

Work and Home: Where Do You Draw The Line?

Cityparents Annual Survey 2021/22



In our latest Annual Survey, conducted in December 2021, we asked Cityparents members how their work and home lives fit together. As the new working world generated by the pandemic has resulted in widespread acceptance of remote working and increased understanding of how employees manage family responsibilities alongside their jobs, we wanted to explore the practical impact of this on daily life.

Louisa Symington-Mills, Founder and CEO of Cityparents comments:

“The results show evidence of real progress for working parents with the majority of respondents feeling more in control of their work pattern now compared with pre-pandemic.

However, the dominance of remote work and the growth of pervasive technologies mean people are finding it harder than ever to set and maintain boundaries, with clear repercussions for mental wellbeing.”

The key findings emerging from our survey are summarised on the following pages.



1. Setting and respecting boundaries is a major challenge

72% of respondents are not able to regularly and effectively maintain boundaries between work and home life. Numerous respondents mention longer work hours and overlap with family time. Many acknowledge that self-discipline plays a part but that heavy workloads and an employer expectation to be 'always on' largely override.

72%

struggle to maintain boundaries

Cityparents member:

“I do not feel in control, I am not working well or productively.”

2. Members find little or no time to decompress

36% say they rarely find time to decompress; only 15% say this is something they can regularly do. Many talk about the lack of time for self-care, and for exercise in particular. While many enjoy the flexibility of working from home, lots acknowledge that the commute used to provide a natural barrier between work and home and miss having this break in the day. There were many concerning comments including, “I mostly feel like I am coping, not thriving”, “Totally burnt out in mind, body and soul!”, “Very tired and overwhelmed.”

3. Work commitments very often take priority over family life

73% of respondents put work commitments ahead of family / home commitments either always, frequently or occasionally. ‘Work first most of the time unless there is a crisis’ remarked one; others made similar comments, referencing the difficulty of allocating priorities. “I struggle to know what is ‘fair’ to both home and work parties” and of managing boundaries: “I still insist on not working weekends.” 8% of respondents would not put work above family.

73%

tend to put work ahead of family



Cityparents member:
“Technology has meant that work follows me. There is no break from work at home.”

4. Technology is helpful in allowing flexibility - but there's no escape

46% say they respond to work communications outside of work hours, at least several times a day. 73% respond to work communications whilst managing family commitments and 68% check work messages while on annual leave. Email remains the biggest culprit with 31% frequently using it outside of work hours.

5. Career prospects are perceived to be deteriorating, especially for home workers

28% say their career prospects are worse than before the onset of the pandemic, and 70% believe that those working solely from home will not have the same opportunities as those based in the office. Additional comments repeatedly referenced the expression 'out of sight, out of mind' and the perception that presence in the office is still widely preferred by business managers - "despite the policies being in place, people still equate presenteeism with ambition and ability" said one member.

Career prospects



Survey Methodology and Demographics

Cityparents Annual Survey 2021/22 was carried out between 11th November to 7th December 2021. It received 550 responses, of which 86% were female and 14% were male. 93% were professionals with caring or parenting responsibilities.

