

New report finds huge social disparity in lockdown family life

For immediate release

Disadvantaged UK families have suffered disproportionately when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing since lockdown began, according to a new report from [Parent Zone](#).

A quarter of parents (25%) with incomes below £20,000 said they had not been personally coping, compared to just 14% of those earning more than £55,000.

And 36% of lower-income parents said their child's mental health and wellbeing had worsened since lockdown started, compared to 31% in the £20-£54,999 range.

The 'Left behind in lockdown' report, based on research carried out with Ipsos MORI, found that financial and digital divides have had a huge effect on how families have coped during COVID-19 restrictions since 23 March.

Digital poverty

Technology has generally had a positive impact on family life this year, with 77% of parents saying that connected tech helped them during lockdown.

But social disparity between rich and poor was evident. Of families in the top earnings bracket, 85% saw a benefit from connected tech. This dropped to 71% for those earning below £20,000.

Parents on the lowest incomes felt the least benefit from time spent together, with fewer stating improvements in their relationship with their children and generally feeling closer as a family.

Only a third of low-earning parents (36%) reported a positive impact on their ability to educate their child – compared to half of the highest-earners.

The research, carried out by Ipsos MORI for Parent Zone, also found that:

- Nearly one in five (17%) parents on the lowest income felt more distant from their family, compared to one in 10 (9%) of the highest earners

- Less than a quarter (23%) of lowest-earning parents said that their relationship with their children had improved, compared to a third (35%) of the top-earning parents
- Just over half (51%) of lowest-earning parents said that lockdown had a positive impact on their ability to spend quality time together as a family, compared to 59% of the highest earners

Even among parents who reported a positive impact on their family's lockdown wellbeing, those in the lowest income bracket were the least represented.

Vicki Shotbolt, founder and CEO of Parent Zone, said: "Our research highlights significant gaps between parents with the resources to access help, and the ones without. It also shows that parents have been coping admirably well – but at a cost.

Giving parents the recognition they deserve and the support they need is vital if – as the government claims – we want to minimise the negative impact for children and young people growing up during Covid."

What needs to happen

The report calls for future lockdowns to be planned with a better understanding of the impacts on families generally – and less affluent families specifically – to ensure all families have the same opportunities.

Among the recommendations:

- A family grant to enable disadvantaged parents to improve digital access
- Financial support for those facing unexpected childcare costs
- Policymakers to take into account the extra pressures on parents
- The government to publish its 2021 plans for English schools as soon as possible

Vicki Shotbolt said: "As the pandemic continues to cause chaos, this report should act as a wake-up call to politicians to take the needs of parents seriously.

Parental needs shouldn't be left to the bottom of the pile when the planning gets done. On the contrary, helping parents to effectively juggle work and family life has never been more important."

Read the full report [here](#).

Editor's note:



Research was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Parent Zone. It surveyed a nationally representative quota sample of 4,459 adults in the United Kingdom aged 16-75 of which

1,056 were identified as parents. Interviews were carried out using its online i:Omnibus between the 16th and 19th October 2020. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age within gender, government office region, working status and social grade in the UK.

Parent Zone founder and CEO Vicki Shotbolt is available for interview.
Please email press@parentzone.org.uk or call 020 686 7225.

About Parent Zone

Parent Zone are the experts in digital family life. We provide support and information to parents, children and schools, working globally to help families to navigate the internet safely and confidently. We regularly work with parents, schools, governments and businesses to study, understand and address the impact of emerging technologies on young people.