

# Yorkshire's working parents have been hit hardest by lockdown

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Business

## Lockdown is hitting Yorkshire's working parents more than anywhere else in the country, according to national research by Theta Global Advisors.

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By Ros Snowdon

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More than half (51 per cent) of Yorkshire parents said their mental health has suffered because of the increased pressure and responsibility of helping their child with their home schooling.

This was the highest in the country and Hull and Sheffield were the two worst hit cities in the UK at 58 per cent and 51 per cent respectively.

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Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of people in Yorkshire believe parents have been hardest hit by the pandemic as they had to work, take care of and teach their children simultaneously.

This was the highest level in the UK and compares with 64 per cent nationally.

Theta said that despite schools remaining open in the second national lockdown, thousands of parents have been forced to balance working, teaching and caring duties at home more so than ever before.

As schools continue to send children home due to potential Covid-19 outbreaks, the research showed this is putting increasing pressure on parents.

The firm said working parents are being forced to work from home and teach their children simultaneously to help prevent them falling behind.

Nearly a third (31 per cent) of parents in Yorkshire said that having to take care of their children during the first lockdown period set them back more than a year in their career. Sheffield was the most affected city in the UK at 59 per cent.

Nearly a third (31 per cent) of parents in Yorkshire said they fear their child not returning to school full-time will put their job in jeopardy as they will have to continue to care for them while working from home. This figure was the joint second highest in the country and the Sheffield level was the highest in the country at 47 per cent.

The research showed that over a quarter (27 per cent) of Yorkshire parents said their employer has been unsympathetic to them having to manage childcare around work during the lockdown period. This was the joint second highest in the country and compares with 23 per cent nationally. Once again, Sheffield was the highest with 39 per cent saying their employer has been unsympathetic.

Chris Biggs, partner at Theta Global Advisors, said: "Lockdown restrictions were bound to impact people across the country, but for those who already look after children, the impact this period would have on their career has been significantly underplayed.

"Our research has shown that working parents do feel that they are under increased pressure and stress due to homeschooling during lockdown and the majority of Brits support this.

Therefore, we must do more to help working parents to ensure this lockdown doesn't hold them back even further."

He said it is crucial that stressed parents speak to their employer or manager.

"Stress decreases productivity, increases the margin for error and makes people less focused, so it is vital for both employee and employer to deal with it effectively," Mr Biggs said.

"If you are struggling to balance work and home life, for example, especially during a second national lockdown, have a conversation with your manager and put in place workable deadlines that work for you and your employer.

"Many of my team can actually work more effectively after 7pm when they've settled their children down for the night so they can just focus on work, meaning that neither their work or home life suffer while the kids are at home. Try and be as accommodating with your boss as possible and all being well, they should demonstrate the same willingness back."