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ANNA MATYSIAK
BEATA OSIEWALSKA
ANNA KUROWSKA

LabFam
INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE
FOR LABOUR MARKET AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

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The Role of Working-From-Home for Maternal Employment Re-Entry after Childbirth

Anna Matysiak[1]*, *Beata Osiewalska*[1], *Anna Kurowska*[2]

[1]*Interdisciplinary Centre for Labour Market and Family Dynamics (LabFam), Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Warsaw*
[2]*Interdisciplinary Centre for Labour Market and Family Dynamics (LabFam), Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw*
**Corresponding authors: annamatysiak@uw.edu.pl*

Abstract: This study investigates how work-from-home (WFH) —by mothers and their male partners—shapes maternal employment re-entry after childbirth. Drawing on Conservation of Resources and Boundary Management theories, the study distinguishes between WFH access and regular use. It hypothesizes that regular WFH use by mothers and their partners supports earlier and full-time maternal return to paid work, particularly among second-time mothers. The UK Household Longitudinal Study (2009–2019) is used to estimate discrete-time hazard models of return to paid work after first and second births, distinguishing between full-time and part-time re-entry. Among first-time mothers, both WFH access and regular use are associated with a greater likelihood of full-time re-entry, though not with overall return. Among second-time mothers, regular pre-birth WFH use significantly increases the likelihood of returning to paid work—regardless of hours—whereas access alone does not. No significant associations are found between male partners' WFH and maternal employment outcomes.

Keywords: childbirth, flexibility, remote work, return to work, telework, work from home, United Kingdom

JEL codes: J10, J11, J13

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1. Introduction

The rise of work-from-home (WFH) is transforming 21st-century labour markets (Eurofound, 2020). In the United Kingdom (UK)—the focus of this study—around one in four employees occasionally worked from home in 2019, i.e. prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (Eurostat 2022). This figure increased sharply during the pandemic, with recent estimates indicating that 35–40% of workers now regularly work from home (ONS 2023; ONS 2024). Given its widespread adoption, understanding the implications of WFH is increasingly important.

As a flexible alternative to conventional office-based work, WFH may be particularly relevant to mothers returning to paid employment after childbirth. By reducing commuting time (Allen et al. 2013; Arntz et al. 2022) and offering greater scheduling flexibility (Golden et al. 2006; Chung and Van der Lippe 2020), WFH can support the integration of paid work and caregiving responsibilities—especially when care demands are high, such as after second or subsequent births. Mothers with access to WFH—or whose partners can work from home—may therefore return to work sooner or re-enter full-time rather than part-time. Nevertheless, WFH may also pose challenges for women. Mothers working from home often undertake more housework and childcare than their on-site counterparts (Kuang et al. 2025; Wang and Cheng 2024), face greater difficulties maintaining boundaries between work and family roles and report higher levels of psychological distress (Cañibano 2019; Gadeyne et al. 2018). Fathers, meanwhile, frequently use WFH to extend their working hours (Allen et al. 2015; Powell and Craig 2015), potentially limiting their caregiving involvement and constraining their partners' return to (full-time) employment.

Theoretically, it thus remains unclear whether WFH—by either mothers or their partners—facilitates women's (full-time) return to employment. In addition, these effects may depend on the birth order. Second-time mothers not only face larger caregiving demands, but are also more likely than first-time mothers to be aware of the challenges WFH poses in the context of childcare. Having previously navigated the combination of WFH and caregiving, they may have developed boundary management strategies that help them maximize the benefits and mitigate the drawbacks of this arrangement (Kossek et al. 2006). As such, mothers' use of WFH before a first versus a second birth likely carries different implications and may shape their return to paid employment in distinct ways.

Empirical evidence on how women's and their (male) partners' WFH affect maternal return to paid work remains limited. To the best of our knowledge, only Chung and van der Horst (2018) have addressed this topic. Conducting their study in the UK and drawing on the first waves of the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UK HLS), they found marginal evidence that women who worked from home before birth were less likely to reduce their working hours within two years after childbirth than those who did not. Although their research was pioneering, it was constrained by a short observation window—covering only two panel waves (2010/2011 and 2012/2013)—which provided only a snapshot of women's return to paid employment. As a result, they could assess whether WFH was associated with full-time versus part-time work among early returners, but could not examine the process of maternal return to paid employment. In addition, their relatively small sample size (N = 272) limited the potential for more detailed subgroup analyses (e.g., by birth order).

Other studies have examined adjacent aspects of work autonomy, such as occupational autonomy (i.e., how work is done; Portier 2025) or flexible scheduling (i.e., when work is done; Lott 2020), and found that greater work autonomy indeed supports maternal re-entry into paid employment. However, they did not address flexibility in workplace location, leaving an important gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of WFH arrangements. Although WFH remains less common than flexitime or occupational autonomy (Osiewalska and Matysiak 2025), its rapid growth and strong appeal—particularly among parents—underscore the need for further inquiry (Aksoy et al. 2022; Thomson et al. 2021).

Even less is known about how fathers' WFH affects mothers' labour market outcomes. Past studies addressed the role of fathers' flexitime in that context, but not WFH. Using German data, Lott (2020) found no effect of fathers' pre-birth flexitime on maternal return to paid work, whereas Büchler and Lutz (2021) found positive effects when flexitime was assessed post-birth. Meanwhile, the impact of male partners' working from home on women's employment outcomes is highly relevant—not only due to the growing prevalence of remote work, but also because male partners can play a key role in alleviating the conflict between paid work and caregiving responsibilities, thereby facilitating women's careers (Langner 2018; Norman 2020).

Given this limited evidence, we advance the knowledge of how and why WFH—by both women and their partners—affects mothers' return to paid employment. Drawing on Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll 1989) and Boundary Management (Ashforth et al. 2000; Clark 2000) theories, we propose a framework for understanding how WFH by women and

their male partners affects maternal return to (full-time) employment. Using UKHLS 2009-2019 data (N = 1,291) and discrete-time hazard models, we examine how women's access to and regular use of WFH before birth is linked to their return to paid work following first and second birth, distinguishing between full-time and part-time return. We also study the role of the male partner's WFH. By covering longer time period and applying event history models, our study offers a more robust and nuanced understanding of how WFH arrangements shape maternal employment trajectories than it was possible in the early research on the topic.

Our focus is on UK before the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The data for the post-pandemic period are still too limited to perform a robust study on the topic and we deliberately excluded the pandemic time to isolate the effects of WFH on women's return to paid work from the confounding influences of social distancing policies, such as school closures and lockdowns. The UK offers a particularly relevant context for our study. Even prior to the pandemic, the UK displayed one of the highest rates of WFH in Europe (Eurostat 2022) and British legislation supported employees' right to request WFH to accommodate caregiving (Chung and van der Horst 2018; Wang and Cheng 2024). Flexible work arrangements, such as WFH, may provide an important strategy for sustaining maternal employment in the UK as the state provides little support for work and family reconciliation (Adler and Lenz 2015; Yerkes and Javornik 2019).

2. Background

2.1 Mother's Employment in the Context of Limited Reconciliation Policies

Across most European countries, including the UK, mothers have lower labour force participation than childless women, are more likely to work part-time, and earn less—with these disparities being largely attributed to difficulties in reconciling paid work and childcare (Blau and Winkler 2018; Matysiak and Cukrowska-Torzewska 2021). Supportive policies—such as paid parental leave, accessible childcare, and greater male involvement in domestic labour—can mitigate these tensions (Schober and Büchau 2022; Zoch and Hondralis 2017). However, in the UK, such support remains limited: men's participation in childcare is low, public childcare is primarily targeted at low-income or single-parent families (Yerkes and Javornik 2019), and parental leave is poorly compensated. Of the 52 weeks of maternity leave, only the first six are paid at 90% of earnings without a cap; the next 33 weeks are paid at 90% or £172.48 per week, whichever is lower, and the remaining weeks and 18 weeks

of parental leave are unpaid (GOV.UK 2024a). British men also work long hours (Adler and Lenz 2015) and rarely take parental leave (Kaufman 2018), often leaving mothers to reduce their hours to manage caregiving (McMunn et al. 2020).

In this setting, WFH may offer a viable way to combine paid work with care. By increasing flexibility and eliminating commuting, it could support earlier returns to work or facilitate full-time rather than part-time employment. Recognising it, the UK government introduced the right to request flexible working in 2003, initially for parents of young children, expanded to all workers with 26 weeks' service in 2014, and—most recently in 2024—to all employees from day one (GOV.UK 2024b). Despite employers' discretion to refuse requests, the UK recorded one of the highest pre-pandemic WFH rates in Europe, with 26% of workers working from home in 2019 (Eurostat 2022).

2.2 WFH in the context of combining paid work and care

Caring for a small child demands significant investments of time, energy, and emotional capacity from mothers (Greenhaus 1985). Drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1989), we argue that a mother's decision about when to return to paid work and whether to resume it full- or part-time depends on her ability to manage these resources and minimize their depletion. WFH may serve as an important tool that facilitates more efficient allocation of time and energy, enabling earlier or full-time re-entry into employment. Consistently with Boundary Management theory (Ashforth et al. 2000; Clark 2000), a mother who works from home has more control over her schedule and can set the boundaries between paid work and care. As a result, she can arrange work-related tasks around family obligations more flexibly—for instance, working during a child's naps (Chung and Van der Lippe 2020; Felstead et al. 2002). She can also save time and energy by eliminating commutes, minimizing interruptions from coworkers, or performing paid work concurrently with domestic chores (Arntz et al. 2022; Korbel and Stegle 2020). WFH may also ease psychological strain by allowing mothers to remain in close proximity to children and react quickly in emergencies. Furthermore, WFH can increase job satisfaction by offering greater autonomy and control (Darouei and Pluut 2021), which may encourage earlier (full-time) return to paid work.

However, WFH has also drawbacks that may deplete mothers' resources. Namely, WFH increases the permeability of the boundaries between paid work and family domains as it reduces physical and temporal boundaries between the two domains (Kossek et al. 2006;

Glavin and Schieman 2012). Remote workers, who lack such boundaries, often face interruptions from family members or extend their workday into the evening to catch up on unfinished tasks (Cañibano 2019; Powell and Craig 2015). Women working from home may also face expectations to assume greater household and caregiving responsibilities simply due to their presence at home (Allen et al. 2015; Sullivan and Lewis 2001), and indeed tend to perform more domestic labor than office-based workers (Lyttelton et al. 2022; Wang and Cheng 2024). Consistently with the Boundary Management theory developing boundary management strategies is essential in order to mitigate such challenges and reduce the risks of role blurring (Ashforth et al. 2000; Kossek et al. 2006). These can include physical separation (e.g. organizing a dedicated home office), temporal structuring (e.g. aligning work hours with school or daycare schedules), and symbolic transitions (e.g. switching off the computer to mark the end of the workday) (Fonner and Stache 2012; Nippert-Eng 1996).

All in all, the role of WFH in supporting mothers' return to employment after birth remains unclear. On the one hand, the possibility to WFH offers working mothers a means to conserve their resources, such as time, energy and emotional capacity. On the other hand, however, it also creates risks resulting from the increased permeability between paid work and family boundaries. Empirical research generally supports a positive link between WFH and work-family balance (Allen et al. 2013; Darouei and Pluut 2021; Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Golden et al. 2006; Laß and Wooden 2023). Yet, this effect appears modest, likely due to the counterbalancing risks of role blurring (Allen et al. 2015). A more nuanced perspective on WFH is thus warranted—one that differentiates between access to and actual use of WFH (Allen et al. 2013; Kossek et al. 2006).

2.3 Access to WFH versus Its Regular Use

Whether a woman makes regular use of WFH or she only has access to it may play a significant role in shaping her decision to return to paid work after birth. Even without regular use of WFH, the availability of this work arrangement can offer a mother a sense of control over her resources. Knowing that she is not bound by a rigid commute and can work from home in case of emergencies may alleviate her time-related strain (Allen et al. 2013; Kossek et al. 2006). A mother who regularly works from the office may still benefit from knowing she can occasionally request WFH to manage appointments, childcare logistics, or recover from fatigue. Moreover, access to WFH has been linked to greater organizational attachment among

workers (Darouei and Pluut 2021; Grover and Crooker 1995), which may further encourage mothers to return to paid work earlier or on a full-time basis.

However, regular use of WFH may be more consequential for conserving resources and facilitating (full-time) re-entry into paid-work (Allen et al. 2013; Chung and van der Horst 2018; Gajendran and Harrison 2007). The flexibility granted in practice may not match formal entitlements, meaning that some employees cannot meaningfully use WFH despite having nominal access to it (Eaton 2003; Kossek et al. 2006). Pre-birth experience with WFH may also enhance individuals' ability to effectively utilize the flexibility this arrangement offers and minimise the risks of role blurring. Those who engaged in WFH before giving birth have likely developed boundary management strategies to navigate overlapping work and family demands (Fonner and Stache 2012; Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Kossek et al. 2006). Women, in particular, may have already established a dedicated home workspace and learned to integrate domestic tasks—such as cooking or laundry—into their workday. This familiarity may ease their return to employment.

Based on these considerations, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- H1a: Women who regularly worked from home prior to childbirth are more likely to return to paid employment than those who worked exclusively on-site.
- H1b: Women who regularly worked from home prior to childbirth are more likely to return to full-time rather than part-time work.
- H2: Prior access to WFH without its regular use has a weaker effect on women's return to paid employment compared to regular pre-birth WFH use.

2.4 Pre-Birth Experience with combining WFH and childcare: First vs. Second Births

WFH may be particularly valuable for mothers with more than one child for two main reasons. First, a larger number of children places greater demands on mothers' time, energy, and emotional resources, intensifying the need for effective strategies to balance paid work and caregiving. This makes WFH especially beneficial for mothers considering labor market re-entry after a second birth.

Second, mothers of two children are more likely to have prior experience using WFH in a parenting context. Unlike women who worked from home before having children, these mothers have already navigated the benefits and challenges of WFH while caring for their first child. They may have developed even more effective boundary-management strategies than

first-time mothers. Namely, apart from having set up a dedicated home workspace they might have chosen a childcare centre for the first child close to home or established household routines to reduce work interruptions. Entering their second maternity period, these women are better equipped with knowledge, habits, and coping mechanisms that can ease their return to work and support full-time employment.

Based on these considerations, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H3a: Pre-birth WFH use is more strongly associated with a return to paid employment for second-time mothers than for first-time mothers.
- H3b: Pre-birth WFH use more strongly predicts a return to full-time rather than part-time employment after the second birth compared to the first.

2.5 The role of a male partner's regular use of WFH

A mother's return to (full-time) employment may also be shaped by her partner's work arrangements at the time of re-entry. As partners' life trajectories are interdependent, one partner's labor market status and working conditions can influence the other's behaviors and outcomes (Verbakel and de Graaf 2008). However, the direction of this influence is not clear.

One the one hand, the Theory of Allocation of Time (Becker 1965) suggests that a partner who is more successful in the labor market and has no childrearing obligations (usually a man) should invest his work resources into his professional career to optimize household welfare. Consistently with this approach, men who can work from home use the flexibility of this work arrangement in order to enhance their professional careers (i.e. by working longer and more intensely) rather than taking over some of the childcare obligations. This, in turn, leaves mothers with greater care burden, further depleting their resources and thereby reducing their likelihood of returning to (full-time) employment. Some empirical research indeed indicates that men tend to use WFH to enhance their work performance rather than increase domestic contributions (Allen et al. 2015; Lott and Chung 2016; Powell and Craig 2015), which leads to detraditionalization of the gender division of labor (Wang and Cheng 2024).

On the other hand, however, men who can work from home may also decide to use this resource to enrich their family role consistently (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). For instance, they can reallocate the time saved on commuting to caregiving responsibilities, such as walking/driving children to and from nearby childcare centers, or to contribute more to domestic tasks rather than extending their working hours. Through a cross-over effect, this can

help preserve mother's resources, i.e. alleviate her time pressure, save her energy and reduce psychological strain. Consequently, in line with COR, WFH by the male partner may also support a mother in returning to paid work earlier or on a full-time basis.

Empirical evidence suggests that fathers who work from home not only increase their time spent on paid work but also tend to increase their childcare time, though not housework (Lyttelton et al. 2022). They are also more likely to stay at home with sick children or organize drop-offs/pick-ups than office-based fathers (Kuang et al. 2025). Other studies find that men's use of flexitime positively impacts women's earnings (Langner, 2018) and facilitates return to employment after childbirth, though rather part-time than full-time (Büchler and Lutz 2021). These findings, alongside broader societal changes—such as the decline of household specialization (Juhn and McCue 2017), women's growing economic independence (Klesment and Van Bavel 2017), and men's increasing involvement in domestic work (Altintas and Sullivan 2016)—suggest that partners' WFH may support, rather than hinder, mothers' labor market participation. We therefore propose the following hypotheses:

- H4a: Mothers whose male partners regularly work from home are more likely to return to paid employment than those whose partners work exclusively on-site.
- H4b: Mothers whose male partners regularly work from home are more likely to return to full-time rather than part-time employment.

This supportive role of partners' WFH may be particularly salient for second-time mothers, who face increased challenges in balancing employment with the care of two children, and for whom a partner's presence and involvement at home may be crucial in shaping their decision to return to work.

3. Method

3.1 Data and Sample

To examine the relationship between partners' WFH arrangements and women's return to employment after childbirth, we use data from waves 1 to 10 (2009–2019) of Understanding Society: the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). UKHLS is one of the largest annual panel studies, surveying around 40,000 UK households and collecting detailed information on many aspects of people's lives, including family and professional careers (Benzeval et al. 2020).

Our analytical sample comprises partnered women aged 18–44 in heterosexual unions with available partner information. We include women who gave birth to their first or second child during the observation period and were employed before that birth (998 first-time mothers; 876 second-time mothers). Women who experienced both births within the study period contribute to both subsamples. We exclude non-partnered women for two reasons. First, their return-to-work decisions may be shaped by different economic and caregiving pressures compared to partnered women, and second, their numbers in the dataset are too small to allow for meaningful subgroup analysis. We also exclude women with three or more children due to their limited sample size and the greater selectivity of women with larger families into employment. Self-employed women are also excluded, given the distinct nature of their employment trajectories around childbirth (van der Zwan et al. 2020). We retain only cases with complete information on fertility and employment histories—including the date of return to paid work. Our final sample includes 820 mothers of one child (8,555 woman-months) and 702 mothers of two children (7,956 woman-months), yielding a combined sample of 1,291 unique respondents and 16,511 woman-months of observation.

We follow women for up to five years after childbirth. Observation ends at employment re-entry (our event of interest), the last interview date, or the end of the partnership—whichever occurred first. If a woman re-partnered before returning to work, she re-entered the sample. Although the maximum observation window is five years, actual observation periods are typically much shorter. For first-time mothers, the mean duration of observation is 9.4 months, with 90% observed for 16 months or less. For second-time mothers, the mean is 10.7 months, with 90% observed for 21 months or less.

3.2 WFH status

Our key explanatory variable captures access to and use of WFH. For women, WFH status is measured prior to childbirth, typically at the survey wave immediately preceding the birth, or, if that information is missing, at the wave before that. For male partners, their WFH arrangement is evaluated based on their current status, with a lag of one year to account for their working conditions preceding women's reentry into employment (shorter lag is not possible due to the annual nature of the data). We use the current WFH arrangement of the male partner, lagged by one year, instead of the arrangement at birth as the partner might have changed a job, lost employment, or newly requested WFH after a child was born. Men who

were not employed or were self-employed are categorised separately, as their WFH status cannot not be evaluated.

The WFH status is derived from two UKHLS questions asked biennially within the work conditions module (starting wave 2). The first question (jbflex7) asks whether flexible arrangements—such as "working from home on a regular basis"—are available at the respondent's workplace. Those with access were then asked the second question (jbfxuse7) whether they *currently* use any of these arrangements, including regular home working. Based on this, we construct a three-category variable:

- *No access to WFH / Onsite work:* Respondents without access to regular home working (reference category, denoted as 'no access').
- *Access with irregular or no use:* Respondents who report access but use it irregularly or not at all (denoted as 'irregular / no use').
- *Regular use of WFH:* Respondents who report working from home on a regular basis (denoted as 'regular use').

This approach reflects both the availability and the use of WFH, consistent with prior UKHLS studies (Chung and van der Horst 2018; Osiewalska et al. 2024). Although UKHLS includes a category for respondents who *mainly* work from home, fewer than 4% selected this option—too few for reliable analysis.

The WFH status was collected within the UKHLS work condition module every two years, starting with wave 2. We impute missing WFH data from the nearest available wave, provided the respondent did not changed jobs or employers (under 5% of cases). For those who changed jobs, missing values are imputed using linear bootstrapping. We test the robustness of our findings against this imputation strategy (see Robustness Checks).

In our sample, 20% of women employed before their first birth had WFH access—7% used it regularly and 13% irregularly or not at all. The figures were similar before second births (9% regular use, 11% irregular/no use). Among male partners, 24% had access to WFH, with 11% using it regularly and 13% irregularly or not at all. These proportions were consistent across first- and second-time fathers.

A potential concern related to assessing women's employment before birth is that women may change employers after childbirth in order to seek additional flexibility. In such a case, our conclusions on the role of WFH for maternal return to paid work would be biased. However, in our data, such job changes are rare. Among first-time mothers who returned to

work during the observation period, only 2.6% (14 out of 539 cases) changed employers, with 4 of them gaining access to WFH in their new roles. An additional 5.9% (32 women) changed jobs but stayed within the same organization and 2 of these women gained WFH access. For second-time mothers, only 2.1% (10 out of 467 cases) changed employers but none experienced a gain in WFH access, and 4.3% (20 women) changed roles internally, with just one gaining access to WFH. These statistics grants credibility to our approach.

3.3 Other variables

We control for the time since childbirth (in months and months squared), woman's age at birth (18–29; 30–34; 35–44), survey period (2009–2012; 2013–2016; 2017–2019), ethnicity (British/Irish; Asian; Indian; Black; Other White; Other), and educational attainment prior to childbirth (Tertiary; Below tertiary). Economic wellbeing is captured through perceived financial situation (lagged by one year and grouped as: Comfortably; Alright; Just about/Difficult), and health status is measured by self-reported general health (Excellent; Very Good; Good; Fair/Poor, also lagged by one year). We additionally control for parity (One child; Two children). Finally, women's working hours prior to childbirth (full-time vs. part-time) are included, as women who worked part-time pre-birth are less likely to return to full-time employment post-birth. Part-time employment was defined as 30 hours or fewer per week, based on the UKHLS measure (jbft_dv). Summary statistics for all variables and further details on the control variables are provided in the Appendix in Table A1.

3.4 Analytical strategy

We employ discrete-time event history models with a complementary log-log (cloglog) specification. Our baseline model (M1) includes women's pre-birth and their partners' current WFH arrangements, alongside time since childbirth (months and months squared) and all control covariates as listed above. This model tests hypotheses H1a (women who used WFH before birth are more likely to return to work), H2 (the effect of WFH use is stronger than access to WFH without its regular use), and H4a (partner's WFH use facilitates maternal return to paid work).

To assess the extent of labour market re-entry, we estimate a competing-risk multinomial cloglog model (M2), distinguishing between re-entry into (1) full-time work, (2) part-time work, or (3) no return to paid work. Model M2 includes the same explanatory and control

variables as M1 and tests H1b and H4b, which predict that women's or their partners' WFH use increases the likelihood of full-time (rather than part-time) re-entry.

Finally, to address H3a and H3b, we re-estimate both models separately for mothers of one child (M1a, M2a) and two children (M1b, M2b), testing whether the effects of WFH use are stronger for second-time mothers. These models contain the same set of control covariates apart from parity.

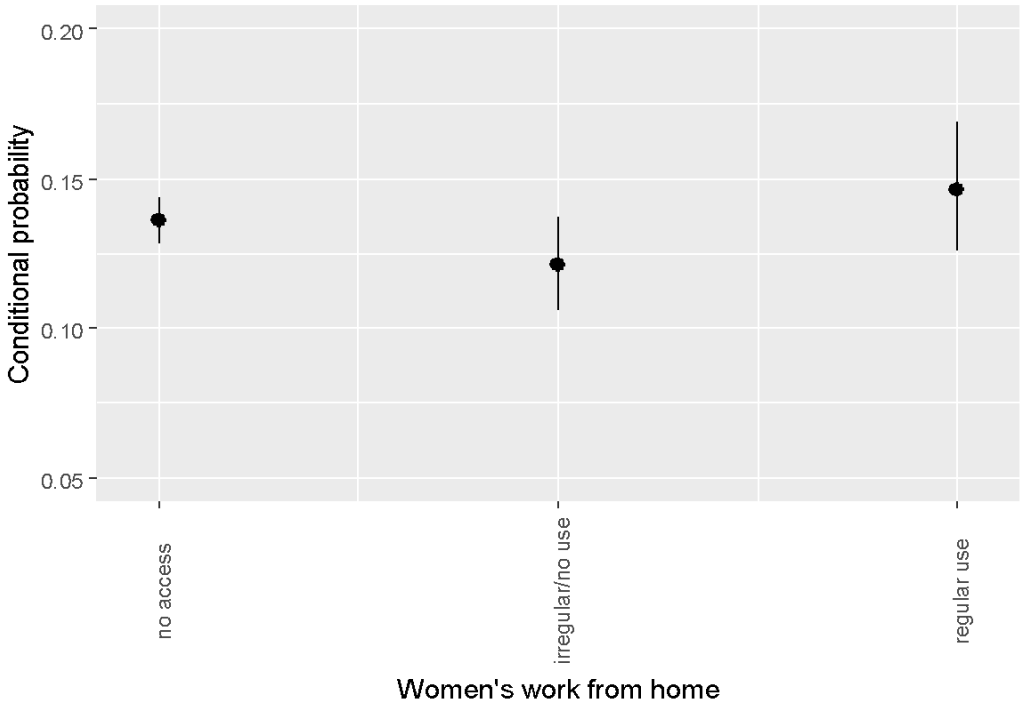
4. Results

Instead of interpreting model coefficients (shown in the Appendix, Tables A2 and A3), we predict the conditional probabilities of women's return to paid employment, presented in Figures 1 to 6. These probabilities reflect the likelihood of re-entry in a given month, conditional on not having returned to paid work in any prior month. To assess statistical significance of the difference between two probabilities, we compute confidence intervals (Cis) for pairwise comparisons. To this end, we follow Austin and Hux (2002) who demonstrated that non-overlapping 83% CIs indicate a difference between the two probabilities at approximately the 5% level.

4.1 Women's WFH and Return to Employment after Childbirth

We first examine the relationship between women's pre-birth WFH arrangements and return to paid work, without distinguishing between part-time and full-time employment or parity. Results from Model M1 (Table A2 in the Appendix; Figure 1) show no significant association between either WFH access or regular use and the likelihood of returning to paid work, if no distinction between full- and part-time return is made.

Figure 1. *Predicted hazard of return to employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth.*

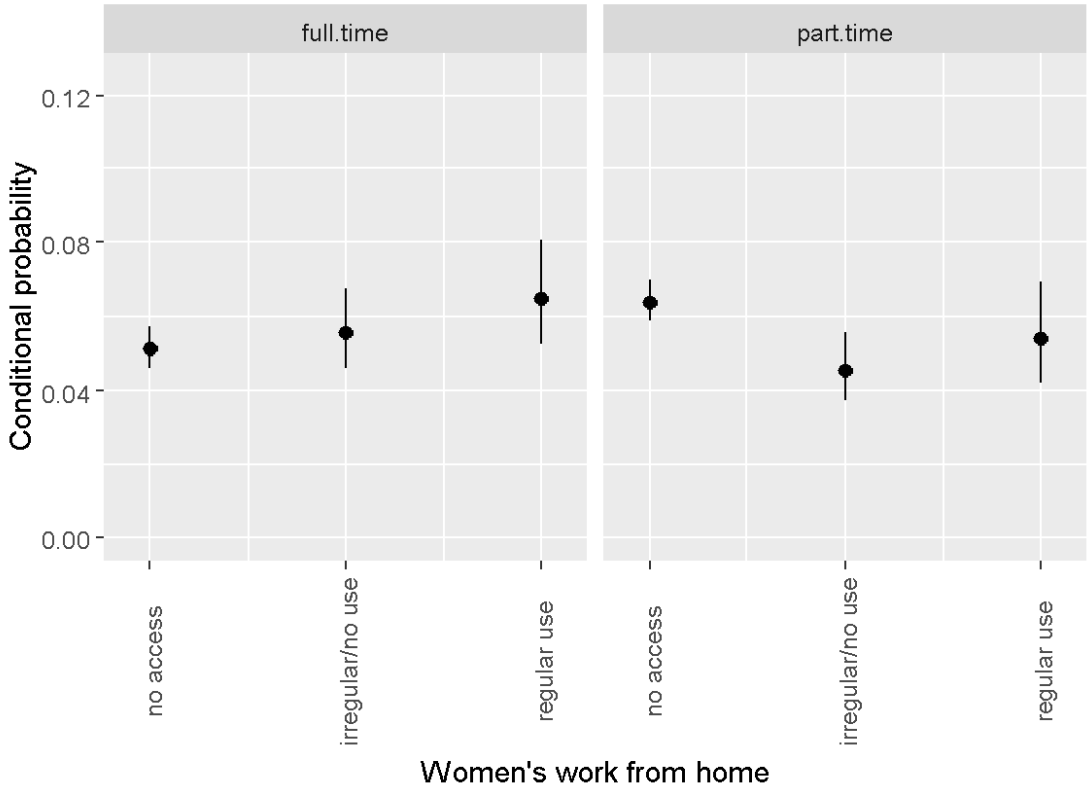


Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, health, and the number of children.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

We then assess whether WFH is associated with full-time versus part-time re-entry. Predictions from Model M2 (Table A2 in the Appendix; Figure 2) reveal that women who worked exclusively on-site before birth were more likely to return part-time than full-time. By contrast, women with access to or regular use of WFH were as likely to return full-time as part-time, net of their pre-birth working hours.

Figure 2. *Predicted hazard of return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth.*

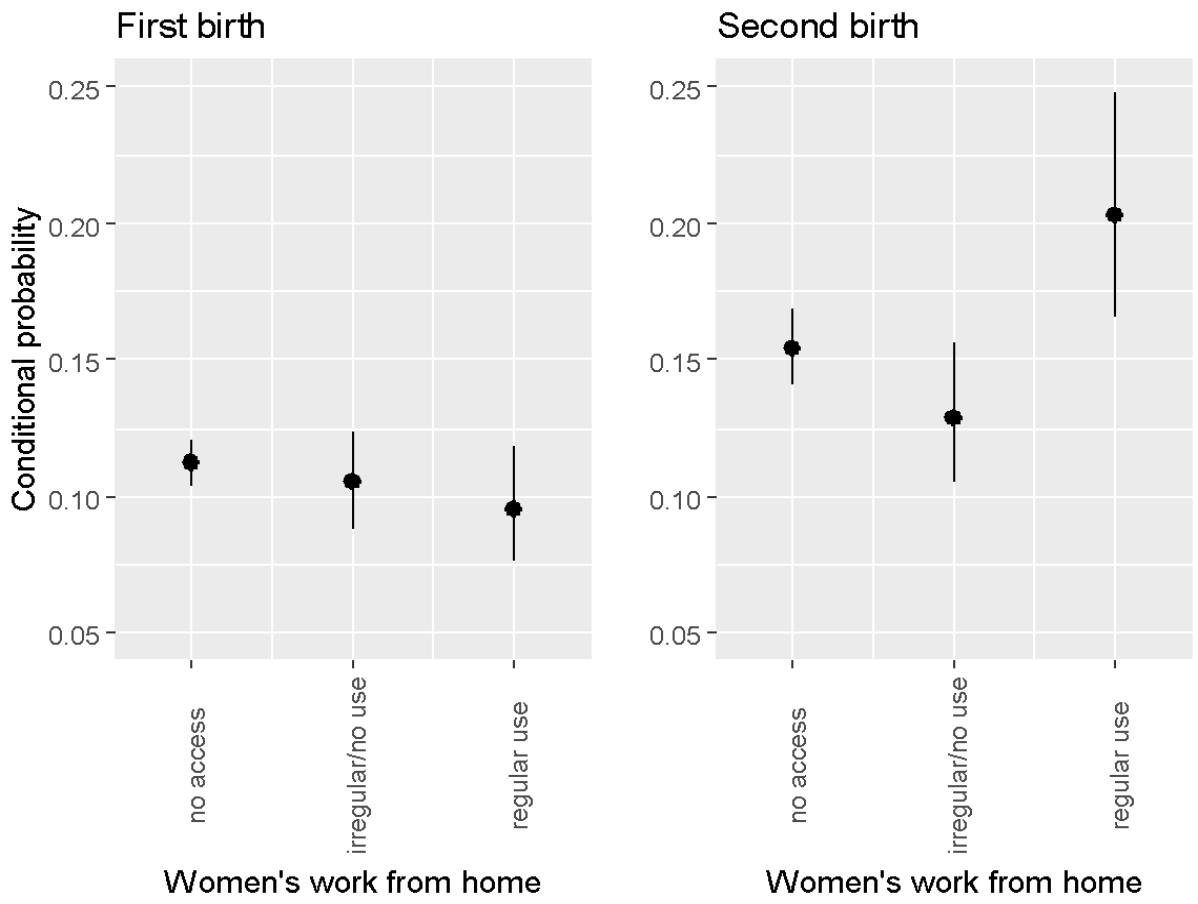


Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, health, and the number of children.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Next, we explore whether these patterns differ by parity (Figures 3–4, Table A3 in the Appendix; Models M1a–b, M2a–b). Among first-time mothers, WFH access to or use before childbirth was not significantly associated with overall re-entry into employment compared to onsite working women (Figure 3). However, those first-time mothers who regularly worked from home or had access to WFH before birth were more likely to return full-time than part-time (Figure 4). Interestingly, women who worked exclusively on-site before their first birth were as likely to return full-time as part-time.

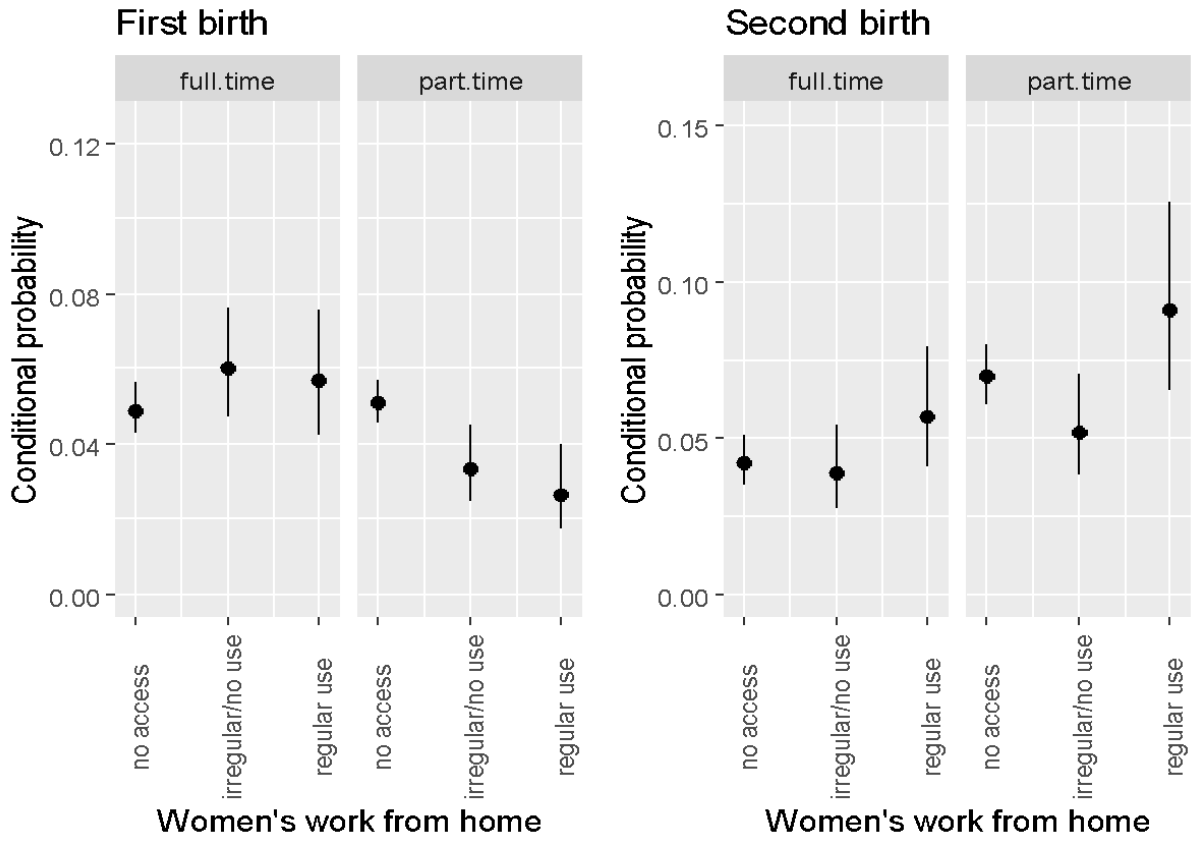
Figure 3. *Predicted hazard of return to employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth and parity.*



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1a-b, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, and health.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Figure 4. *Predicted hazard of return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth and parity.*



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2a-b which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, and health.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Among second-time mothers, the pattern was reversed. Women who regularly used WFH before birth were more likely to return to paid work than those with no access or only irregular use of WFH (Figure 3). However, they were equally likely to return full-time as part-time (Figure 4).

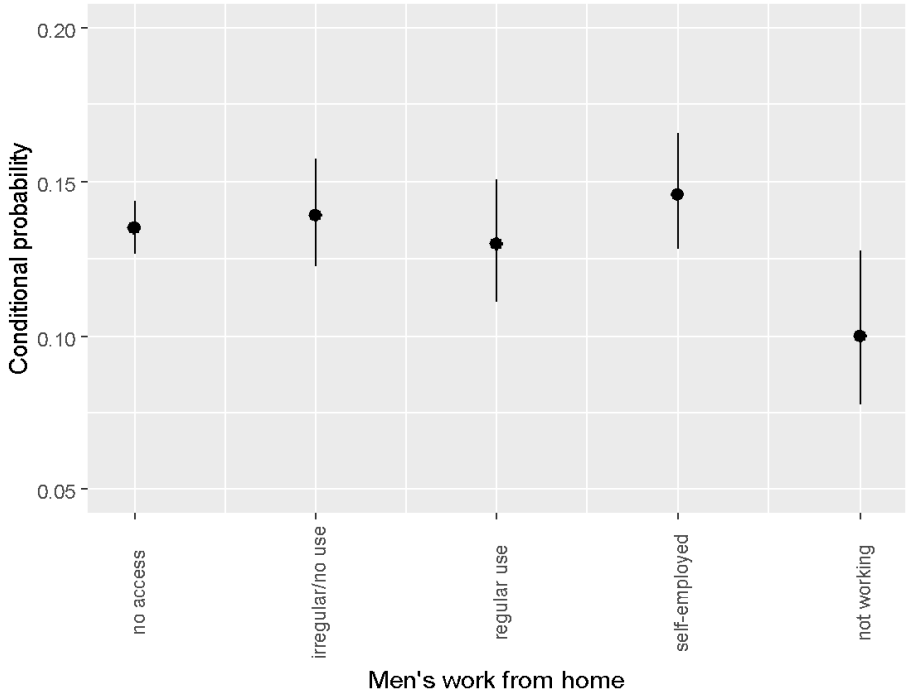
Taken together, these results evidence that the effect of WFH varies by birth order. For first-time mothers, pre-birth WFH use facilitated return to full-time rather than part-time work but did not affect overall re-entry. For second-time mothers, it increased the likelihood of returning to work but did not influence whether that return is full-time or part-time.

4.2 Male Partner's WFH and Female Return to Employment

Beyond women's own WFH arrangements, we also examined whether their male partners' WFH status influenced women's return to paid work, assessing it around the time women were making the decision whether and when to return to paid work. Relevant estimates are shown in Tables A2–A3 in the Appendix and predicted probabilities are displayed in Figures 5-6.

Our findings indicate no significant relationship between men's WFH arrangements and women's return to employment (Figure 5). Whether the partner had access to or regularly used WFH, women were no more likely to return to work than those whose partners worked exclusively on-site. Similarly, his WFH status did not affect whether women returned full-time or part-time (Figure 6).

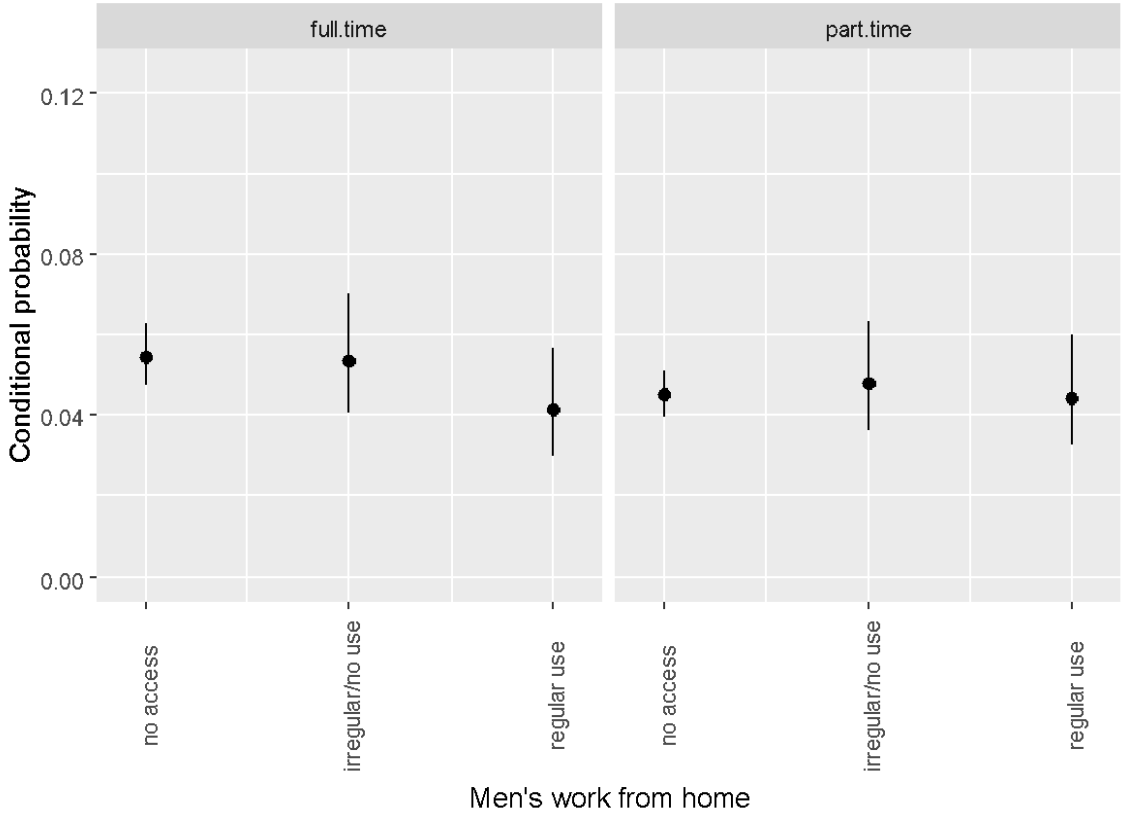
Figure 5. *Predicted hazard of women's return to employment after birth by male partner's WFH arrangement*.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, health, and the number of children.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Figure 6. *Predicted hazard of women's return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by male partner's WFH arrangement.*



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, health, and the number of children. Self-employed and not working categories were not shown to increase clarity.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

We further explored whether this relationship varied by parity. Although results are not shown (Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix), they consistently indicated that the partner's WFH status was not related to women's return to paid work, regardless of whether it was after a first or second birth.

4.3 Robustness checks

We conducted several additional analyses to assess the robustness of our findings and account for potential selection mechanisms. First, we tested the sensitivity of our results to different imputation strategies for missing WFH data. Using alternative approaches—including

bootstrapping and directional imputations (upward and downward)—we found consistent results across specifications (available upon request).

Second, we addressed potential selection into WFH. Women with higher education or high-status occupations were overrepresented among WFH users and might have differed from other women in ways that affected their employment plans or ability to afford childcare. To mitigate this concern, we included controls for education and financial situation in all models. In addition, we re-estimated our models on a matched sample of women working onsite and those working from home, using coarse matching (McAfee 2002) based on age at childbirth, pre-birth education, occupation, and working hours. Results from this matched sample (Appendix, Figures A3–A7) remained consistent with our main findings.

5. Discussion

In the context of balancing paid work and caregiving, WFH may be described as a "double-edged sword" (Osiewalska and Matysiak 2025): it may facilitate work-care reconciliation but also blur boundaries and increase workload (Kelly et al. 2011; Glavin and Schieman 2012). This study explored whether WFH—specifically access to and its regular use before childbirth—supports women's return to paid work, and whether it encourages full-time over part-time re-entry. We conducted our analysis in the UK (2010–2019), a context where WFH was promoted by policy to ease work-family conflict, yet other supports, such as childcare, remained limited. This setting enabled us to investigate WFH's effects beyond highly selected groups (i.e. with right to WFH) and in a country with institutionalized, though employer-mediated, flexibility.

Drawing on Conservation of Resources and Boundary Management theories, we hypothesized that regular use of WFH facilitates women's return to employment after birth (H1a), in particular on a full-time rather than part-time basis (H1b), that it is more beneficial than mere access to WFH (H2), and that the beneficial effects of WFH use are stronger for second- rather than first-time mothers (H3a and H3b). Our findings show that WFH indeed facilitates women's return to paid work after childbirth, but its effects are contingent on birth order and pre-birth experience with WFH. Specifically, we found support for H1a and H2 only among second-time mothers, and for H1b only among first-time mothers. Support for H3a was observed, but not for H3b.

For first-time mothers, WFH—both access and use—did not increase the overall likelihood of returning to paid work but did raise the probability of resuming full-time rather than part-time employment. This suggests that WFH helps first-time mothers optimize their resources, such as time, energy and/or emotional capacity, and supports full-time re-entry. With fewer caregiving demands than mothers of multiple children, first-time mothers may find full-time work more feasible and use WFH as a strategy to maintain career continuity.

For second-time mothers, the pattern is reversed. Regular use—but not access—to WFH prior to childbirth was linked to a higher likelihood of returning to paid work, though it did not significantly increase full-time over part-time re-entry. These mothers likely face more intensive time and energy demands (Kristjansdottir et al. 2020) and may prioritize flexibility and work participation over hours worked. Importantly, among this group, only those who had already used WFH benefited—suggesting that actual experience (rather than access alone) helps mothers navigate the dual pressures of caregiving and paid work through better boundary management strategies and clearer expectations.

This distinction between access and use of WFH was particularly salient. For first-time mothers, both were associated with full-time re-entry. For second-time mothers, only actual use influenced the return to paid work. This suggests that pre-birth experience with WFH provides women with practical insight into the realities of combining paid work with caregiving, and helps them assess the true value of WFH in managing these dual responsibilities. Women who used WFH before childbirth have likely developed boundary management strategies that allow them to leverage its flexibility while minimizing its drawbacks. Moreover, by actually using WFH, they can be confident that this option is genuinely supported by their employer, rather than rely on a mere promise. First-time mothers—who typically face fewer demands on their time, energy, and emotional resources—may feel more comfortable taking a chance on untested work arrangements. In contrast, second-time mothers, operating with more constrained resources, are understandably more cautious and inclined to rely on strategies they know to be available and effective.

We also examined whether male partners' WFH influenced women's post-birth employment. Theoretically, this could go in either direction: on the one hand, men can use flexible work to support their own careers, on the other hand, they may decide to enrich their family roles and thus facilitate employment re-entry of their female partners. Given increasing male involvement in domestic work, we hypothesized that men's WFH would support women's return to full-time employment (H4a, H4b). However, we found no significant effect

of men's WFH on women's re-entry, regardless of birth order. This contrasts with German studies showing positive cross-partner effects of his flexitime on her employment outcomes (Büchler and Lutz 2021; Langner 2018). Our sample size did not allow us to conduct a more in-depth investigation into this finding. It is possible, however, that stimulating effects of WFH on women's return rates among some couples, more likely those better educated with more egalitarian gender role attitudes, are balanced out by negative effects among other couples in which men use WFH to primarily enhance their work efficiency or avoid workplace interruptions, rather than to share childcare responsibilities. The latter type of couples may be still numerous in the UK where men often work long hours in contrast to their female partners and rarely make use of parental leaves (Adler and Lenz, 2015, Eurostat, 2022, Kaufman, 2018).

Our study extends prior work, particularly that of Chung and van der Horst (2018), by analyzing a longer period (2009-2019) instead of 2012-2014 and a larger, more diverse sample (N=1,291 instead of 272 mothers). The study by Chung and van der Horst (2018) demonstrated that mothers with access to flexible work arrangements (telework and flexible work schedules) in the UK were less likely to reduce their working hours when back to employment within two years after birth than women without such opportunities. By leveraging a larger dataset spanning a longer period, we complement these findings by showing that WFH supports women's return to paid work in ways that depend on prior use and parity. For first-time mothers, WFH supports full-time re-entry. For second-time mothers, it acts more as a general enabling mechanism for labour market participation, but not necessarily full-time work.

Our findings also contribute to research on flexible work arrangements and maternal employment re-entry (Buchler and Lutz 2021; Lott 2020; Portier 2025). Studies conducted in Germany (Büchler and Lutz 2021; Lott 2020) found that flexitime indeed helps mothers return to paid employment, but rather part-time than full-time. Our UK-based findings—focused on WFH—indicate the opposite for first-time mothers. Because part-time working among mothers is common in both countries, these differences may reflect national policy contexts. In Germany, employees with six months' tenure in firms with 15+ employees have a legally protected right to reduce their working hours, which can only be denied under exceptional circumstances (Lott 2020, Paule-Paludkiewicz 2024). In addition, parents may request to return to paid work part-time while on parental leave which lasts 36 months and can be partially used until the child is 8 years old (Reimer et al. 2024). In the UK, flexible work requests—including WFH—are discretionary, subject to employer approval, and leave is shorter. As a result, women often face a more abrupt transition back to paid work and may be forced to choose

between reducing work hours or not returning to employment at all. Our study demonstrates that WFH occurs as a useful tool in that context, allowing mothers to return to paid work and, in case of first-time mothers, do it without reducing work hours. These findings align with recent work by Portier (2025), based on the US data, who showed that occupational autonomy (how work is done) serves as a key resource enabling maternal employment re-entry, especially when they lack parental leave provisions. Together, this evidence suggests that policy frameworks significantly shape how flexible work arrangements are used and experienced. Future cross-national research should investigate these institutional effects in greater depth to better understand the interaction between labor market policies, flexible work, and maternal employment trajectories.

Beyond employment re-entry, our findings have broader implications for gender inequality. WFH may support women's labour force participation, but it may not promote gender equality in career progression or earnings. Prior studies show that WFH can reduce opportunities for promotion or salary growth (Fernández-Lozano et al. 2020; Munsch 2016; Matysiak et al. 2025). Hence, women—more likely to use WFH for caregiving—may fall further behind in career advancement. Moreover, WFH may exacerbate gender disparities in unpaid labour. Women working from home continue to shoulder more domestic responsibilities (Wang and Cheng 2024), face higher workloads (Kurowska, 2020), and report greater psychological strain (Gadeyne et al. 2018). Thus, WFH may enable employment, but it may also reinforce domestic gender inequalities and compromise women's mental health.

These risks underscore the need for policy interventions to prevent WFH from becoming a gendered tool for caregiving. UK legislation provides equal rights to request flexible work, but cultural and organisational change is needed to ensure men also use it for family-related purposes. WFH must be positioned as a dual-gender strategy, not a default solution for mothers. In addition, broader supports—including expanded public childcare and dedicated leave for fathers—are essential to ease the work-care burden and promote more equal sharing of responsibilities.

Finally, our study has some limitations. Access to WFH is more common among highly educated women in high-status jobs, raising concerns about selection bias. We address this through controls and matching, but further research using different datasets and designs is needed. In addition, the relatively small share of WFH users limited our ability to explore heterogeneity—for instance, across household types or among single mothers, who face unique constraints. Finally, in the pre-pandemic context of low prevalence of WFH, some women may

not have been aware of the flexible working arrangements available to them. It is also possible that access to WFH changes with the birth of a child, for example, through eligibility for flexible working rights specifically for parents (in place between 2003 and 2014 in the UK). This limitation is likely less pronounced in post-pandemic datasets, where WFH became more widespread and institutionalized. Future studies should leverage such data to examine how WFH interacts with family structure, gender norms, and policy environments to shape maternal employment outcomes.

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Annexes

Table A1. Summary statistics, UK 2009-19

		ONE-TIME MOTHERS		TWO-TIME MOTHERS	
Variable	**Levels**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Return to employment	No return	8017	93.7	7491	94.2
	Full-time	274	3.20	207	2.60
	Part-time	264	3.09	258	3.24
Women's pre-birth work from home	No access	6632	77.5	6056	76.1
	Irregular / no use	1006	11.8	917	11.5
	Regular use	567	6.63	585	7.35
	Missing	350	4.09	398	5.00
Male partner's work from home	No access	5077	59.3	4286	53.9
	Irregular / no use	824	9.63	827	10.4
	Regular use	780	9.12	537	6.75
	Self-employed	729	8.52	989	12.4
	Not working	269	3.14	320	4.02
	Missing	876	10.2	997	12.5
Age at birth	18–29	3081	36.0	1803	22.7
	30–34	3500	40.9	3035	38.1
	35–44	1974	23.1	3118	39.2
Period	2009–12	1837	21.5	1428	17.9
	2013–16	4431	51.8	4352	54.7
	2017–19	2287	26.7	2176	27.4
Ethnicity	British/Irish	6945	81.2	5927	74.5
	Asian	180	2.10	349	4.39
	Indian	694	8.11	703	8.84
	Black	134	1.57	263	3.31
	Other white	517	6.04	533	6.70
	Other	59	0.690	124	1.56
	Missing	26	0.304	57	0.716
Educational level before birth	Below tertiary	2570	30.0	2737	34.4
	Tertiary	5956	69.6	5139	64.6

	Missing	29	0.339	80	1.01
Health	Excellent	2169	25.4	1393	17.5
	Very good	3648	42.6	3139	39.5
	Good	1716	20.1	2144	26.9
	Fair/Poor	308	3.60	397	4.99
	Missing	714	8.35	883	11.1
Working hours	Full-time	7449	87.1	3721	46.8
before birth	Part-time	893	10.4	4116	51.7
	Missing	213	2.5	119	1.5
Subjective	Comfortably	2863	33.5	1668	21.0
financial situation	Alright	3459	40.4	3311	41.6
	Just about/Difficult	1767	20.7	2460	30.9
	Missing	466	5.45	517	6.50
	Total (woman-months)	8555	100.0	7956	100.0

Table A2. Estimates of Model 1 and 2 on the Risk of Return to Employment (part-time / full-time) after Birth, UK 2009–19

	MODEL 1		**MODEL 2**			
	Any paid work		**Full-time**		**Part-time**	
Predictors	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p
(Intercept)	0.01	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000
Duration in months	1.70	0.000	1.98	0.000	1.62	0.000
Duration in months squared	0.98	0.000	0.97	0.000	0.98	0.000
Age at birth (ref. 30-34)						
18-29	0.94	0.484	0.79	0.062	1.05	0.649
35-44	0.87	0.066	0.77	0.025	0.95	0.644
Period (ref. 2009-2012)						
2013-2016	0.75	0.001	0.72	0.010	0.75	0.020
2017-2019	0.70	0.000	0.59	0.000	0.78	0.073
Education before birth (ref. Below tertiary)						
Tertiary	1.15	0.059	1.54	0.000	0.95	0.622
Ethnicity (ref. British/Irish)						
Asian	0.64	0.044	0.87	0.643	0.47	0.042
Indian	0.52	0.000	0.74	0.134	0.32	0.000
Black	0.86	0.473	1.38	0.211	0.22	0.009
Other white	0.67	0.008	0.88	0.533	0.48	0.003
Other	0.89	0.718	1.36	0.478	0.66	0.381
Health (ref. Excellent)						
Very good	0.96	0.590	1.02	0.886	0.90	0.361
Good	0.81	0.027	0.81	0.157	0.79	0.080
Fair/Poor	0.84	0.345	1.23	0.447	0.67	0.125
Subjective financial situation (ref. Comfortably)						
Alright	1.32	0.000	1.41	0.005	1.29	0.028
Just about/Difficult	1.22	0.031	1.33	0.048	1.17	0.232

Pre-birth working hours (ref. Full-time)						
Part-time	0.66	0.000	0.11	0.000	1.66	0.000
Number of children (ref. One)						
Two children	1.29	0.001	1.68	0.000	0.96	0.713
Women's work from home (ref. No access)						
Irregular/no use	0.88	0.230	1.08	0.609	0.69	0.022
Regular use	1.07	0.557	1.25	0.162	0.85	0.419
Men's work from home (ref. No access)						
Irregular/no use	1.04	0.733	0.95	0.751	1.19	0.249
Regular use	0.96	0.726	0.91	0.600	1.03	0.854
Self-employed	1.09	0.417	0.99	0.932	1.21	0.195
Not working	0.69	0.060	0.88	0.626	0.46	0.026
Observations (woman-months)	16511		16511			

Note: RR stands for Risk Ratio, p for p-value

Source: Authors' calculations based on UKHLS data.

Table A3. Estimates of the Model 1a-b and 2 a-b on the Risk of Return to Employment (full-time / part-time) after Birth, by parity, UK 2009–19.

	M1a: One-time mothers		**M1b: Two-times mothers**		**M2a: One-time mothers**				**M2b: Two-times mothers**			
					Full-time		**Part-time**		**Full-time**		**Part-time**	
Predictors	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p
(Intercept)	0.00	0.000	0.01	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.01	0.000
Duration in months	1.83	0.000	1.63	0.000	2.05	0.000	1.78	0.000	1.94	0.000	1.54	0.000
Duration in months squared	0.98	0.000	0.98	0.000	0.97	0.000	0.98	0.000	0.98	0.000	0.99	0.000
Age at birth (ref. 30-34)												
18-29	0.97	0.745	0.82	0.144	0.83	0.220	1.13	0.431	0.66	0.071	0.91	0.635
35-44	0.78	0.031	0.92	0.452	0.67	0.019	0.91	0.592	0.90	0.521	0.90	0.497
Period (ref. 2009-2012)												
2013-2016	0.84	0.139	0.63	0.000	0.81	0.186	0.89	0.513	0.62	0.022	0.61	0.005
2017-2019	0.80	0.094	0.60	0.001	0.67	0.038	0.94	0.752	0.51	0.005	0.62	0.023
Education before birth (ref. Below tertiary)												
Tertiary	1.21	0.066	1.06	0.585	1.52	0.010	1.00	0.979	1.56	0.021	0.88	0.393
Ethnicity (ref. British/Irish)												
Asian	0.58	0.198	0.66	0.127	0.78	0.642	0.38	0.182	0.90	0.778	0.54	0.162
Indian	0.52	0.001	0.47	0.001	0.75	0.292	0.33	0.001	0.67	0.189	0.28	0.001
Black	1.45	0.229	0.59	0.082	2.70	0.008	0.24	0.164	0.87	0.694	0.21	0.034

Other white	1.01	0.976	0.39	0.000	1.16	0.564	0.82	0.512	0.53	0.060	0.24	0.001
Other	0.84	0.772	0.85	0.660	1.05	0.951	0.60	0.617	1.55	0.429	0.60	0.351
Health (ref. Excellent)												
Very good	1.06	0.572	0.84	0.162	1.08	0.626	1.03	0.837	0.95	0.797	0.74	0.082
Good	0.89	0.392	0.70	0.011	0.80	0.293	0.97	0.896	0.82	0.372	0.60	0.009
Fair/Poor	0.96	0.875	0.74	0.211	1.21	0.630	0.79	0.591	1.15	0.726	0.57	0.102
Subjective financial situation (ref. Comfortably)												
Alright	1.44	0.001	1.12	0.370	1.73	0.000	1.20	0.228	0.97	0.880	1.30	0.143
Just about/Difficult	1.23	0.115	1.14	0.334	1.49	0.038	1.05	0.819	1.06	0.791	1.27	0.232
Pre-birth working hours (ref. Full-time)												
Part-time	0.75	0.087	0.61	0.000	0.10	0.000	1.47	0.042	0.10	0.000	1.78	0.000
Women's home-based work (ref. No access)												
Irregular/no use	0.94	0.634	0.83	0.246	1.23	0.270	0.65	0.062	0.89	0.633	0.74	0.185
Regular use	0.87	0.412	1.30	0.116	1.20	0.420	0.50	0.032	1.22	0.410	1.41	0.186
Men's home-based work (ref. No access)												
Irregular/no use	1.01	0.939	1.05	0.739	0.97	0.885	1.03	0.891	0.87	0.588	1.26	0.275
Regular use	0.84	0.273	1.14	0.488	0.74	0.213	0.97	0.905	1.38	0.289	1.08	0.777

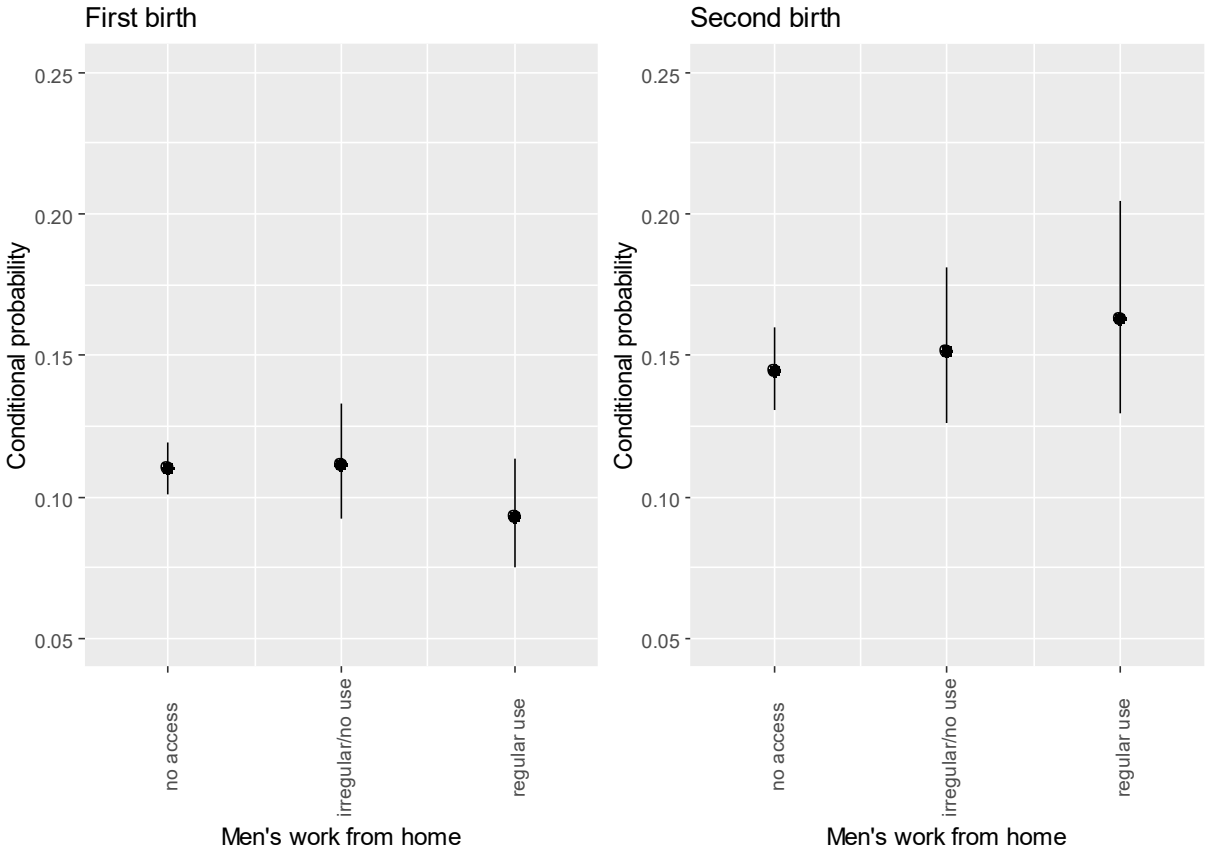
Self-employed	1.22	0.183	1.01	0.956	1.30	0.245	1.22	0.386	0.75	0.251	1.27	0.243
Not working	0.68	0.178	0.73	0.245	0.78	0.541	0.56	0.187	1.04	0.896	0.32	0.054
Observations (woman-months)	8555		7956				8555				7956	

Note: RR stands for Risk Ratio, p for p-value.

Source: Authors' calculations based on UKHLS data.

The role of male parnter's WFH for maternal employment re-entry by parity

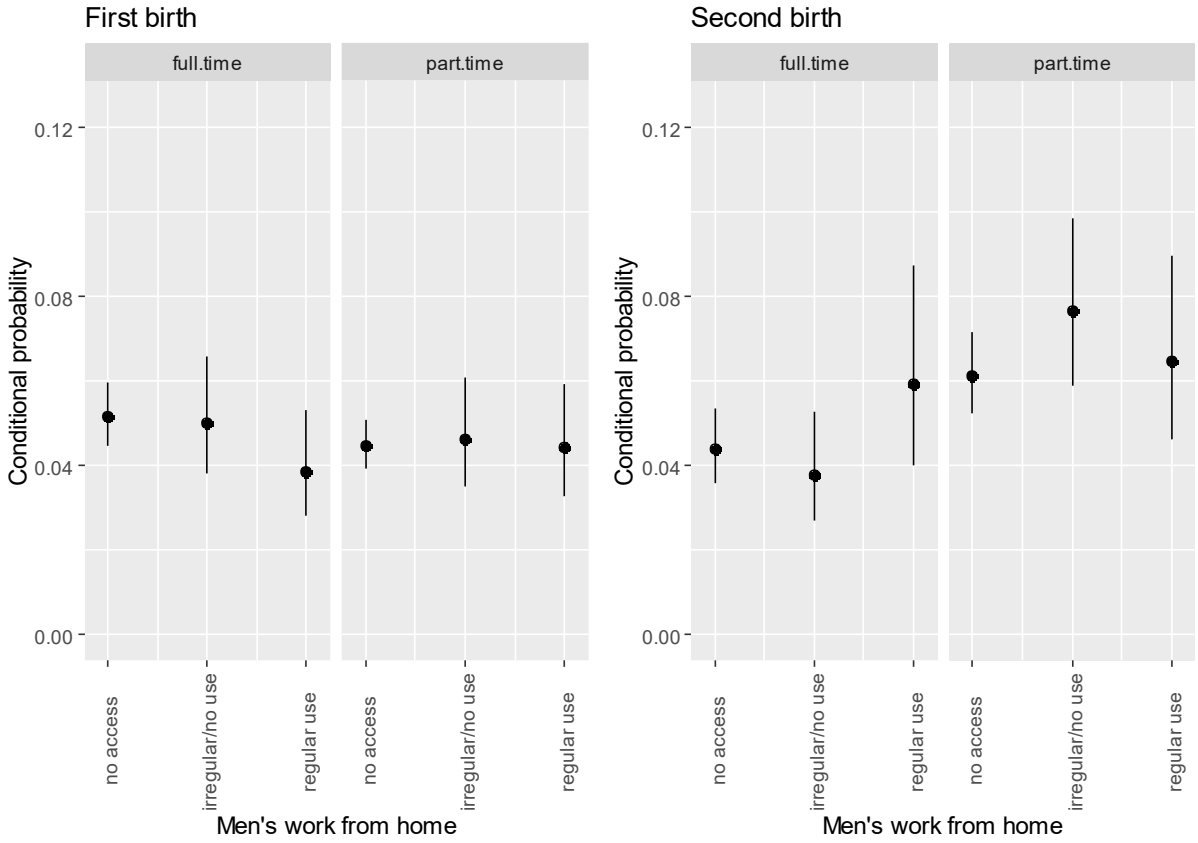
Figure A1. *Predicted hazard of return to employment after birth by men's WFH arrangement before birth and parity.*



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1a-b, which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, and health.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Figure A2. *Predicted hazard of return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by men's WFH arrangement before birth and parity.*



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2a-b which includes the measure of women's and their partner's WFH. Model controls for: period, woman's age at birth, her ethnicity, educational level, perceived financial situation, pre-birth part-time vs full-time job, and health.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

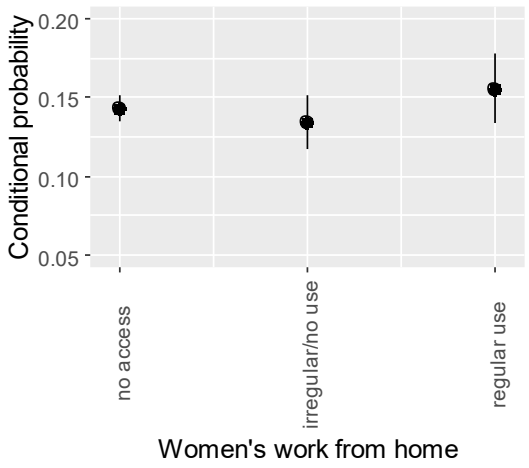
Coarsened Exact Matching Procedure and Results

To account for potential selection effects wherein highly educated women or those in high-status occupations may be more likely to work from home, we conducted a robustness check using Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM). This technique allowed us to create a matched sample of women working onsite and those working from home, ensuring comparability on key covariates.

We matched the groups based on the following pre-birth characteristics: age at childbirth (18-29, 30-34, and 35 or more), pre-birth educational level (below tertiary or tertiary), occupational status (Professionals/Managers; Associate professionals/Clerks; Other), and weekly working hours (35 or fewer, 36-44, and 45 or more hours). The matching procedure successfully retained more than 80% of the initial samples of first- and second-time mothers, with 5487 controls matched to 1573 treated cases for first-time mothers and 4283 controls matched to 1492 treated cases for second-time mothers; 10 treated cases were discarded among second-time mothers. Effective sample sizes (ESS), which provide a more accurate estimate of statistical power by accounting for the weighted nature of the sample, were 5311.6 for the control group and 990.64 for the treated group among first-time mothers, and 4171.91 for the control group and 1120.24 for the treated group among second-time mothers, further underscoring the robustness of the matching procedure. Moreover, balance diagnostics confirmed that the matching successfully achieved covariate balance, as the standardized mean differences (SMD) – which quantify the difference in means between the treatment and control groups, scaled by their pooled standard deviation – were all equal to zero, a highly desirable result.

These findings suggest that the CEM procedure effectively controlled for potential confounders such as women's age at childbirth, pre-birth education, occupation, and working hours. Re-analyses conducted on this matched sample did not alter the results of the main analyses, thereby reinforcing the robustness of our conclusions. The results from these re-analyses are presented in Figures A3-A7. However, due to the reduction in sample size following the matching procedure, we were unable to generate reliable estimates for a competing risk multinomial model that distinguishes between returns to full-time or part-time employment by parity. As such, we are unable to present the results corresponding to those shown in Figure 4 of the main paper.

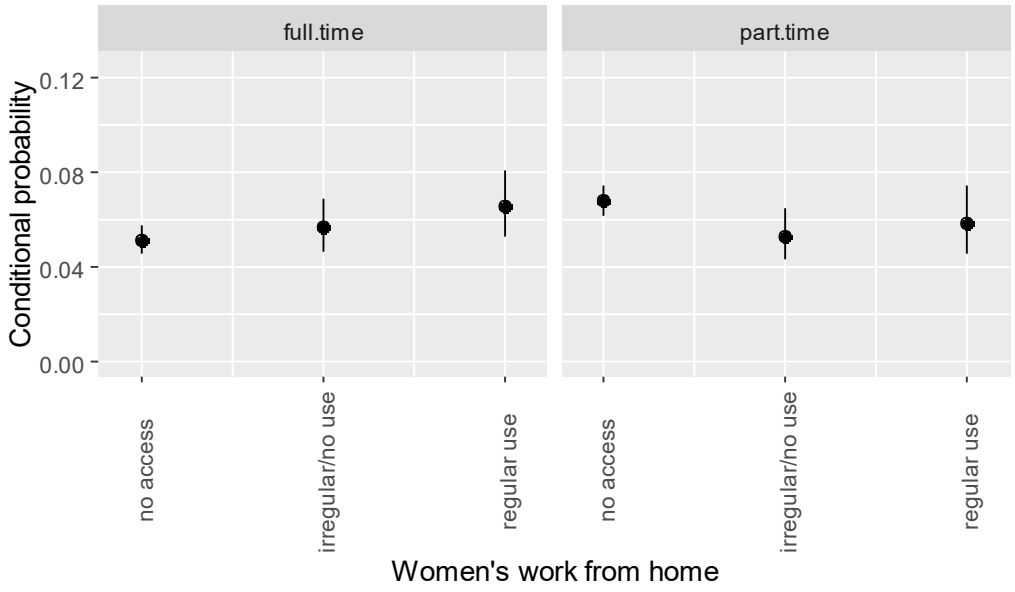
Figure A3. Predicted hazard of return to employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth – matched sample.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1 performed on a matched sample of women with and without access to work from home.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

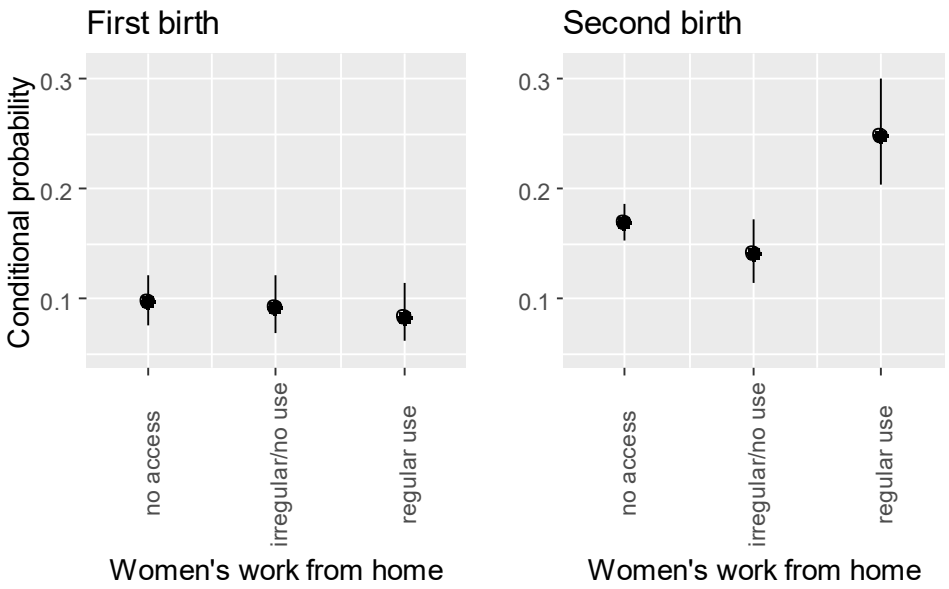
Figure A4. Predicted hazard of return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth – matched sample.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2 performed on a matched sample of women with and without access to work from home.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

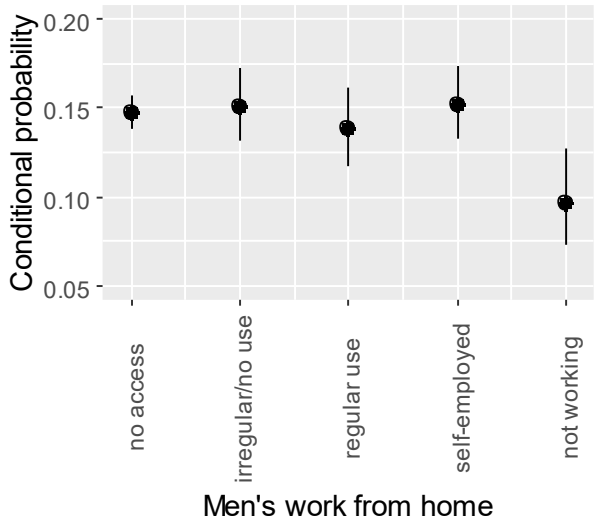
Figure A5. Predicted hazard of return to employment after birth by women's WFH arrangement before birth and parity – matched sample.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1a-b performed on a matched sample of women with and without access to work from home.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

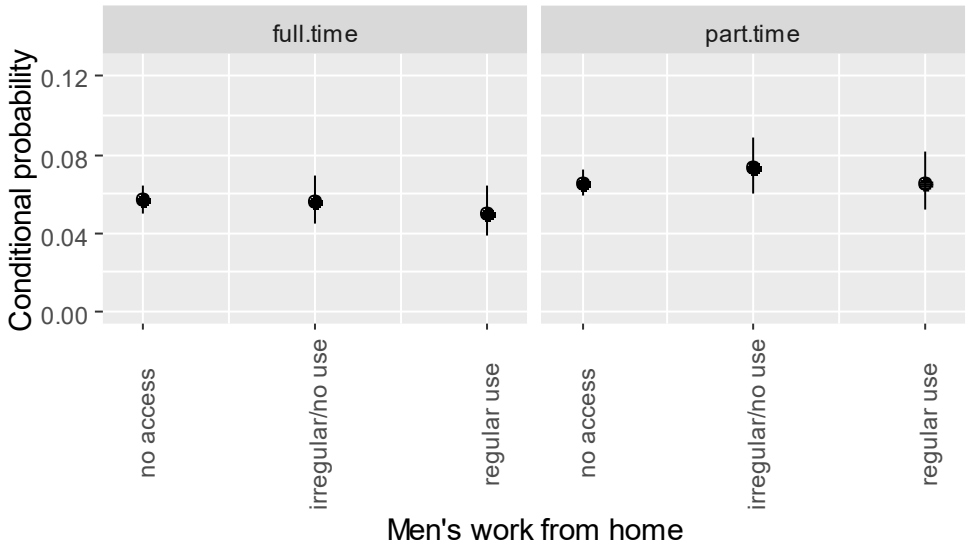
Figure A6. Predicted hazard of women's return to employment after birth by male partner's WFH arrangement – matched sample.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 1 performed on a matched sample of women with and without access to work from home.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

Figure A7. Predicted hazard of women's return to full-time / part-time employment after birth by male partner's WFH arrangement.



Note: Predicted probabilities and 83% CI are calculated based on the estimates of Model 2 performed on a matched sample of women with and without access to work from home.

Source: Own calculations based on UKHLS data

University of Warsaw
Faculty of Economic Sciences
44/50 Długa St.
00-241 Warsaw
www.wne.uw.edu.pl
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