

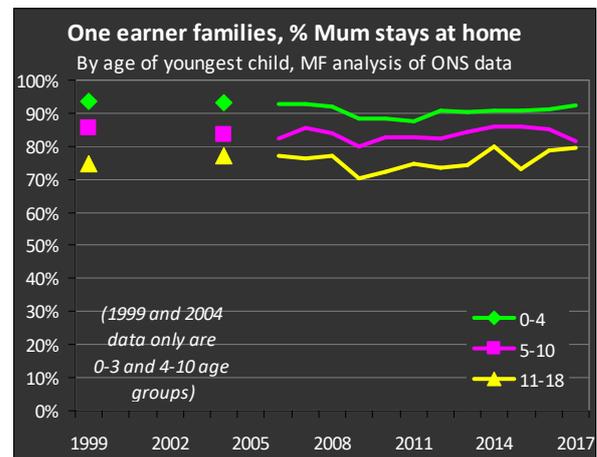
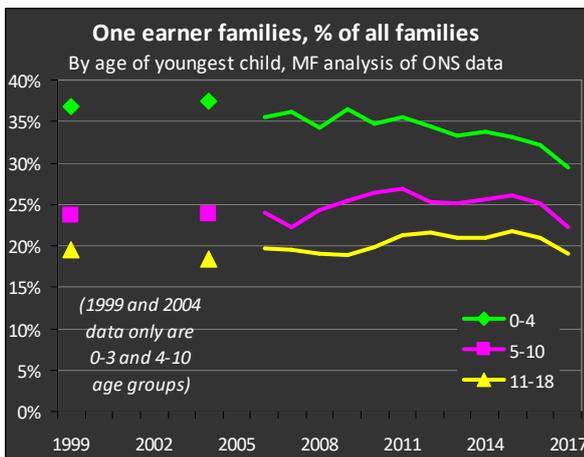


# Marriage Foundation

## One earner families

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- Despite significant policy efforts to encourage both parents into work, our analysis of ONS data shows little reduction in one earner families across the past two decades, and no change at all in the proportion of those families where dad is the earner and mum remains at home.
- Throughout 1999 to 2017, a consistent one quarter of families had only one earner. For families with the youngest child under 4, that proportion was one third: only in the year 2017 has this dropped to 29%. It is possible this may be related to the introduction of Universal Credit.
- However during the same period, dads have remained the earner and mums have stayed at home in at least 90% of all one earner families with children under 4, and 80% of those with older children. Even if early days, the introduction of up to six months shared parental leave in 2015 has yet to have any impact whatsoever on this gender imbalance over its first three years.
- I have long argued that nine months of pregnancy automatically orientates a mum to her child far more than a dad. This has big implications both for public policy – the special role of a mother toward her child – and private stability – the special role of a father toward the mother.
- This evidence suggests that two decades of public policy initiatives – that try to equate men and women as if the same – have fallen foul of human nature – that men and women are different.



**Data sources:**

MF analysis of ONS data

ONS (2014) Working couples by child age 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014: data commissioned for Marriage Foundation

ONS (2017) Families living with dependent children by family type, full time or part time employment and age and number of dependent children, 2006 to 2017, England

**One earner families as % of all families with children**

Youngest child	1999*	2007	2012	2017
0 to 4	37%	36%	34%	29%
5 to 10	24%	22%	25%	22%
11 to 18	20%	20%	22%	19%
All families	27%	27%	28%	25%

**One earner families where dad is the earner**

Youngest child	1999*	2007	2012	2017
0 to 4	94%	93%	91%	92%
5 to 10	86%	86%	82%	81%
11 to 18	75%	76%	73%	80%
All families	87%	88%	85%	87%

\*Note that 1999 data is for 0-3 and 4-10 year olds