



Family Friendly



Making Britain family friendly

A National Family and Parenting Institute report





The long road to a family friendly society

In 1994 the United Nations celebrated the first International Year of the Family. In the UK, campaigners put together a Family Agenda for Action. The Agenda said:

“The International Year of the Family set itself the task of making the UK more family friendly. Achieving that purpose involves

fundamental change. Whilst individuals are responsible for making or breaking families, the surrounding culture has a significant impact on their actions and decisions. A society planned around the needs of families, that values families, means fewer children in care, fewer lone parents on benefits, fewer young people graduating to prison”.¹

The Agenda called for, amongst other things:

- ⦿ putting the well-being of families at the heart of policy making
- ⦿ ensuring that families have the right amount of work – enough for a decent living, not so much that the quality of family life suffers
- ⦿ combating poverty for children, old people and their carers
- ⦿ creating a child-friendly society in which children are welcomed rather than tolerated.

Next year, 2004, is the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and the United Nations is once again putting families on the map by marking the anniversary with activities planned world-wide. In the UK, it offers an opportunity to look again at ways to help and support families, and to campaign to make Britain a better place to raise a family.

The last ten years have been mixed for families. Families themselves have continued to change and evolve. A snapshot across Britain in August 2003 would reveal a complex, fluid and diverse picture.

There has been a focus and interest from Government, policy makers and the media about all aspects of the family, from what they eat, to education, relationships and, of course, one of the biggest debates – how can parents balance the

1. Family Agenda for Action, IYF UK Office, 1994

often competing demands of work and family life. There has also been intense interest in the relationship between the family and state; how much responsibility do parents have, or can be given, over their children? When is the state intervening for the good of the family, and when is it just interfering and nannying? These questions have been centre stage for most of the preceding decade, with no sign of let up.

But it is striking that the same basic principles set out by campaigners in 1994 remain so relevant today. These principles articulate the need for a child/person centred approach to policy and decision-making, and a recognition of the need for people to achieve a balance in their lives between work and family life, a balance made easier if people are not in poverty.

Do we view children and young people as assets, as enrichers of our community and our lives?

Ten years on, this report finds many echoes in the briefings and reports prepared in 1994, calling for action from Government. Yet there has been change and progress – in the workplace, in the attitudes and services some companies provide and perhaps in parents' own attitudes. But a big question mark remains. Do we, as a society, welcome and accept children into our public spaces, our parks, our restaurants, shops and transport? Do we view children and young people as assets, as enrichers of our community and our lives? Or are we, as a society, suspicious and unwelcoming, worried about our security, fearful of the threat of others, particularly the young?

Making Britain a better place to raise a family is an idle dream unless those questions are answered.

2. *Work and family life in the 21st century*, Shirley Dex, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, September 2003

3. All the other bulleted points are from *Social Trends 33*, National Statistics January 2003, available from The Stationery Office

Facts and figures about the state of the family in Britain

- ◉ There has been a decline in the 'traditional' family household of a couple with dependent children and a rise in the number of lone parent households and people living alone
- ◉ Nowadays, a quarter of all households comprise a couple with dependent children and 6% are lone parents with dependent children
- ◉ However most children – 78% – still live in the traditional family household headed by a couple (Spring 2002)
- ◉ One in ten children now live as part of a step-family
- ◉ Almost nine in ten people aged 60 and over are grandparents, and 61% see their grandchildren at least once a week
- ◉ More than 50% of adults see their mothers once a week or more, but were less likely to see their brothers or sisters

“In 2000 just over half of men and women were married”

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- ◉ In 2000 just over half of men and women were married, down from 71% of men and 65% of women in 1971. At the same time, cohabitation has increased, and in 2000/01, a quarter of non-married adults were cohabiting. The drop in the marriage rate in the UK reflects a European trend
- ◉ In 2001, around 40% of children were born outside marriage
- ◉ Women are having children later. In England and Wales the average age of first time mothers is 29, having risen from 23 in 1971
- ◉ 57% of lone mothers are now economically active, compared to 48% in 1992
- ◉ 54% of mothers with children under 5 now work, up from 43% in 1991²
- ◉ Almost 43% of all mothers in couples work part-time: 28% of lone mothers do³.



The Parents' Poll

What do parents understand by family friendly?

"Where children are accepted as human beings, no tutting or shaking heads"

- Parents strongly supported the idea that family friendly was about attitudes and culture. They agreed it was about "parents being valued for bringing up children", a "society where parents and children are listened to" and a "society which supports families when things go wrong"
- There was no real difference in view between urban and rural parents
- Parents with very young children highlighted shops and public places being geared towards families' needs



What changes did parents want?

"At work, it means that you don't have to hide the fact that you are a parent and that you may have responsibilities to juggle"

- Parents thought that the most important Government policy to make Britain more family friendly would be to give parents a right to flexible working (not just a right to ask employers)
- The second most important policy was to put more resources into activities and support for teenagers. Parents' concern about their teenagers came out strongly in the poll: they feared for their security and they worried they were being judged
- More police on the street was the most popular local policy

Parents supported the idea that it was about "parents being valued for bringing up children"

- Parents of children attending nursery or primary school were more likely to link the term to family friendly work arrangements and childcare.
- Parents of teenagers were most likely to define it as being a supportive and tolerant culture
- Opinion amongst parents was divided over whether Britain is more family friendly now than ten years ago, though more feel it is (47%) than not (32%).
- Over half the parents (51%) felt that the Government doesn't listen to the needs of parents and children.

"Family friendly means putting people before things"

- Parents also wanted a 20mph speed limit on residential roads
- They also called for more affordable after-school activities, and leisure facilities.

"Little things that make life much easier for parents in shops, town, public places and events. Thoughtful things."

About the report

This report, *'Making Britain family friendly'* follows on from an earlier NFPI report, *'Is Britain family friendly?'* published in 2000⁴. The first report highlighted parents' concerns about British attitudes and services, from employment to transport and challenged Government and service providers to show a commitment to a family friendly society.

This report is organised in five sections, drawing on research and policy in key areas relevant to a family friendly Britain:

- ⦿ Making ends meet
- ⦿ Work
- ⦿ Childcare
- ⦿ Travelling around
- ⦿ Local neighbourhoods.

Where appropriate, it draws comparisons between Britain and other European countries. Underpinning and illustrating the research are our findings from our MORI poll of 1,391 parents⁵. We asked parents what they understood by the term 'family friendly', what experiences they had of family friendly services, and the opposite, and finally, what policies they thought would help make Britain family friendly. We also consulted with parents through our website, www.e-parents.org and through our parent e-mail network. Our main aim was to discover whether for the parent in the street, life had changed for the better in the last few years.

4. *Is Britain family friendly? The parents' view*, NFPI, 2000

5. *Attitudes towards Britain being Family Friendly*, Research Study conducted for NFPI, MORI, 2003. MORI conducted the survey in April 2003, interviewing 1,391 parents face to face in their homes.

Making ends meet

Parents say

When asked what the idea of family friendly meant to them, only 17% of parents said it meant provision of financial support, a relatively low figure compared to strong support for a tolerant, supportive society where parents are valued. Lone parents, parents with older children and larger households were, not surprisingly, more keen on financial support but in general parents wanted more affordable services, such as childcare and reasonably priced leisure services, than more cash in their pockets. In fact, only 5% of parents thought increasing child benefit was the most important policy Government should adopt, and 8% thought it was the least important.

That is not to say that parents don't worry about money. They do. In a previous NFPI survey⁶, making ends meet was one of their worries. It costs a lot of money to bring up a child. One estimate is just over £20,000 for the first five years⁷ and a total of £50,000 to care for a child up to the age of 17⁸.

All parents worry about providing for their children, but parents living in poverty face even tougher barriers: poor housing, inadequate and unreliable public transport, and reduced life choices. A large body of research demonstrates the link between poverty and poor living conditions to increased chances that children will fail to thrive.

In Britain

The UK as a whole has the fourth largest economy in the world, but we have one of the highest levels of child poverty of all industrialised countries.

In March 1999, the Government pledged to end child poverty within a generation, to halve it by

6. *Listening to parents*, NFPI, 2001

7. A survey by *Pregnancy and Birth* magazine, quoted in *The Guardian* 6 March 2001

8. *The cost of the family today*, NFPI, 2001





2010, and to reduce it by a quarter by 2004. Children born into poverty have a lower birth weight, higher infant mortality and poorer health. As they grow up they are less likely to stay on at school and will have fewer qualifications. As adults they will be lower paid, experience unemployment and are likely to die younger. At that time, 4.2 million children lived in poverty in the UK. Poverty is defined as almost half average weekly earnings (currently about £550 a week)⁹.

The government has launched a raft of policies designed to lift families out of poverty, including the minimum wage, Sure Start, reform of the tax and benefit system and Child Tax Credit, as well as the New Deal to get lone parents back into work.

So, with a year to go, how is the Government doing in its commitment to reduce poverty by 25%

At risk of poverty by type of household, 1998

The numbers do not show numbers or percentages of households in poverty. They are indices to allow comparison across different countries.

Single parent with dependent children

EU average	35	Italy	18
Belgium	25	Netherlands	43
Denmark	15	Austria	32
Germany	47	Portugal	40
Greece	13	Finland	9
Spain	38	Sweden	19
France	31	UK	45
Ireland	48		

2 adults with 2 dependent children

EU average	13	Italy	15
Belgium	12	Netherlands	9
Denmark	3	Austria	11
Germany	12	Portugal	13
Greece	13	Finland	4
Spain	22	Sweden	6
France	8	UK	14
Ireland	11		

Three years on, the most recent figures still show UK households and children amongst the most at risk of poverty

- that is, by approximately one million? Commentators are divided.

According to the Government, 3.8 million children are now living in poverty – a reduction of 400,000 children. However, there are still big regional and local differences, and the risks of child poverty continue to be concentrated in certain households, for example, workless, lone parent, young parents or families with four or more children. Half of lone parent families, for example, were living in poverty.

The Policy Studies Institute suggests that the living standards of families in poverty have improved. Looking at the poorest families, in 1999 41% of out of work families were in severe hardship, but by 2001 this figure had dropped to 22% of two parent families and 28% of lone parent families.¹⁰

9. www.statistics.gov.uk

10. Quoted from an article by Alan Marsh, Professor of Social Policy, University of Westminster and the Policy Studies Institute, *Lifted out of the worst poverty*, *The Guardian*, 5 August 2003

Children under 16 at risk of poverty, 1998

EU average	24	Italy	28
Belgium	18	Netherlands	17
Denmark	3	Austria	16
Germany	26	Portugal	27
Greece	21	Finland	6
Spain	25	Sweden	11
France	22	UK	26
Ireland	23		

The tables are all taken from *The social situation in the European Union 2002*, Eurostat, 2002.



However, although there is likely to be a substantial drop in the number of poor children, the poverty threshold is likely to rise with the rise in incomes, as the definition of poverty is tied to average weekly earnings.

So the picture is mixed, with some undoubted progress being made. Yet, as Ian Sparks, the Chair of End Child Poverty Coalition, commented: *“it’s strange how our perceptions change. If the Government in 1993 had announced that the number of children in poverty had dropped by 400,000 there would have been great excitement. The same announcement in 2003 has been greeted with disappointment and anxiety. The pledge to end child poverty by 2020 has raised our expectations. Now all of those concerned with children in poverty have to face the reality that this is going to be a long struggle made worse by the fact that an increasing standard of living for the majority leaves those in poverty further behind”*¹¹.

How do we compare with Europe?

When the NFPI compared Britain to Europe in 2000, we found that we had the highest rate of child poverty in Europe. Three years on, the most recent figures still show UK households and children amongst the most at risk of poverty (see panel left).

Work

Much of the debate about a family friendly society is focussed on trying to help families achieve a better balance between work and family life. Work is central to people’s lives and well being, and also a source of stress and anxiety. In the UK, and across the EU as a whole, there is a commitment from member states to a high employment rate. In 2000 the European countries agreed to aim for

a European employment rate of 70% for men and more than 60% for women within ten years¹².

Getting more people into work is one of the Government’s principal strategies to reduce poverty. In 2001, the UK was one of only four member states with employment rates above the EU target. In 2002, there were more people in employment in the UK since records began in 1959¹³.

The most recent EU statistics (1998) suggest that across the EU, about 60% of mothers work, compared to about 65% of women with no child care responsibilities. After Denmark and Sweden, more UK mothers worked than any other country¹⁴. According to Government figures, 56% of women with a child under 5 worked in 2002, and once the youngest child reached 15, 79% of women were working¹⁵.

However, the UK also has one of the highest part-time employment rates for working mothers in the EU. One of the biggest increases is in the number of part-time workers, up by almost a third since 1987, and 82% of those workers are women. About 39% of women in couples and 28% of lone mothers with pre-school children are now working part-time¹⁶.

What do parents think?

How do working parents cope with the expectations about returning to work and remaining in work? In our earlier report, parents spoke of the dilemmas they faced: needing to go back to work to pay the mortgage and childcare, feeling under pressure not to stay at home, but believing that they could exercise little choice about when and how to return to work and organise their working lives.

12. *Social Trends 33, chapter 4, The Stationery Office, 2003*

13. *ibid*

14. *The life of women and men in Europe: a statistical portrait, Eurostat, 2002*

15. *Social Trends 33, The Stationery Office, 2003*

16. *Labour Force Survey, 2003*

11. *End Child Poverty newsletter, Spring 2003*





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Over the last couple of years, there has been much debate about balancing work and life, and some progress within Government. We were able, with this MORI survey, to check whether parents felt differently about work and family life.

- Parents clearly stated that they believe that “a workplace geared towards meeting families’ needs” should be part of a family friendly Britain. 22% of responses highlighted this issue.
- And they disagreed (64% of them) with the statement that “being a family friendly employer isn’t good for business”
- Both men and women called for a family friendly workplace, with more full time employees (29%) prioritising this demand than part-time (22%), or naturally those not working (16%).

British couples are developing a system of “shift parenting” to cope with ever longer working hours

- Parents with more education and in higher paid jobs, interestingly, wanted a family friendly workplace – 33% of those earning over £30,000, compared to 17% on under £17,000.
- There were the greatest number of calls from parents with primary school age children – 30%, with 27% of responses from lone parents and parents with babies and toddlers.

Encouragingly for business and the Government, 49% of parents thought that British businesses placed equal importance on women being able both to work and to bring up children; 26% thought businesses only were interested in women working. Looking in more detail at these responses, we see that:

- 52% of women, compared to 45% of men thought that business encouraged both
- The younger the respondent, the more positive was the comment about business

- There was a stronger vote of confidence in business in the North than in the South
- 60% of part-timers were satisfied that business was acknowledging work and family commitments
- The lower paid, lower social class respondents were more positive about business than higher paid, higher social class categories
- However lone parents were least likely to believe that business was supporting work and family.

From these responses, it is possible to suggest that recent changes in provision for parents are beginning to have some effect on people’s perception of their work life balance. These responses are certainly relatively positive – particularly for part-time, low paid mothers, who traditionally may not have had the same access to opportunities to work flexibly as more highly paid women.

However, encouraging though these signs are, parents clearly feel that there is still a long way to go. 36% of parents called for a right to flexible working – not just a right to ask. This was by some margin the biggest category, followed by 21% of parents calling for putting more money into activities for teenagers. 17% of parents called for paid leave for mothers, that is, paid parental leave, and 15% for paid parental leave for fathers.

Working pressures

Working hours and time

In the middle of the nineteenth century the average worker worked around 75 hours a week. By the middle of the twentieth century, it had dropped to 44 hours and hovered around there until the 1980s. In the 1980s, the average week for men working full time had crept up to 47 hours, and for women to 43 hours. In 2000, at the time of writing our first report, Britain had the



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longest working hours in Europe – 44 hours, compared to a European average of 40.5 hours.

The latest comparative figures from the European Commission show that, despite a small drop, British men and women still work the longest hours in Europe (see panel right).

Across the EU, only about 8% of employees worked usually at least 49 hours a week, but in the UK the figure is as high as 21% of employees. A survey carried out by *The Observer* on how people use and think about time asked questions about time and work. 51% of respondents agreed that they work longer hours than they did five years ago¹⁷.

The end of 9-5 and the growth of 24/7

A study by the National Centre for Social Research found that British couples are developing a system of “shift parenting” to cope with ever longer working hours. Parents were beginning to take it in turns to work and parent. This burden fell principally on the mothers, who were more able to reorganise their work lives than the fathers. NCSR found that almost one third of their sample of 1,000 families are working more than the 48 hours a week maximum set out in the Working Time Directive, with 12% working more than 60 hours a week. The study found unusual hours far more prevalent. One in five mothers is now at work before her children are at school. One positive effect of shift parenting is that the father often takes more responsibility for childcare; however, sometimes the couple’s relationship becomes the casualty¹⁸.

Shift working and shift parenting reflects the new ways in which work and family life are becoming enmeshed. We commented in our earlier report that the old 9-5 routine is buckling under the demands of the 24/7 economy and there is

17. *Real Time*, *The Observer*, July 2003
 18. *Happy Families? Atypical work and its influence on family life*. Ivana La Valle, National Centre for Social Research, 2002

Average hours worked per week, full time employees 2000

	Total	Men	Women
EU	40.3	41.1	38.9
Belgium	38.5	39.2	37.1
Denmark	39.3	40.2	37.9
Germany	40.1	40.5	39.3
Greece	40.9	41.7	39.5
Spain	40.6	41.1	39.6
France	38.9	39.5	38.0
Ireland	39.9	41.1	38.1
Italy	38.6	39.8	36.5
Netherlands	39.0	39.2	38.2
Austria	40.1	40.2	39.8
Portugal	40.3	41.1	39.3
Finland	39.3	40.1	38.4
Sweden	40.0	40.2	39.7
UK	43.6	45.2	40.6

The social situation in the European Union, 2002, Eurostat

Both men and women called for a family friendly workplace

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increasing evidence that parents are not the winners in this more fluid economy. A report from Eurostat “*Women and men working weekends and their family circumstances*” shows 40% of women and over 45% of men work on Saturdays, whilst almost 23% of women and just over 26% of men worked on Sundays. These figures are all higher than in the early 1990s. Eurostat comments that weekend working “*may help with reconciling caring responsibility with the pursuit of a career, but it might also reduce the amount of time the family spends together as a unit*”¹⁹.

More women and more men in the UK worked weekends than in any other European country: responding to the opportunities a flexible labour market offers? Or given no choice in their contracts of employment? Furthermore, the study found that the UK had one of the highest percentages of women with young children working



on Saturdays (apart from France, where there is school on a Saturday), and in addition, in the UK more women with children usually worked on a Saturday or Sunday than women without children.

The Eurostat report is supported by the recent research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showing that more than half of fathers and more than a third of mothers work at least one Saturday a month, while a quarter of mothers and almost one in three fathers work on Sundays. The report's author says *"Long working hours that routinely breach the EU Directive and pressure to work on Sundays and at weekends deserve particular consideration because they are areas where parents express the strongest levels of dissatisfaction"*²⁰.

Travelling to work

Add on to the long hours the nightmare of commuting. All forms of transport have increased within the European Union, but car use has soared by 118% (not just on commuting). British car commuters travel slightly over the average distance as their European colleagues, as do Danish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Swedish commuters. However, Britain spends more time commuting each day than any other country: 46 minutes compared to 36 minutes in France, or 23 minutes in Italy²¹.

Amount of paid holiday and its impact on school holidays

Britain has less paid holiday than any other European country. It has fewer public holidays, and unlike most other European countries, there is no statutory right for British employees to take public holidays. And Britain is alone in the EU in allowing employers to count bank holidays as part of the four weeks minimum leave guaranteed under the Working Time Directive (see panel left).

So what does it mean?

The drive to get parents back to work continues; indeed it is one of the major planks of Government attempts to reduce poverty. However it would be wrong to ignore the signs of strain and stress that this policy appears to be creating amongst families.

The long hours culture, growth in shift working and lack of annual leave entitlement places huge burdens on parents struggling to juggle work and family commitments. British workers work for longer hours if they are full time. They are more likely to work atypical hours.

20. *Work and family life in the 21st century*, Shirley Dex, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003

21. *European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport*, Commission for Integrated Transport, 2003

Both mothers and fathers would like greater flexibility about work



Public holidays and legal minimum annual leave

Combined

Austria	38
Belgium	30
Denmark	34.5
Finland	37
France	36
Germany	29-32
Greece	32-34
Ireland	29
Italy	32-42
Netherlands	28
Portugal	34-36
Spain	32-34
Sweden	36
UK	20
EU average	33

A major research project published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation²² analysed 19 studies on work and family life. The findings are a powerful summary of the pressures parents face daily trying to do their best with work and family responsibilities.

- ⊙ Today's 'typical' family is one where one parent works full time and the other works part-time.
- ⊙ Mothers want fathers to work shorter hours; parents of both sexes – and their children – dislike weekend working
- ⊙ Many mothers would prefer shorter hours of work, even giving up paid work altogether, if they could afford it
- ⊙ Both mothers and fathers would like greater flexibility about work
- ⊙ The Government's target of tackling family poverty through work can also send a signal that only paid work is important – reinforcing the low value placed on unpaid work and care. The overlapping implication – that paid child care is better than parental care – runs contrary to the instincts of many parents.

Another survey carried out by Good Housekeeping Magazine²³ paints a similar picture:

- ⊙ Half of working mothers would leave their jobs tomorrow because their home lives are suffering
- ⊙ Nine out of ten say that having children has harmed their careers
- ⊙ Half have sent a sick child to school rather than stay home
- ⊙ Forty per cent said they were too tired to enjoy being with their children.

However, more British women work part-time than anywhere else in Europe, and interestingly the UK has one of the highest rates of part-time working for men – is this a sign of new thinking by men and employers? Parents need choice, not to be forced into labour market. Whilst the Government are pushing parents towards work, it seems that some parents, particularly those with younger

children, are pulling against the tide. Room has to be found in Government policy to respect those parents, and not to penalise them financially, if they choose to prioritise raising their children in their early years.

Helping parents to balance work and family

Since our last report, there have been several important improvements in working parents' rights. When we compared the UK to other European countries in the last report, we found that we were at the bottom of the pile, having some of the worst maternity pay and leave, paternity provision, parental leave and flexible working arrangements in Europe. The Government has shown great commitment to bringing in improvements:

- ⊙ Maternity leave has been extended from 18 to 26 weeks, plus the possibility of a further 26 weeks
- ⊙ Maternity pay has risen from the previous arrangement of 6 weeks at 90% of salary, then 12 weeks on a flat rate of £60 to 6 weeks at 90%, then 20 weeks at £100 a week
- ⊙ There is now two weeks' paid paternity leave, at £100 a week
- ⊙ There is now a right to ask, on return from maternity leave or for parents with young children, for reduced or flexible hours. Employers must consider the request seriously
- ⊙ There is evidence that employers are getting behind the case for improving the balance between work and family life. A survey by the Department of Trade and Industry suggested that 94% of employers support work life balance, and 82% said they have some work life balance practices in place²⁴
- ⊙ A survey of Human Resources Managers by the Work Foundation found that flexible working cut work absenteeism. Half the responding organisations offered flexible working²⁵.



22. *Work and family life in the 21st century*, Shirley Dex, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003

23. The Good Housekeeping survey is based on 1,000 questionnaires returned by readers. The results appear in the October 2003 issue.

24. Department of Trade and Industry press release, 7 April 2003
25. www.theworkfoundation.com/newsroom, 27 January 2003



- The DTI survey showed that about 26% of employees already work flexitime. Another half who don't work this way said they would like to work flexitime, and a third would like to work reduced hours. Another survey suggested that 50% of mothers would like to work term time.
- The Government is consulting on providing more help for parents; "Balancing work and family life: enhancing choice and support for parents" suggests a range of options, from the right of fathers to attend ante-natal appointments to allowing mothers to claim childcare costs before returning to work to help her child settle into childcare.

However in some respects Britain still lags behind Europe. The Government needs to continue its progress:

- Some European countries offer several weeks at full pay: for example Spain and France offer 16, France 16, Germany 14 and Italy 21
- Other European countries offer paid parental leave; Britain still only offers unpaid leave
- Parental leave should be extended to parents with children under 12
- Some argue that the right to ask for flexible working is of little value; parents need a right to work flexibly, and the age of the children should be extended to 12
- The DTI survey also suggested that half of all British workers worried that asking to work flexibly would damage their careers. Real progress will not be made until there is more evidence of a change in workplace culture, amongst men and women. Long hours and other working pressures will undermine the positive steps being taken
- The Government should follow the example of other European countries by giving people a right to take bank holidays and disaggregate them from the four week minimum annual leave entitlement
- The Government needs to give consideration to ways to reduce weekend working for parents, either through discussions with employers and unions or through regulation

- As we discuss in the chapter below, flexible working, improved maternity provision and more rights for fathers is inadequate without affordable, available and high quality childcare.

Childcare

Parents say

Twenty per cent of responses say that good quality childcare is important for a family friendly society. After-school clubs and holiday play schemes were named as family friendly services second only to leisure services. And whilst relatively few people thought the Government should prioritise providing childcare for the under 10s (only 5% of people thought it was the most important policy), it may be because parents chose policies which gave them the choice to care for their children or use childcare – the most popular policy by a long way was a right to flexible working (25% of people said it was the most important policy).

In Britain and Europe

The European Commission looked at how much men and women in different countries cared for their children. They found that women are twice as likely as men to spend time looking after children on a daily basis. However there were significant variations. Around 80% of women aged 20-49 in Europe as a whole spent time caring for children, but whereas in, for example, Denmark and the Netherlands, the proportion is over 90%, in the UK, it falls below the European average at about 77%. Only about 36% of men in the UK spent time looking after children, compared with almost 90% in the Netherlands, 72% in Germany, 55% in Italy and about 61% in Finland. Only in Portugal, Spain and Greece did men spend less time looking after their children than women²⁶.

26. *The life of women and men in Europe, 2002, Eurostat*



Current Government figures state that there is now one childcare place for every five children under the age of eight (Ofsted 2003). There are currently 985,400 registered childcare places, about a third with childminders, a third full time day care places and another third in afterschool clubs. This ratio is an improvement from the time of our previous report, where about one child in every seven had a childcare place.

However, there are still problems. One of the major problems for parents is the cost of childcare. According to the TGWU, women spend up to two thirds of their wages on childcare. They have to work an average of three hours a day for one day of nursery child care, but in the south east they have to work 4.6 hours a day for one day at nursery²⁷. The Daycare Trust has found that a shortage of childcare places has pushed up the costs of childcare by 7% in the last year. The average cost of a nursery place for a child under two is now £128 per week (£6,650 a year) or £168 in the south east (£8,730 a year). The average cost of a full time place with a childminder is £118 a week (£6,100 a year)²⁸.

Parents may also have strong preferences about the type of childcare. The Daycare Trust's survey showed that parents lack quality affordable childcare in their areas, particularly childcare for children under two and after school clubs. Only 13% of parents with dependent children use formal childcare services all the time. Other research²⁹ (Chevalier and Viitanen) suggested that 25% of mothers of pre-school children could not get the formal childcare, for example a nursery place, of their preference. Although there may have been other care available, for example, childminders, many mothers did not regard this as an adequate substitute for nurseries.

There is also evidence that parents prefer informal childcare, for example, their child being looked after by relatives. Informal childcare provides far more flexibility to parents, is often reciprocal and

based very locally, thus cementing social relationships. However informal childcare, unlike formal childcare, is not subsidised by Government.

Another problem that is becoming more evident is the lack of provision for parents who work atypical hours, for example, weekends, evenings or shifts. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation research³⁰ found that it was extremely difficult for parents to find childcare to cover those times. The survey of 600 providers found that few were prepared to open before 7am or after 7pm. Employers who depended on shift, evening and weekend work like the NHS did little to provide out-of-hours childcare. Parents had to rely on informal help like partners, grandparents or friends. The report called for "stronger action to protect working parents from the growing pressures of the 24-hour, 7-days a week society".

Childcare during the holidays

Despite the recent investment in childcare, school holidays are still a problem for working parents. Research conducted by Abbey National for summer 2003 found that parents spend an extra £250 per child over the summer holidays even before the cost of childcare. Childcare is even more expensive – over a third of working parents spend up to £100 per week for a nanny or to send their child to an activity centre. That's around £600 for the six week break and up to £1200 for a family with two children. The study also showed that 55% of parents stop working or reduce their hours during the summer holidays to keep the cost to a minimum³¹.

When a typical weekly cost of a place for a child in a summer holiday play scheme is £67.70 a week, (up from £58.46 in 2002³²), then parents are facing significant extra costs to be able to continue working whilst their children are on holiday.

30. *Work and family life in the 21st century*, Shirley Dex, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003

31. "Parents count the cost of summer" press release Abbey National 16 July 2003

32. Daycare Trust



27. TGWU press release, 7 March 2003

28. Daycare Trust Survey, 2003

29. Reported in *The Guardian*, 16 April 2003

How do parents cope?

“Running round in circles: Co-ordinating childcare, education and work”³³ shows how parents co-ordinated getting one or more children between home, school, nursery and childcare in a way that fitted with work commitments. The study found that:

- ⦿ Parents, particularly mothers were ‘running round in circles’, trying to fit in the school run, nursery or childminder drop-off and getting to work on time
- ⦿ The problem is not necessarily that there was not childcare, but the arrangements needed were complex and often dependent on other support, for example, fathers, friends and neighbours
- ⦿ Parents identified the complexity and time pressure of these arrangements as a possible barrier to returning to work, as well as the costs involved of childcare.

Pupils in England who start school at four or five have lower boredom thresholds and are more likely to distract classmates compared with pupils from Finland and Denmark who start school in the year they turn seven. This study chimes with other concerns about the huge growth in children of three and four attending school – in 1970 only 21% did so, by 2002 this had tripled to 63%. The concerns come from an anxiety that children are being shoe-horned at too early an age into over formal teaching and an education environment, where, developmentally they may do better in a more informal, play oriented setting, where the need to impose discipline and good behaviour is not so paramount.

Travelling around

Transport provoked strong views amongst parents, both in terms of their own experiences and how it affected the mobility and independence of their children. Being able to get around has been shown to be key to a family’s wellbeing. A report by the Social Exclusion Unit³⁴ showed how low income and socially excluded families without regular access to a car had fewer opportunities to find work, access health care, take part in leisure and other activities and keep in contact with friends and family.

Parents say

In our MORI poll, transport was a recurring feature.

- ⦿ When asked to name a family friendly service, 21% (after prompting) mentioned local transport facilities
- ⦿ At the same time, 24% (after prompting) said their local transport service was not family friendly. Parents with children under three highlighted their dissatisfaction with local

34. Making the connections: Transport and social exclusion, Social Exclusion Unit, 2003

The UK has the most extensive traffic congestion in Europe

Whilst many parents want and need good quality affordable playschemes and childcare during the school holidays, it is also an opportunity for employers to offer flexible working to allow parents to be able to spend time with their children. Other options such as term time working or compressed hours also allow families extra time together. A pity, then, that travel companies, hotels and tour operators operate a policy of increasing prices during the only times that families can travel away together.

What about the children?

There may be costs, too, for children. A recent research study from Ofsted suggests that six year olds in England are more badly behaved at school than their counterparts in countries where formal lessons start up to two years later.

33. Published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003

transport services more than any other issue raised

- ⦿ Criticism of transport rises amongst parents with greater education living in southern England
- ⦿ Criticism of local transport is surprisingly consistent whether parents live in urban or rural areas; however 19% of rural parents praised local transport, compared to only 14% of city dwellers
- ⦿ Support for the government bringing in cheaper public transport was middling, and there was little support for increasing the frequency of public transport. Nor did cost appear to be an issue for parents. These responses may reflect the dominance of the car culture in this country.
- ⦿ However, improving transport was a great priority, not surprisingly, for parents with teenage children who are likely not to have cars of their own. Parents of teenage children pointed to lack of good transport, street lighting, litter and other local environmental issues and being consulted on local planning decisions as particularly non family friendly.

In Britain

Transport is one area in which Britain still falls way behind other European countries, although there are some signs that the Government is attempting to put right the chronic historic lack of investment. A recent report by the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) looked at best practice in European transport systems.

“The evidence we are now publishing is a clear but stark demonstration of two generations of neglect, of a transport network starved of investment for half a century. A situation that forced people into their cars whether they wanted to or not. In the UK we have fallen a generation behind the best in Europe.... We have more congestion than any other European country. We have the most

car-dominated economy in Europe. As well as motorists, public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists have borne the brunt of this neglect in the UK. While we were not investing sufficiently in better public transport we were charging our passengers a lot more to use worse services.”

The report then warned “today we all stand at a crossroads between a US-style car culture and a sustainable European multi-modal system³⁵”.

The car culture

Despite having below average car ownership, people in the UK make more use of their cars than any other European country. Road traffic is forecast to increase by up to 48% by 2026, but two thirds of people think something should be done about it³⁶. The UK has the most extensive traffic congestion in Europe.

Bus services in the UK receive less Government subsidy than in any other country in the EU

The distances travelled by car increased by 11% during the 1990s, but 60% of cars had only one occupant in 1999/2001³⁷. A quarter of all car trips in 1999/2001 were less than 2 miles long. The proportion of short trips made by car is slowly increasing.

Families need reliable affordable buses

Between 1980 and 1998, bus travel in the UK dropped. Most EU countries experience a growth in demand for buses. Bus services in the UK receive less Government subsidy than in any other country in the EU³⁸.

Thirty per cent of people in the countryside do not have access to a car during the day³⁹. In rural areas in 1998/99, 52% of households had at least one bus every hour. 10% had no daily service at all.

35. *European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport*, Commission for Integrated Transport, 2003

36. *Commission for Integrated Transport*

37. *National Travel Survey*

38. *Commission for Integrated Transport*

39. *Cabinet Office*





Family Friendly

Families need flexible fares transferable to all public transport

Public transport fares in the UK are more expensive than in any other European country apart from Denmark and Sweden⁴⁰.

The real cost of motoring has stayed the same since 1975 but the real cost of public transport has gone up by 50-80 per cent⁴¹.

Ten years ago, the UK office of the International Year of the Family called for discounts for families to acknowledge different size and composition of families, not just two adults and two children. It is time that transport operators listened.

Children need to gain independence by walking and cycling in their local neighbourhood

School travel

At peak travel time in the morning, 20% of cars were making the school run. These journeys are often less than a mile. In the early seventies, seven out of ten seven year-olds made their own way to school. Today less than one in ten does. Less than 10% primary aged children go unaccompanied, compared with over 80% in 1970.

In 2002:

- ⦿ 39% of primary aged children went to school by car (an increase of 11% over 15 years)
- ⦿ 54% walked (down from 62% only a few years earlier. In 1971 over 90% of ten year olds walked to school)
- ⦿ 18% secondary school children went by car
- ⦿ 43% walked
- ⦿ 32% went by bus.

There are signs that the proportion of children going by car is levelling out. The Government is encouraging schools to draw up school travel plans, in discussion with the local community, so that more children can walk and cycle to school. For more information, read *"A safer journey to school: a guide to school travel plans"* (available on www.dft.gov.uk).

Walking and cycling locally

Overall about 42% of households own a bike, and 90% of children. However, bicycle use has been falling steadily since 1975/6 and is one of the lowest in Europe. Only about 2% of trips to school by secondary age children were by bike⁴².

Other countries have been successful in encouraging cycling for short journeys. Key factors that have made a difference are well planned and extensive cycle networks, the enforcement of a 20mph speed limit and other safety measures. The Government is committed to increasing cycling, and more could be done to encourage cycling locally: more cycle lanes, more lock-up facilities locally and at schools, cycling proficiency lessons for all children in year 6 of primary school.

Walking has declined across Europe, but in 1995,

Walking has declined across Europe, but in 1995, the UK had the lowest per capita walking distance except for Greece

the UK had the lowest per capita walking distance except for Greece. The number of miles walked per person in Britain fell 21 % between 1985/86 and 1996/98⁴³. Most walking trips are short, local trips, but the number of children walking to school has declined. The Government is also keen to encourage local initiatives to encourage more children to walk, not least for health reasons, and schemes like walking buses are gaining popularity.

Children's ability to travel freely and independently, however, is severely constrained by two major issues: road traffic and the local environment. We discuss both these issues in the following section on neighbourhoods.

40. Commission for Integrated Transport
41. Transport 2000

42. www.transport2000.org.uk/factsandfigures
43. www.transport2000.org.uk/factsandfigures



Local neighbourhoods

Parents say

The MORI poll carried out by NFPI asked a number of questions about people’s perceptions of where they live and how their neighbourhoods could be improved. The table of their replies is set out on the right.

There are no surprises here. The things that matter to people day to day do not change substantially. In an earlier report by MORI⁴⁴, a low level of crime, affordable housing, decent public transport, clean streets, low level traffic congestion, access to leisure and culture for all and open spaces were all important factors in making somewhere a good place to live. And when MORI asked what needed improving, top of the list were more activities for teenagers, low level of crime, road and pavement repairs, public transport, facilities for young children, clean streets and less traffic.

The picture that emerges from our poll of parents is a familiar one. Parents like where they live, broadly speaking, but when asked about improvements highlight a familiar list of issues. Whilst in our survey these issues have been identified as making an area more family friendly, it is also true to say that they would not only make a neighbourhood more family friendly, but more citizen friendly. They affect how people feel about their area, whether they feel pride, whether it’s a place they want their kids to grow up in.

Increasing interest in regeneration and environmental improvements has led to the idea of “liveability”. Originating in the United States as an agenda to help citizens and communities preserve green spaces, ease traffic congestion, restore a sense of community and enhance economic competitiveness, liveability has become a

Which do you think would improve you and your family’s lives on a day to day basis?

More police on the streets	56%
Bringing in a 20mph speed limit on residential roads	34%
Lowering the cost of leisure facilities	25%
Affordable after-school activities	25%
Cheaper public transport	24%
More road sweeping and collection of litter	23%
More frequent public transport	21%
Better kept parks and more park wardens	21%
Being consulted on development plans	20%
Friendly neighbours	20%
Holiday play schemes	18%
Giving greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists	17%
More leisure facilities	16%



Things that matter to people day to day do not change substantially

Making Britain family friendly

Improved street lighting	14%
Having family members to call on for support	10%
Local crèche provision in shopping centres	10%
Community wardens	5%

shorthand for a clutch of issues concerned with people’s immediate living environment and quality of life.

Views about their neighbourhood and neighbours

People might think it could be improved, but it would be a mistake to assume that people did not care for their neighbourhood. When asked in our MORI poll if they thought that their

44. The rising prominence of liveability, MORI, 2002



Family Friendly

neighbourhood was a good place to live, a resounding 74% of parents thought that it was, with only 14% disliking their local area. Within that overall figure were some interesting differences:

- More older people (80%) than younger people (57%) agreed
- 71% of urban dwellers agreed compared to 81% of rural dwellers
- Fewer single parents (58%) felt good about their neighbourhood compared to two parent families
- Of the two parent families questioned, there was little difference in response according to the age of the child, averaging around 70% agreeing.

A sign of the times is that the most recent government statistics on the state of Britain today devotes a long article to local networks, neighbourliness and community spirit⁴⁵. The article looks at community spirit in neighbourhoods, trust in neighbours, satisfactory friends and family networks to begin to form a picture of how people see their neighbourhoods. The EU conducts similar studies, looking at, for example, how often people speak to their neighbours.

People's perceptions of their local neighbourhood give an indication of the strength of community spirit and neighbourliness. Since 1984 the British Crime survey has asked this question: *'In general, what kind of neighbourhood would you say you live in? Is it a neighbourhood in which people do things together and try and help each other or one in which people mostly go their own way.'* In 1984 about 40% chose each of those options (the other option being a mix of both). The latest figures – 2000 – shows about 36% believe people help each other, and 49% believe people go their own way.

Young adults were likely to be the least neighbourly, doing fewer favours for and receiving fewer favours from neighbours, for example. They were least likely to trust neighbours; trust rose

with age. After 30, adults were more likely to be involved in local communities.

British people talk to their neighbours slightly more than the EU average, more than in Belgium, the Netherlands or Denmark, but less than in Spain, Ireland or Portugal⁴⁶.

The picture of British neighbourhood life from the statistics and the polls, then, is mixed. It is a picture dominated by involvement and community feeling amongst older people, and less amongst younger. People like their neighbourhoods, and many talk to their neighbours, but they feel there is less sense of community, and a strong feeling that many things need to be put right. Improving local neighbourhoods however involves confronting a difficult problem, one that is key to making Britain more family friendly. How can all the different, and often conflicting interests within a neighbourhood work together in co-operation, and how can trust be forged between groups who feel they have reason to be suspicious and hostile of each other?

Who are our neighbourhoods, streets and public spaces for?

Not for children and young people?

Consider the evidence

The British Heart Foundation says a third of under-sevens fail to reach the minimum recommended activity levels – and by 15, two thirds of girls are classified inactive. The proportion of children judged overweight has increased sevenfold in 30 years to 30%. Seven out of ten school leavers abandon physical activity⁴⁷.

In a survey carried out by Powergen during the 2003 summer holidays, seven out of 10 children spend more time playing on computers and watching TV than any other hobby. 25% of parents said their children spent seven hours or more a day

46. *Living conditions in Europe, Eurostat 2000*

47. *No particular place to go? Children, young people and public space, Ken Worpole, Groundwork, 2003*



in this way. More than half of children under 16 have their own television sets at home. Young people in the UK spend more time watching television than anywhere in Europe.

Research from the Children's Society and the Children's Play Council⁴⁸ asked more than 2,500 children what stopped them playing outside. Their answers included being told off by adults, and even threatened for activities such as riding a bike in the street. Adults are becoming increasingly intolerant. A MORI survey found that 75% of the adult population supported a legally enforceable evening curfew on teenagers⁴⁹.

The Government's Anti-Social Behaviour Bill could be the biggest threat yet to young people's sense of belonging to their community. The Bill will, amongst other things, allow police to return

Seven out of ten children spend more time playing on computers and watching TV than any other hobby

children and young people under 16 to the family home if they are found out without an adult after 9pm, even if they have not done anything wrong. This would mean that a young person returning home from a friend's house or youth club, or a group of friends playing in the park on a late summer's evening would not have a right to be out and about – they would only allowed to be out on sufferance.

This proposal is an example of an unfamily friendly measure promoted by the government in the hope that it will help bring about the kind of safe community people want. However by pathologising young people it may simply ensure that public spaces and the streets continue to be regarded as child free zones.

Not for cyclists or pedestrians?

Consider the evidence

The impact of traffic on children's safety

Road safety generally is better in the UK than in any other European country. People are less likely to die on the roads than anywhere else except Sweden. The Government should be praised for tackling this problem, and for supporting sustained campaigns to reduce road deaths.

However the general figure hides some crucial differences particularly important to families. Whilst car occupants are the least likely to die, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists are amongst the most at risk. Pedestrians and cyclists are more than twice as likely to be killed on UK roads than in Sweden or the Netherlands.

In 2001, 3,818 children were killed or seriously injured, while cycling or walking. By way of comparison the average number of children abducted and killed by strangers each year is seven. Traffic is the leading cause of death for children aged one to 14. Children from disadvantaged families are five times more likely to be killed on the roads than the better off⁵⁰.

In 2000, nine of the other fourteen member states of the EU had a lower rate of child pedestrian deaths than the UK. 3,144 child pedestrians were killed or seriously injured in the UK in 2001. The highest pedestrian casualty rates were for children in the final years at primary school and first years at secondary school, with most deaths and injuries occurring close to home⁵¹.

In 2001, 674 child cyclists were killed or seriously injured, and another 5,451 were involved in accidents. The London Cycling Campaign say that "it is almost impossible to avoid cycling on pavements at times because of obstructive and inconsiderate car drivers who clog up the roads and block the paths of cyclists".



48. Research released by the Children's Society for Playday 2003
49. Ken Worpole

50. Streets ahead: safe and liveable streets for children, Institute of Public Policy Research, October 2002
51. www.transport2000.org.uk/factsandfigures



Making our neighbourhoods family friendly - what can be done?

Neighbourhoods are not for the easy passage of cars. They are not for one group of people, and not others. Public space is a precious amenity to be shared, particularly in cities. Aldo van Eyck, the Dutch architect responsible for much of the development of Amsterdam, had this to say:

If they (cities) are not meant for children, they are not meant for citizens either. If they are not meant for citizens – ourselves – they are not cities⁵².

Good things are starting to happen. National and local Government are investing in local neighbourhoods, through various initiatives, for example, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the national Play Review, the establishment of a new public space unit at CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) as well as child-directed initiatives such as Sure Start and the Children Fund which draw funding and resources into socially excluded areas. More needs to happen.

1. Introduce a 20mph speed limit

Government research shows that the high levels of casualties are a result of the lack of speed restrictions, rather than increased exposure to traffic. Reducing the speed of traffic around school and residential areas is vital.

There should be 20mph well-enforced speed limits around schools and parks across the country. Hit by a car at 30mph a child has a 55% chance of being killed, while at 20 mph the risk falls to 5 per cent⁵³. In areas where 20mph speed zones do exist, injuries to children have fallen by 67%. Speed limits of 20 mph on residential roads are favoured by 79 per cent of people.

2. Support children's and young people's right to travel about

The Government is introducing a tough law to forbid anyone over the age of 10 from riding on pavements. If caught, they will have their bicycles

seized and auctioned. The ostensible reason is fear of cyclists causing death and injury to pedestrians. The most recent figures show in 1997 two pedestrians were killed by cycles in London, and one of those was in an accident caused by a car. However, as stated above, 674 child cyclists were killed or seriously injured in 2001. Instead of pitting child cyclists and pedestrians against each other, the Government should prioritise both in a comprehensive local transport strategy.

"Either we can continue to withdraw children from the growing threat that is posed (by the rising volume and speed of traffic), and inculcate fear in parents and children about the risks, or we can withdraw that threat from the children by 'taming' traffic". Mayer Hillman

3. Extend home zones

The Children's Play Council describes home zones as "a street or group of streets designed primarily to meet the interests of pedestrians and cyclists rather than motorists, opening up the street for social use. The key to creating a home zone is to develop street design that makes drivers feel it is normal to drive slowly and carefully. Features often include traffic calming, shared surfaces, trees and planters, benches and play areas. Home zones can create attractive urban environments, foster positive community spirit and provide safer streets for everyone".

The Government has provided funding for nine pilot schemes in England and Wales, four in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland, and the Transport Act 2000 gave legal recognition to the concept for the first time. Many local authorities are developing plans to introduce them, although Britain has some way to go to catch up with the Netherlands, where there are about 6,500, Germany and Denmark.

Initial feedback from the pilot schemes suggest strong community support once the scheme is explained and developed, but also some concerns, for example, the greater use of the streets by children and young people, and possible

52. Quoted in Ken Worpole

53. www.transport2000.org.uk/factsandfigures



constraints on car parking. However, a prospective Health Impact Assessment from the pilot home zone in Plymouth – Morice Town – refers to the likely health gains, not only from reductions in accidents and car fumes, but also from the area becoming a more friendly place, with more neighbourliness.

Home zones are expensive to implement, but there are many ways to take elements of home zone design, for instance, a reduced speed limit, redesign of the roads and incorporate them into existing or new areas.

4. Make neighbourhoods inclusive

One of the clearest messages from our MORI poll was the anxiety of parents about their teenage children. From wanting more police on the streets to calling for more activities for teenagers, parents are worried that the place of teenagers in their communities is unclear. It appears that there is a tendency to regard young people as suspect and potentially anti-social or criminal by adults, but young people are very likely to be victims of crime themselves. One survey suggests that 25% of children between 12 and 16 have been a victim of crime, often bullying, theft or assault. They themselves can be fearful of being out and about and are looking for helpful and supportive adults to provide some protection and security⁵⁴.

Too often the facilities and activities available to young people are limited, under-funded and unexciting. In a survey published by the Children's Society in 2002⁵⁵, the majority of 500 children described their local parks and playgrounds as boring. 45% said they were not allowed to play with water, 36% not allowed to climb trees and 23% not allowed to ride bikes or play on skateboards. Cuts, together with insurance and safety fears have combined to reduce the quality of play available to children and young people – one good example is the closure of many paddling pools in parks on cost and health and safety grounds. A programme of investment in play and youth facilities is long overdue.

Participation of young people in our communities does not stop at making sure that they have safe and interesting places to play. Young people inhabit all public space, not just playgrounds, parks or youth clubs. Research⁵⁶ suggests that “one of the ways in which young people often inhabit public space is as a series of stopping points in a continual process of ‘moving on’ or ‘wandering’ in and through a neighbourhood”. For all the money, welcome though it is, that the Government is investing in activities and schemes to engage young people, particularly during the holidays, it is in no-one's interest to corral young people into organised activities, leaving them little time for hanging out and doing nothing. Providing good quality schemes and places to go is vital, but no-one should be surprised when young people also choose to hang out in public places.

A programme of investment in play and youth facilities is long overdue

Making Britain family friendly

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In 1997 a citizens' jury was established by South Lanarkshire Council to look into the increasingly vexatious issue of vandalism and graffiti by young people in the Hillhouse area of Hamilton, and over four days heard evidence as to the best way forward...During the course of the project a number of jury members moved from a position of hostility towards young people to a greater understanding of their anxieties and needs. When it came to recommendations, they made sensible and realistically costed suggestions, as well as acknowledging that they, the wider community, had a responsibility to help young people feel a sense of belonging where they lived.

No particular place to go? Children, young people and public space, Ken Worpole, Groundwork, 2003



54. Quoted in Ken Worpole

55. Research published by the Children's Society for Playday 2002

56. Quoted in Ken Worpole

The family friendly campaign

As our report shows, there has been much progress over the last three years to make Britain a better place to raise a family. The Government has shown commitment to tackle the problems and pressures people face in balancing work and family life, and is still committed to reducing child poverty. There are signs that across the board there is more awareness of the need to provide services suitable for families.

But there is still a long way to go, and that is why the National Family and Parenting Institute has decided to launch a long term campaign, pressing for more progress in public policy and practice and lobbying and persuading companies of the case for better family friendly services.

If these changes and progress bring with them a more positive attitude generally towards parents, children and young people, then it may be that Britain is well on the road towards becoming a family friendly society.

Our campaign starts with the premise that family-friendly is:

- ⦿ **about society and structures, not about telling people how to be a parent**
- ⦿ **about changing current attitudes that tend to exclude children and families**
- ⦿ **similar to citizen friendly. It's about benefiting all, bringing children and parents and human values back into the heart of planning, products, services, environment, the neighbourhood and the workplace**
- ⦿ **about the big things and the small details – from government policy to a lego table in a shop – looking at what will make life better for families on a day to day and on a long term basis.**

The NFPI will be researching, reporting and campaigning on a wide variety of issues, and will be lending its support to other organisations and companies developing their own family-friendly policies and services.

If you, a parent, organisation or company want to help make Britain a better place to raise a family, please sign the family friendly pledge and send it back to us. Every signature makes a difference.

The family friendly pledge

We ask all organisations, companies and individuals to sign up to the pledge to help make Britain a better place to raise a family. Please sign below and send the pledge back to:

NFPI Family Friendly Campaign
FREEPOST LON12668
London NW5 2YR

Many thanks for your support.



Making Britain
family friendly

The family friendly pledge

I/we pledge to support the family friendly campaign in its aim to make Britain a better place to raise a family.

- ◉ By supporting the right of mothers and fathers to have more control and choice about work to better balance their working lives with looking after their children
- ◉ By working to make local neighbourhoods safe, stimulating and welcoming places for parents, children and young people
- ◉ By promoting a culture of acceptance, tolerance and support for parents, children and young people
- ◉ By listening to and respecting children's and young people's views
- ◉ By encouraging companies and organisations to make their services family friendly

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL _____

EMAIL _____

SIGNATURE _____

- Please tick this box if you would like to be kept informed about the family friendly campaign.

← please sign the pledge

Making Britain
family friendly

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©National Family and Parenting Institute 2003

Published by
National Family and Parenting Institute
430 Highgate Studios
53-79 Highgate Road
London NW5 1TL

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Email info@nfpi.org
www.nfpi.org

ISBN 1 903615 27 5
Registered Charity No 1077444

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