most consistent independent predictor of work-seeking was maternal age. After controlling for other factors, mothers seeking work were significantly more likely than those in paid work or not in paid work and not seeking work to be younger than 30 when the cohort child was born. This result was found in all models at all age points. Being in the youngest age group – under 20 when the cohort child was born – was particularly strongly associated with looking for work. When contrasted with mothers who were also not in paid work but were not looking for work, the odds of mothers in this age group looking for work when the child was aged 5 were 8 times higher than those for mothers in the oldest age group.

As may be expected, household income was also a strong and consistent predictor of whether or not a mother was looking for work. When comparing mothers who were looking for work with all other mothers, being in a lower income group was independently associated with looking for work at all age points. However, having a lower income was not associated with looking for work when comparing those looking for work with those not looking, when the child was aged 10 months and 5 years.

Some family characteristics also showed statistically significant associations with work-seeking, though not across all models and time points. When the child was aged 3 and 5, after controlling for other factors, single mothers were more likely than those living in couples to be seeking work when comparing those looking for work with all other mothers. For example, at age 3, the odds of single mothers looking for work were 1.5 times higher than those for mothers in couple families. When analysis was restricted to mothers who were out of work only, being a single parent was also associated with looking for work, but only when the child was aged 5. At the same time, the age of the youngest child in the household was independently related to looking for work. For example, among all mothers and when restricted to those who were not in paid work when the child was aged 5, those whose youngest child was 3 or older were more likely than those with a child under 3 to be looking for work. Looking again at mothers who were not in paid work, the number of children in the household was only independently associated with looking for work when the cohort

¹³ Results are reported in Tables 1 to 6 in the Technical Annex.

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child was aged 10 months, when those with more than one child were less likely to be seeking work than those with two or more children, after controlling for other factors¹⁴.

The mother having a long-term health condition only emerged as being statistically significant in relation to work-seeking at age 3. Among mothers who were not in paid work, those who reported a long-term health condition had lower odds of seeking work than those without such a condition.

¹⁴ See Table 2 and Table 6 in the Technical Annex.

4 MOTHERS' ACCOUNTS OF WHY THEY HAVE NOT FOUND PAID WORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at what mothers viewed as the main barriers to finding suitable paid work. Exploring mothers' own accounts can help paint a more rounded picture of their situation and aid our understanding of how best to support mothers of young children into work.

In a recent study looking at the experiences of mothers in the UK, Adams *et al.* (2016) found that around 8% of mothers who were not in paid work were not looking for work. The main reasons given were that they wanted to stay at home to look after their children (75%), that they were unable to find a job that would pay enough to pay for childcare (52%), that they were unable to find suitable childcare (45%), and that they were unable to find a job with the right hours (36%) or in the right location (24%). These findings suggest that mothers are likely to have numerous reasons for not looking for paid work – including a mix of practical reasons and lifestyle preferences.

This chapter considers the main barriers to entering or re-entering work reported by mothers in Scotland who had actively looked for work in the last month. Thus, the focus here is less on mothers' motivations for looking (or not looking) for paid work, and more on the barriers facing those who are actively seeking work – although, in practice, as exemplified by the range of practical considerations outlined by Adams *et al.* (2016), there is likely to be a considerable amount of overlap.

Drawing on data collected from mothers in BC2, the chapter provides an overview of the main reasons given by mothers of children aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years in 2011, 2013 and 2015 who had looked for work in the last month, as to why they had not managed to find paid work. It then moves on to consider in more detail each of the main reasons given by mothers and any changes according to the age of the child. Note that the group of mothers who answered questions about barriers to finding paid work varies across the three age points.

4.2 Key variables used in the analysis

At all three age points, mothers who had not done any paid work in the week before their interview were asked whether they had actively looked for paid work or a place on a Government scheme in the last four weeks. Those who had looked for paid work were asked what they thought were the main reasons they had not found anything suitable. Mothers gave verbatim answers which were subsequently coded into one of five categories: no suitable jobs available; childcare (including availability and affordability); not looked very hard - family commitments; not looked very hard – other reasons¹⁵; other reasons¹⁶.

4.3 Key findings

- The main reasons given by mothers as to why they had not managed to find suitable paid work were: that no suitable jobs were available; childcare issues; and not having looked very hard (often because they preferred to stay at home to look after their child or children).
- Among mothers of 10 month old children, more than half quoted a lack of suitable jobs. Among mothers of 5 year olds this had dropped to just a quarter.
- Conversely, while just 14% of mothers of 10 month old children referenced childcare issues as a barrier to finding work, 26% of mothers of 5 year olds did so. Those not living with a partner were more likely than those living with a partner to mention childcare issues when the child was aged 10 months. This suggests that arranging suitable and affordable childcare for the very youngest children may be a particular barrier for single mothers seeking to enter or re-enter the workplace.
- Irrespective of the child's age, around a third of mothers who had looked for work in the last four weeks indicated that they had not been looking very hard. For some, this was due to family commitments. Others referenced things such as ill health or anticipating moving to a different area, having another baby, going into education, or starting a job they had recently obtained.

4.4 Main reasons why mothers have not found paid work

The main reasons given by mothers for why they had not managed to find suitable paid work were: that no suitable jobs were available; they had issues arranging suitable and affordable childcare; and simply not having looked very hard. In relation

¹⁵ 'Not looked very hard: other reasons' included things like moving house, pregnant, going into education, only recently started looking, already found job, ill health.

¹⁶ 'Other reasons' included lack of experience/qualifications, competitive job market, and no particular reason given (e.g. 'Don't know').

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to the latter reason, this was often because they preferred to stay at home to look after their child(ren), due to other family commitments, or because of practical constraints on their availability to take up a job (for example because they were due to move to a different area or that they were expecting another child).

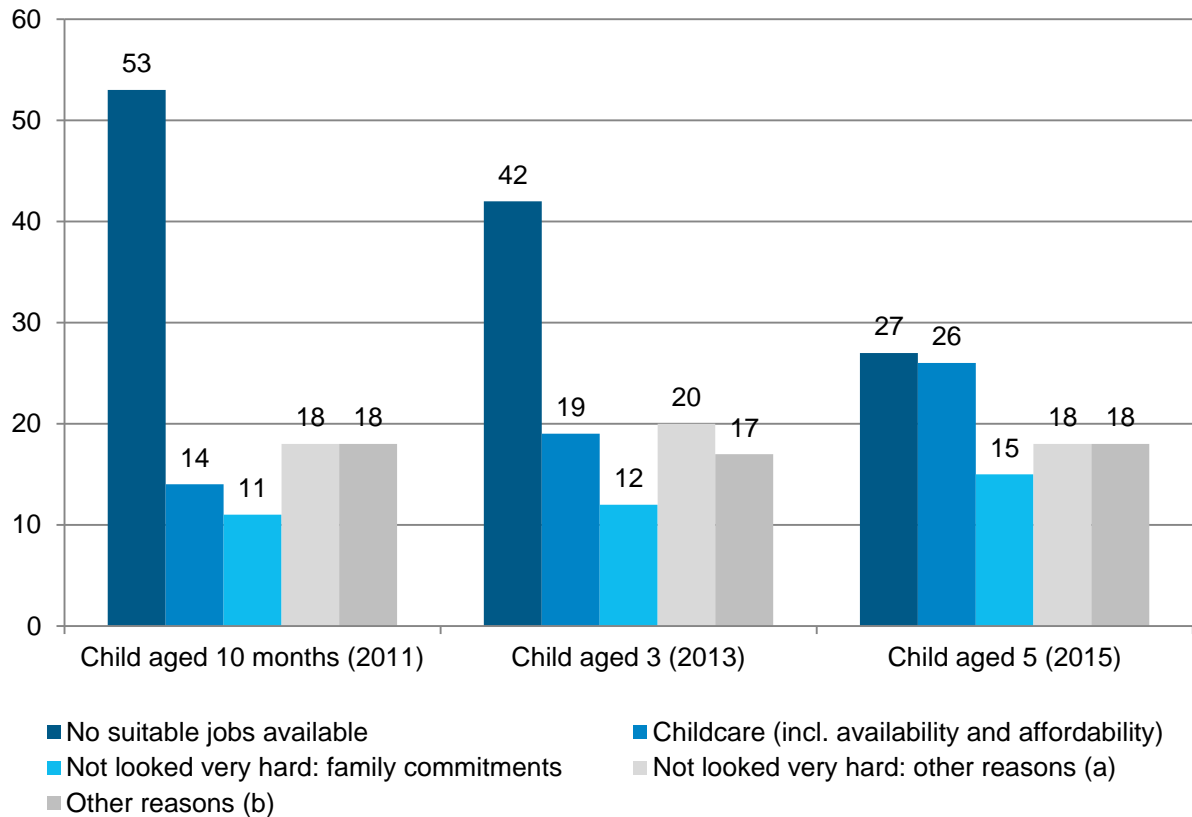
Figure 4-A shows the proportion of mothers at each child age point who mentioned each of these as one of the main reasons why they had not managed to find paid work. It shows that in 2011 the most common reason given by mothers in Scotland with a 10 month old child was that no suitable jobs were available (53%). References to 'no suitable jobs available' included mentions of struggling to find jobs with hours that would fit in around family responsibilities. For example, some mothers mentioned that they needed working hours that would 'fit' with their partner's working hours, often with reference to childcare, while others referenced the need for working hours that would fit around school hours. Others mentioned that there were simply not many jobs in their particular field, or in their local area. Finally, some noted that there were not many jobs around at all.

14% of mothers of 10 month old children referenced issues with arranging suitable and affordable childcare while 11% had not looked very hard because of family commitments. A further 18% had not looked very hard due to a number of primarily practical reasons, while another 18% referenced a range of other reasons for not having found work.

Two years later the picture had changed slightly. The most commonly referenced reason given by mothers of 3 year old children who were looking for work was still a lack of suitable jobs (42%). The apparent difference in the proportion of mothers who quoted childcare issues is not statistically significant.

A different picture emerges when looking at the main reasons given by mothers of 5 year old children in 2015. At this point, both childcare issues and a lack of suitable jobs were quoted by around one in four mothers who were looking for work, with 26% mentioning childcare issues and 27% mentioning a lack of suitable jobs. The proportions referencing not having looked very hard (for whatever reason) and who reference various other reasons were similar to those seen at earlier age points.

Figure 4-A Reasons why mothers had not found paid work, by age of child and year (%)



Base: Mothers in BC2 who looked for paid work in the last four weeks. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): child aged 10 months=330/353; child aged 3=217/270; child aged 5=177/236.

(a) 'Not looked very hard: other reasons' included things like moving house, pregnant, going into education, only recently started looking, already found job, ill health.

(b) 'Other reasons' included lack of experience/qualifications, competitive job market, and no particular reason given (e.g. 'Don't know').

The following sections consider each of the main reasons given by mothers in more detail and discuss the changes observed according to the child's age.

4.4.1 No suitable jobs available

As outlined above, in 2011 more than half (53%) of mothers of 10 month old children who had looked for work in the last four weeks mentioned a lack of suitable jobs as one of the main reasons why they had not managed to find paid work. This proportion dropped to just over a quarter (27%) of mothers of 5 year old children four years later.

This could reflect differences in the type of work mothers are looking for as their child

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grows older. It is possible that mothers are more likely to look only for part time work when their child is a baby but are increasingly willing to work longer hours as their child grows older. There is some additional evidence from GUS which supports this. Mothers of children in the older GUS birth cohort (BC1) who were looking for work were asked whether they were seeking full or part time work. Mothers were asked when the child was aged 2 and when the child was aged 5. At the time the cohort child was aged 2 (out of an unweighted total of 283 mothers), 79% said they were looking for part time work, 11% were looking for full time work, and 11% were looking for either full or part time work. At age 5 (out of an unweighted total of 179 mothers), 71% were looking for part time work, 9% were looking for full time work, and 20% were looking for either full or part time work¹⁷. Although relatively small, these differences suggest that by the time their child was aged 5, a higher proportion of mothers were open to working full time, rather than solely looking for part time work¹⁸.

Previous analysis of GUS data has shown that part time working is not universally available (Dean *et al.*, 2017) and mothers looking for part time work may therefore face additional barriers to engaging in paid work compared with mothers who are willing to work full time. Indeed, a number of mothers in GUS specifically mentioned a lack of part time jobs as a reason why they had not managed to find suitable work.

Alongside this, between 2011 and 2015, various policy changes were implemented which placed additional requirements on those receiving out-of-work benefits to demonstrate that they were actively seeking work (e.g. Simmons, 2011; UK Government, 2012). Where such requirements were accompanied by additional support with job seeking this may have helped mothers identify available jobs. In any case, with their job searches being scrutinised it is also possible that mothers who were receiving out-of-work benefits felt less able to attribute their lack of success with finding work to the lack of suitable jobs because their definition of 'suitable' jobs was being challenged and re-defined through the application of stricter job search criteria. This raises questions about whether the quality of a job considered 'suitable' has dropped more generally, although broader consideration of this is beyond the scope of this report.

Finally, the decrease in the proportion of mothers mentioning a lack of suitable jobs coincides with a general improvement in the job market. For example, UK wide, the average number of unemployed per vacancy fell from 5.2 in the first quarter of 2011 to 2.5 in the first quarter of 2015 (Office for National Statistics, 2015). Note, however,

¹⁷ Results not shown. Available on request.

¹⁸ 'Full time' and 'part time' were left to respondents themselves to define.

that these figures cover both full and part time vacancies, as well as so-called 'zero-hour contracts' – the latter which, due to their lack of security, may be less appealing to those with caring responsibilities.

4.4.2 Childcare

In 2011, around one in six (14%) of mothers of 10 month old children who had looked for work in the last four weeks mentioned childcare issues as a reason why they had not yet obtained a job. At this point, childcare issues seemed to be a particular concern for single mothers, with two in ten (19%) single mothers mentioning childcare as a reason why they had not found work, compared with just one in ten (10%) mothers who were living with a partner¹⁹.

These findings suggest that policies aimed at helping mothers to engage in paid work should not disregard the importance of ensuring access to affordable and suitable childcare for younger children, including children under the age of one. Indeed, improving access to childcare for the youngest children may be of particular benefit to single mothers, a group of mothers whom we know are often facing multiple levels of disadvantage.

As already noted, among mothers of 5 year old children who were looking for work, the proportion who quoted childcare issues as a reason why they had not managed to find work had risen to 26%. This may indicate a shift in what mothers view as the main barriers to finding suitable paid work, from a lack of suitable work being seen as the main barrier for mothers of 10 month old children in 2011 to an equal emphasis on childcare among mothers of 5 year old children four years later.

What might have been driving this shift? As suggested above, by the time their child was aged 5, mothers may have been more likely to look for full time work, or at least to be willing to work longer hours than when their child was a baby. Such a shift in priorities could in itself have led to childcare being seen as more of a barrier to finding paid work. If only a limited number of part time jobs were available, simply identifying suitable jobs to apply for would likely have been a key concern for many of the mothers looking for part time work. Conversely, mothers who were willing to work longer hours would have had fewer difficulties identifying suitable jobs. For these mothers, finding childcare that is affordable and fitted around full time working hours may well come to be seen as a more immediate barrier to working than identifying suitable jobs to apply for. Furthermore, finding suitable care for school-aged children (including holiday care) is likely to be at least as (if not more) challenging than finding suitable full day care for younger children (e.g. Harding *et al.*, 2017).

¹⁹ Results are provided in Table 8-1 in the Appendix B.

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Further to this, as also noted above, between 2011 and 2015 when the GUS data were collected, policy changes introduced stricter requirements on those receiving out-of-work benefits to actively seek paid employment. An implication of this may have been that mothers were increasingly supported (indeed, required) to identify suitable jobs and that other issues, such as finding suitable childcare, were therefore felt to be more prominent.

Finally, childcare has been high on the political agenda in Scotland in recent years, and increasingly so with the introduction of the Children and Young People Act in 2014. It cannot be ruled out that an emphasis on childcare in the public debate may have played a role in bringing childcare issues front of mind for mothers who were not in paid employment.

4.4.3 'Not looked very hard'

Irrespective of the child's age, around a third of mothers who had looked for work in the last four weeks indicated that they had not been looking very hard. For some, this was due to family commitments. These mothers generally quoted looking after children as the reason they were not working, with a number of them commenting that their youngest child²⁰ was still too young for them to go back to work. For others, not having looked very hard was down to other things such as not having looked for very long, ill health, or anticipating things like moving to a different area, having another baby, going into education, or starting a job they had recently obtained.

Among mothers of 5 year old children in 2015 who had looked for work in the last four weeks, those who were single were more likely than mothers living with a partner to mention family commitments as a reason for not having found work (20% of single mothers mentioned this compared with 10% of partnered mothers²¹). One possible interpretation of this is that mothers who were the sole carers for their children were more likely to prioritise spending time with their children over paid work. To test whether this might be the case, additional analysis was carried out which examined the proportion of mothers of 5 year old children in 2015 who said they were not looking for work because they were looking after home or family (results not shown). The results of this analysis suggested that, if anything, mothers living with a partner were more likely than single mothers to give this as a reason for not looking for work. Another potential interpretation is that single mothers – perhaps especially those with more than one child – were less likely than mothers who lived with a partner to think it plausible that they could manage to combine work with caring for their child or children. While one interpretation does not necessarily rule

²⁰ This was not necessarily the cohort child.

²¹ Results are provided in Table 8-1 in Appendix B.

out the other – for example, mothers may not think combining work and caring for children is plausible, but at the same time they may not mind because they also have a preference for looking after their children rather than working – the potential implications of the latter are important for policy makers, raising questions about whether interventions specifically targeted at single mothers may be required to help these mothers into work.

Mothers of 5 year old children who were living with a partner were more likely than single mothers to say they were not looking very hard for reasons other than family commitments (26% of partnered mothers compared with 11% of single mothers²²). While the exact reasons varied, a common theme appears to be that these mothers had future plans of one kind or another or had only recently started looking for work – as such, many of these mothers may simply have been in-between jobs. The difference between single and partnered mothers may thus primarily be a reflection of the general advantage of partnered mothers. For example, we know that two-parent families tend to have higher household incomes and, on average, partnered mothers would therefore be more likely than single mothers to be able to afford not being in paid work.

GUS respondents were not asked about the intensity of their job search efforts. Nevertheless, it is notable that irrespective of their child's age, when prompted, around a third of mothers of young children who had looked for work in the last four weeks said they had not been looking very hard. In part, this may be an effect of political efforts and a public discourse which stresses that everyone – including mothers with young children – should be active in the labour market. In this context, mothers may feel compelled to search for and possibly also apply for jobs, even if they are not expecting to take on paid work. More generally, it is not clear that these mothers face any particular 'barriers' to entering or re-entering paid work. Rather, many of these mothers may simply have weighed up their options and found that, for whatever reason, engaging in intensive job searches and entering paid work is not currently the best option for them. As such, they may be 'actively looking' only in so far that they are keeping an eye on the job market in case anything should come up which would make (re)entering paid work seem worthwhile.

4.4.4 Other reasons

In addition to the three main categories of reasons discussed above, some mothers mentioned that they were lacking qualifications and experience to be able to compete with others in the job market. Some also mentioned transport as an issue. While only mentioned by a small proportion of mothers, the references to a lack of qualifications

²² Results are provided in Table 8-1 in Appendix B.

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and experience are crucial for efforts which seek to address the inequalities in the labour market – especially, perhaps, efforts which seek to address the persistent pay gap between men and women. The reference to transport issues is something which may be particularly pertinent for women living in less accessible areas²³. It also suggests that local area planning, including considerations about public transport, should not be excluded from initiatives to support mothers' employment.

²³ Numbers in the GUS data were too small to run separate analysis of this.

5

EMPLOYMENT TRAJECTORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS WHO LEFT WORK AFTER HAVING A CHILD

5.1 Introduction

One of the main benefits of using data from a longitudinal study like GUS is that it enables us to look at the circumstances of the same individuals over time. While the initial chapters of this report are concerned with the characteristics and circumstances of mothers of children of a particular age across specific calendar years, this chapter focuses on the circumstances of the same groups of mothers over time.

Firstly, it considers the employment trajectories of mothers in each of the two GUS cohorts from their child's birth up until the child was aged 5. This kind of analysis can help us understand more about how mothers move in and out of work following childbirth, as well as how this may differ between mothers who had a child in 2004/05 (mothers in BC1) and mothers who had a child six years later (mothers in BC2).

The chapter then focuses on a group of mothers who followed one specific trajectory – those who had a paid job while they were pregnant, gave up work after having a child and had not returned by the time their child turned 5. For these women, childbearing appears to have been of particular significance to their employment trajectory and they are therefore of particular interest to policy makers interested in the barriers facing mothers of young children who want to engage in paid work.

Existing research has shown that mothers who worked during pregnancy are much more likely to be in work after the birth (e.g. Chanfreu *et al.*, 2011). GUS data contains information about whether mothers worked during pregnancy as well as about their employment status at the time the child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. It is therefore possible to look at whether mothers who worked during pregnancy were also more likely to remain in work until their child reaches school age.

The reasons why women give up work after having a child are likely to be many and varied. However, if the aim is to support mothers to be able to remain in work after

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childbirth, it is important to understand why mothers leave paid work. For example, are the mothers who give up paid work mainly those who can afford not to have a paid job and who can comfortably choose to stay at home to look after their children? Or are they primarily less advantaged mothers confronted with a number of the barriers often associated with living in more chaotic circumstances, such as low levels of skills and education, low pay and a lack of flexibility in the jobs available to them?

A useful first step towards answering questions like these is to understand more about the mothers who give up paid work after having a child, and how they compare with the mothers who remain in or re-enter work. To do so, this chapter looks at characteristics of mothers in Scotland who left work after having a child and had not returned by the time their child was aged 5. It compares these to the characteristics of mothers who either remained in or returned to work during this period and identifies key differences between the two groups. It also identifies characteristics which are independently associated with mothers giving up work.

5.2 Key variables used in the analysis

5.2.1 *Employment trajectories*

The employment trajectories looked at in the initial part of this chapter were developed using data collected from mothers in the two GUS birth cohorts when the cohort child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. Only cases where the child's mother was the main respondent at all three sweeps of data collection were included in the analysis. Initially, variables were derived which identified a total of eight combinations (or trajectories) of mothers' employment statuses across the three sweeps²⁴. For simplicity, these were collapsed into the following four overall trajectories:

- Mothers who were in paid work at all three sweeps, namely at the time the cohort child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years.
- Mothers who were eventually in paid work by the time the child was aged 5, but who were not in work when the child was younger (these mothers were out of work at the time their child was aged 10 months or 3 years, or both).
- Mothers who were in paid work at some point when their child was younger (i.e. when the child was aged 10 months and/or 3 years), but were not in work at the

²⁴ These eight combinations covered the possible combinations of mothers being either in work or out of work at each of the three sweeps. Mothers for whom information was missing at one or more sweeps were excluded from the analysis.

time the child was aged 5.

- Mothers who were not in paid work at any of the three sweeps.

These 'trajectories' are based on information collected about mothers' employment status at specific time points. Mothers who were in work at all three sweeps are assumed to have been in work continuously until the child was aged 5, while those who were out of work at all three sweeps are assumed to have been continuously out of work during this time²⁵. The trajectories analysis does not take into account any other children the mother may have – the 'child' referred to in the text is the GUS cohort child²⁶.

5.2.2 *Characteristics of mothers who left paid work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child was aged 5*

The second part of the chapter uses data from BC2. As above, only cases where the child's mother was the main respondent at all three sweeps were included in the analysis. The main group of interest in these sections are mothers who gave up work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child was aged 5.

Throughout the sections, these mothers are compared with mothers who remained in or returned to work during this period. Definitions of these groups are provided in Table 5-1.

²⁵ The data does not take into account mothers' employment status outside of these time points. It is possible that mothers who were in work at all three time points where GUS data were collected may have been out of work at some other points during this period. Conversely, mothers who were out of work at all three sweeps may have been in work at other time points during the period.

²⁶ Additional analysis (not shown) showed no differences in patterns when restricting the analysis to cases where the cohort child was the youngest in the household.

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Table 5-1 Definitions of groups of mothers considered in the analysis

Group of mothers	Definition	Sample sizes (unwtd)
Mothers who left work	Mothers who worked while they were pregnant with the cohort child but were not in work at any of the time points GUS data were collected after the child's birth (i.e. not in work when the child was aged 10mths, nor when they were aged 3yrs nor 5yrs).	177
Mothers who remained in or returned to work	Mothers who worked while they were pregnant with the cohort child and were in work at at least one time point after the child's birth (i.e. when the child was aged 10mths and/or 3yrs and/or 5yrs).	2804

Existing research has suggested that a range of household and individual characteristics are likely to be important when considering mothers' engagement in paid work after childbirth (e.g. Chanfreu *et al.*, 2011; Fagan and Norman, 2012; Smeaton, 2006). In line with this, a number of characteristics and circumstances were considered in the analysis undertaken for this chapter. To ensure consistency, and to enable meaningful predictive analysis, only information on characteristics and circumstances collected at the time the child was aged 10 months was included in the analysis²⁷.

5.3 Key findings

- Around half of mothers in both cohorts were in work at all three points up until their child was aged 5. Mothers in BC2 were more likely than mothers in BC1 to be in work at all three sweeps (53% of mothers in BC2 compared with 48% in BC1).
- Between one in five and one in four of all mothers were not in work at any of the three time points. The proportion of mothers who were not in work at any point dropped between the two cohorts, from 24% in BC1 to 21% in BC2.

²⁷ Some initial analysis was conducted using information collected at the time the child was aged 5. Using information collected at this age did not make any substantive differences to the results.

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- Compared with all mothers, mothers who worked during pregnancy were more likely to be in work at all three time points (i.e. when their child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years). Around three quarters of mothers who worked during pregnancy fell into this category, compared with around half of all mothers. Mothers who worked during pregnancy were also less likely to be out of work at all three age points. These patterns were evident in both cohorts and are in line with previous research.
- Only a small minority of mothers who worked during pregnancy had left work and not returned by the time the child was aged 5 (10% in BC1 and 7% in BC2). Mothers in BC2 were less likely than mothers in BC1 to have given up work, though differences are small.
- Overall, mothers who gave up work tended to live in less advantaged circumstances than mothers who remained in or returned to work. For example, those who left work were more likely to be younger, to be single mothers, and to be living in the most deprived areas. In contrast, they were less likely to have a degree or to have been working in professional or managerial occupations. And as may be expected, having left paid work, these mothers were also more likely to be in low income households.
- Among mothers living with a partner who was in work, those who gave up work were more likely than those who remained in or returned to work to have a partner who was on a low income but were just as likely to be living with a partner on a high income.
- Being a single mother, having lower levels of educational qualifications, having another child before the cohort child turned 5, and the cohort child having a long-term health condition all independently predicted giving up paid work.

5.4 Mothers' employment trajectories

Figure 5-A shows the proportion of mothers in each cohort who followed each of the employment trajectories outlined above. It shows figures for all mothers and for mothers who worked while they were pregnant with the cohort child. Looking at all mothers, Figure 5-A illustrates that, in both cohorts, around half of mothers – the largest group – were in work at all three sweeps. A further one in six mothers (17% in BC1; 16% in BC2) were in work at the time their child was aged 5, but had been out of work when their child was 10 months and/or aged 3. Thus, the majority of mothers who were in work at the time the child was aged 5 were also in work when the child was younger.

Mothers in BC2 were more likely than mothers in BC1 to be in work at all three time

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points (53% in BC2 compared with 48% in BC1).

Around one in five mothers were not in work at any of the three time points. The proportion of mothers who were not in work at any point dropped between the two cohorts, from 24% in BC1 to 21% in BC2. Overall, around one in three mothers were not in work at the time the cohort child was aged 5.

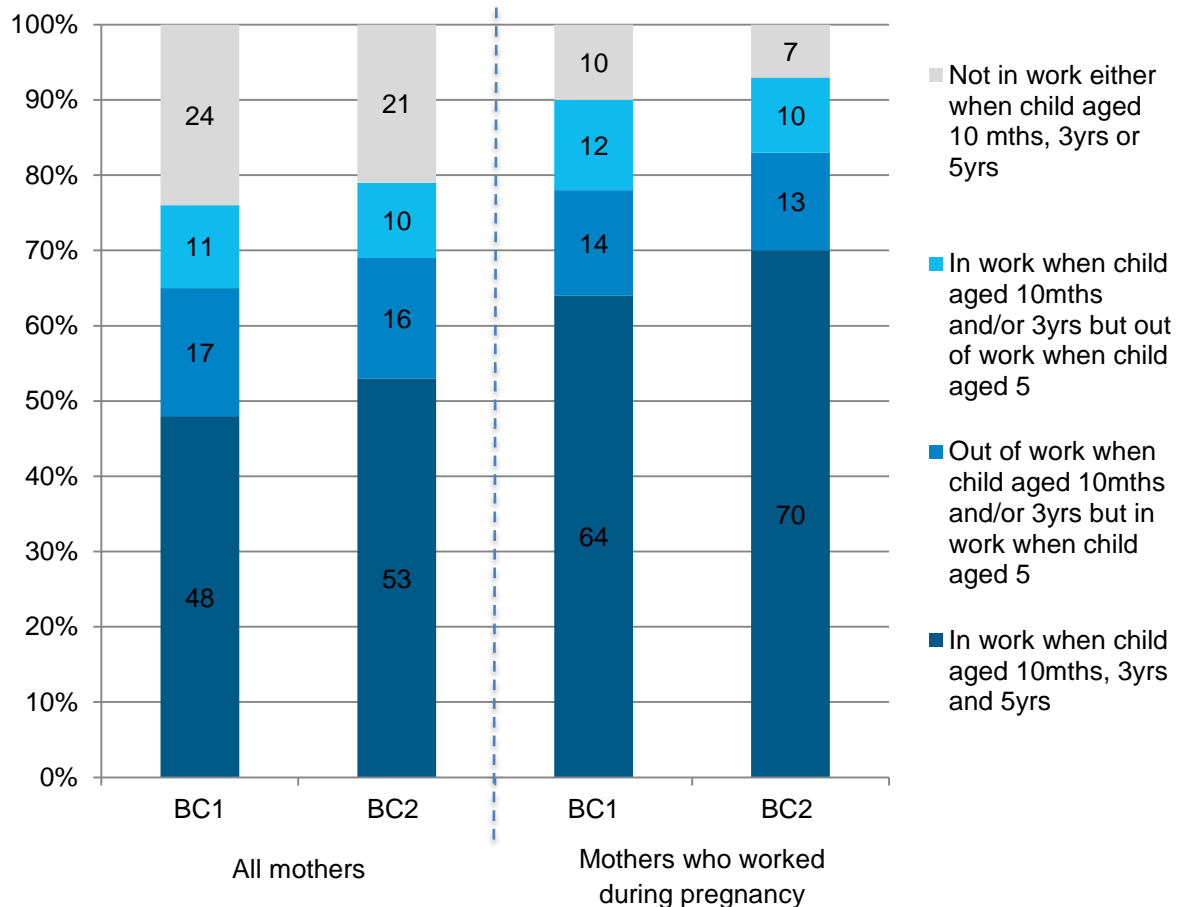
Compared with all mothers, mothers who worked during pregnancy were much more likely to be in work at all three time points and less likely to be out of work at all three points. For example, 70% of mothers in BC2 who worked during pregnancy were in work at all three points compared with 53% of all mothers. Conversely, only 7% of mothers who worked during pregnancy were not at work at any point during the first 5 years of the child's life, compared with 21% of all mothers (Figure 5-A).

In both cohorts, only a small minority of mothers who worked during pregnancy had left work and not returned by the time the child was aged 5. Mothers in BC2 were less likely than mothers in BC1 to have left work and not returned by the time the child was aged 5: 7% of mothers in BC2 had done so compared with 10% of mothers in BC1. In total, only around one in five mothers who worked during pregnancy were not in work by the time the cohort child was aged 5. This is in line with existing research which has found that working during pregnancy is a strong predictor of mothers' post-birth labour market participation (e.g. Chanfreu et al., 2011; Fagan and Norman, 2012).

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Figure 5-A Mothers' employment trajectories, by cohort and by whether mother did paid work while pregnant



Bases: All mothers who took part at all three sweeps / Mothers who worked during pregnancy and took part at all three sweeps. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): All mothers: BC1=3502/3495; BC2=4088/4078. Mothers who worked during pregnancy: BC1=2712/2553; BC2=3238/3019.

5.5 Characteristics of mothers who left paid work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child was aged 5

5.5.1 Age, education and social class

Mothers who gave up work after having a child and had not returned by the time the child turned 5 tended to be younger than mothers who remained in or returned to work. For example, 11% of mothers who left work were under 20 at the time of their child's birth, compared with just 3% of mothers who remained in or returned to work. In contrast, 54% of mothers who remained in or returned to work were aged 30 or over compared with just 33% of mothers who left work (Figure 5-B).

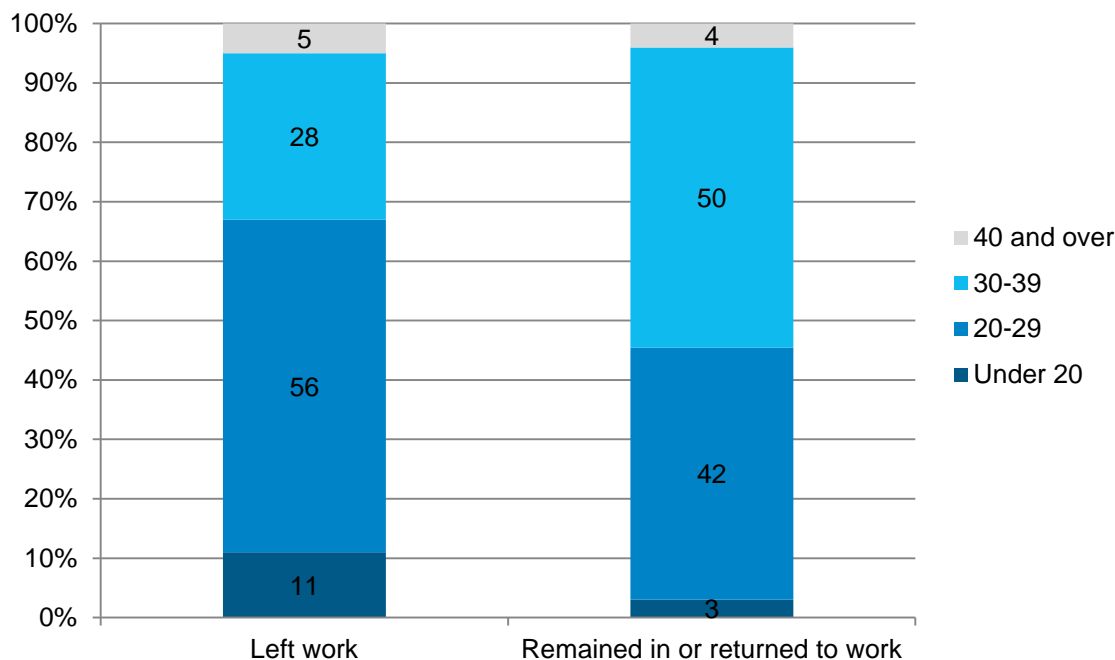
Compared with older mothers, younger mothers have had less time to establish

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themselves in the labour market before having children, something which has previously been shown to be associated with remaining in employment after having a child (see e.g. Chanfreu et al., 2011). From previous analysis of GUS data (e.g. Bradshaw et al., 2014b) we also know that young mothers are more likely to live in disadvantaged circumstances and as such this difference may be a reflection of the additional barriers young mothers face, rather than simply their age. Indeed, additional analysis suggested that being a young mother is not in itself predictive of giving up paid work after childbirth. Further details are provided in section 5.6.

Figure 5-B Mother's age at child's birth, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



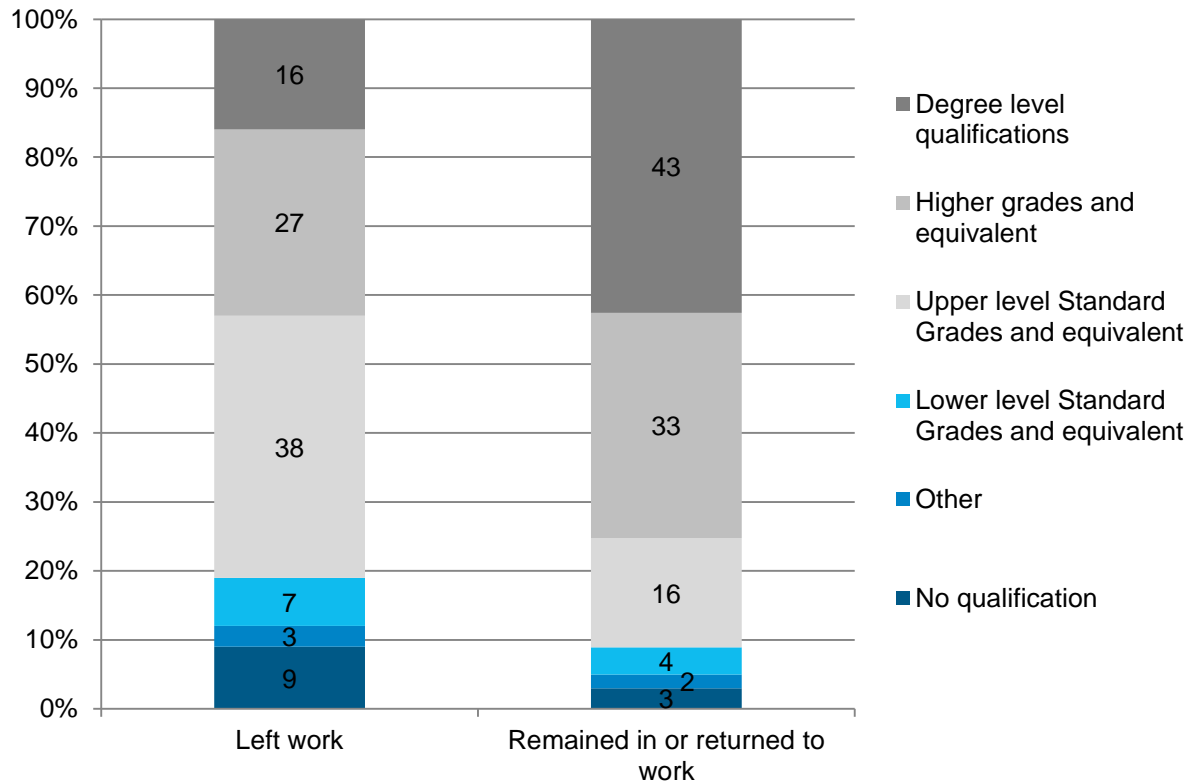
Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3061/2804.

Mothers who gave up work tended to have lower levels of education than those who remained in work (Figure 5-C). In particular, degree level qualifications were much less common among mothers who left work: just 16% of these mothers held a degree level qualification compared with 43% of mothers who stayed in work. In contrast, 9% of mothers who gave up work had no formal qualifications compared with just 3% of those who remained in work.

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Figure 5-C Mother's highest level of education when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3058/2802.

At least in part, this difference by education may be explained by mothers with degree level qualifications being more likely to be in occupations with career ladders and deferred rewards – aspects which increase the opportunity costs of not returning to work (Smeaton, 2006). Being in different types of jobs than those with lower qualifications – with differing responsibilities and greater levels of autonomy – it is possible that mothers with higher levels of education experience greater levels of satisfaction and enjoyment from the work they do, acting as a stronger motivation to return.

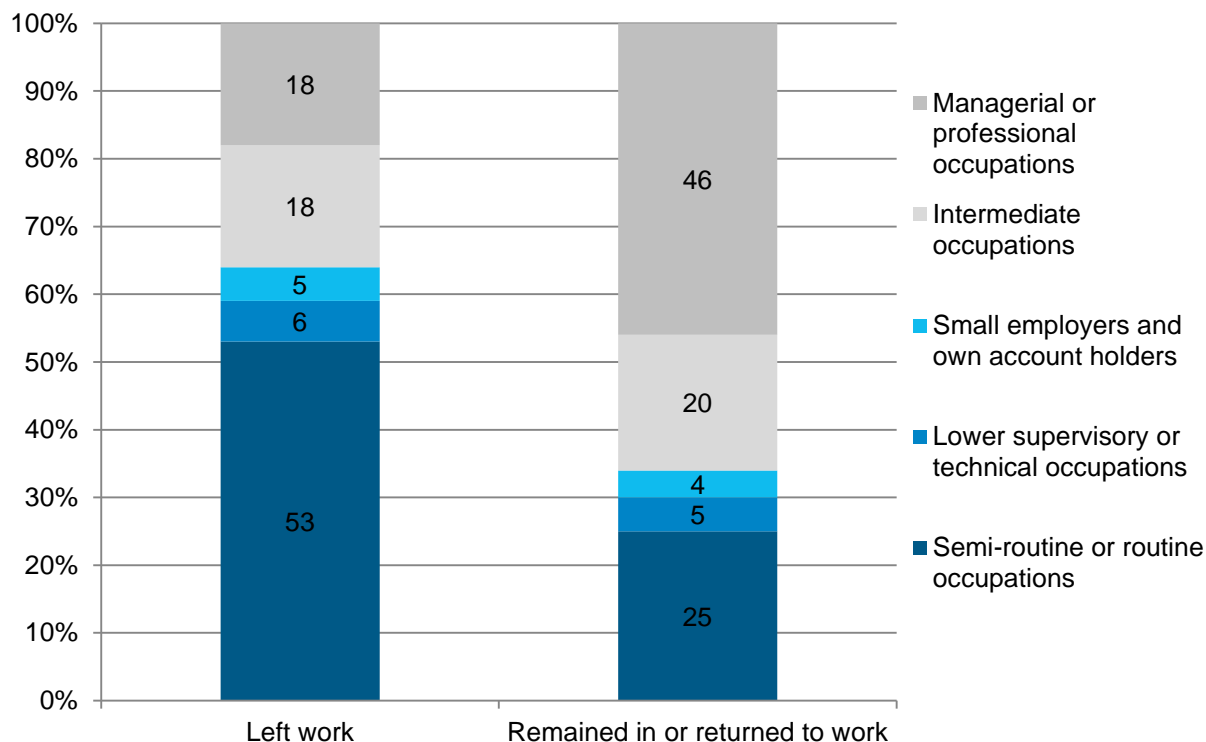
Indeed, as Figure 5-D shows, mothers who left work were considerably less likely to

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be in professional or managerial occupations²⁸: just 18% of these mothers were in professional or managerial occupations compared with 46% of mothers who remained in or returned to work. In contrast, mothers who gave up work were much more likely to be in routine or semi-routine occupations – 53%, compared with 25% of mothers who remained in work.

Figure 5-D Mother’s occupational classification (NS-SEC), by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3056/2800.

Previous analysis of GUS data suggested that those in routine/semi-routine jobs are less likely to have access to flexible working facilities (Dean *et al.*, 2017). Not having access to flexible working is likely to make it more difficult for mothers to combine

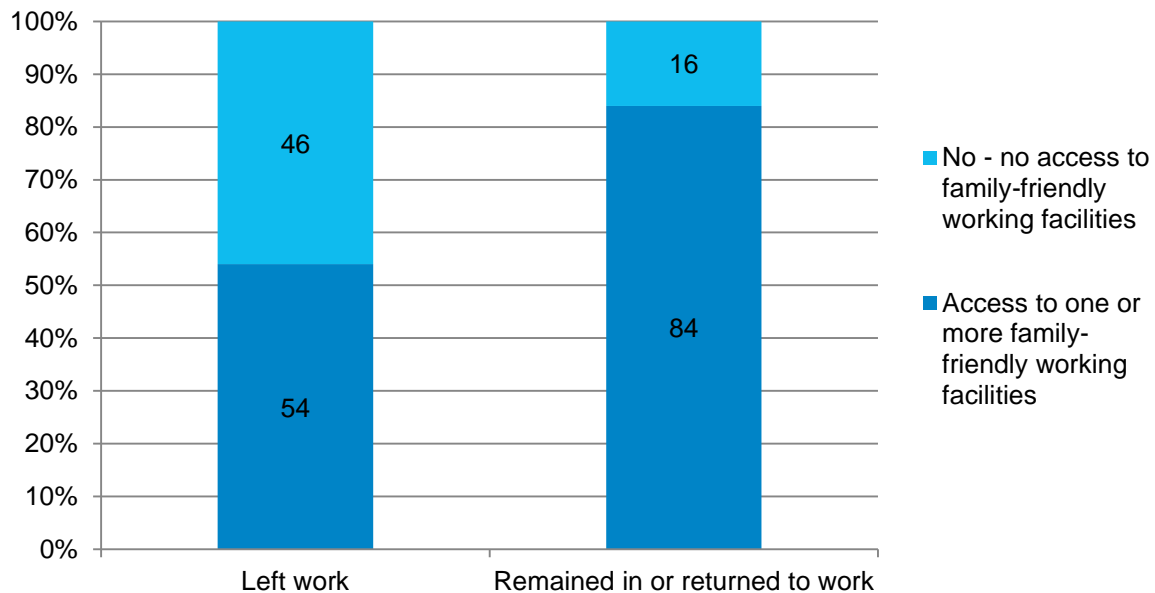
²⁸ For mothers who were in paid work at the time of the sweep 1 interview, information was collected about their current job, while for mothers who were not in work the information was collected about their most recent job. However, even if a mother changed jobs between pregnancy and the time her child was aged 10 months, in most cases such a shift is unlikely to incur a change in occupational classification. Indeed, additional analysis looking solely at mothers who did not change jobs in the first 10 months since the child’s birth showed only minor differences to the results presented here. For example, the proportion of mothers in professional and managerial occupations who returned to work was 46% among all mothers and 47% of mothers among mothers who did not change jobs.

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work and caring responsibilities. Thus, this may have had an impact on mothers' decision on whether to remain in work. And indeed, mothers who gave up work were less likely to say they had access to one or more family-friendly working facilities^{29,30}: 54% of these mothers said they had access to some form of family-friendly working facilities, compared with 84% of those who remained in or returned to work (Figure 5-E).

Figure 5-E Proportion of mothers who had access to family-friendly working facilities in job held during pregnancy, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were working as an employee during pregnancy and did not change jobs in first 10 months after child's birth. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=154/188; Remained in or returned to work=2786/2528.

²⁹ A definition of the measure of family-friendly working facilities is provided in Appendix A.

³⁰ Information about access to family-friendly working facilities was collected at sweep 1. Information was collected about mothers' current or most recent job and was collected from mothers who worked as employees only. Access to family-friendly working facilities is something which may actively influence mothers' choice of post-birth employer. For example, mothers who changed jobs after having a child may have done so specifically in order to get access to more family-friendly working facilities. Therefore, analyses including measures of access to family-friendly working facilities were restricted to cases where the mother had not changed jobs in the first 10 months following the child's birth. (More specifically, this was done by restricting the analysis to cases where the mother was either not in work at sweep 1 or was employed by the same employer).

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5.5.2 Household income and managing financially

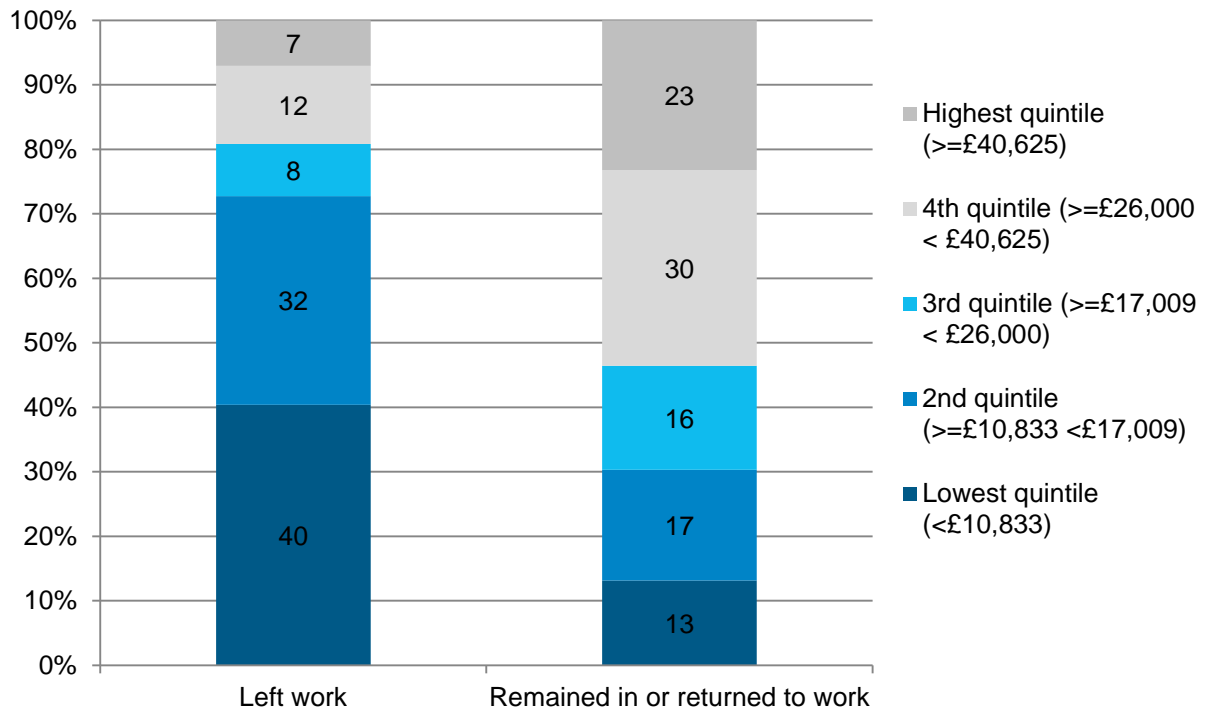
Mothers who gave up work and had not returned by the time their child was aged 5 tended to live on lower incomes at the time the child was 10 months than mothers who remained in work or had returned to work during this period (Figure 5-F). For example, at the time their child was aged 10 months, 40% of the mothers who left work were living in the poorest fifth of households – compared with just 13% of the mothers who stayed in or returned to work.

The lower level of household income seen among mothers who left work is likely to be at least partially explained by the fact that the household income measure is closely related to a mother's employment status – mothers who are in paid work are likely to have higher incomes than those not working. Nonetheless, household income is also likely to be strongly associated with things like mothers' social class and hourly earnings. We can therefore use it as a proxy measure of the economic context in which mothers make decisions about whether to return to work. For example, if we assume that mothers in lower income households are more likely to be in lower paid jobs, for these mothers, remaining in or returning to a low-paid job may not be worthwhile if childcare costs exceed the amount they would earn. Also, as noted above, previous analysis of GUS data showed that parents on lower incomes are less likely than those on higher incomes to have access to family-friendly working facilities (Dean et al., 2017). Conversely, assuming that mothers in higher income households are more likely to be in well-paid jobs with access to family-friendly working facilities, these mothers may find it easier to combine paid work with childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, paying for childcare is likely to be less of an issue for mothers in higher income households than for mothers in low income households – although previous GUS analysis has shown that families in more disadvantaged circumstances are more likely to use informal (i.e. free) childcare (Bradshaw and Wasoff, 2009).

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Figure 5-F Equivalised household income when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=154/188; Remained in or returned to work=2786/2528.

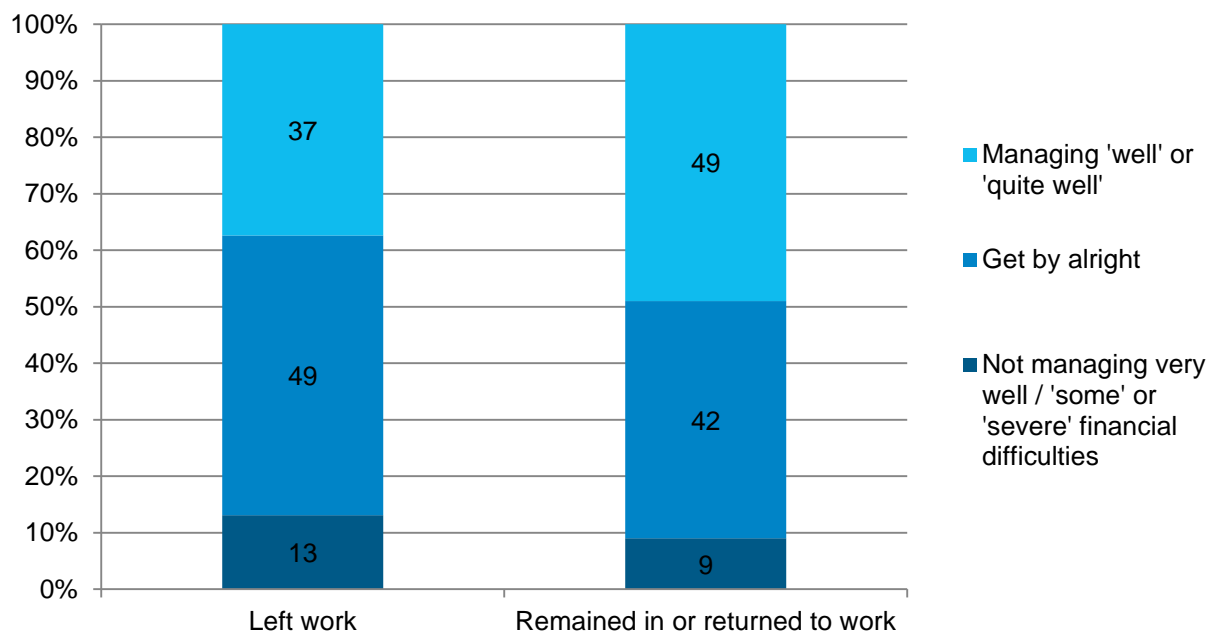
Mothers' subjective perceptions of how the family is managing financially may also play a role in decisions about whether or not they remain in or return to work after having a child. Figure 5-G shows the distribution of how mothers said their household was getting on financially at the time the child was aged 10 months.

The difference in reporting 'not managing very well' between mothers who returned to work and those who did not was not statistically significant. However, mothers who left work were less likely than mothers who remained in or returned to say that they were managing 'well' or 'quite well'. 37% of mothers who gave up work said this compared with 49% of mothers who stayed in or returned to work. This reflects the same general pattern seen in the household income data that mothers in poorer financial circumstances are more likely to give up work.

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Figure 5-G How household is managing financially when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3057/2800.

5.5.3 Family characteristics

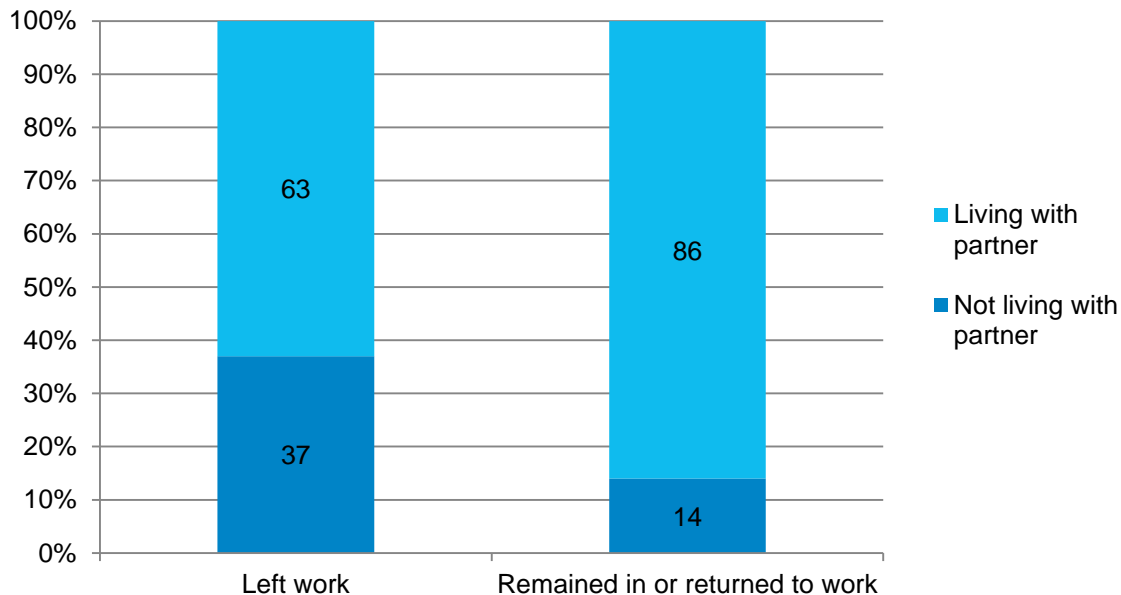
Compared with mothers who stayed in or returned to work, mothers who gave up work were much more likely to be lone parents: 37% of mothers who gave up work were lone parents at the time the child was aged 10 months, compared with just 14% of those who returned to work (Figure 5-H). This is perhaps unsurprising given that single parents do not have another adult carer in the household to care for the child and only one adult to generate income. Thus, organising and paying for childcare is likely to be a more significant issue for single mothers compared with partnered mothers. To some extent, this argument is supported by the findings in chapter 4 which suggested that at the time their child was aged 10 months, single mothers who were looking for work were more likely than partnered mothers to report childcare issues as one of the main reasons they had not found work. Notably, no differences were evident among mothers of 3 and 5 year old children. While overall the proportion of mothers who referenced childcare as a barrier increased as the child aged, it is possible that single mothers are more sensitive to the cost of childcare.

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Thus, the likely reduction in childcare costs as the child reached pre-school age may have had more of an influence on single mothers than on partnered mothers^{31,32}.

Figure 5-H Whether mother is living with a partner when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3061/2804.

Interestingly, mothers who lived with a partner who was not in work at the time the child was aged 10 months were just as likely to leave work as those living with a partner who was in work (Table 8-2 in Appendix B). Analysis restricted to mothers whose partners were in work at the time the cohort child was aged 10 months showed that partners of mothers who gave up work tended to earn less than partners of mothers who remained in or returned to work. For example, among mothers who lived with a partner who was in paid work, 27% of those who left work lived with a partner who earned less than £12,000 per year, compared with just 16% of mothers who remained in or returned to work (Figure 5-I). Interestingly, mothers who left work

³¹ A reduction in childcare costs is likely to have occurred as the child turned 3. First, childminders and nurseries often offer lower rates for older children. Second, in 2013 and 2015 pre-school aged children in Scotland were eligible for 12-15 hours of free pre-school education per week.

³² It is also possible that the apparent lack of difference found between single and partnered mothers at these ages is simply down to the smaller base sizes, which mean that any differences between single and partnered mothers in the sample would have to be considerably larger for us to be confident that they were real differences in the population.

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were just as likely as those who remained in or returned to work to be living with a partner in the highest income group: among mothers who lived with a partner who was in paid work, 18% of those who left work lived with a partner earning more than £31,200 per year compared with 15% of mothers who remained in or returned to work³³.

Figure 5-I Partner’s annual take-home pay when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy and were living with a partner who was in paid work at the time the child was aged 10 months and where information about the partner’s income was provided. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=92/95; Remained in or returned to work=2045/1756.

The analysis also showed differences according to the partner’s socio-economic status. Among mothers whose partner was in work, those who gave up work were less likely than those who stayed in or returned to work to be living with a partner in a professional/managerial occupation (31% compared with 46%). In contrast, partnered mothers who left work were more likely than those who remained or returned to be living with a partner in a routine or semi-routine occupation (33% compared with 20%, Figure 5-J).

These figures suggest that a partner’s socio-economic circumstances are likely to

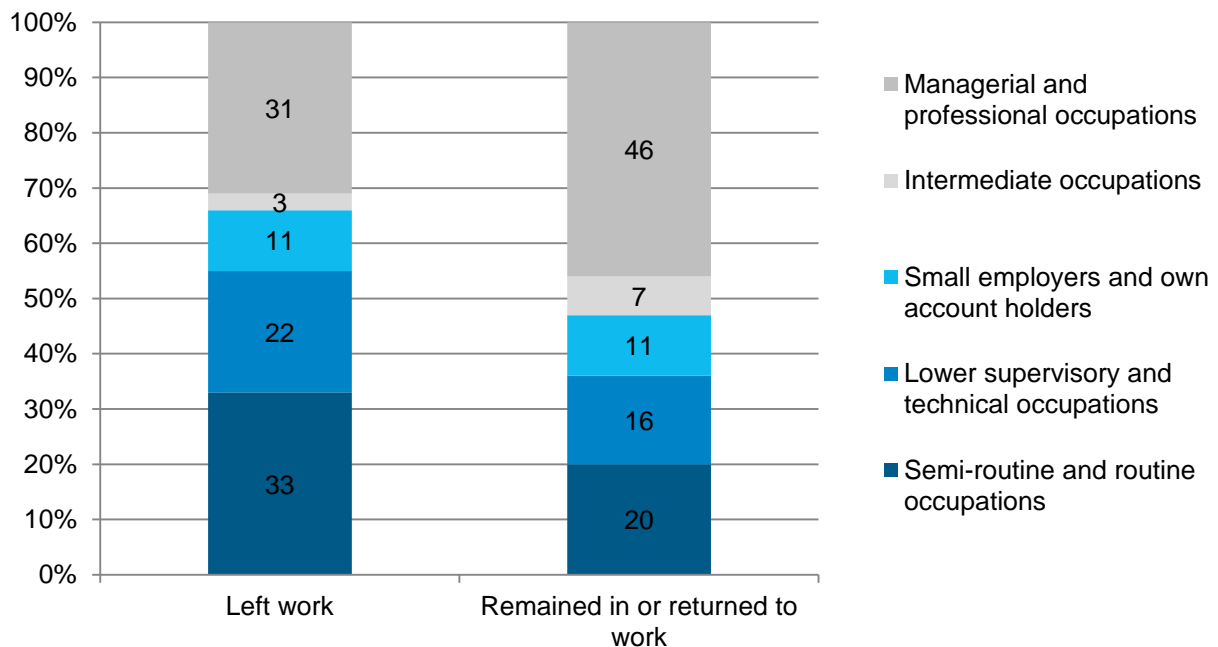
³³ The apparent difference between mothers who left and remained in/returned to work was not statistically significant.

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play a role in whether a mother leaves work or not after having a child. However, they also suggest that this role varies significantly for different mothers. Thus, multiple (and at times contradictory) patterns seem to be at play. For example, for some mothers who are living with a partner who is not in paid work, engaging in paid work may be a financial necessity. At the same time, living with a partner who is not in paid work may simply be another indicator that a mother is living in circumstances which make labour market participation more difficult for both her and her partner (for example, having low levels of skills and education). Conversely, mothers living with a partner in well-paid work have a higher level of flexibility to choose not to engage in paid work, if they prefer, compared with mothers living with a partner who is not working or is on low pay. At the same time, mothers living with a partner in a professional/managerial job may be more likely to be in professional/managerial jobs themselves and therefore be *less* likely to give up work.

Figure 5-J Partner’s occupational classification when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy and were living with a partner who was in paid work at the time the child was aged 10 months. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=121/122; Remained in or returned to work=2652/2282.

In addition to considering the presence of a partner in the household it is also worth looking at the presence of any siblings. The presence of older children does not seem to be associated with a mother’s likelihood of giving up or staying in work. At the time the cohort child was aged 10 months, there were no differences in the

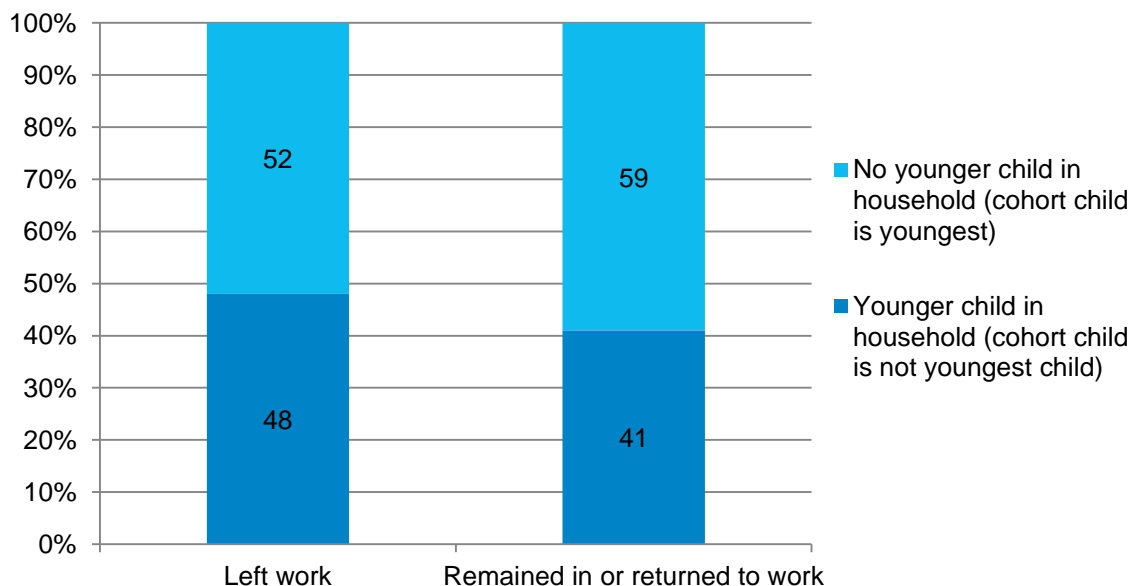
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number of children living in the households of mothers in the 'left work' group and mothers in the 'remained or returned to work' group. Given the additional caring responsibilities, we might have expected mothers with a higher number of children to be more likely to give up work.

It is worth remembering, however, that at 10 months the cohort child was (in the vast majority of cases) the youngest child in the household and was therefore likely to require more intensive care than any older siblings. Indeed, there were indications of a relationship between a mother having another – younger – child and giving up work. 48% of mothers who gave up work had a younger child living with them at the time the cohort child was aged 5, compared with 41% of mothers who remained in or returned to work. This difference was only borderline significant ($p=.073$). This suggests that while the presence of younger siblings may be part of the picture, it is unlikely to be the main factor driving mothers to give up work.

Figure 5-K Whether younger child in household when cohort child aged 5, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3061/2804.

5.5.4 Area characteristics

Mothers who left work tended to live in areas with higher levels of deprivation than mothers who remained in or returned to work (Figure 5-L). For example, at the time the child was 10 months old, 34% of mothers who gave up work were living in the most deprived areas, compared with just 19% of mothers who stayed in or returned

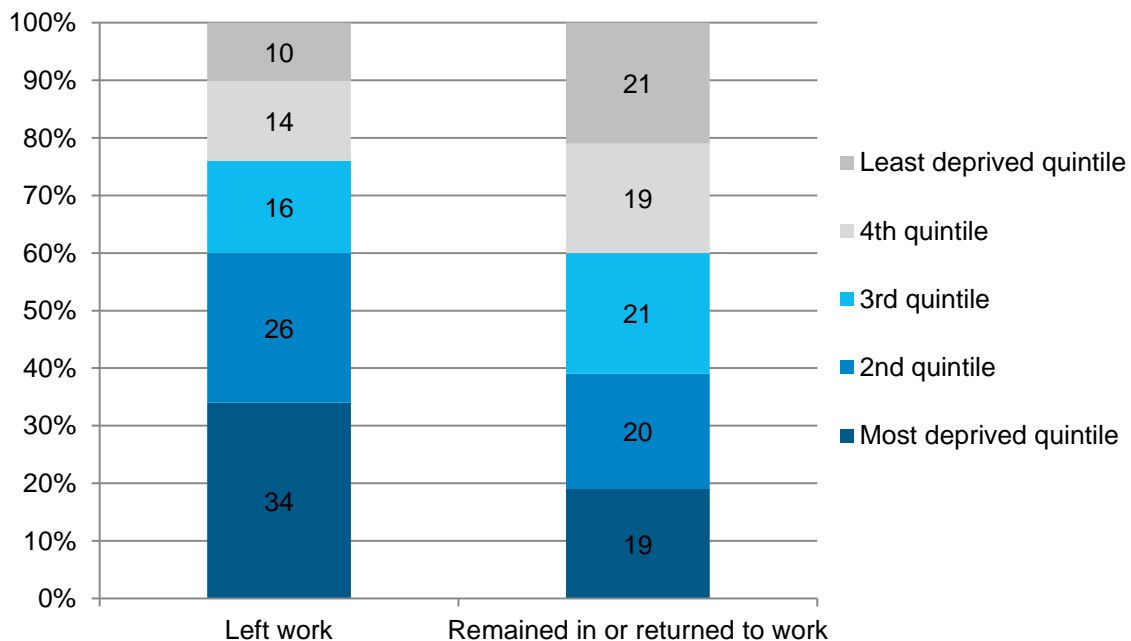
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to work. Conversely, just 10% of mothers who left work lived in the least deprived areas compared with 21% of mothers who did not.

This confirms the suggestion made by other research (e.g. Chanfreu *et al.*, 2011) that mothers living in less advantaged circumstances are more likely than those in more advantaged circumstances to leave work after having a child. It is possible that the jobs available in the most deprived areas are of a nature which makes it more difficult to combine paid work with having a young child. For example, jobs in these areas may be more likely to be lower-skilled and therefore also to be low-paid and offer less flexibility than the jobs available to mothers living in less deprived areas. However, multivariable analysis which controlled for the influences of other factors found no independent relationship between the level of area deprivation and the likelihood of mothers giving up work. This suggests that the differences by area deprivation seen in Figure 5-L are explained by other differences between mothers in the two groups (further details in section 5.6).

Figure 5-L Level of area deprivation (SIMD quintiles) when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=177/216; Remained in or returned to work=3061/804.

Whether mothers left work did not appear to be associated with whether they lived in urban or rural locations (Table 8-3 in Appendix B).

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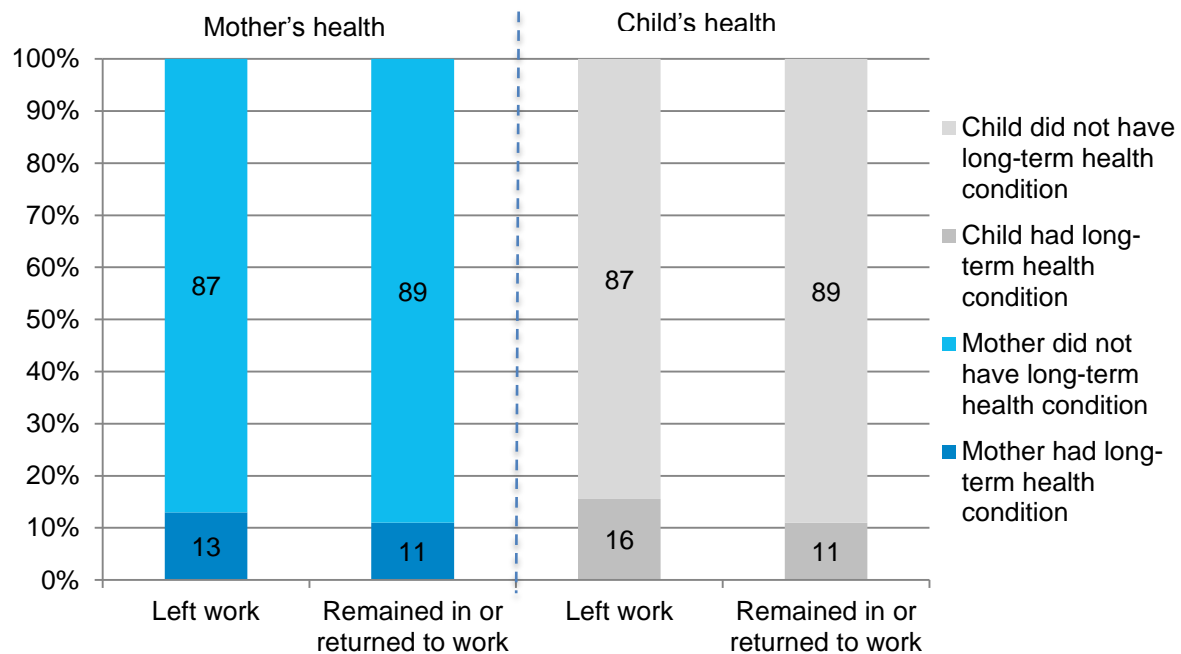
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5.5.5 *Maternal and child health*

Mothers who gave up work were neither more nor less likely to suffer from a long-term health condition than mothers who stayed in or returned to work. At the time the cohort child was 10 months old, 13% of mothers who left work reported having a long-term condition, compared with 11% of mothers who remained in or returned to work (Figure 5-M). While this may seem counter-intuitive, it is worth remembering that the analysis was restricted to those who were in work during pregnancy. As such, that we do not see any differences is likely to simply reflect the fact that mothers with the most severe health conditions were less likely to be in work during pregnancy (and therefore not included in the analysis).

The child's health appears to have more of an impact. Mothers who gave up work were slightly more likely than those who remained or returned to report that their child had a long-term condition at the age of 10 months. 16% of mothers who gave up work said this, compared with 11% of mothers who remained in or returned to work (Figure 5-M). It is worth noting that the measure covers a range of conditions, not all of which are likely to require much additional care. However, some of the conditions undoubtedly do and even though the difference seen here is relatively small and is only borderline significant ($p=.073$), having a child with severe health problems, especially those which require constant care, is likely to have an impact on a mother's likelihood to give up work.

Figure 5-M Proportion of mothers/children with long-term health condition when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5



Base: Mothers who were in paid work during pregnancy. Base sizes (unweighted/weighted): Left work=172/211; Remained in or returned to work=3044/2785.

5.6 Main factors associated with leaving work

A number of the characteristics and circumstances considered above are likely to be strongly interrelated. This means that, on the basis of the bivariate analysis outlined above, we cannot be sure which characteristics and circumstances are themselves associated with mothers giving up work, and which are related primarily due to their relationship with another characteristic. To address this, multivariable logistic regression models were fitted to identify characteristics and circumstances which were independently associated with a mother leaving work after having a child and not having returned by the time the child was aged 5. The results are discussed below.

5.6.1 All mothers

The bivariate analysis suggested that, compared with mothers who remained in or returned to work, mothers who gave up work were likely to be younger and to be living in more deprived areas. They were also more likely to be single mothers, and less likely to have a degree or to have been working in professional or managerial occupations. Finally, whether a mother had another child within the first five years of

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the cohort child, and whether the cohort child had any long-term health problems or disabilities also seemed to play a role.

These characteristics and circumstances were entered into a multivariable logistic regression model which predicted a mother leaving work after having the cohort child and not having returned by the time the child turned 5³⁴.

The results indicate that being a single mother, having low levels of educational qualifications, having another (younger) child, and the cohort child having a long-term health condition were all independently and positively associated with a mother giving up paid work. For example, the odds of leaving work after having a child and not having returned by the time the child turned 5 were almost four times higher for mothers who had no educational qualifications than for mothers who had a degree. The odds of single mothers leaving work were twice as high as those for partnered mothers.

As a whole, a mother's occupational classification was not significant in the model. Nonetheless, there were some indications that mothers in routine/semi-routine occupations were more likely than mothers in professional/managerial occupations to give up work.

Neither the level of area deprivation nor the mother's age were independently associated with a mother giving up work. Thus, the associations found in the bivariate analysis are likely explained by the fact that mothers who have lower levels of education – a characteristic which was independently associated with mothers being more likely to give up work – are also likely to be younger in age, and to be living in the more deprived areas.

As discussed in section 5.5.2, the bivariate analysis suggested that mothers living in the poorest households were more likely to give up work after having a child. Unsurprisingly (given the reasons set out in section 5.5.2), living in the poorest households remained strongly and positively associated with a mother leaving work, even when controlling for the influence of other factors. Notably, however, the presence of a partner became less significant once household income was added to the multivariable model³⁵. This could suggest that the partner's income plays an important role – something which is considered further in section 5.6.2.

The bivariate analysis also indicated that mothers who did not have access to any family-friendly working facilities were more likely to give up work after having a child (cf. section 5.5.1). To test whether this relationship remained significant when

³⁴ Results are provided in Table 7 in the Technical Annex.

³⁵ Results are provided in Table 8 in the Technical Annex.

controlling for the influence of other factors such as the type of job and the mother's level of education, whether the mother had access to family-friendly working facilities was added to the multivariable model (after household income had been removed). Because of the way the information about family-friendly working facilities was collected³⁶, this analysis was restricted to mothers who did not change jobs during the first ten months after the cohort child's birth, and to mothers who worked as employees while they were pregnant (i.e. mothers who were self-employed are not included). The results³⁷ show an independent relationship between not having access to any family-friendly working facilities and giving up work after having a child, with odds of leaving work for mothers who had no access to family-friendly working facilities being more than one and a half times as high as for mothers who did have access (OR=1.7). When interpreting these results it is important to bear in mind the possibility that mothers who were in work at the time of the interview may be more likely to be aware of any family-friendly working facilities offered to them than mothers who had not worked since having a child. Nonetheless, the results seem to indicate that access to family-friendly working facilities is a factor which should not be overlooked when considering circumstances influencing mothers' engagement in paid work after having a child.

5.6.2 Partnered mothers and single mothers

As previously suggested, their partner's income is likely to have at least some bearing on mothers' decisions about whether or not to remain in or return to work after childbirth. To test this, a separate multivariable model was fitted for mothers who were living with a partner. The model included all the individual and household variables included in the initial model, except whether a partner was present in the household. In addition, this model included partner-specific variables such as the partner's socio-economic class and their annual take-home pay³⁸.

Some of the results were similar to those found for all mothers. For example, a mother having lower levels of education and having another (younger) child were both strongly and positively associated with giving up work, while the mother's age was not. The association between the cohort child having a long-term health condition and leaving work found for all mothers was not evident among partnered mothers. Also in contrast to the findings for all mothers, there were some indications that partnered mothers living in the most deprived areas were more likely than those

³⁶ As previously noted, information about access to family-friendly working facilities was collected at sweep 1. Information was collected about mothers' current or most recent job and was collected from mothers who worked as employees only.

³⁷ Results are provided in Table 9 in the Technical Annex.

³⁸ Results are provided in Table 10 in the Technical Annex.

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in the least deprived areas to give up work (area deprivation as a whole was borderline significant in the model, $p=.070$).

The analysis for all mothers found a tentative association between mothers' socio-economic status and whether or not she gave up work, with mothers in routine/semi-routine occupations appearing to be more likely to give up paid work than mothers in managerial or professional occupations. Among partnered mothers, working in lower supervisory or technical occupations or in routine/semi-routine occupations was associated with giving up work and not having returned by the time their child was aged 5. For example, the odds of partnered mothers working in lower supervisory and technical occupations giving up work were more than two and a half times bigger than for partnered mothers working in professional/managerial occupations.

As noted above, when looking at all mothers who had not changed jobs in the first 10 months after having the cohort child, we found that not having access to flexible working – or at least not being aware of it – was associated with giving up work. Given the suggestion made by previous research (e.g. Dean *et al.*, 2017) that those in routine/semi-routine occupations are less likely to have access to flexible working, another multivariable model was fitted for partnered mothers who had not changed jobs in the first ten months after the cohort child was born and who were not self-employed (results not shown). Interestingly, this showed no significant relationship between access to flexible working and a mother's propensity to give up work. This seems to suggest that, although it may play a role, a lack of access to flexible working does not (fully) explain why mothers in routine and semi-routine occupations were more likely to give up work after having a child.

Neither their partner's socio-economic class nor their level of income was independently associated with whether or not a mother gave up work after childbirth on an overall level³⁹. However, there were some indications that mothers with a partner on a 'middle' income were more likely than mothers with a partner on high incomes to give up work after having a child⁴⁰.

To supplement the analysis looking at partnered mothers, a further multivariable model was fitted for single mothers⁴¹. Among single mothers, after controlling for other factors, none of the characteristics and circumstances found to be associated with leaving paid work for all mothers were found to be significant. However, it is

³⁹ 120 partners who were not in paid work were added to the lowest income group (incomes up to £12,000 per year).

⁴⁰ Partners on 'middle' incomes are here defined as partners with an income of £15,600-£31,200 per year. Partners on 'high' incomes are defined as partners with an income of more than £31,200 per year.

⁴¹ Results are provided in Table 11 in the Technical Annex.

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difficult to say whether this is due to genuine differences or whether it is simply due to the low base sizes in the analysis of single mothers⁴².

⁴² The low base sizes mean that differences between sub groups need to be relatively large for us to be confident that they are also occurring in the population.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

This chapter draws together the findings and considers two questions. First, how can these findings help us answer the key policy questions posed at the outset of the report? And second, what do they tell us about maternal employment in Scotland? In particular, what picture do they paint of mothers of young children who may be facing particular barriers to entering, re-entering or remaining in paid work?

6.1 Addressing the key policy questions

6.1.1 *Which mothers need support to secure paid work?*

The findings suggest that young mothers may be in particular need of support to secure work – especially teenage mothers. They emerged as a group more likely not to be in paid work and one which was consistently present among those seeking work. This is perhaps unsurprising given that younger mothers tend to have lower levels of education and skills and will also have less work experience – simply as a function of their age. We also know that young mothers are more likely than older mothers to be living in less advantaged socio-economic circumstances (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2014b).

Single mothers appear to be another group which could benefit from additional support to secure employment. For example, being a single mother was independently associated with giving up work after having a child, and single mothers were significantly more likely than partnered mothers to quote childcare issues as a barrier to finding paid work when their child was a baby.

More widely, mothers in lower income households were more likely to be seeking work, and compared with more advantaged mothers those living in less advantaged circumstances were more likely to give up paid work after having a child.

6.1.2 *What are the barriers facing mothers who want to work?*

One of the main barriers reported by mothers was a lack of suitable jobs. This was by far the most common reason mentioned by mothers when their child was aged 10 months. Specifically, finding suitable *part time* work is likely to be a particular issue for mothers of children this age. Difficulties finding work within the local area that fitted mothers' particular skills set was also mentioned. This could suggest that location in itself is likely to be a barrier for some mothers who are looking for work.

This may be because the area is particularly remote or because only a limited range of jobs are available.

Mothers also referenced childcare issues as a barrier to finding paid work. These included difficulties with arranging childcare as well as mentions of childcare simply being too expensive to make working worthwhile. There were some indications that childcare was perceived as more of a barrier as the child approached age 5. Notably, however, among single mothers childcare issues appeared to be a significant barrier also when their child was a baby.

In addition, a lack of qualifications and experience to be able to compete with others in the job market was mentioned by some mothers, as were issues with organising transport. The latter is likely to be a particular issue for mothers in less accessible locations⁴³.

Thus, mothers gave a multitude of reasons for not having managed to find paid work. Moreover, the main reasons varied according to the child's age. This suggests that the barriers to employment that mothers face are multiple, complex and differ according to their specific circumstances – including the age of their child, their level of skills and experience, where they live and whether they are living with a partner. Further research – ideally with a qualitative component – would be desirable in order to gain a fuller understanding of the barriers faced by different groups of mothers, how they co-occur and interact.

6.1.3 *How can mothers be supported to start or remain in paid work after having a child, and to remain in work as their child ages?*

A mother's level of education was found to be an important predictor of whether or not she gave up paid work after having a child. This suggests that any initiatives aiming to support mothers to remain in or return to work after childbirth should take into account the mother's level of skills and educational qualifications. Mothers with no or lower levels of qualifications are likely to have less choice than highly educated mothers when it comes to pursuing paid work. They may also be more likely to be in low-paid jobs with little autonomy and little flexibility to fit work around their family commitments. Thus, in the short term, supporting mothers to gain further qualifications would undoubtedly give mothers with little or no prior qualifications more flexibility to pursue paid work which suits their needs. For example, colleges offering flexible courses and subsidised on-site nurseries could help make further education more accessible to mothers with young children. Notably, though, initiatives focused solely on making further education or skills improvement initiatives

⁴³ Due to small numbers this was not possible to test in the analysis carried out here.

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more accessible are unlikely to be effective on their own. Such initiatives would need to go hand in hand with efforts to ensure that mothers consider continuing their education or learning new skills to be a valuable pursuit. In other words, for education and training-focused initiatives to work, mothers need to see paid work as something worthwhile *and* they need to see further education as relevant for improving their chances in the labour market.

Further to improving mothers' level of skills, the research also suggests that it is important to ensure that suitable work is available – particularly part time positions. Crucially, however, part time jobs must be of a secure and well-paid nature and must match mothers' skills levels. It is also important to address the penalties often incurred from part time employment, including the risk of being trapped in a cycle of part time work-no work (Connolly and Gregory, 2006; for an overview of the literature on penalties associated with part time work see also Fagan and Norman, 2012).

Other forms of family-friendly working are also likely to benefit mothers – for example, being able to work from home and/or to work only during school hours, and being able to take time off at short notice without pay penalties or other negative repercussions. Having access to family-friendly working facilities could be particularly important for mothers who care for a child with a long-term health condition. Needless to say, however, if pregnant employees are not aware of such facilities, or if such facilities are not advertised to potential new employees, mothers are unlikely to be aware that such options exist. They may therefore be discouraged from remaining in or applying for a job which appears irreconcilable with their future caring responsibilities.

The findings also suggest that ensuring suitable childcare is available – including for children under the age of one – may help some mothers (back) into work after having a child. This could be of particular importance for single mothers who will in most cases be their child's primary and sole carer. In addition to being high quality (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2014a), childcare must also be affordable and available at a time and in a location convenient to mothers.

Irrespective of their child's age, young mothers were particularly likely to be out of work and looking for work. Further reductions to the teenage pregnancy rate may therefore in itself help reduce the number of mothers in need of tailored support to secure paid work. However, we know that many young mothers face multiple forms of disadvantage (e.g. Bradshaw *et al.*, 2014b) and a targeted approach to address the particular needs of young mothers may therefore be warranted. Notably, given the multitude of challenges many young mothers face, initiatives would likely benefit from taking a holistic approach, with the inclusion of both health, education, early years and employment services, rather than simply focusing on one dimension.

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Another aspect to consider, perhaps particularly for younger mothers, is that mothers who do paid work while they are pregnant are more likely to remain in work after having a child. As such, connecting pregnant women with an employer during their pregnancy, or other similar approaches, may be worth exploring for initiatives aiming to support young or disadvantaged mothers.

Although mothers who were looking for work were overall more likely to be younger and to live in less advantaged circumstances, they were by no means a homogenous group. For example, a minority of the mothers who were not in paid work but reported that they had looked for work in the last four weeks did not appear to be facing any particular barriers to entering or re-entering paid work. Similarly, mothers who were in paid work while they were pregnant but were subsequently out of work until the child turned 5 were also a very heterogeneous group. They were not all well-off women with high-earning partners, neither were they all mothers living in severely disadvantaged circumstances (although they were more likely to fall into the latter group).

Thus, the needs of mothers who require support to enter, re-enter or remain in work after having a child are complex, and although this report has identified what appear to be some of the key barriers facing mothers who are looking for work, these will be closely intertwined with the mother's wider situation. For policy makers this suggests that any interventions which aim to support mothers to enter, re-enter or remain in work after childbirth will require a holistic approach. That is, an approach which takes into account mothers' wider situation and responsibilities and cuts across policy areas – including early years services, education and business initiatives as well as local transport planning – rather than focus on isolated measures such as providing support with job searches or guidance on preparing for or attending job interviews.

Within such a holistic approach, however, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of the nature of the paid work available to mothers. In the longer term, if the aim is to support all mothers who want to enter, re-enter or remain in work after having a child, wider initiatives to address the poorer working conditions often associated with low skilled work – such as low pay, insecurity and a lack of flexibility – are likely to be required. Crucially, initiatives must ensure that paid work – irrespective of a mother's skills or experience – appears attractive and convenient to mothers with young children. Paid work should be felt by mothers (and everyone else) to be worthwhile, and should not be a source of stress or worry about how to combine paid work with their other responsibilities.

6.1.4 *To what extent would an expansion in the provision of affordable childcare support mothers into paid work?*

As noted in chapter 4 , childcare was mentioned as a barrier to finding work by a

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substantial minority of mothers of young children in 2015. A quarter of mothers of 5 year old children in Scotland who were looking for work quoted issues with childcare as a reason why they had not managed to find a job. This supports the argument for improving childcare provision in Scotland and highlights the need for both flexible and affordable childcare. The findings also suggest that ensuring suitable childcare is available for the youngest children – including children under the age of one – may help some mothers (back) into work after having a child, particularly single mothers.

An important factor to keep in mind when considering childcare provision as a potential lever for supporting maternal employment is that mothers of young children may not automatically perceive paid work as the best option for them. As shown in this report, a substantial minority of mothers appear to have weighed their options and found that, given the options available to them, engaging in intensive job searches is not worthwhile. Although not specifically covered in the GUS data, it is possible that – alongside other factors – perceived poor quality of a childcare setting or the logistics of dropping off and picking up children at childcare at either end of the working day could influence mothers' considerations of whether to take on paid work or to remain at home to look after their child or children themselves.

6.1.5 *Has there been any progress in supporting maternal employment between 2004/05 and 2010/11?*

Overall, mothers who had a child in 2010/11 were more likely than mothers who had a child six years earlier to be in paid work when the child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. They were also more likely to remain in work after childbirth and during the first five years of their child's life. In 2015 only 21% of mothers of 5 year old children who were out of work had also been out of work when their child was aged 10 months and 3 years, compared with 24% of mothers of 5 year old children in 2009/10. For policy makers and others who seek to increase mothers' opportunities to undertake paid work whilst caring for a young child or children, this is a small but encouraging change.

Nevertheless, the analysis found no evidence of any change in the proportion of mothers who were out of work and seeking work. This suggests that barriers to maternal employment were still in place. Furthermore, these barriers appeared to be unevenly distributed. In particular, among mothers who were in work while they were pregnant, those living in less advantaged socio-economic circumstances were more likely than more advantaged mothers to be out of work after having a child. Also, irrespective of their child's age, younger mothers living in lower income households were more likely than older mothers in more comfortable financial circumstances to be out of work and looking for work.

Thus, the research showed an overall increase in the proportion of mothers of young

children who were in paid work. However, it also showed that socio-economic inequalities between mothers remained and that a small minority of mothers with young children were still unable to find suitable paid work.

6.2 Concluding remarks

At an overall level, maternal employment rates in Scotland appear to be improving - mothers living in Scotland who had a child in 2010/11 were more likely to be in employment during the first five years of their child's life than mothers who had a child six years earlier. Among mothers who had a job while they were pregnant, those who had a child in 2010/11 were also more likely to remain in work until their child was aged 5 compared with mothers who had a child six years earlier. This suggests that the conditions which support maternal employment were better in 2015 than they were six years earlier.

Nonetheless, the findings do indicate that there is still room for improvement. For example, there was no evidence of a change in the overall proportion of mothers who were out of work and looking for work (although numbers were small). For example, in 2015, around one in five of mothers of 5 year old children had not been in paid work at any of the three time points considered – i.e. they were out of work when their child was aged 10 months, 3 years and 5 years. Thus, barriers to maternal employment remain. Mothers' own accounts of why they had not managed to find paid work pointed to two main barriers, namely a lack of suitable jobs and issues with arranging suitable childcare. In addition, a significant minority of mothers said that they had not looked very hard – often because they preferred to stay at home to look after their child or children, or because of practical constraints on their availability to take up a job (for example because they were due to move to a different area or were expecting another child). This highlights the complexity of the factors that influence maternal employment, and how mothers' and their families' decisions around paid employment reflect both their personal circumstances and wider social, cultural and economic trends.

The research findings also indicate that inequalities among mothers remained. Most strikingly perhaps, irrespective of their child's age, younger mothers and mothers living in low income households were found to be more likely than older mothers and mothers in higher income households to be out of work and looking for work.

In line with existing research, working during pregnancy was found to be strongly associated with being in paid work after the child's birth. When looking solely at mothers who worked during pregnancy, single mothers were more likely to give up work after having a child compared with mothers who were living with a partner. In addition, single mothers were particularly likely to quote childcare issues as a barrier to finding paid work when their child was a baby. The findings also suggest that

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mothers with additional childcare needs – for example, those who had another baby or who were caring for a child with a long-term health condition – were less likely to remain in work after having a child compared with other mothers. Finally, there were some indications that mothers with lower levels of skills and education were more likely than highly skilled mothers to leave paid work after having a child. The findings suggest that part of the explanation for this could be that mothers in highly skilled jobs are more likely to have access to family-friendly working facilities – including, for example, flexibility in how much, where and when they work – although the picture was mixed. Whilst not directly examined here, it is also worth considering the impact of job satisfaction more widely. For example, compared with mothers working in routine or semi-routine occupations, highly skilled mothers in professional or managerial occupations are likely to have a higher degree of autonomy and creativity in their job. In addition, highly skilled women are likely to receive higher levels of pay and they are more likely to be in jobs with career ladders and deferred rewards (Smeaton, 2006). This is likely to make work both more appealing and more rewarding.

In conclusion, the findings presented in this report paint a mixed and rather complex picture of maternal employment in Scotland. On the one hand, in 2015, mothers of young children were more likely to be in paid work than previously. On the other hand, barriers to maternal employment remained and were not evenly distributed. Mothers living in disadvantaged circumstances appeared to be disproportionately unsuccessful in securing work and more likely to leave paid work after having a child. Whilst choosing to give up work after having a child may reflect a mother's personal preferences, such decisions are made in a context which is heavily influenced by wider social, cultural and economic factors and the support and resources to which a mother and her family have access. As this report has shown, any consideration of maternal employment must take into account the significant variations in mothers' socio-economic circumstances.

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8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DETAILS OF KEY EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

Mother's level of education

At the first wave of data collection, the respondent was asked to provide information on the nature and level of any school and post-school qualifications they had obtained. The information was updated at each subsequent contact. Qualifications were grouped according to their equivalent position on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which ranges from Access 1 to Doctorate.

For the purposes of this report, these were further banded to create the following categories:

- Degree level academic and vocational qualifications
- Higher grades and Upper level vocational qualifications
- Upper level Standard Grades and Intermediate Vocational qualifications
- Lower level Standard Grades and Vocational qualifications
- Other
- No qualifications

Using these bands, the highest qualification level was defined for the respondent.

Equivalent annual household income quintiles

The income that a household needs to attain a given standard of living will depend on its size and composition. For example, a couple with dependent children will need a higher income than a single person with no children to attain the same material living standards. "Equivalentisation" means adjusting a household's income for size and composition so that we can look at the incomes of all households on a comparable basis.

After equivalentisation, the sample was split into five, equally sized groups – or quintiles – according to income distribution. Each group thus contains around 20% of families.

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Area deprivation (SIMD)

Area deprivation is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland. It is based on 37 indicators in the seven individual domains of Current Income, Employment, Health, Education Skills and Training, Geographic Access to Services (including public transport travel times for the first time), Housing and a new Crime Domain. SIMD is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones, which have a median population size of 769, are ranked from most deprived (1) to least deprived (6,505) on the overall SIMD and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

In this report, the data zones are grouped into quintiles. Quintiles are percentiles which divide a distribution into fifths, i.e., the 20th, 40th, 60th, and 80th percentiles. Those respondents whose postcode falls into the first quintile are said to live in one of the 20% least deprived areas in Scotland. Those whose postcode falls into the fifth quintile are said to live in one of the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Further details on SIMD can be found on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview>

Occupational classification / social class (NS-SEC)

This variable draws on the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). It comprises five different occupational classifications:

- Managerial and professional occupations
- Intermediate occupations
- Small employers and own account holders
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi routine and routine occupations

Further information on NS-SEC is available from the National Statistics website at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160106042025/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html>

Urban/rural classification

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification was first released in 2000 and is consistent with the Government's core definition of rurality which defines settlements of 3,000 or less people to be rural. It also classifies areas as remote based on drive times from settlements of 10,000 or more people. The definitions of urban and rural areas underlying the classification are unchanged.

The classification has been designed to be simple and easy to understand and apply. It distinguishes between urban, rural and remote areas within Scotland and includes the following categories:

- 'Large Urban Areas': Settlements of over 125,000 people
- 'Other Urban Areas': Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people
- 'Accessible Small Towns': Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and within 30 minutes' drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
- 'Remote Small Towns': Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
- 'Accessible Rural': Settlements of less than 3,000 people and within 30 minutes' drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
- 'Remote Rural': Settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more

For further details on the classification see Scottish Government (2008) Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2007 – 2008. This document is available online at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/29152642/0>

Access to family-friendly working facilities

Mothers who were or had previously been working as employees were asked whether they had access to a number of family-friendly working facilities. For this report, mothers who said they had access to one or more of the features listed below were classified as having access to family-friendly working facilities; mothers who did not report to have (had) access to any of these were classified as not having (had) access to family-friendly working facilities.

Features defined as 'family-friendly working facilities':

- Subsidised child care
- Childcare vouchers

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- A work place creche or nursery
- Flexible working hours always possible
- Flexible working hours sometimes possible by arrangement
- Allows parents paid time off when a child is sick (in addition to normal holiday allowance)
- Allows parents unpaid time off when a child is sick
- Allows parents unpaid time off during school holidays
- Allows employees to work from home some or all of the time
- Allows employees option to job-share

Whether mother has any long-term health conditions

This measure indicates whether the mother reported to have a disability or health problem lasting 12 months or more.

Whether cohort child has any long-term health conditions

This measure indicates whether the cohort child had a health problem or disability lasting or expected to last for more than a year, as reported by their main carer. The range of health conditions included in the measure is wide and as such not all children identified in the GUS data as having a long-term condition will require the same level of care.

Partner's annual income / take-home pay

In cases where a partner was resident in the household and where the partner was in work, respondents (mothers) were asked about their partner's take-home pay. The partner income figures presented in this report refer to annual take-home pay.

For the purposes of this report, partners' annual take-home income was grouped into six roughly equally sized groups. When the measure was included in multivariable models, partners who were not in work were added to the lowest income group and partners for whom no pay information was provided were treated as a separate group.

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APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table 8-1 Reasons why mothers had not found paid work, by whether mother living with a partner and by child's age (%)

	Single mothers			Partnered mothers		
	Child's age			Child's age		
	10 months	age 3	age 5	10 months	age 3	age 5
<i>Base: All mothers in BC2 who had looked for work in the last four weeks.</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
No suitable jobs available	53	47(*)	28	53	36(*)	25
Childcare (incl. availability and affordability)	19*	22	28	10*	16	23
Not looked very hard: family commitments	12	10	20*	9	13	10*
Not looked very hard: other reasons ¹	15	20	11**	20	20	26**
Other reasons ²	14	21	17	20	14	20
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>94</i>
<i>Weighted bases</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>110</i>

¹Not looked very hard: other reasons' included things like moving house, pregnant, going into education, only recently started looking, already found job, ill health.

²'Other reasons' included lack of experience/qualifications, competitive job market, and no particular reason given (e.g. 'Don't know').

* Significant differences between single and partnered mothers at p<.05 level.

(*) Borderline significant difference between single and partnered mothers.

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Table 8-2 Family type by partner's employment status when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5

	Left work	Remained in or returned to work
<i>Base: All mothers in BC2 who worked during pregnancy and took part at all three sweeps of data collection and where information about partner's employment status was provided at sweep 1.</i>	%	%
Not living with a partner	37	14
Living with partner who is in paid work	57	82
Living with a partner who is not in paid work	6	4
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>3059</i>
<i>Weighted bases</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>2801</i>

Table 8-3 Urban/rural location of when child aged 10 months, by whether mother left or remained in/returned to work by time child aged 5

	Left work	Remained in or returned to work
<i>Base: All mothers in BC2 who worked during pregnancy and took part at all three sweeps of data collection.</i>	%	%
Large urban	42	39
Other urban	29	29
Small, accessible towns	6	8
Small remote towns	4	4
Accessible rural	15	16
Remote rural	3	5
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>3061</i>
<i>Weighted bases</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>2804</i>



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