

The Fawcett Society – Supplementary Evidence (CPF0006)

Coronavirus Diary Excerpts about working from the kitchen table

From April 2020-2021 the Fawcett Society asked women to share their experiences of the pandemic. Below is a selection of quotes from mothers about having to work from the kitchen table:

"I am doing less now for one of my part-time jobs, but that's OK. My husband's full time job is still very busy. We are still splitting homeschooling. I am around more though, and do worry I do less of the actual work - ie I bake while my son does some 'art' (he made armour and a shield out of a large cardboard box, he colours in activity books), or I try to work in snatches while sitting at the kitchen table with him while he does online times tables or French on the iPad."

"My husband is using the office as his working from home base whilst I'm on the kitchen table which means I'm much more accessible every time the children need something. I'm finding it really hard to find a quiet space when I'm doing work Zoom /Skype calls."

"I've had a challenging week as having had a couple of easy weeks at work as I phase myself back in work is now incredibly busy. I found myself getting upset at the fact that I'm trying to work at the kitchen table all day (and am therefore always accessible to the kids) whilst he hides away in the study and appears to 'help with the kids' at 4pm. I find it really difficult to work at the pace I need to whilst looking after them which is stressful."

"This has been a strange week, in many ways, with the opening of other non essential shops, I was expecting it to perhaps feel a bit more 'normal' but my work (in a secondary school) remains closed except for a small number of students in year 10, so I remain, as I have for the last however many weeks, at my kitchen table for a large proportion of the day.

I had a very low day on Wednesday (mainly due to the aforementioned kitchen table) and just the frustration of trying to work whilst trying to persuade my daughter to do anything school related, whilst my husband is back to work out of the house is quite a lot to bear.

I find it really challenging that because I can only really work in a 'shared' household space, my time is generally 'fair game' so if my husband feels like a chat at the end of the day, then I am somehow obliged to join in."

"My son is in year 7 and he is expected to follow his usual timetable via Google classrooms, so he should be quite independent, but he is very sociable and likes to chat about what he's doing. I sit opposite him at the dining table while I'm working. My husband works in the study, because he worked from home before

the pandemic so all his equipment etc is in there. So home schooling really falls to me. We have recently agreed that I can use the study sometimes if I've got meetings, so then my husband sits at the dining table with my son. But my husband spends most of his day talking on the phone in meetings, so that makes it hard for my son to concentrate on his work. So that's another reason why the home schooling tend to fall to me as I have fewer meetings. Actually, I like to be involved in my son's school work, so I don't want to be stuck in a different room all the time. I am enjoying finding out what he's studying. But sometimes it can be hard if I need to concentrate and he's trying to talk to me about his school work. So I might tell him to be quiet, and then he might get upset. So then I feel guilty."

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