

Aviva Home Report:

Home skills and household repairs

April 2017



Introduction

This latest edition of the Aviva Home report takes a look inside family homes, examining how we take care of our properties and how our different roles in the family interact.

Previously in this series we've seen that the make-up of the modern household is evolving, with more young people living at home for longer. This report looks at how 'traditional' roles are also changing, moving away the mum-at-home, dad-at-work model and creating a more fluid family landscape. We take a look at 'who does what?', both in terms of household tasks and parental roles, and we see how the 9-5 model is shifting to accommodate the needs of working parents.

This report also investigates how we deal with matters when things go wrong around the home. We consider whether we are a nation of DIY-ers, and if so, how and where

are we learning our skills? Are we handing down skills through the generations, or are we turning to how-to guides on the internet?

There's also the question of to DIY or not to DIY? Do we have the skills and the time to actually do things ourselves? We explore what we'd be willing to tackle, and what happens - and how much it might cost - when things don't quite go to plan.

This report paints a picture of a busy home life where there is no one-size-fits-all approach. No two households are the same, and people are taking a modern approach to balance their work and family lives. Traditional has been replaced by diverse and variety is the new normal.



Propositions Director

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Contents

Modern living – who does what around the home?	Page 4
Spotlight: The rise of the stay-at-home dad	Page 8
Household horrors – what happens when things go wrong?	Page 10
Conclusion	Page 15
Methodology	Page 16



Modern living – who does what around the home?

The bygone UK model of the stay-at-home housewife and the working husband has been superseded by a society where there are almost as many women in employment as men.

Official figures show that the proportion of UK women in employment has increased from 52.7% in 1971, to 69.7% now¹. There are currently almost 17 million men and 15 million women working in the UK², with a typical working week lasting 37.6 hours for full-time workers, and 16.2 for those working part-time³.

However, these figures only tell half a story, accounting for paid labour only. On top of this is a hidden glut of additional work, with Aviva research finding UK adults typically spend more than 18 hours a week - or more than 950 hours a year - doing household chores.

Cooking typically takes up most time at 3 hours and 28 minutes a week, followed by cleaning (2h, 05m), food shopping (1h, 40m) and laundry (1h, 34m).

Women claim to spend more time than men doing tasks around the home, totting up almost 21 hours a week, compared to 15.5 hours a week for men. However, when asked who does most around the home, both genders lay claim to being the hardest home-workers. Breaking down household chores by task, there are only three areas where men claim to spend more hours than women: car maintenance, money management and gardening.

FOOTNOTES

(1) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/lf25/lms>

(2) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes>

(3) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/actualweeklyhoursworkedseasonallyadjustedhour01sa>

Data referenced does not include self-employed or second jobs.

Household task	Average time spent weekly	Average time spent weekly: men	Average time spent weekly: women
Cooking	3 h, 28 m	2 h, 40 m	4 h, 14 m
Cleaning (including hoovering, dusting, cleaning kitchens / bathrooms etc)	2 h, 5 m	1 h, 19 m	2 h, 49 m
Washing and ironing	1 h 34 m	1 h, 5 m	2 h, 1 m
Tidying rooms (including children's bedrooms)	1 h, 10 m	52 m	1 h, 28 m
Changing / making beds	41 m	35 m	46 m
Looking after pets	1 h, 40 m	1 h, 20 m	1 h, 59 m
Walking dogs	1 h, 15 m	1 h, 11 m	1, 18 m
Money management / budgeting	55 m	59 m	52 m
Shopping for food e.g. supermarket shopping	1 h, 40 m	1h, 38 m	1 h, 43 m
Helping children with homework	35 m	33 m	35 m
Dressing / bathing children etc	38 m	31 m	44 m
Gardening	59 m	1 h, 8 m	52 m
Car / vehicle maintenance	30 m	40 m	21 m
Online shopping	1 h 7 m	57 m	1 h 16 m
	18 h, 17 m	15 h, 28 m	20 h 58 m



Four out of five women (81%) say the person who does the most in their home is female, while 50% of men say the person doing the most in their household is male. A considerable 17% say the chores are equally spilt in their homes (although 20% of men said this, compared to 14% of women).

This said, the overall findings could reflect the fact that women are more likely to take time out of work to look after children, and are more likely than men to take on part-time employment. ONS data shows there are 6.2 million women in part-time employment, compared to 2.3 million men⁴. Alongside this, there are 14.6 million men working full time, alongside 8.7 million women.

However, there is evidence to suggest that this traditional trend is shifting, particularly amongst working men with children, and this explored in more detail in this report (page 8).

Chores and children

While 18 hours is the typical time spent on chores across all households, unsurprisingly, hours increase in line with the number of children in the home:

Number of children in the home	No children	One child	Two children	Three children
Weekly hours spent on household tasks	16 hours, 24 mins	18 hours, 36 mins	21 hours, 48 mins	24 hours, 48 mins

And while children are a source of delight, they also appear to be a cause of domestic chaos. A third of parents living with children say they 'treat the house like a hotel', while almost half of parents (44%) say they have argued with their youngsters over the tidiness of their home.

Shockingly, more than half of parents with children living at home say they have less than an hour a week to themselves: 52% say they have less than an hour of 'me time' each week.

FOOTNOTES

(4) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/timeparttimeandtemporaryworkersseasonallyadjustedemp01sa>

“It’s fascinating to see how working lives and habits at home have changed over the years. Some ‘conventional’ customs remain, with men taking on more full-time roles than women, and women stating they spend more hours doing household chores than their male counterparts. This said, 50% of men say the person doing the most housework in their home is male, so there is some dispute as to exactly who does what.”

Adam Beckett

Propositions Director,
General Insurance
Personal Lines, Aviva UK

Hidden hours of housework

When it comes to comparing those in paid employment and those who aren’t, there is very little difference with the number of hours spent doing chores. Those not in paid employment spend slightly less time doing household tasks than those ‘at work’. Arguably this could be because some non-workers are retired and may not have children living at home who create the need for more housework.

Working status	Not in paid employment	Working part time	Working full time
Weekly hours spent on household tasks	17 hours, 7 minutes	21 hours, 31 minutes	18 hours, 12 minutes

The research also found evidence of how lines are blurring between working and home environments. It suggests that workers spend on average four hours and 17 minutes a week working at home, on top of their ‘normal’ hours in the workplace.

Spotlight: The rise of the stay-at-home dad



As the number of women has increased in the UK workforce, the number of men has declined. According to ONS figures, in 1971, 91.4% of UK men over the age of 16 were in employment, whereas now this has fallen to 79.3%*.

While there are a number of factors which have led to this, one of the most fascinating points of interest is the proportion of men taking on 'hands on' roles when they have children. Research carried out by Aviva suggests that men are the main childcare providers in one in seven UK households with dependent children (aged 18 and under).

Moreover, almost half of working fathers said they made changes to their working hours or habits after having

children, with a quarter (25%) actually reducing their hours or giving up work altogether to help accommodate the new needs of family life.

Only 54% of fathers questioned said their working habits were unchanged after having children. In addition to those who said they had reduced their hours, 16% said they were able to negotiate flexible working hours and 13% were able to spend at least some of their employment hours working from home.

The research also suggests that the rise of women breadwinners is also having an impact on the number of men taking on the role of the 'primary parent'. Of more than 1,000 parents with dependent children surveyed, 26% said that the main income earner in their household was female.

Financial matters play a crucial role when it comes to balancing careers with childcare. Of the families who saw at least one parent reduce their hours or give up work after having children, four out of 10 (43%), said that childcare was too expensive to make the return to full-time work worthwhile.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/mgsvlms>

How did having children affect your working lives?	Working dads	Working mums
Reduced hours worked	21%	37%
Negotiated flexible working hours	16%	17%
Worked from home on occasion	13%	11%
Continued to work as before	54%	15%
Gave up work	4%	30%

Financial factors also play a crucial part when deciding who takes on the role of the main childcare provider. Of the families who saw one parent reduce their hours or quit work altogether after having children, 57% said the decision was financial, saying it was necessary for the person who earned more to return to work.

This was in fact the most common reason for deciding which parent took on the main childcare role. In contrast, 40% of families said the main childcare provider was chosen because this person wanted to spend more time with the children.

The study also found that on the whole, hands-on dads seem to relish their roles, with 57% saying they feel 'lucky' to have the opportunity to spend this time with their children, although one in three (31%) said they sometimes found themselves feeling isolated as many events and groups were geared towards mothers.

However, almost a third of parents (31%) said they felt that attitudes had changed, and it was more common to see dads taking on hands-on roles, while a similar number (32%) said they would expect to see more dads taking on the role of the 'primary parent' in the future.

"It's fantastic to see that attitudes are changing and the traditional roles of mum and dad are shifting, making it possible for both parents to be more actively involved. Accommodating working practices, such as flexible working and shared parental leave, mean that both parents and businesses can feel the benefits. Parents are able to achieve a balance, while businesses can retain happier talented employees."

"We need to do more to change attitudes and create more inclusive workplaces, but it's encouraging to see that things are moving in the right direction."

Jan Gooding

Global Inclusion Director for Aviva



Household horrors – what happens when things go wrong?

Most households appear to settle into a pattern where specific individuals have certain responsibilities around the home – whether by design or by implicit agreement.

As a rule of thumb, Aviva research shows that men are more likely to take charge in the event of a home emergency such as a broken boiler or no running water. Three quarters of men (74%) questioned in the study said they take the lead in the event of problems around the home. This is largely borne out by women's responses, although 40% of

women also claim that they take control in these situations so there may be some slight disparity between perception and reality.

There's also evidence to suggest that the vast majority of people are willing to give things a go themselves when it comes to domestic problems, rather than bringing in a professional straight away.



Household problems people may try to fix themselves:

- A blocked sink – **85%**
- A blocked toilet – **77%**
- A blocked drain – **64%**
- Broken or blocked gutters – **41%**
- Broken electrical switches or sockets – **38%**



Household problems where people are more likely to turn to a professional:

- Roof damage – **88%**
- Broken boiler – **85%**
- A blocked chimney – **82%**
- A broken window – **77%**
- Problems with electrical wiring – **75%**

Seven out of 10 people say that when things go wrong around the house, they would generally have a go at fixing the problem themselves. Perhaps surprisingly, this proportion is almost as high amongst people who rent their homes (70% private renters, 69% in social housing) as those who are homeowners (74%).

However, this is very much depends on the task in hand. Understandably there are a number of problems which people are happy to leave to the experts.

“It’s clear that when it comes to our homes, we like to get stuck in and have a go when things go wrong, but it’s important to remember that some things are best left to the professionals.”

Safety is absolutely paramount and it can be highly dangerous if people don’t have the specialist training or knowledge – for example in the event of problems with a boiler or electrical wiring. So while it’s admirable that people are prepared to get their hands dirty, some things are best left to the experts.”

Adam Beckett

Propositions Director, General Insurance Personal Lines, Aviva UK



DIY: The financial factor

There are a multitude of motives for doing DIY repairs around the home, rather than bringing in a professional. There is the pride which comes with tackling a task, and the convenience of being able to simply get on with the job in hand.

But the most common reason people give for fixing household problems themselves is the desire to save money (69%).

People also complain that it can be difficult to get tradespeople to come out to them (54%) and that it can be awkward finding a suitable time for them to visit (42%).

A wary 18% also say that they don't trust tradespeople not to overcharge them.

On the flipside, when people do choose tradespeople, it is most commonly because they want to make sure that the job is done safely and properly (71%) or that they just don't have the skills to tackle the jobs themselves (43%).

Research conducted for this edition of Aviva's Home report series found that over the course of a year, households spend on average £589 fixing things that have gone wrong around the home.

However it's likely that some households spend a great deal more than they had budgeted for, as one in five (22%) admit that they have had to pay for a professional to put things right when they'd had a DIY task go wrong. In fact one in 10 households (9%) said that they had done this on several occasions.

The average amount paid out in the event of such a DIY disaster is £1,319, although almost a fifth of people in this situation had run up a bill of more than £3,000 in order to put things right.

The top five bodged DIY jobs which required professional help to put right were revealed as:

1. Unblocking a toilet
2. Fixing electrical wiring
3. Fixing a broken boiler
4. Unblocking a drain
5. Fixing electrical sockets and switches

The home skills gap – can we do it ourselves?



On the whole we class ourselves as a nation of DIY-ers, with the ability to turn our hands to a multitude of tasks around the home.

However, we live in an age where there is an app for everything and we can summon up help around the house with very little effort. 'Handy' websites allow access to a wide variety of tradespeople, offering a valuable resource for people who may not have the time or the necessary skills to take on household tasks.

This doesn't just mean the bigger, more complicated projects such as building an extension or fitting a new bathroom. Through apps and sites, we can now find someone to help with even the smaller jobs such as putting

up shelves or building flat-pack furniture.

This can be a boon for time-poor households, who value the ease and speed of finding a tradesperson, but there is another train of thought that certain domestic skills are being lost as we turn to others for even relatively basic tasks.

As part of this latest Home report, Aviva discovered a staggering skills gap in some quarters, with one in five UK adults saying they do not know how to boil an egg (19%), and a similar number saying they would not know how to change a light bulb (21%).

Almost a third (31%) of people would not be comfortable cooking a complete meal without a recipe, and more than four in 10 (43%) say they would not be confident changing a baby's nappy.

The skills base falls even further when it comes to changing a flat tyre – 63% wouldn't know how to do this – while 69% wouldn't feel confident changing a washer on a tap.

	Percentage of people confident doing task
Boil an egg	81%
Change a lightbulb	79%
Cook a complete meal without using a recipe	69%
Read a map	66%
Sew on a button	65%
Unblock a sink	62%
Remove a stain from a carpet or clothing	59%
Change a baby's nappy	57%
Wire a plug	57%
'Bleed' a radiator	53%
Check oil levels in a car	53%
Put up a shelf	47%
Put up wallpaper	39%
Change a flat tyre	37%
Change a washer on a tap	30%
Fit tiles	22%

However, this perhaps paints a misleading picture of a nation of domestically incompetent householders, when in fact we take pride in our 'handy' skills. The vast majority of UK adults (96%) say they have learned some DIY skills, with half of the nation (50%) saying their abilities were in part self-taught, through trial and error.

Almost half of UK adults say their dads were responsible for sharing some of their DIY knowledge, while more than a third of people (35%) say their mums had also helped build up their domestic DIY skills.

However, technology is quickly rising up the ranks in terms of teaching, with one in five (20%) people saying they have picked up DIY training via videos on the internet. This jumps to two out of five people aged 18-25, but accounts for just one in 10 people aged 55 and over.

In contrast books and DIY manuals have aided nearly a quarter (23%) of people aged 55+, but just 11% of people aged 25-34.

Where people have picked up household DIY skills

I taught myself (trial and error)	50%
I was taught by my dad	45%
I was taught by my mum	35%
I learned via the internet e.g. YouTube videos	20%
I learned through books / DIY manuals	17%
I learned through work	16%
I was taught by another family member / friend	15%
I learned at school	15%
I learned by watching TV	12%
I learned by asking experts	8%



Conclusion

Our latest report has unearthed some fascinating findings.



Adam Beckett

We know that the world is changing, and the habits and behaviours we see in and around the home are a perfect reflection of this. Not only is the make up of the UK household evolving in terms of who lives there, so are the roles of the people living in our homes.

Working habits are becoming more flexible, both in terms of how, when and where we work, and also with regard to who is doing the work. Men and women, mums and dads are all likely to take on very different roles to those seen 50 years ago and flexibility is the order of the day.

Inside the home there is also evidence that modern living is making its mark. People are enjoying the best of both worlds with flexible working, but the household chores remain, and it is perhaps not a surprise to hear that parents living with children have less than an hour a week of 'me time' to themselves.

We are also still a proud nation of DIY-ers but we recognise our limits, both in terms of time and skills, and are happy to turn to experts to make our lives easier. This does however pose a question of whether certain basic skills are dying out - it is a shock to see that one in five people say they don't know how to change a lightbulb!

On the whole this report takes a snapshot of a nation of busy households, juggling work and family lives and doing what they need to do, within their financial limits, when things don't quite go to plan.

Modern living is hectic, and we are often pulled in many directions at once, but teamwork, cooperation and flexibility are enabling us to us to keep all our plates spinning at home.

Adam Beckett

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Methodology

All results relate to research commissioned by Aviva and carried out by Censuswide research in February / March 2017 unless stated otherwise. 2,004 adults from across the UK were interviewed about their habits and roles around the home. In addition 1,013 parents with dependent children were interviewed regarding their working habits to compile this report.