



Understanding
Society

COVID-19 Survey

BRIEFING NOTE

WAVE 1: APRIL 2020

HOME SCHOOLING

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The *Understanding Society* COVID-19 study is a regular survey on the experiences and reactions of the UK population to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey is an integral part of *Understanding Society*: the UK Household Longitudinal Study, which is a representative survey of UK households and began in 2009. Researchers can link the data from the COVID-19 survey to answers respondents have given in previous (and future) waves of the annual *Understanding Society* survey.

The survey is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Health Foundation.

Fieldwork

The COVID-19 survey is an online questionnaire.

The first wave of the COVID-19 survey was fielded between 24 and 30 April 2020.

A telephone interview will be offered to respondents who wish to take part but live in a household where no-one is a regular internet user. Fieldwork for the telephone interviews began in late-May and continues to early-June 2020.

Fieldwork for the online survey is carried out by Ipsos MORI and for the telephone survey by Kantar.

The sample

All *Understanding Society* adult sample members aged 16+ and who had taken part in one of the two last waves of the main study were invited to participate.

17,450 participants completed the survey in the first Wave.

For researchers wishing to analyse the data, weights are provided that adjust for the clustered sample design of the main study and unequal response bias.

For more information on the design, fieldwork and using the COVID-19 survey data please see the [User Guide](#).

The data

The COVID-19 survey data is available to researchers via the UK Data Service, Study Number 8644.

Citation

M Benzeval, M Borkowska, J Burton, TF Crossley, L Fumagalli, A Jäckle, B Rabe and B Read (2020) *Understanding Society COVID-19 Survey April Briefing Note: Home schooling*, Understanding Society Working Paper No 12/2020, ISER, University of Essex.

Survey content

In Wave 1 the 20 minute questionnaire carried questions on:

- Household composition
- Coronavirus illness
- Long-term health conditions
- Caring
- Loneliness
- Employment
- Finance
- Financial security
- Time use
- Home schooling
- Food
- Alcohol consumption
- Smoking
- Exercise
- Mental health (GHQ)

In subsequent waves, core content will be repeated to track changes through the outbreak and rotating content will be added on new topics reflecting the changing social, economic and policy context, as well as question proposals from researchers.

Home schooling

Michaela Benzeval
University of Essex
Understanding Society Director

Magda Borkowska
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Senior Research Officer

Jonathan Burton
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Associate Director Surveys

Thomas Crossley
European University Institute
Understanding Society
Associate Director Scientific Content

Laura Fumagalli
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Research Fellow

Annette Jäckle
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Associate Director Innovations

Birgitta Rabe
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Topic Champion Education

Brendan Read
University of Essex
Understanding Society
Senior Research Officer



The questions on **home schooling** in Wave 1 of the Understanding Society COVID-19 survey cover the following themes:

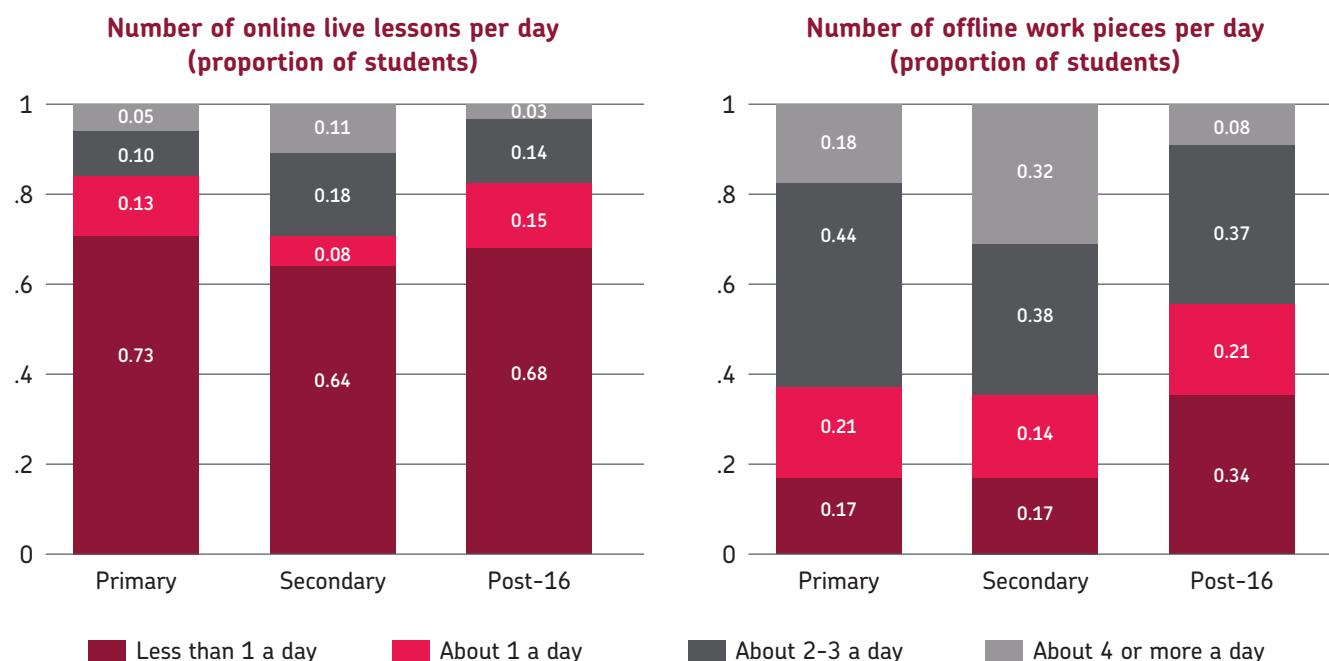
1. Type and amount of work provided to students by schools during school closures
2. Children's resources at home, including computers, free and paid-for learning materials
3. Time taken by children doing and by parents actively helping with schoolwork
4. Provision of free school meals for eligible children

These questions were answered by parents for each child 18 years and younger currently enrolled in school or college. The tables and figures in this note are at the child level, using the maternal response if more than one parent or guardian reported for the same child, and the paternal if the maternal response was missing. By merging the data with the past waves of the annual interviews of Understanding Society, we were able to verify the relationship between the children and the reporting adults and obtain the gender of the children.

The questions on **time use** include a question on time spent doing housework per week, asked of all respondents, and on time spent on childcare and home schooling, asked of all respondents living with children under 18 in the same household. The figures in this note limit the sample to parents of children currently enrolled in school, where responses of both parents/guardians were used, if present.

Schools' provision of schoolwork during school closures

At the time of COVID-19 interview 4% of students attended school or college, for example because they are vulnerable or their parents are key workers. The vast majority (96%) of children did not attend school. Among children of school age (4-18) enrolled in school or college and not attending, 90% were provided with schoolwork to do at home, as follows:

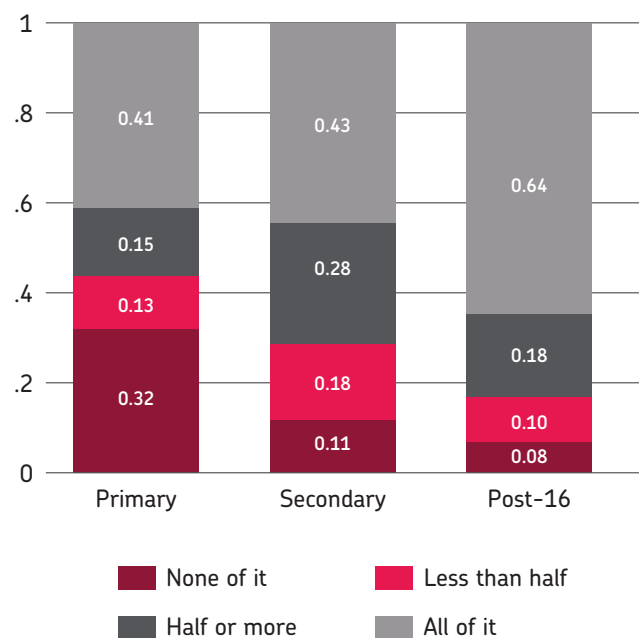


Notes: Average daily number of online/offline lessons provided by school. The figure uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3680.

- Most students receive offline work from their school that does not involve real-time interactions with teachers, such as worksheets, assignments or video clips to watch. The number of such offline work pieces is highest in secondary school and lowest in post-16 education.
- A considerably lower proportion of children are offered online live lessons provided by teachers. 32% of students have one or more of these online live lessons a day.

Schools providing feedback on schoolwork set

Share of homework checked by teachers
(proportion of students)

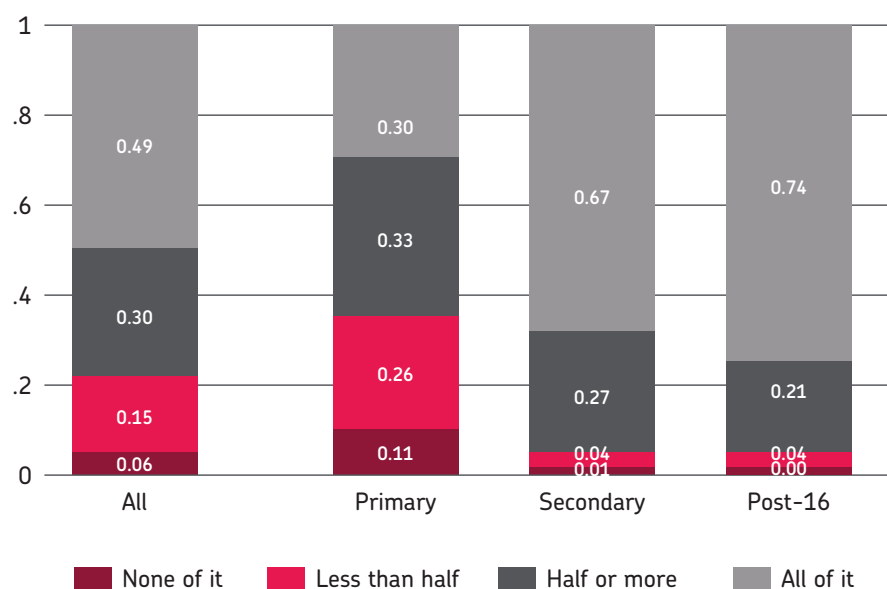


Notes: Proportion of student's homework (sent or uploaded) which is checked by a teacher. The figure uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3680.

- Of those students receiving homework and submitting it back to school, 65% report that at least half of the homework was checked by teachers. This proportion is higher among post-16 students (82%).

Computer required for school work

Share of schoolwork requiring a computer (none, less than half, half or more, all) by phase of education



Notes: Share of schoolwork requiring a computer (none, less than half, half or more, all) by phase of education. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3675

- 79% of students require a computer (or tablet or laptop) for at least half of the work provided by schools, while only 6% do not need a computer for any schoolwork.
- 63% of primary school students need a computer for at least half of their school work, compared to 94% of secondary and 95% of post-16 students.

Home resources: computers, apps and tutors

	Computers, tablets, laptops			Use of apps, websites, exercise books, tutors		
	Student has own computer %	Student has access to shared computer %	Student has no access to computer %	Student uses freely available resources %	Student uses paid-for resources %	Student does not use additional resources %
All	45	51	4	54	9	37
Education phase						
Primary school	33	62	5	61	10	29
Secondary school	54	43	3	48	7	45
Post-16	72	27	1	46	6	48
Household composition						
Single parent	59	34	7	54	6	39
Multiple adults	44	53	3	54	9	37
Highest qualification (parent)						
GCSE or lower	45	48	7	53	4	43
A-level	48	49	3	54	8	38
Degree	44	54	2	56	12	32
Employment status (April)						
Employed- not on furlough	47	50	3	56	10	34
Employed- on furlough	49	48	3	57	4	39
All/Some self-employment	44	54	2	62	9	29
Non-employed	36	55	9	44	7	49
Work at home (April)						
No	47	50	3	58	6	36
Yes	48	50	2	55	14	32
Country						
England	45	51	4	55	9	36
Scotland	47	50	3	53	6	41
Wales	43	48	9	49	6	45
Northern Ireland	47	53	0	58	4	39

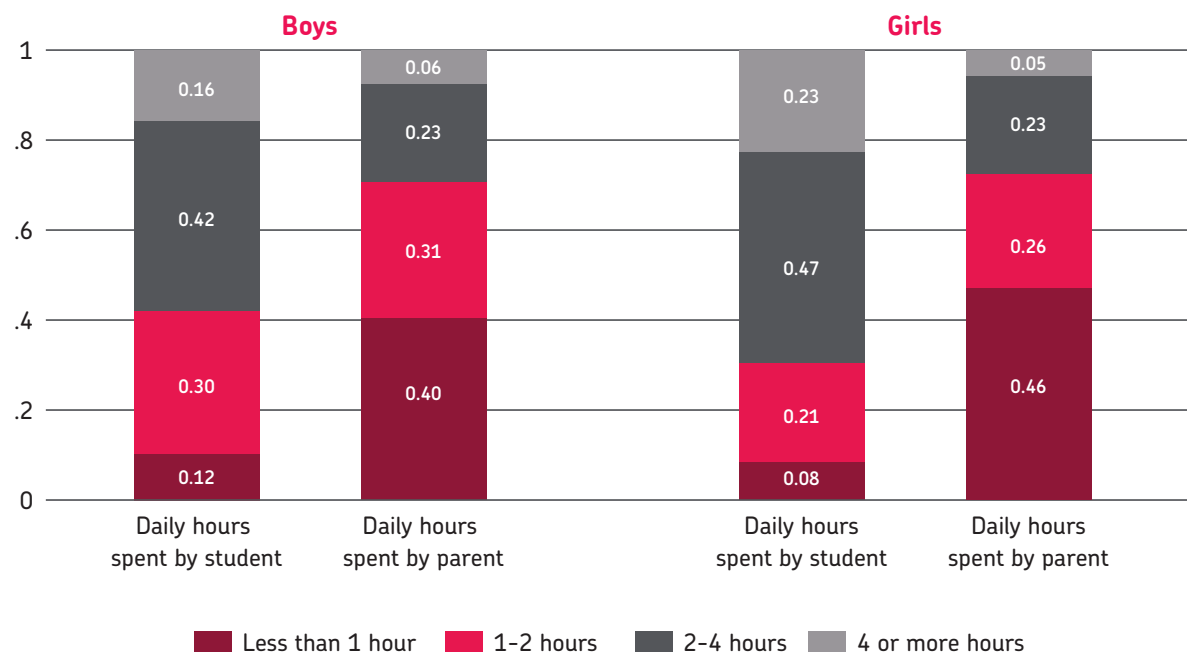
Notes: Percentage of students who have access to own/shared/no computer, tablet or laptop at home; percentage of students who use free or paid for additional learning resources such as online tutoring, educational apps, website subscriptions or exercise books. The table uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3675.

- Only 4% of students have no access to a computer, laptop or tablet. However, 51% of students need to share their devices with others.
- Almost 72% of post-16 students have their own computer, while this is less common among secondary (54%) and primary school students (33%).
- A higher proportion of students (59%) living in single parent households have their own computer compared to students living with more than one adult in a household (44%).
- More than half of students (54%) use additional, freely available, learning resources, while only 9% of students use paid-for resources, such as apps, website subscriptions, tutors and exercise books.
- Students whose parents are not in employment are least likely to have access to any additional resources (51% compared to 63% on average).
- Students whose parents are currently on furlough are least likely to have access to paid-for resources (4% compared to 9% on average).

Time spent by students and parents on home schooling

The survey asks parents how much time they or other family members spend actively helping each child with school work. The figure uses one response per student.

Daily hours spent on schoolwork by students and parents by gender (proportion of students)

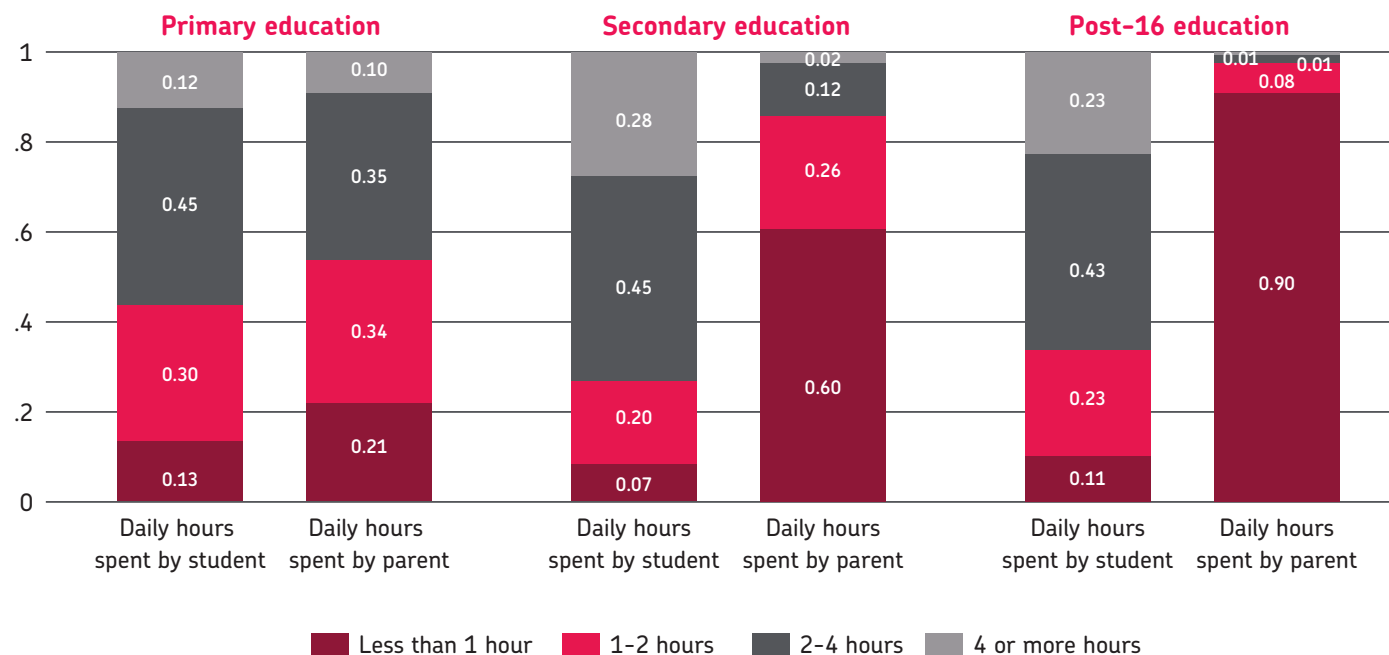


Notes: Average daily hours spent on schoolwork by students and parents, respectively. The figure uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3680

- 58% of boys and 70% of girls spend 2 hours or more a day doing their schoolwork.
- Parents spend slightly more time actively helping boys than girls. They help boys for very short durations (less than one hour) less often and for 1-2 hours more often than girls.

Time spent on home schooling by phase of education

Daily hours spent on schoolwork by students and parents by phase of education (proportion of students).

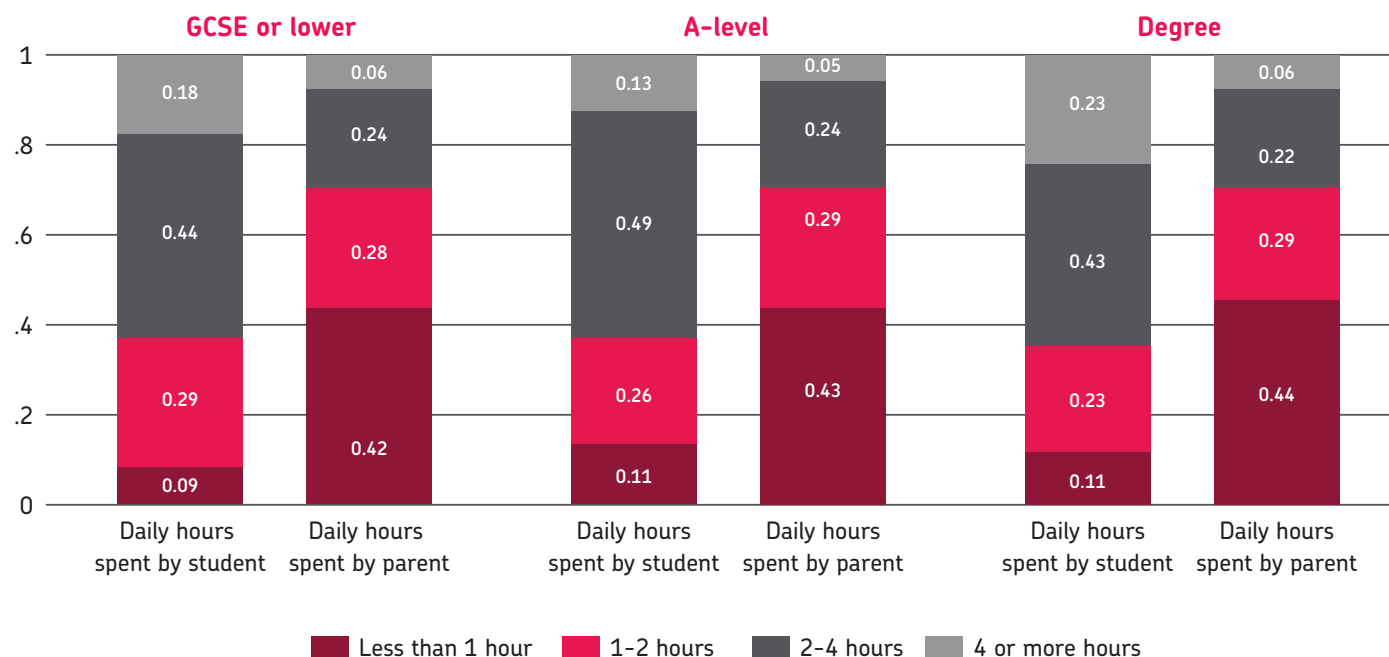


- Primary school students spend less time doing schoolwork than secondary school and post-16 students.
- 12% of primary school, 28% of secondary school and 23% of post-16 students spend 4 or more hours on schoolwork every day.
- Parents spend considerably longer actively helping younger students. 45% of parents help primary school students for 2 or more hours every day, while 14% spend that amount of time helping secondary school and 2% helping post-16 students.

Notes: Average daily hours spent on schoolwork by students and parents, respectively. The figure uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3680

Time spent on home schooling and parents' education

Daily hours spent on home schooling by students and parents, by parents' education (proportion of students)



Notes: Average daily hours spent on schoolwork by students and parents, respectively. The figure uses answers provided by the mother if available; by the father if mother's answers were not available; by another family member if both mother's and father's answers were not available. The sample includes students matched to the annual Understanding Society survey and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3680

- The amount of time parents spend actively helping their children with schoolwork does not vary much by parents' educational background.
- Students whose parents have a degree are more likely to have a long daily study time of 4 hours and more (23% compared to 18% among students whose parents have a GCSE level qualification or lower and 13% among students whose parents have A-levels).

Parents' time spent on housework, childcare and home schooling

This table uses questions from the time use module of the COVID-19 survey. We use responses of parents of children enrolled in school or college.

Weekly hours spent by parents on housework, childcare and home schooling

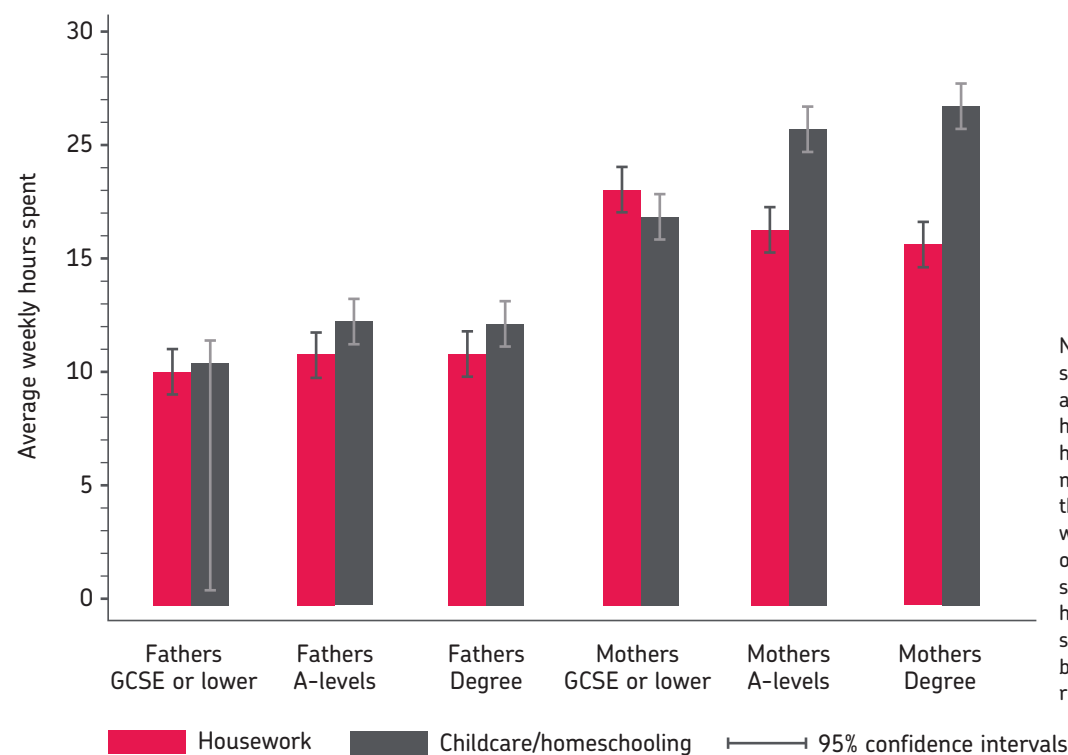
	Weekly hours spent on housework		Weekly hours spent on childcare/homeschooling	
	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers
All	11	17	12	21
Household composition				
Single adult	14	20	11	22
Multiple adults	11	17	12	20
Employment status (April)				
Employed- not on furlough	10	14	10	18
Employed- on furlough	12	21	17	20
All/some self-employment	12	19	11	22
Non-employed	12	21	14	27
Work at home (April)				
No	12	17	12	18
Yes	9	15	10	20
Country				
England	11	17	11	21
Scotland	12	17	16	20
Wales	15	18	17	21
Northern Ireland	8	19	10	18

Notes: Average weekly hours spent on housework by fathers and mothers; average weekly hours spent on childcare and/or home schooling by fathers and mothers. The sample includes those aged 19 and over, who reported being a parent or guardian to at least one school age child living in their household and enrolled into school and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3,868.

- Mothers spend 6 more hours than fathers doing housework and 9 more hours doing childcare and home schooling per week.
- Single parents spend more time on housework but not on childcare and home schooling than multiple adult households. The differences between time spent by mothers and fathers persist regardless of household composition.
- While mothers spend considerably more time doing housework when they are furloughed, self-employed or non-employed as opposed to being employed, this is not the case for fathers. Fathers do however spend more time on childcare and home schooling when they are furloughed.
- Fathers and mothers working at home do less housework than those working away from home.

Differences by education in parents' time spent on housework, childcare and home schooling

Weekly hours spent by parents on housework, childcare and home schooling, by parents' education



Notes: Average weekly hours spent on housework by fathers and mothers; average weekly hours spent on childcare and/or home schooling by fathers and mothers. The sample includes those aged 19 and over, who reported being a parent or guardian to at least one school age child living in their household and enrolled into school and with non-missing basic characteristics. Weighted results. N=3,868.

- There are no significant differences by education in the amount of time fathers spend on housework or childcare and home schooling.
- Highly educated mothers spend 3 hours less doing housework and 6 hours more doing childcare and home schooling per week than mothers whose highest qualification is at GCSE level or lower.

For more information and to contact the Study

Email: info@understandingsociety.ac.uk

Twitter: [@usociety](https://twitter.com/usociety)

Find out more about the Study online at
www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/themes/covid-19

Acknowledgements:

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