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POLITIQUE FAMILIALE
ET GARDE DES JEUNES ENFANTS
AU ROYAUME-UNI
(1979-2000)

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Méthodologie

Approche générale

Pour mener à bien cette recherche, nous avons adopté la méthode suivante :

- Les quelques études approfondies récentes sur l'emploi des femmes et la garde de jeunes enfants nous ont servi de base de départ. Dans le domaine de la petite enfance, nos sources essentielles sont : l'étude Day Care Services for Children, réalisée pour le ministère de la Santé britannique en 1990 par l'Institut des études démographiques et des recensements, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), à partir d'un échantillon de 5 525 enfants ; les différentes études réalisées par l'antenne britannique du Réseau de la Commission européenne sur les modes de garde (qui a existé de 1989 à 1995), notamment les deux rapports réalisés par Bronwen Cohen, avec la collaboration active d'un grand nombre de spécialistes et d'organisations représentatives intéressées par la question ; une étude réalisée pour le ministère de l'Education et de l'Emploi en 1998 sur l'offre et la demande en matière de services d'accueil de jeunes enfants (Local Assessments of childcare needs and provision). Nous avons complété cette étude statistique en nous adressant aux différents organismes de sondages (MORI, Harris, Gallup, Social and Community Planning Research, NOP ...), Ainsi qu'à l'OPCS et aux ministères de l'Education et de l'Emploi (Department of Education and Employment), de la Santé (Ministry of Health) et des Affaires étrangères (Foreign & Commonwealth Office).

- Pour nous permettre d'examiner ces données dans le contexte européen, nous nous sommes ensuite adressée à la Commission Européenne et aux responsables du Réseau européen en France et au
Royaume-Uni, pour obtenir les différents rapports nationaux et européens *consolidated reports* sur la garde des enfants et des sujets connexes : emploi, égalité des chances (entre hommes et femmes, et entre enfants de différents milieux sociaux et de différentes origines ethniques). A deux reprises, nous avons rencontré la représentante britannique du réseau européen, Bronwen Cohen, qui est également présidente de *Children in Scotland*, l'équivalent écossais du *National Children's Bureau*.

- Les différentes organisations directement intéressées par la garde des enfants (*Playgroups Association, National Childcare Campaign, National Children's Bureau, Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network, Children in Scotland, Equal Opportunities Commission, Day Care Trust, Employers for Childcare* etc.) ont été très coopératives, et nous ont envoyé des brochures, des rapports sur leurs activités, ainsi que des informations précises que nous leur avons demandé.

- Pour connaître leurs positions sur la question, nous nous sommes adressées aux différents partis politiques (*Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, Scottish Nationalist Party*), ainsi qu'au *Trades Union Congress (TUC)* et à la *Confederation of British Industry (CBI)*. Tous ont répondu, sauf la *CBI*. En particulier, le parti travailliste, les *Liberal Democrats*, et le *TUC*, nous ont communiqué beaucoup de documents aussi bien sur les femmes que sur la garde des enfants.

- Pour voir si l'intérêt croissant pour la question de la garde des enfants, constaté dans la presse et dans les publications des partis politiques, se reflétait aussi au niveau parlementaire, où elle avait rarement été évoquée auparavant, nous avons demandé au bureau d'information du parlement britannique, *Public Information Office of the House of Commons*, d'effectuer une recherche sur les questions posées aux Communes et à la Chambre des lords entre 1980 et 1997. Grâce
au site internet du parlement, nous avons ensuite étudié dans *Hansard* les débats les plus marquants sur la famille et la garde des enfants qui eurent lieu pendant la période en question.

- Pour pouvoir examiner de plus près une approche et une expérience de la garde d'enfants assez exceptionnelles au Royaume-Uni, nous avons contacté le Conseil Régional de Strathclyde à Glasgow. En effet, suite à une enquête approfondie sur les besoins de la population de cette région, en 1986, Strathclyde fut la première région à intégrer en un seul, tous les services pour les enfants de moins de cinq ans.

- Nous avons élaboré un questionnaire à l'intention des femmes qui avaient eu des jeunes enfants pendant la période concernée, sur leurs choix et préférences en ce qui concerne la garde de ceux-ci. Ce questionnaire a été distribué en particulier à un groupe de femmes ayant repris des études universitaires (*mature students*), après avoir élevé leurs enfants pour la plupart, puis à des associations de parents. Cependant, malgré quelques tentatives, le taux de réponse a malheureusement été trop faible pour pouvoir s'en servir de manière quantitative. Nous avons également réalisé des entretiens approfondis avec un certain nombre de femmes ayant répondu au questionnaire, et notamment avec des *mature students*. Dans ces entretiens, nous avons adopté globalement une approche non directive, ce qui a permis de faire émerger les aspects les plus significatifs de l'expérience différente des unes et des autres. Nous avons été contrainte, pour des raisons d'emploi du temps des personnes interrogées, de mener ces entretiens avec deux ou trois personnes à la fois, mais après une première expérience, nous avons constaté que cette situation donnait lieu à des échanges intéressants, surtout lorsqu'il s'agissait de personnes ayant eu des expériences contrastées.
- En utilisant les mots clés: women, employment, childcare, nursery education et family, nous avons collecté des articles dans les archives des journaux, The Guardian, The Observer, The Independent. L'Extended Academic ASAP, moteur de recherche que nous avons pu utilisé, à partir de la bibliothèque d'Anglia Polytechnic University à Cambridge, a été particulièrement utile, et nous a fourni des articles pertinents en provenance de sources diverses, et parfois inattendues, comme l'American Association for the Advancement of Science. Nous avons également prêté une attention particulière aux lettres des lecteurs dans les journaux mentionnés ci-dessus, et à des émissions de radio où les auditeurs peuvent dialoguer avec des invités. Ces deux sources permettent, dans une certaine mesure, de jauger l'intérêt que l'opinion publique porte à ces sujets. Les émissions de radio avec des personnalités politiques qui, dans le feu de l'action, répondent à des questions d'auditeurs et/ou de journalistes, sont parfois plus révélatrices que des discours ou déclarations écrits.


- Pour les discours politiques sur la famille, en plus de Hansard, nous avons utilisé, en ce qui concerne les conservateurs, notamment les autobiographies des deux Premiers Ministres, Margaret Thatcher
et John Major, ainsi que les discours de Margaret Thatcher, publiés dans *Collected Speeches*. Pour les discours des travaillistes, nous avons consulté régulièrement le site internet du parti travailliste qui comprend une rubrique 'discours'.

- Pour obtenir des informations sur les *nursery vouchers*, nous avons rencontré Dr. Christine Stephens de l'Université de Stirling, qui nous a fourni tous les rapports de son équipe, responsable de l'évaluation du système en Ecosse, et les références des autres études sur l'expérience dans les zones pilotes.

- Une dernière source très utile, qui nous a permis d'obtenir des informations et d'établir des contacts fructueux, notamment avec des chercheuses dans les domaines de *Women's Studies* et *Gender Studies*, fut le *ICBH Gender List*, qui malheureusement n'existe plus.

**La terminologie**

En dehors des difficultés habituelles de traduction, nous avons été confrontée à quelques problèmes spécifiques que nous signalons parfois dans les notes de bas de page. Premièrement, les domaines de *Women's Studies* et *Gender Studies* sont beaucoup plus développés dans les pays anglo-saxons qu'en France ; déjà 'genre' est assez peu utilisé, sauf par des spécialistes, pour le moment, et d'autres termes, par exemple, 'gender blind', doivent être traduit souvent par de longues circonstanciations.

La désignation des différents modes de garde pose également quelques problèmes puisque, malgré la pénurie, il y a un très grand nombre de structures différentes : publiques, privées et bénévoles. Même au Royaume-Uni, une certaine confusion règne parfois dans l'utilisation de différents termes. Cette confusion provient à la fois de la complexité de la situation, mais également d'un manque de
connaissance des non-spécialistes et parfois d'une volonté politique de rester dans le flou. Pour ne pas créer plus de confusion, dans certains cas nous avons préféré garder le terme britannique. Pour faciliter la tâche du lecteur, nous incluons un glossaire où nous définissons ce que nous entendons par les termes anglais désignant les différentes structures d'accueil. Ce glossaire est d'autant plus nécessaire que les termes anglais et français apparemment équivalents ne recouvrent pas les mêmes réalités.

D'autres difficultés rencontrées

Une des grandes difficultés que nous avons rencontré tout au long de ce travail, fut de trouver des statistiques comparables. Au niveau géographique, nous avons voulu considérer l'ensemble du Royaume-Uni, mais cela n'a pas toujours été possible, et parfois nous avons dû nous contenter des chiffres pour la Grande-Bretagne, voire, pour l'Angleterre.

Pour pouvoir considérer clairement l'influence du manque de solutions de garde de jeunes enfants en ce qui concerne le travail des femmes, il est évidemment plus opératoire de pouvoir comparer les chiffres d'emploi des mères d'enfants de moins de cinq ans avec les chiffres de celles ayant des enfants en âge scolaire, or, souvent on ne trouve que des statistiques globales pour les femmes avec ou sans enfants. En matière de structures de garde également, les statistiques ne diffèrent pas toujours entre les structures pour les moins de cinq ans et celles pour les enfants scolarisés en primaire qui bénéficient d'un accueil en dehors des heures scolaires. De plus, certaines statistiques ne diffèrent pas entre les structures des différents secteurs.

La nature des difficultés a changé en cours du travail. Alors qu'au départ la difficulté était de trouver de l'information en la glanant des bribes ici et là, progressivement, la question de la garde des jeunes
enfants et la conciliation du travail salarié et vie de famille, d'un sujet obscur qui n'intéressait qu'une poignée de féministes et de spécialistes de la petite enfance, est devenue un sujet d'actualité, et il fallait plutôt trier des monceaux d'informations et d'opinions publiées presque quotidiennement.
Annexes

Annexe 1

(Avril 2001)

**W.B.** How was the Childcare network set up?

**B.C.** It was all part of a policy of having networks to explore various issues and that partly related also to a resourcing issue within the European Commission as they had far fewer civil servants, as it were, than in national governments. So for them it was a method of actually exploring some of these issues, and it was a recognition of childcare in equal opportunities work, and work on women. And it followed on from the first kind of initiative in that area which was the publication of proposals for parental leave, they predated the establishment of the network.

**W.B.** How did you become the British representative?

**B.C.** I was working for the EOC at the time and involved in relation to parental leave, and that was, I think, why my name was put forward.

**W.B.** I read Vicky Randall’s book on childcare recently and she says that on the question of childcare, feminism ‘missed the boat’ in the UK, would you agree with that?

**B.C.** What do you mean exactly by ‘missed the boat’?

**W.B.** Well, because they weren’t ready to fight on the question at the right moment, and when they finally got round to it, they were faced with the very hostile government, and so it was practically too late to really get going.
B.C. Well, it is slightly more complex than that. It relates to one of the issues there still is at a European level and to the different elements within childcare. There is the fact that childcare as care is important for women but there is also the issue of the importance for children, in terms of their learning, development and other aspects, and I think it is one of the features that it's useful for you to look at, the extent that the European dimension has only been able to explore it from an equal opportunities perspective. And as you will have picked up from reading our reports, in particular our final report (...), we draw attention to the need for a much more holistic approach. It is problematic just to look at it from the point of view of care, and I think that's in terms of how Europe has influenced the agenda here. I think that did have quite a major influence, the work we did at a European level and the league tables we produced, it highlighted the whole issue for the incoming Labour government. But, I think in a sense that it too some time for that distinction to be ... for them to be fully aware of that, because I think some of the incoming government came in very much from the perspective of childcare as an equal opportunities European-profile issue. Clearly the issue of the strategy was very much recognition of the need to reconcile some of these things, but I think there is still quite a lot of work to be done on them. And at a European level, I think that remains ... - because there is no longer a childcare network and no vehicle to actually address this issue - it remains an unresolved issue in many senses.

W.B. What were the main obstacles you encountered in drawing up the reports on Britain?

B.C. The most obvious one was the separate statistics for education and care. And, in the UK, there was the additional dimension that the statistics I think were very poor, but they were ..., people were slightly defensive about them as well and then it was necessary to get them across the UK, and there were slightly different systems, slightly different ways of collecting the statistics. And it was fascinating, in a way, because I think that my report was the report to include Northern
Ireland. I was warned by statisticians of the difficulties and problems in actually including Northern Ireland against the others. But I did it because it was a commitment I made to people in Northern Ireland that I would actually enable people to see what their provision was like. So I did that, I think you could put caveats around the statistics, but you could still use them, so that was one of the major problems. I would say that government departments were very co-operative actually, in terms of helping me to get the statistics, because I think they thought it would be quite useful for them as well.

(laughs)

W.B. Well Yes, it was the first time such inclusive figures came out. But, to come back to the European level, why finally was there no childcare directive and why was the recommendation watered down?

B.C. Why no directive, well, why indeed, we did our best to say there should be a directive. (laughs) But I think that the recommendation was really quite strong and it did have an effect in quite a number of countries, in particular in some ways in those countries that were the best. The Danes, for example, who had quite high levels of provision, actually enjoyed getting everything up to recommendation levels.

(laughs) I think the main reason that we didn’t get the directive, and that the recommendation was watered down was that some national governments felt very strongly that there shouldn’t be one. They queried the competence at a European level ... that was a matter of public record in the UK ... in a meeting that took place at the time of the European elections, it was very clear that the then government was very concerned about the competence issue in relation to these things. W.B.

So there was very strong opposition from the British government?

B.C. From a number of governments actually, but that was a powerful source of opposition over it.

W.B. But there were other governments opposed to it?

B.C. In different ways and different directions, yes. And one of them was actually concerns from the Danish government over whether that would
water down their provision. That's also a general issue in relation to social policy directives.

**W.B.** Yes, like the concern in France over the recent maternity leave directive.

Yes, the Danes were very worried about that too.

**W.B.** The Childcare Network changed names to become the Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities, was that recognition of the importance of considering these issues as a whole?

**B.C.** The change of names was simply because there was a discussion within the Commission on family issues, and where they should actually come, and the question was should there be a separate network or should we be given responsibility for this. So we were given responsibility for it and the name changed accordingly.

**W.B.** So it was the Commission that was at the base of that?

**B.C.** Yes, it was an administrative thing really. It wasn't because of any deep-seated agenda.

**W.B.** So it wasn't actually a recognition of the family/work relationship?

**B.C.** Well yes it was about embedding childcare in work and family, which was a good thing, but, on the other hand, there was also the additional responsibility for care for older dependants, so... but, nevertheless, it actually had some rationale, you could put it that way I think. And it wasn't a major issue for us, but it did of course ... we still got referred to colloquially as the Childcare Network. The other name was incredibly long, I mean, I can't even remember it half of the time (laughs) so we just remained the Childcare network. What you may be interested to know, and it may not be in your questions but you might be interested to know looking at the network, we are about to launch a magazine called 'Children in Europe' which has been developed by a number of those involved in the old network. It's a consortium of 7 countries initially, and the editor will be Peter Moss. We have here the English-language rights for the new magazine and we furnished the assistance, the editorial assistance, and its being launched in
September, the first week in September, in Scotland actually and we've got a contract for the first two issues, and we'll take it from there. It's actually a charge magazine, it's not free. (...) So it's an interesting aftermath, and it demonstrates one of the reasons, I think, for our success, that is the strength of the network. 4 or 5 years after its demise actually having a magazine says something about what we were like as a network.

W.B. You did do an amazing amount of work.

B.C. (laughs) yes. The Commission is no longer using networks, I think one or two have still lingered on -their legal network is the only one I know about, so they have moved away from that.

W.B. That was another question I was going to ask you later on. Why did the network fold up? I read in another report from the network 'Women in Decision Making' that the British member was very ... sort of bitter about that.

B.C. Well they abolished most of their networks basically, that's what actually happened, and it did cause a lot of people to raise their eyebrows at the time. I should say that we felt that we had actually been a network for 10 years and it was an issue for us. Did they wish to review it? Did they wish us to continue? Did they wish to create others? But in the event it didn't come to that. They just did it. I think they probably felt that some networks were more successful than others, I think that was perhaps one of the issues, and it was time to review the role of networks as they'd had them for 10 or 12 years.

W.B. Maybe they could have reviewed them first, before closing them.

B.C. (laughs) Well, maybe, yes.

W.B. Was it very sudden for you? Because I read most of the reports right up practically until the end and there was no mention of this.

B.C. No. We knew this would come up because we worked through these 2 or 3-year contracts and we thought it was right that they did review our network. Then we got caught up in this wider agenda of actually doing it. But we do feel there is gap now and that is why we are producing the magazine, in a sense, because we feel that some of the
data that's been ... there's always a problem of data at a European level, where it relied on Member-States, national governments, putting it in.

**W.B.** It is very difficult to compare.

**B.C.** Yes, and we think that we actually had rather a good system, a good understanding of it. It does take years working on it to have an understanding of each other's systems and it's just kind of left a big yawning gap in that area. But it is caught up with the Commission's uncertainty over social policy. They've now expressed concern to strengthen their social policy dimension but they're dealing with it through things like the social policy forum and various other means. And I think that the Commission became very involved as well in enlargement and as you enlarge of course the difficulties increase, and networks have to enlarge, and I think there were issues about how one did it. So, that's what happened to it.

**W.B.** What kind of delays are we talking about? Did they say "You're closing up in 3 months?"

**B.C.** I can't remember exactly, but I think we knew during the last year. (...)

**W.B.** What were the links and relations between the different networks - 'Women and Employment', 'family and work' and 'The European Observatory on the Family'? Were there problems of overlapping, or disagreement?

**B.C.** No, we didn't have as much contact perhaps as we should have had, but there were some all-network meetings to which the co-ordinators and some members were invited. I think that those in charge of the networks, as it were, within the Commission were quite on the ball, really, making sure they didn't get two networks doing the same thing, for the most part, because there could have been masses of problems of that kind. In relation to those that came under the unit, anyway, that would be true. I think perhaps the family observatory was slightly different and did it's own thing, I mean I don't think it duplicated, but I think it ...we could have benefited from closer contact. But, one of the interesting things when you actually have networks of
people outwith an organisation, outwith the Commission, is in a sense that they are freer to make their own links, so I don't think you get the sort of turf issues that you get when you work within the same institution when you are responsible for things that might slightly overlap. We didn't see turf issues. So I don't think it was a great problem.

W.B. Were there, for example, meetings between the British experts belonging to the different networks?

B.C. Yes there were, not that much, and I think there was some discussion about having more. But, actually, since everyone did an awful lot, and if you spend too much time talking about what your doing you don't have time to do it.

W.B. There did seem to be a slightly different perspective between the British representative at the family observatory and the childcare network.

B.C. I don't think that was a major issue, I think some of these things could all benefit from improvement. I think one of the things we were successful at on the network was I think we did a very good job linking up with the structural funds. I was commissioned by the network and by the Commission to look at the issue of childcare in relation to the structural funds. It was one of the things we didn't blow our trumpets about perhaps, which was we contributed to applications in relation to childcare that came within the structural funds in a very valuable way I think. And that was one of the mainstream issues that I feel was one of the most significant things we did. We met up with work we did on rural childcare in particular. So there were particular reasons for which it was easier perhaps to do more in some rural areas.

W.B. Some places in Scotland benefited.

B.C. Yes, I think we were quite good at spotting those things, but actually, it was us actually that spotted those - those opportunities to jump across.

W.B. What do you think could be said globally about the influence of the network on policy in the UK?
B.C. Well I think it did play a significant role in raising the profile of childcare, in particular from an equal opportunities perspective. I think it helped put it on the agenda politically and contributed to the incoming government's commitment to actually doing more about it. I think it contributed very directly to the issue of the childcare strategy, because that was one of the recommendations, and the recommendation came from our work. And I suppose it would have been rather nice, thinking about the continuation of the network, to be able to report what had happened in relation to the childcare strategy, the developments and so on. I think it is fair to say that some of these things were taken up and have been worked on, but it would have been good to have some role actually independently reporting on some of that. So occasionally, yes, I do actually feel my pen twitching to actually write a synopsis and now it has contributed to the magazine we are producing. So it will be good to get ...

B.C. The pen twitching? (laughs) Related to that, since 1997, have things changed fundamentally?

B.C. I think there has been a very fundamental change in the profile of the issue, in the resources that have been put in, in the adoption of the strategy. That isn't to say that I think everything has been solved by any stretch of the imagination. I am now involved in ... what was the Scottish Childcare Board that has now become ... I think ... in another parallel move to the change of title for the network, it's gone from a quite catchy name to a very obscure name that I can't remember either (laughs) ... it is chaired by the Minister and supposed to inform the strategic thinking behind it, and I think that there are some pretty fundamental strategic issues which still have to be really enacted upon, and which ..., to anticipate your next question, the most significant would be the issue of education to care, in terms of conditions and training in relation to producing a more integrated service. And that remains the issue which is the most difficult to be grasped. But, you may be interested to know that Peter Moss and myself, and Pat Petrie, have recently been awarded an ERSC grant - to have a comparative look
at children’s services in England, Scotland and Sweden. We have sort of consistently advocated to the government here, to the Scottish Executive in Scotland and elsewhere, that Sweden is quite a useful country to look at. Because they do have integrated services under education and therefore it is quite useful to discuss and see what that makes possible and what happens in relation to that. And I think that it is when you look at what is happening in Sweden that you realise we still have quite a journey to go. But in Scotland we have this interesting sort of development, thinking about Sweden, in terms of there is a facility, there’s a deal that is being looked at in terms of teachers’ pay and conditions which does provide some basis for actually being able to go further and looking at the school day, in a way that the Swedes did, that’s one of the issues, and I suppose that one of the other issues that is still around, apart from that, in terms of some of the things that we advocated, because there were lots of other things, well two other things really I suppose - there’s the issue of where childcare sits in relation to work and family generally, and, where men come in relation to it and I think whilst there has been a lot of talk about men and childcare, we haven’t necessarily seen any real action to actually involve men more in childcare. We still in Scotland have a group ‘Men in Childcare’ which received not a penny from any source, so it just facilitates some of those that are interested. And the issue of paid parental leave which is clearly absolutely fundamental and I think that, looking at provisions that the government come up with - and I hope they are not just going to do just a sort of straightforward extension of maternity leave - what they’re revealing is the extent to which they haven’t taken on board the issues about men and children for which we will push very hard.

B.C. I will have to finish soon. So if you have any really pressing questions?

W.B. Well there is the question of the kind of provision. You always advocated public provision and what we are getting now is a lot less about public provision, but I haven’t seen anything written about this
choice. There is a lot about partnerships and private provision and so on, but there is not a lot written about public provision - that I have seen. And then there is the question of the use of reception classes.

B.C. There has clearly been an increase in public provision, there has been an overall increase in provision, and I think it does still remain an issue that is involved with this divide between education and care. The increase in public provision has come largely, but not solely, in terms of nursery education, there has been a vast increase there. And the care has tended to come more from the private sector, though not solely. Some authorities have been seeking to develop this - like Stirling, for example. And, I think that it is a bit open still in terms of people's thinking, as to what extent it should be authorities like Stirling that are showing us the way. I would say, I think there is certainly a role for other providers - particularly for meeting parents' particular requirements for provision and other things. And I think there is room for facilitating much more parent action over childcare. But I would still expect that the most logical cost-effective system we could have, to be honest, would be to extend public nursery provision to actually provide care as well, in the most cost-effective way.

W.B. But are things improving in that way? Because it would seem that an awful lot of children are going into reception classes.

B.C. Yes, in relation to nursery education, it has always been less of a problem in Scotland, of course as you'll know anyway, because we've never had the large numbers that there are, particularly in Wales, but in England too ... But there is over this issue, a debate that we in this agency have tried to get started over at what age children should start school. I don't know if you have seen the booklet we did with the Scottish Council Foundation, called 'Families and learning'. I'll give you a copy of this. Do you have one last question?

W.B. I read that Peter Moss had said that children were being forgotten to a certain extent in the childcare policy today. Would you agree with this? That it's more about business, maybe a bit about women ...
**B.C.** I think it's a lot about education too. I think the failure is in bringing these strands together, that's where the failure comes, things still tending to be addressed in different departments in different ways. More administrative integration of departments within education would certainly facilitate a more global approach. I think there is still a journey to be undertaken.

**W.B.** And administratively, how do you think this could be achieved?

**B.C.** Some authorities like Stirling are showing very clearly what we can actually do at local authority level, and they have publicly said that it would be good to see that happening in the Scottish Executive for example. But I think that in the Scottish Executive they think they have made a lot of progress in relation to that, and I think that is true. But, nevertheless, I think that issues like training and initial qualification need to be looked at. And I think Peter's remark might have referred to the European level, because there is a big gap at the European level. Or, rather, there are 2 gaps, one is the overall taking forward of the competence that they have demonstrated they have in this area, you know, what happened to the childcare recommendation. They are supposed to be reviewing what has happened in relation to the recommendation, what are they going to do over that. And these are issues we need to raise, what are they going to do over that? And the second one, I think, is that unfortunately they have had to deal with this just from an equal opportunities perspective and not from a children's perspective. And we've argued consistently that actually it's quite perverse to say that makes it more difficult for member states. We think that member states' national policies are probably undermined by the gap ...There are all these funding programmes that support just care, for example. You can get money for that, but not for having a more integrated approach. And that undermines the approach that has been taken in many member states.

**W.B.** And nationally, do you think there should be a Minister for Children, for example? Do you think that is part of the solution?
B.C. We did have one in Scotland, but now he has gone back to being Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs. (laughs) He still has responsibility for children, and if you’ve read our last newsletter, you’ll see him quoted as saying, “Every Minister should be a Minister for Children.” (laughs) Well I’m afraid that’s got to be it.
### Annexe 2

**Questionnaire**

**Women’s employment and childcare in Britain (1979-1999)**

### I. Maternity and Employment

1. **Please fill in for each child.** (If you have more than 3 children, please fill in for first three).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Age today</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Were you in paid employment at birth?</th>
<th>Maternity leave</th>
<th>How long did you remain out of paid employment? (if longer than maternity leave)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1st   |           |     | □ yes  
         □ no | □ yes  
         Number of months:  
         % wage:  
         □ no | |
| 2nd   |           |     | □ yes  
         □ no | □ yes  
         Number of months:  
         % wage:  
         □ no | |
| 3rd   |           |     | □ yes  
         □ no | □ yes  
         Number of months:  
         % wage:  
         □ no | |

2. If you left paid employment for some time after the birth of your child(ren). (If you did not, go directly to question 3).

A) **For what reasons?** (You can choose several answers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1st child</th>
<th>2nd child</th>
<th>3rd child</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because you felt it was better for the child/children?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because you could not find suitable childcare?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You had doubts about the quality of the care offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain these doubts:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities were too far away from your home to be convenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please specify travelling times:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory solutions were too expensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please specify expense involved if possible.</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
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</table>
### B) Would your choice have been different (choose the most appropriate answer)

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<th>1st child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>if high-quality childcare had been available</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if high-quality childcare had been available near at hand</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>if high-quality childcare had been available near at hand at a reasonable price.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify what price you would have considered as reasonable</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
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</table>

### 3. If you went back to work after maternity leave or after a very brief interruption:

**A) For what reasons did you go back to work? (Several answers possible)**

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<th>1st child</th>
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<th>3rd child</th>
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<tr>
<td>because you liked your job?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>for financial reasons?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>not to harm your career</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because you didn’t like staying at home</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>other reasons</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>please specify:</td>
<td>☐</td>
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**B) Did you go on working full-time?**

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<td>☐ yes</td>
<td>☐ yes</td>
<td>☐ yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ no</td>
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**Number of hours per week?:**

**C) Did you go part-time?**

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<th>1st child</th>
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<td>☐ yes</td>
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<td>☐ no</td>
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**Number of hours per week?:**

**D) What kind of childcare solutions were available for you? (Several answers possible)**

- Sharing with Partner.
- Family (grandparents etc.)
- Neighbours/Friends.
- Childminder.

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</table>
Local Authority Nursery □ □ □
Private nursery □ □ □
Nanny □ □ □
Other. Please specify:

E) What childcare solution(s) did you adopt?

1st child:

2nd child:

3rd child:

F) Was the solution chosen convenient?

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<th>1st child</th>
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<tr>
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<td>□ no</td>
<td>□ no</td>
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Please specify advantages and disadvantages.

G) Was the solution adopted the one you preferred?

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<th>1st child</th>
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<th>3rd child</th>
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<td>□ yes</td>
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<td>□ no</td>
<td>□ no</td>
<td>□ no</td>
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</table>

H) If not, what would you have preferred?

1st child: Why?

2nd child: Why?

3rd child: Why?
I) a) What did your childcare cost per week?
   With one child: £
   With two children: £
   With three children: £

b) Percentage of your wage (roughly)?
   With one child;
   With two children:
   With three children:

J) If you have more than one child. Was it easy to find compatible childcare provision?
   With two children:
   □ yes
   □ no
   Please explain difficulties:

   With three children:
   □ yes
   □ no
   Please explain difficulties:
II. Your opinion on different kinds of childcare for children under three

4. a) Class the following. Number from 1 to 8 in order of preference.

☐ Mother at home.
☐ Sharing with Partner.
☐ Family (grandparents etc.)
☐ Neighbours or friends
☐ Childminder
☐ Local Authority Nursery
☐ Private nursery
☐ Nanny
☐ Other. Please specify:

b) Please explain your 1st preference

III. Nursery education

5. A)(Several answers possible) Did your 1st child 2nd child 3rd child

Start school at 5
Start school at 4 in a reception class
Start school at 4 in a nursery class
Go to a local authority nursery school at 4
Go to a local authority nursery school before 4. Please specify age:
Go to a private nursery school at 4
Go to a private nursery school before 4 Please specify age.
Go to a play group at 4
6.a) Did you live in one of the pilot areas for the nursery voucher system in 1996-97?

☐ yes
☐ no

b) If so, did you benefit from the nursery voucher system during the test period 1996-97?

☐ yes
Did it change anything for you? ☐ yes
☐ no

Please specify:

☐ no

7. If you live in Scotland
a) did you benefit from the nursery voucher system in 1997-98?

☐ yes
Did it change anything for you? Please specify:

☐ no

Why not?
III. Your feelings

8. If you did go back to work after maternity leave or a very short break after the birth of your child/children (If not go directly to question 9)

a) Did you feel those around you approved of your going back to work?

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b) Did you feel confident before going back to work that juggling a career and family responsibilities would be easy?

□ yes
□ no

c) Once back at work after the birth of your child/children, did you feel (several answers possible)

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Other feelings. Please explain:

9. If you gave up paid employment to stay at home (if not go to question 10)

a) after the birth of your did you feel
    (several answers possible)
satisfied □ □ □
frustrated □ □ □
you were doing the right thing □ □ □
you had made the wrong choice □ □ □
Other feelings. Please explain:

IV. Working Conditions

10. At work, did you meet with understanding as regards your new responsibilities as a mother? (if you did not remain in paid employment, go directly to question 12).

□ yes
   In what ways?:

□ no

11. Did you benefit from any measures specifically designed to help parents conciliate family life and professional responsibilities?
   □ yes
   Please specify:
V. Family life

12. If you were living with a partner when your children were under 5 (if not go directly to question 13)
   a) Did your partner share household tasks and childcare with you? Would you say (several answers possible)
      □ you and your partner shared most tasks fifty/fifty
      □ your partner helped a bit with the housework
      □ your partner helped a bit with the children
      □ your partner was working too long hours to help much at home
      □ your partner did nothing to help at home
      □ your partner played with your child/children
      □ your partner looked after the children more than you did
      □ your partner did more housework than you did

   b) Who made the decisions on childcare?
      □ you alone
      □ your partner
      □ both of you

   c) Who paid?
      you alone
      □ your partner
      □ both of you

13. If you were a single parent with children under 5
   a) Did you benefit from any allowances?
      □ yes
      Please specify type(s) of allowance:

      □ no

   b) Was it possible to remain in paid employment and benefit from this/these allowances?
      □ yes

      □ no

   c) Financially speaking was it better for you to stay in paid employment
      □ yes
VI. Future developments

14. Are you aware of the recent measures taken by the present government in the field of childcare?
   □ yes
   □ no
   Can you name any?:

15. Do you think these measures might improve life for parents?
   □ yes
   □ no
   Please explain your answer:

16. Do you think (several answers possible)
   □ childcare is a question that only concerns parents
   □ childcare is a question that concerns society as a whole
   □ the state should help parents to combine their careers and family responsibilities
   □ the state should provide nursery education for all children aged 4
   □ the state should provide nursery education for all children aged 3 and 4
   □ the state should provide nursery education only for children in need
   □ the state should let private and voluntary providers take care of nursery education
   □ nursery education should be provided by different providers: public, private and voluntary

17. What measures do you think would best help parents conciliate their careers and family responsibilities? (Very important)
VII Personal data

This data is important and will help with the processing of the questionnaires. All information will be treated as strictly confidential.

18. Age:

19. Occupation today:
   □ unemployed
   □ student
   □ housewife
   □ paid employment
   □ self-employed

If you are in paid employment or self-employed please specify profession:

20. Number of working hours (if in paid employment):

21. Your Income bracket (if in paid employment): £

22. Are you
   
   married?
   a single parent?
   unmarried living with a partner?

23. If you are living with a partner (married or not)

Income bracket of your partner:

Profession of your partner:

24. Number of children:

25. Age(s) of child(ren):
   1st:
   2nd:
   3rd:

26. Your age when you had
1st child:
2nd child:
3rd child:

26. Qualifications:
academic:
vocational:

27. Occupation before having children:
(if different from today)

28. Residence
town
big city
rural area
suburban area

29. Housing
tenant in rented flat
owner-occupier in flat
tenant in council house
tenant in terraced house
owner-occupier in terraced house
tenant in semi-detached house
owner-occupier in semi-detached house
tenant in detached house
owner-occupier in detached house
Annexe 3

Entretiens avec mères

(Le personnel qui parle sont identifiés par leurs initiales, les initiales W.B. indiquent qu’il s’agit de l’interviewer. Tous les noms des personnes interviewées ici sont fictifs.)

Entretien N°1

Isabelle Hamilton
enseignante, 40 ans, 2 enfants (3 et 12 ans), élevés en Grande-Bretagne et France

(Après avoir rempli le questionnaire et en avoir discuter avec nous, Mme Hamilton a préféré enregistrer son propre témoignage plutôt que de répondre question par question).

As a result of the lack of childcare in Britain, I am back living in France, as here I can have a good job and look after my children satisfactorily. However, my husband is still working in London where he has a good job as an editor for a paper. But we are split up as a family.

When I got married I was 25, I had a good job at the BBC, as a language assistant. Then, shortly after we married, I took on a job with a Civil Engineering Consultancy. I was initially taken on to translate and prepare proposals, reports and other such documents from French into English, for the IMF, the World Bank and other such institutions. So everything had to be of a very high standard. Then, after a few months, I was promoted to Manager, Manageress, of the editorial department, with 7 translators and editors, under my orders. It was a very satisfying job and I was earning £13 000 a year, which was a good salary 15 years ago.
I was in fact earning more than my husband who was then still working for the BBC.

The problems started when I had my first child. Shortly after becoming pregnant, I found out there was an acute shortage of childminders in Westminster. I was told that the options in terms of childcare were either a private crèche - £200 a week for full-time care and no tax relief. Otherwise, there were registered minders, and registration is a good thing, normally they come under the control of the relevant council, there are police checks etc., but the downside is that you sometimes get the impression you are 'bordering on the social case' with social workers and so on. A childminder cost about £40 a week, that is 15 years ago again, and there was no tax relief either - that was not an option in Britain at the time - it might be now for some. But, anyway, as there were no childminders, or not enough, I couldn't find one near our home.

I went back to work when my daughter was 6 months old and the nearest childminder I could find was in Camden where I worked. That meant to take her to the childminder, I had to travel 45 minutes by tube, then there was a 10-minute walk to the block of flats where she lived and then half an hour's walk to work, as there were no direct bus or tube lines. Then, doing the sort of work I was doing, it was not always just 9 to 5. When there were deadlines, and there always were, there was the problem of overtime to see the projects through. And it just got more and more difficult. Because I was not able to do much overtime, the firm and the people under my orders began to question my status as manageress. They said I was no longer the person I had been, I couldn't deliver the goods, because I couldn't be there to supervise from A to Z any more.

As it happened, the company had then to move its head-office and we were all made redundant within the year, but I would probably have been asked to take a step down. Despite equal opportunities legislation,
there are ways of making a person step down in a private company. Pressure can be applied, and pressure was applied. In fact at first I was relieved when I was made redundant. Because things had got worse. We had to move as we could not afford a house in Westminster. So the transport problem got even worse. I had to take the suburban train with my daughter because I couldn’t find a childminder in S.E. London either at first. Eventually I found a childminder in Greenwich where we lived, except, like most childminders she wanted an 8 to 6 day and they don’t like to have children any later, which I can understand. But 8 to 6 is impossible when you are commuting to central London - something has to give. And with childminders you don’t have the system of cover you have with a crèche or a nursery. When minders go on holiday for example. My second childminder went on holiday to the West Indies, and so she went for 5 weeks, and so I had to find a replacement. The replacements I found were registered but some of them were not at all adequate. I don’t know how they were selected and passed by the social services. In one case I had an awful experience I had to go to this very run-down estate and leave my daughter in a house that was filthy, with a garden like a rubbish tip. I collected my daughter who was just under 2, stinking of cigarettes. The minder was not fit to look after young children, she could barely read and she suffered from acute diabetes, in fact she could barely stand up, and yet she had been passed by the social services. I got more and more distressed.

I found a new job but I had to resign, what with all these problems with replacement childminders and then my childminder came back, but she moved. So I often couldn’t get to work on time, I couldn’t concentrate on my work... In fact I was so exhausted, I actually had a nervous breakdown, I had panic attacks, I became agoraphobic, I was fearful for my child, almost paranoid. In the end I was under medication and no longer able to work at all. And this lasted for about 2 years during which time I did some free-lance translation from home. I managed to make
some pocket-money, but nothing commensurate with the salary I had before and not the same responsibility and kudos.

Eventually I went back to the BBC, to the world service, but the irony is, as I went back part-time -which was ideal for childcare as I wasn't so dependent on childminders and I managed to work out a solution with another part-time mother who worked at the BBC too, and the whole thing worked - the downside was that as a part-timer I was more vulnerable to cutbacks. And eventually, after about ... 18 months my hours were reduced and nothing could be done as part-timers are not protected by legislation. So that was it. I eventually found that my train fares almost exceed the meagre amount of money I was getting from the BBC. It had a very distressing effect on us as a family, as a couple. It was very negative for my self-image.

In education, teachers encourage girls at school, to wok hard, and they often do better than boys in fact. You can't bring children up with this sort of message and then say because you have got married and have children you suddenly have to change your line of conduct and forget about the past. When you've been brought up to try hard, to do challenging things intellectually, you can't suddenly be satisfied with reading women's magazines and preparing dinner for your husband. A lot of women end up going ... well, more or less mad, on that regime.

Eventually I got frustrated and started looking around for other things I could do, feeling my job at the BBC would one day disappear with the gradual privatisation of parts of the BBC. This is when I hit on the idea of trying for the *agrégation*. I could prepare it with the *CNED*. I did that for a year and thought it would be satisfying from an intellectual point of view, at least, even if I don't pass. I passed and then discovered, rather to my horror, that I had to do a year's training in France. But having passed, I thought well I might as well go the whole hog.
So, I went back to France for a year, and it was a real revelation. Schools started at 8:45 and finished at 6:45, and before and after, there was a childcare service, the children were looked after by teachers or trained play leaders. I also found while I was back in France that people actually thought it was a good thing working, I enjoyed more esteem. There was not the silent reproach you feel in Britain, the way people look at you if you do work, thinking ‘Oh, your poor children, poor things’.

That is a real problem in Britain, the attitude to mothers who work. You often hear words like ‘selfish’, ‘latchkey children’. There was pressure from my in-laws. There was no interest whatsoever in my work. All they would say is you won’t have to work much longer because your husband is doing all right and so he can support you. And I was certainly never offered any help from anyone, except from my parents, who were in France.

When there are problems with childminders. The rallying cry is, ‘It’s the mother’s fault’ because she is at work. I had this feeling of having no moral support. In France, it’s normal to work and people are more supportive. In France I found that people took it for granted that if you had an education, you should do something, you know, interesting. So I was absolutely amazed when I came back to France with my daughter, was also amazed to see that you got tax relief for childcare, but I found out more about that later when I had my second child. But at that time I only had my daughter to worry about and school hours were fine.

But, after my year’s training I went back to Britain. My husband had stayed there and it wasn’t very nice being split up especially with a small child. I became pregnant with my son and so my return to England coincided with a phase during which I had a young child at home. Initially I decided I wouldn’t go back to work until my son was a year old. I had waited a long time for him and to enjoy his early childhood. After a year, however, when I tried to find a job again, my
problems really started again. There were no council crèches, except for social cases, there were so few of them. Private nurseries cost £125, and no tax relief. A childminder cost about £60 a week. And with 2 children, things are more complicated. My daughter started school at 9 and finished at 3.30. She was not old enough to go alone, and so I had also to find a childminder to take my daughter to school, collect her and bring her home. So all that meant about £500 a month, again no tax relief and a lot of running around. And the nurseries don't stay open any longer than childminders.

Because I had not been working in the UK, employers weren't interested in my qualifications, the *agrégation* didn't mean much to anyone. I went for interviews and was offered a job in a grammar school, teaching French. But, with the children, I couldn't do the hours required and I had to turn the job down. Then I thought I could work in Adult Education. I went for an interview and I was selected, but the pay was meagre, £30 for a 3-hour session once a week. It wasn't much, but I thought at least no childcare would be necessary and there would be no taxes. However, the particular course I was to teach didn't materialise. So there was only one session. I got £30 just for turning up, although they took off an emergency tax as I had been previously working abroad. And it wasn't just me. There were 5 other women with small children in my street, within 6 months of going back to work, they had all resigned or been made to resign.

One woman was a senior chartered accountant, she was head of department, money was no problem. She could afford quality childcare, but found it too stressful running to and fro. She found it so hard, that after 6 months, she could no longer cope. The only crèche she could find was several miles from her home and her work.

Another woman was a scientist, she was doing a PhD. For her the problem was the expense, she couldn't go on with her research and pay
for adequate childcare. So she gave up her studies and stayed at home, doing some cooking from home for private functions.

Another was a teacher, she found the travelling too hard. She went on longer than the others, she gave up after a year. But, actually hers was a sort of success story. She then started a teacher-recruitment agency from home. She was successful but thought it was a terrible struggle trying to work and all the rest ...

All these women had been educated to degree level or more. In this group of depressed women, I was actually more prepared as it was my second baby, for the others, it was their first and it came as a shock. We all felt a deep sense of frustration.

In my case things got even more depressing. In the meantime, my husband had become an executive, he had often to go off on missions and work late at night. I felt we had lost out, careerwise and familywise. My husband didn't have much choice either, he was obliged to work long hours to support the rest of the family and get up the professional ladder.

I was getting news from friends in France, they were doing well in their careers - barristers, doctors, lecturers etc. I thought what am I here? I knew I had a better chance in France, so I applied for a job as a lecturer. I knew childcare would be easier in France, and sure enough, I managed to register my son in a council crèche. The facilities were excellent and there was real backup. I felt happy leaving my child. The people who looked after him were not just professionals, they had constant training. My son was happy, he wasn't wasting his time, there were lots of activities, it was good to see him develop. I could drop him off at 8 and collect him at 6.30 if necessary. And it was easier to find casual people to look after the children too. They don't have to be registered, I could pay a neighbour. For my daughter, the school hours were longer,
which may be a drawback, but with one day off a week, it was easier for me to manage. One day off a week is easier to negotiate. I also found I was getting tax relief on childcare and on having children. You don’t get that in Britain, my husband was just getting the married person’s allowance. Child benefit is about equivalent in Britain and France, but with extra tax relief and benefits it is much better for parents in France. What’s more when I was pregnant with my son, I got an allowance of about £100 a month, from the 4th month of pregnancy. You get help all the way, in Britain you get no help at all. I also benefited from paid parental leave, whereas in Britain you don’t get a penny. In France, the whole structure is much better adapted to working women.

In Britain, despite Tony Blair’s repeated promises, what reforms there are, are targeted at those who are a burden on social security. There have been improvements, especially for the poorest, but you don’t get a choice. In France, women who want to stay at home can, they get an allowance.

But the problem is, my husband and I are again living apart and we only get together during the holidays. It is the situation for working women in Britain that has caused me to come here and until that problem is sold, as long as there is no childcare and no support, I can’t see myself going back.
Mature students
Ces entretiens ont eu lieu à Anglia Polytechnic University. En raison des emplois du temps chargés de ces femmes, les entretiens ont eu lieu à 2 ou à 3.

Entretien N°2

Sheila Williams (45, une fille 14 ans)
and Alice Johnson (42 ans, une fille 15 ans, un garçon 13 ans)

A.J. My name is Alice and by profession I’m a court reporter. I went back to work 3 weeks after my first child was born.

W.B. 3 weeks?
A.J. Because, by virtue of what I was doing, it takes years to establish your name and 2 minutes to lose it. I went back purely half a day a week because I said to the people I was sub-contracting to, « I am prepared to come back for half a day a week ». Now, it may have been that I wasn’t required for half a day a week but if I was, I was available for that, so the family didn’t suffer, I still had a lot of contact with Catherine, and I built up those hours and those days as first my daughter and then my son grew up.

W.B. And did you get any maternity leave?
A.J. No! I was self-employed so it doesn’t ... And obviously that’s another reason for going back. I couldn’t afford to stay at home if I wanted to maintain the standard of living that I had at the time.

W.B. Would you have preferred to stay at home?
A.J. No. It was my choice. I could have given up work and then tried to get back in again, at some future date. But, at the end of the day, I was 25, I had an established career, and I didn’t want to give it up, but, having said that, if I’d had a conventional job, 9 to 5, I wouldn’t have done what I did. I was in a very fortunate position, I had options, and I
was working for companies that were prepared to work with me along those lines. I am, was, in a unique situation.

**W.B.** (to **S.W.**) And what about you? What was your experience at the birth of your children?

**S.W.** To a certain degree I had flexibility. I didn’t realise this so much at the time, but with hindsight, and even listening to you Alice ... I realise I had a tremendous amount of flexibility. I worked in the Health Service, in administration, and straight away I had the right to return after leave as I had been working there a long time. I was thinking about that the other day when I was answering your survey, I actually went on leave in April and I didn’t have to go back until the following January.

**W.B.** And was this paid maternity leave?

**S.W.** This was paid maternity leave. My daughter was born in 1984 so from that point of view I was lucky in that respect. And you said, Alice, that you went back 3 weeks after, I could no more have imagined going back 3 weeks after than flying in the air.

**A.J.** But then again I didn’t particularly view it as going back to work because it was only half a day. Yes, I then had reports to produce after, but if I’d had to go back 5 days a week, there was no question, I wouldn’t have done it. It was purely by virtue of what I was that I was able to do it. Or, I couldn’t have done it. One, because I wouldn’t have had the stamina, and I wouldn’t have had the inclination.

**W.B.** And you didn’t have the choice of having maternity leave.

**A.J.** No, I didn’t have the choice. And if I hadn’t gone back sooner rather than later, I mean the options for getting back in with the clients I had had would have been that much reduced, so it would have been a very retrograde step, to have stayed out for 6 months, say 6 months.

**S.W.** Well as it was for me going back after 7 months, you do tend to lose your confidence and I remember having to really put everything together after leaving this role for 6 or 7 months. I think the saving grace was that I really wanted to go back to work, I mean much as I enjoyed those first months at home, I could not envisage staying at home, being a full-time mother. I just couldn’t do that. So I suppose
that gave me the impetus, I never lost contact with work. The only problem, and it was the childcare, because back in '84 there wasn't ... it wasn't that ... obvious ... You didn't have ... I thought that I would go along the route of having a childminder. That's what I was looking for. I thought of having a nanny at home, but I didn't actually want somebody living in my house. And where I lived, sort of out of Cambridge, I didn't think it was going to be terribly easy to get somebody to come and stay at my house. I didn't want an au pair, because I wanted somebody qualified. So already my ... options were reduced. So I thought, I've got to find a social minder. So I approached social services but I realised very quickly through my investigations that in actual fact you ... you were just given a list of names and you went and had an interview yourself with the people.

**W.B.** With no advice?

**S.W.** With no advice and there were no ... I mean I didn't know the history of these people, they could have told me a whole pack of lies, I wouldn't have known what they were telling me, if it was true or not. And, in fact, I did have a slightly unsettling experience with the first childminder I left my daughter with. I arrived one morning and the other... At that time a childminder could only have three children. I don't know if that's changed. Anyway, I arrived that morning and it was a very suitable childminding situation, it was right behind where I worked, physically, geographically, and I had done the best vetting I could have done, I mean, bearing in mind that, it's only with hindsight that you realise that you could perhaps ask other questions. And I also worked on instinct, I would do things like dropping back on the childminder unexpectedly, I mean I don't know what it was about the way I was functioning, but I just didn't have any guidelines given to me, so I had to create my own. And one day I arrived and, the other childminder, sorry, the other mother, or parent of the other child, who actually worked in the health service as well, was withdrawing her child and I could not get out of her why she was doing that. Anyway, I went in to the childminder and I asked her and I couldn't, I couldn't understand
what the problem was, but I started to feel uncomfortable and I ... Anyway, I left my daughter there for the morning and I couldn’t work, I just couldn’t work, I thought there is something not right here, this other woman wouldn’t tell me anything, the other mother, I tried to get in contact with her husband who worked in the health service ... and, the long and short of it was, I discussed it with my husband whom I actually worked with and we just went and picked up my daughter at midday and ... there was actually a suggestion or rumour of child abuse, and I just never ever got to the bottom of it. But what I did do was...

**W.B.** Did you contact the other mother again?

**S.W.** The mother wouldn’t elaborate, but from what I could gather, because in the end I rang up social services and I made such a nuisance of myself and in the end I said to the lady, «Would you put your child there?» and she said, «No». You felt you were dragging everything out of them, so I don’t really know what the story was, I had my daughter checked over, the doctor assured me there was nothing wrong, but it just ... I felt sick, I just felt sick, because I knew I had done everything I could do, that was possibly reasonable. But, to this day, I often wonder what it was, what it was all about, and ...

**W.B.** The other mother did have a strange attitude, not wanting to explain anything!

**S.W.** Well, I tried to find out, as I said, from the social worker. I pushed and I pushed and it was ... her child was a 4-year-old, so she was a pres-schooler, and it was something that the child had gone home to her parents and said, well I don’t ... I can’t begin to imagine what a 4-year-old would have said. I mean I just don’t know people who ... I don’t even know people who have been abused, you know on a personal level, so I don’t know what it was. In the end, I just sort of pushed it to one side I just got my daughter out of there. Fortunately, my second childminder, who I befriended, and that’s when I decided that if for any reason I couldn’t find the right person, I was going to give up work.

**W.B.** It was too nerve-wracking to go on like that?
S.W. Absolutely, I was obsessed with the whole thing. In fact, the few people, as you said ... one of the questions in your survey was did you feel guilty, were you made to feel guilty and it encompassed a whole series of questions about the people ... and yes, some people at work made me feel guilty for being there, because they were older than I was and they just couldn’t understand what I was doing back at work.

W.B. Did they make you feel this quite distinctly?

S.W. Oh yes, there was quite a lot of animosity and hostility from some people, but you know, you have to think things like this out for yourself, and then you’re either happy about it or you’re not.

W.B. But you did feel this disapproval?

S.W. Oh yes, and of course people were aware that I had taken my daughter away very quickly... I remember the day it happened ... taking her away from this place. And of course I had to go home then, as I’d got her with me and my mother wasn’t around. And they said of course it was bound to happen, so I felt even worse.

W.B. But, your second childminder was much better?

S.W. Oh, it was the complete opposite! I am friendly, we are friendly with Maggie until this day. She no longer child minds because she has gone on to other things, we have the same ideas on ..., not that discipline counted for my daughter, she was wonderful in that way - we think they’re wonderful don’t we (laughing) - I trusted her implicitly, I mean I could see that my daughter was ecstatically happy, in fact, sometimes she didn’t want to leave. It was a wonderful, wonderful situation. So when it works, it’s wonderful, when it doesn’t work it must be heart-wrenching.

W.B. (to S.W) So you had 2 very different experiences. (to A.J.) And what about you? How did you sort things out?

A.J. When it was just my daughter, we started off with a childminder but at that point I was still working minimum hours.

W.B. But what about finding the childminder? Did you have the same sort of experience as Sheila, with no advice etc.?
A.J. We tried placing ads, but didn't really have any luck in terms of the sort of person we were looking for. The childminder we eventually employed was obtained through our local community health centre, on a personal referee basis, and she was actually a foster carer as well, and an extremely happy household. Our problem was purely one of time frame, with the hours that sometimes even on my half day - my half day might function say four until eight at night. So she wasn't prepared - fair enough - to do a whole day of childminding with say one or two other children and then still have Catherine until eight o'clock at night. And then if the job that I was on ran over it became obvious that on a long term basis that this was not going to work. My son sort of appeared on the scene, sort of not that long after, I mean there's only 15 months between them, and at that point we then had to take stock and say, "Well a conventional childminder situation is just a no-go area".

W.B. What sort of hours was the childminder willing to work?

A.J. 9 to 6. We were living in Puckeridge and working in London principally; so for me to get home by 6, meant I had to leave London by 4. So at that point we had to look elsewhere. And then we really, just by sheer good fortune, struck on a little goldmine, by the name of Pauline. And literally, by just word of mouth, not qualified, but ... My childminder knew of the family, a very large village family, and so everyone knows everyone else, and she was unmarried, she still is, although she now has a son of her own, but by taking on Pauline, we also obtained an extended family for both of our two. Because neither my parents, nor my husband's parents lived locally. And Catherine and David had a good many years of a super family. They were really very very fortunate.

W.B. So that really worked out well.

A.J. That's right. And Pauline was prepared to come in whenever we needed her. So if I wasn't working one week, that was OK. And it worked. It really worked well until the children got a little bit older, by that I mean 9 -10, and at that point, we then started having slight problems which became more obvious. Because, by that time, Pauline had her own child, she's a single mother, em ... my two were getting
older and had their own interests, well then we get conflict, because Pauline's son, obviously she had to put first. Our two had their own diverging interests, ballet or swimming club, or this club or that club, and then we did start having problems. And in any event, our circumstances have changed because I'm here anyway. And for the last 2 years, prior to starting here, I, again because of the ludicrous hours, and albeit the children were that much older, I could no more ....

W.B. Cope?

A.J. Cope, yes, well it wasn't that ... I could cope, but I wasn't doing anything ...

W.B. Properly?

A.J. Properly. I wasn't doing anything properly. And albeit when you've got, you know, sort of babies and toddlers, the world around you says, "Things get easier as they get older". They jolly well don't. They get a darn sight more difficult.

S.W. Well they change, don't they? The parameters change constantly. You get into sort of a routine and suddenly you find it has changed again. One thing I ought to perhaps ... that you might find relevant, is that I went back part-time. I didn't go back full-time, so I don't know if that has a bearing. That made a difference. I then had my mornings for me, mind you I had to be very organised getting us all ready for work, but it was fine, I had a flexible employer, they didn't mind me coming in a bit later, whatever, and then I was able to go off in the afternoon and spend my time with my daughter so those who didn't like me being at work (laughter) ...

W.B. How many hours were you working?

S.W. I started off with 20 hours a week I remember, and then at some point, I think it was when my daughter went to school, I went up to 25 hours, because I was able to fit it in .... But at that point of course we no longer needed a childminder, except she did come in ... in fact I think she hung on to childminding until we left. And also I had a couple of miscarriages and so she thought there was going to be a follow on period and I think she'd have liked to have that but it never
materialised. And then she gave up, Camarra went to school and she gave up. She did hang on for us basically, but ... it was a two-way thing. The other thing I would say in respect to childcare is I played my part I think. I realised, from the childminder’s point of view, seeing how other parents treated her, she couldn’t ever guarantee an income, because they would just say they were coming and then they would pay her if they came, and then maybe they wouldn’t come, and it wasn’t a regular income for her and I realised ... she was a little sceptical when I first knew her, was I going to be like all the rest. So I said, when I realised this was happening, I suggested to her we have - we didn’t have a contract or anything - but I suggested that she have a regular amount of money, so we agreed ...

W.B. Was she registered?

S.W. Yes she was but taking about qualifications, she wasn’t qualified, other than that she was a mother herself and her two children were there. She and I had an agreement that I would pay her, and we agreed on an amount, and she would have to put it up when she saw fit, because she knew what the other childminders were doing. And I would also give her a retainer for holidays because she wasn’t covered in holiday periods. So, if I was going on holiday, or ... well certainly if I was going, because my daughter wouldn’t have been on holiday then, would she? But there were school holidays in terms of the playgroup that she took my daughter to. She took my daughter to a playgroup, so I would pay extra for that because that would be the entrance fee, so she always had ..., she knew she had a regular income, either a retainer or full time.

A.J. We did the same, otherwise I would have lost her.

W.B. Did other parents just pay as you go, more or less?

S.W. They were very erratic with their payment, even erratic with the child turning up or not. They didn’t treat her very well and I realised then that it couldn’t have been much fun.

A.J. We actually worked with Pauline on the basis that she wouldn’t take on any other children, because with the hours that I worked we
couldn't, couldn't do that. I mean Pauline actually, as we flitted ... when
the children were younger, babies and toddlers, she was at our home,
when we needed her. When they became older, then they would either
be at our home or at her home. But because of the hours that I worked,
and my husband, he was nine 'til 5, nine 'til six, 5 days a week, at that
point and we felt with our late arrivals home, because even my husband
couldn't get home before 7. Then for her to have our two for potentially,
as they got older, much longer days, we didn't want her taking other
children as well. So the only we could do it was to give her a regular
income - again no contract. We were very fortunate, I mean she was
super in all senses of the word, but it was never on a formal footing.
S.W. Maggie only had one other child, she was one of those people that
the social services used, if they had an emergency and had to place a
child somewhere and that I remember happening, one day I arrived and
there was a tiny baby there. But, Maggie's priority was ... were her
registered children. But as I recall really, there was only one other child,
which was good for my daughter. But then she went to playgroup from a
very early age and loved it, being an outgoing child. I mean, it also
perhaps goes down to the personality of your child.
W.B. So there was a playgroup locally?
S.W. Yes, I mean Maggie lived literally 2 minutes from where I worked
and the playgroup was just round the corner. And the other thing that I
used to do was that Maggie at the time didn't have a car. We became
friends, I would drop her off at the station if she wanted to go
somewhere. If she wanted to go to Peterborough for the day with her
family, she'd take Camarra with her. I mean, it was a day out for
everybody. And my daughter never went on a train except with Maggie,
just the same with the bus. So, it became more of a friendship, but I
always respected the fact that, we sort of respected the fact that we
were employer/employee, and she got her regular money and she knew
where she stood with us. So, somehow we had these 2 relationships
going on and in the middle of it all, the most important thing was, my
daughter was happy. And I was happy, I suppose that was quite important really, you know.

W.B. The two go together, I think.

S.W. The two go together, but if my daughter hadn't been happy, than I'd have given up work as I said earlier on. There was no doubt, so...

W.B. (to A.J.) Was there a playgroup, or anything like that, anywhere near you?

A.J. No. No. There are 3 now.

W.B. So things are changing?

A.J. Yes, there was nothing at the time.

W.B. That was at the beginning of the eighties, you said?

A.J. '84. Catherine was born in '84.

W.B. And there was nothing then.

A.J. Well, Catherine actually started at a playgroup at about 4, I think, David started a little bit earlier because Catherine was there, and that was a 10-mile drive.

W.B. And there was nothing nearer than that?

A.J. Nothing at all, and there was no pre-school either, there is now.

W.B. Locally?

A.J. Yes, in the village there are nurseries and there are pre-school groups.

W.B. Since when, do you know?

A.J. Pre-school, I would say in the last 6 years, nursery, in volume in the last 3 to 4 years.

W.B. So, it is a pretty recent development?

A.J. Yes, but that is partly because the area is vastly expanding because of Stanstead airport. So there are a lot of factors involved there. But it also meant of course, I mean Pauline did have a car, but because she was going backwards and forwards, that meant extra for the petrol etc., etc.

W.B. So she took the children to the playgroup?

A.J. (to S.W.) And as with you, both of the children went out on day trips and sort of family outings as well, with Pauline and her family. And
there was as much at home there as they were really down with my parents, or my husband's parents.

W.B. They actually had another family.

S.W. We were very lucky actually, when you think back on it, considering the way it could have turned out. Because with a nursery ... I know other people I worked with subsequently, who had childcare arrangements. They would go to this ... sort of general nursery and all the children would go. And I heard all sorts of things...I mean the children ... it is much better if it is family situation, if it's a home environment if it's a one to one almost, even if there is another child. Whereas a nursery situation...I mean, again it depends on the personality of the child.

W.B. And it depends on the nursery;

S.W. And the nursery, and how they relate to the children. Because you could have one room like this with lots of children, but you still need to give them individual attention.

A.J. That's right.

S.W. They still need to feel they belong.

A.J. That's right.

S.W. So much to think about now... I'm glad I don't have to ...(laughs)

W.B. And do you see things around you changing too?

S.W. Absolutely. Not only did I sit through people who subsequently had children and I could see what kind of arrangements they were making, I could see the changes, but in my village, tiny village outside of Cambridge, there is one of the best nurseries, in the village hall! I mean, it is well-known, I've talked to most people even here in Cambridge, sitting on a bus. 'And, where is your daughter?', 'Oh! that's where she is!'. If only! I mean that might have been quite different. There was one right in my village. But 10 years ago ...

W.B. And this nursery takes children from what age to what age?

S.W. Well obviously pre-schoolers, so .. and I think it starts at 3.

W.B. So they take them from three until they start primary school?
S.W. Which, when I think about my childminding, I mean my daughter started going from 7 months onwards until school time. I mean I don’t know, maybe, do nursery schools take them earlier nowadays?

A.J. Some of them take them from 0, but again you obviously went back part-time as well, more part-time than my part-time, but it wouldn’t have crossed my mind to have gone back full-time.

S.W. Me neither

A.J. From sort of 0 age. Having had the children ... I’ve been very fortunate, I’ve had the best of both worlds.

W.B. When did you begin to feel you couldn’t cope any longer?

A.J. 5 years ago. And I changed 2 years ago. I mean, part of it was ... I was going to say my own fault in as much as I became embroiled in my work. I’d moved from being a reporter and I bought myself into the partnership and took on a different role again and was there at a time when a lot of things started happening in the business, not just the company, but the business. And I was swept up in that and ultimately it meant I was doing 15-hour days in London. Well, (sigh) there came a point when it was just beyond common sense. I was always there, if there was something on at school, if there was a concert ...or parents’ things, because I could always work, work around it. But actually, physically, the hours were getting longer and longer and longer, plus transport, and I couldn’t see the end of this. And, it was obviously wearing on Pauline, the children were getting older, they had other things they wanted to do as well. By this time Catherine was coming up sort of 11 and ‘I don’t want a childminder any more’. I want to do x, y and z. I want to go and see so and so and so after school. I want so and so to come to me.

S.W. Certainly after-school activities from what I can remember, I mean I needed my afternoon off. Because, the moment I picked my daughter up, we were just going different places. You were on the go the whole time. And people used to say to me, ‘Have a nice afternoon off’, but it was as busy in the afternoon as it was in the morning.
W.B. So when she went to school, you didn't have to get someone to pick her up etc.?
S.W. I went to pick my daughter up from school, because the school was in my area, whereas the childminder was in my work area, so she took her to the playgroup, but I took her to the school.
A.J. One telling remark, they thought my childminder was the mother. Both of my children are fair and blond, and my childminder is fair and blond, and on the odd occasion I come, I'm the childminder. It's ... odd.
W.B. So a few years ago you felt it was getting too much?
A.J. Yes, these last 3 years were progressively becoming worse and worse, and albeit the children were that much older and didn't need you ... Well they jolly well do. So I gave up half of it. The other half I'm still doing now, I actually finish next week.
W.B. So you are still working?
A.J. I'm still working, but in a different capacity and I've been able to combine beginning this course on the understanding that there was no way I was going to continue after March 31. But I'm home, I'm there, at the beginning of the day, I'm there at the end of the day and I'm there for the holidays. I wouldn't change what I've done, I don't regret having done what I've done. I think the children have got a lot out of it, in their own way. I certainly have, I wouldn't have wanted to have been a full-time mother. If I had my time again now, I wouldn't want to be a full-time mother, because it's not in me. I have no desire to be a full-time mother.
W.B. Do you think anything would have helped you to carry on with your career?
A.J. No, ultimately I think it was ... The predominant move behind changing things, was one the children, and then, on the other hand, there was me. I'd worked towards a goal, I'd achieved that goal, and then, well... Do I really want to see myself doing this for the next umpteen years? Yes, I've enjoyed it, but no.
W.B. And going back to being a student, did you find that easy?
A.J. No! No, not at all. (to S.W.) You are in your second year, I'm still semester 2 of my 1st year. I find it very hard to be on the other side of the table, very hard.

W.B. In what ways?

A.J. Well, I was the boss, and now I'm not. It's actually a total role reversal.

S.W. I actually like that aspect, the relinquishing of responsibilities.

A.J. Yes, I like that side of it, but I find it very difficult not to answer back. In certain situations, you know, with some of the younger students, the majority of the students ...(to S.W.) I don't know what it's like in your modules, but I find it is the mature students that are talking all of the time, having this input. I know we've got years behind us, we've got experience, wisdom, call it what you like, to draw on, but you feel as if you want to put a bomb under some of these young people at times.

S.W. Especially as I think it would be nice to benefit from hearing other people's points of view. And I know, I'm sure they all have something to say. They may be lacking in confidence, speaking in a crowd, and yet if only they knew how you feel doing that. I mean, they're more prepared for this open presentation in class. I mean I look at my daughter and she hasn't got any worries at all about standing up in class and talking, I mean they did it from age 4 or 5, you know talking about, you know bringing something in and talking about it. It is actually more of an ordeal for us and yet I enjoy the participation. I would actually love to hear some of the youngsters views.

W.B. (to S.W.) Why did you decide to come to university?

S.W. I've always wanted to do that. I mean, I've been at work 20 years. Whilst I enjoyed it very very much and I gave my all, as we all know the Health Service has changed beyond belief and I just got fed up with the changes that seemed to be disadvantageous to the patients. In fact, most people who worked there, in the higher echelons, I'd swear they don't ... didn't realise they were working for patients. So I was
disenchanted with that and the redundancy gave me a chance to do this, which is something I'd always wanted to do.

**W.B.** So you were made redundant?

**S.W.** In effect, I was made redundant, I mean I anticipated it and waited for them to start talking about redundancy. And I was just about first in the queue and I said, 'Right, I'll take it, thank you very much'.

**W.B.** So, did they offer you the course?

**S.W.** No they didn't. I managed to get from them the pre-access and access that were the foundations to this. But unfortunately, by the time I got here that was like 2, 3 years down the line. But it was an opportunity. And it is like everything else, change brings about adversity, but it brings about other positive factors. So I'm very glad it happened. But, I sometimes wonder... as you say, it is so hard in some respects that ... all sorts of things are hard, and don't mean sort of taking it in, I mean all sorts of aspects are hard but there's also all lot that is challenging. But ... sometimes I wonder what I'm doing here.

**W.B.** (to **S.W.**) Did you find it difficult to adapt, at first?

**S.W.** I found it more difficult. If I had come here straight from work, I don't think I would have managed it. But, because I had done the 10-week pre-access and then a year's access, that is like bringing you up to post-A-level, ready to come here, that gave me what I needed. I would have had a terrible shock if I had just come here. I don't think I would have lasted. It's like anything, any environment, you have to learn to play their rules, even if there don't appear to be any rules. And I would have been in a total shock I think.

**W.B.** What shocked you most?

**S.W.** Well the expectations! I mean ...

**W.B.** Did you find them very high?

**S.W.** Well again if I think of the difference between level B and level H. I remember some key person saying to me last year, 'There's a big jump between B and H. And I remembered that phrase and I think it was in view of that, that I thought I'm going to go part-time. What with that and my daughter's situation, I'm glad I did. I couldn't have coped with 60
credits at level H. And yet, everything I have done over the past 3 years in studying has been hard but I've somehow got there. So that's good, isn't it. It's sort of stretching you and bringing you up. But how much can you stretch the elastic, what's going to happen over the next couple of years?

**W.B.** What age is your daughter now?

**S.W.** She'll be 15 in June. So she is doing her first year GCSEs, got exams this week. So I'm afraid my work has gone by the board because I've been testing her and helping her. Next year, when I should have graduated, that's why I've deferred it, I didn't want ... I mean I become totally selfish when I'm working and I've got exams. I mean I don't want to see anyone. I lock myself up in a room. You can't do that to a 15 year-old. Especially when the school itself is telling you «Please be there for your children, help them, guide them». So, it took me... a few months ago, talking to my daughter, I realised she hadn't grasped the meaning of exams and what was expected.

**W.B.** So you are now a part-time student?

**S.W.** Yes. We work alongside each other in separate rooms. And I've no doubt about it, and my husband agrees, my having taken on this course at this point has actually had a beneficial effect for her. Because she sees me - she doesn't have a sibling you see - her half-sister no longer lives with us, so she sees me in that role. I'm working towards something. I think it would be very difficult for her to be upstairs working when she doesn't see anyone else doing it. So that's actually worked from her point of view as well.

**W.B.** *(to A.J.*) Are you a full-time student?

**A.J.** Yes, so I have the interesting decision to make about what to do with my third year abroad. And I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do at the moment. But as I was saying to Sheila before you came in, if I'd put this off until everything was clear, until Catherine and David are clear of exams, and that's another 3 or 4 years done the line, and if I actually want to do something with this qualification, fingers crossed, I mean my
marketability is reducing all the time. So it’s (sigh) it’s an unknown quantity.

(…) (5 minutes discussion on going back to university)

**W.B.** Looking back, do you think anything could have improved your situation as a mother of young children?

**A.J.** I think I would have liked my parents closer. They’re 130 miles away. As much as we were very fortunate as I’ve said with Pauline, there is nothing quite like, you know, there’s that sort of little niggle, it’s 8 o’clock, it’s whatever ...

As much as Pauline was always prepared, and happy, to have the children for an extra half hour or whatever, there comes a point when you feel you don’t want to impose another … whereas if it’s family... I think ... I don’t know. I think I would have preferred ultimately to have my parents closer where they could have had more interaction and where I wouldn’t necessarily have had the same anxieties as I had looking to someone else... Especially when they were say 7, 8. When they had an earlier bedtime and they couldn’t go to bed.

**S.W.** I was happy with my childminder. But thinking about your point, Alice, my parents lived nearby, but they both had their own lives and, while I did call on them, especially if I wanted to go away for a couple of days, this is where the employer/employee system with Maggie worked. Because, if I asked her, could she spend some extra time, say I’d got a meeting in the evening ... If I said occasionally, could you have her until 9 or 10, I mean Camarra was absolutely delighted because she was staying longer with Maggie and then she’d see the girls and Maggie’s husband. But somehow I had no qualms about ..., because in the end, it was a financial arrangement. Even though’ it was friendly, I knew I was paying Maggie for the extra time. So we had this agreement and it worked. Whereas I know when I’ve left my daughter with my parents, I’ve worried, I better get back because ...

Another problem, more generally speaking, is when your child gets sick. You have to allow for when children get sick. There is no provision for that, so parents have to lie and say I’m sick.
W.B. So you feel that would be an important measure?
S.W. Yes, you have to allow for the fact that children get sick.
A.J. Yes. One of the ladies who works with us, had a baby about a year ago. She found a nursery for him, literally just behind the court centre, no problem, and the other week he was ill, so the nursery wouldn’t have him. She’s self-employed, she had to take a week off as well. She’s up in arms, she’s working to pay the nursery. She still has to pay the nursery that won’t accept in because he is ill. So whatever happens she is financially at a total loss. It’s absolutely ridiculous. The nurseries can literally can blackmail you.
S.W. The other thing I suppose is the amount of money. I mean I had an agreement with my childminder. And I realise looking back, and even at the time, I mean what I paid for my childminder was ridiculous.
W.B. How much were you paying?
S.W. Well, it looked like it started off at 70 pence an hour. Now that goes back to ’84. I looked it up specifically to answer your survey because I couldn’t remember. So it started at 70p. and then it rose to £1. And it was always me that instigated the raise, Maggie never instigated it. I didn’t know what other people were paying ....
Oh dear! we’ll have to be going.
Entretien N°3

Cathy Smith (45 ans, 3 enfants, 13, 19 et 21)
Maria Jones (39 ans, 2 filles 19 et 17 ans)

W.B. Did you go on working when you had your children, or did you stop?
C.S. I had my first child in 1977, I was working full-time and I stopped for several years.
W.B. Would you have liked to go on?
C.S. Possibly, yes. But the problem was that as I worked as a secretary at King's College Language School, I had to be at work throughout the summer.
M.J. I was doing secretarial work until I had my first child in 1979. I had no desire to try and juggle. I had my second child quite quickly, 2 years after the first. I went back to work when my eldest daughter was 10.
W.B. You said you had no desire to try and juggle, did the idea that it would be difficult influence your decision?
M.J. Yes. My mother worked. We spent our holidays with granny. I remembered my mother's difficulties and thought it would be difficult for me. And then, I was earning less than my husband. So, as he was much better paid, I didn't want to disturb his pattern. But finally I got bored. Housework is not very exciting. I went back to work in 1990, full-time.
C.S. At first I didn't have time to feel bored. I built up a circle of acquaintances around the playgroup that there was locally in the village, 2 days a week for 2 1/2 hour sessions. I really enjoyed helping with the playgroup and school. I really perceived pressure to go back to work when the other mothers went back. Then I felt it would be more rewarding to go back when my youngest child was 7.
W.B. Did you go back part time or full time?
C.S. I returned part time. My employers were Cambridge University and they were very flexible. I finished at 3.15 and had school holidays off. So, they were very supportive.
M.J. I had big problems for all school holidays, finding holiday care for school children was very difficult. It was very easy to feel very guilty. From a male point of view you were just going back for your own satisfaction.

W.B. Do you think things are changing?

M.J. Now, I think things have changed. Working mothers have become the norm. For grandparents, for example, it’s not part of their culture. They think you’re deserting your children, especially when they are young.

C.S. Companies are changing too, some offer extended maternity leave and company maternity schemes.

M.J. Not all of them! For my sister, for example. It was appalling. She was a lone mother and she had to go back rapidly to working full-time. She had no choice, she had to stop breast-feeding etc. it was very upsetting.

C.S. Today there is the problem of mortgages too that puts a lot of economic pressure on families.

W.B. Why did you decide to come to University?

C.S. Well I worked in education, I was in contact with degree students. I always regretted not having gone to university when I was young, so when I was around 40 I signed on for an Access course. And I think it is difficult to adapt to not being needed. I dreaded becoming a person who can’t let her kids go ... having no interests.

M.J. I’m not 40 yet, but this may be mid-life positiveness. Life is creeping on. I need a career, not just a job. I’m on my own now, and I couldn’t afford the life I want to live. My children think I’m mad going back into education.

C.S. My daughter is doing a similar degree and it is actually bringing us closer together.

M.J. I went to France after school and when I came back I gave up the idea of doing a degree. Now it’s easier to change directions, it’s accepted as part of everyday life.
C.S. Well I was going to go into further education when I left school but I was not allowed to do the course I wanted and so I gave up. And then I got married quickly and had my first child when I was 20.

W.B. You both chose to give up working when your children were young, do you think that the availability of good quality childcare and nursery education would have altered your choice?

C.S. No. Time goes by so quickly. I never felt frustrated.

M.J. Yes, but ... With a job too it can be frustrating. It's fine if you've chosen that and you've got a progressive husband, but there are not many around. Men are sometimes happy to do their stint at home if they are made redundant or if their wife is really well paid ...

W.B. The government is now bringing in parental leave, do you think that will make any difference?

M.J. I think that's great, I think the option should be there.

C.S. Yes, but I disagree with pressure either way on women to work or not to work.

M.J. But, only a small proportion of women have a choice. Most have such a small choice. They don't have the choice of a career, but just of work, so it is a question of need, not choice.

C.S. Well if I judge from people living around us, women with professional careers found care with no problem.

M.J. Yes, but if you don't have money, it's a struggle still. My nephew is 7, 3 years ago my sister was paying £70 a week for 3 days childcare. It's a huge sum if you have no state help. As it ended up she realised she was not much worse off on income support.
Entretien N° 4 (a)

Clara Brown (25, mère seule, une fille 2 ans 8 mois)
Anna Cartwright (50, 2 enfants)
Janice Allen (45-50, 4 enfants, vécut en Australie jusque 1990)

W.B. First of all, I'd like to know if, when you had your first child you were working or not?
A.C. No, I wasn't.
C.B. Yes, I was.
J.A. My experience is not relevant until 1990, because when I had my first child, I was in Australia.
W.B. (to C.B.) Did you have maternity leave?
C.B. Yes, I had the statutory 14 weeks.
W.B. And then could you go back if you wanted?
C.B. Yes I could, but I didn't. I couldn't afford it. I didn't earn enough to cover my childcare, my travelling expenses etc., to make it worthwhile.
W.B. And would you have liked to go back?
C.B. I would have at the time. And the pregnancy wasn't planned, so it was all a bit ... anyway, but I just felt it wasn't really an option when I worked it all out, I was actually better off on benefit, and so that's what I did for a year and I stayed at home.
W.B. But you actually did work out that it was better doing that?
C.B. Yes.
W.B. And were there any childcare possibilities around you?
C.B. Only childminders, where I live there is one nursery, one private nursery and the rest is childminders. You can get a list from the council or something of registered childminders, but that was the only option.
W.B. Yes, and that seemed too expensive as well, with the travelling etc.
C.B. Yes.
W.B. (to A.C.) You weren't working at the time, was that a choice?
A.C. Well, my husband was in the airforce, so we lived on a base. We were newly married and I was pregnant and so I never really got a chance to find a job. I decided if I was pregnant there was no way I was going to get a job. I was trained as a nursery nurse, so I thought, well...

W.B. Oh you had a nursery nurse training?

A.C. Yes, I'm a Norland Nanny, one of the worst probably, ask my children about that.

(laughs)

W.B. It's never the same with your own children.

A.C. No. I didn't really think of getting a job after that and it would have been difficult to find childcare, and it would have been expensive. So, again, it comes to balancing out the options, and you think, well, once I've paid someone to look after the child and the hassle that involves, then I might as well stay at home.

W.B. And how long did you stay at home?

A.C. Oh, twenty-something years. Yes, I had my last child in 1984 and I got a job when she was four.

W.B. And then, did she go to nursery school, or something like that?

A.C. Yes she did. There was a nursery school reasonably near, and we had a little more money by that stage, so that wasn't so crucial.

W.B. And were you able to find a full-time nursery place for her?

A.C. I didn't look for one. No. At the time, I don't think that would have been an option, there weren't any day nurseries, there were nursery schools. So we're talking about 9 to 3 maximum and most nursery schools are probably one-session, probably 9 'til lunchtime.

W.B. So when you went back to work, did you go back as a nursery nurse?

A.C. Oh no! Oh no! [laughs] I went to work in the Childrens' Hospice in Milton that was in the stages of being set up. It wasn't open. They were in the process of fund raising, so I went to open the press office. I absolutely loved it! I did that for 3 years, but again it was restricted hours, I only worked 9.30 'til 2.30 because I had to fit in with school times.
W.B. [to J.A.] What about you?

J.A. Well, I have had all kinds of combinations and permutations of care.

W.B. You had an experience abroad, so how did Britain compare with Australia for example?

J.A. Australia is where I come from, so ...

W.B. You are Australian?

J.A. And childcare is ... well, there's a shortage of places, but it's quite accessible, in cities, though I'm not sure it's like that everywhere, and I went back to work 3 months after I had my first child, part time, and childcare was accessible, was there as an option.

W.B. Were you able to go back to the job you were doing before?

J.A. To the same company, yes, but I went from full-time to part-time status, so I did different work, but it was a choice, and one of the things I did was setting up childcare within the company. I was working on projects and that was one of the projects, setting up childcare.

W.B. What kind of sector were you working in?

J.A. A big public company.

W.B. A big public company, so it was already into providing childcare?

J.A. It was one of the first to do it at that time, in the mid-eighties.

W.B. And when you got to Britain, did you find things very different?

J.A. Well ... it was different, because I was looking for different things, and when you change countries everything changes, and I was looking for a different mix, then we had another baby and so everything changed again. And my experience here was when we found a nursery - there was one in the next village - it was a privately-run nursery, for 3 to 5s, so Pre-School, and that was there ...

W.B. It was a private structure, it wasn't a local authority nursery?

A.C. Local authority provision in this country has been pretty much restricted to inner cities and labour-controlled councils.

W.B. It is changing, but ...

A.C. It is changing, ... because there is more pressure, but, particularly if you live in the country, the chances of finding a state-provided ... even
a nursery school, let alone a day nursery, there is an assumption, because you live in the country, you don’t have to work, I think.

J.A. (laughs) I only live 10 minutes out of Cambridge, but it's much harder to find in the country.

W.B. And did you have a job at that time?

J.A. Yes, flexible, so ... and I've used a nursery in Cambridge too, preschool, rather in the sense of term dates, because there were distinctions in the provision of care. And as your children get older, I think you modify the provision to suit your own requirements for your own work and your own timetables.

W.B. But you had quite a flexible timetable, so you didn’t have too many problems?

J.A. Yes, I was in quite a different situation from someone who actually has to be in a job for regular hours and regular days, I was able to manage my time, not much better, but more freely. (A.C. has to leave)

W.B. Was one form of provision enough then?

J.A. Largely, but you always need a network of friends etc. Of course, we don’t have grandparents here, so that was a shortcoming. But then we discovered that most people here don’t have local grandparents anyway, so, it’s not very different.

W.B. (to C.B.) Would you agree with that?

C.B. I think ... I was just thinking actually, 'cos I think I’m in quite a different situation. In fact, I’m a single parent, and have been since ... day one. And I think that changes the situation a lot, because I obviously need to find some way of supporting myself, and as I said, I was better off getting income support rather than going back to work but I had no one else to, sort of, help me with that.

W.B. You were really on your own?

C.B. I mean, I do get an awful lot of support from my parents, they live in the same town, and without them, I wouldn’t have been able to do this degree, because they help me, in all sorts of ways, and obviously, when you’re restricted a bit more by being on your own, you know, you’ve got all the extra restrictions, childcare, financially etc. etc. ...
W.B. Under the former conservative government, lone parents were ... had a hard time of it, do think this is still true to day?
C.B. I wasn't a parent when the Conservatives were in power, so I can't speak from experience, that side of it ...
W.B. Do you think that still persists today?
C.B. I do think it's getting better, but it's slow. But I suppose that's only natural, since I've had my daughter, things have changed quite a bit. They've brought in the New Deal for Lone Parents, that I don't know an awful lot about, but I believe you can get up to 70% of your childcare paid, which obviously makes a fantastic difference if you're working full time, 9 to 5 Monday to Friday, that clocks up a lot of hours to pay for, so things are definitely changing.
W.B. But you personally weren't offered anything in the framework of the New Deal?
C.B. Well, it came out a year after I had had her so, when I was actually due to go back to work, that wasn't available, my choices were: to go back to work, pay full-time childcare, or not go back to work and go on to Income Support, they were my only two options.
W.B. I think the New Deal is more for ... I think the first people that can get it have school-age children.
C.B. I'm not entirely sure, because I didn't look into it, because it wasn't here when it would have applied, and then I had started here anyway, and I did try to find out about it and was told that as a student it didn't count. You had to be going to work, but them seemed to suggest that if I was working, rather than studying, that it would, but again I didn't go into much depth. I didn't take it any further.
W.B. but, do you get help with your fees here?
C.B. Yes, I get my fees paid for me, and I also get a grant, it's only about £2 000 a year; But, again, things are changing for students now as well. At the beginning of this year they brought in, we got a once-off grant which was specifically for childcare, a thousand pounds for the year which obviously helped, though it only covered less than half of my
childcare needs. But apparently, next year, it's all changing again and you can apply to get 85% of your childcare back, apparently.

W.B. So that is improving.

C.B. Yes, they are, but, it is all happening a year too late for me every time.

W.B. (to A.C. and J.A.) do you think from your personal experience that things are changing?

A.C. and J.A. Oh, yes!

A.C. I think that the younger generation now coming up with children is much more demanding, the options are there, they've already got much more choice in everything that they do, and I think therefore they are used to having choice. They are used to being able to do things, I look at what my children are able to do as young adults. I mean, my daughter is two years older now than I was when I had her ... when I had my son ... and I say quite clearly to my children, «don't have your children too young. There are lots of things to do out there, go and do them ».

J.A. And having them later, I think you do have more freedom to choose, you're less reliant on ... you know, generally speaking, you're more mature ...

A.C. You have more resources too, chances are you've got a partner who has a reasonable job and so you are that much more able to pay for childcare. Maybe you've got friends you can call on to look after them ...

I think it was really difficult back in the seventies, there were very few choices really.

W.B. Do you think you would have acted differently if you had had more choice?

A.C. Yes, yes. ... It goes back such a long way, the choices I made were based on what was available then. (...)

As I said I was married to someone who was in the airforce, he was an officer, and officially officers wives are not permitted to work.

W.B. Oh! Was this actually an official rule?

A.C. Well it depended on what rank you were, but certainly the senior officers wives were not expected to work because it was something of a
slur on their husbands. It was OK for other ranks wives. But I remember, this was in 1976 or 77, I think, there were officers getting milk tokens and were on, whatever they called it, family income support, in those days, because the pay was so poor. They'd gone from a system where your accommodation was provided free, and you were given almost pocket money, to a military salary scheme, though inevitably, the amount they had decided you could live on ... and of course we had rampant inflation, something like 20-odd% per year. The Labour government didn't want to give them a pay rise, people were leaving in their droves, women were saying, I've got to go out to work, we cannot live on what we earn. I think you actually had to get permission from the station commander to get a job. And when the station commander's wife got a job, he had to get permission from a senior staff officer. He had to make a case, and he said, because I've got three daughters in their teens, I have not got enough money to pay for the very basic things that they need. (...) 

C.B. I actually grew up on a military base in Germany. My parents weren't in the military ... they were teachers. But I seem to remember that my mum ... we lived in officers quarters ... my mum was one of the only women that worked because she was actually, I was going to say a civilian, she was actually a teacher, but all the officers wives that lived in the same bit as us, they often looked after me while my mum was teaching their children. 

(...) 

This is something I now feel very passionate about because I was working when I fell pregnant, and ... I mean I'd just started out on the career ladder, I was only 19 ...

W.B. What kind of work were you doing?

C.B. I was the UK sales controller for a company that made aerosol valves. That sounds much more grand than it was, it was mainly customer services mixed with putting in computer data, and there was a bit of sales involved as well. But when I'd gone into the company, I remember really selling myself, I remember the guy was really sort of
positive, and saying we've got big plans for you, and then obviously when I fell pregnant, I felt a really failure because ... from that point of view, because ... I think the attitude to mothers in the workplace as well is very different. I think people started treating me differently as soon as I was pregnant. I mean this guy who had been very positive towards me, they'd been sending me out on sales trips with the male reps and things like this. Obviously sort of training me up to go on further, and as soon as I was pregnant ... even if at that point I hadn't said that I wasn't going back, the attitudes changed, and I started getting more menial jobs again.

**J.A.** That's a huge difference. I mean that just doesn't happen ... well it does ... but in Sidney where I was working, attitudes were ... we'd just go on strike for something like that. I think from talking to you and other friends I think the attitudes here are much more conservative. I mean there are some big cultural issues in childcare provision, the way people respond to women in the workplace.

**C.B.** But I think it is quite scary in a way that that was so recent, I'm not even talking about 20 years ago.

**J.A.** There may be a difference too between provincial attitudes and attitudes in big cities.

**C.B.** I think nowadays the laws have changed, I mean by law I shouldn't have been discriminated against, for being pregnant etc. etc. but ...

**W.B.** In practice ...

**C.B.** Yes it was a very male environment, because the office that I was in was sales based and it was mainly men, there was a female secretary and a couple of other ... and there was a big factory that was mainly men, and I really did feel that the attitude towards me changed when I was pregnant, very much ...

**W.B.** They thought well she's not going anywhere now?

**C.B.** When I said I wasn't going back, I felt like they were biding their time until I had gone. They knew they couldn't get rid of me there and then, if they could have done it they really would have done, I really felt that. In fact my line manager who, in fact, was a woman, but she was ...
she was in her fifties and had never married and never had children, so obviously had a very different attitude anyway, and she was very openly hostile to me and made it quite plain. And she actually went to see the personnel manager to say that she didn't think I should get the maternity pay, because I wasn't going back. Well, I went to see him and he said "You will because that's what the law says". But she was outraged that I was going to receive maternity pay for 14 weeks.

**W.B.** In spite of the laws, apparently the idea that paid maternity leave is a right for all women is still not recognised by everyone.

**C.B.** And from a woman as well, that was quite ... you know, I found it quite upsetting that she was so hostile to me. And it made me think, even more so that I wouldn't want to go back. I thought, if they're like this now, if I was going back, surely they'd still be the same, thinking "Oh she can't do as much, etc."

**W.B.** (to **J.A.**) So you really found a big difference between here and Sidney?

**J.A.** Not so much in the practicalities. But just talking to people and understanding ... you know, getting to know people and realising that their experiences were quite different from what it was like growing up in Sidney. Although it's an English culture, it's ... it's a smaller place and I think a lot of social changes were taken on board a lot earlier than they've been taken on here.

**W.B.** Personally, did you feel differences when you got here?

**J.A.** As a consumer of services?

**W.B.** As a consumer of services and generally as a woman working with young children.

**J.A.** Well yes and no. I didn't have my children until quite late, I was more mature. And I sort of knew what to expect, I'd been here before, so in some ways it wasn't a surprise I just adapted. But I do think the cultural change has been slower and it's a much bigger community, I mean there are a lot of issues about childcare and maternity leave, you know. As mothers who have careers or are trying to establish careers,
you want to keep going, you don’t want to stop, but I think one has to be fairly understanding of the business problem too (…)

**W.B.** I have been living in France for a long time and the question of the right to maternity leave is practically not an issue there.

**J.A.** Presumably French businesses have adapted.

(…)

**C.B.** That surprise me! Actually you wouldn’t, I mean I wouldn’t have expected that from France.

**J.A.** Their attitude to education is different too.

**C.B.** But they’re still quite (laughs) … well, it still seems like quite a patriarchal society and quite chauvinist in a lot of ways, hem…., yet in this area it seems to be so much more advanced than here, it strikes me as strange, I can’t understand why Britain is so still .. set in this attitude.

**J.A.** It must have a bit to do with the role of … of the self-perception French women have, I mean French women are remarkably independent really are the, despite the feminist…er feminine side French women … are known for. There are a lot of French women in government, there are a lot of senior French women in organisations …

**W.B.** Well … Yes…but it’s far from perfect.

(laughs)

**J.A.** I mean comparatively. I mean I don’t know, but I’m sure there are more French women at the top of large organisations.

(…)

**J.A.** I was going to say earlier that one has to be quite clear about the social and educational levels for each individual’s response to this problem. Because obviously we three had quite different educational experiences first time round, (to **C.B.**) You never got a chance …

**C.B.** I mean I feel fortunate to have got … I mean, I remember when I was in the final year at school, and one of my friends got pregnant, she was 15, and she didn’t even do her GCSEs, I feel fortunate I’ve got them and I’ve done my A-levels. I mean she must be in an incredibly difficult position. In fact, she’s unqualified, I can’t see …
W.B. So she hasn’t got much choice.
C.B. No, menial low paid work is all really ...
J.A. The educational standards you attain before you confront these problems has a lot to do with how you can solve them. Obviously in my case I was able to be self-employed, I was able to find care that wasn’t as expensive as ... that left me a little bit at the end, it didn’t leave a lot but you know there was enough to do it, there was a reason for doing it.
W.B. Were you paying a high percentage of your income, can you remember?
J.A. You know I can’t, I’m sorry, I can’t remember.
W.B. Did it seem hefty at the time?
J.A. I don’t think childcare is expensive for what we are asking those people to do, that doesn’t mean we can afford it, but it is a huge responsibility and it requires decent pay.
C.B. But that’s a Catch 22 situation, because, obviously, whenever I look for a job, I mean I work part time at the moment around my studying. And when I look for jobs I have to say: «That’s what the pay is, then I take off what I’ll have to pay for childcare and say that is what I’ll be earning», and often ends up below the minimum wage. I mean, in the summer, when I was looking at factory work and things, anything to earn some money. If they pay just above the minimum wage, say £3.80 an hour or something like that, and I was paying £1.80 for childcare, I’d be working for £2 an hour. Well ... I would never have considered that in the past, but then again I have to look at it ... like £2 an hour is better than £0 pounds an hour. But at the end of the day, when you’re in a lower-paid sphere of work. You know, you’re so limited, and you’re looking at ... sort of ... it’s almost like ... you know, they brought in this minimum wage, but as I said it doesn’t count when you have to pay ... half of it or whatever, in low paid jobs, you end up working for nothing practically, that’s a very difficult situation.
J.A. People’s attitudes to childcare differ according to whether they are the sole breadwinner ...
C.B. (to J.A.) Were you in a situation where you needed to work? Like for the money? Or was it more to do with the fact that you had worked for a long time?

W.B. That's good, you can ask the questions for me.

(laughs)

J.A. I needed to work, yes I did.

C.B. If I was in the opposite situation from the one that I have been in, I mean if I had been married, or with a partner, and they were earning enough for me not to go to work, I would still have ... maybe not immediately - I mean I really valued the year I spent at home with her - but I still would have liked to have gone back to work, I mean ... as in coming here, for example, because...

J.A. That's part of the social change isn't it? Society is realising that women need to work

C.B. (to J.A.) I don't know exactly what you did, but if you'd studied a lot, worked hard and moved up the career ladder why should you stop?

J.A. Yes, why should you? I mean if you've spent 10 or 15 years building up a career, you don't abandon it. Not because you've spent 10 or 15 years building up a career, but because the person who has done that doesn't stop working because that is part of the person.

W.B. Have you ever heard people around you saying "you've got four children, what are you doing out working?"

J.A. No, because I keep them quite separate. I think that is one of the secrets to work with children is to keep the two issues separate. In a sense that doesn't present people with problems then, because a lot of the problems ... I mean, I remember back in the eighties rationalising it for myself to other people. Men would often go out, this is talking about the early eighties, a long time ago, to the dentist, get their car registered, do this, do that, so what difference if I went and breastfed my child? The fact is they didn't need to know, they never told their secretaries they were going to have their car registered, they just said "I'm going out for an hour" and walked out. Well I used to say "I'm out for an hour", go down in the lift, drive for 10 minutes to the childcare
centre, breastfeed the baby and come back again. They were none the wiser.

C.B. That's quite interesting.
J.A. I think women ... we want them to understand that that we are people, just like they're people, but we sometimes push it in their face, whereas actually they are not quite ....
C.B. But there again, it depends what sort of position you are in at work.
J.A. Of course, of course.
C.B. Obviously, I wasn't in a position where I could just leave the office anyway.
W.B. Yes, all that depends on your position in the hierarchy.
J.A. Yes, at that time I was working ... I was on part-time work and as long as I did the work ... I mean it's quite true you can't leave a factory, or secretarial work.
W.B. When you came to Britain, did you have a job beforehand?
J.A. Well by then I was self-employed, so I carried on.
W.B. And that suited you?
J.A. Yes, I changed, I think that was one of the things, when I started having children I became self-employed. I think that's why the statistics say that most women who manage to juggle these things eventually, either work with other women, (laughs) or are self-employed.
C.B. I think I have been given even more drive by having a child now, because all this has come to light for me in the past few years. I mean, due to my age before, and not having had children, and not having been in the working world very long ... none of it ...I probably hadn't even considered it, that it would be a problem etc. And now I feel quite strongly that ... you know, I'm not going to let my situation affect ...
J.A. You're outlook?
C.B. No ... what I'm going to do. I mean I had a child young and I mean, it is like Anna was saying, (laughs) I would advise people not to have children early. It must be much easier to do things the other way round, it would have been much easier for me to study and have a child later.
W.B. Yes, although I actually know some counter-examples.
C.B. Well, actually, I wouldn’t have gone to university if I hadn’t had my child, because at the time I didn’t feel ... I was desperate to get out and work and I knew I wouldn’t have the dedication to study for four years etc. And, I think now that it has changed, that I have to ... I feel like a pressure that I always have to be a step ahead, to be better than I would have been, because I have got - I’m not saying my daughter’s holding me back or anything - but it obviously makes it more difficult.
J.A. In a sense, you’re actually saying that your child has actually opened your horizons. Because you said «Well, I’ve actually got to do better than ...»
C.B. I feel that a lot of girls my age, for example my peers here at college, I mean (to J.A.) there’s you, obviously that’s a different situation, but ... when I go out into the working world at the same time as the people that I’m studying with now, I feel that I’ll be ... I’ll have to put in that bit extra, does that make an sense?
W.B. Yes.
C.B. Because I’ve got this extra (laughs) responsibility.
W.B. But at the same time you feel this is stimulating you to a certain extent?
C.B. Yes. I don’t know if that is a personal thing or not, I don’t know if it would make everybody react in the same way ...
J.A. I think that one of the things that the having of children makes you do, is to become much more efficient with your time. And you know, people who have children in the workforce recognise that, you probably don’t know this yet ...
C.B. No, I haven’t got there yet.
J.A. And they recognise that a woman who can actually manage a child, and as a single parent, is actually going to be a much better bet as an employee than someone who is building a rapid career and is likely to leave the job in 12 months’ time.
C.B. I think my attitude is one of immediate defence, because I do feel that when I get out there ... and even now as a student, that ..em ..
people ... like the issues with childcare and things, that it is going to be tough. I mean, I have talked to my tutor about it, because I will be going to France in the summer, for the year, and obviously my daughter will be coming with me, so I’m going to be experiencing childcare in another country, and I have been told that it’s much better in France. I haven’t experienced it yet, but I have been talking to several people who say it’s much better and a completely different experience from over here and I think, well, I’ll come back here again, I’ll have to ... It’s going to be even worse, because I’m going to be even more dissatisfied, because I’ve spent a year somewhere else where it’s supposed to be much more efficient.

W.B. There are childcare facilities here at the university, do you use them?

C.B. Yes, she goes to the nursery here. That is something that I wanted to point out earlier. When I first started here, people would ask me “Where does she go?”, and I said “The nursery here”, and most people assumed that it was free because it was the university nursery, and they were shocked at the fact that I had to pay and not even, what I think is a particularly cheap rate, as a student you do get a certain percentage off.

W.B. How much do you pay?

C.B. It’s ... it changes as they get older, obviously they don’t need as much. Eh well .. their needs are different ...With the reduction, it works out at about £17-£18 a day, so I think I remember, when she was in the most expensive part, I remember working it out at about £2.15 an hour. The university subsidise a certain percentage of it.

W.B. And are you satisfied with the nursery?

C.B. The facilities, yes. It’s just, you know, a huge, huge drain on my finances, I mean I pay around £60 a week in childcare.

W.B. And do you get anything back on that?

C.B. Nothing. Well, we did get, this year £1 000 one-off payment for the whole year which covers just under half, so, obviously that helped, but, I mean, for the first year for example ... nothing. You get your loan, you
get your grant, obviously I got my child benefit as well, and that's what I lived on with a large overdraft. So ... there's not a lot of help at all, and it's something that made me really angry when I started applying for university. I kept keeping getting these doors shut in my face in a way, because I kept sort of ... For example housing benefit ... as a ... it makes me quite angry ... when I was at home on benefit, the way they work it out is they say, "Right, we work out how much you need a week to live on", and they say that a single mother on her own with one child under 5 needs £90 a week to live on. They take off your child benefit from that, and they give you the rest. Well, I used to get about £70 something a week, £73 a week, and then £17 a week child benefit. And when I was at home, it wasn't too bad to be honest, because I didn't have ... I wasn't paying childcare because I looked after my daughter at home. As they always used to call it, "the benefit trap", you get trapped, because that never goes up ... I mean it goes up according to inflation, but ... When I applied for university, they still looked at it like that and they don't take your childcare into consideration. When I went to the benefits office to try and sort it all out, they said to me, "You're getting your grant", and it worked out at about £120 a week when you divided it up, so they said, "Oh that's more than £90, you won't get any benefits any more". But I've got about £60 a week childcare and that's just not taken into consideration as a student, they don't ... It was a kind of big loophole in the system and, as such I was told that I had enough money to live on with £120 a week, of which £60 had to go on childcare and they then told me that I couldn't get housing benefit, well, in theory, you can get housing benefit as a student and a single parent when I applied for it, I was told that I would get about £2 a week, which wasn't even worth applying for. So, you know, at the time ... things have improved a bit since then, that was a few years ago, but at the time it really made me cross, because, as I said, if I didn't have the support of my parents, financially and otherwise, because now they pay my mortgage, I couldn't have come to university and I couldn't have gone back to work really
either. I mean I could have gone back to work but all my money would have gone into childcare.

**W.B.** What about the attitude of people to nurseries? Do you think ... has anyone said to you, «Oh! your daughter’s in a nursery, that’s not good for her»?

**C.B.** No. I think people consider ... well, I consider it’s better for her, in a way.

**J.A.** You don’t hear much ... well it may be because we move in student circles, but you don’t hear much implied criticism now. You know, it’s a conservative attitude, isn’t it? And you may find it in different settings but ...  

**W.B.** That is one thing that is changing I think.

**J.A.** Well the financial necessity of work has changed, now most families require two breadwinners.

**W.B.** That has been the case for some time now, during the conservative era, and all the same, there were a lot of people saying ...

**J.A.** But the social attitudes have changed.

**C.B.** I think they have, it’s just slow and it’s taken a long time, and it’s going to take even longer. It’s just a slow-moving process.

**W.B.** And looking around you, do you really find things changing just now? Do you think there are more childcare places now?

**C.B.** Well, I don’t actually know that many people with children.

**J.A.** Well, I’m ashamed to say that I don’t know either because since my youngest child has been out of it, I’ve lost touch with the demand for places. It’s an appalling aspect of parenthood, but the less ... when things become less critical to you, you may have opinions, but ...I couldn’t tell you honestly. I mean, if I was to believe what I have read, I mean, yes, they’re more accessible, but, the reality ... I don’t know. I know who couples who do need a nanny or whatever. But a lot of schools now provide after-school care.

**W.B.** So that is changing. Is there after-school care in the school your youngest child goes to?
J.A. Yes, we pay for it. There are more and more after school schemes and there are lots of holiday schemes. So I think that has changed. The council does quite a lot too.

W.B. Cambridgeshire far a short time now has been considered as in advance for some things, they sent up the childcare website that became a model nationally.

(...) 

C.B. I still think the links with money are very very strong. I mean, childcare, this is very obvious, but childcare is much more accessible if you’ve got the money.

J.A. It is more accessible too if you have a car to look for it.

W.B. Yes that is another problem for mothers with children, especially in a country where there is a problem with public transport.

J.A. Yes, that’s acute.

C.B. Well I drive - I live about 35 miles out - and I drive in and, I mean, I take the train occasionally, but only when I’m on my own, when I’m bringing my daughter to the nursery, I don’t take her on the train because I worry (laughs) about disturbing other people, because there is this attitude to children still.

W.B. You think that remains?

C.B. Yes. Definitely. When you’re on a train, you still get those looks if your child starts screaming or something. you know that other mothers can sympathise, like when you are in the supermarket or something, you know that other mothers will sympathise, but other people... That’s specifically why ... Also at the station where I live, there is no way of getting ... I mean there is only steps over to the platform that I need, and, I mean, she’s a bit older now, but before with the buggy, it was too much hassle. So again there is no provision there, but I just can’t stand the pressure of going on the train and being constantly worried about keeping her quite, sitting her still.

J.A. it would be very easy to make a wagon, sort of for children.

W.B. I actually saw one in London yesterday.
J.A. You couldn’t do it, to say this for children, no children anywhere else, but you could do it to encourage people ...

C.B. Well I’d much rather go into a carriage where you know everyone else is in the same boat as you ... rather than get looks from ...businessmen. I can’t help it. There’s actually lots of places that I try not to take her to.

W.B. I thought that had changed a bit, because when I started on this subject, I noticed that, for example, in Britain a lot of hotels etc. would take dogs and cats and whatever, but not children.

J.A. You wonder how they get away with it, that is discrimination.

W.B. So you definitely think that still exists?

C.B. Last year, we were looking, my mum and I, at going away a few days with my daughter, in some sort of guesthouse, B&B etc. and there were a lot that said no children. And that was one of the things you had to take into account. (...)

Earlier in the year I went to a hotel, part of a big chain, not a guesthouse and obviously didn’t say no children. But again I still felt the pressure. I mean, maybe I’m a bit over-sensitive, but when we were in the dining room for example, I had to leave half-way through dinner, because she was being ...she was being very naughty, but I was getting looks ... these two old women on the table next to me kept giving me these dirty looks. And, in the end I left because I’d rather be in my room than sitting in a dining room with people thinking “Oh dear!” ...

Entretien 4 (b)

Témoignage d’Anna Cartwright sur son séjour à Norland Nursery Training College.

W.B. What qualifications were required to be admitted?

A.C. Students had to be over eighteen with 5 'O' levels. Alternatively, there was a 'maiden' scheme, which involved entry at sixteen and two
years' domestic service at the college before starting training. Maidens traded service for fees - pretty archaic, Huh?!

**W.B.** Can you remember roughly what the fees were?

**A.C.** Fees were around £1500 per year in 1972 and grants were available from some education authorities, dependent on whether similar training was available in a local authority establishment.

**W.B.** How long did your training last?

**A.C.** The training involved 15 months at the residential college, followed by 3 months in a hospital children's ward, and a 9 month probation period as a private nanny or nursery assistant. At the end of all that, we were awarded a National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) certificate plus a Norland badge and Cert. The NNEB qualification did not require the 9 months' probation, but you couldn't call yourself a Norland Nanny without both. Or pull the same salary!

**W.B.** What was the college like? I have heard it was very strict.

**A.C.** The college was in a large manor house in Hungerford in Berkshire. It had previously been used as a boarding school, and the accommodation hadn't changed at all. We lived in 4-5 bedded rooms and the bathrooms were communal. We were only allowed out on certain evenings, and had to be back by 10.30! Since the house was 2 miles away from town up a steep country lane, and only a handful of girls had cars, going out was a bit of a rarity. After a day looking after other people's homesick children, it was quite hard to have one's social life restricted too. But we were told that we had to learn to be responsible at all times, because that's what our employers would expect. Quite tough when you're only just out of school. It didn't have an official lights out policy, but we were usually exhausted, so it didn't matter too much. Boyfriends, if you could find one amongst the farm hands, were only allowed in the library, until 9.00p.m.

**W.B.** And what was the teaching like?

**A.C.** The teaching was divided into parts. 3 months of theory: hygiene, child development, nursery management, cookery and needlework etc. We had to know how to cook, sew, and clean a house properly, so that
we could instruct the servants! I wish. We also ran the Norland nursery school, under supervision.

After that, we were allowed to wear the coveted beige dress and bow tie, and to work in the nursery. This was residential, and was basically a holiday camp for children whose parents didn't want to bother with them. Sometimes parents were working abroad in unsuitable areas of the world, but more often it was just a way to get a break from the children if they couldn't or wouldn't pay for a nanny at home, they brought them to Norland. I don't remember how much it cost, but it was cheaper than a plane ticket and a hotel room, at the time. The nurses had to look after the children as though they were in a private home, including sewing on name tapes, doing the washing (by hand, for practice) and sleeping in the same room. Cleaning the nursery and preparing feeds for babies were all part of the job, and you got one day+night off per week. Jolly hard work if you had a family of three or a small baby, and some of them stayed for weeks.

The way that you coped with all the practical aspects counted towards the final result, including attitude (It think I slipped up there once or twice, because I resented being treated like a child, and expected to behave like an adult). Nothing serious though, compared to some of my chums, who kicked against the traces rather more than I did. A few girls left, because they couldn't stand it, but not many, one or two were asked to leave, for not being 'suited'. It all sounds pretty horrific, but I have to admit that the training itself was first rate, if a little behind the times, even for the 70s. It was the extra curricular restrictions which were unnecessarily irksome, and I believe that they have now been considerably relaxed. The end result, a Norland nanny, still attracts respect around the world, because they can be guaranteed to have had an impeccable training (better than the average princess these days).

I did complete my probation period as a nanny, but knew by then that it wasn't for me - I wanted some personal liberty. So I got married!!! And the rest is history........
W.B. Thank you for digging into your past for me.
A.C. I didn't know I'd remembered so much
Annexe 4

Transcription de l’émission Woman’s Hour (Radio 4) du 4 janvier 2000. Questions des auditrices à Margaret Hodge, ministre responsable de la garde d’enfants.

Journalist, Martha Kani (M.K.): Today, Margaret Hodge, the Minister responsible for childcare, is here to answer your questions.

Britain has the most expensive childcare in Europe. In France and Belgium the state provides all-day nursery education from the age of 3. In Sweden, that begins at birth and the local authority pays 3/4 of the cost. In Britain the state provides very little actual childcare. There’s nursery education for 4-year-olds but that’s only for 2½ hours a day. The bulk of childcare is carried out in the private sector, that’s by and large childminders or day nurseries. How do you think childcare should be organised in this country? What do you think of government plans for Ofsted to inspect childcare? You may have heard Chris Woodhead outline his plans on the programme yesterday.

Well, let’s begin now with a call from Catherine Foreman, who is calling from London. Good morning, Catherine.

C.F. Good morning.

M.K. What point would you like to make?

C.F. I just wanted to say to Margaret Hodge that today I’m looking after a teacher’s 3 children. She’s a dear friend of course, and she looks after mine, but this is a situation where a person who is trained to look after children has nobody to look after her own children. They are no state-run childcare centres, so as a friend, I am looking after her 3 children, so that she can go to work. In actual fact, because of the low pay of teachers, she can’t afford private childcare, so she has to rely on friends and grandparents.

M.K. What do you think of the system that operates in Sweden we talked about earlier?
C.F. I thought that was superb. Perhaps Margaret Hodge should go to Sweden and come back and implement that in this country. At the moment, I've been working for 13 years now myself and I've been forced to rely on a jigsaw/hodge podge of childcare, relying on my own parents, again friends, and I don't know why it's taking so long in this country to set up state-run childcare for working mothers.

M.K. So, Margaret Hodge, there is a challenge for you, end the jigsaw, follow the Swedish route.

M.H. Well, first of all, our history is different. I mean, until this government came into office, I think childcare was seen to be entirely the private concern of individuals and, indeed, the state only ever intervened when the child was at risk, for example, at risk of abuse, and the state might come in. Now we are changing that and, for the first time, we have got a government that is busy implementing a national childcare strategy. But you can't build a national childcare infrastructure overnight, it takes time and particularly to get the right quality, that's the first thing. The second thing is, because of our history, because we haven't had that tradition of state-provided childcare, there is a huge diversity out there. There are childminders, there are council-run day nurseries and there are also private nurseries, and it would be madness, given the shortage of childcare, for us to destroy what is there. We must build on that, improve the quality and provide choice that comes from diversity.

M.K. But, is the ultimate aim of the national childcare strategy to provide that choice of state-run provision for everybody?

M.H. I think the ultimate aim is to provide choice for parents and children and not to worry too much about who provides, but ensure that what is provided is of high-quality and is affordable. And one thing I can say to Catherine, is one of the issues she raised is her friend is a teacher. We have, just 2 months ago, introduced the WFTC, with the childcare tax credit component, and that would mean that somebody earning up to about £20 000, hose childcare might be somewhere in the
region of £100 a week, could get £60 a week through a credit system in their wage packet towards the costs.

M.K. Well, I'm sure we'll be getting other calls about that later on. I'd like to go over now to Fiona Leddy in Folkestone. you've been concerned that employers ought to be doing more, Fiona.

F.L. Yes, I definitely think so. Hello, good morning. I've got 2 children, one is aged 2 and the other is aged 9 months and I've been looking for a job to go back to, at least part-time work, for about 3 months now, and my main concern is sheer logistics. Getting up in the morning, driving them ... well I haven't actually got a car at the moment. I might even have to buy a car, although we can't really afford it with the sort of wages I'm going to be earning. Driving them from one place to the other and then finally getting to work in reasonable condition about 9 ... I mean, if employers provided more childcare facilities at the place of employment. I realise that's difficult for small employers, but maybe city-centre childcare facilities, large facilities right in the centre of town, that would be wonderful. Is there anything like that going to be provided?

M.H. Well, I'd love employers to do more for childcare and so we're constantly in discussion, we're encouraging employers to do more.

F.L. Why don't you force them to do more?

M.H. Well, I'm not sure how you do that, is the honest truth. I think the most important contribution of employers is to have employment practices that are family-friendly. So, for Fiona for example, so that she's helped by being given time to pack up the children and take them to the childminder or take them to the daycare centre, or wherever they're cared for her on her way to work and she doesn't have to worry about those logistics. And I think the introduction of policies which make it easier for people to balance work and home is the key contribution of employers. Some employers do a lot, I mean one hates to sort f single them out, but the HSPC bank run a huge number of day nurseries. And then again, it's down to parents. Some parents don't want actually to take their children with them to work. They prefer their
children were cared for in their communities, close to their home, either by a childminder or in a day nursery.

**F.L.** Oh, I agree with that, but I think childminders in particular, you have to be very careful about which childminder you choose, and a day nursery is definitely better, from my point of view.. I'd rather take them to a day nursery, but there aren't enough of them, and they have to be affordable and, well, that's a different story.

**M.H.** I mean that's all true. We're building all that. If I can just say to you, in the first 2 years of the government we've created more new childcare places than the previous government created in the 18 years in office. That's a pretty good start. But there's a long, long way to go to ensure that everybody who needs childcare - and it's got to be affordable, accessible, flexible, all the things that fit in with parents' lives - will get it at the point at which they want it.

**M.K.** Fenola Barr in Cheshire next. Now, you're concerned about the tax situation.

**F.B.** Yes, and I feel that. All childcare fees should be tax-deductible and this would create a tremendous injection into the provision of quality childcare. Because you can't have cheap childcare and have quality at the same time. There are many issues to be considered here. There is the quality of training which is quite lacking and very fractured at the moment. And you can't just take people off the dole and say "OK, you can look after children, just because you're on the dole, you know, that's something you can do.

**M.K.** Okay, there's a number of points here. I'd also like to bring in Judy Pring, living in Exeter. And you're worried about the tax credit too.

**J.P.** Yes. When the WFTC came out, I thought, wonderful, I'll be able to go out to work. To be eligible for it, I went through all the hoops, interviews etc., got a job, and then found out that I only got £11 towards my childcare - £72 a week - when I was only earning £80.

**M.K.** So wouldn't it be simpler to make this tax credit available to all?

**M.H.** Well, it's just a question of priorities. I mean, we've been investing £8 billion aver this spending period in developing a childcare
and early years strategy. We've got to decide where the money should go. What we have decided, is that it is better to support low income families with the WFTC. And when I say low income, you can earn up to £30 000 and still get support with your childcare costs. It depends on your income and it depends on the childcare costs. I don't think that's a bad system. If I can put it into its context, the previous government had a system through the tax system to help, but only £30 million was spent on that. Our much more generous system ... in the first couple of weeks we had 700 000 enquiries about the childcare tax credit.

M.K. But it didn't work for Judy. Judy, would you like to come back in there?

J.P. Yes. We are a low-income household, my husband only brings home £11 000 a year. I was only going to earn £4 000 a year. So actually with WFTC, we would have actually got £29 on his wages alone, because it's a low income. I must admit it's better than family credit, but I would like a little bit extra help for low incomes.

M.H. Judy, just, honestly, it's always very difficult to talk about individual cases, but it sounds from the figures that you gave that the calculations must have been wrong. Now, I'm always happy for you to write to me and I'll have a look at it. But, certainly on those sort of figures, you should be getting far better support.

J.P. Well, I hope so.

M.H. With those sort of figures, 70% of your childcare costs should be met through the childcare tax credit, unless there is something we haven't covered or I don't understand properly.

M.K. I'd like to bring back Fenola Barr now on a more general point. It's a question of priorities according to Margaret Hodge.

F.B. Yes, I agree it is a question of priorities within the family as well, because if a parent wants to go out to work and she's calculating what she has to pay out for her childcare, if she is going to be paying out more for the childcare than it's worth her while going out to work, there's no point in going out to work. If she's got 2 children, it means she has to pay twice the amount. One child might cost you £100 a week,
2 children will cost you £200, or maybe, with the 10% reduction, £190 or £180. That’s a lot of money for parents to pay out, especially if they are on low incomes. The tax credit which comes in in April is certainly ... is welcomed by people on low incomes, but it worries me that there is this demarcation line. Parents may earn up to £30 000, what about those who are earning £31-32 000 and have 2 children, maybe 3 children? They’re not going to get any help at all.

M.H. First, let me deal with the question of 2 children, because under the tax credit system you can get over £100 towards the costs of 2 children, that’s the maximum. If it costs you £150, that’s what we’ve taken as the maximum for childcare costs for 2 children, the credit system can pay you £105. So, it’s a generous credit system. There’s always a barrier at which, if you are going to have means testing, at which you will not qualify, and you’ve chosen a figure just above that barrier. But can we come back on that other thing you talked about, Fenola, which I do agree entirely with you. One of the reasons why we are injecting money through individuals into the system, is that is one way in which we can raise the quality of the childcare. Because I mean every mum wants to be assured, if they’re going out to work and leaving their children in childcare, that it’s a high-quality, good childcare setting.

M.K. Which is presumably one of the reasons for which the government has decided to appoint Ofsted to oversee the inspection of people who look after children, and I’d like to go to a couple of callers who are worried about Ofsted taking over. I’d like to start with Sarah Clarke-Smith in Derbyshire.

S. C-S. Good morning, Martha, good morning, Margaret. Nice to have the opportunity to speak to you. I am a registered childminder and have been for the past four and a half years, and up until the last couple of weeks, I’ve been fairly busy. But now, I’ve decided to finish childminding and offering my service in the area, and I know that I am not alone in this. One of the deciding factors for myself was that we would, as childminders, no longer be able to rely on the support of a caring agency
i.e. the social services, which is an agency that is concerned with the all-round development of young children and not just the educational aspect of child-rearing. I feel very much that, during this current debate, we have heard very little about the mothering and the nurturing that babies and children require for good social development. And I know from my experience that that is why parents have chosen childminders, so that they have got a mature lady who probably has had experience of child-rearing. So that their children can benefit in this way. Now, childminding is, or can be, a very stressful job. You're on your own with young children, and I have had experiences in the past where I've been very dependent on my social worker to give me support in stressful or difficult circumstances. And I feel that maybe Ofsted isn't focused on this kind of support that's needed and that very young children might be a little more vulnerable than they are now in these circumstances.

M.K. Rose Murphy, in Cambridge, you have something to add to this point.

R.M. Yes. I work as an advisor for the local authority and during yesterday's programme, Chris Woodhead said that Ofsted would not be providing an advisory service, otherwise objectivity is compromised during the inspection process, which I can understand. But what I want to know is, if Ofsted isn't going to provide an advisory service for childminders and others who work with children in isolation, as your caller just said, who is going to provide this very important service?

M.K. This does seem to be a very important point, Margaret Hodge. Who is going to provide this very important service?

M.H. Well I'm very glad I have got this opportunity to put the records straight, and I hope, Sarah, when you've heard what I've got to say, you will reconsider your position. What we're establishing is a distinct new arm of Ofsted, which will bring together the best of early years education inspection and the best of childcare inspection, registration and support, so it's not going to be Ofsted as you know it for schools. It is going to be something that is as concerned about the child's
development, emotional development and the nurturing, as it ... we are concerned about the intellectual and cognitive development of the child.

**M.K.** Yes, but Chris Woodhead did rule out Ofsted offering support.

**M.H.** What we want to happen is that local authorities, working through early years partnerships, will provide that support and advice to childminders like Sarah. So Sarah won't lose the support. The support will continue to be provided by the Roses of this world, working in the local authority through the partnership. We are dividing up the support and development role from the inspection and regulation role, in the same way as we have done elsewhere. And we think that's a better way, having the one to ensure that you're having high quality, but also having the support to individuals. So, Sarah, you won't be losing your social work support, and Rose will carry on doing that job that she's currently doing in development, if she chooses to stay with the local authority.

**M.K.** Sarah? Does that answer your concern? Rose? Would you like to answer that?

**R.M.** Yes, I can appreciate what Margaret is saying and recognise the real need to ensure quality, and people out there in isolation really do need a number, a person to phone for help, and it would be reassuring if we could be guaranteed that will stay.

**M.H.** That will continue to happen, but let me put this to you. I had a childminder the other day who moved from one area to another and she had to go, right through again, the re-registration process, the re-inspection to get herself registered as a childminder. That was a complete hassle, she had been childminding for 10 years, why should she, just because she moved areas, go through the whole procedure again? What we're introducing is a national capacity, a national set of standards, which will be as involved with childcare and child development as the current social services inspectorate is, but bring together, in a seamless and integrated way, early years education and childcare. I always say, and I'll just say this, Martha, quickly, kids don't distinguish between being cared for and being educated, and we've got to stop doing that and think about all the child's needs in the round.
M.K. Now, we mentioned the need for qualifications a little earlier. Alison Johnson's calling from Derby. You're from the professional association of nursery nurses.

A.J. Yes, good morning. I represent the Association of Nursery Nurses, and our association has over 6000 qualified childcare workers, and many of our members are nannies working in the family home, and I was pleased earlier to hear you were talking about high-quality care, and also the need for national standards. But, we have a significant number of nanny members, and whilst we recognise that children can be at risk when they're alone with a carer in the home, with an unqualified person, we are concerned that there is an unregulated system for employing nannies in this country. And we would like to ask how you can guarantee children's safety and protection without a nanny registration system?

M.H. Well, I think I’ve probably talked to you before, Alison, and I’ve probably told you that what we can’t do is provide a complete fail-safe system. In the end, the parent who employs the nanny must make the appropriate checks to make sure the record is straight, and also, the parent is the one who, day to day, sees the child, talks to the nanny, and is the best person to ensure there is a fail-safe system, but having said that...

M.K. But, wouldn't a register of nannies go somewhere towards addressing parents' worries?

M.H. What we are doing is ensuring, through the registration of nanny agencies, that they do make all the appropriate checks, right through from police checks to qualification checks, and references, to ensure that the people they recommend to parents have got the appropriate qualifications and are not people who shouldn't be working with young children. A nanny register, I think, is just not feasible, because nannies move all around the country, it's very difficult to keep track on them. And then, you have this extremely difficult problem of what happens if a nanny and a family fall out? The parents complain to the people who run the register and say you should take this women, or young girl, off the
register. Who’s to judge whether or not actually she’s an appropriate person to work with young children, or if it isn’t a personality clash?

M.K. So, Alison, do you think the registration of nanny agencies would work?

A.J. It needs to be a compulsory registration, because at the moment it is a voluntary registration of agencies and we can’t be sure that all agencies are going to follow best practice. We do our best to work hard here at the professional Association of Nursery Nurses to do our best to advise parents and nannies on best practice.

M.H. I’ll just say on that, that I’m currently talking to my colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry who oversee the regulation of agencies, to see how much we can put into regulation and I hope I can meet some of Alison’s concerns through these discussions.

M.K. To Leeds now and Cecily Hamlin. You’re an early years teacher and you’re also concerned about qualifications.

C.H. Yes, I certainly am and I would like to take up the point with that the previous caller made. Qualifications are absolutely crucial. I’m most concerned about ... a very quick expansion of the childcare services. My own experience is more or less totally in schools, but I do have contacts with the local authority daycare. I know the care that they take in employing properly qualified people and also giving them access to quality on-going in-service training. But the private staker - I’m not saying that some of them are not very good, because I do know that they - but I’m concerned that people will not set up daycare establishments with the absolute minimum of qualified staff. I do know of places where unqualified or minimally qualified staff are employed. Now people like this do need an awful lot of supervision and help. We have NNEB who have come to school from the private sector, and their terms and conditions of service are very poor cases they are being paid the absolute minimum wage.

M.K. Which is something that has been backed up by research from your own department, a study on the effective provision of pre-school
education found that the services run by the state, whether they were schools or nurseries, were actually much better than the private sector.

**M.H.** One of the great challenges we face is to raise the qualifications throughout the sector as it currently is and to make sure, as we build new places that they are of a high quality, and nothing matters more than the quality of people working with young children.

**C.H.** Why not expand the state sector?

**M.H.** The answer is: to ensure that all the people working with young children do have access to high-quality training. And that is one of the strategies we're building up. He have given money to the TECs, we've put money through the partnerships and local education authorities, specifically for the private and voluntary sector. We're putting more money into the F.E. sector. They are spending about £100 million a year on training people. We have got this distinct arm of Ofsted. We've brought in the early learning goals which gives a framework for all practitioners.

**M.K.** But you've got a big task ahead. 40% of childcare staff who don't have any qualifications at all, and in day nurseries, half the staff don't have to have qualifications.

**M.H.** It's a massive challenge to raise the quality and the qualifications of those working with young children, but I can say one thing, Martha, a lot of children are looked after by loving grandparents, or siblings, or friends, and they - don't lets go overboard on qualifications - they do matter. They matter particularly if you're doing the nursery education, the early years education, the 3 and 4-year-olds, which is why we are putting so much in place. But equally, just a loving, cuddling, warm home, is also very important, somebody you can trust to be warm and caring with your children matters as much.

**M.K.** Although, as the Conservative politician Theresa May was telling us yesterday, there can be a problem to qualify for the WFTC, you have to be registered. So your lovely cuddly grandmother has to go off and register herself. Theresa May has come across cases like that.
M.H. Well, I did hear Theresa May saying that. And the answer to that is that the state is not going to do everything. And if you are lucky enough to have a grandmother who lives close enough and who is not herself working, and who will look after your child, I'm sure that's a really good sort of alternative solution. But why should the state pay for that?

M.K. Because people on low incomes need help with childcare and they can only get it if they go to registered childcare.

M.H. Well, I'm assuming they are not paying their grandmother. If they are paying their grandmother, if the grandmother is choosing to look after the child, it's a bit mad, because we are trying to expand the sector, there's always finite resources, however much money I've got, to put it in that direction. So it's partly a question of where do we put the money. And it's the other issue that there are limits to what the state ought to do in developing and supporting childcare.

M.K. Now let's talk to Anne Jones who is also concerned about training.

Anne J. Oh, good morning to you. I think what is very clear is we've got a hotchpotch of childcare and I realise what a big job it is for your government to put right the neglect of the last ..., well, century really. But, I do think that training is important, grandmothers or not. And I am a grandmother, and my grandchildren have just arrived, because my daughter is trying to make her marriage work by working as well as raising her children. And really, families are in some cases in quite a mess now. But I do think anyone who looks after children should be trained. The assumption that because people have raised children they are qualified is where we are going totally wrong. There is now greater need than ever for children to all start school at an equal playing field and if some children are receiving very poor care - and others very good care - they're handicapped from the word go. (...) You have mentioned a number of schemes for inspection and regulation that are just ad hoc. there shouldn't be a warning that an inspector is coming. I know in many of the nurseries - and I've been very involved in teaching under-5s and I have wide experience of this - parents have to leave their children
at the door, you have to notify if you’re going to visit, and some of the care is not good. And we’ve also had a problem around here, as many playgroups have simply had to close and the children are more deprived than ever because parents can’t get them into childcare.

**M.H.** Anne, I couldn’t agree more. Training is crucial. There are more people involved in early years education and childcare professionally than there are in teaching, and traditionally we have not invested properly in the training of people working with children at this very crucial age. And we’re trying to put that right, it is a massive task, but we’re trying to put that right, we’re trying to raise standards, but it won’t happen overnight. It will take us probably 5 to 10 years to get the sort of quality childcare and early years education that Sweden have, because they’ve been at it for decades and decades before we started. And, can I just say on the issue of inspections, I couldn’t agree more with that as well. We don’t want massive preparation for inspections, we want people to be able to spot-check, particularly if children are being locked up ...er ...looked after in the home. And one of the ways in which the new arm of Ofsted will work, it will have a local capacity and it will include spot-checks on nurseries and on day care, but training is crucial, we understand that, and we’re putting in place those bits of the jigsaw to actually raise the quality, and the status of those who work with children in the early years.

**M.K.** Anne, thank you. To Carla Schimmels in London now.

**C.S.** My point was that - I edit a magazine called The Register, a childcare listings magazine - and what is overwhelmingly strong from the women who use it, is that childcare needs are so varied and you seem to be in this programme talking principally about chidminding and nurseries. Many many women whose working lives are such that they need a nanny, not necessarily a qualified nanny, they may need the after-school-care run; they may need someone picking up at nursery at lunch time...They have 2 children, they can’t get a childmindder who can take the 2 children, because their ages are such that they haven’t got the places. Nurseries, particularly private nurseries, if you have 2
children they are exorbitant. It would cost more probably than having a
nanny or a nanny-share and the working families tax credit doesn’t
cover that. There’s no flexibility.

M.H. Carla, just on that first part, I don’t agree that there isn’t
flexibility, we are also developing a lot of out-of-school childcare
provision, that’s anything from breakfast clubs to after-school clubs, to
holiday clubs, and there’s been a massive expansion of those. Children
who are there, are eligible for childcare tax credit.

C.S. What about when you have a one-year-old and a 5-year-old?

M.H. Well, you are right about flexibility, but there are a lot of schemes,
for example wrap-around care for the 5-year-old, or indeed childminders,
it depends on the choices you make. I think it is one of the strengths of
the UK system, given the diversity, is that there is choice. I mean in
Sweden, it is a bit, sort of, you know, you’ve got your state nurseries
there, whether you like it or not.

M.K. We don’t have the choice of sending our children to a state
nursery. There are very very few in this country, very few of your early
excellence centres, so people don’t have the choice. It’s the private
sector, or nothing.

M.H. No, no, Martha, give us time, and what I’m determined to do is
build the infrastructure of a high quality. If we went at it too fast, we
would just not meet the quality standards. I should probably have
talked about this earlier. Not only do we have early excellence centres,
that you talked about, that do provide integrated care and education - 29
of them around the country - we also have the Sure Start programme
where we’re providing 250 projects over the life-time of this government
for very young children from 0 to 3, which will not just provide support
for the young children and the childcare for them, but also support for
families to help them with those very early years when you come to
grips with being a good parent.

C.S. But I get mothers saying, “I want my child to go to a nursery can’t
get my child into a nursery, so I’m going to have to go down the nanny-
share route", because their child is under one, and no way can they get into a state nursery, unless their child is at risk or whatever ...

**M.H.** That's no longer ...

**C.S.** I'm at the coalface. I'm dealing with these women every day and that's what they tell me. And in the private sector, they are saying they have to get their child's name down at birth almost, if their child is to get a chance of going to a nursery before the age of one.

**M.H.** Carla, in 2 years we haven't created the whole infrastructure we want, but we have made good progress.

**M.K.** Let's hear from someone else at the coalface, Helen Hayes in Essex. It sounds as if you're facing a sort of crisis.

**H.H.** Good Morning, I'm in the situation where I have 3 children, 6, 4, and a baby, I have worked ever since I had the children. I'm due back at work tomorrow after maternity leave, I had an au pair whom I trained up myself. She called my on December 23 that she's staying at home in France and not returning. I am now in a situation where I'm due back at work tomorrow at 9 a.m. and I have no cover. The other point I'd like to make is, I'd like to move the issue slightly to the fathers. My husband does what he can, but if a client wishes to see him at 8.45 a.m., he as to go, because our livelihood depends on it, and if I wasn't there to back up, to take the children to the nursery or whatever ... I do feel there should be more flexibility in the total working environment, especially for the fathers, because a lot of men do want to get involved, and there's the huge stigma, if you leave work at 5.05 to go and collect your children, then you're not going to progress in the corporate boardroom.

**M.K.** I'd just like to bring in Anne Townsend in Brighton. Anne, you've had experience of how things operate elsewhere in the E.U.

**A.T.** Six years ago, I was living in Germany and going through a divorce, and I had - well she was just over one at the time my daughter - a private childminder at the time. So I thought I'd look into state nurseries and I did. And they jumped in, almost immediately, offered me a place, and it was for something like £30-£50 a month, full-time care, morning till late afternoon, I was working an 8-hour day at the time.
M.H. Can I first deal with the issue of fathers, because I agree entirely with what Helen said, that fathers should do more. We have just introduced the parental leave directive as from 1 December of last year. That, for the first time, gives the right to 3-months unpaid parental leave, and I hope fathers will start taking that. I’m hoping to be launching soon a campaign which will encourage firms to be much more ... eh eh ... ensure that both fathers and mothers can spend time on their caring responsibilities, whether with children, or elderly, sick and disabled relatives. I think the sort of disaster that’s faced Helen - I’ve been in that situation and it’s an absolute nightmare - but I’m not sure what anyone can do to avoid people letting you down. These things do happen and they are a disaster to you. I just hope you will work your way through this and find alternative childcare.

M.K. Perhaps if state nurseries were available, then these crises wouldn’t happen.

M.H. We keep coming back to this issue, that the state should provide everything. I mean, I really do think ... Think of where we are at. We are in a situation where we have got over 100,000 childminders, a lot of private and voluntary nurseries, a lot providing good care, what we’ve got to do is build on that. The state will also provide, there are an increasing number of nursery classes, nursery schools, schools that provide wrap-around care, so that children can be there all day. We’ve got our early excellence centres, we’ve got the sure start centres, there’s a huge amount happening out there, to improve things. I think there is a gap, here is a particular gap around very young children, 0 to 3, and it’s one that is very difficult to fill and ensure that we’ve got the appropriate facilities there. But, it’s got to come both through the private sector and the state sector, and we’re trying to do that, through the WFTC as well as providing the infrastructure. So, Anne, we’re building on what’s already here, rather than trying to implement what’s going on in Europe.

A.T. But I don’t think ... I mean at the moment, it’s not in place is it?
M.H. I mean we've been at it, Anne. I keep saying this, if you start with nothing and within 2 years build as much as the previous government did in 18 years, we're not doing badly and it would be disastrous to suddenly, rapidly open a huge number of nurseries, not have the appropriate people working there, not have the quality that would make you feel that your baby was getting a really good early years experience in the setting in which you were leaving her or him.

M.K. Let's address now the amount of money that people in the sector are getting paid. Barbara Batten from Luton.

B.B. I was phoning to say that looking after a child I get paid between £2 and £2.25 an hour. Now, obviously that is below the minimum wage, but I accept I'm self-employed. What I wanted to know was if I'm expected to go through training, Ofsted reports, have people come round etc., etc. What is the government going to do to compensate me for that, because I could actually earn more going out as a cleaner at £5 an hour.

M.H. Again, one of the legacies is that childminding, and earliest childcare, has traditionally been seen as a low-status job here, and one of the jobs I've got to do is to turn that round. Now, obviously, if we expect people to be trained, and obviously if we're raising the quality, what must go with that is a change in wage and salary levels for that job. And we're doing a number of things. The minimum wage is one thing that I've talked about. I think the fact that we've got the WFTC, supports low-income families in being able to afford higher-quality childcare and therefore childcare workers can be paid more.

B.B. Am I correct in understanding that it's actually up to the childminder though to claim the tax back on that?

M.H. Eh, the parent claims ... the, it will go ... the childminder will have to claim it through the system.

B.B. So, as far as the childminder is concerned, it's actually going to make their check less at the end of the month, from the parent, if you like, and then they are going to have to go through the system to claim it back, against their own tax presumably.
M.H. Well, if you earn more, you will have to pay more tax, that is true, you will be earning more.

Say you got a check for £100 a month, they get a tax return of £50 and they pay you £50 and you have to go through the system to claim the other £50.

M.H. No. The parent herself will ... get the eligibility ... for ... eh ... the tax credit ... that she will get, and so ... but you will have to claim that back, that is right, and you will then get taxed at a higher income, that is also right, but you will be getting more money, which is why you are paying more tax.

M.K. One more question, Catherine Mason from Bristol.

C.M. I found difficulty when my son started school, with a 5-month old baby, finding childcare that covers her needs and his needs, because he has emotional behaviour difficulties and needs collection from school. It hasn't been possible to find affordable childcare to meet both their needs and return to work, and I am now redundant from my former job.

M.H. (...) We are looking, particularly for children with special needs, and children with disabilities, as to whether we can change the childcare tax credit rules. So you could have a childminder in your home who could look after both.

M.K. I'm afraid we'll have to leave it there. Margaret Hodge, thank you for joining us.
WEDDED TO WELFARE

Do They Want to Marry a Man - Or The State?
A WOMAN NEEDS
A ROLE MODEL LIKE
A FISH NEEDS A
BICYCLE...

L'objet de cette thèse est d'examiner la politique familiale au Royaume-Uni, en particulier en ce qui concerne la garde des jeunes enfants, surtout pendant les 18 ans au pouvoir du parti conservateur de 1979 à 1997, mais aussi, pendant le premier mandat de Tony Blair.

Il s'agit de comprendre :
- pourquoi un pays considéré comme patrie de l'Etat providence n'a pas investi dans des services d'accueil pour des enfants de moins de cinq ans ?
- pourquoi un pays, pôle de référence à différents moments décisifs dans la lutte pour les droits des femmes, se trouve aujourd'hui à la traîne en Europe en ce qui concerne les mesures permettant aux parents, et notamment aux mères, de concilier travail salarié et responsabilités familiales ?

Il s'agit d'essayer de répondre à ces questions en examinant tous les facteurs historiques, culturels, politiques et économiques qui ont contribué à façonner les choix en ce domaine, et également de peser toutes les conséquences de cette situation.

Nous avons jugé nécessaire de considérer la garde des enfants dans le cadre d'un examen global de ce que l'on peut appeler une 'politique familiale', puisque les attitudes à l'égard de la famille sont au cœur des contradictions en ce qui concerne l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, dans les faits, et non seulement en droit.

Childcare and Family Policy in the United Kingdom (1979-2000)

The aim of this study is to examine 'family policy' in the United Kingdom, in particular in the field of childcare, during the 18 years of Conservative rule from 1979 to 1997, and the first mandate of New Labour, and to answer two main questions:

Why did childcare provision and nursery education remain the missing link of the Welfare State?

Why is Britain lagging behind other European countries as regards measures enabling parents, in particular mothers, to reconcile work and domestic life?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to first examine the historical, cultural, political and economic factors that have contributed to moulding policy in this field, before weighing up the consequences for women, men, children and society as a whole.

Although the United Kingdom has never had an explicit 'family policy', many policy decisions have a direct affect on families, and the family is at the heart of the contradictions that prevent women from benefiting from their legal right to equality.

Discipline : Anglais

Mots-clés : femmes, famille, garde d'enfants, égalité des sexes.

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