



# Survey on parental and caring responsibilities in surgery

## Introduction

Parental and caring responsibilities can have an impact across all stages of surgical careers. The **Royal College of Surgeons of England**, following the publication of a review of diversity in leadership, has committed to a programme of work in this area and has commissioned the **Nuffield Trust** (an independent health care policy and research organisation, [www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk](http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk)) to explore the impact further and identify actions to address any challenges.

## Who would we like to take part?

This survey aims to gather views on the impact of parental or caring responsibilities on surgical careers. Parents in Surgery is an issue that affects everyone, and we welcome participation from anyone who wants to submit their views.

This includes people who have or had a role in surgery, or are training or considering to have one. Similarly, while we want to hear from those at any stage of deciding to be, becoming or being someone who looks after a child, respondents need not be at any of these stages.

A couple of questions are specifically aimed at those with other caring responsibilities.

## What would taking part involve?

This survey should take around 12 minutes to complete.

\* Required

**What information are we collecting and how will it be used?**

The questions ask information about you, your views about several aspects of your parenting and career decision making, as well as your experiences of support available and your well-being.

The questions do not ask anything that is, in itself, identifiable. However, there are some opportunities where free text can be entered. We ask that you do not include any identifiable information. In the unlikely event that you do we will delete that information from our data set.

Similarly, if you enter any information that would cause us concern about your health or welfare or that of the person that you care for, we are unable to act on this information as we will be unable to identify you.

There are some personal data that we are collecting, such as ethnicity and sexual orientation, with options to prefer not to say. The primary reason we are collecting this type of information is to better check if there are groups under-represented across the responses we receive.

No one outside of the Nuffield Trust will see individual responses, all data presented will be aggregated and small numbers suppressed.

We will analyse your responses and we will independently write up our findings, alongside the findings from the other parts of this project, in a short report that will be publicly available on our website. We will not be able to personally tell you when this has occurred but please keep an eye out for information from The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

**How will we store the information collected?**

The information collected in this survey will be stored securely with access restricted and only processed in the UK and will be retained for a two-year period before being destroyed. All participant information is stored in our UK based IT systems which are accredited to the ISO 27001 information security standard. Full details of your rights are available from:

<https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/privacy-notice>.

**What can you do if I have further concerns about the data governance?**

If you have any concerns about data privacy, please contact the Trust directly in the first instance using the contact details below.

If you lodge a complaint but are not content with the outcome, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision (available at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, 0303 123 1113) or make a complaint to the Charities Commission.

The data Controller, responsible for keeping your information secure in relation to the above services is: The Nuffield Trust for Research and Policy, 59 New Cavendish Street, London, W1G 7LP, 0207 631 8450.

**Are there benefits to responding to the survey?**

The information that you provide will help inform our understanding of impact of parental and caring responsibilities on surgical careers and identify actions to address any challenges.

**What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this survey?**

You are free to choose not to participate in the survey. If you decide not to take part in this survey, there will be no penalty to you.

**Further information**

If you have any queries about the project or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Fisher (survey lead) or Billy Palmer (project lead) at the Nuffield Trust at [parents-in-surgery@nuffieldtrust.org.uk](mailto:parents-in-surgery@nuffieldtrust.org.uk)

This participation information, and your responses, will be available at the end of the survey if

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for this survey, I understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary, and that data will be anonymised so that I cannot be identified. I consent to taking part in this survey. \*

Yes

## Instructions on how to complete the survey

In order to help you understand what we mean when we ask about certain things and how to complete the survey please read the following

### Definitions

1. When we say 'parenting' or 'parental' we mean this in a broad sense covering (but not necessarily limited to):
  - family planning, such as pre-pregnancy (including assisted reproductive technology) and deciding not to become a parent.
  - pregnancy, including surrogacy and during the processes of adoption/fostering/kinship.
  - caring for a child in the early years and during school education.
2. When we say 'work' or 'organisation' we mean the place where you routinely carry out your daily activities and can include educational settings and whilst you're in training. For doctors-in-training please also capture your views on your deanery.
3. When we say 'parental leave' we mean any form of leave related to parental responsibilities including but not limited to maternity and paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoption leave.

**Not everybody will be able to respond to all questions.** For example, some questions are about direct experiences relating to pregnancy. The survey has been built so that not all questions require a response in order for you to proceed to the next questions and sections. However, if a question is not applicable to you, we would appreciate that you select the not applicable option.

There are some **open response text boxes**, including at the end, so you can expand on answers

## About you

In this section we ask a series of questions about you and your situation

### 2. Where in the UK do or did you train or work? \*

*If across different countries, please select the nation where you spent longest*

select one

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- Not UK based

### 3. What best describes your current position? \*

select one or please describe in other

- Retired or no longer working in a clinical role
- A consultant surgeon
- A specialty and associate specialist surgeon
- In core or speciality surgical training
- In foundation training
- In medical school
- In dental specialty training
- Other

4. What best describes the speciality you currently work in? \*

select one

- Not applicable
- Academic surgery
- Cardiothoracic surgery
- Dental surgery
- General surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Otolaryngology (ENT)
- Paediatric surgery
- Plastic surgery
- Trauma and orthopaedic surgery
- Urology
- Vascular surgery
- Other

## 5. Which year did you graduate from medical school?

select one

- Still studying
- Not applicable
- 1979 or earlier
- 1980-89
- 1990-99
- 2000-04
- 2005-09
- 2010-14
- 2015-19
- 2020 or later

## 6. What best describes your gender?

select one or please describe in other

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other



## 7. What best describes your ethnic group?

select one

- White - British
- White - Irish
- White - Any other White background
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Mixed - Any other mixed background
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - African
- Black or Black British - Any other Black background
- Other Ethnic Groups - Chinese
- Other Ethnic Groups - Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say
- Other

## 8. What best describes your sexual orientation?

select one or please describe in other

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Gay man
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Other

## 9. What best describes your current parenting situation?

select one

*When we say 'have children' we mean have children by any means. When we say 'currently considering' we mean both that you plan to in the future or are currently undecided*

- My partner is, or I am, pregnant with our first child
- I have 1 child
- I have 2 children
- I have 3 or more children
- I am currently considering having children in the future
- I currently do not plan to have children
- Other

10. Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

select one

Yes

No

## Influences and decision making

11. How much do you agree with these statements?

My parenting plans, decisions and experiences will or have  
select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
make/made it less likely for me to pursue a career in surgery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
influence/d my decision about the surgical speciality I plan to/do work in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. If your parenting plans, decisions and experiences have influenced you to pursue a different specialty, which specialty were you previously considering or working in?

select one

- Not applicable
- Academic surgery
- Cardiothoracic surgery
- Dental surgery
- General surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Otolaryngology (ENT)
- Paediatric surgery
- Plastic surgery
- Trauma and orthopaedic surgery
- Urology
- Vascular surgery
- Other

13. If your parenting plans, decisions and experiences have influenced your decision to pursue a career in surgery or choice of specialty, what were the main contributory factors?

select all that apply and/or please describe in other

- The length of training
- The number of hours
- When hours are worked
- The predictability of hours
- The flexibility of hours
- The impacts on mental health
- The impacts on physical health
- The childcare options compatible with my work
- The perceptions of others about having children
- Other

## 14. How much do you agree with these statements?

My parenting plans, decisions and experiences have meant that I

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
took longer than expected to get to my current role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
was less able to take on leadership roles within my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
was less able to take on additional activities to my role e.g. academia/ research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
feel less likely to achieve my career goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
have considered leaving my role in surgery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. If your parenting plans, decisions or experiences have affected your career progression, what were the main contributory factors?

select all that apply and/or please describe in other

- Having an extended period of time off on parental leave
- Working less than full time
- My ability to take on additional roles e.g. academia/research
- My ability to take on leadership roles
- The perceptions of others about me having children
- Other

16. How much do you agree with these statements?

My career is likely to influence or has influenced

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
If I will have children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of children I have or will have	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How I will start or started a family e.g. the use of surrogacy or adoption	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I will start or have started a family	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not applicable	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree



My use of parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My decisions on breastfeeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ability to take <b>unpaid</b> time off for family and dependents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ability to take <b>paid</b> time off for family and dependents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. If your career decisions have influenced your parental choices what were the main contributory factors?

select all that apply and/or please describe in other

- Length of training
- Number of hours
- When hours are worked
- Predictability of hours
- Flexibility of hours
- Impacts on mental health
- Impacts on physical health
- Parental leave entitlement
- Childcare options compatible with my work
- Perceptions of others about having children
- Impact on my career progression
- Impact it will have on others I work with
- Perceptions of others about me having children
- Other

## Support

18. How much do you agree with these statements?

In my experience, the available **information** on my employer's policies, entitlements and support on the following was sufficient for my needs

select one for each statement

	Not applicable or don't know	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
Family planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pregnancy at work, including risk assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adoption, fostering or kinship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parental leave for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping in touch days	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phased or supported return to work after parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Infant feeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Less than full time working or other changes to working patterns

Dealing with unforeseen or emergency situations for family or dependents



19. Were you satisfied with your **access** to the following and, if not, why?

*Please note that keeping in touch days were only introduced in April 2007 for maternity leave and in December 2014 for shared parental leave if this applies to you, i.e. you took your parental leave before these dates, please say not applicable*

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Not needed	Yes (satisfied)	No (not satisfied) - perceived negative impact on my career	No - insufficient information about it	No - discouraged or not allowed
Parental leave for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changes to work arrangements during pregnancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping in touch days	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phased or supported return to work after parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Less than full time working or other changes to working patterns

     

Facilities and support for feeding an infant

     

Time off for family and dependents (not including parental leave)

     

20. Were there any other reasons (not listed above) why you didn't access these opportunities?

please describe

## 21. How much do you agree with these statements?

In my experience, while I was pregnant the following were sufficient for my needs

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
A place to rest at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time to rest at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Options to change my working hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Options to change the type of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 22. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the support you received or would have liked to have had while pregnant?

please describe

23. In my experience, I was happy with the childcare available to me because of the following

*Select 'Not applicable' if you have not had a need for childcare. This question is not limited to just onsite provision.*

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
The hours fit with my working patterns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There were enough spaces for my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was convenient given my place(s) of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Has there been **onsite** childcare provision for you to access?

*Select 'Not applicable' if you have not had a need for childcare*

select one

- Not applicable
- Yes, and I have used it for some or all of my childcare provision
- Yes, but I have not used it for my childcare provision
- No, there is/was no onsite child care provision
- Don't know

25. How much do you agree with these statements?

In my experience I felt sufficiently supported by my organisation and team

By 'start a family' we mean by any means.

By 'providing care' we mean looking after, or giving any help or support to, anyone outside work because they have any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age.

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	I did not seek support	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewl disagree
When I was planning to start a family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I or my partner experienced a miscarriage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I or my partner experienced poor postpartum health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In relation to my child's ill health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When providing care for someone outside work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



26. If you did not seek support for any of the above from your organisation why was that?

Tick all that apply and/or please describe in other

- Not applicable
- It was personal to me
- I didn't think my organisation would be able to support me
- I didn't want people to know my family planning decisions
- Other

## Experience and wellbeing

27. How much do you agree with these statements?

In my experience with my most recent child

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
I worry that my work schedules/duties compromised the health of my baby during pregnancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I had stopped working sooner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of time I had off for parental leave was long enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. If you have a child/children how much do you agree with these statements?

select one for each statement

	Not applicable	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
I regret the family sacrifices I have made for my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A career in surgery is compatible with parenthood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. Of these options, what would you change to make parenting experiences better for those with a role within surgery?

select all that apply and/or please describe in other

- Better support for family planning
- Better support during pregnancy
- More flexible training pathways
- More flexible working patterns
- Lighter work schedule during pregnancy
- Better policies for, and access to, parental leave
- Improved return to work arrangements
- Better infant feeding support
- Better onsite / near-site childcare provision
- Improved culture around parenting
- More certainty about location of work
- Other

30. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experiences of parenting and a role within surgery?

please describe

## TO DELETE BEFORE GOING LIVE (left in so as not to lose pilot responses)

### Your thoughts about the survey

The following questions are designed for you to give us feedback on the survey during this pilot

#### 31. What do you think about the guidance on the purpose of the survey and how it would be used?

For example, does the participant information provide a sufficient outline of what the study is about and what the overall purpose of the research is?

Does the participant information adequately address issues of anonymity and confidentiality?

Please describe any issues

#### 32. Were there any issues with navigating the survey?

For example, are the title and sub headings clear and unambiguous?

Is the question order appropriate? Could the order of questions bias replies or affect participation rates?

Was the information presented in an easy-to-read format? Did you carry out the survey on a pc/laptop, tablet or mobile phone?

Please describe any issues

33. Were the questions easy to understand and answer?

For example, are the instructions throughout (both in the participant information and questions) easy to understand and follow?

Is the language throughout appropriate?

Are the questions explicit enough or do any need to be explained?

Are any questions irrelevant, superfluous or repetitive?

Are any questions offensive or otherwise inappropriate?

Please describe any issues

34. What did you think about the length of the survey?

For example, has all information necessary for developing a profile of participants been sought?

Was it the right length of time? (too long, too short)

35. Do you have any other feedback?

## This is the end of the survey

Thanks again for your time to complete this survey and provide feedback. Your responses will be vital to furthering our understanding of the impact of parental and caring responsibilities on careers within surgery and to identify actions to address any challenges. If you want to talk more about your experiences please contact us at [parents-in-surgery@nuffieldtrust.org.uk](mailto:parents-in-surgery@nuffieldtrust.org.uk)

Please submit your responses using the button below.

Afterwards you will be able to print off the participant information, including our Nuffield Trust contact details, and your responses. At some point the survey will be closed and you will no longer be able to access that information using the survey link.

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