**Lack of part-time jobs in senior or well paid roles force new mothers to abandon successful careers**

New research from the University of Warwick suggests many women in the UK are being forced to go back to work full-time or abandon their careers after having a child because of a lack of part-time work, particularly those in senior or highly-paid roles.

A new paper published in *Work, Employment and Society*, shows that more higher-paid mothers go back to work full-time in the UK, whereas lower-paid mothers are more likely to go back to work part-time.

Lead author Dr Clare Lyonette from the University of Warwick Institute for Employment Research said many women in more senior positions found they could not return to their previous jobs on a part-time basis after maternity leave.

She said: "There is a culture among many employers that part-time work is not a viable option in more senior positions.

We found women who were in senior positions who wanted to go back to work part-time had to downgrade jobs and work well below their abilities.

"A lack of quality part-time jobs has obvious implications for women in the longer-term, reducing their career opportunities and lifetime earnings".

The research team also compared the situation for UK mothers with that of mothers in the US.

They found the situation was even worse in the US because of the cost of healthcare.

Dr Lyonette said: "Crippling healthcare costs seem to be one of the main reasons in the US for both parents working full-time.

Families cannot afford to lose the benefits of a paid-for healthcare package from their employer so they have to go back full-time."

Dr Lyonette said: "It is also likely that the current economic crisis will only increase the pressure on women to continue in, or return to, full-time work, especially if men's jobs and healthcare entitlements are seen to be at risk."

In both countries, however, the team found a lack of quality part-time work or part-time opportunities in more senior level occupations.

Dr Lyonette added: "In both countries, opening up part-time work in more senior level occupations may also increase the number of fathers working reduced hours."

**Notes to editors**

The paper ‘We both need to work’: maternal employment, childcare and healthcare in Britain and USA by Clare Lyonette, Gayle Kaufman and Rosemary Crompton, is published in *Work, Employment and Society*, 25 (1) 34-50.

To speak to Dr Lyonette or to see a copy of the paper please contact Kelly Parkes-Harrison, Press and Communications Manager, University of Warwick, [k.e.parkes-harrison@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.parkes-harrison@warwick.ac.uk), 02476 150868, 07824 540863