



PARENTS AND CARERS IN PERFORMING ARTS (PIPA) COVID REPORT

PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Parents and carers have been under relentless pressure since the first UK wide Covid related lockdown in March 2020, facing round the clock caring and home-schooling responsibilities. Many carers and parents have also taken on additional caring responsibilities for elderly and vulnerable people affected by Covid. The purpose of this research, conducted in October 2020, is to investigate the impact of Covid on people with intersectional caring responsibilities working in the performing arts - an industry, that has been forced to close, resulting in widespread redundancies and very little work available for a predominantly [self-employed workforce](#).

An online survey, conducted by PiPA in [June 2020](#), highlighted the vulnerability of parents and carers in the performing arts. Women, solo parents and carers, as well as those facing other kinds of social exclusion were highlighted as the most vulnerable. The aim of this second PiPA survey, conducted in October 2020, was to gain a deeper insight into the extent to which caring responsibilities during Covid, when combined with other protected characteristics and/or economic disadvantage, lead to increased challenges and further marginalisation of these already under-represented groups.

KEY FINDINGS

The whole population is affected by Covid but the performing arts has been hit particularly hard. Data from the [ONS in August 2020](#) found that 51% of Arts workers have been furloughed compared to 13% across the whole country. Figures released by [BECTU](#) in August 2020 estimated over 7,000 performing arts workers have been made redundant plus thousands of freelancers, zero hours workers and fixed term contract workers left without any income in the theatre sector alone.

1. **One in four women are doing 90% or more of the childcare** and are struggling to work or to seek work. The pressure of school and nursery closures combined with lack of job opportunities in the performing arts is impacting on women's well-being and causing them to rethink their careers. Women are 50% more likely than men to be uncertain about their futures in the performing arts
2. **Talent haemorrhage:** seven out of ten parents and carers (72%) are considering abandoning their career in the performing arts.
3. **D/deaf and disabled respondents** or those with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to have taken on full-time caring responsibilities (doing 80% or more of the childcare) due to the pandemic. They are also the least satisfied with Government support with many

not qualifying for SEISS freelance support scheme because they have tended to work fewer hours.

4. **Mental health crisis:** Eight out of ten respondents reported significant stress due to the pandemic with over one third of women with caring responsibilities reporting that they are overwhelmed or in fight or flight mode. Almost half (45%) of D/deaf and disabled respondents class themselves as 'really stressed' or in 'fight or flight' mode.
5. **Financial pressures and work challenges:** Work has collapsed, with nearly 60% of respondents now working fewer than eight hours a week, compared to only 7% before Covid. Childcare responsibilities mean that it is much harder to be available for what few work opportunities come up. 80% of respondents were wholly or partly self-employed: many failed to qualify, or only qualified for a small amount of SEISS support, frequently this was because of having taken a period of maternity leave or reduced working hours due to care responsibilities.



"This report evidences the scale of impact on women in the performing arts workforce. With many crippled by the increase in caring responsibilities they are struggling to hold down a job or put themselves forward for the little work that is available. In fact, available work has fallen off a cliff. Without urgent action and a clear message of support, the sector will haemorrhage its female talent with caring responsibilities as a direct result of the pandemic. At worst, this is catastrophic for the sector and for equality. We need to reverse this shocking trend before it's too late."

PiPA Chair Sarah Jackson, OBE, authority on flexible working, women at work, gender pay-gap.

"If we're going to see healthy numbers of women on stage, backstage, behind and in front of camera after Covid we need to act now. PiPA's research has shown that too many women see no feasible way to return to the profession they love. There is a real risk, as more and more women drop out of our industry that decades of gender equality will be lost. Changes to SEISS eligibility, the mandatory monitoring of the numbers of parents and carers being employed and the implementation of job sharing schemes would go some way to ensuring that we will continue see all kinds of women in all kinds of roles across the performing arts."

Rakie Ayola, award winning actor, producer and PiPA Ambassador. She is Patron of The Childhood Tumour Trust and Trustee of The Actor's Children's Trust.



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WHO TOOK PART

500 performing arts workers responded to PiPA's survey between 11th September and 11th October 2020. 91% of respondents were parents and 14 % cared for a disabled child or elderly, ill or disabled adult. 80% of respondents were female, 75% freelance and 46% performers.

Survey respondents represent different sectors within the performing arts: 25% work primarily in Music, 66% in Theatre and 9% in Dance.

Intersectional care responsibilities:

1. 23% of respondents self-identified as coming from an economically disadvantaged background*.
2. 11% of respondents were D/deaf, disabled or had a long term health condition,
 - of whom 38% also identified as coming from an economically disadvantaged background compared to 23% of those without a disability.
3. 14% of respondents were solo parents and carers,
 - of whom 35% also identified as coming from an economically disadvantaged background compared to 22% of parents and carers in couple relationships.
4. 7% of respondents come from Black, Asian or ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The whole dataset was separately analysed for respondents from Music, Dance, Theatre and Opera. There were very few statistically significant variations. Unless otherwise indicated all data pertains to all four sectors as a whole.

All quotes, unless otherwise credited, are anonymous responses to the survey.

* It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this self-selecting sample. Economically disadvantaged is not a definitive classification and is intended to give an indication of the intersectional impact of caring responsibilities for further investigation if appropriate.

COVID AND WORK

There is a stark contrast in working hours before and after Covid, showing that parents and carers have a hugely impacted ability and opportunity to work due to the pandemic. Pre Covid, only 7% of respondents were working a maximum of 8 hours a week, this has leapt to 57%. Also, before Covid, over half of respondents were working 29 hours or more in an average week, this has fallen to 12% since Covid.

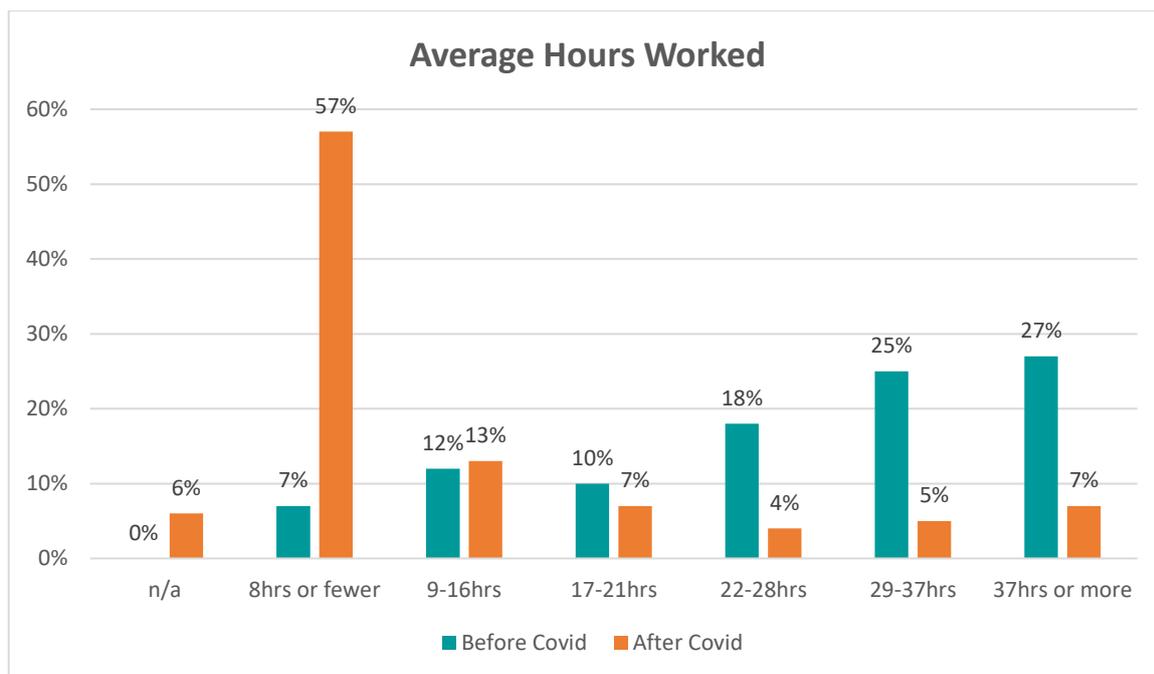


Figure 1

There is a general lack of work in the sector as a direct result of lockdown measures. However, this is compounded for parents and carers who report feeling overwhelmed by the stress of home schooling or other care giving demands and are unable to compete for the few opportunities there are:

“There is going to be so much competition for every tiny opportunity as people scabble for work, and I just feel less able to compete because of my ongoing caring commitments and recent career break.”

Others report that they self-select out of opportunities or turn down work due to the fear of having to look after children or relatives in the event of an unexpected school or nursery closure, or illness:

“I am still nervous about taking on new work (what work there is!) in case I need to drop it to do childcare again (I already have 2 friends whose children's schools have closed temporarily because of local outbreaks).”

One Stage Manager commented:

‘If I can't attend the show for 2 weeks cause my kid is off school that's me out of the contract.’

GOVERNMENT PROVISION

The ability to receive government support poses a problem for parents and carers in the performing arts, due to the complex and nuanced nature of the eligibility thresholds. This combined with the uncertainty of childcare due to school closures and increased competition, with a higher number of people applying for a smaller number of jobs, has left parents and carers feeling like they have ‘fallen through the cracks’ in receiving support:

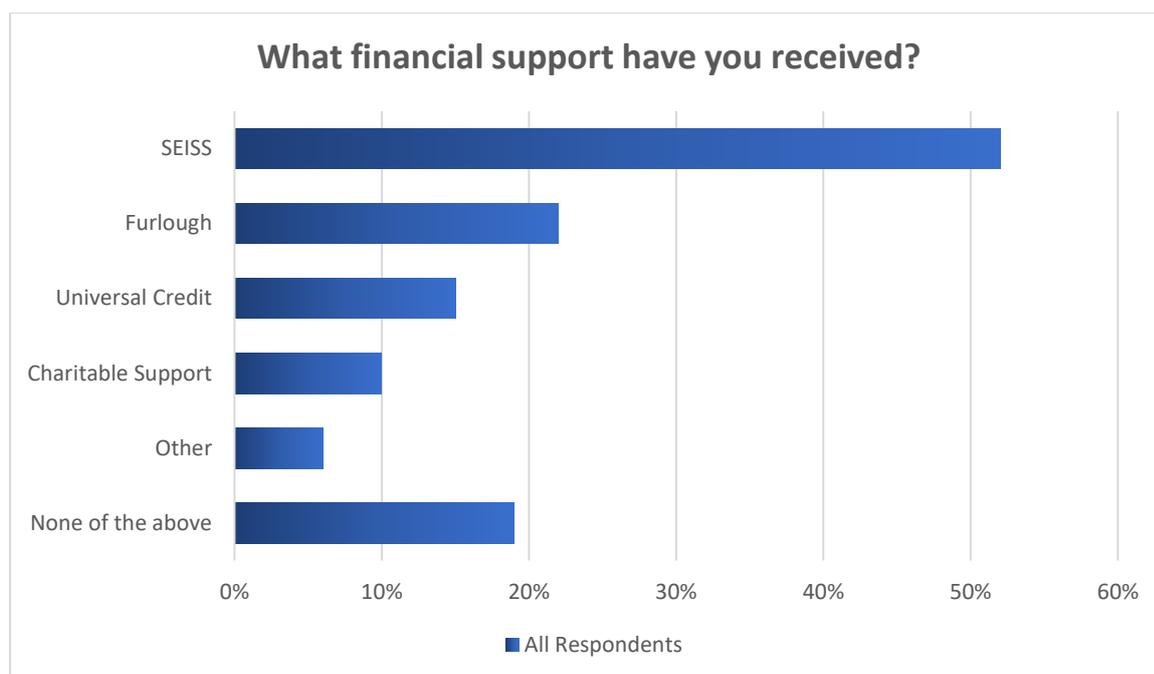


Figure 2

A [report published by Excluded UK](#) estimated that 1.6 million self-employed workers had missed out on support. Mixed income models, such as working part-time on a PAYE basis job as well as being self-employed, are common practice for many performing arts workers who support their creative work with a steady income stream. However, this has left them ineligible for Government support:

“As I am employed and self-employed I was below the 50% cut off for govt support.”

“People in my position fell through the cracks with portfolio careers of mixed employed and freelance status or unfortunately timed job changes without the required freelance history or length of employment at a particular place”

“I earn below the tax threshold so was not eligible for the help for freelancers.”

Self-employed workers on maternity allowance experienced SEISS calculations vastly reduced due to being on maternity leave during the 3 year qualifying period:

“They did not take maternity leave into consideration with the SEISS grant so having had a baby in 2016 my grant was much lower than it would have been if they had discounted that tax year.”

“I was on maternity leave twice in the last 3 years. They took this into account so that really effected the average that they paid me. And now, without any further support, I don't know how I'll carry on in this industry.”

Parents and carers, particularly women, [are more likely to work part-time or be self-employed](#). People who work fewer hours in order to look after others may have been eligible for the initial SEISS grant but the amount of the grant would have been significantly lower than it would be had they not had caring responsibilities:

“I am grateful for the SEISS payment. However, I feel I have been paid less and penalised for my earlier maternity years and low income from the re-entry back into work years after having a baby.”

“SEISS was unfair as based on three years when took time out to look after children.”

“I would've got a lot more if my last tax year had been taken into consideration as my business has been steadily growing since returning to work post having my child.”

New SEISS rules from 1 July 2020, meant that people who did not qualify for SEISS - if their income during the qualifying period was affected due to pregnancy or maternity leave - were then eligible to make a claim. There was no change however in the rules for people who had only been previously eligible for a minimal grant because they worked reduced hours in order to accommodate caring responsibilities.

Directors of limited companies, a common employment structure for performing arts workers, have also been excluded from Government support:

“My husband and I are both directors of our own limited company. Because we pay ourselves through dividends to regulate our income we were unable to claim anything near what we earned.”

We asked people how satisfied they were with the Government support provision. On a scale of 1-5 the average satisfaction score across all respondents was 2.69 out of 5 (1 being not satisfied at all and 5 very satisfied).

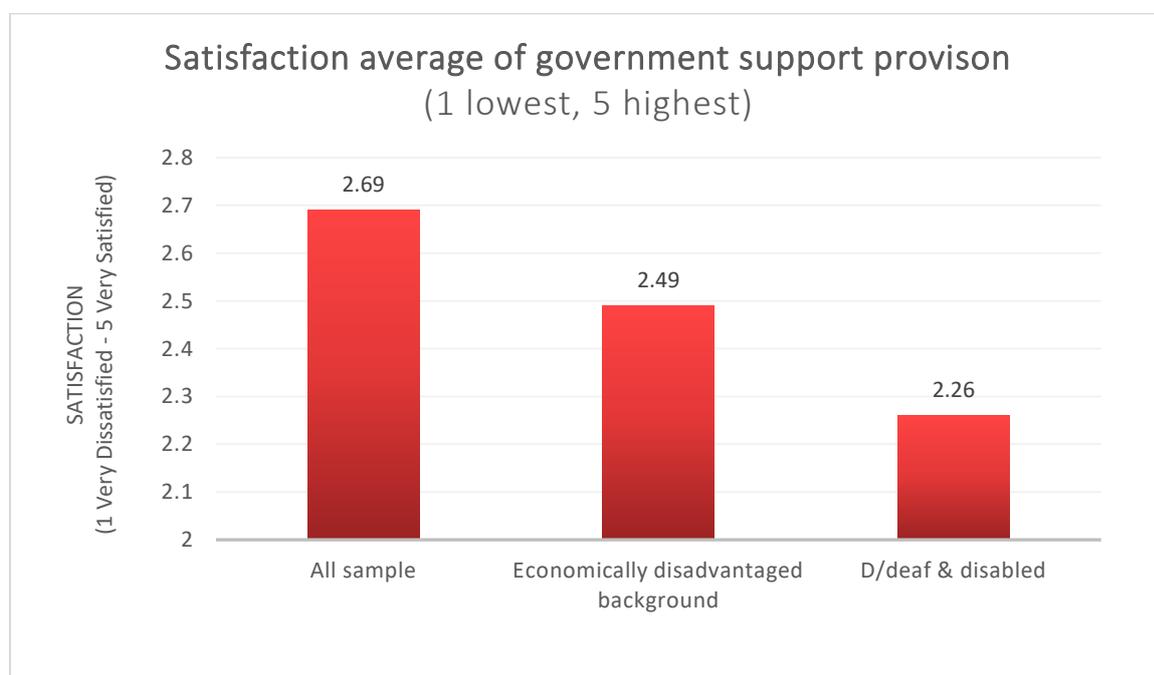


Figure 3

Overall, almost half of respondents (44%) are dissatisfied with the Government support. D/deaf and disabled respondents reported being the least satisfied. The qualitative data indicates that working reduced hours due to disability and/or caring responsibilities may have impacted the entitlement of D/deaf and disabled people to Government support. We are also seeing that those on disability or

carer related benefits, whilst losing their additional income from performing arts, have been excluded from SEISS:

"I was already on benefits due to my disability and did not receive any help from the SEISS."

"I don't work as many hours as I would like because of my caring responsibilities and my own health problems, my income therefore is lower so the SEISS barely covered ongoing business costs, let alone day to day living costs."

"Financially now totally reliant on benefits, Carer's Allowance, Husband's old age pension and attendance allowance."

"The temporary increase to Universal Credit has helped me reduce my monthly incoming/outgoing deficit but the housing element is still far short of the cost of rent in my area."

Those who self-identified as being from an economically disadvantaged background were also less satisfied with Government provision:

"Not eligible for SEISS as only became 100% self-employed in September 2018 the years counted meant I was under the 50% rule largely due to maternity leave."

"I am not the breadwinner as my partner is. He did not qualify for SEISS or furlough which means I, as the lesser earner, am now the sole earner in the household. It is not enough money for a family of 4 to live off."

"My wife hasn't earned due to care commitments for our disabled son and so she cannot claim anything on SEISS."

IMPACT ON WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

We asked what the immediate impact of Covid and subsequent government measures had been on the work and family lives of performing arts professionals. The open text responses were coded by frequency:

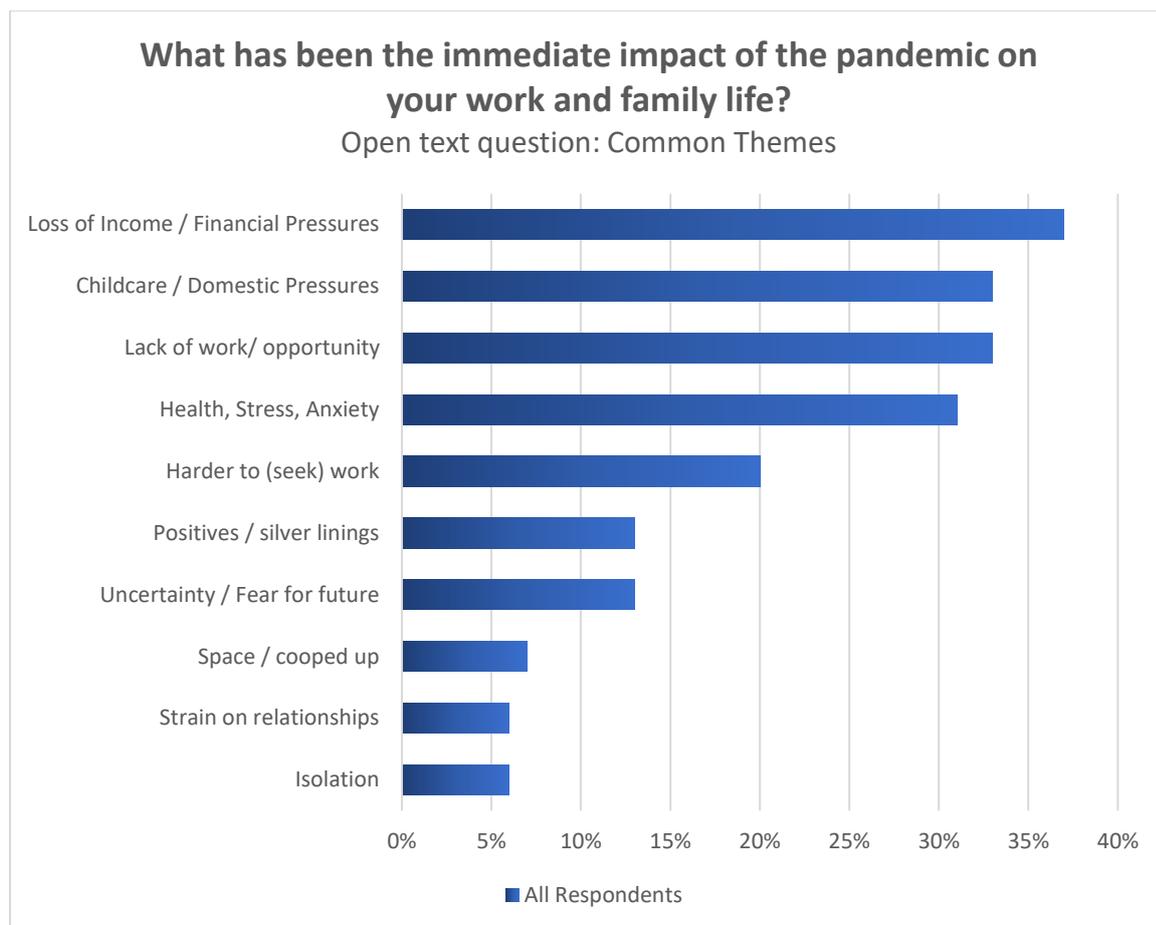


Figure 4

Childcare & Domestic Pressures

One third of respondents mentioned childcare and domestic pressures as a major impact of the pandemic. School and nursery closures and disappearance of the usual tapestry of caring arrangements that solo parents in particular rely on, were reported repeatedly in the free text responses. Increased strain on domestic relationships and/ or being consigned to full-time caring responsibilities to enable a higher-earner partner to go to work were also recurrent themes.

This is covered in further detail in the *Childcare Crisis* section, later in this report.

Financial Pressures

In an already low paid and insecure sector many performing arts workers do not have the financial cushion or savings afforded to those in employment in other sectors which means there is potentially less of a buffer.

Over one third (37%) of respondents cited loss of income and no work (33%) as the major impact of the pandemic, underscoring the vulnerability of a predominantly (80%) self-employed sample with caring responsibilities.

“I am now facing eviction and repossession of my house because I cannot pay my mortgage.”

"We need to pay bills and support our child and are very anxious about how we can continue in the long term to do that."

"Less money for essentials (have had to cut down on food and fuel bills) and no money for my children's extracurricular activities which have had to cease."

"It has put a huge strain on family life, we have had to use food banks and the impact on my health has been horrendous."

Strain on Relationships

The prolonged strain of managing throughout the pandemic has also taken its toll on relationships and marriages:

"Unprecedented stress, anxiety, fear, tears, marriage under strain (husband also performer)."

"Split up from partner in July. From March to June I was responsible for 95% of household expenses and 80% of childcare. Now I am 100% responsible."

Health, Stress and Anxiety

The cumulative impact of reduced income over time, little available work and additional full-time responsibility home schooling has significantly impacted the mental wellbeing of respondents with almost one third (31%) of respondents reporting a direct negative impact on their health, stress and anxiety levels, as well as concerns for their children:

"Mental health issues especially anxiety and depression. [...] Children seeing parents completely stressed and no end or help coming from anywhere."

"During the height of the pandemic I feared for my children's mental health, as I frantically tried to record online provision or create new work; ignoring the children and their needs."

"Every creative outlet that I fought hard for because I wanted to return to my profession after a number of years out being a parent and a parent of a child with additional needs has disappeared. This has had a huge impact on my mental health and well-being."

Silver Linings

Unexpected positives of the pandemic reported by some parents and carers include spending more quality time with dependents and/or better work life balance:

"Impact on family life has been positive in some ways - spending more time with family together at home, helping the children with their home learning more than ever before."

"Husband has been able to work from home so sees more of children."

“We were creative together and had time to talk and read and walk together. We enjoyed the slower pace.”

Of the 13% respondents who reported at least one positive outcome of the pandemic almost all were white British or European and able-bodied.

Intersectionality

The data below from respondents at the intersection of caring responsibilities and other protected characteristics, economic disadvantage and/or solo parents and carers, identifies key variables and differences in the impact of the pandemic on work and family life. This data is reported by exception where there is a statistically significant difference over 5%. If a theme is not referred to then it is comparable to the whole sample data in Figure 4.

Work and Family life: Economically disadvantaged background

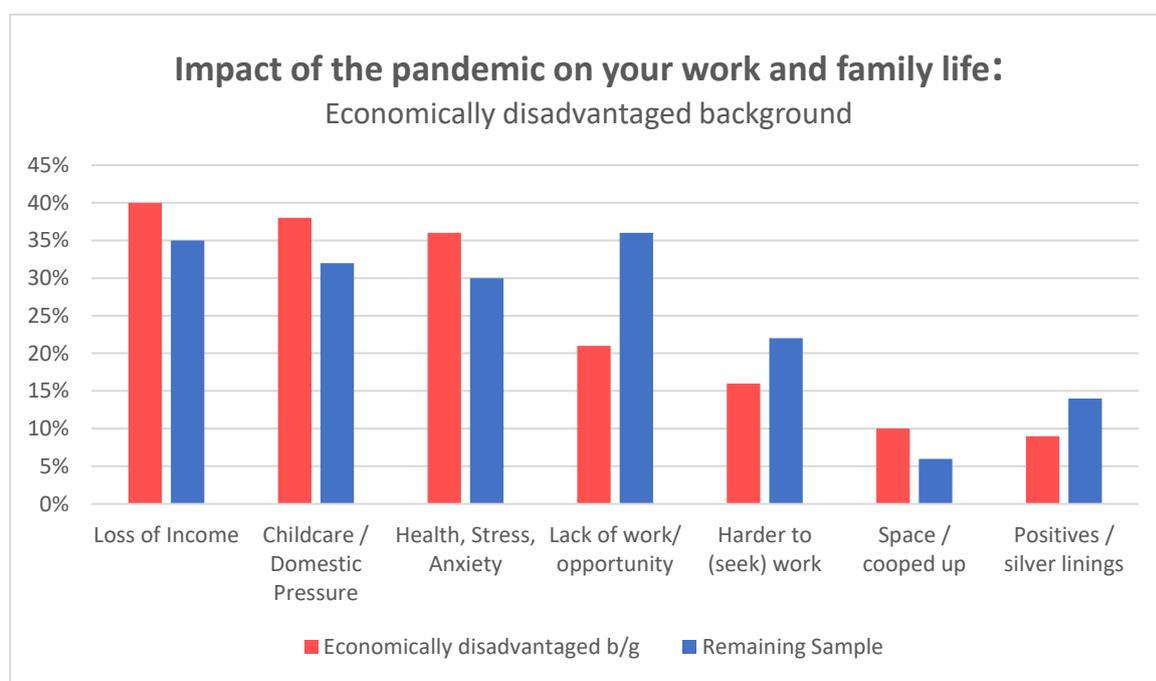


Figure 5

Respondents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (22% of whole sample, 80% female) were:

- more likely to note difficulties with **childcare** such as school closures, unexpectedly becoming the primary carer and **increased domestic pressures**.
- more likely to mention **health** concerns.
- less likely to mention **positives**.
- Less likely to mention the lack of **jobs** and more likely to mention the **financial loss**.

Work and Family life: D/deaf, disabled or those with a long-term health conditions

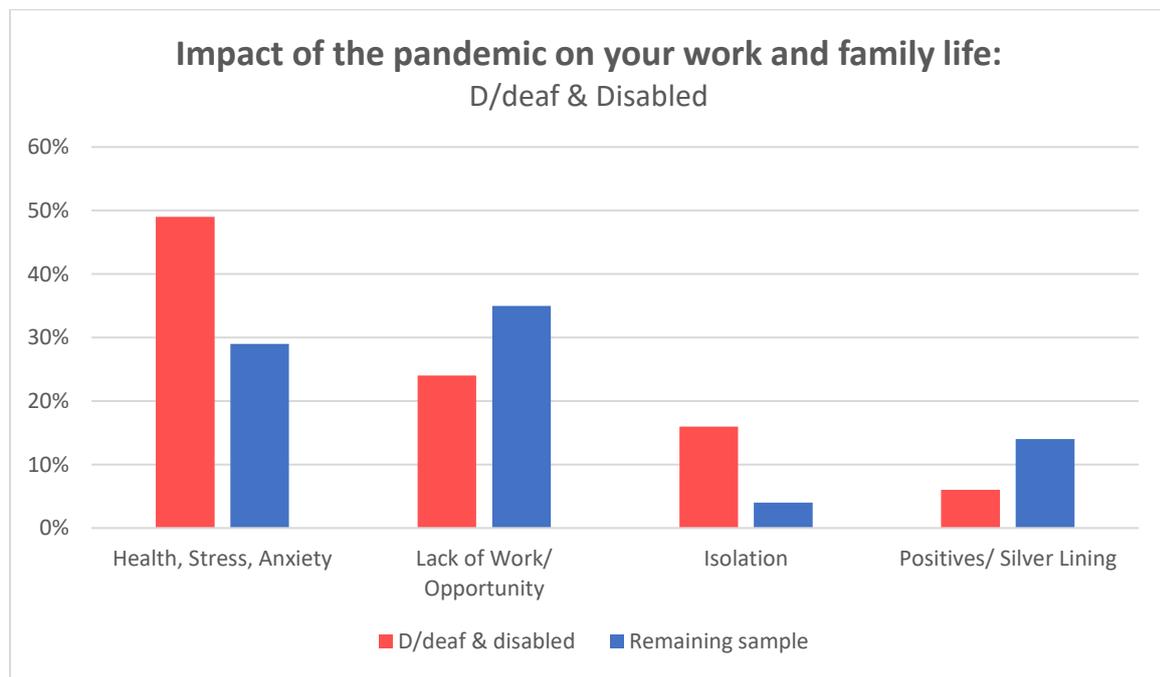


Figure 6

D/deaf, disabled or those with a long-term health condition (23% of whole sample, 87% female) were:

- more likely to mention **health** concerns, in particular stress and anxiety.
- more likely to mention feelings of **isolation**.
- less likely to mention any **positives** or silver linings.
- less likely to mention the lack of **opportunities**.

D/deaf and disabled respondents who also identify as being from an economically disadvantaged background are a small but significant group within the sample who are overwhelmed by their current circumstances:

“I don't know what to do - I don't have time to think and I'm constantly trying to figure out where to get money from next.”

“Constant stress, anxiety and exhaustion. Lots of extra planning for lessons because of safety and restrictions. Everything feels very insecure and I'm worried for the future. Childcare has been incredibly hard and every sniffle causes huge worry. Our whole family is utterly fed up and my little girl is constantly anxious no matter what we do to reassure her.”

“My daughter is unable to partake in ongoing activities because we do not have disposable income. I also suffered from a relapse of MS due to the stress, unknown outcomes and not being able to get any respite.”

“Carer’s Allowance isn’t reflective of the hours of care given. Less than £1.91 per hour AND restriction on earned income.”

“I’m so worried about work opportunities, I feel like I’m at the back of a very long line.”

Work and Family life: Solo Parents and Carers

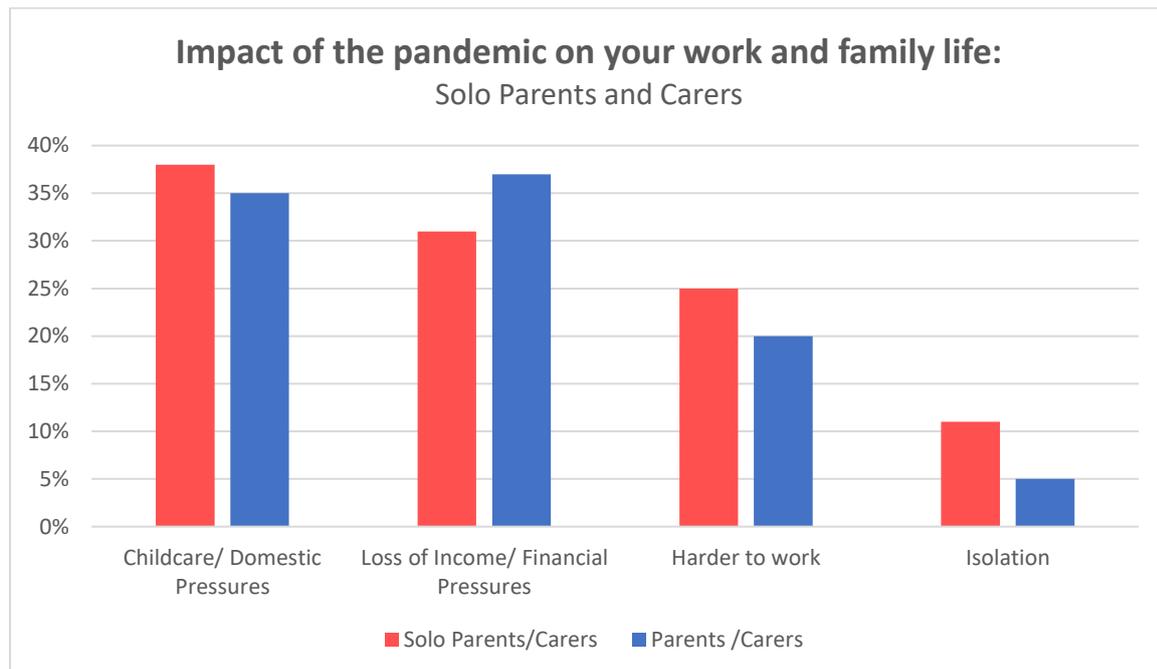


Figure 7

Solo parents and solo carers (14% of whole sample, 84% female) were:

- more likely to report feelings of **isolation**.
- More likely to report that it is **harder to work** due to caring responsibilities.
- less likely to mention **loss of income**.

The prevalent feeling of isolation, health worries and anxiety for solo carers appears further exacerbated where two or more social factors intersect such as disability and economically disadvantaged background:

“Limited contact with anyone and isolated with a new baby, nowhere to take him to meet people and no check-ups/appointments. Very lonely”

“Suffering from depression due to being isolated from friends, colleagues & family. Overwhelmed by supporting children and working from home.”

“Income greatly reduced, that impacts on baseline needs: food, heat, mortgage, etc. The uncertainty creates anxiety and fear. That has been the hardest.”

“I need to pay my bills and I have no partner to share the burden of lost earnings. If I cannot work in the arts, I will be forced to find alternative work.”

Covid has exacerbated financial and psychological issues. It has also, as has been widely reported in the press, had a significant impact on issues surrounding domestic violence:

“It has been impossible to work while the children were home, it has made a domestic abuse situation more difficult to bear and the help slower to come and my work has all been cancelled until next summer at the earliest.”

Work and Family life: Black, Asian and Ethnically diverse

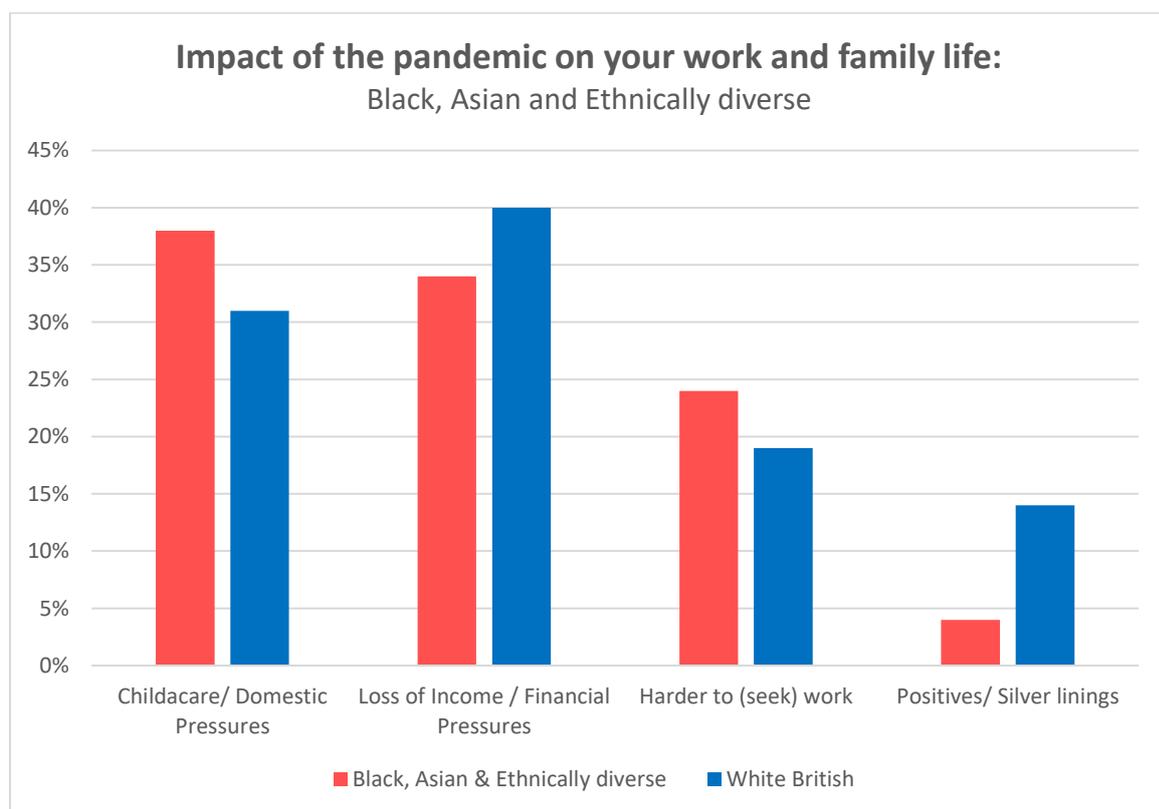


Figure 8

The low sample number (30 respondents) makes it difficult to identify specific driving factors or trends however preliminary data highlights that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents (7% of whole sample, 84% female) were:

- more likely to cite domestic pressures such as [childcare](#)
- more likely to mention finding it [harder to work](#) or [access work opportunities](#)
- less likely to mention [positives or silver linings](#)

A greater sample and/or focus groups is required to better understand the specific challenges facing Black, Asian and ethnically diverse performing arts workers with caring responsibilities.

A CHILDCARE CRISIS

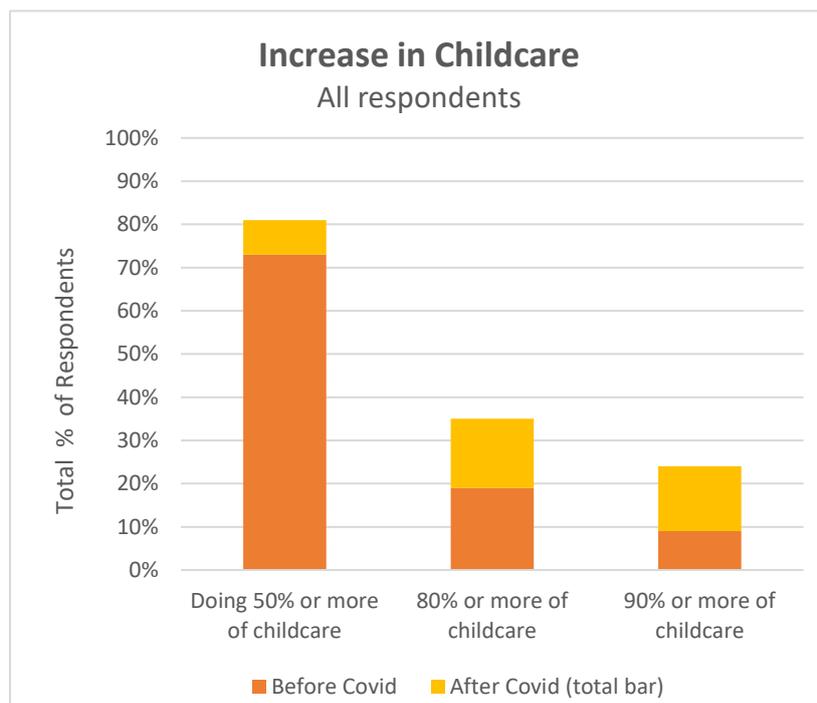
The majority of parents in the UK have experienced school, nursery and other childcare setting closures. Many have also had to carry on working, juggling home-schooling and work, often in the same room, for extended periods of time.

There is a general lack of work in the sector as a direct result of lockdown measures. However, this is compounded for parents and carers who report feeling unable to compete for opportunities in an increasingly competitive market especially under the stress of home schooling or other caregiving demands.

[PiPA](#) research has consistently shown that caring responsibilities fall predominantly to women. Studies have indicated that the decision to stay at home, in dual income households, [will be taken by mothers](#). We wanted to know how the division of childcare has changed for performing arts workers since Covid and whether the impact was felt differently across other protected characteristics.

We asked respondents how caring is divided between those in couple relationships.

If you are living with a partner, how much of the childcare are you responsible for:



The data shows that within their couples, PiPA survey respondents are taking on a greater share of the childcare. The qualitative data indicates that it is highly likely the partner is working outside the sector, with the parent working in the performing arts becoming the primary carer, therefore impacting their availability to work. This is particularly significant considering that 75% of our sample are self-employed and therefore most likely not to be available to find work:

“Suddenly, from touring the UK, I became a full time “housewife” school teacher, fully reliant on partner for income. As a low-income family: immediate cut backs and worries to make ends meet, pay bills and put food on the table.”

“Family life has been very difficult - managing childcare, working full time and trying to teach. My child was pretty neglected during lockdown as we were working so much.”

“I’ve become primary carer for my child and lack of childcare makes it difficult to accept limited amount of work on offer.”

“My capacity to work or create work has been massively reduced due to huge increase in family work.”

“I don’t know if I could take on any performing work even if it existed because I would have no childcare, and I would not be able to self-isolate without huge disruption to my contract. The intervening months were difficult because I was teaching much more to make up the Opera shortfall whilst also home-schooling. Life is now very stressful because it is completely uncertain, and I fear I will never sing again.”

Others report that they self-select out of opportunities or turn down work due to the fear of having to look after children or relatives in the event of an unexpected school or nursery closure or illness:

“I am still nervous about taking on new work (what work there is!) in case I need to drop it to do childcare again (I already have 2 friends whose children's schools have closed temporarily because of local outbreaks).”

One Stage Manager commented:

“If I can't attend the show for 2 weeks cause my kid is off school that's me out of the contract.”

Intersectional Caring Responsibilities

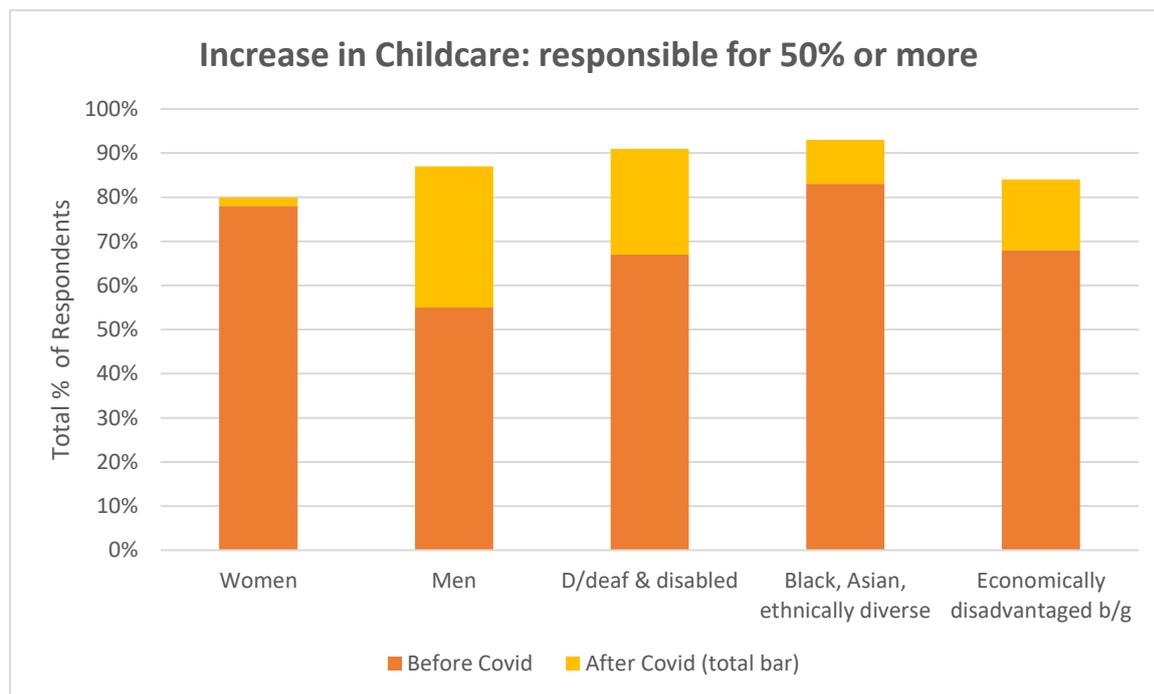


Figure 10

- At the 50% or more level of childcare, the situation did not change significantly for women—indicating what we already know, that women take the primary care responsibility in couple families, and within the performing arts this translates into freelance work, [lower pay and reduced opportunities](#).
- In keeping with the general population, as well as our sample, [male respondents are taking on more of the childcare](#) after Covid. This may be due to several factors including that they are more likely to be working from home, less likely to spend time travelling or their partner may be working. It is also probable that the self-selecting nature of this survey and the topic is likely to attract men who are taking on more childcare during Covid. This is further evidenced by the 55% of men who did 50% or more of the childcare pre Covid- significantly higher than the national average of [16 hours per week according to the ONS](#).
- More D/deaf and disabled respondents are doing 50% or more of the childcare after Covid.

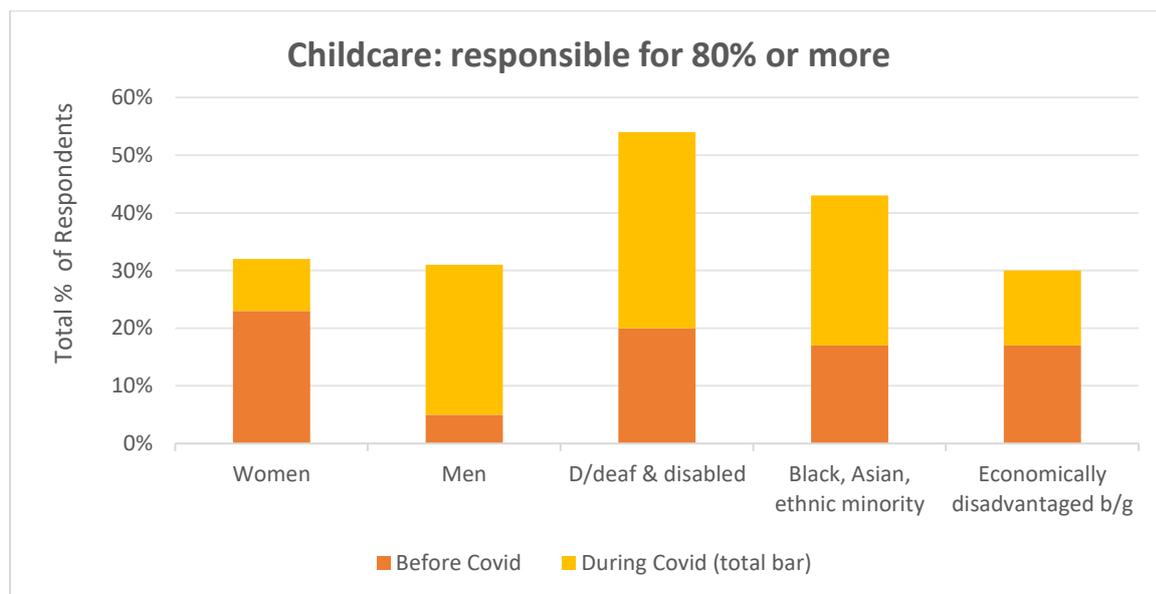


Figure 11

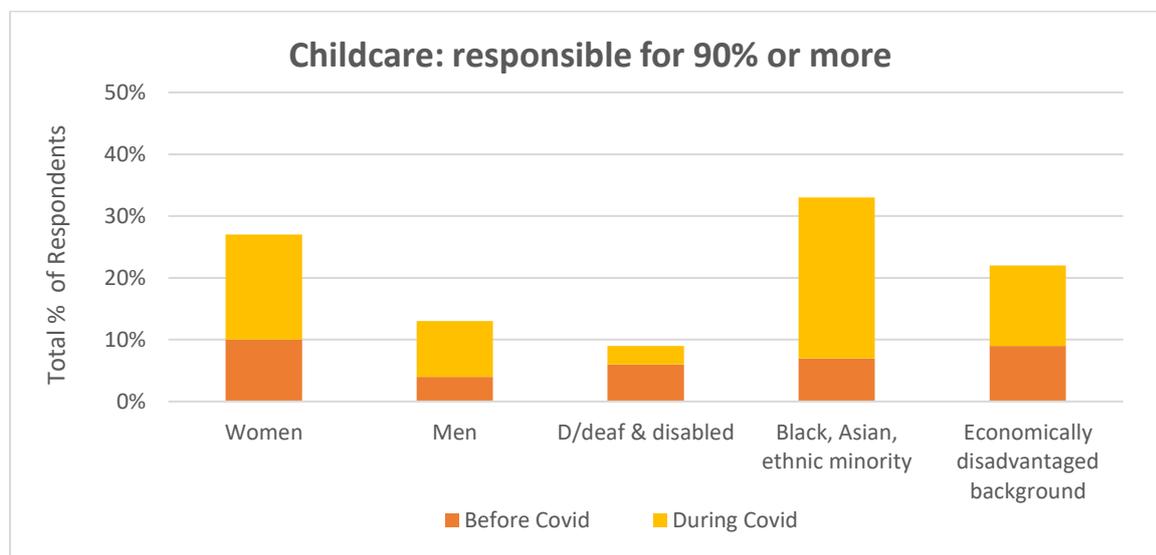


Figure 12

Looking at those parents in couple families who are taking on 80%, 90% or 100% percent of the childcare, we can see:

- More survey respondents are taking on almost full-time childcare significantly reducing their ability to seek opportunities or accept work.
- The data shows that men are doing significantly more although still not as much as women. This trend is also reported by the [Institute of Fiscal Studies](#). This is likely to indicate that they are not working. [An LSE report suggested that this is the case in about 20% of households.](#)
- There is not such a large increase for women, but nevertheless almost one third are doing at least 80% of the childcare, indicating both how restricted they were before Covid, and how much less available to work they are now.
- More than half of D/deaf and disabled respondents or those with a long-term health condition are taking on at least 80% of the childcare versus only one fifth before.

- More than two fifths of respondents from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds are taking on full-time childcare as oppose to under one fifth before.
- People who are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to be doing 90% or more childcare as a result of the pandemic.

For those who reported doing 90% or 100% of the childcare due to Covid, qualitative data indicates that one driving factor is that a partner's work takes precedence:

"Pandemic stripped me of identity as a musician and made me into almost full time housewife/keeper/nanny"

"I became a full time stay at home parent when my freelance work dried up. This worked for our circumstances as it allowed my husband to focus on his job full-time"

There is overlap between the intersectional categories but our sample size doesn't permit us to analyse the data at that level. Overall, however, it is clear that all parents (women and men) face increased childcare challenges, and parents who are women, D/deaf and disabled, Black, Asian, ethnically diverse, or economically disadvantaged are more likely to be impacted by increased caring responsibilities.

The gendered impact was particularly highlighted in the qualitative data from female D/deaf and disabled people or those with a long-term health condition:

"As I am home full time now I look after the children the majority of the time so my husband can continue to work."

"Feels like very little prospect of any acting work in the foreseeable future. As a family we are increasingly having to rely on my partner's income as the money from the grant dwindles."

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Covid and subsequent government measures have had a major impact on people's mental health. We asked respondents where they would place themselves on the following scale measuring stress:

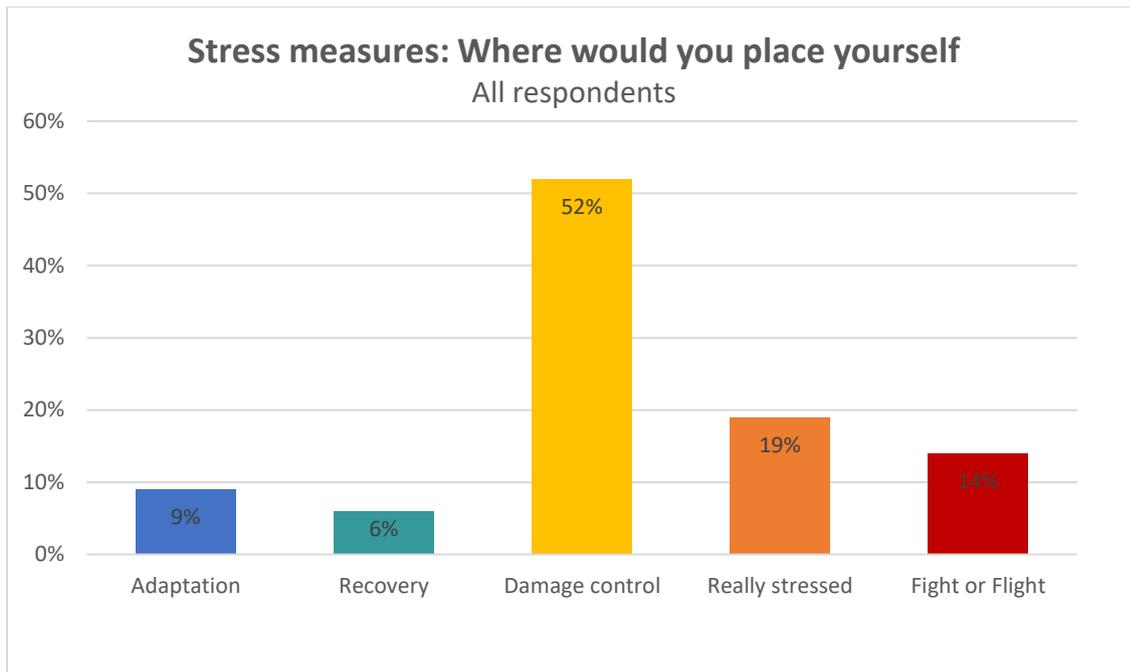


Figure 13

Half the general sample considered themselves to be in the damage control phase, which is where significant stress is being experienced and the person is attempting to manage the situation, which is, in itself, a mental health challenge. One third placed themselves in the ‘really stressed’ or ‘fight or flight’ stage.

Gender

The stress response cut by gender reveals a clear difference of impact:

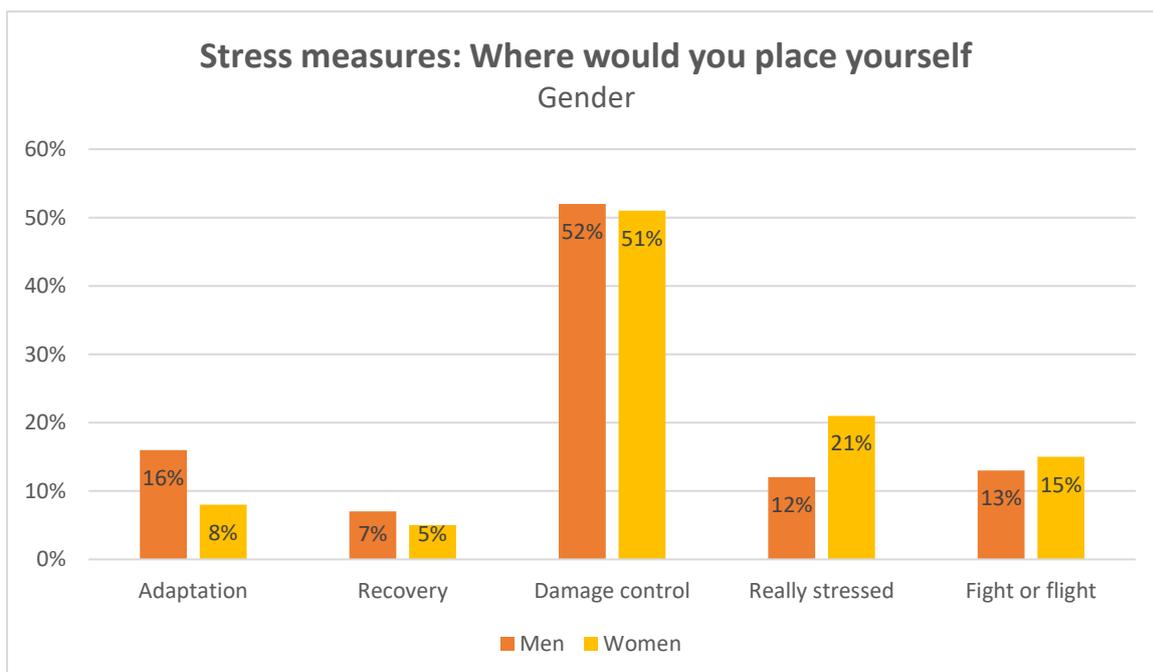
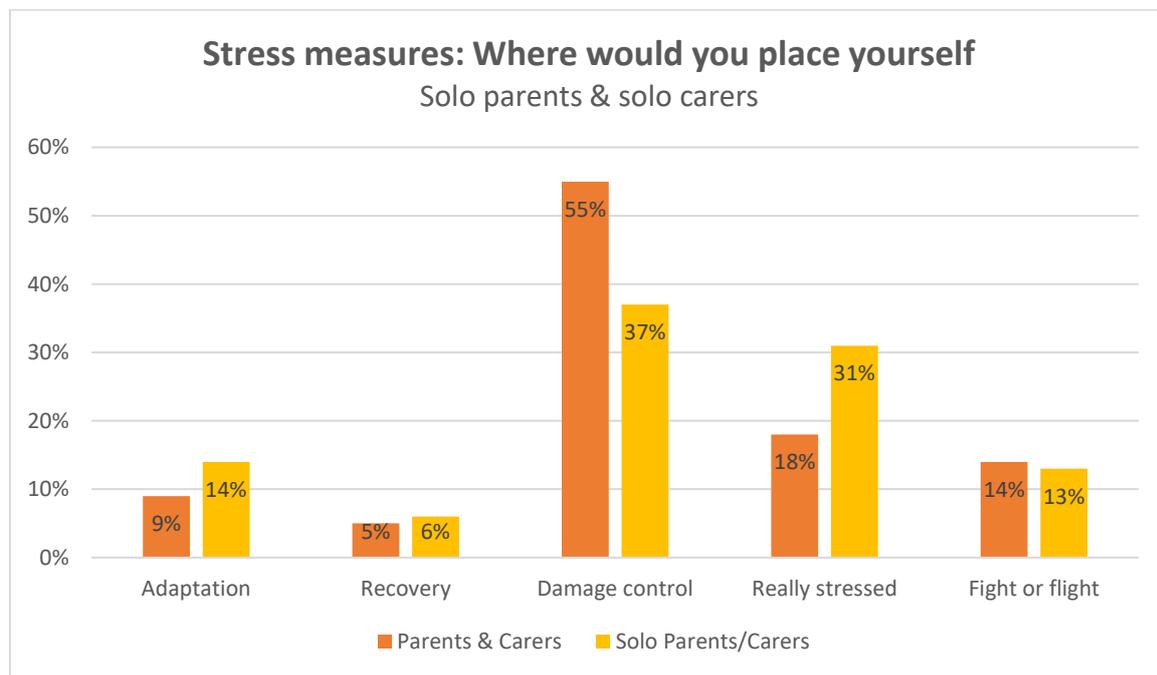


Figure 14

Female respondents were twice as likely to class themselves as ‘really stressed’ or ‘fight of flight’ (36%) than male respondents who were more likely to place themselves in the ‘recovery’ or ‘adaptation phase’ (23%.)

Solo parents and Solo carers

Solo parents and carers (the majority of whom are female (83%)) were nearly twice as likely to report feeling overwhelmed:



Couple parents and carers are significantly more likely to place themselves in the ‘damage control’ phase while four out of ten solo parents and carers (44%) class themselves as ‘really stressed’ or in ‘fight or flight’ reflecting the extreme challenges faced by solo parents:

“Unable to work in same capacity as single parenting household and no childcare support I had a small amount of respite, perhaps every other weekend or once every two weeks, though this was difficult due to my ex-partner being back to work after only being furloughed for two weeks. It was heavily unbalanced and caused a lot of issues. I'm now feeling like I'm in burnout and dreading another lockdown.”

“I lost everything I had worked for. I am incredibly lucky to have been attached to a show which reopened in August, but it's not enough to pay the bills. I get paid around £10 an hour there now - it's a temporary pay cut that all staff have taken until social distancing is relaxed and our capacity can increase. It's hard, but we all decided that we would rather work on a show for minimum wage than not have a show at all.”

D/deaf, Disabled and/or those living with long term health conditions

The impact for D/deaf and disabled respondents is even starker with almost one in two people (45%) placing themselves in the ‘really stressed’ or ‘fight or flight’ stages:

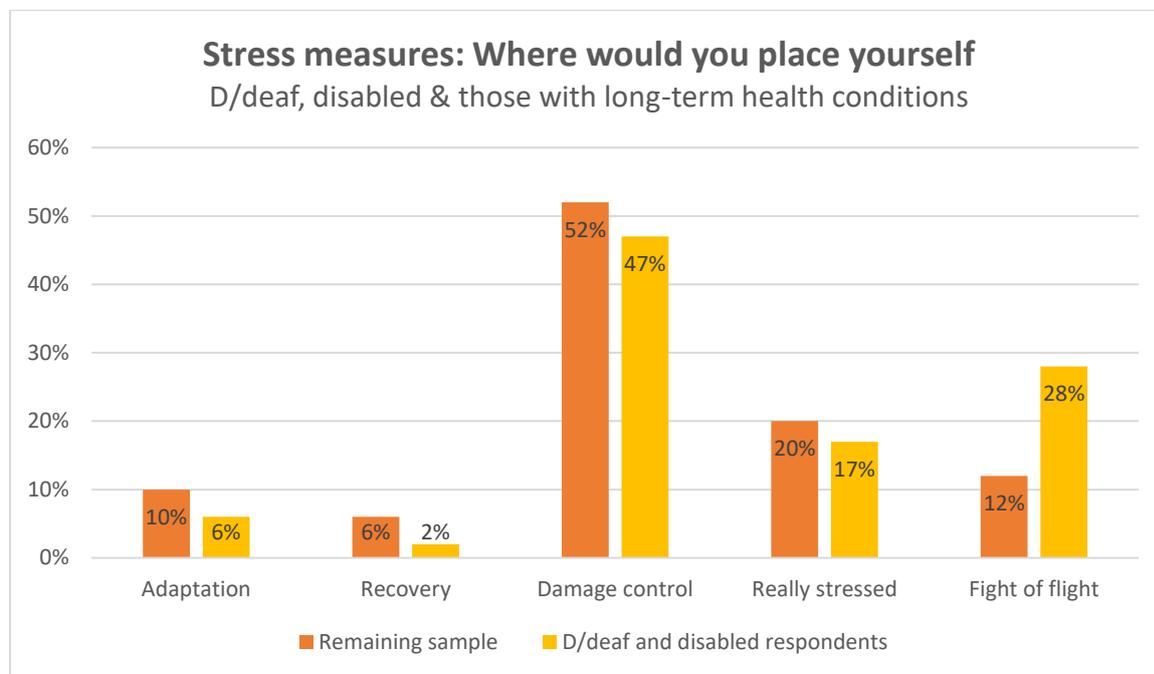


Figure 15

D/deaf and disabled or people with a long-term health condition were more likely to report facing mental health challenges and very few reported being in the ‘adaptation’ or ‘recovery’ phase, correlating with qualitative data:

“My health has suffered due to an increase in functional seizures brought on by the added stress of not getting any financial help from the government despite being eligible based on my average earnings over the last 3 years.”

“Significant stress and mental health problems which required medical treatment. Loss of my independence and loss of activity away from my home/family disability & carer challenges.”

“I have not been able to work outside the house. Rising tensions between myself and my partner. My son is 2 and he has been very fractious, my daughter being 3 months old at the start had no other human contact for 5 months. As a disabled parent, my support was non-existent except for a few disabled mum networks I am involved with. I was shocked how support for myself, such as mental health support, just didn’t exist.”

LEAVING THE INDUSTRY

We asked respondents if the problems caused by Covid mean they are considering abandoning their career in the performing arts.

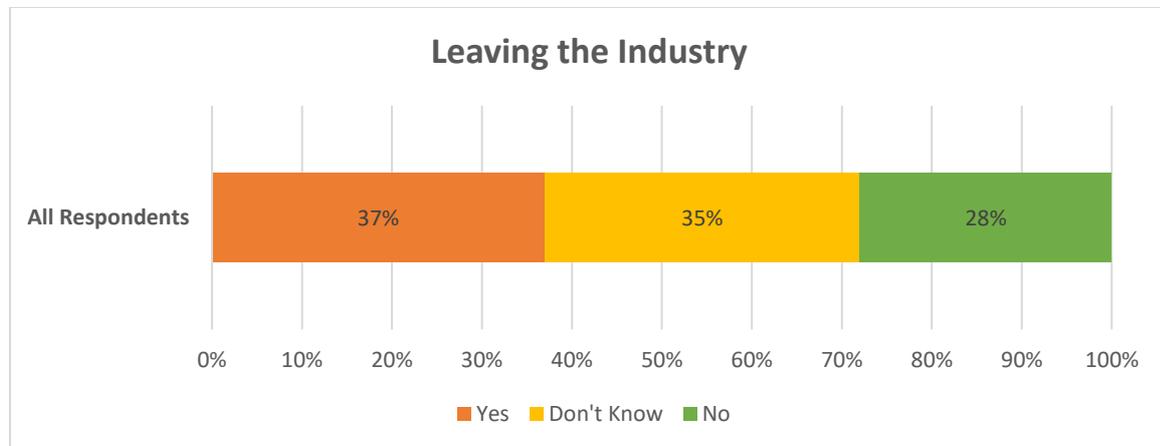


Figure 16

Overall seven out of ten (72%) respondents were considering leaving their profession for a variety of reasons. These were captured as open text responses which were coded by frequency:

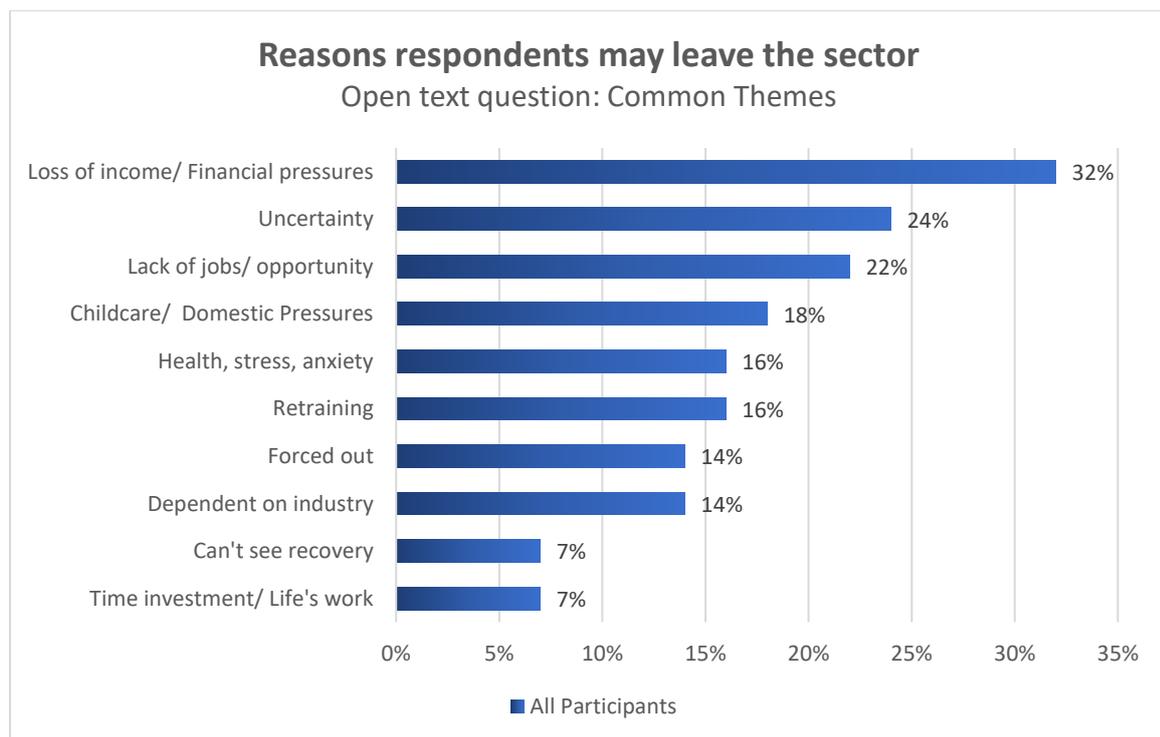


Figure 17

Nearly one third (32%) cited loss of income and just over one fifth (22%) of parents and carers cited lack of work opportunities are factors when reporting reasons why they are considering leaving the profession with qualitative data highlighting the need for stability to support their family:

“I work a pretty regular 45 hour week with peaks at 70 hours a week and was already struggling to support my family and achieve a work/life balance. All I can see coming is pay cuts/freezes, worse conditions and redundancies.”

For others, lockdown and isolation measures mean that it is not possible to continue in the profession:

“I am struggling with the Freelance existence, uncertainty, cut in wages. With the new Covid restrictions, even one day’s filming may require additional days isolating away from home which is impossible as a primary carer.”

For 21% of respondents, the decision to leave their profession is dependent on the way the industry recovers from the impact of the pandemic, highlighting the need for the industry to build back in an inclusive and accessible way to avoid further talent loss:

“I am considering abandoning [my career] because of the combination of greatly increased concern about the mid- to long-term security and nature of my job.”

“I have been trying without success to find an alternative role. However, my age and the fact I have always worked in the arts sector is against me, as most jobs I applied for did not even shortlist me.”

“[Lockdown/ The last months] has allowed me to reflect on the fact that my working practices were previously unhealthy and unsustainable - I worked way too many hours and felt unending pressure to “do it all” as a single parent. I now want to remain in the industry but with a healthier working practice.”

Leaving the Industry: Gender

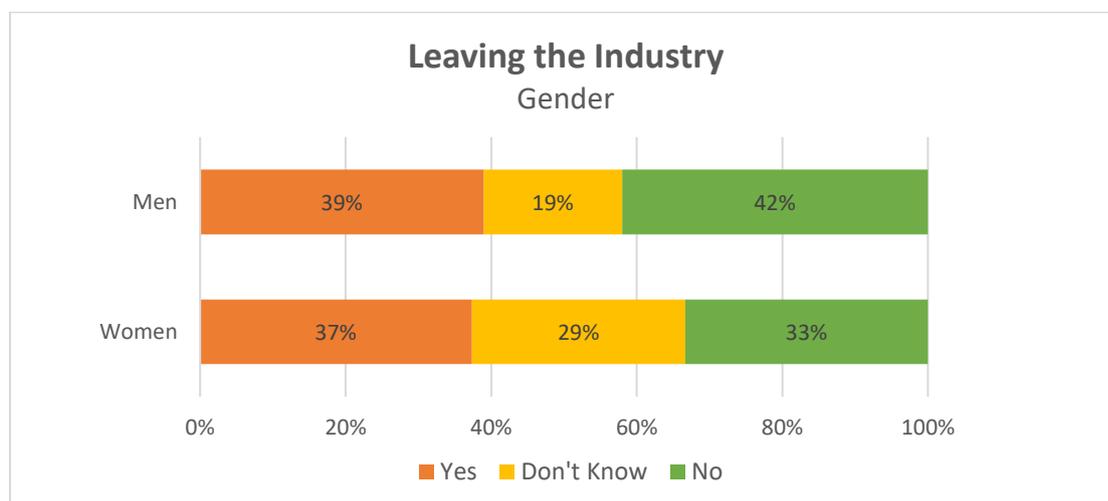


Figure 18

For female respondents, more reported not knowing whether they would leave the performing arts (and fewer reported No) than expected by probability. For male respondents, fewer reported not knowing whether they would leave the arts (and more reported No) than expected by probability.

Female respondents are facing a greater degree of uncertainty than men about their future in the industry. Women are 50% more likely to be uncertain about their future in the sector and men more certain that they will stay:

“If my fixed term contract isn't renewed next year I will look to retrain in an area with more secure employment [...] The instability of fixed term contracts and stress this causes in the current situation isn't a sustainable way of living and impacts negatively on my mental health which then impacts my family's wellbeing.”

Intersectionality

When we looked at the data, identifying as a D/deaf or disabled person, having a long-term health condition, or coming from an economically disadvantaged background did not significantly affect the likelihood of leaving the arts. However, understanding the variable driving factors of those who are considering leaving, gets us much closer to understanding the broad range and impact the pandemic has on different groups, highlighting the need for a multi-faceted approach to retain the talent of parents and carers across all protected characteristics and under-represented groups.

Leaving the Industry: Economically disadvantaged background

We asked respondents to provide more information on why they were considering whether to abandon their career or not:

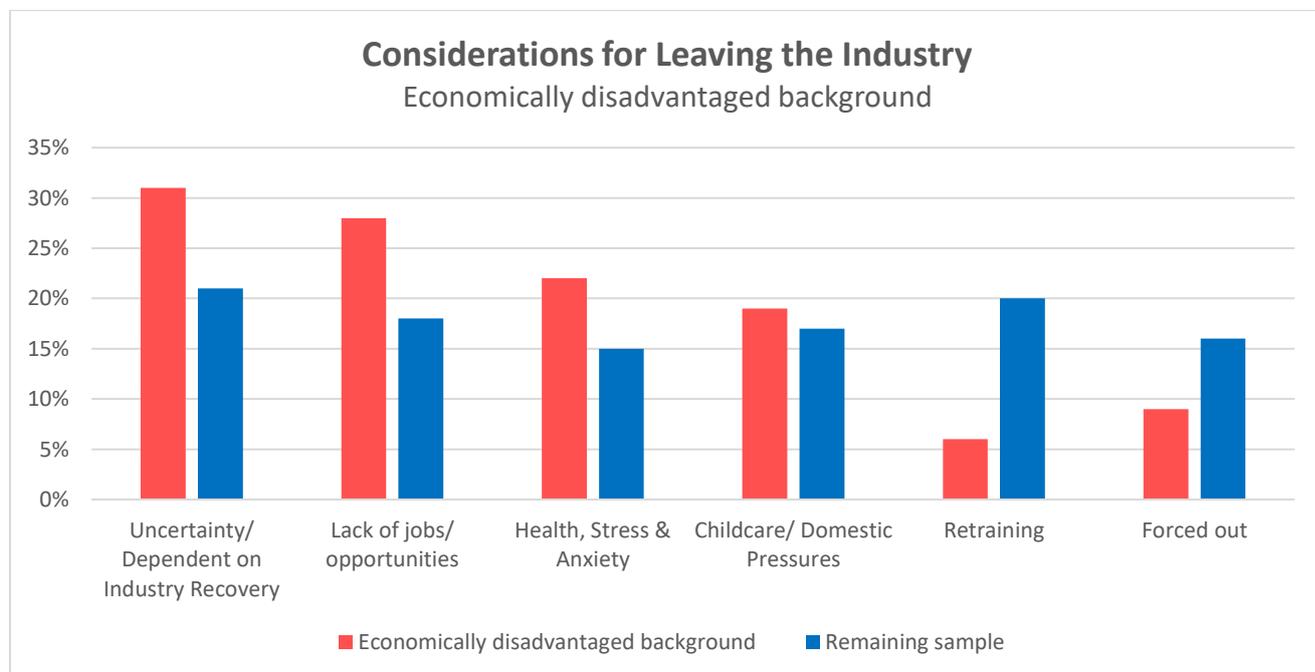


Figure 19

Respondents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were:

- more uncertain about the future

- more concerned about their **health**
- less likely to mention **retraining**
- more likely to mention the lack of **jobs**.

“We can’t pay our mortgage on universal credit and that’s all we’ve got until our industry is able to operate as pre Covid”

“If I can get through the next six months I might be ok.”

“I kind of have abandoned it temporarily. I spend more time operating a till than I do being creative. The thing is though, I don’t know what else I would do. I’m already in huge amounts of debt from doing my MA and I can’t afford to retrain.”

“I won’t go back to performing and touring. Luckily for me with my son I was moving this way anyway.”

Leaving the Industry: Disability

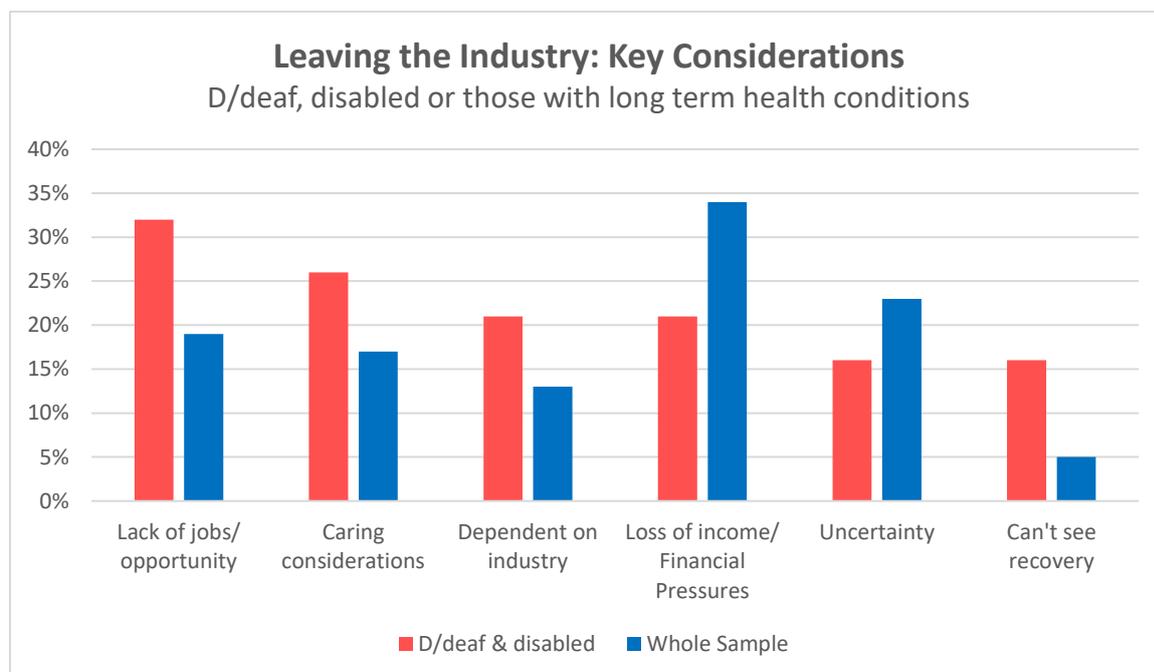


Figure 20

Respondents who were D/deaf, disabled or living with a long-term health condition were:

- most likely to mention the lack of **jobs and opportunities**
- more likely to mention **caring responsibilities**
- less likely to mention **finance**
- less likely to mention **uncertainty**
- more likely to feel **dependent** on how their industry fares
- more pessimistic about the likelihood of their sector’s **recovery**.

“The struggle to make work and get it out to audiences is a slog and exceptionally hard to juggle with having children, and is a real struggle to strike the right balance without being a larger

organisation. It has always crossed my mind to change careers since having children but Covid made me assess this even more, is it worth it, would it be easier to be employed?"

"Unless or until there is a vaccine it feels too dangerous to work in front of an audience, bearing in mind my own health vulnerability and that of my husband."

"If I can adapt to life on benefits for the time being and maintain contact with all previous employers, then there may be some hope of the situation improving if circumstances allow as venues are permitted to open thus allowing productions to tour again. Otherwise I may have to look at other avenues for employment, although I have no idea what as I have been in the entertainment industry all my working life."

"If schools were to close again I would have to ask to be furloughed or laid off, I think. It was completely unsustainable working and educating."

"Considering the now enormous unemployment rate within the sector and the inevitable, long-term reduction in activity, I fear the sheer volume of competition for jobs in the short, medium and long-term will mean it is near impossible for me to earn sufficiently and/or to progress my career within the arts. I am considering the ways in which my skills and experience can be applied elsewhere."

Leaving the Industry: Solo Parents and Carers

Solo parents and carers were less likely to indicate that they were considering abandoning their career in the performing arts:

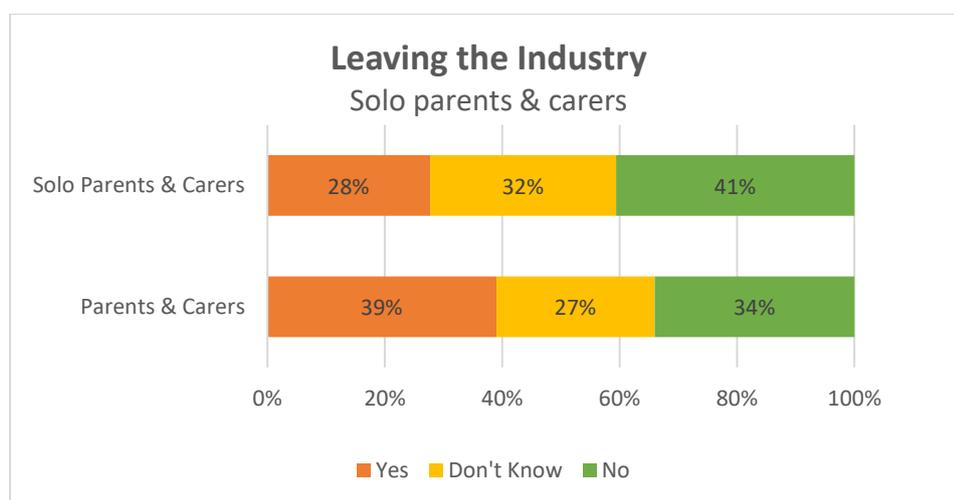


Figure 21

Solo carers report being adept at managing portfolio careers which seems to affect the ability to stay in the profession:

“I’ve hung on for 30 years as a jobbing actor and I’m a single parent so used to adversity. It has however focussed me to get a better ‘side-line’ job so doing an online degree to help with this.”

“I also work in video games where the work is not reliant on live interaction and contact. This has been my saving grace.”

Those considering leaving the sector reported the following as the key drivers:

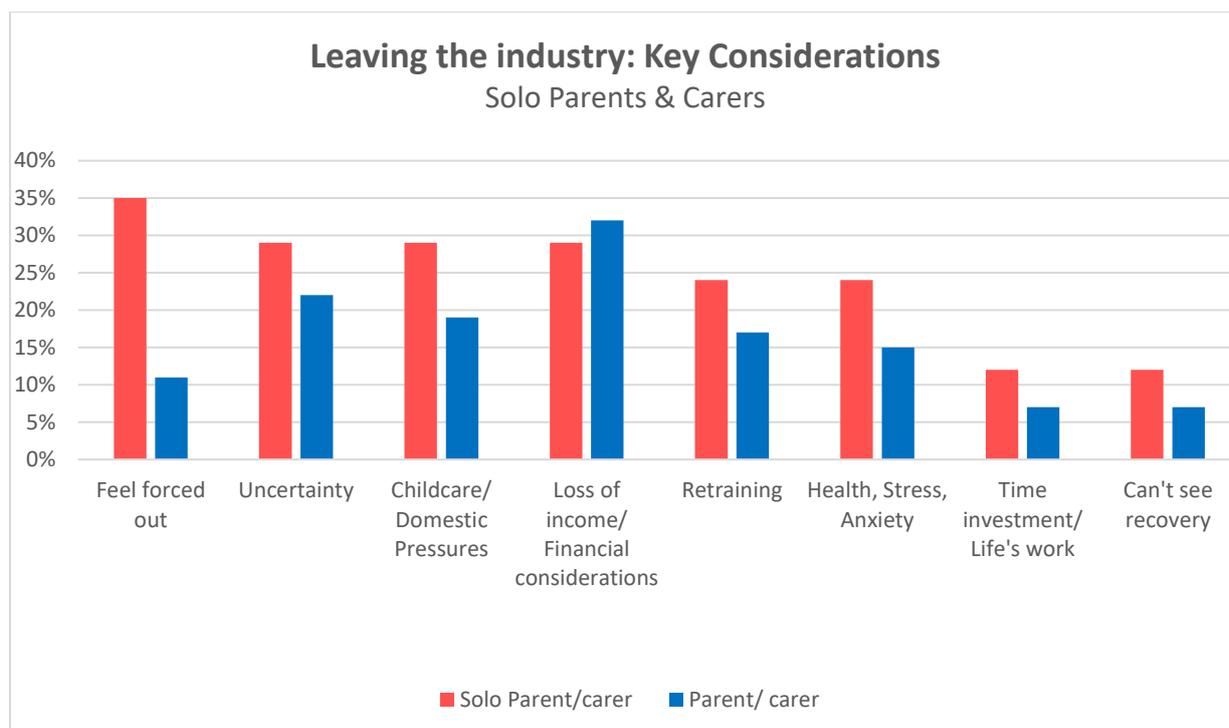


Figure 22

Compared to the whole sample, solo parents and solo carers considering leaving the industry were:

- most likely to report feeling **forced out** of their role, career, or industry
- more likely to report **caring** responsibility as a concern
- were more likely to report feelings of **uncertainty**
- more likely to mention **retraining**
- more likely to report the **time** theme e.g. feeling of losing their life’s work
- more likely to report **health or stress**-related concerns

“I need to pay my bills and I have no partner to share the burden of lost earnings. If I cannot work in the arts I will be forced to find alternative work.”

“I desperately don’t want to give up my career but the pressure both of being a single parent and also, from universal credit, to find work, don’t fill me with hope.”

“My balance as single mum and sole carer with work is very fragile. If I can't find work that is sympathetic with my situation I won't be able to continue my career.”

Leaving the Industry: Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents

Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents were also significantly less likely to consider abandoning their career in the performing arts:

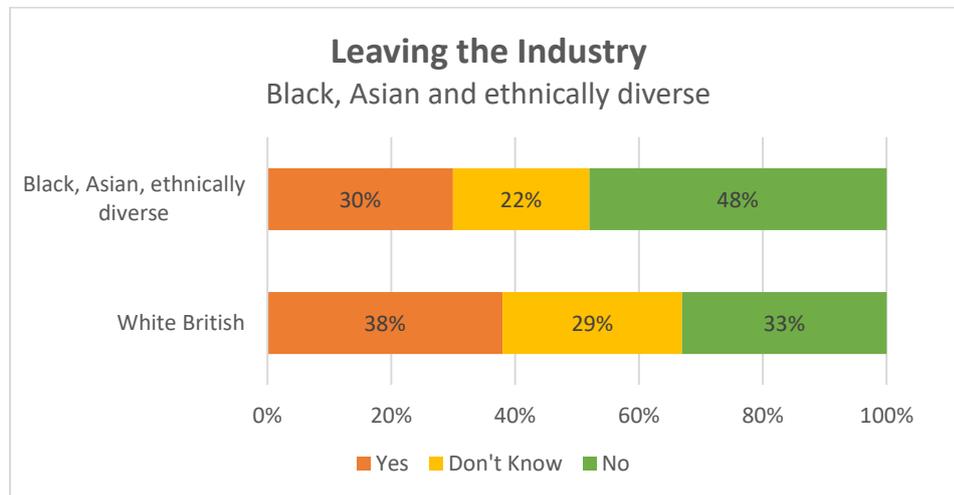


Figure 23

The low sample number (30 respondents) makes it difficult to identify specific driving factors or trends however preliminary data points to the following drivers:

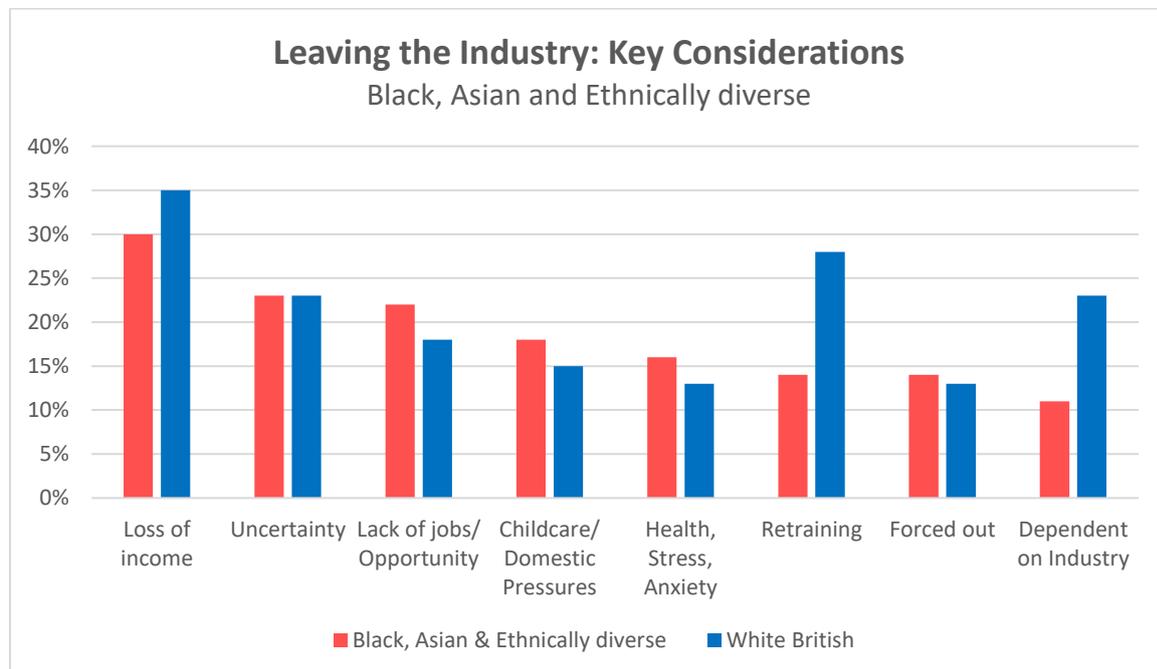


Figure 24

Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents who were considering leaving their careers were:

- Slightly more likely to mention **lack of Jobs** and opportunities
- Slightly more likely to cite **childcare** as a main reason as well as **health**.

- Less likely to mention [retraining](#).
- Less likely to mention dependency of the [industry's recovery](#).

"It's so disheartening to think that your career may be over for the foreseeable future, especially as a female from an ethnically diverse background, where there are so many excluding aspects to contend with already."

"The move towards Sunday shows will push me out of the industry as it will mean I would never see my children."

"My career had been gradually but consistently developing and going in the direction I wanted it to go, including with my income increasing slowly until the pandemic hit. But now I cannot afford to wait for performance spaces to reopen. If this wait lasts for another 6-8 months, I will probably already have had to settle into other types of paid work, with music performance slotting into a secondary, hobby-type of activity. Having a young family and no external family support are two crucial factors in this assessment."

A greater sample and/or focus groups is required to better understand the specific considerations facing Black, Asian and ethnically diverse performing arts workers with caring responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The Government SEISS scheme has been a lifeline for the majority of self-employed parents and carers in the performing arts. However, a significant proportion have been, and continue to be, excluded from the scheme. These parents and carers are approaching one year without income and reduced means to support their family. **We call on the Government to urgently review the eligibility criteria for SEISS to include all those previously ineligible for parenting and caring reasons including, but not limited to, mixed income models or maternity leave.**
- 2) **We call on grant makers and funding bodies to add caring responsibilities to all mandatory monitoring requirements for funding recipients.** To retain all its talents, the industry needs to know how many parents and carers it employs and how care responsibilities become a greater barrier for women, people who are D/deaf and disabled, people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or those with other protected characteristics. Equal access to work opportunities is essential to ensure these groups are not further marginalised due to the impact of Covid, home schooling or other care requirements placed on them during the pandemic.
- 3) **We urge employers to proactively communicate and accommodate furlough options for parents and carers,** for whom the combination of working from home and home schooling can be untenable, to ensure they are able to continue working.

- 4) **We encourage employers to make adjustments to work-load and to promote autonomy and flexibility around core hours**, enabling parents and carers to meet work and family requirements. Many parents and carers work early mornings and evenings to accommodate home school and additional care responsibilities. Discussions about workload are crucial to enable appropriate planning and scheduling.

- 5) **We encourage employers to establish production backup through job share modelling** to provide a robust in-built cover system that allows for last minute changes to domestic settings such as school closure, unexpected requirement to provide care or self-isolation due to Covid. Communicating this before the point of offer is crucial to ensure that parents and carers do not self-select out of opportunities.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the findings, please email PiPA Operations Manager Kandy Rohmann Kandy@pipacampaign.com or Co-CEO Cassie Raine Cassie@pipacampaign.com