

Women pick jobs closer to family over bigger salary – as government promises to help them reach their financial potential

Women who have an hour-long commute are nearly a third (29 per cent) more likely to leave their current job than if they had a 10-minute commute.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) says this contributes to men doing the majority of high-paid jobs. They believe it's likely women prefer short commutes because they do more childcare and unpaid work.

The news comes following the Government Equalities Office's (GEO) launch of a new plan to empower women across the UK from school to retirement. It commits to supporting both women and men to balance work and care and giving women real choice at home and in work.

Minister for Women and Equalities, Amber Rudd, said today:

"Women across the country struggle to find a balance between being a parent and their job.

"These statistics show how women are likely sacrificing a larger paypacket, and career growth, because they are doing the bulk of childcare and unpaid work – like taking care of elderly relatives and their home.

"I'm determined that women should be supported by the government and their employer to find that balance. We want to financially empower everyone across the country so they can reach their full potential."

In 2017 the government introduced ground-breaking regulations requiring large employers to publish the differences between what they pay their male and female staff in average salaries and bonuses.

The Roadmap for Change sets out a number of measures from across-government, including:

- Consulting on proposals to better support parents to balance work and family-life through parental leave and flexible working;
- Exploring developing innovative pilots to deliver more flexible working in SMEs and in sectors with high numbers of low paid employees;
- Improving access to information for swamped parents, bringing together guidance on:
 - childcare support;
 - parental leave;
 - family friendly employment policies;
 - and other relevant services and support.

Reporting is just one part of what the government is doing to tackle the drivers of the gap including:

- Publishing guidance showing how employers can diagnose the cause of their gap, and the practical actions they can take to close it;
- Supporting men and women with caring responsibilities through childcare entitlements, promoting flexible working and Shared Parental Leave, and delivering initiatives to support those returning to work;
- Working with business to support and increase women's progression to senior positions;
- Breaking down gender stereotypes, for example increasing the number of women taking qualifications in STEM subjects.