

# Families in the Labour Market, 2014

Coverage: **UK**

Date: **09 December 2014**

Geographical Area: **Region**

Theme: **Labour Market**

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## Correction

Revised figures provided at 16.30 on the 9th December 2014.

A production error has been identified in the processing of data for the Families in the Labour Market in 2014 short story bulletin, some figures within the bulletin were affected but no amendment is greater than 2.5%, these amendments did not have any effect on the interpretation of the data. All corrections have now been made.

ONS apologises for any inconvenience caused.

## Key Points

- In 2014 87.7% of families were classified as working families, the highest percentage since comparable records began in 1996.
- The largest increase in the percentage of working families since 1996 has been amongst lone parent families with dependent children.
- Over half (52.7%) of the 2.0 million workless families in 2014 were families where all members had been out of work for three or more years, with retirement the most common reason for not being in employment.
- In 2014 12.5% of dependent children (1.7 million) were living in workless families, which was the lowest percentage since records began in 1996.
- Parents of young children (aged under five) were almost twice as likely to be in employment if they were in a couple (78.6%) than if they were lone parents (40.9%).
- In 2014 the employment rate of women with dependent children (69.6%) was slightly higher than the rate for women without children (67.5%).
- Young mothers (those aged 16 to 24) were around half as likely to be in employment (36.0%) as mothers aged 25 to 64 (71.6%) in 2014.
- The percentage of lone mothers in work in 2014 was the highest (62.3%) since comparable records began in 1996.

## Introduction

The purpose of this analysis is to provide an insight into the labour market participation of families within the United Kingdom. It focuses firstly on the family unit as a whole, examining participation rates of families following the onset of the economic downturn in 2008 and characteristics of workless families. The analysis continues by examining the impact of dependent children on families.

Economic activity status of a family is broken down into the following:

- **Working family** - a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment.
- **Fully working family** - a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all people aged 16 and over are in employment.
- **Family with mixed economic activity** - a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one but not all people aged 16 and over are in employment.
- **Workless family** - a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where no one aged 16 and over is in employment.

A family is defined as a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child. Children may be dependent or non-dependent, where dependent children are those aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full time education. Types of family include married couple families, cohabiting couple families and lone parent families. A family is different to a household in that households can contain one family, more than one family or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people. Throughout this analysis at least one person within a family will be aged 16 to 64.

In 2014 81.1% of families in the UK were couple families (12.9 million), with the remaining 18.9% being lone parent families (3.0 million). In 1996, 83.5% of families were couple families (12.3 million) and 16.5% were lone parent families (2.4 million), which shows that the percentage of lone parent families has been increasing over the past 18 years. Despite an increase in cohabiting couple families and lone parent families, married couples were still the most common family type in the UK<sup>1</sup> in 2014.

There were also 7.2 million single persons in the UK in 2014 aged between 16 and 64, accounting for 17.8% of all people of this age. This is an increase from 5.4 million single persons in 1996, when single persons accounted for 14.7% of 16 to 64 year olds. Whilst single persons are not families and not included in this analysis, they can still have a significant impact upon the economic activity of a family unit, should they be related, for instance as a parent or a non-dependent child living separately from the family unit, or single persons living in the same household as a family.

Family level analysis breaks households down into family units to examine the interaction between family members, such as the impact of dependent children on parents' economic activity. Analysis at the household level provides a more comprehensive insight into living standards as it includes all members of a household. For analysis at the household level see the [Working and Workless](#)

[Households 2014 statistical bulletin](#)<sup>2</sup>. As households can contain more than one family unit, the estimates in this report will differ to those in the Working and Workless Households 2014 statistical bulletin, producing higher estimates for fully working and workless families. This is because a household with mixed economic activity can contain, for example, one family where all members are in employment and one workless family.

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the changing demographics of families over time see the Families & Households statistical bulletin:

[www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> For the Working and Workless Households 2014 statistical bulletin:

[www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/working-and-workless-households/2014/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/working-and-workless-households/2014/index.html)

## **Families in the Labour Market**

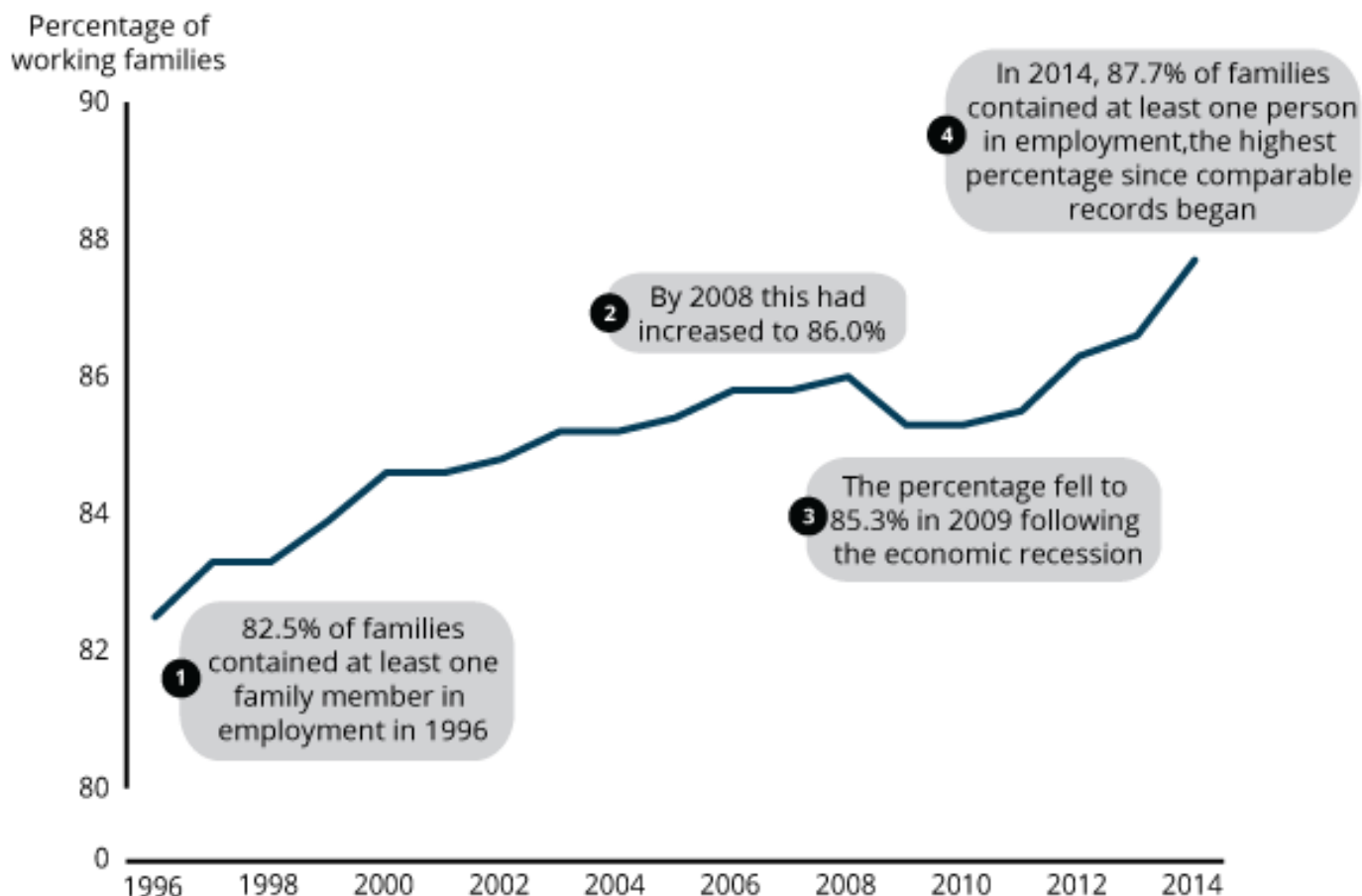
### **Highest percentage of working families since 1996**

In April to June 2014<sup>1</sup> there were 13.9 million families, that included one or more persons aged 16 to 64, in the UK that contained at least one person in employment. This accounted for 87.7% of all such families and is the highest percentage of working families since comparable records began in 1996.

## Economic activity of families, 1996-2014, UK

### Highest percentage of working families in 2014 since comparable records began in 1996

Families containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 or over is in employment



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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The percentage of families containing at least one adult member in work increased throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s from 82.5% of families in 1996 to 86.0% in 2008. In 2009, following the onset of the economic downturn, the percentage fell to 85.3%. Between 2009 and 2011 the percentage remained fairly flat, increasing by 0.2 percentage points. However, it grew at a faster rate between 2011 and 2014, increasing by 2.2 percentage points to 87.7%.

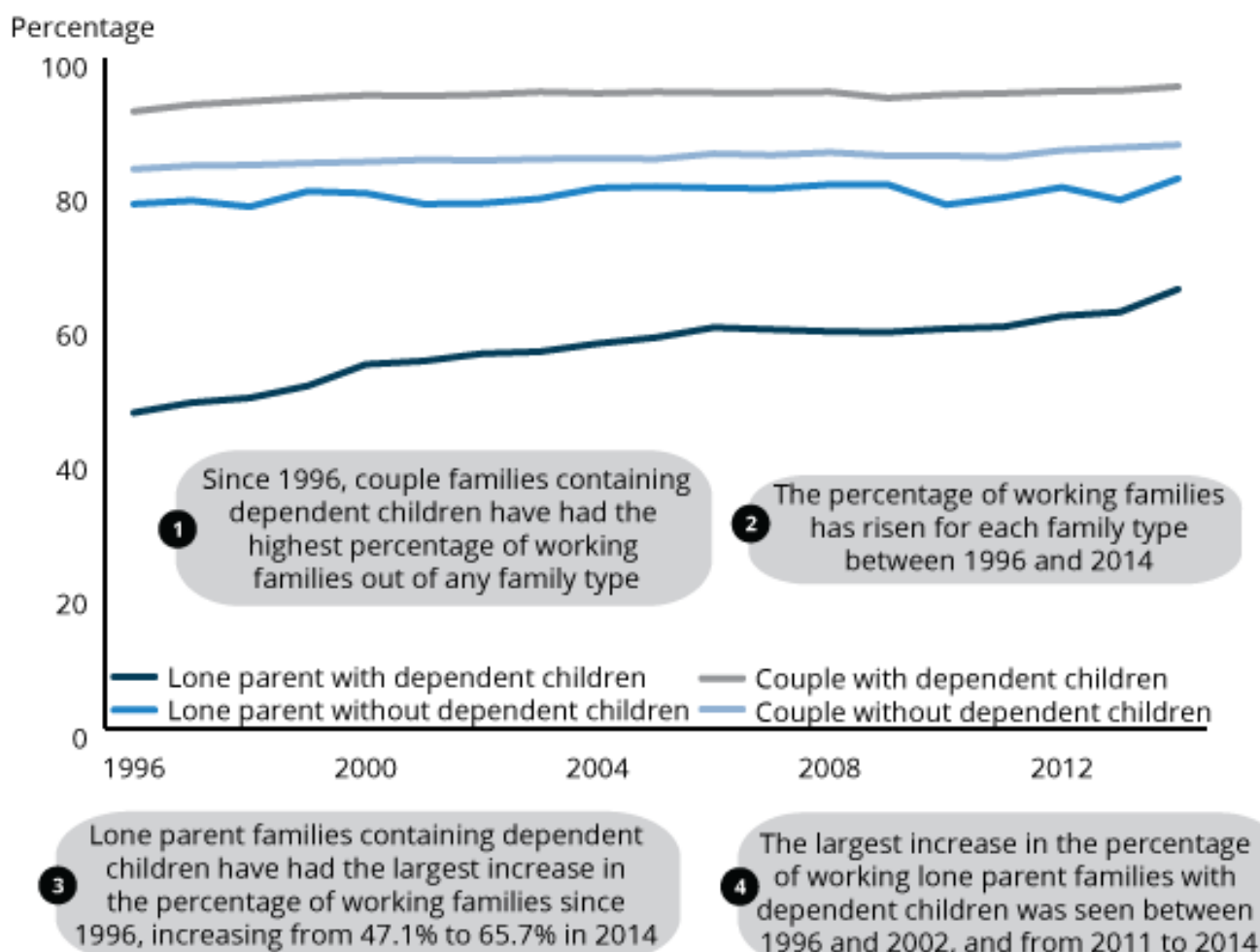
**The largest increase in the percentage of working families since 1996 has been in lone parent families**

Families consist of lone parent families and couple families. In 2014 around two thirds (66.0%) of lone parent families contained dependent children, with the remaining lone parent families containing only non-dependent children. 46.1% of couple families contained dependent children, with the remaining couple families containing either non-dependent children or no children at all.

In 2014 a higher percentage of lone parent families without dependent children were working families (82.0%) than the percentage for lone parent families with dependent children (65.7%). Working couple families that contained dependent children accounted for 95.7% of couple families with dependent children, which is a higher percentage than for couple families without dependent children (87.9%).

### Working families by family type, 1996-2014, UK

#### Largest increase in the percentage of working families since 1996 has been in lone parent families



Note: Lone parent families without dependent children are those containing non-dependent children only

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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The percentage of lone parent families with dependent children that were classified as working families rose from 47.1% in 1996 to 65.7% in 2014. This is the largest increase of any family type and helps to explain the increase in the percentage of working families in general.

The increase in the percentage of working lone parent families may be attributed to a combination of policy initiatives, changes in the characteristics of lone parents over time<sup>2</sup> and general improvements in employment rates in the UK.

Policy initiatives introduced over the past 15 years that have aimed to help lone parents into work include financial incentives to work and work promotion programmes. These include:

- 1998 to 2011 – New Deal for Lone Parents.
- 2008 to 2012 – Changes to Lone Parent Obligation.
- 2011 to present – Work Programme.

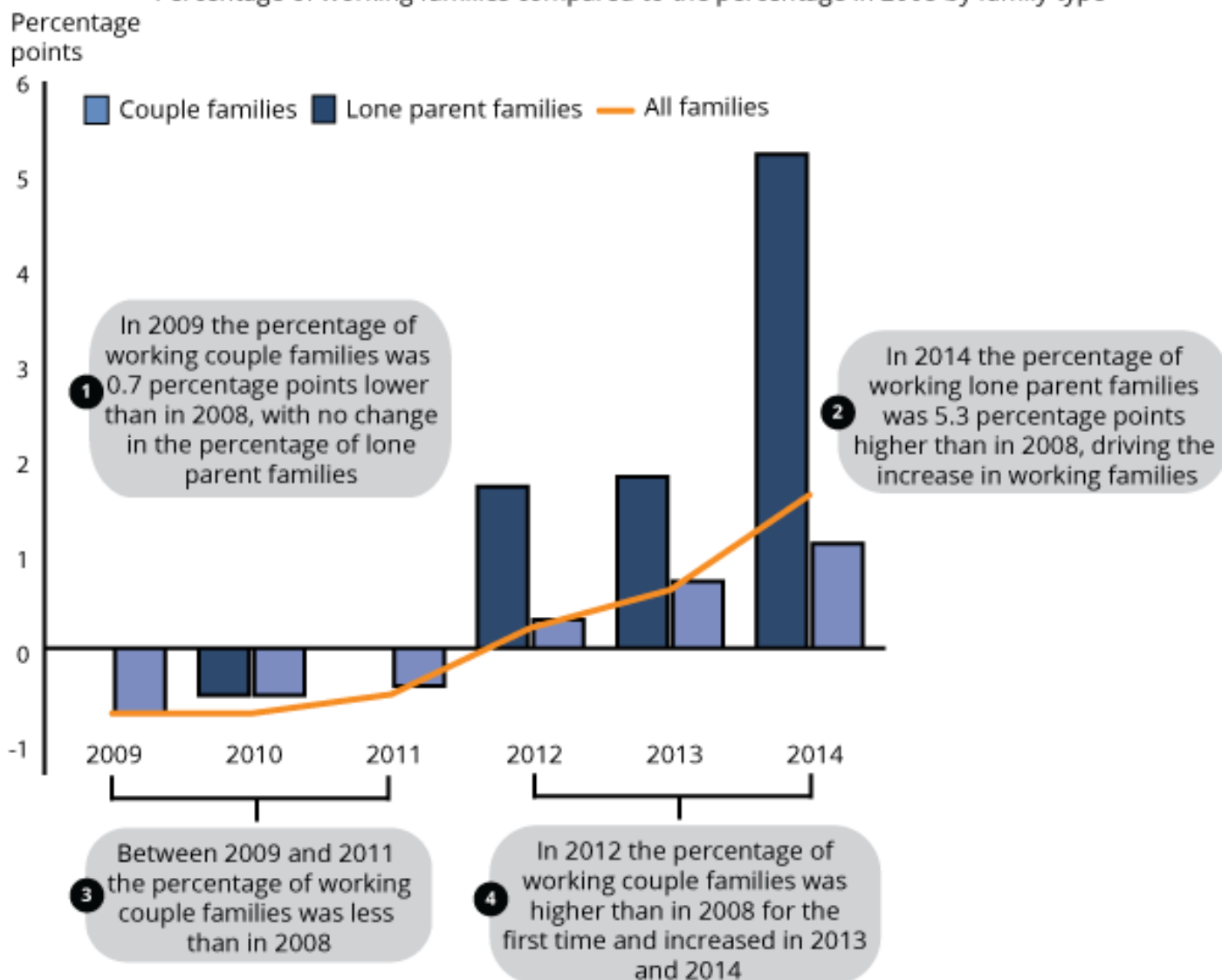
### **The increase in the percentage of working families since 2012 has been driven by lone parent families**

The percentage of working families was lower between 2009 and 2011 than the percentage in 2008, before the economic downturn. The main driver of this was a decrease in the percentage of working couple families. In 2012 the percentage of working families was higher than in 2008 for the first time and has remained higher in subsequent years. This has been driven by an increase in the percentage of working lone parent families, although the percentage of working couple families has also increased in these years.

## Change in the percentage of working families, 2008-2014, UK

### Lone parent families have driven the increase in the percentage of working families since 2012

Percentage of working families compared to the percentage in 2008 by family type



Note: A working family is a family unit containing at least one person in employment, in families containing one person aged 16 to 64

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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One of the policies which could have had an impact on the percentage of working lone parent families since 2008 is changes to the Lone Parent Obligation<sup>3</sup>. Prior to 2008, lone parents

were eligible to claim Income Support provided that their youngest child was aged under 16. Between 2008 and 2012, the age criterion at which Income Support could be claimed was reduced incrementally down to children aged under five:

- November 2008: Income Support restricted to lone parents with children under 12.
- October 2009: Income Support restricted to lone parents with children under 10.
- October 2010: Income Support restricted to lone parents with children under 7.
- May 2012: Income Support restricted to lone parents with children under 5.

### **Around half of all workless families contained members who had all been out of work for three years or more**

In 2014 there were 2.0 million workless families in the UK<sup>4</sup> and around 1.0 million (52.7%) of these were long-term workless families, where all members have been out of work for three years or more. Of the remaining workless families, 310,000 had been workless for less than a year, 420,000 families had been workless for between one and three years, while there were also 188,000 families where no member had ever worked.

#### **Workless families by length of worklessness, 2014, UK**

**In 2014, over half of workless families contained members who had all been out of work for three years or more**

In 2014 there were 2 million workless families in the UK which can be broken down into:



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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Workless families tended to contain older family members, with over half of those old enough to work being aged 50 or over (51.0%). The most common reason for members of workless families to be out of employment was retirement, which suggests that many workless families contained members who had chosen to retire before the age of 65.



In 2014 long-term workless families consisted of 569,000 couple families (55.7%) and 453,000 lone parent families (44.3%). Couple families that were long-term workless tended to contain older family members, with almost three quarters of those old enough to work aged 50 or over (73.0%). By contrast, long-term workless lone parent families tended to contain members that are younger, with around half of those old enough to work in these families aged between 25 and 49 (52.8%). This is reflected in the reasons given by people in these families for being out of work - the most common reason for people in couple families was retirement (43.4%), while in lone parent families it was looking after the family or home (30.6%).

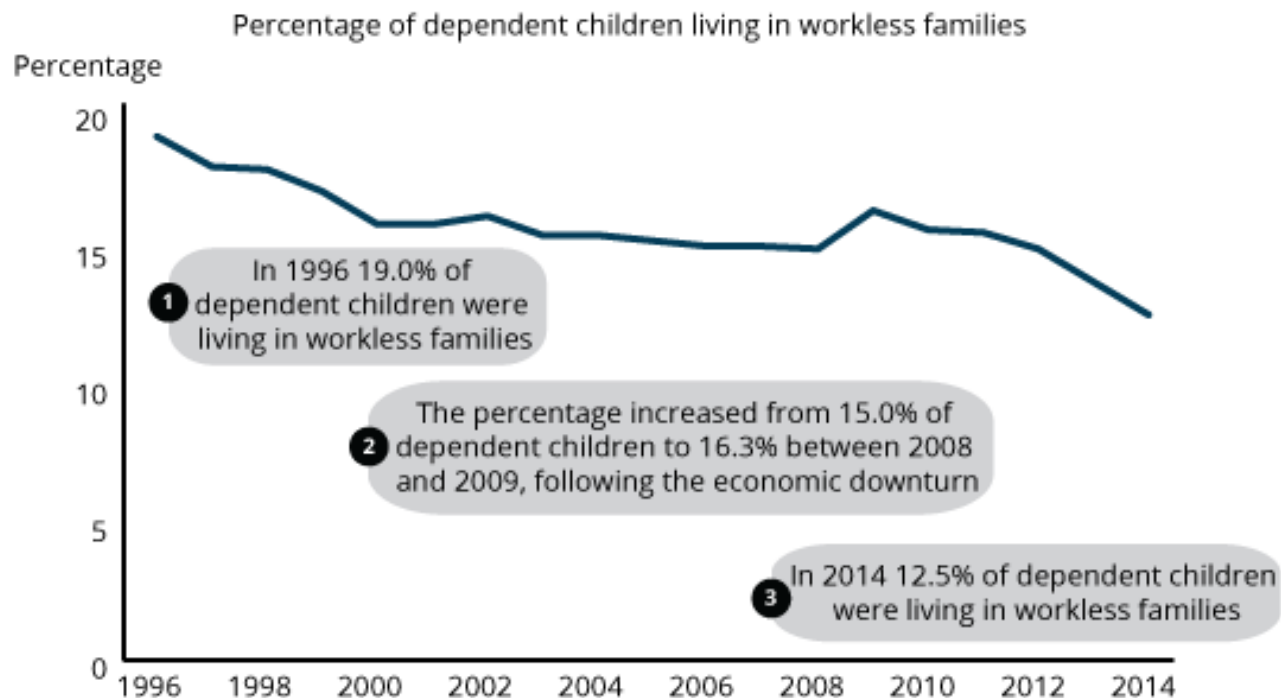
Of the 188,000 families in the UK where all members had never worked, approximately 18,000 were student families- where all members were aged 16 to 24 and in full time study. The remaining 171,000 families were predominantly lone parent families (133,000), with 38,000 being couple families. People in families that have never worked tended to be younger than people living in workless families generally. Just under half (45.5%) of people old enough to work were aged 16 to 24, compared to 16.0% of people of this age in all workless families.

### **In 2014 the percentage of dependent children living in workless families was at its lowest since comparable records began**

In 2014 1.7 million dependent children lived in workless families, accounting for 12.5% of all dependent children, which is the lowest percentage since comparable records began in 1996. The number of dependent children living in workless families had fallen by 832,000 over this period, with the percentage falling almost continuously until the economic downturn in 2008. Despite an increase in 2009, following the onset of the economic downturn, the percentage continued to fall in subsequent years.

## Percentage of dependent children living in workless families, 1996-2014, UK

### Percentage of dependent children living in workless families in 2014 the lowest since records began



Note: A workless family is a family unit containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all family members aged 16 and over are either unemployed or economically inactive

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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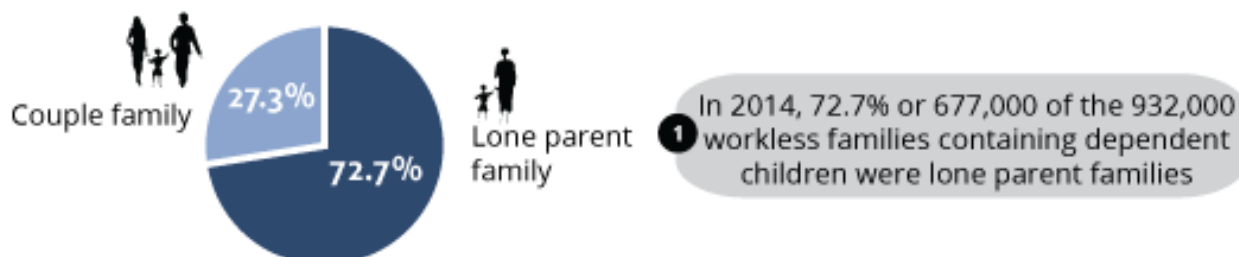
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In 2014 11.8% of the 7.9 million families containing dependent children were workless, with 72.7% of these being lone parent families. Lone parent families are more likely to be workless because there are fewer adults in these families than in couple families to balance the requirement for earning income and the provision of childcare.

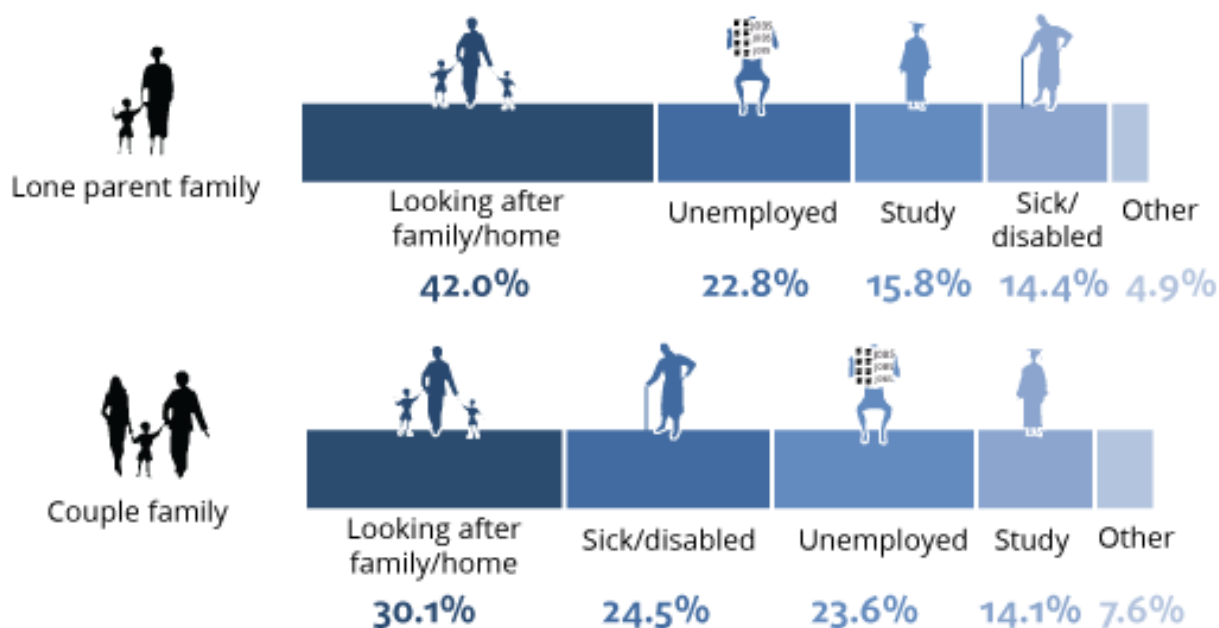
## Workless families with dependent children by family type, 2014, UK

**In 2014, just under three quarters of workless families that contained dependent children were lone parent families**

Workless families with dependent children by family type



Reasons for not being in work by family type



**2** Looking after the family and home was the most common reason for not being in employment for people in both lone parent and couple families

**3** This is followed by unemployment and study for people in lone parent families and sickness/disability and unemployment for those in couple families

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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For workless lone parent and workless couple families with dependent children, the most common reason given by family members for not being in employment was that they were looking after the

family or home. This was followed by unemployment and study for lone parent families and sickness and unemployment for people in workless couple families.

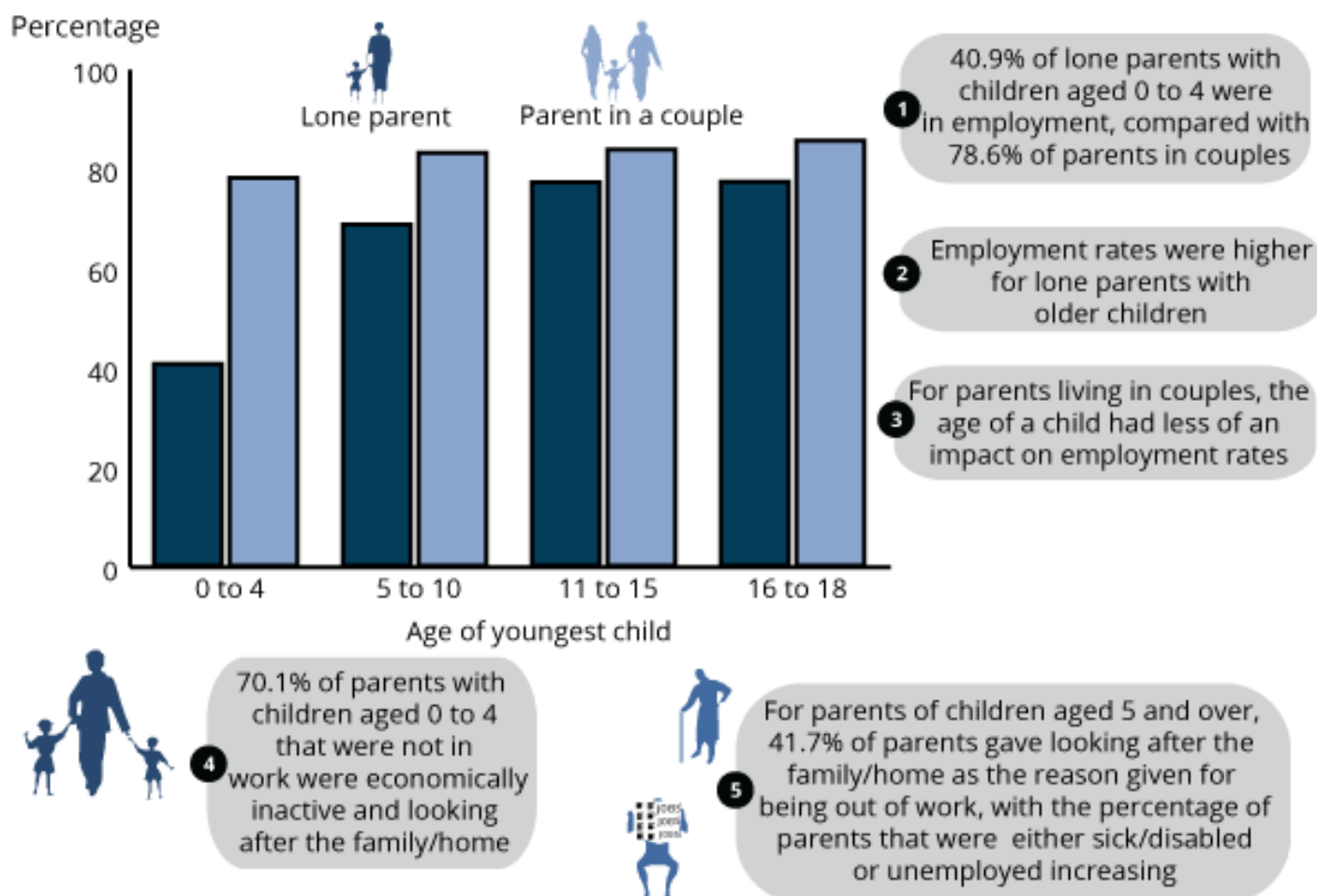
**Parents of young children (aged 0 to 4) were more likely to be in employment if they were a parent in a couple than if they were a lone parent**

In 2014 63.4% of lone parents with dependent children<sup>5</sup> were in employment compared with 81.7% of parents in couples, although these rates varied depending on the age of the youngest child in the family.

**Percentage of lone parents and parents in a couple in employment by age of youngest dependent child, 2014, UK**

**In 2014 the percentage of lone parents in employment depended on the age of the youngest child more than for parents in a couple**

Percentage of lone parents and parents in a couple in employment by age of youngest dependent child



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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In 2014 40.9% of lone parents with children aged under five were in employment, whereas almost twice the percentage of couples with children of that age were in employment (78.6%). The employment rate was higher for lone parents with children aged five to ten (69.1%) than for those with children aged under five and higher again for lone parents with children aged between 11 and 15 (77.7%). The employment rate for parents in couples was also higher for parents with older children, although the increases were less distinct.

Over half of all parents that were not in employment gave looking after the family and home as the reason for being out of work (56.5%). Parents of children under the age of five were particularly likely to give this reason, with 70.1% of parents not in employment giving looking after the family and home as the reason for being out of work. A smaller proportion of parents with older children (aged between 5 and 18) gave this as the reason for not working (41.7%). Instead the percentage of parents unable to work due to sickness or disability was higher (23.5%), as well as the percentage of parents who were unemployed and actively seeking employment (21.7%) than the percentage of parents with children aged under five.

### **Couples with older dependent children more likely to have both partners in employment**

In 2014 over two thirds of couples with dependent children were families with both parents in work (68.3%). The percentage changed depending on the age of the youngest dependent child in the family, where families with older dependent children were more likely to be couples with both parents in work. For couples with dependent children between the ages of 16 and 18, over three quarters of families had both parents working (77.1%) compared with 62.5% of couples with children aged under five.

Couples containing one working parent accounted for 27.1% of couples with dependent children. The percentage of couples with one parent in employment was higher for couples with young dependent children than for couples with older dependent children. The majority of couples with one working parent were families where the male partner was in employment. As couples with older dependent children were more likely to be couples with two working parents and less likely to be couples with one working male parent this implies that mothers from couples were more likely to enter the labour market when their children were older.

Fewer than 5% of couples with dependent children were families where neither parent was employed. By comparison, the percentage of lone parents that were not in employment was over seven times as high (36.6%). This disparity can be partly explained by the advantages couples gain from having two carers, meaning that the compromise between earning family income and looking after children is more easily achieved. This balance is harder for lone parents, especially lone parents with children below primary school age, who require more full time care.

## Families in employment by the number of employed parents, family type and age and number of dependent children, UK, April to June 2014

per cent

	Couple families <sup>4,5</sup>					Lone parent families <sup>6</sup>	
	Both employed	One parent employed	Father	Mother	Both not employed	Employed	Not employed
<b>All families with dependent children</b>	68.3	27.1	23.5	3.6	4.6	63.4	36.6
<b>Age of youngest child</b>							
0 to 4	62.5	32.3	29.1	3.2	5.2	40.9	59.1
5 to 10	71.5	24.7	21.2	3.5	3.7	69.1	30.9
11 to 15	73.0	22.9	18.3	4.5	4.1	77.7	22.3
16 to 18	77.1	18.0	14.0	4.0	4.9	77.8	22.2
<b>Number of children</b>							
One child	73.4	22.3	18.4	3.9	4.2	66.3	33.7
Two children	70.3	26.3	23.0	3.3	3.4	64.5	35.5
Three or more children	48.7	42.3	38.4	3.9	9.0	47.1	52.9

**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Couples with both parents in employment, one parent in employment or no parents in employment and lone parents in employment or not in employment
2. Dependent children are children aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full-time education
3. Uses Labour Force Survey household datasets for April to June 2014
4. For this analysis couples are family units consisting of a male partner and a spouse both aged between 16 and 64
5. Couples include opposite-sex married and cohabiting couples only

6. Lone parents include both male and female lone parents
7. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

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The number of dependent children in a family also impacted upon the likelihood of parents being in work. Parents in couples containing three or more dependent children were significantly less likely to have both parents in employment than couples with one or two dependent children, with a similar picture for lone parents. For couples, this was partly offset by a higher percentage of families containing just one working parent, with 9.0% of couples containing no working parents. However, for lone parents the lower percentage of working parents resulted, by definition, in a higher percentage of lone parents out of employment: over half of lone parents with three or more children were not in work (52.9%).

### **Women with dependent children were more likely to be in employment than women without dependent children in 2014**

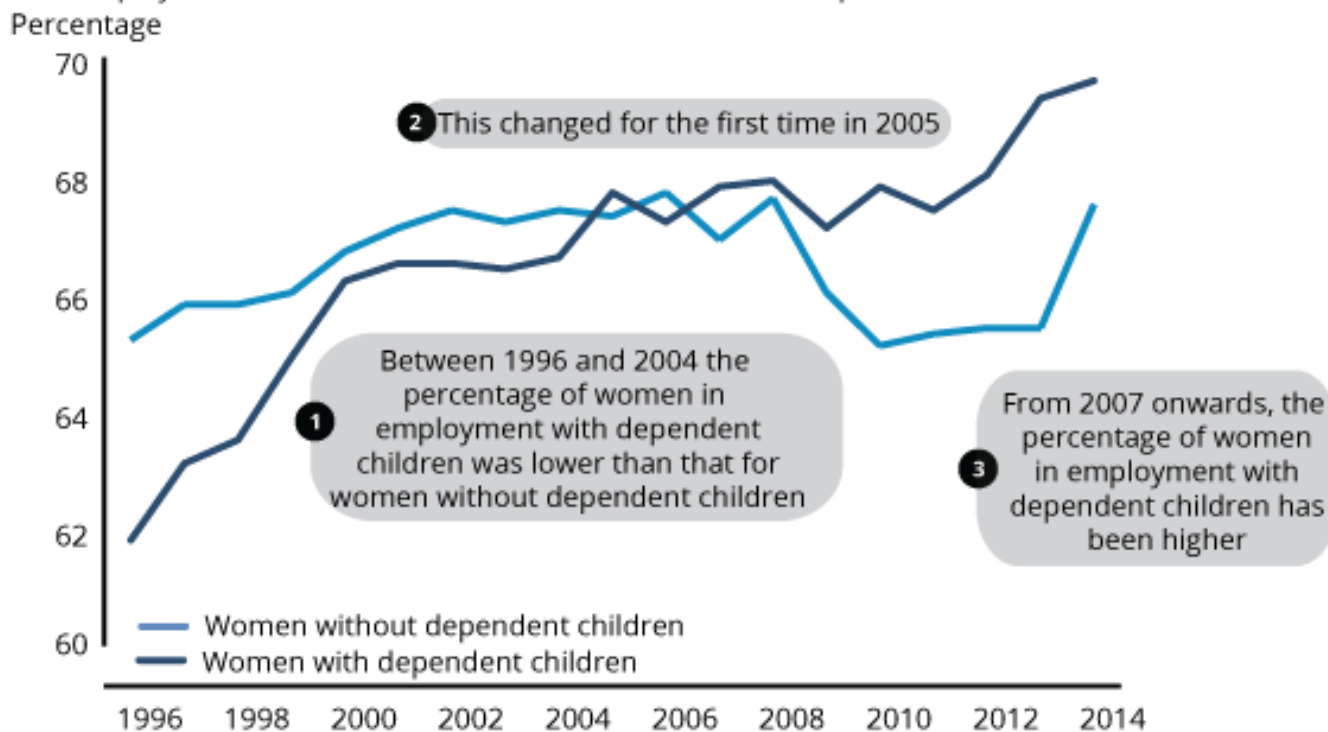
In 2014 there were around 7.7 million women with dependent children in the UK, living in couples and lone parent families. Approximately 70% of these women were in employment (69.6%), which was a higher percentage than for women without dependent children (67.5%).

Before 2005, the employment rate of women without dependent children (women who are childless or have non-dependent children living with them) was higher than that for women with dependent children. However, this changed for the first time in 2005 and, since 2007, the employment rate for women with dependent children has become the higher of the two. Following the economic downturn in 2008, the gap widened between the two rates, as the employment rate for mothers with dependent children generally increased while the rate for women without dependent children fell. Since 2010, however, the employment rate for women without dependent children has increased, most notably in 2014, closing the gap between both rates.

## Employment rates of women with and without dependent children, 1996-2014, UK

**In 2014 the percentage of women with dependent children in employment was higher than the percentage for women without dependent children**

Employment rates of women with and women without dependent children, 1996 to 2014



Note: Women aged 16 to 64 and dependent children are children aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full time education

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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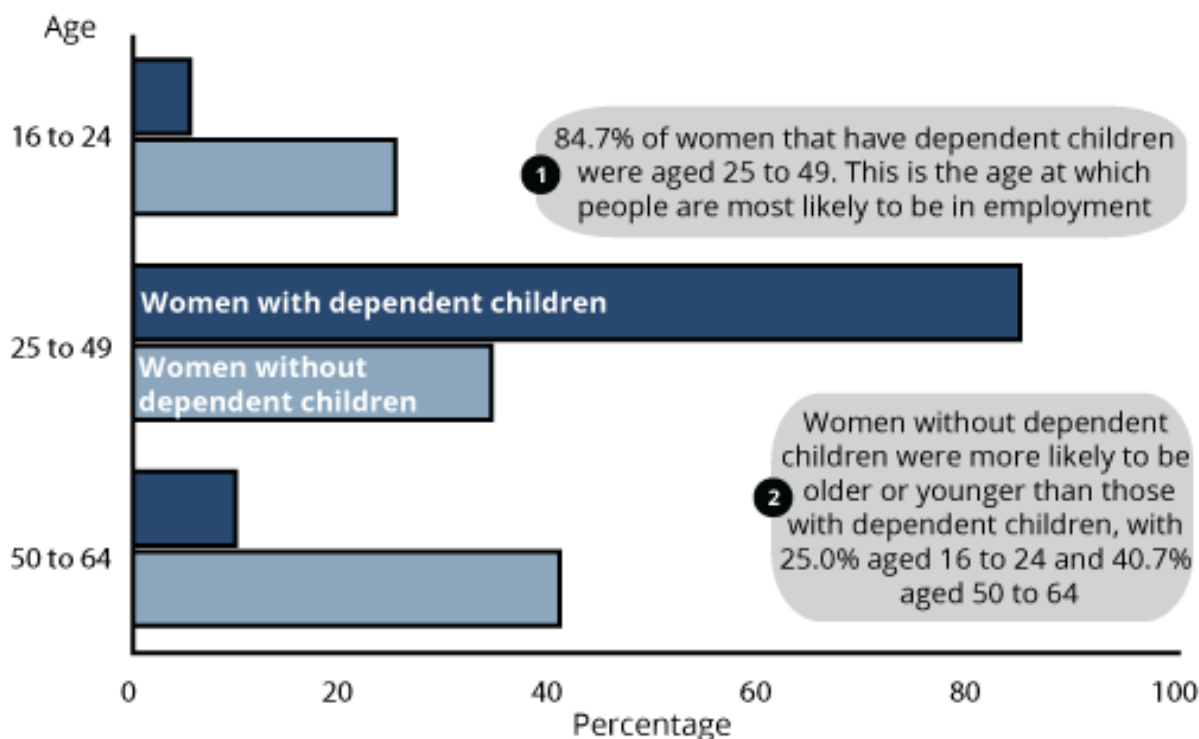
One explanation why the employment rate for women with dependent children was higher in 2014 than the rate for those without is that the former cohort of women tended to be aged between 25 and 49, when employment rates are usually highest. In contrast, women without dependent children were more likely to be either aged 50 to 64 or 16 to 24. Resting outside of the 25 to 49 year old age band increases the likelihood of women being retired, in full time education or otherwise removed from the labour market.



## Age of women with and without dependent children, 2014, UK

**In 2014 the majority of women with dependent children were aged 25 to 49 whereas women without dependent children were more likely to be 50 to 64**

The age of women with and without dependent children



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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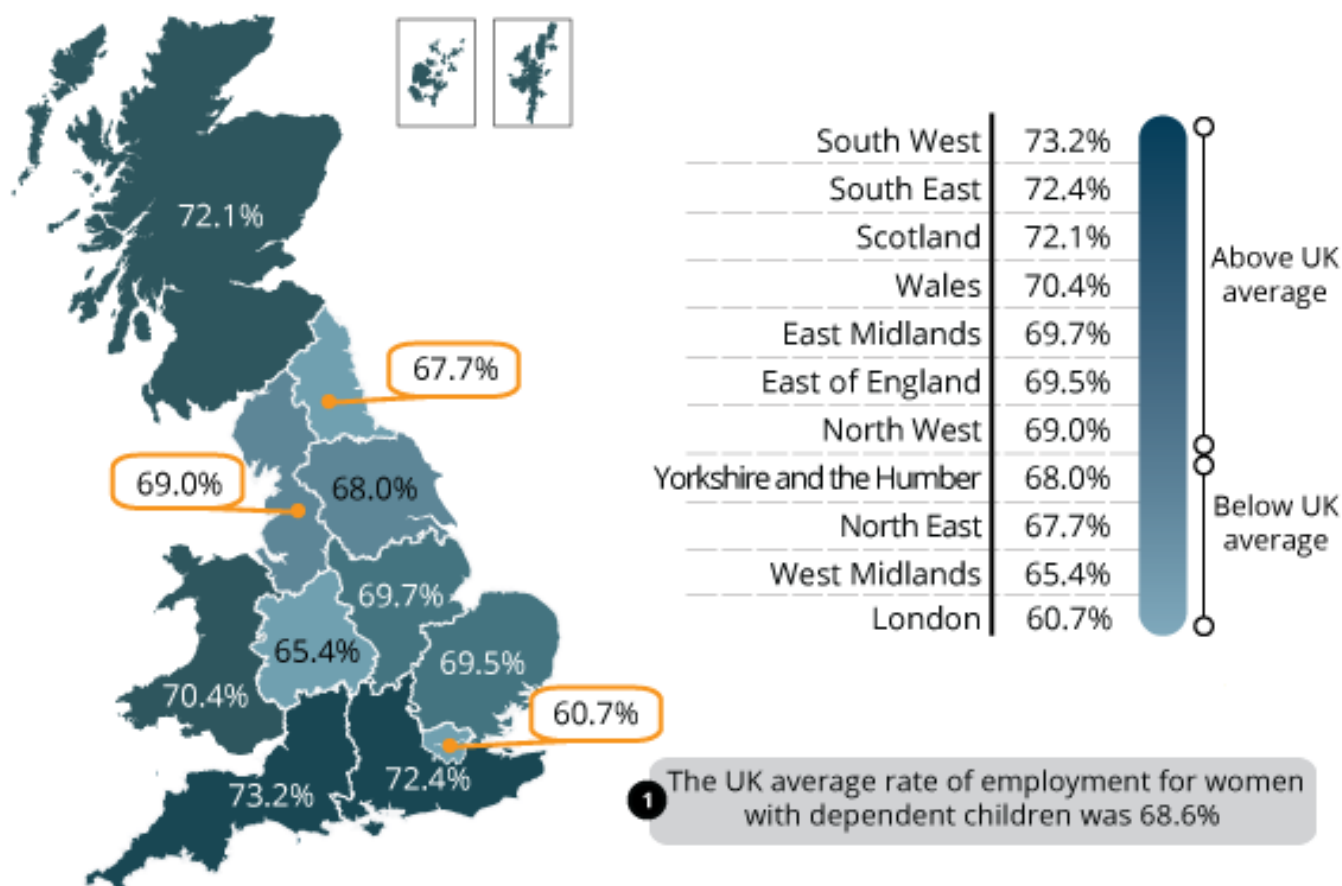
### In 2013, the percentage of women with dependent children in employment was highest in the South West

In January to December 2013<sup>6</sup> the employment rate for women with dependent children was highest in the South West, where 73.2% of women with dependent children were in employment. The rate was lowest in London, where 60.7% of women with dependent children were in work. By comparison the employment rate for women without dependent children was highest in the East of England (71.3%) and was lowest in the North East (60.7%).

## Percentage of women with dependent children in employment by region, 2013, GB

### Highest employment rates for women with dependent children in the South West in 2013

Percentage of women with dependent children in employment



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Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

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The employment rates of women with dependent children were generally higher than the employment rates of women without dependent children in the regions and devolved countries of Great Britain. Only in London and the East of England were employment rates higher for women without dependent children.

#### Mothers of dependent children were less likely to work full time than women without dependent children in 2014

In 2014 more than half of women with dependent children in employment worked in a part time capacity (54.3%). By comparison, two thirds of women without dependent children who were in work were employed full time (67.5%).

The percentage of women with dependent children working full time was higher for mothers with older children, rising from 42.3% of working mothers with children aged under five to 52.9% of mothers with a youngest dependent child aged between 11 and 18. However, this is still less than the percentage of women in full time work without dependent children.

### Women in employment by employment type and age of youngest dependent child, UK, 2014

		Women with dependent children			Women without dependent children <sup>5</sup>	All Women 16-64
		0 to 4 <sup>4</sup>	5 to 10	11 to 18		
	All children					
<b>In employment</b>	5,397	1,975	1,569	1,852	8,574	13,971
<b>of whom:</b>						
Full time <sup>6</sup>	2,467	836	653	979	5,788	8,220
Part time <sup>6</sup>	2,929	1,140	916	873	2,785	5,751
<b>Percentage working:</b>						
Full time	45.7	42.3	41.6	52.9	67.5	58.8
Part time	54.3	57.7	58.4	47.1	32.5	41.2
<b>Employment rate</b>	69.6	60.9	73.3	78.4	67.5	68.3

**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Women aged between 16 and 64
2. Dependent children are children aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full time education
3. Uses Labour Force Survey April to June 2014 dataset
4. The Labour Force Survey categories women on maternity leave and on a career break as in employment
5. Includes women with non-dependent children or no children
6. Adjusted for women with missing employment type
7. The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number in employment divided by the total
8. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted
9. Totals may not sum due to rounding

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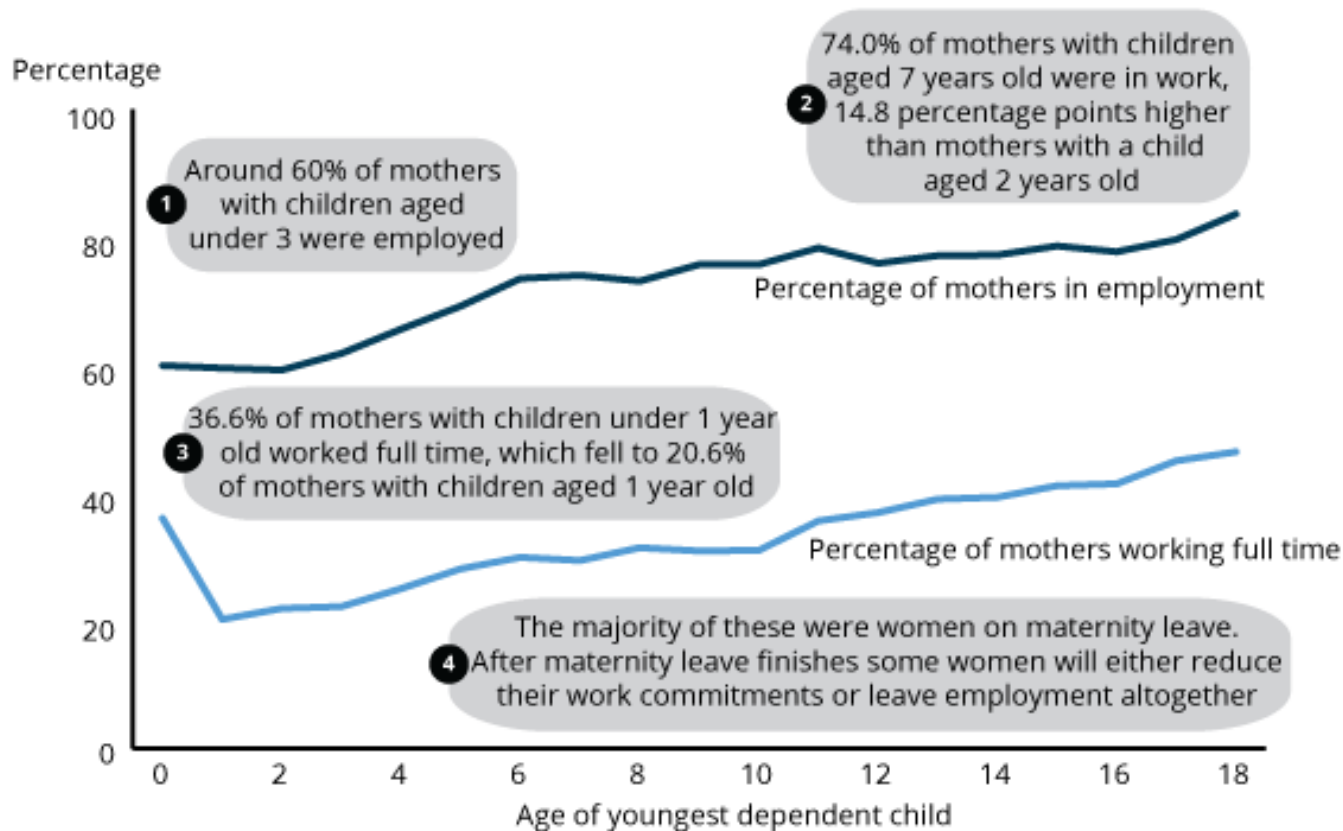
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The employment rate of women with dependent children was higher for parents with older children. The percentage of women in employment with children aged under three averaged at around 60%. The largest increase in the employment rate of women with dependent children occurred for women with dependent children aged between three and six years old.

## Employment type of mothers by age of dependent child, 2014, UK

**In 2014 the largest increase in the percentage of women in employment with dependent children came for mothers with children between the ages of 2 and 7**

Percentage of women that are in work that have dependent children and those that work full time, by the age of their youngest dependent child



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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In 2014 over one third of women with children under the age of one worked full time (36.6%). This percentage dropped to 20.6% of women with children aged one year old. One explanation for this fall could be that women with children under a year old may take maternity leave as full time workers, but either do not return to work or return in a part time capacity when their maternity leave has finished. The percentage of women in full time employment was higher for women with older dependent children. For women with dependent children aged 12 and over, the percentage was higher than for women with children under the age of one.

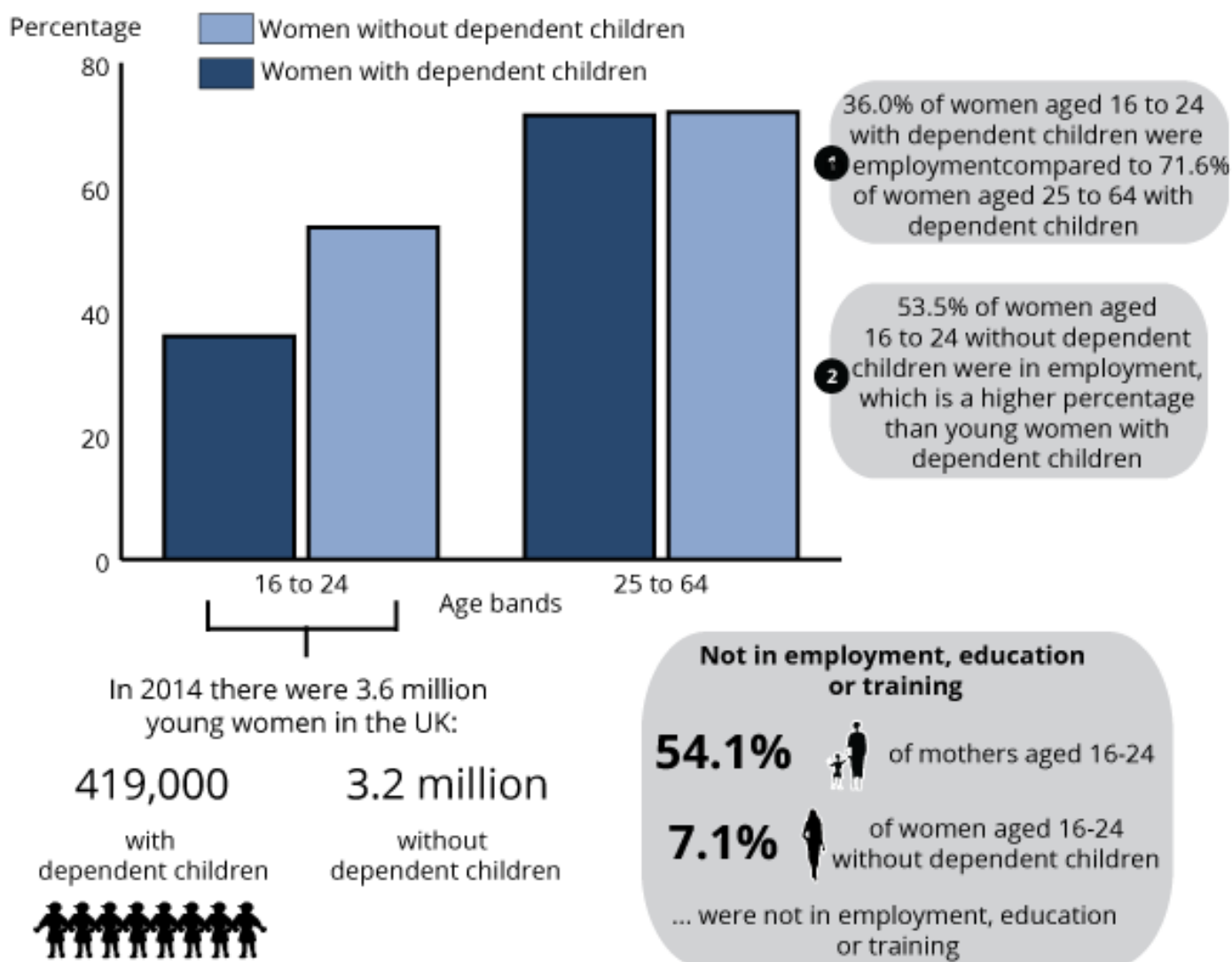
### **Young mothers (aged 16 to 24) were less likely to be in employment than mothers aged 25 to 64**

In 2014 36.0% of young mothers (aged 16 to 24) were in employment, compared with over 70% of older mothers (those aged 25 to 64) with dependent children (71.6%). Young mothers were also less likely to be in employment than young women without children, of whom over half were in work (53.5%).

## Employment rates of women with and without dependent children by age bands, 2014, UK

**In 2014 the percentage of mothers aged 16 to 24 in employment was lower than the percentage of mothers aged 25 to 64**

Employment rates of women with and without dependent children by age bands



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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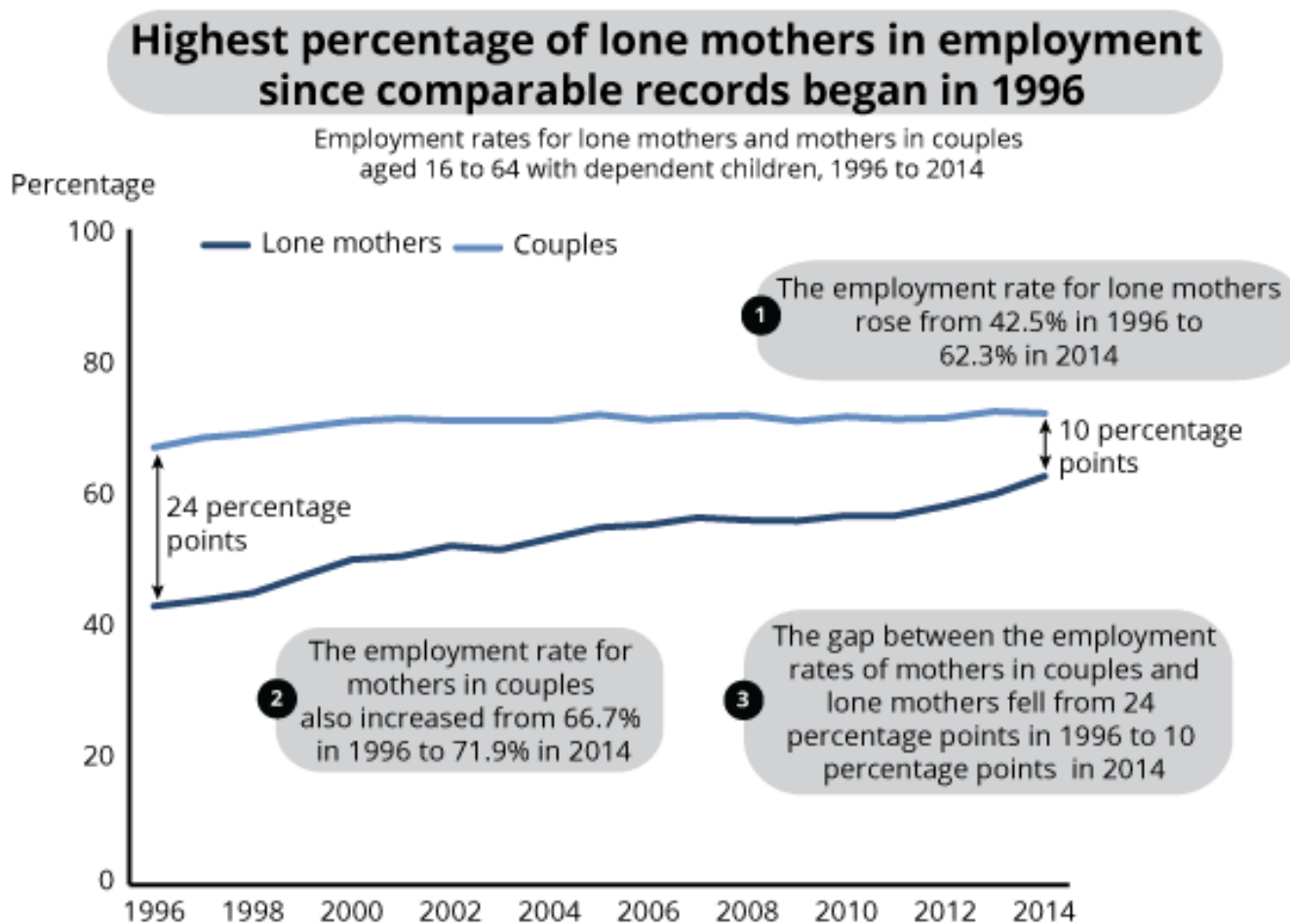
(30 Kb)

Of the 419,000 young mothers in the UK in 2014, over half (54.1%) were not in employment, education or training (NEET). By comparison, 7.1% of young women without children were NEET, which suggests that having children at a young age reduced the chances of a young woman being in employment or involved in activities that increase employability.

## Highest percentage of lone mothers in employment in 2014 since comparable records began

In 2014 the majority of lone parents with dependent children were lone mothers (91.6%). The percentage of lone mothers in employment with dependent children stood at 62.3%, which was the highest percentage since comparable records began in 1996. However this was still below the percentage of mothers in couples that are in employment (71.9%). The employment rate for lone mothers in 1996 was 42.5%, and has increased by around 20 percentage points over the past 18 years. The employment rate of couple mothers also increased but by a smaller margin of around 5 percentage points, meaning that the gap between employment rates has closed significantly over the past 18 years.

### Employment rates for lone parents and mothers in couples aged 16 to 64 with dependent children, 1996-2014, UK



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

#### Download chart

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(33 Kb)

The largest increases in the percentage of working lone mothers occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the employment rate rose from 42.5% in 1996 to 51.7% in 2002 and also since 2011, when it has increased from 56.3% to 62.3% in 2014.

**The percentage of lone mothers in low skilled jobs was twice as high in 2014 as the percentage of couple mothers**

In 2014 14.7% of lone mothers with dependent children worked in low skilled jobs such as cleaners and catering assistants, compared with 7.9% of couple mothers. Couple mothers were more likely to work in high skilled occupations than lone mothers. In 2014 30.9% of working couple mothers were employed in high skilled jobs with nursing and teaching professionals being the most common occupations. This was almost double the percentage of lone mothers in high skilled work (17.1%), demonstrating that mothers in couples were more likely to be employed in high skilled work, while lone mothers were more likely to undertake low skilled occupations.



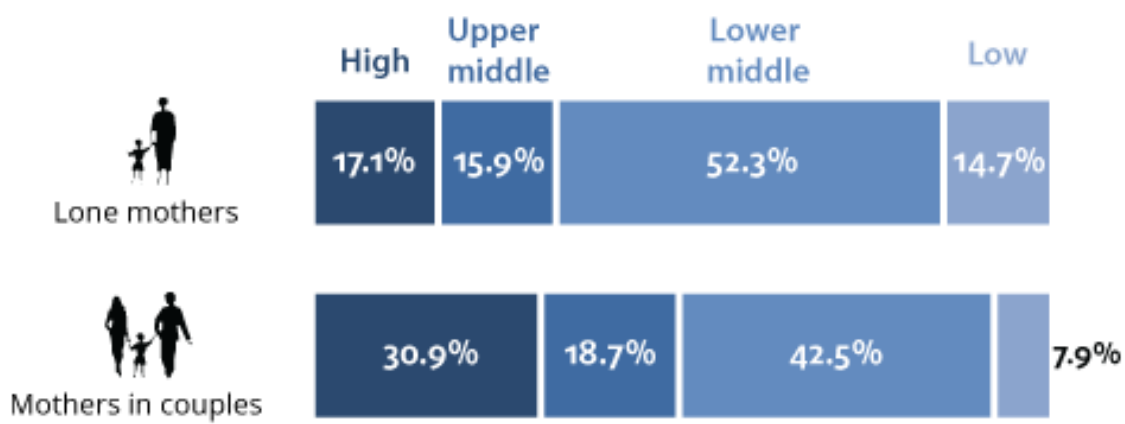
## Skill level of the occupations of lone mothers and mothers in couples with dependent children, 2014, UK

### Higher percentage of lone mothers in low skilled jobs than mothers in couples in 2014

Skill level of the occupations of lone mothers and mothers in couples with dependent children

**1** 17.1% of working lone mothers worked in high skilled occupations compared with 30.9% of mothers in couples

**2** By contrast the percentage of lone mothers working in low skilled jobs was almost double the percentage of couple mothers



**3** Lower middle skilled jobs were the most common type of occupations for both lone mothers and mothers in couples

The three most common lower middle skilled occupations of mothers were:



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(42 Kb)

Lower middle skilled jobs were the most common types of occupation for mothers in general, with 44.5% of all mothers working in jobs that included care workers, retail assistants and teaching assistants. Otherwise, 28.1% of mothers worked in high skilled jobs, 18.1% in upper middle skilled and 9.3% in low skilled occupations.

## Notes

1. Note that all periods mentioned in this report are for the quarter April to June in the Labour Force Survey household datasets unless stated otherwise.
2. Changing characteristics include an increase in the average age of lone parents and an increase in the percentage of lone parents that have never been married. See [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/2011/sum-lone-parents.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/2011/sum-lone-parents.html)
3. See table BEN01 of the Labour Market Statistics for the change in the number of single recipients of Income Support. [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/index.html)
4. It is not possible to capture instances where family type changes. For example a workless lone parent that had recently been in a couple with mixed economic activity - where their ex-partner was in employment.
5. The remaining analysis focuses on the employment status of parents with dependent children and thus lone parents with non-dependent children only are not included in this section of the analysis.
6. Regional analysis uses the January to December 2013 Annual Population Survey household dataset.

## Background notes

### 1. Sources

- Labour Force Survey, ONS
- Annual Population Survey, ONS

All UK analysis uses the quarterly Labour Force Survey household datasets for the period April to June 1996 to 2014.

All regional analysis uses the Annual Population Survey household dataset for the period January to December 2013.

Further information about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is available from:

The LFS User Guide [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html) and

LFS Performance and Quality Monitoring Reports. [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-force-survey/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-force-survey/index.html)

## 2. Household datasets

The figures in this report come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) household datasets, which are to be used for analysis at a household or at family level. Household datasets are weighted differently to person datasets, in that each person in a household is given the same weight. This ensures that weighted estimates at the household level are consistent. When using the household datasets to give estimates of the total number of people, the different weighting procedure will give marginally different estimates to those from the person datasets.

## 3. Seasonal Adjustment

The data cannot be seasonally adjusted because the Labour Force Survey household datasets are produced for Q2 and Q4 only. In order to carry out seasonal adjustment data would have to be available for each quarter.

## 4. Concepts and definitions

- **Family:** A family is a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child. Children may be dependent or non-dependent. Types of family include married couple families, cohabiting couple families and lone parent families. A family is different to a household in that households can contain one family, more than one family or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.
- **Economic status of a family:** A working family is a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one person aged 16 and over is in employment. These families may be '**fully working**' or '**mixed**':
- A **fully working** family is a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all people aged 16 and over are in employment.
- A family with **mixed** economic activity is a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where at least one but not all people aged 16 and over are in employment.
- A **workless** family is a family containing at least one person aged 16 to 64, where no one aged 16 and over is in employment.
- **Dependent children:** Dependent children are children aged under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 who have never married and are in full time education.
- **Parents:** Mother/father includes biological mothers/fathers, step-mothers/fathers and adoptive mothers/fathers with dependent children that live in the same household as them. Foster mothers/fathers, women/men with non-dependent children and those whose children live in a separate household are not included.
- **Skill level:** Skill level is based on Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2010 groups. Where occupation group is not available for workers, they have been excluded from the analysis. Skill level is defined with respect to the duration of training and/or work experience recognised in the field of employment concerned as being normally required in order to perform the activities related to a job in a competent and efficient manner. The four skill levels are high, upper-middle, lower-middle and low skilled:

- High – Occupations at this level are generally termed ‘professional’ or managerial positions, and are found in corporate enterprises or governments.
  - Upper-middle – Occupations found at this level include a variety of technical and trades occupations, and proprietors of small business. For the latter, significant work experience may be typical.
  - Lower-middle – This skill level covers occupations that require the same competence acquired through compulsory education, but involve a longer period of work-related training and experience.
  - Low – This skill level equates to the competence acquired through compulsory education.
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

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