

Gender at Work and at Home

**Professional and Parental Identities
in Home-based Telework**

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¹ Whilst this text is not yet publicly available it makes a useful contribution to the discourse analysis literature. I am in a privileged position to have seen a proof of Watson's chapter and it is from this that the page numbers are determined – these are therefore subject to change when the text goes to print.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Work

Describe role

Career/ education background – how got into current occupation

Hours, how long spent in home vs office / on road etc. – typical day?

Satisfaction with role

Aims for future career

What kind of worker are you?

What does your career mean to you?

Do you think career has been affected by teleworking?

Family

Married / living with your partner?

How many kids, ages, etc. – any specific needs or disabilities?

How current childcare / schooling arrangements are managed

How about domestic work in the home?

What kind of parent would you say you are?

What time off did you have when child born?

Anything changed since began teleworking? – eg. time on domestic work, socialising, personal development

Telework

How long worked from home?

Who instigated? – work or self

Why decided?

Who discussed with?

Other peoples reactions – colleagues, spouse, children themselves

Was it what you expected? Better / Worse?

What were / are your opinions of others who telework – what would a typical teleworker be like?

How do you keep in touch with colleagues and clients?

Have you had any issues of isolation / invisibility?

Do you think you have more control over your work now?

Do you think you are a better worker now? – eg. more focused / efficient?

What was the learning curve / strategies developed to manage working from home?

Overall Impact on family

Overall Impact on career

Impact on life generally – positive / negative

Overall satisfaction – how would you change things, or would you go back to traditional work

Identity

‘How does home-based telework impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?’ – what do you think the findings might be? How relevant are they to yourself?

Has it changed how you think about yourself?

How would you categorise yourself – father / mother firstly or in occupational role? – has telework changed this?

How your kids/ spouse think about you / how others see you?

Office set up – why like this? Is this ideal?

Appendix 2: Participants summary sheet

(Researcher To Complete) Participant Number Tape number.....

Gender, Telework and Career Research Project
Katy Marsh
University of Sheffield

Participants Summary Sheet

Name

Gender

Age

Ethnic Background

Occupation

Organisation

Interview Date

Interview Venue

How many children do you have?

How long have you teleworked?

How much time do you spend working from home?

.....

Do you agree to participate in a video recorded interview for the purposes of the project named above?

(Please sign) (Date)

Would you like your name and the name of your organisation to remain anonymous?

.....

Contact Details

Appendix 3: Participant priorities table

Name	Priority	Justification
Barbara	Neither	<p><i>My career means to me independence, it means independent money for me, it gives me more power in my life as well</i> BF69</p> <p><i>Family life really does come first</i> BF387</p>
Dan	Parental	<p><i>K - How would you categorise yourself, as a father firstly or as a consultant firstly?</i></p> <p><i>D – Definitely as a father.</i> DM256</p>
Gary	Neither	<p><i>K - What does your career mean to you?</i></p> <p><i>G – Quite a lot, because, you know from our conversations, I studied for an MBA and completed that this year, so obviously that's an investment that we made to further the career</i> GM47</p> <p><i>K – How would you categorise yourself – as a father firstly or as a business relations manager firstly?</i></p> <p><i>G – As a Father</i> GM338</p>
Kath	Professional	<p><i>Me – How would you categorise yourself first as a mother, or as a business resource manager?</i></p> <p><i>Kath – As a European Resource Manager</i> KF247</p>
Helen	Neither	<p><i>I have a huge wealth of roles in life</i> HF320</p>

James	Neither	<p><i>K - How would you categorise yourself, as a father firstly or in your occupational role firstly?</i></p> <p><i>J – I think that for me the two are always in conflict JM574</i></p>
Adam	Parental	<p><i>K - How would you categorise yourself firstly, as a father or as a researcher?</i></p> <p><i>A – Father AM274</i></p>
Magnus	Neither	<p><i>The two jobs are obviously different but equally important, so I'm trying to devote as much time to each as I could MM278</i></p>
Sam	Neither	<p><i>Me - Do you think of yourself more as a father or more as a territory project co-ordinator?</i></p> <p><i>Sam – Em .Bit of both really, I do see my self as a father, it's hard to balance SM448</i></p>
Tina	Neither	<p><i>When I'm on me holidays and out of working time, then firstly I'm a mother, if God forbid something happen to them or they were ill or they needed me in some way that nobody else would do, I don't mean picking them up from school, I mean if they broke an arm, a leg, or they're ill or whatever, then I'm a mother firstly, obviously. But generally, 8 while 5, 5 days a week, I'm a manager first, that's probably not what people want to hear TF300</i></p>

Ken	Neither	<p><i>K - How would you categorise yourself firstly, as a Dad firstly or as a computer analyst firstly?</i></p> <p><i>...Ke – Er. It's a tricky one that</i></p> <p>KM316</p>
Anthea	Parental	<p><i>Family come first before my job and my career, and you don't realise that until they come along ... work pales into insignificance really, compared to your family, so they come first. So I am very family-focused. It dominates my thinking, everything, so that's the sort of parent I am</i></p> <p>AF105</p>
Sandra	Parental	<p><i>I'm not really career minded, I'm just a normal housewife who's got a full time job, with a nice family</i></p> <p>SF60</p>
Ruby	Parental	<p><i>Your children become an extension of you really, you think more of them than you do of yourself, they come first always</i></p> <p>RF137</p>

Appendix 4: Interview Transcripts

Order of transcripts

1. Barbara (BF)
2. Dan (DM)
3. Gary (GM)
4. Kath (KF)
5. Helen (HF)
6. James (JM)
7. Adam (AM)
8. Magnus (MM)
9. Sam (SM)
10. Tina (TF)
11. Ken (KM)
12. Anthea (AF)
13. Sandra (SF)
14. Ruby (RF)

Interview 1: Barbara

1 K- Just for the camera would you mind saying your name and where you
2 work?

3 B – Yeah it's Barbara Hearn and I work for United Response

4 K – Could you describe the job that you do Barbara please?

5 B – I'm an inclusion co-ordinator for a national charity, supporting people
6 with learning disabilities. It's a lottery funded position which means it's a
7 temporary contract, at present it's until March 2005, although it has been
8 extended a few times because we keep getting more funding. The job is
9 about involving the people we support in their daily lives and as an
10 inclusion coordinator I do a variety of things supporting service users to
11 have a say, supporting the organisational change policies and procedures,
12 training of staff and it involves quite a lot of travel - I work throughout a
13 division which is quite a large area, so I do a lot of travel as well.

14 K – And what's your career background - how did you get into the work
15 you're doing now?

16 B – Well I originally started off working in a laboratory when I left school
17 and got qualified in chemistry and science. I did day release from there, but
18 I sort of got bored of that after 10 years and a residential social worker's
19 position came up for a local institution, for B-care, and I applied for the job
20 and for some reason got it, so it was a whole new thing, working for people
21 with learning disabilities. Since then I worked for B-care and did a lot of
22 in-house training with them, then B-care transferred their services to
23 United Carers, the company I work for and we transferred with it and
24 through out my career I've worked as a residential social worker and sort
25 of came up through the line management structure. my last job was as
26 Service Manager and I was always interested in communication and I
27 applied for this internal job, and got it.

28 K – Hours wise, how long do you spend at home in the office?

29 B – It depends each week is different because I do a lot of travelling with
30 work but on average over the year I probably spend 2 and a half to 3 days
31 on average.

32 K – And are you satisfied with the role that you're doing at the moment,
33 with your current job?

34 B – Yes I enjoy my job at the minute, it's difficult cos it's a timed job,
35 we're always wondering when we're gonna be finishing, so that's quite
36 hard but other than that I really enjoy it.

37 K – What are your aims for your future career?

38 B – Well at the minute I'm at college because I haven't got any sort of
39 proper qualifications in social work or learning disabilities and so at the
40 minute the organisation's paying for me to the NVQ 4 Manager's Award
41 but I don't really know what I want to do long term. I really enjoy the
42 training aspect of the job I'm doing, the inclusion aspect, so maybe to stick
43 around training and stuff. I wouldn't like to go into management again.

44 K – I'll ask you a really broad question now, what kind of worker are you?

45 B – *(laughs)*

46 K – Just anything that comes off the top of your head.

47 B – I can be quite a chaotic worker, I am quite imaginative so I do a lot of,
48 you know, I can imagine a lot of things, and approach things from a
49 different angle than some people. I'm not very good at... well I am a good
50 organiser, but in a chaotic way if that makes sense, so I can organise large

51 events very well. things like that, and I do organise quite large events and
52 for people to do stuff. but organising my work time in my office. is
53 something I'm not brilliant at, I don't like sitting down in an office but I
54 have to do it unfortunately, that's the aspect I least like.

55 K – Yes, does that form quite a large part of your job, kind of deskwork?

56 B – It does in preparation, it should form more, at the minute I'm very,
57 very busy, so I'm doing a lot of out and about work. and snatching office
58 work and I'm really feeling that I need to catch up a lot. so after I come
59 back off leave I've got a lot of training courses that I need to prepare for. so
60 yeah, I need to be here, knuckling down.

61 K – What does your career mean to you?

62 B – What does my career mean to me? That's a hard question, phew. I
63 really enjoy it, I really enjoy my job, I really feel like I'm making a
64 difference in what I'm doing, I like to see people empowered, which is. I
65 think, part of my role, is empowering people we support as United Carers. I
66 like to see change, so I'm quite good at change management and we do a
67 lot of change, sometimes I think 'oh it would be really nice to stay at home
68 and not do any work at all', so you've always got that cos you do miss out
69 on your family things but I don't think I would be happy doing that. My
70 career means to me independence, it means independent money for me, it
71 gives me more power in my life as well I think.

72 K – Do you think your career's been affected by you working from home?
73 Think it might have been different if you were in a more traditional setting?

74 B – I think the job that I've got now is quite a flexible role, so it's quite a
75 flexible job. and I generate my own work, if that makes sense, so the work
76 that I do, is what I generated – ok it's on demand- but I do generate my
77 own work. And I think that amount of flexibility, it's good to be working
78 from home for that, I don't think I could do this job working from an
79 office, cos I think, because of the travelling that I do. I don't think my
80 career's been affected by working from home, because I do go out and
81 about and I do meet a lot of people and I work with managing directors of
82 the organisation as well, I am quite a high profile person within the
83 organisation.

84 K- So you're married, living here, and you've got 3 children, you were
85 saying. Could you just remind me how old they are?

86 B – 9, 7, and 5.

87 K – And currently how do you arrange childcare and schooling and things?

88 B – Em well, cos I've always worked, I've never had a career break, while
89 I've had the children, so I've always worked, and apart from a very short
90 space of working part time, I've work full time throughout having the kids,
91 at the minute, since my last job I hired a nanny. employed a nanny, and she
92 still works for me now. although she doesn't work full time for me now,
93 she used to work full time for me. I was her main employer, but when Lucy
94 started school I employed her for 20 hours a week, I employ her. and she
95 comes in the morning, if I'm working from home then I take the children to
96 school. but she will pick them up from school and do the after school
97 activity, cos I tend to work til 5 o'clock, if I'm away like this week she
98 stayed overnight when I was staying overnight somewhere and she would
99 take them to school, but she has them in the holidays as well.

100 K – Great, how about domestic work in the home, how's that organised?

Interview 1: Barbara

101 B – Very badly! Yeah, my Aunty tends to come and clean once a week
102 usually, she's not been lately cos we've had a lot of building work going
103 on, but usually she'd come once a week for a couple of hours, but apart
104 from that we share that, my husband and myself. share that out.

105 K – Is that almost 50/50 then?

106 B – Oh, at least, he does a lot, yeah definitely.

107 K – Did you have time off work when your children were born?

108 B – I had maternity leave, normal maternity leave, but I've always worked
109 so I just had the... I can't remember what it was then, it wasn't the year
110 that you get now, certainly not.

111 K – It's gone up now hasn't it?

112 B – Mmm

113 K – And another broad question, deep question, what kind of parent would
114 you say you are?

115 B – Oh God! I don't know what kind of parent I am, I think, I always said,
116 (this is) very strange, cos my Mum always stayed at home when we were
117 young, and I always said that I would go to work cos I was never very
118 maternal and sometimes I feel, sometimes you feel guilty about it but I
119 think that overall I provide my children with a wide range of experiences
120 and that they're... because mine and Adrian, my husband's relationship's
121 fairly stable, and their childcare arrangements have been very stable, so
122 they've had Joanne, for the past 5 years, the nanny. they're quite confident
123 that I'm going to come back, I would like to think that it hadn't affected
124 them much, I mean it's bound to have affected people in some ways but I
125 don't think it's affected them adversely, I think that they've had a wide
126 variety of, variety of... and I would rather have done that – had Joanne.
127 and then they'd be able to go to playschool and do all the things, than take
128 them to a nursery. I think that's not so good, but they have been in their
129 own home, so, and they have got a stability in their lives. I do a lot of
130 activities with the children, you know we do a lot of stuff together, a lot of
131 stuff at weekends, and in the week if I'm about, we do a lot of things, so
132 they get their money's worth!

133 K – Great, what have you learnt since becoming a parent?

134 B – God, life's tough! Life's stressful, you have to sort fights out a lot.

135 What have I learnt since becoming a...? Well, you've obviously got more
136 people to think about than yourself, so obviously what you do affects...

137 you know, so you have to be more organised, and you have to be thinking

138 'oh they need a packed lunch today' or whatever, if there's a school trip, or

139 they've got to take something to school, I have to think about all that, so

140 you have to be more organised. I perhaps don't take as many risks as I

141 would have done before, I used to do a bit of lairy stuff but you're always

142 thinking, well you've got kids, you've got responsibilities, so you become

143 more responsible, you know, yeah.

144 K – Do you think your role in your family's changed since you've began
145 working from home?

146 B – No, I don't think so, because I've always worked, the days that I do
147 work from home, I actually do work and I do have childcare, I don't work
148 from home... if I hadn't have my childcare sorted for the days I work from
149 home then I would see my role as an extended role, sometimes I have to
150 say to Adrian 'well...', sometimes, oh - people do put more demands on

151 you than when you're going out to work, so like sometimes I get jobs like
152 going out to the bank or stuff that if I was actually working in an office that
153 I wouldn't do. But because I do spend a long time on the road and a lot of
154 time away, I'm only supposed to do 35/37 hours a week. and I do a lot
155 more because of the travelling I do, so you know. I can be quite flexible.

156 K – So you've worked from home for 4 years or so now.

157 B – Mmm

158 K – Who instigated that? Was it yourself or someone at work?

159 B – Well I had the option when I got my current role. I always worked in
160 an office before then for United Carers, because it was a brand new role
161 within the organisation and there actually wasn't any office space for me to
162 work in... they would have found some had it been desperate but I said 'I
163 don't mind working from home', so that's what I did and all my colleagues
164 work from home.

165 K – What have other people's reactions been when you said that you
166 wanted to work from home, for example in your family and people who
167 you'll be working with?

168 B – Well because all my colleagues, we're all spread out all over the
169 country, so the team I work with, we all work from home, so that's a sort of
170 normal thing, the family hasn't bothered. I mean I've got the office here so
171 I can shut it up at night and that's it, so it doesn't sort of... well it does
172 sometimes encroach on the house but not very often, so they haven't...
173 nobody's said anything adverse I don't think.

174 K – Is it what you expected, working from home? Or is it a better
175 experience or worse?

176 B – Sometimes I find it really hard to get motivated, especially if I've been
177 really busy and I've been working away a lot and obviously I have jobs to
178 catch up with at home as well, and people come round, I didn't expect that,
179 you know that people come round cos it is your home at the end of the day
180 and you get a lot of phone calls, personal calls, at home that you don't
181 really get at work which, you have to get out of them, you have to say 'I
182 can't really talk to you cos I'm working at home'. What was the question
183 again?

184 K – Was it what you expected?

185 B – Was it what I expected...? I think so yeah, I think that sometimes I
186 think that it would be nice to work in an office with other people. and I
187 don't think... I know for a fact that I wouldn't like to work from home full
188 time.

189 K – What were your opinions of other people who worked from home
190 before you began?

191 B – I don't know if I had any. I don't know. I didn't really know anybody
192 who worked from home, but funnily enough there's a lot of people who
193 work from home in the road, in this road, that I live in now. so we do
194 actually compare notes cos a lot of us go to... we keep saying that we'll
195 have to go out at Christmas and stuff, cos that's the sort of thing you miss
196 out on - office parties and all that sort of stuff. I presume I thought... I
197 don't know, I don't think I had an opinion, but I know some people might
198 think it's a dos you working from home. but I think it's more demanding
199 and I actually think you get more work done. because I think that if you're
200 working in an office you walk in, you have a coffee, you have a chat.

Interview 1: Barbara

201 there's always someone there to have a chat with, whereas if I'm here I will
202 be working pretty much solid. I do... I do feel guilty sometimes if I go out
203 for lunch, occasionally I go out for lunch with a friend and that is the thing.
204 I think I feel that people'll be saying 'oh it's her. she's working from home.
205 look she's swanning off in Mackton' or whatever. do you know what I
206 mean? And even days, I was talking to a colleague cos our job's quite
207 imaginative, I can sit here and actually really struggle to work. like my
208 colleague he'll say 'well go and do something else and you can come back
209 to it', but I feel really guilty that between 9 and 5 I should be working, so
210 although it can be flexible, although I do a lot of other hours above and
211 extra, even if I can't work properly I'm still sat in here twiddling my
212 thumbs when I should really just walk away and treat it more flexibly.

213 K – Do you have an idea of what a typical teleworker is like?

214 B – As I say there's one or two people work from home up here, on the
215 whole people tend to be fairly motivated and at the end of the day, if they
216 weren't they wouldn't still be in their jobs would they? I wouldn't like to
217 work from home because of childcare issues, I'd have to have my children
218 separate. I think you'd be different if you had to look after your kids, I
219 don't see how you could do it.

220 K – How do you keep in touch with your colleagues and people that you
221 work with at United Carers?

222 B – Well, there's an Area Office in Mackton, and I've been there this
223 morning actually because all my mail, all my work mail goes there, so I
224 usually go to the office once a week to pick my mail up, so I sort of have a
225 chat with them then and just catch up on stuff and they're also an admin
226 centre so if I have any administration stuff I'll just go there and do that.
227 I've got a mobile phone that I use a lot and obviously email and probably,
228 on a typical day, I probably get 20 or 30 emails - I can spend a day on just
229 doing emails all day you know.

230 K – Have you had any issues of isolation?

231 B – No but I think that's because I don't work from home full time, if I
232 worked from home full time then yes, I wouldn't want to work from home
233 full time, so I think that I would have then, but I think because I do a lot of
234 training, I'm out and about a lot meeting people, I don't.

235 K – Do you have more control over your work now?

236 B – My work controls me, that's where I'm not very good. I do tend to shut
237 the office up because I think you have to do, so I do shut the office up, but
238 then if Adrian's working nights or something, and the kids are in bed and
239 I've got something burning, then I will come back to it, which, if it was a
240 real office, you know an office somewhere else, you wouldn't do that, so I
241 will do work later on at night if I need something doing then I'll do it then
242 whatever.

243 K – And are you a better worker? Are you more focused? Do you get more
244 done?

245 B – I suppose it depends on how I'm feeling at the time. Some days I'm
246 useless, some days I can't do anything. I have sessions where I find it
247 difficult to remain motivated. You have to be self-motivated but also
248 there's a certain amount of pressure on me to do a certain amount of work
249 anyway so... you just have to get it done.

Interview 1: Barbara

250 K – What was the learning curve for you to becoming a teleworker? Did
251 you have to develop strategies to manage working from home?

252 B – One of the things that I found difficult to manage working from home,
253 one of the things I need... I got a shredder - cos I generate a lot of paper. I
254 do a lot of shredding, cos I mean, I've got a lot of stuff which is reference
255 things, reading, training materials, so to keep on top of it. I mean that filing
256 cabinet there, I've probably not been in there for a while. and I really need
257 to clear it out, so probably one of my things is that every now and again
258 you would have to have a good clear out, it's just full of stuff for United
259 Carers this office is. So that would be a learning curve. not to keep stuff.
260 cos I tend to keep stuff, and in an office, if I worked in a real office. I don't
261 think I'd keep stuff because I think it gets archived and put away as a
262 matter of course, doesn't it?

263 K – So you've developed ways to make sure that family and work are kept
264 separate, for example shutting the door at the end of the day. Are there
265 things that you've had to say to your children or to your husband, perhaps
266 maybe 'don't disturb me between certain times...`?

267 B – Yeah, on the whole it's not too bad cos Adrian works full time. so if
268 I'm in the office he's at work or if he's working nights he's in bed, the
269 children are at school, all of them now. I'd say in the school holidays I
270 think it's going to be... I mean we've just started the school holidays and
271 I've actually been working away for the first few weeks so it's not been an
272 issue, but I was thinking, if it does become an issue, I thought I might need
273 to take my computer to the office for a couple of days in Mackton and
274 work there, and work there, so that could be an issue, but they are fairly
275 good, they know if the office is shut... And Joanne, who looks after them,
276 she's good with them.

277 K – Overall what has the impact been on your family of starting to work
278 from home?

279 B – I think the impact on my family of working from home... I don't think
280 there's been an impact as such, I think the impact's been of the job full
281 stop. Because of the amount of travelling I do as well, sometimes things
282 do, if I'm preparing for a big conference or something, then things will...
283 there's been one or two times when I've had stuff all over the dining room,
284 so you know it can be, it can encroach on the rest of the house, but I mean,
285 at least because I work from home I can take the kids to school, if I'm at
286 home, so that's quite nice, I can sort of be flexible if they've got a school
287 play or something, and go and see that. I've got my diary and I don't book
288 anything else in, so I probably see more of their school activities than I
289 would if I was working in an office, if I plan it right.

290 K – And overall, just to summarise, what do you think the impact has been
291 on your career?

292 B – I mean I, I think as I say, because I'm quite a high profile person in the
293 organisation and do a lot of travelling and meet a lot of people, it's not
294 done me any harm, working from home, but I can see that if you were
295 quietly beavering away at home by yourself then people could forget you
296 were there, but they don't forget I'm there because, as I say, I'm out and
297 about a lot, so yeah, I don't think it's had an impact, working from home.
298 And my manager's particularly good, we still have a lot of support. I get a
299 lot of support from her cos I mean she works in London, we're very

Interview 1: Barbara

300 dispersed, she works from home, she has one day in her office. then works
301 from home, and we have support time over the phone and things like that.
302 so we're in regular contact, and she trusts what we do. and I might say 'oh
303 I've gone to the hair dresser's today', but she knows that, like yesterday. I
304 didn't finish work til 9 o'clock at night, so I've got a very trusting
305 manager. so I think that's nice, that's good, you can do that, but I still do
306 feel guilty, I mean I sat in the hair dressers today thinking 'ooh' and yeah
307 but actually they do owe me a lot of hours.

308 K – So the impact on your life generally of working from home is a
309 positive one?

310 B – Yeah, I think it's been positive, I think it's been positive, but only
311 because I travel about as well, I wouldn't want to do it full time.

312 K – Are there things that you would change? Or would you ever go back to
313 traditional office-based working?

314 B – Em, depending on the job, I think it depends on the job. I think... I was
315 working in an office yesterday and they said 'oh it'd be really nice to have
316 you working here all the time' and you know I do miss that, sort of
317 building relationships with people in an offices, cos I enjoy that aspect of
318 work anyway, so I don't think I'd mind working in an office. but the job
319 that I've got, I generate my own work, it's a flexible position in a lot of
320 ways, so it does demand a lot of hard work, I don't think I'd like to go back
321 to a job where work was sort of generated for me. you know. so it's not a
322 working from home issue, it's the type of role I've got really.

323 K – So, to summarise what we've been talking about then. is telework an
324 effective way for parents to reconcile work and family life?

325 B – Cor! You see, like, I wouldn't work from home to look after kids
326 becasue that would be impossible, well, kids my kids age, they still need
327 separate childcare, so I don't think it makes a difference in my family life, I
328 still pay the same amount of childcare out as I would do if I was working in
329 an office, and they know that I'm at work if I'm in here, because I've done
330 it for so long, and if you think. Lucy, my youngest. it's been since, I've
331 been doing it since she's been born, I've been doing this, pretty much, she
332 was a year old when I started doing this, so they're just used to that. that's
333 the way that they know that I work. So it's not reconciled family life. no.
334 but it's been a good way for me to do my job.

335 K – Great. My overall research question is 'how does home-based telework
336 impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?'.
337 What do you think the findings might be?

338 B – I think it depends on the job, if you were working from home full time,
339 with very little... and it depends on how it's managed, if you were working
340 from home full time and you weren't particularly getting the support from
341 your organisation that you needed, then I think it would be a very lonely
342 way / place to be, and I think you wouldn't be very motivated to carry on,
343 depending on your job I suppose, because I'm working from home not all
344 the time – I've got some time in the field and some time at home. I've got
345 good support, I have a lot of contact with people, a lot of phone
346 conversations, then you know that's good, it does enable me, the only
347 positive. the only sort of scam that there is is if one of the kids is ill off
348 school and I'm working from home. then I can manage that with them.
349 because I wouldn't like to... cos I've got quite a large house and I've got a

Interview 1: Barbara

350 separate office. so it can get shut off, and we don't really... so it's my
351 working office really, so when I'm in here I'm working, when I'm out
352 there I'm not, so it is sort of separate. whereas I know some of my
353 colleagues, one of them's in her bedroom and I couldn't cope with that.
354 you know, I'm glad I've got a separate office where it can all be shut
355 away. So it depends on the person's circumstances, some people will say
356 it's impacted on their career because they're lonely, because they're
357 isolated, and because they're not... they're invisible to their organisations I
358 think, whereas with my job I'm fairly visible and, you know. I don't do it
359 all the time.

360 K – Has working from home changed how you think about yourself and
361 who you are?

362 B – Changed how I think about myself? No, because I think the role that I
363 do is a very valued role and my manager values what I do and she's a very
364 supportive manager. I think I'm really lucky to have a really good
365 manager, who also work from home, so she understands, we have sort of
366 mutual support, so if I say 'right we need to shut up shop', you know, it's
367 stuff like if you get up at 7 in the morning and you come and might switch
368 your emails on, whereas you'd never. you would never dream of going
369 down the office to do that, would you? And sometimes in an evening you'll
370 sit and do some work. I can't remember what the question was, what's the
371 question?

372 K – Has it changed how you think about yourself?

373 B - So no, I still feel valued, that's what I was trying to say. as a member of
374 staff, and as a part of an organisation, I feel a very valued part of the
375 organisation, but it's down to the skill of my manager. really I think that,
376 and I can see managers in the past. maybe people would have imagined
377 that I wouldn't have thought it would be so good, so you know if you've
378 got that good support and people know you're doing the work and you
379 know you do get regular contact, I think that they're the important things
380 about working from home.

381 K – And how about the way that you would categorise yourself? Would
382 you say that you're a mother firstly or would you categorise yourself as an
383 employee, in your professional role?

384 B – In my professional role? I mean I'm obviously a mother. I'm a mother
385 of 3 children, I'm a parent, because, my husband's a parent as well. luckily,
386 cos I get a lot of support from him, so we're both parents really, and I think
387 I'm me first and my job second, so all the things, the family life really does
388 come first, although work obviously impacts on it, it always does whatever
389 job you do, if you're a working parent it does, so yeah me family would
390 come first.

391 K – Do you think you working from home has changed how your kids or
392 how your husband sees you?

393 B- No, because I work away a lot as well now. I think they still value what
394 I do, as I say. every now and again there'll be a job comes my way, that's a
395 house job, because I am about and I sometimes say 'do you think I do
396 nothing at home all day – I'm working you know', that occasionally
397 happens but not on a regular basis, but that still sometimes happens.

Interview 1: Barbara

398 K – Ok we're pretty much through with the questions, I just wanted to ask
399 you about the way that you've got your office set up down here. is it...
400 why did you decide to have it set up like this? And is this ideal?

401 B – I need, as I say, I need to get more things out of the office, I've got a
402 lot of equipment that I use, because I've got a lot of things like projectors,
403 cameras, I've got 2 laptops, I've got a lot of things like big files that I use a
404 lot, you know. training packs, so I've got a lot of equipment which I need
405 to store, which does worry me sometimes cos there's a lot of money's
406 worth in these offices, so I could really do with storing them up in the
407 office and fetching them from the central office, but saying that it wouldn't
408 practically work because I have to leave the house at 5 o'clock some
409 mornings, so the office, I could do with some more shelves really. but then
410 I'd just fill them, so maybe I'm better not having any. I've got to ditch the
411 filing cabinet, I don't like the filing cabinet, so that's got to go.

412 K – How do you feel about being next door to the kitchen?

413 B – That's alright, to be honest with you when I'm in here and I've got that
414 door shut and I've got me music on, cos I tend to have music, it doesn't
415 bother me at all.

416 K – The final thing that I'd like to do is just have a scan around with the
417 camera, if that's alright?

418 B – It's very messy! It's very, very messy!

419 K – Don't worry about it, but the final question for the film is - thank you
420 for taking part - and could you give me some feedback about how you felt
421 taking part in this project?

422 B – That's fine yeah, I don't mind taking part, it's interesting to listen to
423 your questions cos obviously there are issues working from home and some
424 people do get a rough deal working from home, we get a lot of allowances
425 as well, we get home-working allowances so that's good. I think it's not
426 people... some people do see it as a dos, so it's quite nice that somebody's
427 doing some research into how... cos I think it will affect the workforces
428 more and as more people work from home... cos there's computers and it's
429 enabled people to do that. and organisations ought to understand what it's
430 like, I think my manager does you see, I think that's the real difference.

431 K – Right thanks again. I'm just going to...

432 B – That's me dog underneath here, see me dog there?

433 K – That's what we could hear snoring!

434 B – He's actually there all the time. and he's wrapped his self up in my
435 email wires.

436 K – I'm just gonna pick the camera up...

437 B – And he's a bit smelly, so it's a very smelly office, don't like the smell
438 of it! – I think he's died!

Interview 2: Dan

- 1 K- Could you say your name and your job into the camera Dan. so we can
2 make sure I've got sound and things on it?
- 3 D -Ok, it's Dan Timmons, I work as an IT security and network design
4 consultant.
- 5 K - Could you describe your job a little bit more to me?
- 6 D - Yeah. I generally design internet working, basically I was one of the
7 architects of the internet in the UK, so designed networks for banks, large
8 corporations. internationally and nationally. Recently my work's moved
9 into the security field, so that's to stop people hacking in to those networks,
10 and keep the networks safe for our customers.
- 11 K - Ah right, quite a technical role then?
- 12 D - Yeah, yeah.
- 13 K - What's your background, kind of career-wise? How did you get into
14 this current occupation?
- 15 D - Er, when I left school I did electronics at college, then I joined a
16 company called M-call, famous for the phones, but they were doing
17 networking at the time, and did an apprenticeship in data communications,
18 and also went to college again and did BTEC's in further electronics
19 qualifications and just progressed from there, and worked up from being,
20 er, originally I left school, I left college, and became a bench engineer
21 fixing stereo equipment, things like that, but data communications was the
22 way that the market was going - IT.
- 23 K - Right, do you work full time?
- 24 D - Yes, I do, yeah.
- 25 K - And how long roughly do you spend at home?
- 26 D - At the moment I'm spending about 70% of my working time at home.
- 27 K - Sometimes you're out on the road, visiting clients and things?
- 28 D - Yeah, basically a lot of our customers are in London, I work for a
29 national - well it's an American company, and we're based in the UK, so a
30 lot of our clients are based in London, so a lot of my meetings have to take
31 place in Head Offices, either in London or wherever their Head Office may
32 be.
- 33 K - Right, but there is a local office you could go to if you wanted?
- 34 D - Yeah, 15 minutes down the road, as a national... in our company... in
35 the UK we have business centres: in Scotland, London, Manchester, Milton
36 Keynes, Birmingham, and obviously down south.
- 37 K - And are you satisfied with the role that you're in at the moment?
- 38 D - I am yes, I'm very happy with it.
- 39 K - Great and do you have any aims for your future career?
- 40 D - Em. Pretty much just staying within the field I'm in. it's an evolving
41 market, and technology's constantly moving on. so it's not like it's a
42 stagnant role, it kind of keeps me very active and busy.
- 43 K - What kind of worker would you say you are? - Quite a deep question.
- 44 D - What type of worker? Well, to do this type of role you have to be an
45 expert in your field, so highly technical in the knowledge field that I'm in,
46 self motivated is a key factor, and self disciplined, certainly working from
47 home you need to have self discipline.
- 48 K - Great. What does your career mean to you?
- 49 D - A great deal. Since I was, maybe 21, I was very ambitious, and wanted
50 to be the top of the best, and one of the qualifications I attained, round

Interview 2: Dan

- 51 about the age of 23. was the highest you can get in the IT communications
52 industry, and since then I've always aspired to stay at the top of my field.
- 53 K – Great, and do you think that your career's been affected by the fact that
54 you work from home?
- 55 D – Not as yet, but in coming years I think it will affect it more
- 56 K – In what way?
- 57 D – In a negative way as from a career perspective. Obviously, being
58 young and it evolving into a career position of a high standing is one gain
59 that you get but then when you have the child bearing / child caring needs,
60 then that can impact your career progression, it can either slow it down,
61 stop it, or set it back. I guess I'm at the point now where my career is still
62 going forward but I can feel that it will either slow down because of my
63 commitments to my child or it will have to take a step back and I'll have to
64 do some downsizing.
- 65 K – Right, and you're a single dad, and you've got one child who's 4 and a
66 half. How do you currently arrange your childcare and schooling?
- 67 D – Ok, up until yesterday I had an au pair, or nanny. it just so happened
68 that it was my niece from Australia, 20 year old niece, but I did actually
69 apply and do some searches with agencies for an actual au pair, and it was
70 only when family found out that I was looking and my niece wanted to
71 come to the UK, that fitted, but basically she performed the same function
72 as an au pair would perform.
- 73 K – What about domestic work in the home. how do you organise that?
- 74 D – Again, I do my own housework, and when the au pair was here she
75 basically helps out 50/50 pretty much - a thankless task but, you know, we
76 all do it.
- 77 K – Great, did you have time off work when your child was born?
- 78 D – Yes, I took 3 weeks off.
- 79 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are?
- 80 D – Er, very... hands on, loving, affectionate, a mentor as well.
- 81 K – Great, in what kind of ways?
- 82 D – Obviously bringing up a son alone, you know he always wants his
83 cuddles, he wants affection, and he gets it, he gets that off me in equal
84 measure, obviously teaching him the ways of the world, I'm a very
85 practically minded person and he seems to like pulling things apart like I
86 did when I was a little boy.
- 87 K - Right, brilliant, and what have you learnt since becoming a parent?
- 88 D – Em, probably that it's the most important job that I'll ever do, whereas
89 before being a parent, work was probably the biggest ambition I had, after
90 having a child I wouldn't swap him for the world, now I put obviously
91 family before work.
- 92 K – Great, and has your role in your family changed since you've been
93 working from home?
- 94 D – Well I've been working from home in a similar role for, you know, the
95 last 10 years, but I've only just been divorced for the last 2 and a half
96 years, so that's where my role's changed, as a single dad, so obviously there
97 has been a change as I'm now living alone, whereas before obviously I had
98 my wife, so the role has certainly changed but we adapt.

Interview 2: Dan

99 K – Sure, so you’ve worked from home for kind of about 10 years, but 2
100 years whilst managing the parenting role as well. Who instigated the fact
101 that you were going to start working from home?

102 D – Well within the industry that I’m in, the working from home has
103 always been an option because a lot of the work is technical, using your
104 mind and using a computer, so there’s not always the need to clock in to an
105 office or do a 9-5 desk job, so I’ve always had the flexibility to do work
106 from home, and it’s only in the last 2 years when I’ve actually asked my
107 employer for flexible working, it means that I will actually take advantage
108 of that a bit more.

109 K – Great, so the main reason that you decided to work from home was to
110 be able to balance your childcare?

111 D – That’s right yeah.

112 K – What have other people’s reactions been - mainly your child and
113 people you work with, for the fact you work from home?

114 D – Certainly from work, like I say within the industry it’s not uncommon,
115 I think some of the times I’ve... one of the practical ways I work from
116 home is to avoid going to London as frequently as I would if I wasn’t out
117 there doing child care, so one of the reactions would be that they’re
118 probably wondering where I am at a lot of meetings and why I’m always
119 teleconferencing in, that’s actually a small hurdle to overcome. With regard
120 to my son, working from home, he loves it cos he’s always got the
121 opportunity to come in and have his knee kissed better.

122 K – Aw. Is it what you expected, working from home, or has it been better
123 than you expected, or worse?

124 D – Sometimes it’s difficult to balance some of the work commitments and
125 working from home, and also the problem with working from home is the
126 extended... the hours of the daytime don’t actually have any clear
127 demarcations, and this is probably self discipline as well, knowing when to
128 cut off, when it’s work time and when it’s home time.

129 K – Yeah. What were your opinions of other people who teleworked,
130 before you began?

131 D – I thought they were jammy sods!

132 K – So you thought it was quite a privilege to be able to work from home?

133 D – Yes, like I say, about 10 years ago, because I work in the networking
134 industry, I developed, with an employer, some techniques, some tools, that
135 we could allow people to do the same job sat at a desk that they could from
136 home: special extension lines for the phone, so it looked like they were
137 logged into the office, computers, ISDN links, networking links, so the
138 companies that I worked for, I made teleworking more practical for them,
139 so I kind of, do as it says on the tin.

140 K – Great, do you have an idea what a typical teleworker might be like?

141 D - Typical teleworker? I certainly, well, looking at some of the customers
142 that we have, a lot of the banking customers, they have sales administrators
143 who work from home, they’ll do telesales and trying to cold calling people,
144 and chase up existing customers and offer services, so the only tool you
145 need there is probably a database and a phone to contact people. Other
146 typical teleworkers may be doing administration type jobs.

147 K –And how do you keep in touch with your colleagues and your clients?

148 D – We have bi-weekly teleconference calls, because...

- 149 *(A child's voice outside)* – Dad, dad.
- 150 D – Bear with me Harry. *(The child comes in)* We have bi-weekly
- 151 teleconference calls and monthly meetings as well, face to face. so we all
- 152 keep in touch that way, and obviously we have email and in our
- 153 corporate... we have a chat forum as well so if we have any technical
- 154 questions or queries...
- 155 H - Dad?
- 156 D – Yes Harry?
- 157 H - Can we have an ice pop now?
- 158 D – Ok, can you get Emma to get it out the freezer?
- 159 H – Or I might do it.
- 160 D – Oh, ok, one each then ok?
- 161 H – Ok *(runs off)*
- 162 K – Have you had any issues of isolation?
- 163 D – No, actually, it's quite a fair balance, I do travel a lot, when I've not
- 164 got my son, so when I've got my son you know. that's the key focus, when
- 165 he's with his mother, that's when I splurge out on the work ethic and get in
- 166 touch with people.
- 167 K – Great, and do you think that you have more control over your work
- 168 now that you're working from home?
- 169 D – I have less interruptions from work. Working in an office, especially in
- 170 the job I do, if you're there, people. cos you're treated like the technical
- 171 oracle, people are constantly tapping you on the shoulder and trying to
- 172 interrupt you. Whereas now, people are more likely to schedule my time.
- 173 so it gives you a more balanced and structured way of working as well.
- 174 K – Do you think you're a better worker now – more efficient, focused?
- 175 D – I'm probably about the same, I don't think it's changed my focus.
- 176 K – What was the learning curve of starting to work at home? Did you
- 177 have to develop strategies to manage that?
- 178 D – Yes, you basically assess yourself after a while and find out that you're
- 179 spending a lot of hours of the day going to the fridge or pottering around
- 180 the house and things, that can be a bit of a problem when you're working
- 181 from home, cos you're actually in your home environment, so it's finding
- 182 that boundary where you switch off and work. It's still not easy, you know
- 183 people still come to the door, trying to sell you double glazing when you're
- 184 working from home.
- 185 K – What do you think the overall impact has been on your family life, of
- 186 working from home?
- 187 D – I think it's been, obviously it's improved vastly, you get to see more of
- 188 your child and hopefully Daddy won't be just someone who popped to
- 189 work in the morning, and came home at night, tucked you in bed.
- 190 K – Great, and what do you think the overall impact has been on your
- 191 career, of working from home?
- 192 D – At the moment I think it's stayed fairly balanced, and it's not really
- 193 impacted it, but I do get the feeling that certainly, from the undercurrents
- 194 within my industry, that it can stifle your career, and basically there's
- 195 always someone to replace you, who's willing to go that extra mile, put
- 196 those extra mileages in and get away from home.
- 197 K – Right, overall then, what's the impact been on your life? Has it been a
- 198 positive impact or a negative would you say?

Interview 2: Dan

- 199 D – Oh definitely a positive. And even if the work situation, the career, was
200 put on hold, it's still a positive experience because, like I say, I put family
201 above the work.
- 202 K – Brilliant, so would you change anything? Or would you ever go back
203 to traditional working do you think?
- 204 D – I think I would find it absolutely deplorable. I wouldn't be able to do a
205 9 til 5 office job. I'm too used to being my own boss, in my own
206 environment.
- 207 K – Is telework an effective way for parents to reconcile work and family
208 life, do you think?
- 209 D – I think it most definitely is. We always talk about work / life balance
210 and obviously if you're spending most of that time in work, it's not much
211 of a balance, so having a work / life balance working from home is a lot
212 more do-able.
- 213 K – My overall research question is: 'How does home-based telework
214 impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?' –
215 What do you think the findings might be?
- 216 D – It is a very grey area now, cos you, certainly your work identity is
217 typically identified from your presence in work, the output that you give, if
218 that presence isn't seen, in person, I've experienced it, where my work has
219 been appreciated, but no-one can put a face to a name, so you, that kind of
220 stifles your career, because when people are talking about promoting
221 people or giving someone some affirmation for some positive work,
222 because people don't know you face to face, they will probably put
223 someone who they've seen face to face ahead of you, so it can actually set
224 back your status in the work area. And from a family perspective, or from a
225 parenting perspective, I think that it would probably put you up in the
226 stakes, you know cos you're a good worker, you're a good parent, because
227 you're balancing the work and your parenting together, as opposed to: it's
228 one extreme or another, full on parenting or full or work.
- 229 K – Do you think things might be different if you were a woman, if you
230 were a mother? Do you think you might find the impact on your
231 professional and parental identity different in anyway?
- 232 D – It depends, cos we've seen the big shift in the career of working
233 women, I think a career woman who's reached the high level of the career
234 ladder, would suffer the same consequences that I may suffer now, with
235 careers being put on hold or set back due to childcare needs, but if you're
236 talking about a typical environment, scenario, where mothers do maybe a
237 part time job, not actually a career-based job, more just a functional job,
238 doing some kind of retail or something, then if she hasn't developed a
239 career for herself and it's just a job, then you know, it would impact less,
240 so if I, for example, stacked shelves in Sainsbury's. I'd have the same
241 effect as if it was a woman who stacked shelves, and I think it would be the
242 same if it were a high powered career woman and a high powered man, it's
243 the same impact. I think companies frown upon anyone who's gonna let
244 childcare interfere with an active career.
- 245 K – Great. Has teleworking changed how you think about yourself and who
246 you are?
- 247 D – Em. I think it's just put everything into perspective, to know that there
248 is a balance to be met, you can get too hung up on a job and a career, and

Interview 2: Dan

- 249 you loose sight of what the important things are in life, I think that working
250 from home has allowed that balance to become quite clear and set in mind,
251 so you know that your family is important and work is important, to feed
252 and sustain that family. and that`s why you do it.
- 253 K – Brilliant. I think we`ve already covered this really but just to clarify.
254 how would you categorise yourself, as a father firstly or as a consultant
255 firstly?
- 256 D – Definitely as a father.
- 257 K – And has working from home affected that, do you think?
- 258 D – Em. It`s allowed me to be more of a father. But obviously as soon as
259 you become a father and you get that bond with your child, then that`s first
260 and foremost.
- 261 K – And has it changed how Harry sees you do you think?
- 262 D – Yeah, I think if he spent a lot of time without me then the bonds would
263 be less firm, I think spending time with a child, certainly at the age Harry
264 is, at 4 and a half, it`s so important to spend quality time with them.
- 265 K – And how about how people see you in general - you mention these
266 people coming to the door - what do you think they think when you come
267 to the door and you`re at home?
- 268 D – I don`t know to be honest, I know a lot of my neighbours... I`ve got a
269 nice car on the path and it never goes anywhere. and they see me here. also
270 see young ladies entering the house all the time when I get a new au pair in,
271 so they probably think I`m in some kind of dodgy industry. Who cares
272 what they think as long as my son`s happy.
- 273 K – Exactly.
- 274 *(Harry has walked in again)*
- 275 H – Dad?
- 276 D – Yes?
- 277 H - Sammy can have a lolly?
- 278 D – Yes, he can, if his Mummy says, ok?
- 279 H – I have a lolly as well?
- 280 D – You`ve had one, don`t have another one, don`t be fat and greedy.
- 281 H – One for me and Sammy
- 282 D – No
- 283 H – Ohhh.
- 284 D - Have you just had 2 sticks of lolly?
- 285 H – No, I just gave one to Emma.
- 286 D – Ok, you have one and Sammy have one.
- 287 K – We`ve nearly finished anyway.
- 288 D – Nearly finished *(he says this to Harry as the boy leaves the room, then
289 turns back to me)*
- 290 K – In fact I pretty much am finished, I just wanted to ask if there was
291 anything else you wanted to add? And perhaps you could tell us a bit about
292 Fathers Rights Collective?
- 293 D – Ok, the only thing, I know that I`m probably in a very privileged
294 position to have a job which allows me to have flexible working. If I was a
295 factory worker who had to clock in at 9 and finish at 5. 5.30. then there
296 isn`t the option of teleworking. so I do consider myself very privileged, and
297 I know there`s many a father would love to be able to do what I`m doing. I
298 know there`s many a mother - within a family unit. they choose to be the

Interview 2: Dan

299 one that's the primary family bread winner. they also adopt a work stance
300 either to go out and get employment that will allow flexible working or
301 allow working from home, whereas many fathers, in the majority, are
302 already in a place of full time employment that will not allow the
303 flexibility, so I'm hoping that the equality now, of people in work, and also
304 we're pushing, with Fathers Rights Collective, for equality in parenting,
305 which allows , when a family's together, for example, as a family unit, you
306 decide who does what role: you may decide to 50/50 balance your working
307 life and career and you both chip in or one may decide 'well I've got the
308 biggest career potential, so I'll push that route to get more money in', while
309 the other person says 'I'll do the childcaring and balance that with maybe
310 some part time work', and it may be the man or the woman who does either
311 role these days and people are going into a more 50/50 role. The problem
312 is, as I've said before, child care and a job go ok, child care and a career
313 can be something that's stifling or just doesn't get off the road, so I hope
314 that with 50/50 equal parenting that's the thing that happens, people do
315 roles as required. Now, what Fathers Rights Collective does today, because
316 that's the shift in society, that we know that there isn't automatically a
317 presumption that one person is the primary child carer - cos it could be
318 either, cos you've negotiated it as part of the family unit - after separation,
319 divorce, the system today that takes on that old model: that mother is
320 always the primary childcarer, dad is the primary breadwinner... hang on a
321 sec, I think someone's kid's... *(Dan checks the window)* oh it's alright,
322 sorry. So the fact is that society has shifted on from those norms but the
323 law today hasn't shifted on one iota. I found it exactly, myself, was that,
324 when I went through separation and divorce, as soon as mother left the
325 house and took the kids, and for reasons better known to herself, she
326 decided not to let me have any access to them, when I took recourse to the
327 family court, after trying mediation failed miserably, so I had no choice but
328 to go to the family court, and when I got there I found that whatever Mum
329 said was believed and was true, and the fact that she claimed to be the
330 primary breadwinner...
331 *(Harry comes in crying)* Ooh, bare with me. *(He scoops Harry up and sits*
332 *him on his lap)* Y'alright? What's the matter?
333 H - *(undecipherable through the tears)*
334 D - What have you done? Hurt your finger? Oh dear, how did you do that?
335 H - *(Still crying)* I tripped over.
336 D - You tripped over? *(Dan kisses it, he crying stops)* Is that better, eh?
337 How did you trip over?
338 *(Another child off camera)* - Tripped over that black rug.
339 K - Oh dear, I wonder if now might be a nice time to give Harry a little
340 present? What do you think, will it make you feel better do you think? Let
341 you have a little present?
342 D - Ooh, say thank you Harry.
343 K - Have I spelt your name right, is it with a 'h'?
344 D - *(to Harry)* Is it right? Let's have a look, ooh it's a card and what does it
345 say? 'To Harry from Katy', ah it's a voucher for the toyshop.
346 K - So you can get yourself a nice new toy.
347 D - Shall we go there today and go and buy something?
348 K - Brilliant.

Interview 2: Dan

- 349 D – Say thank you to Katy.
350 H – Thank you.
351 K – That’s my pleasure, and you can do some colouring.
352 D – You can colour, it says ‘colour me in’. it’s a good card that, isn’t it?
353 Shall we keep that safe and play with that later? You’ve got your dirty
354 hands, so we’ll let you go out and play... just be careful... I know I’ve just
355 kissed that.
356 H – (*undecipherable*)... pointing...
357 K – Can you still point with it? Is it still your pointing finger?
358 H – (*Nods*)
359 D – Still working, isn’t it? (*Dan wipes a tear from his son’s eye*)
360 K – Good, good.
361 D - Go and play nicely, be careful.
362 K - Go and make sure you can still point at things Harry won’t you?
363 D – He’s fine. That’s what you get to be able to do working from home
364 *At this point Dan continues talking about his work with Fathers Rights*
365 *Collective for a further 12 minutes, this is omitted from the interview*
366 *record as irrelevant*
367 K – Just to finish off the filming, if you don’t mind, I’m just gonna have a
368 scan around of your office space.
369 D – Yeah.
370 K- So you can kind of see the balance. Starting from the front window.
371 You’ve got some toys on the top shelf. are they Dad toys?
372 D – Yeah, Harry bought me that, ‘Back to the Future’ car.
373 K – Brilliant. So you’ve got a mix on the dresser, of work books...
374 D – Yeah, my work seems to be spreading more than the... I was actually
375 building an extension on the side of the house before we divorced so I’d
376 have a separate office space and that. I still have building plans for that.
377 K – Right, and a filing cabinet in the corner, and then doors leading
378 through to the living room. Great, I think that’s all I need of that. Is the
379 office space set up like this kind of, consciously, is it ...?
380 D – I’m reluctant to have it here actually, at one stage I had it in the spare
381 bedroom, then I brought it down here for more practical... you know,
382 rather than being distant. I think it should be next to your home
383 environment, when you’ve got childcare, you’ve seen Harry running in and
384 getting a cuddle and be sent off, but I would like it to be a little bit further
385 away than in this room, which is why I want to get, build an office on the
386 side of the house.
387 K – Does this double as a dining room?
388 D – It’s a dining room yes, so it’s a bit of an eye sore having a filing
389 cabinet and that in a living room. We’re limited for space at the moment,
390 but hopefully we can improve that.
391 K – Thank you for taking part, that’s pretty much it, apart from, could you
392 give me some feedback how you felt taking part in this project?
393 D – No it’s fine, I think it’s great to say, to spread the word, of what dad’s
394 can really achieve when you put your mind to it. Most of the dad’s that I’ve
395 spoke to have said ‘ooh I could never do that cos work would get in the
396 way’, well you’ve got to rethink outside the box, you’ve to change your
397 career, change your job, or have words with your employer and see where
398 the options are, unless obviously if you’re a factory worker, your doing 9-

Interview 2: Dan

399 5, there`s not many options unless you can get extra holidays and things.
400 but where you`ve got a job where you sit at a desk, you answer the phones,
401 you work on a computer, there`s no reason to say to your employer `why
402 can`t I do this from home?` and this is what I used to do with my
403 employers and we then put in a system, a network, to actually make them
404 accept that`s actually a reality and now more employers are actually
405 thinking that way there`s more opportunity for more people to actually
406 grasp that opportunity. And say, well there`s no reason to drive for an hour
407 to work, sit at a desk, answer the phone, drive an hour home again, when.
408 I`ve got a phone at home, I`ve got a desk, I`ll cut out the driving, and after
409 work they`re straight home.
410 K – Absolutely, brilliant, thanks very much then, I`ll turn it off now.

Interview 3: Gary

1 K- Could you just, so I can check the camera's working properly and the
2 sound and things, state your name for me?

3 G – My name's Gary Jacques

4 K – Can you tell me a little bit about what you do? You've put your job
5 title as Business Relations Manager.

6 G – Fairly vague. I'm program manager at the moment for an IT services
7 based in the UK here in Milton Keynes, we've got probably four or so
8 offices here, and my role is to program manage a productivity initiative
9 across Europe, where the company's hoping to save several million dollars
10 by implementing technology through various people really.

11 K – Right, how did you get into that kind of work?

12 G – EMK, my employer is where I started working, from my first job, so
13 this has been my progression through various jobs within the same
14 organisation

15 K – Right, when you were kind of at college and things was this the kind of
16 area you always wanted to get into?

17 G – No, no, when I was at college, and studying it was first of all chemistry
18 and biology I was interested in. but within Milton Keynes, it's much more
19 an electronics and technology town really, so it was an electronics and
20 technology company that I applied to, took me on.

21 K – Right, so you've been working from home now for about one, one and
22 a half years?

23 G – Yes.

24 K – How long do you spend in the home as versus the office?

25 G – It's virtually 5 days a week at home, there might be a half-day each
26 week when I'd pop into an office, as I say there's several offices here, so I
27 can pop in to see staff that work for me and have status reports and updates
28 or look through finances or it could be my upwards reporting to the
29 management chain.

30 K – Are you happy with the work that you're doing now?

31 G – Er

32 K – Just asking kind of what... how good your job satisfaction is.

33 G – Could be higher. It's not a bad job, not a bad company to work for. but
34 I think after a year, year and a half of the same program, it's time to move
35 on, and after 7 years with the same company it might be nice to change as
36 well.

37 K – So do you have aims for your future career?

38 G – Looking at the moment, checking it out at the moment.

39 K – Right. What kind of worker would you say you are?

40 G – What kind of worker? Are there any options?

41 K – No. Just the first words that come into your head when someone says
42 'what kind of worker are you?', perhaps...

43 G – Reluctant

44 K – Ah right

45 G – Fairly logical and technical, and I like to fault-find and diagnose and
46 repair things.

47 K – Right, right. What does your career mean to you?

48 G – Quite a lot, because, you know from our conversations, I studied for an
49 MBA and completed that this year, so obviously that's an investment that
50 we made to further the career. There's still a need, whether you believe in

Interview 3: Gary

51 the man as the breadwinner or not, to bring in as much money as possible
52 to look after the family. So I want to have a career that I enjoy and that I
53 think rewards well.

54 K – Do you think your career's been affected by working from home,
55 either negatively or positively?

56 G – I don't think so. The one thing that I would suggest, is that by not
57 being in the office, you're not visible. If you wanted to, it's harder to play
58 the politics from home, because you can't influence and network so much
59 in the corridors. But equally if you want to get on, progress through results,
60 it's probably easier not to be involved in some of the gossiping.

61 K – Great. And you're married with 2 children, have any of your children
62 got any additional needs or anything like that?

63 G – Nothing significant, I take the little boy to speech therapist once a
64 week.

65 K – Ok, and how old are they?

66 G – The boy's 5 and my little girl's 8.

67 K – Ok, how's childcare currently arranged at the moment?

68 G – They both are at school between 9 and 3, or 3.30, within half a mile of
69 the house, so I often take them before 9 o'clock and drop them both off and
70 be back in the home office before 9.

71 K – Great.

72 G – And then collection, Kath or I would come home and collect them, or
73 more likely we have a friend that collects our little girl from school and
74 drops her off at home.

75 K – And how about domestic work, how is that shared in the home?

76 G – We hire someone else to do it.

77 K – Did you have time off when your children were born?

78 G – Only a couple of weeks, sort of a weeks holiday and a week at
79 management discretion.

80 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are?

81 G – Fantastic

82 K – Fantastic, that's brilliant. Would you say you're a very hands on
83 parent?

84 G – I think so, given that I've got a full time career, I don't think it was so
85 hands on when I was studying, because it was full time career then 3 or 4
86 hours each night studying each night, so there was a lapse there, but we had
87 a little family meeting last night where we said that we need to go out more
88 and play more.

89 K – What do you think you've learnt, if anything, since becoming a parent?

90 G – Don't have children

91 K – *(laughs)*

92 G – You're a lot less selfish I think. I suppose you become a lot more
93 conservative, well I did, you look out for danger signs and kids being noisy
94 in the street get on your nerves a bit more and cars whizzing by, you
95 become more safety conscious about that.

96 K – Has your role in your family changed since teleworking?

97 G – I suspect that I collect, and do a lot more of the running around for the
98 children than I did before because previously I've had roles all over the
99 UK. The last one would have been an hour and a half's drive from here
100 each way, so obviously if I'm an hour and a half away I can't just nip back

Interview 3: Gary

101 and collect the kids if Kath's busy, she'll have to do it herself or ask a
102 friend. So I suppose I have increased the amount of childcare I perform.
103 K – Do you think being able to have time to study was facilitated more by
104 you being a teleworker?

105 G – Probably, but in the position I was in prior to becoming a teleworker I
106 had my own office, so if I wanted to spend a long lunch doing a case study
107 or something I could, but obviously the results and the daily tasks all have
108 to be performed anyway, but if it overlaps into the evening that was fair
109 enough.

110 K – Who was it that instigated working from home then?

111 G – Me, as I say the role previous to the one I have now was an hour and a
112 half's journey away and I couldn't see the point in driving down to an
113 office with an hour and a half of my own time, sitting at a desk in an open
114 plan office, and waiting until the end of the day, and doing the same to
115 drive back, so more and more, to avoid wasting 3 hours of my time, I
116 started to work from home. Although that was commented upon by the
117 account that I was working in and the management team there.

118 K – Oh right?

119 G - They expected to see me on site at least 3 if not 4 days a week, but
120 when I questioned it they couldn't say why I had to actually physically be
121 there.

122 K – Right, so who else did you discuss it with?

123 G – My immediate management

124 K – Yeah

125 G - Because the group that I'm in, we sell our services out to other parts of
126 the company, who then manage our clients, so obviously I discussed with
127 my manager where I would be based, partially because the account
128 management I worked were raising issues about it, so before I get asked
129 what I'm doing I will tell them what I'm doing

130 K – So was your organisation generally supportive of your decision?

131 G – As long as it caused no delivery problems, service delivery issues

132 K – And did you discuss it with friends and family before you made the
133 decision?

134 G – No

135 K – What were people's reactions, for example your wife and children's
136 reactions?

137 G – I think it's been a slow process, over time, but more and more I would
138 be working from home, so it wasn't as if one day all of a sudden I could
139 burn my suit and never put a tie on again.

140 K – (*laughs*)

141 G – So I think, because Kath and I work in the same industry, for the same
142 company, we're used to travelling, we're used to each other, having to
143 cover for the fact that one or other of us is at home just seems to be the
144 normality now.

145 K – And what do your kids think? Have they really noticed that you're
146 around more?

147 G – Well they've also had to learn what it means, because they're still quite
148 young, our little boy especially, so their role play games, that they play
149 with each other, are all about having a meeting and being on a
150 teleconference.

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151 K – *(laughs)*

152 G – So they know that when Kath and I are in the study then they shouldn't
153 really come in and ask questions about 'can I have a lollipop?'

154 K - Right

155 G - Cos we'll more than likely have an earpiece in and we'll just hold our
156 hand up and push them out the door.

157 K – Was it what you expected then? Or was it better or worse in any way?

158 G – I think it's probably been better, because there is a balance between
159 things that we need to do as a couple at home to manage the home. we can
160 get done. I suppose if I was in an office and I wanted to talk to my bank
161 manager I might want to go and find a quiet corner and I'd be using a
162 work's phone for personal use, whereas now I can pick up my own phone,
163 make the phone calls I need to, still have the business lines clear. So I
164 suppose working from home, it works for me personally, and it also works
165 for the company.

166 K – Before you started teleworking, what were your opinions of other
167 people who teleworked?

168 G –They were skiving, weren't they?

169 K – *(laughs)*

170 G – Well I suppose the answer is out of sight out of mind really. But you
171 don't know what they're doing cos you only see them at scheduled
172 meetings. I'm not sure whether my management have the same view of me
173 cos I'm not sitting there and they they can't just pop round and watch me
174 or ask me a question although, as we were saying earlier on, technology
175 allows them almost to do that. We've just enabled today an instant
176 messaging system for the team I work in, so at any point my manager could
177 send me a message saying 'can you give me a buzz?' Where as, if it was
178 purely email and phone calls, you could not read the email or you could
179 divert the phone call

180 K – Right. So now that you are a teleworker. do you have any idea what a
181 typical teleworker might be like?

182 G – Like us really, myself and Kath. I suspect that there might be
183 categories of teleworker and you have to work in a certain industry, a
184 certain function, a certain level of either expertise or management level, to
185 be able to do this. If I had direct people responsibility, which I don't, I
186 think it would make working from home a lot harder because I'd be
187 expected to either physically monitor what they're doing or be there and
188 walk, walk the offices, and be seen as management, however my position
189 is, is a virtual team, so I've got staff all over Europe, so even if I was in the
190 office I wouldn't see them, cos they'd be in another country or another
191 office within the same country.

192 K – We've already touched on this a bit, but how do you keep in touch
193 with colleagues and clients? What are the main ways?

194 G – Mobile phone is a big one. Virtually everyone in the company is issued
195 with the same mobile phone. This week I'm having a car phone kit
196 installed by the company. So the idea is that you are contactable. and quite
197 often in the past I've been on virtually 24 by 7 call. Just because as the
198 manager I need people to be able to contact me before they make their own
199 decision, it might be one I disagree with. Email is huge. we've got a
200 virtually private network, so the company has paid for broadband internet

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201 access to home, which we plug the laptop into and we have a secure
202 connection that goes through the internet back to the office. and the speed
203 of that it's the same as being plugged into the network in the office.

204 K – Right, so it's mainly mobile phone and...

205 G – Internet email access

206 K – Internet and email, yeah.

207 G – The instant messaging, as I say, it's been enabled today. but I have
208 used it in the past, and you end up just chatting more on it than you do
209 working on it.

210 K – *(Laughs)*

211 G - The one thing that people do say that it's useful for. is if you're on a
212 teleconference and you can't be interrupted. one of the other participants
213 can send you a quick message saying 'are you going to mention XYZ?' and
214 it can prompt you to do so. We also have net-meeting for sharing files. So,
215 I did one a couple of weeks ago, a virtual presentation, with probably ten
216 people that lasted all day. Each of the ten people have their own slides to
217 show and they just took control of the PC's, presented their slides. shut that
218 down again and the next person did theirs

219 K – Brilliant. Do you think you've had any issues of isolation working
220 from home?

221 G – My Dr says I'll be ok soon... *(barely audible)*

222 K – *(laughs)*

223 G – As I said before, I've had an open plan office, I've had a private office.
224 I had a private office at work because of the client details I had, the
225 financial details. Most of the time the office was door shut cos I was
226 discussing things with the client, so I was fairly isolated even though I was
227 at work, and also there was a lot of work to do, so I didn't have time to
228 spend 3 hours around the smoking room or in the canteen or outside
229 walking around, so there was some self-imposed isolation anyway and this
230 just makes it absolute really.

231 K – Do you think you've got more control over your work now?

232 G – I suppose I don't pick up so many informal actions, because nobody
233 bumps into me on the way to and from the coffee machine and say 'oh can
234 you just do this for me', so if they want something that have to specifically
235 ask for it. That's probably gonna come in via email.

236 K – Do you think that you're a better worker now in any way - more
237 focused or efficient?

238 G – I can get the things that I want done. however. you do miss out on the
239 networking aspect of passing your ideas, in a conversation, past two or
240 three people. If I were sitting in the same office and I was writing
241 something I could say does this make sense or what did Joe Bloggs say
242 about this system. If I'd got to phone or email you or leave a message, I
243 might not bother now, I'd just put what I think the response is.

244 K – Was there a big learning curve to becoming a teleworker – did you
245 have to develop strategies to manage working from home?

246 G – No because it was, as I've said before, it was a gradual slide into
247 teleworking, so Kath and I already had to have some kind of agreement
248 about who's picking up the kids today. Before we'd both turn up late or
249 neither of us had turned up at all. If we both think the other person is doing
250 it we hadn't really previously scheduled it then it's quite frustrating for us

251 both to drop what we're doing at work, spend half hour coming across
252 picking up the kids getting them sorted before we're back on line again. So
253 I think we already understood what was going to be involved.

254 K – So do you have different days when you're doing it, and different days
255 when Kath does it?

256 G – Mornings are mine and afternoons are Kath's for collecting the
257 children, doing the household chores as it were.

258 K – Just as a summary, what do you think the overall impact has been on
259 your family of you working from home?

260 G – I think it's, overall it's positive, it's allowed a bit more flexibility, if
261 I've got a report to write before tomorrow morning, I can do it tonight, it
262 doesn't have to be between 9 and 5 today, obviously I need to make sure
263 that I've phoned around and got the information and so that there's
264 preparation to be done, but it allows me to say in this 24 hour period what
265 am I doing. Now that's assuming that there's no fires, and no one fires
266 across an urgent action that I now have to schedule into my activities, but
267 in general we're more flexible I can take Andrew to speech therapy, I can
268 go and watch the harvest festival next week in Morden, and I don't have to
269 ask anyone, I'll just be out of the office and uncontactable for half an hour,
270 and then I'm back.

271 K – And again, as a summary, what's the overall impact on your career, do
272 you think?

273 G – I think, judging by... the roles that I've got at the moment as results
274 focused, so as long as I bring in the savings and the dollars and the chief set
275 objectives, then it will be classified as a success. I probably miss out on
276 some of the gossip about which roles are coming up next and if my face
277 isn't seen then they might not think of me, so I have to keep my name up
278 there somehow.

279 K – So the impact overall on your life would you say is a positive one or a
280 negative?

281 G – It's positive, yes.

282 K – So how would you change things if you could – would you ever go
283 back to traditional working?

284 G – Em, I suspect I'll have to go back to being more office based, purely
285 because not all roles within our company are achievable by teleworking.
286 One of the next roles I'm looking at is based in the UK is for one of our
287 defence government types and purely through the security issues I doubt
288 that they would want me to be teleworking, so if I take that particular role
289 then I'll have to adhere to their policies, which is going to be on-site.

290 K – Do you think you're going to miss working from home?

291 G – I'll miss the freedom of working from home, and also we will have to
292 at home schedule our activities a lot more

293 K – Overall then, is teleworking an effective way for parents reconcile
294 work and family life, do you think?

295 G – I think, again harking back to something I've mentioned before, it
296 depends what your work-life is. You know if you've got a European role
297 like many of my friends have, you have to be in Europe, you have to go
298 places, now when you come back you can do teleworking at home, and
299 catching up with family that way, but I think, you mentioned isolation, I

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300 think that would bother some people. it depends on how sociable you are in
301 the first place

302 K – My overall research question is ‘how does telework impact upon the
303 professional and parental identities of men and women?’ Do you have any
304 idea about what the findings might be?

305 G –It depends, I think, for me, that my parental profile, as it were, would
306 increase I would feel more like a parent, through being at home more,
307 having to think a bit more about when the kids come home at 3. 3.30
308 they’ve got to have something to eat before sixish when we have dinner. If
309 I’m the one here then I’ll have to stop working and make the tea and make
310 sure that they’re getting changed and they’re having something to eat, that
311 they’ve done their home work. But I’m hoping, cos I don’t know, that the
312 professional side also will, well at least won’t be negatively affected,
313 because the company that I work for is going more and more towards
314 homeworking, they’re providing the facilities to do so, so I’m hoping that
315 they don’t just give you the tools with the one hand and then take away
316 your career prospects with the other

317 K – Do you think that the findings of this study will be different because of
318 your gender? So if you’re a woman working from home, do you think
319 you’d find different issues?

320 G – I suspect that if you take the stereotype of the woman being in charge
321 of the house and the man goes off to work, that teleworking may allow
322 women to increase their careers, but again its within a certain career
323 structure and within a certain company that accepts teleworking. I
324 mentioned virtual secretaries, that type of opportunity will open up to a lot
325 more people, but if Kath wanted to go into account management then she’d
326 probably have to go out and visit the clients, you can’t do that from home,
327 so I think it will open up some possibilities.

328 K – Has teleworking changed how you think about yourself and who you
329 are?

330 G – I don’t think so, I didn’t particularly want... if you’ve done all the
331 things in an office by 3, then why do you have to sit there, for another 2
332 and a half hours watching the clock? I know that if the client phones me at
333 7 o’clock at night I’ll take the call, before or after I was teleworking. I
334 think teleworking gives me the flexibility to say, I’ve done my hours I’ll
335 either choose to take the call or not, I’ll write that report today or I’ll do it
336 tomorrow, without thinking well I did my 7 and a half hours in the office
337 and now they want me to do another 3 at home.

338 K – How would you categorise yourself – as a father firstly or as a business
339 relations manager firstly?

340 G – As a Father

341 K – And do you think working from home’s changed that at all?

342 G – I don’t think so. I suppose if I put on a suit and a tie like I used to
343 everyday and had to polish my shoes and go into the office, that physical
344 badge is going to be on me when I leave and when I come back. I think it’s
345 also a signal, a symbol, to everyone else, they see you leaving and they see
346 you come back, and they might see you come back at 5.30 or it might be
347 7.30, our next door neighbour is also in IT, and she’ll joke that I’ve been
348 sitting at home watching telly all day, homeworking has got a bit of a jokey
349 image.

350 K – Mmm. Do you think it's changed how your kids see you?

351 G – Not really cos I think we've been quite strict, both of us, if we work at
352 home, that when the door's shut or I'm on a call then they can't interrupt.
353 They've come to the offices occasionally, just for a couple of hours, and
354 they've seen again, that I'm on a PC and I'm taking phone calls and one or
355 two people might pop by, so they know that they have to sit and be quiet,
356 so I suspect that they'd rather do that at home, where they've got their toys
357 than do it at an office.

358 K – And has it changed anything about the way that your wife sees you do
359 you think?

360 G – I don't think so, she has commented that I need to make sure that I pull
361 the blind up in the study and I've got the window open cos she was a bit
362 worried that I'll just sit in the dark for 7 or 8 hours and that's not healthy,
363 but I do find that when working from home quite often I'm in the study the
364 laptop's on permanently so the mails can come and go at high speed, I had
365 pictured in my mind before full time homeworking, that at 10 o'clock I
366 might go and cut the lawn and midday I'll have my hour for lunch like I
367 would in the office, but I find that I end up working through lunch because
368 there's no particular break no one else is going off to lunch, there's no one
369 here to say 'do you want a drink?' or anything, so I tend to work longer
370 stints, and then might think I haven't had a break and it's one or two
371 o'clock in the afternoon. So then I'll take some time off, and then it'll be
372 time to go and collect the kids so that's a half hour, 45 minute interruption
373 that wasn't there in the office, but it balances out.

374 K – Have you ever told anybody that you work from home and had a
375 negative reaction or a particularly positive reaction?

376 G – Em, nothing significant, no.

377 K – Ok, we're pretty near to the end, is there anything else that you'd to
378 talk about to do with teleworking? Any other comments that you want to
379 add about how it's affected your family life or your career?

380 G – Well I might have to answer the career one in about 5 years time but I
381 think I mentioned before, that the technology has to be there, there's no
382 point in working from home if you haven't got the facilities, other than
383 providing company paid for phone line and broadband at home, work
384 hasn't really done anything to make this happen, I wanted to work from
385 home first so I started doing a few days, and I've got a laptop anyway, so
386 all my computer files are with me all the time, but I think - the one thing I
387 did notice, I had to complete a health and safety questionnaire recently
388 about working from home, and a lot of it I thought was fairly irrelevant it
389 was 'don't strangle yourself when working at home cos there'll be no one
390 there to help you', 'don't electrocute yourself on a dodgy piece of wiring',
391 I wouldn't do that whether I was on my own at home or at work anyway.
392 One thing I noticed, you fill in a form it talks about 'have you got your
393 screen positioned correctly?', 'have you got an adjustable chair?', 'is it a
394 safe power adapter?', all this kind of stuff, which is ok but it's a bit of an
395 idiot's guide to not harming yourself, but once you've filled it in, if you've
396 got any questions, nobody knows the answers. I mean I asked what
397 happens if I have company visitors come and visit me at home rather than
398 me going in to the office, what happens if they hurt themselves here, is that
399 my insurance problem or the company's or what, and the company just said

Interview 3: Gary

400 'don't have visitors at home, because we don't cover it'. If I fall down the
401 stairs here then there's nobody to help, where as if I fell down the stairs in
402 an office there'd be people by every few minutes, and again the answer
403 there was keep your mobile phone with you all the time and phone for help.
404 so there's only so far that the company can watch over you. and I think a
405 most of it seems to be around the health and safety. to make sure that we're
406 all covered and nobody has done anything that will upset the other party.
407 K – About this point in the interview, I'm pretty much at the end, I'd
408 normally have a little look around the working space, would that be ok?
409 G – Yes fine.
410 K – Great
411 K – So this is a downstairs office, you can just see here some pictures of
412 the family, they're on top of the filing cabinet; very comfy looking leather
413 chair. Big white board, some notes, and on the desk there's a laptop, a
414 phone, 3 mobile phones?
415 G – There's loads of phones.
416 K – There's the home-phone - landline, lamp, another landline, computer
417 speakers, some drawers and a printer.
418 G – Shall I point out a few things?
419 K – Yeah.
420 G – The office was primarily equipped for my MBA studies, I needed the
421 white board for all the sketches of the models. making notes for homework
422 and revising, and that's really why the bookcase is in here as well. There
423 was a lot of stuff for study there, the desk again was for studying on and for
424 having home computer with, the big flat screen monitor was provided by
425 work last week and I've got a keyboard and a mouse for attaching onto the
426 laptop, because that was one of the things that they wanted for the health
427 and safety that a proper size keyboard and mouse is advisable if working
428 on the laptop for extended periods and my negotiation was that I have a
429 proper screen as well, but I don't think that's a health and safety issue, I
430 thought that if I'm saving work \$800 a month in office space fees, then
431 they can spend \$500 on a screen as a one off
432 K – Absolutely, good idea
433 G – They provided broadband internet access and a work phone, well I
434 expensed it back, but I requested a hands-free one, you know a digital
435 hands-free, so I could actually be up and about and move around rather
436 than being stuck in this room for hours on end, so if necessary I can
437 virtually anywhere in the house.
438 K – So is this ideal for you now would you say Gary?
439 G – Pretty much. I have to use the home PC for faxing cos I've got a
440 scanner and a printer which are mine but the work will provide me with ink
441 jet cartridges if I request it and I can grab paper from work, so not out of
442 pocket as such through working from home, the only thing that we haven't
443 come to agreement on is how we cover heating, electricity, food and drinks
444 as it were, cos I don't have use of the work's canteen. I don't use their
445 power or heating or anything else and that again, that was one thing I asked
446 but nobody had a very good explanation of how do you calculate it, so I
447 think we'll have to come to an agreement later on.

Interview 3: Gary

448 K – I'm pretty much at the end of the interview then, so thank you for
449 taking part, could you give me some feedback please, about how you felt
450 taking part in the project?

451 G – I was happy to help, as I said I've studied for an MBA, I had to do
452 research studies and projects on that, and it is difficult not going to the
453 same people over and over again, asking similar questions and I also
454 wanted to continue my own learning now that I've the course and I think
455 that involvement in the Chartered Institute of Management, marketing,
456 personnel development, they all help and helping other people.

457 K – Brilliant, thank you very much for your time.

458 G – That's ok.

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

- 1 K- Could you just say your name for the camera please?
- 2 Kh – Kath Jacques
- 3 K – And you are a European Resource Manager, could you tell me a little
4 about what that role entails?
- 5 Kh – Absolutely. I cover the resources in 22 countries across Europe. I
6 look after all of the staff as to our requirements. so if for example we win a
7 new piece of business in a country I make sure we have the staff in the
8 right place at the right time, with the right skill set, and equally if we loose
9 a piece of business I make sure that the headcount is reduce. either by
10 redeployment and new business elsewhere or alternatively by restructuring.
- 11 K – How did you get into that kind of work?
- 12 Kh – No idea. I joined EMK 7 years ago and I very quickly started working
13 on the people side stuff, I put together a pan-European recruitment plan
14 which hadn't been done before, and also a requirements plan. and it sort of
15 grew from there, as EMK grew within the year the need to have that sort of
16 function became more and I became a subject matter expert in the
17 European business.
- 18 K –Just for the camera can you tell me how much time you spend working
19 within your home versus the office, on the road...?
- 20 Kh – Probably 50% I would think
- 21 K – So a typical day might be the morning here...?
- 22 Kh – This is a typical day, it's a good day to do it, so for example this
23 morning Gary has been here today, I was in the office early this morning, I
24 left the office at just before 2 to come home, as soon as I got back here I
25 went straight online in the study, I've had 2 or 3 calls, with the States and
26 Belgium and Germany whilst I've been in the study, then I've gone to go
27 and fetch the children, come back, and I'll start again once we've finished
28 here. This evening, for example, I'm putting together a whole load of data
29 for the States, and I'll be sitting on the sofa over there - it's a wireless
30 house – and I'll compile the data and then send it off this evening, still
31 within the US operating hours.
- 32 K – Are you satisfied with your role at the moment?
- 33 Kh – I love what I do, I really do.
- 34 K – And do you have aims for your future career?
- 35 Kh – That's probably questionable. I have actually just been offered
36 another job, which I'm considering currently. still using some of the core
37 competencies, but I love what I do and I'm lucky and fortunate that I'm
38 actually very good at it and I'm recognised as being good across Europe.
39 which makes me feel, it gives me what I need.
- 40 K - Absolutely. And will that still be flexible as to where you can be
41 based?
- 42 Kh – Absolutely, I don't think I would ever go back to having a purely UK
43 focused role or a role that's in the office all the time, because the
44 flexibility, of having a family, it just wouldn't work.
- 45 K – What kind of worker would you say you are?
- 46 Kh – It depends how you want that answered. I'm extremely driven, I'm
47 completely self-sufficient, I'm very motivated and very enthusiastic, I think
48 if you gave me a job where you had my boss sitting on my shoulder saying
49 'Kath please do this...' I would have resigned.
- 50 K – Perfect, ok. And what does your career mean to you?

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

51 Kh – Probably too much if you ask Gary, I think he would say that my
52 career is probably, probably the most important thing, I love my children
53 dearly but they're going to grow up, my relationship with Gary is fine
54 providing I'm working, I think if I didn't work I'd be depressed and I'd be
55 really upset, so it means everything to me.

56 K – And do you think your career's been affected by working from home?

57 Kh – I think that it's helped, it's helped relieve some of the stress for the
58 family, it's made life easier, it's also made me probably more of a
59 workaholic than I was before, but more flexibly.

60 K – So you're married to Gary and you've got two young children.

61 Kh – Yeah, 5 & 8.

62 K – And... some of these are going to be the same aren't they, I'm going to
63 be asking things like how's your childcare and school arrangements and...

64 *(A phone rings next to her and the filming stops for a moment while she*
65 *answers it)*

66 K – How's the current childcare and schooling arrangements managed?

67 Kh – Currently Gary takes the children to school, I leave the office sort of
68 half past two-ish normally, go and collect Andrew, come back start work,
69 somebody drops Emma off, because our ironer collects Emma from school
70 and then drops her off in the afternoon. School vacations we have a club at
71 the church in the town and we put them into the club there alternatively my
72 sister has them in Wales.

73 K – Oh lovely, and how about domestic work in the home, how's that
74 shared?

75 Kh – We have a cleaner that comes in for 8 hours a week and we have an
76 ironer that comes in once a week, the cleaner does all the washing, so on
77 the whole we don't do any washing, we don't do any ironing, we just do
78 the shopping. The shopping on the whole has been done online by Tesco's,
79 and it's delivered either when Gary is on a conference call, during the day,
80 then he can be on a conference call on his mobile, and unpack the
81 shopping, or we unpack it in the evening.

82 K – Brilliant. How much time did you have off work when your kids were
83 born?

84 Kh – I had 6 months off for Emma, and 5 months off for Andrew. When I
85 went back to work after having Andrew we had a nanny for 6 months an
86 then we put them both into private school

87 K – What kind of parent would you say you are?

88 Kh – I'd say that I'm probably very tough, I think I have high expectations
89 of them, I think I'm also very fair and I give them a chance to have
90 opinions about things, I'm very focused on the work ethic, because of what
91 I do for a living, so I think they're probably being brought up knowing what
92 they need to do, they have deliverables, that they have to do it at the right
93 time, so I think that's probably helping them for later on. I think I'm very
94 fair. I know I don't spend as much time with my children as people I pick
95 my children up from school with, but then equally I think our children
96 travel extensively, they do loads and loads of things, they do skiing, we've
97 just come back from Portugal, they were in Paris at the weekend, you know
98 they have an amazing lifestyle.

99 K – What would you say you've learnt since becoming a parent?

100 Kh – How to love more, how to give more. I think the enormity of being a
101 parent – it never ends. You think about having children, and you think
102 they're gonna be there for the next 50, 60 years, and you really do end up
103 worrying about them forever. I think it's a big responsibility, you have to
104 be financially ok, as far as I'm concerned, and I want to make sure that I'm
105 bringing them up to be ok adults.

106 K – Has your role in the family changed since you began working from
107 home?

108 Kh – No, no, not really... no actually I think since Gary has started working
109 from home my role in the family has changed, I think he shares a lot more
110 of the child stuff, than he did before.

111 K – So you've worked from home, on and off, for about 5 years. Who
112 instigated that? Was it yourself who decided...?

113 Kh – I think... it certainly wasn't EMK, it was one of those things that
114 happened, I think primarily because of the sheer volume of work it started
115 that it was impossible to get anything done during office hours so started
116 doing things in the evening, and I had a global job for a year which meant
117 that I had teleconferences in the evening, starting at 10 o'clock in the
118 evening, and equally because of Asia-Pacific I had conference calls at 6.30,
119 7am in the morning and it seemed more sensible to that working from
120 home.

121 K – Who did you discuss your decision with?

122 Kh – Nobody at all. I just decided that this was going to be working better
123 for me.

124 K – And people at work reacted ok?

125 Kh – Absolutely, because I'm given things that I have to deliver and it
126 doesn't matter where I am or what I do as long as I deliver, if I don't
127 deliver I'd be sacked.

128 K – What did Gary think when you said you're going to be working more
129 from home?

130 Kh – He hasn't minded, apart from if we are both at home at the same time,
131 and the wireless network isn't working and both of us need to be in the
132 study, that's a bit stressful.

133 K – And how about the children, how did they react when you said you
134 were going to be at home more?

135 Kh – I think they like it, I think like to know that we're here, I think they
136 find frustrating if we can't always sit and do homework with them when
137 they come home, but quite often if I'm just sitting down, going through
138 mails and stuff, I can do that and listen to Andrew reading at the same time,
139 so it makes him happy and also I'm clearing my mails out.

140 K – Is it what you expected? Better or worse?

141 Kh – I think... I think it makes life slightly less stressful, because I think if
142 I was in the office permanently and I knew I had to collect the kids and
143 then I was late because I was on a conference call it would be far more
144 stressful, so I think it's probably better and I certainly wouldn't want to go
145 back to being just in the office all the time.

146 K – Before you began teleworking, what were your opinions of other
147 people who worked from home?

148 Kh – That if you're not a self motivated person and you're not a worker, I
149 think it would be isolating and also people use it as a reason not to work:

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

150 'I'm working from home' and it just means actually mowing the lawn,
151 because of the nature of my personality that wouldn't happen with me, but
152 I can easily see it happening with people.

153 K – And now that you telework, do you have an idea of what a typical
154 teleworker might be like?

155 Kh – I think probably fairly similar to me really, you have commitments,
156 you have family responsibilities, you have certain things that you have to
157 be able to do during the day, because you have harvest festival or an Easter
158 service that you have to go to, and you want to be able to fit everything in.

159 K – What are the main ways you keep in touch with your colleagues and
160 clients?

161 Kh – On the phone – I'm on the phone permanently.

162 K – Have you personally had any issues of isolation?

163 Kh – If I was at home all the time, for example, like Gary is, unless he's
164 travelling abroad, I would be very isolated I think. I'm lucky because I'm
165 in a pan-European team, I have contacts in all the various countries, and
166 I'm on the phone permanently and therefore I feel ok, but I think if I didn't
167 have that contact, if I just had, I don't know a data entry type role, where
168 all I was doing was keying data via a phone line, I think that I would be
169 very depressing.

170 K – Do you think you have more control over your work, now you work
171 from home?

172 Kh – Control over the work as to what? I have no control over the content
173 of my work because that's given to me. I have to look after the staff, I have
174 to make sure we have hiring approval, I have to make sure I know how
175 many people are being made redundant, for example.

176 K – Perhaps the timing of your work?

177 Kh – The timing? How many hours do you mean, do I do a week?

178 K – Yeah.

179 Kh – Well I've recently had a hysterectomy so I've been off work for six
180 months - sorry 3 months. Prior to that I would do 45, 50 hours I guess a
181 week, split between the mornings and evenings at home.

182 K – And has it been more flexible since you've been in the home
183 environment, to do your hours as and when you can?

184 Kh – I think they just get more out of me, basically.

185 K – Do you think you're a better worker now - more efficient may be,
186 more focused?

187 Kh – I think I'm very disciplined about what I need to deliver and when.

188 K – And what was the learning curve for you to be working at home? Did
189 you have to develop strategies to manage working at home?

190 Kh – Personally no I didn't, no. Because I'm quite flexible I like change, I
191 don't find it a worry, as I said previously you have to know what is
192 required, by when and make sure you've delivered it. And I think it doesn't
193 matter providing you've done that.

194 K – So overall what do you think the impact's been on your family?

195 Kh – I think it's better for the family, I think it's made a positive
196 difference, having both Gary and I working more flexibly. And I think the
197 children have benefited, certainly I've not missed as many school things I
198 did as when I had just a UK focused role.

199 K – Overall what do think the impact has been on your career?

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

- 200 Kh – It certainly hasn't been negative, I can imagine for other people
201 possibly they lose the visibility. But certainly in my case it's been
202 absolutely fine, it's made no difference whatsoever. I can't say it's helped
203 it, and equally I can't say it's made it worse.
- 204 K – And just to summarise then, has the overall impact on your life been a
205 positive impact or a negative...?
- 206 Kh – Oh definitely positive. Definitely.
- 207 K – Is there anything that you'd change or... you'd never go back to
208 traditional working?
- 209 Kh – I would never want to be in an office all day, and particularly in a UK
210 focused role, this works for me, Gary and the children much, much better.
- 211 K – Is telework an effective way then for parent to reconcile work and
212 family life?
- 213 Kh – Given the nature of what I do for a living, if you ask me as me, if you
214 ask me as an European Resource Manager, personally I think it's
215 absolutely perfect, I think that if you as me as a resource manager, looking
216 at people across countries, I think you have to have good management, you
217 have to have very good direction, and you have to make sure there's good
218 follow through on a person's abilities and what they're delivering, and if
219 people are not delivering to time, to the quality that you require, I think it's
220 very important that your manager can follow that up and make sure it's
221 fixed if there's a problem and resolved quickly.
- 222 K – Would you recommend it to other people then?
- 223 Kh – Oh absolutely, definitely, definitely.
- 224 K – My overall question is 'how does home-based telework impact upon
225 the professional and parental identities of men and women?' what do you
226 think the findings might be?
- 227 Kh – I think it depends on the market people are in, I think in this day and
228 age you're going to get a lot more professional people working from home,
229 as more companies become global, as pan-european opportunities increase
230 I think you'll find a lot more people doing what Gary and I do. And I
231 think that has a big advantage to the family. I think it depends - if you
232 have, I don't know, people taking calls for a call centre from home, I don't
233 think that's going to make a difference to the world or to their families but
234 I do think if you're looking at a professional person doing this type of role I
235 think it's fine, I think it makes a very positive impact on the family.
- 236 K – And do you think that would be different, the issues would be different
237 for men than for women?
- 238 Kh – I think it might make them more understanding of what actually takes
239 place in family life – I'm in a very fortunate position with Gary because he
240 understands completely what it's like, but I think that's unusual even in this
241 day and age, but I think it would probably make men more aware and
242 understanding, and therefore should have a positive effect on their
243 partnership, marriage whatever it is.
- 244 K – Has teleworking changed how you think about yourself and who you
245 are?
- 246 Kh – No, not at all, no.
- 247 K – And how would you categorise yourself first as a mother, or as a
248 business resource manager?
- 249 Kh - As a European Resource Manager

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

250 K – Do you think telework has changed this?

251 Kh – Has it...?

252 K – Has it changed this or is that the way you always...?

253 Kh – No, no, no, I'm very focused about what I do for a living.

254 K – And do you think it's changed how your kids see you?

255 Kh – Definitely, in fact Emma said – she's recently changed schools, she
256 went up to the middle school – and she came back within a few days and
257 said 'I don't think our life is like some of my friend's families Mum'
258 because I travel, I go away a lot, Gary goes away, and she said 'I don't
259 think our lives... you don't do what some of the other Mum's do, you do
260 something different I think'. And it was quite interesting to see it cos I'm
261 probably the only one of the mothers who goes to school with her mobile
262 phone in her ear and I can be on conference calls whilst I'm picking them
263 up, and I think our kids are really used to it, our daughter'll say Mum's on
264 a call, or she'll be late cos she's on a conference call, and she's really
265 together about it, and I'm really proud of them. And I think it's made a
266 very positive effect on them because it's difficult world out there and it's
267 good for them to know that you have to work hard to make a living, it's not
268 just going to come to them.

269 K – Has it changed how Gary sees you do you think?

270 Kh – Em, I wouldn't have though so, I think he know I'm quite a driven
271 individual.

272 K – And has anyone else made any comments when you've said that you
273 work from home?

274 Kh – You have a lot of very negative comments from other people, you
275 asked me a question about working from home and how much they do,
276 basically. I think that people's belief is that if you work from home you
277 don't do a lot and in fact the gentleman over the road, he works for Auto-
278 com, and works from home also and his wife laughs cos he'll be out
279 shopping or whatever and she'll be working, but if you're asking what they
280 think of me as an individual, everyone knows that I work.

281 K – That's pretty much it, is there anything you'd like to add, anything
282 you'd like to discuss about working from home and how it's affected your
283 career or your family?

284 Kh – Apart from the fact that, I think it's an area that big corporations are
285 exploring more, call centres straight into peoples homes. I think it's just a
286 very positive thing to do, but again it comes down to the management, you
287 have to have good management in place because otherwise people will just
288 take the Mickey. So if you don't know what you want to deliver and there's
289 a loop to make sure that: it's finished, done, it's finished done, then it's
290 quite dangerous and could end up costing the company a lot of money, but
291 I think if it's done well, then it's a very good idea.

292 K – I've been through and I've seen the office space where you and Gary
293 work, is it set up... is it ideal how it's set up now, for you?

294 Kh – I think it would be nice if it was bigger, frankly. But if you look as
295 the kids, it's a wireless house, we have the scanners there – I've got more
296 things at home than I have in the office, I don't have a scanner, I don't
297 have my own printer, so I have to walk down the corridor to get my
298 printing, given that it's a confidential role and I could be talking about
299 making people redundant, it's very useful to do that quietly.

Interview 4: Kath (Kh)

300 K – Thank you for taking part in the project.

301 Kh – That's a pleasure.

302 K – Could you give me some feedback about taking part?

303 Kh – It's been fine, really interesting, I think it's an interesting topic that
304 you're studying.

305 K – Thank you very much again.

Interview 5: Helen

- 1 K- Could you just state your name and occupation for the camera please?
- 2 H – Helen Stephenson-Noble, I'm a hydro-geologist
- 3 K – And could you describe the job that you do?
- 4 H – We work for a large professional services company, in an
5 environmental consultancy division. We work mainly on sites that have
6 been contaminated by previous industrial use and need to be re-mediated,
7 or investigated and potentially re-mediated, my particular role is looking at
8 the chemical results we get back from the site and how they can impact on
9 the ground water and nearby surface water resources.
- 10 K – How did you get into your current occupation?
- 11 H – I finished a geology degree and was looking for work I could do in a
12 technology field, I'd worked in engineering geology a couple of years
13 before studying for a masters in hydro-geology, which I followed up with a
14 PhD in hydro-geology, and then returned to consultancy work where I
15 specialised in hydro-geology.
- 16 K – So how long do you spend working at home, compared to working at
17 home or on site?
- 18 H – My working week is 3 days, I would probably make one visit every
19 week or fortnight, either to site or to another office or for a clients meeting
20 or a regulators meeting at their base. I don't have a regular office base
21 anywhere else.
- 22 K – And are you happy with your work at the moment?
- 23 H – Em, yep
- 24 K – You're satisfied with the career that you've chosen
- 25 H – I enjoy with the technical side of my work, I enjoy what I do –I have
26 down days, but don't we all
- 27 K – Do you have aims for your future career?
- 28 H - I'm happy with what I'm doing at the moment, because I have
29 children, I would have very different aims if I didn't have children, so I'm
30 happy with how things are going at the moment, and that's good enough
31 really, right now.
- 32 K – What kind of worker are you?
- 33 H – What are the options?
- 34 K – Broad question isn't it? I suppose some people have answered it by
35 saying oh I'm a very committed hard working person – that kind of things
- 36 H – I like to do things as well as they can be, the best I can do them, to the
37 best of my abilities, it hadn't occurred to me until recently that that wasn't
38 the approach everyone took
- 39 K – And what does your career mean to you?
- 40 H – Em, it's something I enjoy a lot, it's something I'm trained for, you
41 know, specialised, taken a lot of time to specialise in, em, and I like those
42 things and I know that if I stopped doing this for a few years I'd probably
43 never get back into it again because of the technical basis, because
44 scientific and regulatory framework changes.
- 45 K – Do you think your career's been affected by working from home?
- 46 H –No, it's been affected by working part time, but that's a different issue,
47 but in possibly similar ways. so I couldn't, as a part timer I couldn't
48 manage people, and working from home I couldn't manage people but that
49 had already happened because I was part time before I started working
50 from home, and so progressing through the company in to a managerial

Interview 5: Helen

51 role won't happen but it wouldn't have happened because I work part time,
52 so it's been affected for other reasons.

53 K – So you're married to James and you have a 2 year old, and another
54 who's shortly on the way

55 H – That's right

56 K - How is childcare currently managed?

57 H – At the moment I'm on maternity leave and therefore we don't have
58 childcare issues because I'm not currently working, when I was working
59 our 2 year old went to his grandparents 1 day a week and to nursery for 2
60 days a week, most recently, 3 days a week before that.

61 K – And do you have plans for childcare for when the second one...?

62 H – Childcare with 2 kids we would like to, we're hoping to find a nanny
63 to work in our home, the nursery wasn't, er, didn't work out as well as I'd
64 hoped

65 K – Can I ask how domestic work's organised in your home?

66 H – Housework? Chaotically!

67 K – Oh right. And how's that divided? Between the two of you or do you
68 have outside help?

69 H – We have a weekly cleaner, which is just as well cos it wouldn't get
70 done any other way, we have some things I do, some things he does.

71 K – Is it almost 50/50?

72 H – It varies depending on what we're up to and how busy we are, so on a
73 grand scheme 50/50 on a weekly basis, but if James isn't here for a week
74 he doesn't do anything, but he works much longer hours than I do at his
75 job, I wouldn't complain and I think it's perfectly equitable, but that
76 doesn't necessarily mean it's exactly 50/50.

77 K – How much time did you have off work when your first child was born?

78 H – About 8 months. It was the maximum amount of time after the birth
79 that I was entitled to.

80 K – And you're planning pretty much the same with this one?

81 H – I'll have 12 months because the law's changed

82 K – Oh right, of course

83 H - So I'm allowed, I'm entitled to a longer period of time off.

84 K – What kind of parent would you say you are? Some people say they're
85 very hands on or...

86 H – I don't know, involved, relaxed... I've no idea really.

87 K – Maybe I'll ask James

88 H – *(Laughs)*

89 K – What have you learnt since becoming a parent?

90 H – I've had to change nappies...

91 K – Has it changed you at all as a person, do you think?

92 H – I'm probably more patient, not hugely as a person, I mean the things
93 we do have change dramatically the lifestyle we live's changed enormously
94 but as a person I'm still chaotic and disorganised and involved as I would
95 be.

96 K – So you've not worked from home for very long, just a couple of
97 months, and who was that instigated by?

98 H – The company, who closed down the team that I worked in, within our
99 local office and decided to offer me the opportunity to work from home,

100 presumably they decided that they'd rather have me work at all, where ever
101 it was, than not have me work for them.

102 K – So why did you decide to accept that offer?

103 H – Because the alternative would have been not working for them, the
104 other options they could have offered me were working in an office a long
105 way a way which would have meant moving, wasn't feasible for us as a
106 family.

107 K – So did you discuss this with James, what was his reaction – was he
108 keen for that to happen?

109 H – I think we both felt that given that the options were working from
110 home or not working at all, we had absolutely nothing to lose by working
111 from home, if it didn't work out for any reason then I could just quit, which
112 was the alternative.

113 K – Your son's quite young at the moment, but did he have a reaction, did
114 he realise that mum was around more?

115 H – We changed quite a lot of things at the time I started working from
116 home, for reasons that are different to the working from home. so at the
117 time I started working from home we changed his childcare, because his
118 childcare wasn't working out, and because I was about to go on maternity
119 leave, had that not been the case then we wouldn't have changed his
120 childcare arrangements, so he wouldn't actually have noticed. because he
121 would still have been going into the same childcare environment.

122 K – Have your colleagues and clients notice that you work from home and
123 made any comments about it?

124 H – Clients and external contacts don't know, generally. I have a different
125 phone number, and I specifically had to ask my colleagues in my old office
126 when giving out the phone number to stop saying I was at home, just it's a
127 new work number and here it is.

128 K – Why was that?

129 H- Because I had people ringing up at 9 o'clock in the morning and saying
130 'oh have I got you out of bed?'

131 K – *(laughs)*

132 H - And I felt that externally people didn't need to know that I was sat at
133 home rather than sat in an office, cos it made no difference to them and I'd
134 rather they didn't know. Internally people know that I'm sat at home, on
135 the whole their views haven't changed, I think that some people see it as a
136 perk or that I need to be kept more of an eye on to see that I'm getting my
137 work done, neither of which I think is reasonable

138 K – Was it what you expected when you began working from home? Did
139 you have certain expectations?

140 H – Yes, the things that I expected and things that I've noticed, that I've
141 seen in my 'working' environment, there's less of a sense of belonging to a
142 team which I miss, um, and that was the thing I noticed from a work point
143 of view, from a personal point of view the big bonus was not having to
144 drive to work, I was driving about 40 minutes each way, each day, and not
145 making that journey makes a big difference on the time I've got morning
146 and evening.

147 K – So overall had it been a better or worse experience than you expected?

148 H – Than I expected? To date, it's been possibly worse, but I would expect
149 that to get a lot better. I've had a lot of teething troubles with IT equipment.

150 getting the computer set up, getting a computer at all. getting the email
151 working, I had teething problems finding a place at home to work in, so it
152 was tougher to start with and once we've settled in to the situation and
153 once I've got a more permanent computer set up and a more permanent
154 space to work in I expect those problems to go away. we'll see what
155 happens over the next few 'working' months, which won't be for another
156 year.

157 K – Before you began working from home did you have opinions of other
158 people who worked from home?

159 H – Em, in terms of them working from home?

160 K – I suppose the perception of teleworkers.

161 H – I don't know anyone else in my company who works from home or
162 within my field, for a company, I know people who are freelance, but no
163 one that's employed and works from home, so I didn't have any sort of
164 opinions particularly on them. James, my husband, worked from home for
165 the last year and I didn't really have any opinions on him working from
166 home that would be different than if he was in a traditional office.

167 K – Now that you work from home yourself do you have any opinions of
168 what would be a typical teleworker?

169 H – As varied as a typical office worker. No.

170 K – So no real typical.

171 H – No.

172 H – I don't see why there would be.

173 K – Great. And how do you keep in touch with colleagues and clients?

174 H – When I was working in an office and when I'm working at home, by
175 far the majority of my contact is by phone and email. When I was
176 previously working in a much larger office I'd be working alongside the
177 team of people, my colleagues you know were at the next desk, so in terms
178 of with project work, I now keep in touch by phone and email and probably
179 visit colleagues in their offices maybe once a month if there's a specific
180 project need, so I'll see people face to face. I'll also see colleagues face to
181 face at external meetings or sites or in clients or regulators offices, so in
182 terms of project work communication there's no change there. In terms of
183 general ongoing communication sort of just chatter, there's a big change,
184 so I completely don't have those just gossipy chats in the morning, I no
185 longer have a receptionist I see in the morning who's love life I vaguely
186 keep in touch with or those kind of things, which you might sort of miss in
187 a social way but not... that's not an issue at all. I also don't get the
188 conversations about what's going on in the company. I don't have my ear
189 to the ground that there's a new grading system coming in, or anything like
190 that, I make an effort to phone up and you know chat to colleagues in other
191 offices but that's more difficult because they expect a phone call to be
192 about project work, not just general - general stuff – does that make any
193 sense or shall I elaborate at all Katy?

194 K – That's fine. so would you say you've had some issues of isolation in
195 the few months since you've been working from home?

196 H – Yes em, but not in ways that actually matter, so there's really trivial
197 things that it's absolutely petty to complain about, like I haven't been
198 invited to a Christmas party, but because I'm about to give birth at that
199 time I wouldn't be able to go, so it doesn't matter and if I'd wanted to I

Interview 5: Helen

200 know that I could have phoned up and said 'I'm coming to your Christmas
201 party!'

202 K – *(laughs)*

203 H - When I went on maternity leave I didn't have good luck cards, or a sort
204 of goodbye session, and you know it's petty, it doesn't matter, it's not a big
205 deal, just because I don't 'belong' to anyone's team, or the team that I do
206 belong to don't really realise that I do belong with them, so they're not
207 issues in that, they don't make any practical difference

208 K – But personally...

209 H – There's a sense of personal belonging that isn't there, that would have
210 been.

211 K – I suppose that they've seen the bump either, developing?

212 H - No, there's people I see every couple of weeks, so there are people
213 who I see regularly, but things like that would have been managed by your
214 team secretary and I don't even know who my team secretary is.

215 K – Do you think you've got more control over work now you're working
216 from home?

217 H – No.

218 K – Would that be because of the teething troubles you've had?

219 H – No. No change. My technical work, I get work to do, I do work, I
220 finish it. It's really made no difference.

221 K – So would you say you're a better worker now you're working from
222 home, or again has that not really changed?

223 H – No change. The teething problems... but since then I don't think
224 there's been any change.

225 K – What was the learning curve of becoming a teleworker? Did you have
226 to develop strategies to manage working from the home environment?

227 H – Em. No, not in terms of the way I work and way I manage my work,
228 only in terms of things like the communication system, setting up the new
229 email system, that kind of thing.

230 K – And what's the overall impact on your family been of you coming and
231 working from home?

232 H – Em. The key impact to date was not having travelling time and having
233 a little bit more flexibility. My working hours aren't flexible and they can't
234 be flexible, but if actually nobody else ever notices the difference then
235 there's a bit more flexibility than there was. So the key change to date was
236 a bit more flexibility and not having the travelling time. In the future when
237 we have the two children and the nanny there will be quite an impact,
238 because the children will be cared for at home and I'll be working from
239 home, so our plan, our intention for that point is that James and I will be
240 converting a shed in the garden

241 K – Right.

242 H - So we can go out to work and we're physically not here and so they
243 won't notice. I think it will be exceedingly hard for us to work in the house,
244 with the children also cared for in the house.

245 K – Especially so young?

246 H – Yeah, because they're actually here, they're not out at school, they'll
247 be here with someone else looking after them, so we feel that we need to be
248 at least slightly somewhere else, even if it's just a couple of metres outside
249 the back door. The other impacts that we probably haven't covered, you

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250 know which they're getting quite trivial, when I was working in an office
251 on the high street, on a lunch time I could run out and get the shopping, bits
252 and pieces I didn't have, we're now deeply in the middle of nowhere and I
253 can't do that but the other side is I actually get all the laundry done on a
254 working day, by putting it in and out of the machine during tea and loo
255 breaks.

256 K – Do you sort of set yourself specific working hours then, you say
257 they're not very flexible...?

258 H – I'm contracted to work 9 til 5.30 and I would expect to work 9 til 5.30,
259 so yes. And people need to know that I'm available, it's not that I've got a
260 certain amount of work to do a week, but I actually need to be available for
261 people, which may be by phone, it may be emails that needs to go
262 backward and forward within the day, so that's why it's not flexible,
263 because I have to be available.

264 K – What's the overall impact been on your career since you started
265 working from home, has there been one?

266 H – Didn't you ask this before?... In the 2 months I've been working from
267 home, there's not much of an impact, I wouldn't expect much of an impact
268 any different than working part time.

269 K – Ok, so overall has the impact on your life been positive or negative?

270 H – Neutral. It wouldn't be the choice I'd make, if there was an office I
271 could go to just down the road to work in that had a team of people, you
272 know not just somewhere I could go to just sit at a desk, but if I was down
273 the road from a company office with a team of people doing my sort of
274 work in it, I would 'prefer' to do that, but you know I see the impact as
275 pretty neutral, I wouldn't see it as heavily positive or heavily negative

276 K – So overall do you think telework is an effective way for parents to
277 reconcile work life and family life?

278 H – Em. No, not... that would depend so much on what people are doing
279 and how their work works. If you're significantly more flexible about the
280 hours you do your work in then there's an impact but really the fact that
281 you're sitting at a desk at your home isn't really any different, not
282 travelling to and from an office, is a time saving thing, but it's not an awful
283 lot else so just, to answer that, it depends so much what the work pattern is
284 rather than...

285 K – Sure

286 H – Rather than the fact you're at home

287 K – My overall question is: how does home-based telework impact upon
288 the professional and parental identities of men and women? Do you have
289 any speculations as to what those findings might be? – An impact for you
290 personally – has it affected any part of your professional or parental
291 identity?

292 H – Professionally I miss working immediately with a team but I do work
293 with a project team on my project so it's not a huge deal. From my point
294 of view working hours have a far bigger implication than working location
295 and working from home and I think the main impact where teleworking
296 would help parentally is if you've got very flexible hours and you can work
297 when you want to, the main places where it would impact professionally
298 are when you've got to have the close colleague contact to move on
299 professionally and that alone would make the difference.

Interview 5: Helen

300 K – Do you think that when I interview men as opposed to women that the
301 findings will be slightly different? – Particularly as your husband works
302 from home...

303 H – I know James will say quite different things because he has a very
304 different working pattern and his experience of telework is very different to
305 mine, because his colleagues are all in a similar situation to him, and he
306 meets up with them more frequently, and none of them belong in an office
307 somewhere, so I know his experience is different to mine, and the fact that
308 he's full time whereas I'm part time has an impact, and some of those
309 things may be more associated with men rather than women, and whether it
310 actually matters whether you're male or female in those situations, if we
311 were the other way around I don't think we would have much difference.

312 K – And has telework changed how you think about yourself and who you
313 are at all?

314 H – No

315 K – I know it's been a relatively short period...

316 H – No, and I can't imagine it really doing so.

317 K – How would you categorise yourself? As a mother firstly or as a hydro-
318 geologist firstly?

319 H – I'd categorise myself as a mother firstly, because that's the
320 unchangeable, that's the thing that can't give, what ever else I do, I have a
321 huge wealth of roles in life and they're just two of them but I can't not be
322 Henry's mother, I can't just not be my children's mother and pretty much
323 everything else has, you know, quite a lot of give.

324 K – And do you think it's changed how other people see you or think about
325 you?

326 H – Working from home? Other people being sort of personal contacts,
327 family, friends that sort of people?

328 K – Yeah

329 H – Em. I think a lot of the people I meet personally are full-time mothers,
330 when they think I working from home they see it as significantly less
331 serious than working in an office and part of that I suspect is that a lot of
332 full... non... mothers who don't work for money – whatever the right
333 phrase might be – earn some extra money doing what they would call
334 home-working or working from home doing things like pyramid marketing
335 schemes or a bit of this and a bit of that, so a very different work pattern.
336 And some family members have found it hard to realise that I'm not
337 suddenly more available and that, you know, I still need a full day to do a
338 full day's work, we both have to be very specific about saying this is when
339 I'm working, this is when I'm not working because my working hours
340 aren't flexible – that's quite straight forward to me. I have times when I'm
341 working and I won't do anything else during those times, James's working
342 hours are quite flexible, he flexes it more, flexes his time more than I do,
343 not a huge amount, but more than I do, so he finds it easier to do things in
344 what might appear to be working hours.

345 K – That's pretty much all I've got to ask you. Thank you for taking part.
346 Is there anything you feel we haven't covered about working from home
347 that you'd like to comment on?

348 H – No

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- 349 K – Great, could you give me some feedback how you felt taking part in
350 the project?
- 351 H – Em. As someone who spent a lot of time trying to get material for my
352 PhD, you know I hope it's been helpful for you Katy
- 353 K – It certainly has
- 354 H - And it gives you a bit more to build your research on. And because,
355 between the two of us, we've had involvement in research in business
356 studies and so on, we identified to some extent with what you're doing.
357 possibly a bit more than if we hadn't had those sort of backgrounds.
- 358 K – I'm very grateful
- 359 H - You don't have to be
- 360 K – Would it be convenient when I've interviewed James to see the office
361 space you use?
- 362 H – Yes, don't set your hopes, expectations too high
- 363 K – Is it not ideally set up as you'd like it to be
- 364 H – My space definitely isn't no.
- 365 K – So you have separate office spaces, one for James and one for you - I
366 see.
- 367 H – He go there first cos he was home-working way before me. and his
368 space only has space for one person
- 369 K – Whereas yours has...?
- 370 H – No room at all
- 371 K – So you're going to convert the shed
- 372 H – The intention is we're going to convert the shed, we looked in to
373 getting one of those garden office building thingies and we're hoping that
374 converting the shed will be a bit cheaper and will give us enough space to
375 get two desks set up. We'd probably only be in there at the same time
376 about once a week
- 377 K – Can you foresee problems with that?
- 378 H – No, no. We should have enough space for both of us. As you will see
379 when you see our office space, both of them are not ideal. mine is deeply
380 non-ideal and very much a temporary measure.
- 381 K – Do you look forwards to having a more ideally set up office space?
- 382 H – Yeah
- 383 K – And working together with James?
- 384 H – It won't change much
- 385 K – Brilliant, thank you ever so much
- 386 **Looking at Helen's working space with Helen and James**
- 387 J – That's one of the issues isn't it? When you're working from home
388 there's no sort of pure... I mean I guess some people manage to get a very
389 fine divide don't they? – for us work comes into the living space and there
390 isn't really work space
- 391 H – Impacts like the fact that we didn't have this bump here when I started
392 working here, everytime I sat on a chair on the slopey floor I went
393 backwards
- 394 J – Yeah you found that you had to keep your feet on the floor to stop
395 yourself rolling backwards
- 396 H – You better not show this to anyone Katy. or I'll be hung by our Health
397 and Safety team they realise I'm working in this situation

Interview 5: Helen

- 398 J – That’s the other thing, you’re not supposed to just be working off a
399 laptop
- 400 H – No, we’re supposed to have proper computer and docking station,
401 which they would have bought for me, 2 months ago, but I didn’t want it in
402 the house for the next year when I’m not working
- 403 J - The other problem’s the internal accounting thing wasn’t it?
- 404 H – Yeah they were going to buy it, charge it to the division. then in
405 August...
- 406 J –Charge full price
- 407 H - Then in August they we’re going to start suddenly owning all the IT
408 equipment and renting it to the division. So they were going to charge the
409 division then charge our division monthly rental during the year that I’m
410 not working.
- 411 K – Right. So just for the tape – this doubles as your bedroom and we’re
412 upstairs and we’re talking quietly cos Henry’s asleep in bed
- 413 J - Henry’s asleep next door, that’s right
- 414 K – So currently you’re just using the laptop to work from, while you’re on
415 maternity leave
- 416 H – I’m promised a proper computer, docking station and keyboard and
417 everything
- 418 K – So currently things aren’t set up as perhaps they will be
- 419 J – No this is a sort of emergency set up, to get you home
- 420 K – You’ve got a nice view from the window though, it’s actually
421 gorgeous
- 422 H – I’ve got a telephone on my desk, with a separate number
- 423 J – We have a business line, and then we have a broadband connection
- 424 K – Excellent. I think that’s all I need to see up here.

Interview 6: James

1 K- Could you state your name and occupation?

2 J – I'm James Stephenson-Noble and I'm an electrical engineer

3 K – And could you describe your role, your career?

4 J – My career at the moment, or career to date?

5 K – To date, yeah

6 J – I trained as a physicist, my first degree was physics. during which time
7 I was a sponsored student with NT, and I'd done a number of student
8 placements at NT's research labs, which is about 30 miles from here. I
9 grew up in this area, by the time I came to graduate, NT had decided that it
10 wasn't really into doing research, physics, and so I drifted into a different
11 kind of long term research which was all around business scenario planning
12 and really envisaging future networks and along the way, in the early
13 nineties, I just happened to drift into internet network engineering and sort
14 of rode that, as the internet grew up, firstly at a technical level and then
15 really into product and marketing roles. So I stayed with NT at the labs
16 until 1996, so that was 91-96 at the labs, at the end of 96 I moved to work
17 for one of NT's international venture businesses and spent a long time, well
18 felt like a long time over the course of 2 years developing NT's
19 international businesses on the internet side and then in 98 I joined a
20 company called Techcom Communications. who were a start up
21 organisation developing international networks and I was with them for
22 about 4 years and then 2002 I left Techcom, taking redundancy when they
23 were downsizing, by mutual agreement, because there was not a lot that
24 was really interesting me at that point, focused in the next 6 months on
25 completing an MBA, and it was towards the end of 2002, and we were
26 expecting Henry, our first, and the lease was up on our flat in London, and
27 I'd finished the MBA, and I was looking for a job, we decided to move out
28 to Suffolk, and at that point I took a job with some friends who had a small
29 software company in Ipswich. spent about a year with them, doing a mix of
30 organisational and development work and some strategy planning for them
31 and then September of last year, 2003, I took a job with my current
32 employer, Tele-research, which is more of a marketing / business
33 development type role again still in data networks but on the equipment
34 side instead of the service provider side. So that's a potted summary.

35 K – So your role at the moment is kind of electrical engineer, but also on
36 the marketing, development side

37 J – Ya, well it's a mix I guess, it's somewhere between technical sales and
38 product marketing I guess, the job title is Director of Service Development-
39 that means nothing to anybody. Basically I spend my term working with
40 telecoms operators and trying to figure out how they can make money out
41 of services that require them to buy our equipment

42 K – Are you satisfied with your role at the moment?

43 J – No

44 K – Are there things that you'd like to do instead?

45 J – Ya, I mean I guess a large part of my career's been spent working with
46 small new ventures, or certainly in developing something new, and that's
47 big component of what I'm doing at the moment, I came in off the back of
48 an acquisition that Tele-research made last summer, a silicon valley
49 technology company, and I guess, for me, the kind of organisation that
50 interests me most is one that's working in new technology, but is still in the

51 set up phase, so I guess either that or working with one of those kinds of
52 organisation, not necessarily inside one. But as time goes on you find that
53 you're making more and more trade offs between what you're actually
54 doing in your work and the overall sort of lifestyle that you're trying to
55 balance with it

56 K – Do you have aims for your future career?

57 J – Em, I would say that they're not very clear at the moment. If I were to
58 step back 4 years, from my MBA program, then I had very, very clear
59 aims, and I guess those have been diluted to some extent, just partly
60 through the industry downturn and the necessity of what ones working in
61 but also partly through having a family

62 K – What kind of worker would you say you are?

63 J – Kind of worker?

64 K – Just anything that comes into your head

65 J – Well I guess to some degree I'm probably a workaholic. I've never
66 worked a 40 hour week or whatever it is. I guess I work... yeah, so I work
67 hard, I work partly for fun and sort of the inherent interest of what I'm
68 doing is a big part of what motivates me, but these days there's no way I'd
69 consider just doing something interesting without it also turning up the
70 financial rewards

71 K – What does your career mean to you then?

72 J – I guess... well it's multi-faceted. It's partly about self-fulfilment and
73 sort of recognition for being good at what I'm doing, there's an element of
74 that, although, my recognition needs, in a classic sense are probably
75 relatively low, I don't need anyone telling me I'm doing a really great job
76 or anything, I know when I'm doing a good job, so I guess just having a
77 small group of peers I respect, a small group of colleagues I respect, who I
78 know think I'm doing a good job is enough recognition for me so I guess
79 more broadly it's about achieving something useful, I guess that again has
80 tended to decline over time, at the beginning of my career when a lot of my
81 contemporaries from college were going off to become accountants I
82 though that was pointless and so I was going off into engineering and sort
83 of changing the world - a bit. So I guess over time as well it becomes, the
84 balance becomes a bit more orientated towards our actually earning a living
85 and providing for my family, so in that sense the career becomes a means
86 to an ends.

87 K – Do you think your career's been affected by working from home?

88 J – No, not at all because actually the environment I work in, the whole of
89 this organisation really is orientated around people working from home. the
90 organisation I work in is pan-European, it's a US company but our bit of
91 the organisation's pan-European and a lot of the people scattered across
92 Europe are home-based so no I don't think so, not in that sense although
93 there's probably the wider question of whether I'm working in the right
94 role in the right kind of organisation, should I have taken the opportunity to
95 leave Techcom when I did? Should I have gone and work for my friends in
96 this small software company instead of working for a larger company in
97 London a couple of years back? Should I be doing this? – I don't know –
98 so, not the homeworking but the context of the organisation in which I'm
99 doing the homeworking maybe.

100 K – So your married to Helen and you live here with your 2 year old and
101 one that's due at any moment as well

102 J – Yes

103 K – Currently how's childcare arranged?

104 J – Well at the moment Helen's on maternity leave, so on the one hand
105 she's fulltime doing the childcare, he's not in nursery or anything, but on
106 the other hand I'm increasingly conscious that she's finding harder to keep
107 up with this energetic 2 year old as she's been getting closer to having the
108 baby, so I guess the actual arrangement at the moment is Helen's doing the
109 childcare, and when I'm home I try to be helpful in terms of nappy
110 changing starting the lunch but there's a limited amount one can do in a
111 regular working day and I would guess, I mean it's actually a bit tricky to
112 assess objectively when I'm at home, because when I am at home it's
113 actually because I'm working on a particular project and that project may
114 end up being quite time consuming and it ends up being just as bad as if I
115 were out at the office til late at night or whatever, but what we try to do is
116 to try and make sure that we're alternating in terms of doing the bath and
117 bed time routines, Helen definitely does the majority, certainly on working
118 days. Would it be useful if I talk about how things were before Helen went
119 on maternity leave?

120 K – Absolutely, yes.

121 J – Ok, so, up until August, Henry was in nursery 2 days and week and he
122 was with my parents one day a week and that covered that 3 days Helen
123 was working, and the 2 days that Helen wasn't working she's be there for
124 the childcare so on that basis there is no child care for me during the days,
125 and days when I was actually at home we typically do, you know Helen
126 would do the drop off in the morning and I'd do the pick up in the evening
127 from nursery, or vice-versa, you know depending exactly what are
128 commitments were, sometimes we'd both do both ends of the day, the
129 thing that was particularly challenging through the first half of the year I
130 found myself travelling and I'd be away for a week at a time and that
131 became really quite demanding for Helen in terms of taking the drop off
132 and the pick up everyday when she was at work so that was a bit tricky,
133 and then from August until last month, so I guess two and half, three
134 months probably 2 months, Helen started working from home, we went on
135 holiday and he seemed to really enjoy not being in nursery so decided not
136 to take him back to nursery and Helen very much bore the brunt of that in
137 terms of organising her work around the needs of Henry and I think to be
138 honest probably over did it, at that point she should probably have been
139 getting more rest, so we didn't really have a good solution.

140 K – How about domestic work in the home, how's that managed?

141 J – In terms of general cleaning around the house, neither of us do any
142 really we have somebody in once a week who does most of that and we
143 manage to keep things as best we can, in terms of cooking, when I'm here,
144 it's probably roughly 50 / 50, and certainly at the moment, the way we'll
145 typically work an evening one of us does the Henry's bath and the bedtime
146 routine and the other one gets the meal on, and then typically I'll do the
147 washing up afterwards, Helen tends to say I have higher standards than she
148 has when it comes to washing up and wiping down surfaces and so on, so
149 she prefers to let me do the clear up at the end of the day, but obviously

150 that does depend on me actually being here which is probably only 50% to
151 60% of the time, although at the moment it's a lot better because I'm
152 avoiding travel as the baby's due

153 K – Did you have time off work when Henry was born?

154 J – Ya. I actually had... I was actually only a week into this job with the
155 software company and they very generously gave me a week free paid in
156 addition to any leave I was due and I think I only took a week, and Helen
157 had her parents around as well so it wasn't needed particularly, with this
158 one the plan is to have at least two weeks off and then that will merge into
159 the Christmas break

160 K – What kind of parent would you say you are?

161 J – A very disorganised one. Gosh, I don't know. I'm probably around a lot
162 more than a lot of fathers are able to be this is one of those things I'm just
163 not sure about in terms of my current work arrangements if I have to be
164 away overnight that means I miss Henry both at bedtime and in the
165 morning and that would be the case if I'm away over night, and then again
166 if I'm here then I'll see him in the morning and we'll have a good bit of
167 time together in the morning and I'll probably see him for lunch - I'll
168 probably pop in several times during the day and I'll definitely see him in
169 the evenings and anything else I was doing, if we were living here the other
170 option that a lot of people locally would follow would be to travel daily
171 into London, in which case a regular pattern of work would be on a train at
172 7 o'clock in the morning and not be back before 7 in the evening, which
173 means I wouldn't see him at all it's difficult, everybody organises their
174 work in different ways I guess, so from that point of view I'm reasonably
175 hands on, and I guess of the two of us I'm probably sort of more indulgent
176 and disorganised and tend to take things at whatever pace things go which I
177 guess a lot of Dad's probably do and have the luxury to do and Helen's the
178 one that makes sure – ah, now that's the really important bit of housework
179 we missed out – is actually the laundry because Helen does all the laundry
180 and there's a lot of laundry with a two year old

181 K – Especially when he's learning to eat soup

182 J – Yeah, he will absolutely have a change of clothes everyday and a
183 change of nightclothes everyday

184 K – What have you learnt since becoming a parent?

185 J – I know I've learnt all kinds of things just sort of details, how to change
186 a nappy for one and names of lots of Bob the Builder's team and things like
187 that

188 K – (*laughs*)

189 J - I don't know - much more profound things than that I guess. I never
190 have the opportunity to reflect on these things really, but I guess the extent
191 of unconditional love that you can feel for a person - it's probably an
192 unusual marriage relationship where you feel that all the time, and I'm sure
193 as children get older it becomes more challenging, I think it's a wonderful
194 thing, although there may be moments of frustration, the complete
195 commitment you can feel for this little person is extraordinary. Helen and I
196 have been talking recently about the early days of having Henry as we look
197 forward to having this new baby and I'm amazed how little I actually
198 remember of it, just the sheer exhaustion of the broken nights and all the
199 rest of it, so yeah some trepidation towards that, I don't know, we've had

- 200 so many life changes actually have been concurrent, coincident with
201 Henry's arrival, there's all kinds of things I've learnt - how to use a chain
202 saw and how to chop wood but they were coincidental
- 203 K – Do you think that your role as a father's changed, been changed by the
204 fact that you're working from home - they sort of came at the same time for
205 you?
- 206 J – Well 'ish'. I had the year or so – first 10 or 11 months of Henry's life I
207 was working for the software company and I was doing my strict 9-5 and
208 the deal there was I took that job because it was one I could contain and in
209 that case I had a reasonable amount of Henry time at the end of the day,
210 then so in some senses shifting to this role where I'm home-based, I'm not
211 sure I see anymore of Henry, from that point of view, although there are
212 the benefits like when the workload's more manageable - and it ebbs and
213 flows - I can stop at 5 o'clock and catch up on some things after he's gone
214 to bed and after we've had dinner – I don't remember exactly what your
215 question was
- 216 K – It was about whether or not your role as a parent has changed because
217 of working from home
- 218 J – I don't think it's changed 'because of' working from home, but I think
219 I'm able to spend more quality time with him because I'm working from
220 home, I think that's true – certainly more than if I was commuting to
221 London
- 222 K – Oh yes. How long have you actually worked from home
- 223 J – It's now mid-November, I started at the beginning of September last
224 year, so about 14/15 months
- 225 K – And who instigated that?
- 226 J – It came as part of this new role that I was taking, and to be clear, I guess
227 on average maybe I spend approaching 50% of my time at home, actually
228 at home, and the other 50% could be away over night or I could just be
229 away for the day
- 230 K – Why did you decide to take a role where you'd be working from
231 home?
- 232 J – I think really it was about the role than really being home-based. This
233 particular role, if I wanted it to be office based I could have been office
234 based, but the office is out in Buckinghamshire which would have meant us
235 relocating and we didn't want to do that, so being home-based and having
236 to travel a certain amount is the price I pay for doing this role and living
237 here
- 238 K – Did you discuss with your wife that you might like to start working
239 from home?
- 240 J – Yes it was part of the overall discussion about the role although I think
241 that being home-based for some of the time was certainly part of it and I
242 think we were expecting me to be at home more than I am and it was an
243 attractive thing for both of us, I think
- 244 K – And your wife's reaction was a good one
- 245 J – Yeah
- 246 K – Did you discuss it with any other people?
- 247 J – No I didn't actually, I think, because I work in the communications
248 business and because I was involved in the technical side of telework trials

249 for NT in the early nineties I think I had a reasonable insight into certainly
250 some of the aspects of what it was going to be

251 K – Was it what you expected?

252 J – Yeah absolutely, I think again the mix I have means that I'm not prone
253 to some of the issues that maybe some people experience when they're
254 100% home-based and they miss the social interaction or whatever, so yeah
255 pretty much what I expected

256 K – So you're not having a better experience or a worse experience than
257 you thought?

258 J – No, no. As I say, there are things that are different and the things that
259 are different are firstly I'm actually spending less time at home than I
260 expected so I'm having to travel more and that's – you know there are
261 spells, especially when I first took on the role, where one wishes to appear
262 to be ready to please and all the rest of it, whether one is or not that's part
263 of it... so certainly during the first 6 months of the role I was spending a lot
264 of time away and that wasn't how we wanted things to be and that's
265 something that over the last 6 months I've been able to manage it a bit
266 better so I'm not at home as much as expected – one difference - the
267 second difference is actually our lives have changed a bit over the time,
268 when I started Helen was working 4 days a week which meant there was
269 only 1 day a week when I actually had other people in the house at the
270 same time and from my workspace – they way it opens - as you'll probably
271 take a look at later – the way it opens onto one of our other rooms, it's not
272 really very conducive to working when there are people in the other room,
273 so having people around more actually is unhelpful so the working
274 arrangements aren't ideal from that point of view, and we need to do
275 something about that, just in terms of the workspace. I've gone from
276 basically having 4 days of the week of, when I'm here, it's just me to
277 having no days of the week when I have the place to myself

278 K – And you prefer to have the place to yourself?

279 J – Yeah it's easier to concentrate

280 K – Before you began teleworking did you have – what were your opinion
281 of other people who teleworked?

282 J – Good question. So, at Techcom I had a team of about 50 people that I
283 was managing and they were all professional people, you know, they were
284 all graduates and quite a number of them had higher degrees and we were
285 based in London in offices and a lot of people were travelling considerable
286 distances to get into London and we were a start up company and certainly
287 in the first year or two there was a discussion whether they could be home-
288 based at least for some of their time to reduce the time they were wasting
289 travelling. And the feeling, early on, was that because we were in start up
290 mode and we were still forming the teams and forming the relationships
291 was that we couldn't afford to do that we needed to hot-house people and
292 have them in one place from the point of view of interaction, and so we
293 didn't have any teleworkers and if we had had teleworkers in that
294 environment I think that they would have been out of the flow er, so
295 whatever, whilst objectively, I might dispassionately look at them and
296 think great that person's teleworking, they've got good reasons for doing
297 that, I think probably I'd have viewed those people as peripheral. At NT we
298 had plenty teleworkers and that worked just fine so there's no particular

299 disadvantage to being a teleworker although again most of those were on a
300 part time basis so I think it very much depends on the organisational
301 environment, if everybody teleworks to some extent then everyone's in the
302 same boat and there no particular disadvantage to being a teleworker, there
303 no sort of reduced perception of those people, but probably in an
304 environment where more people are office based then I think everybody
305 naturally views the teleworkers with some degree of scepticism and I think
306 that's what Helen is experiencing at the moment.

307 K – Do you have an idea what a typical teleworker might be like?

308 J – Mm. Well, now, I guess the implication of what I've just been saying is
309 that I don't regard myself as a typical teleworker. I have no idea, I have no
310 data to know what the typical teleworker is, I suspect that the typical
311 teleworker, numerically, the average teleworker probably is teleworking
312 part time and part time either on the road or in the office. so if that's the
313 case then I'm actually fairly typical and it's some mix between time with
314 clients or time meeting with colleagues elsewhere. we say in Tele-research
315 that the place one's most likely to meet a colleague is in the BA lounge at
316 Heathrow, that's an occupational hazard. But I guess there's another
317 extreme of teleworkers that I guess is my image of the classic teleworker
318 which is probably shaped by my work at NT where we were pushed a lot of
319 our call centre staff out to work from home and so the majority of those
320 people are doing relatively process oriented jobs with a procedure they're
321 following, following a pattern and they're basically at a desk, at a PC, and
322 a head set and they're doing exactly what they'd be doing if they were tied
323 up to the same equipment in an office, in a call centre, so I guess that's
324 what I think of when I think of a teleworker, typically. Although I suspect
325 that maybe numerically there are maybe more people in my kind of
326 position.

327 K – How do you keep in touch with colleagues and clients?

328 J – Yeah, so, I guess with colleagues a lot of it's by email, huge amount of
329 email and my life has been transformed through the course of this year,
330 that's another huge change that I wasn't going to mention was actually
331 finally getting a broad band connection in here has made a real difference
332 cos we're outside reach from DSL broad band so had to get a radio system
333 put in and I guess that technologically one of the things I've found has
334 changed over the last ten years is just the speed of the connection that you
335 need to work remotely effectively I've had some kind of home working set
336 up since 1994, thereabouts, maybe a earlier, starting off a with a modem
337 running through ISDN and now I have a broadband connection and through
338 out all that time I've also spent a lot of time on the road when you can find
339 yourself reduced to just having a 9.6k dial up on your mobile phone but the
340 big thing that's changed over the past ten years has been the size of the
341 email you get and there's important stuff that you need to be able to see
342 and work through which is embedded in 4,6,8,10 mega bite powerpoint
343 files that you've just got to be able to get to, so email is the biggest thing
344 and that's been a change. The mobile phone, I've got a phone number
345 which appears to be an office number which rings on my mobile, it's
346 patched through to mobile, and that's the other one. And I use Yahoo
347 messenger a lot actually, so instant messaging has been another

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348 transformation, and there are a number of us who use it within the
349 organisation, so that's really useful.

350 K – Is that for more for kind of social communication?

351 J – Yeah – I mean it's never just social. There's always something else
352 there, what I think is the key thing is the presence awareness, so you know
353 that someone's actually sitting at their computer and they're logged on so
354 it's that same... it's the metaphor of somebody wandering into the office
355 and you just happen to see them passing, so you know somebody's there at
356 their desk and that I find incredibly helpful.

357 K – Have you had any issues of isolation?

358 J – No not at all, although you could occasionally go a couple of days,
359 especially living here, where the only people I see is Helen and Henry
360 although that, in my experience, having travelled a lot, is actually less
361 isolating than being stuck in a hotel room somewhere, so there's a lot to be
362 said for that as well.

363 K – Do you have more control over your work now, now you're working
364 from home?

365 J – I think I have about as much control as I've ever had, one of the things I
366 disliked at the software company – I said it was 'nice' working from 9-5, it
367 was also a complete nightmare working 9-5 cos I've never done a 9-5 job,
368 so I hated that feeling that I had to be in for a particular time I had to finish
369 at this particular time, so yeah may be I do

370 K – Do you think you're a better worker now you work from home?

371 J – No, I don't actually and particularly now Helen and Henry are around
372 it's actually quite difficult to work from home at the moment and the thing
373 is I'm not... Helen has a very good way of describing this about me, I can't
374 remember exactly how she puts it – the truth is there's nothing to motivate
375 me like a deadline so I guess I'm a bit of a last minute person and so if I've
376 got something that has to be done I can put it off for ages until it becomes a
377 crisis and then I can end up working through the night to finish it off, and
378 that was fine when I was a student, if I had to pull an all nighter I was
379 hurting nobody but myself but now I'm in a family environment that's not
380 really acceptable so I have to be diligent having Helen and Henry around is
381 a real temptation, especially if there's in the next room, and I hear Henry
382 having a lot of fun, I'd love to go and see what he's doing

383 K – what was the learning curve, did you have to develop strategies to
384 manage working from home?

385 J – Mm. I think there are a number of things that I'm still grappling with, it
386 was easier when it was just me here, but things like it's very easy to, or I
387 find it very easy to land at my desk, at 8 in the morning, and just stay there
388 until you know half past five when it was time to go and get Henry and I
389 just work and work and work and work, and I know that that's not
390 effective, I know that I need to take breaks and so one of things that I
391 started making myself do, when it was just me here, would actually take
392 half an hour out at lunch times, which was great, there was a period I guess
393 from February time through to May, maybe June, when you know I'd get
394 out for a run all week a couple of times a week, if I was here for a whole
395 week, at lunch time, because I don't really eat a lot at lunch anyway, and
396 that was just fantastic, I'd come back to my desk again having had a
397 shower and it was just like starting the day again cos I'm best first thing in

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398 the morning. that's when I get my best work done. So taking breaks, that's
399 one thing, and another thing that I find is actually when there's stuff that
400 absolutely needs to be done, is actually not answering the phone and when
401 you're a teleworker that can be a bit tricky cos you almost feel that you
402 have to be more available than if you're in the office. if you're in the office
403 people would understand, you're in the office but you didn't answer the
404 phone so you must be busy, but if you're at home and you don't answer the
405 phone does that mean you're off skiving somewhere, I am kind of sensitive
406 to that one and actually that just jogs a thought from a couple of questions
407 ago about attitudes to teleworkers again – so, within Tele-research in
408 Europe, we're about 200 people in the organisation of which I guess 60, 80
409 of us are UK based, of which about 25 who are predominantly office based
410 and one of the things our Vice President has been trying to achieve as he's
411 been bringing new people into the business and he's had a strategy of
412 managing some people out of the business due to the way our business has
413 changed over the past few years and bringing people in, so sort of recycling
414 people through the organisation, one of the things he's been trying to
415 achieve is to build more of a critical mass in the office, because he feels
416 we've got insufficient cross-fertilisation between people and I think that's a
417 matter of concern that he has and it's a matter I've discussed with him at a
418 conceptual level, more generally, not just about me, and he actually views
419 people who live close to the office, but don't come into the office, you
420 know choose to telework but live in a half hours drive of the office, quite
421 negatively, he understands the situation of those of us who are scattered
422 elsewhere, and in that kind of case – I think organisations who have
423 learned to manage this well are some of the large financial services firms
424 who have people out on locations a lot of the time people like Cap Gemini
425 etc. these kinds of organisations know how to manage the fact that they've
426 got a large part of their workforce is hardly ever in the office. because if
427 they're in the office they're probably not making money – you want them
428 outside, so that was just an extra thought

429 K- That's great, so overall do you think that the impact on your family's
430 been positive?

431 J – I think so overall with respect to the sort of overall change to work and
432 what else I could be doing, Helen will say that I'm better at home if I'm
433 happy at work and I'm happier at work now than I was 18 months ago

434 K – What do you think the overall impact's been on your career of working
435 from home?

436 J – Well again, inside this organisation I don't think it has any impact, so
437 inside Tele-research I don't think it makes any difference...

438 **(There is a pause as a parcel is delivered to the door)**

439 J – So I think within the organisation I'm in I don't think it's had a big
440 effect because it's an accepted part of the way we work and my immediate
441 boss works in the same way he's exactly the same set up so that's
442 understood as well, I think I mentioned earlier I'm not sure if just doing
443 this role has been a good career move, I'm not really doing the kind of
444 work that really I'd be hoping to do at this point, so that's a question mark,
445 and that has more to do with the organisation I think than, it's more to do
446 with the role than it has to do with teleworking

447 K – But has the experience of working from home generally been a
448 positive or a negative impact?

449 J – Oh, I think it's been positive and I really would like to be spending
450 more time at home and I've been managing that recently on the basis of the
451 work, you know, particular projects that I've been working on recently,
452 which have enabled me to be more home based and partly just because as
453 we look through the rest of this calendar year, over the next month and a
454 half, with the baby coming I can't venture too far a field so Helen and I
455 agreed I'm not getting on anymore flights until after the baby's come

456 K – Would you ever go back to traditional office based work?

457 J – Em, yes, I'd never say never. I don't think I'd ever be prepared to travel
458 everyday to London, no. And I... I'd much prefer to continue having a
459 large chunk of my time at home if I can manage that, and whether
460 eventually that means working for myself or just working for somebody
461 else with the same kind of balance of work, I think would be my preference
462 to stay this way now, but I wouldn't say I'd never go back to office
463 working.

464 **(There is a pause as a new video tape is required)**

465 K – Is telework an effective way to reconcile work and family life?

466 J – Well I think it probably is, but that depends on the kind of work you're
467 doing, when I'm at home I can normally organise my time fairly flexibly,
468 I'll have some number of fixed commitments around conference calls or
469 whatever, I try to avoid conference calls cos their normally pointless but,
470 you know normally I've got quite a lot of flexibility around my schedule,
471 so I can fit other things, you know tomorrow's Henry's birthday, we're
472 having a small birthday tea for family and people, and that starts at 4.30 so
473 the great thing about that is I'll be able to work at least until 4 o'clock and
474 knock off then and if there are any outstanding items, in fact, that's right,
475 somebody was asking for a conference all tomorrow afternoon at 5 o'clock,
476 with a customer, which obviously I've said I can't do, it's Henry's birthday
477 but we are going to have a conference call at 7 o'clock tomorrow evening,
478 so you know I can juggle that around. One of the things that interests me,
479 and I'm sure there are many studies that exist that I'm not aware of, is
480 historically a lot of people had their work close to their home, people
481 weaving, or blacksmith having his forge. building a sort of idyllic rural
482 picture – which probably never existed - but I guess historically people
483 worked close to home in the rural economy or worked in their homes and
484 it's only from industrialization that people have begun to work outside the
485 home or a long distance from home, so I guess I've always viewed the
486 teleworking thing as potentially a way to maybe return to a more traditional
487 way of life, of course that's a load of rubbish cos now we tend to live in
488 nuclear families or smaller family units which never existed previously,
489 people tended to live larger extended families, but there are wider things,
490 like we see people around here, day in day out, you can have a chat with
491 someone who's passing by or they can knock on the door if they want
492 something, so there's almost more of a social context working from home
493 than working in an office, when I previously worked in an office my social
494 contact has always been in the office and associated with the office
495 predominantly and you know I never met my neighbours, so there's a

496 wider social thing there not just about family – obviously that’s outside the
497 scope of what your looking at.

498 K – That’s very interesting actually and something other people haven’t
499 commented upon. But for you then, do you think your role in family life
500 has been reconciled more neatly with your work life since you’ve managed
501 to be working from home?

502 J – I think when I work from home I’m more involved with the family than
503 if I were in an office, but the main challenge I find in what I’m doing is the
504 sort of quid pro quo of working from home is that I also have to have a
505 chunk of time when I have to be completely away from home and that’s the
506 trade off that we both find difficult.

507 K – My overall question is: how does home-based telework impact upon
508 the professional and parental identities of men and women? Could you
509 speculate what you think the findings might be, perhaps from your point of
510 view, how has it affected you parental identity and professional identity?

511 J – Let’s do professional first because that’s easier – I don’t think it has
512 affected my professional identity and I don’t think there’s anything I want
513 to say to elaborate on that, I think in the context of the organisation I’m in,
514 working from home makes no difference but again maybe that only works
515 because I also have to work away from home and there’s a balance
516 between the two, I think, so now I’m purely speculating so this is no use to
517 you, if I think back to my previous roles where I have been office based, I
518 don’t think I could have continued to work in the way I did or indeed to
519 develop my career the way I did by teleworking in those roles so I think it
520 really does depend on the context of the organisation you’re in. On the
521 parental side, I think I’m able to be a lot more involved with Henry
522 certainly than I would be able to if I was working in London and
523 commuting and I guess the question, the real comparator for me. is what
524 am I able to do In this current working context versus when I was working
525 half an hour away and working 9-5 and that’s actually not clear to me, the
526 role I’m doing now and perhaps more so because I’m home-based
527 impinges on the weekends more than my previous role did, and so that
528 obviously reduces family time and however hard one tries to protect it but
529 equally I’m around during the day. and then again I have to be away, so in
530 terms of my role as a parent, certainly if I were working in London, and the
531 only way we could manage that would be either for Henry to be in nursery
532 more for all the time that Helen’s working and she’d have to do both ends
533 of the day so we’d have to do something different there, or she’d be doing
534 full time childcare and that wouldn’t suit her – I think I’ve strayed from the
535 point. So parental role...

536 K – We were talking about how telework has impacted your role as a father

537 J – Really hard to tell whether it has to be honest. I would probably desire
538 to be involved, you know to be quite an involved father whatever the
539 situation, I’d chose to manage my work around that, so that’s why I’m not
540 commuting to London every day. For me the bigger question is around –
541 you know telework is probably an element of it, you know the bigger
542 questions around what I’m doing in my career, I could probably be doing
543 things that are a lot less family friendly

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544 K – Do you think the impact of teleworking might be different if you were
545 a woman? You know, both upon your professional role and your parental
546 role?

547 J – It's hard because - Helen probably has some interesting views on this
548 partly because of what we chose to do with Henry when Helen started
549 telework which was effectively to pull him out of full time childcare. Helen
550 was working 3 day weeks and Henry was in childcare for 3 days and
551 effectively what we did was to reduced his childcare to 1 day or may be
552 less and Helen somehow covered his childcare and worked when he was
553 napping, sort of 5 days a week, and in the evenings as well, which you
554 know is hard work, so the fact that that was an option perhaps then lends
555 some validity to the natural suspicion that maybe some managers would
556 have, that you know that a woman with children who's teleworking maybe
557 isn't as focused on her job as maybe she would be if she was in the office,
558 but I have to say, I'm not as focused on my job when I'm in the office. so
559 maybe that's a legitimate concern

560 K – Has telework changed the way that you think about yourself and who
561 you are?

562 J – No, I don't think so, it's a funny thing though. at Techcom I had a 50
563 person team and I had a nice office. and those sort of status trappings, that I
564 guess contribute to anybody's idea of self, concept of self. Now I spend
565 most of my time in hotel rooms, airport lounges, or in a funny little lean-to
566 room at the back of the house, which is much more untidy than I'd allow a
567 workspace in an office to get to. Idea of self... And then again I think I've
568 always been – and this goes back to my early days at NT, I've never really
569 been a really corporate person, I've always been something of a renegade
570 as far as corporate stuff goes, maybe I've just been set loose in the
571 countryside and I've gone native. So I don't think it's affected my concept
572 of self but there are some rambling thoughts around that which may or may
573 not be helpful

574 K – How would you categorise yourself, as a father firstly or in your
575 occupational role firstly?

576 J – I think that for me the two are always in conflict, I don't feel I'm doing
577 as well in either role as I'd like to and you know, before we had Henry, it
578 was either husband or whatever my work role was and I never felt I was as
579 good a husband as I'd liked to be, although in that case to be honest, I
580 made my decision, I worked - it was the work that took priority and that
581 was a decision that I made then, either consciously or unconsciously, and
582 now, as a father, I'm much more conscious of the conflict and that
583 probably goes back to our views and our desires of how you want to be
584 fathers how you want to be parents goes back to our experiences of being
585 children, our relationships with our parents, I'm sure that must be the case.
586 My father commuted to London.

587 K – And was that one of the key reasons you didn't want to be a
588 commuter?

589 J – This actually was something I discussed with my father when I was
590 making the choice, back in 2002 between taking the job in London and
591 taking the job, the software start up in Ipswich and my Dad said 'you only
592 get that time once with your children' and he said 'I made my choices and
593 I'd say to you think very hard because you only get the time once'

Interview 6: James

594 K – So going back to this conflict that you say you feel between your as a
595 father and your role at work, do you think working from home has added to
596 that conflict or alleviated that a little?

597 J – I think it increases the conflict to be honest, partly because it's made it
598 more immediate, em yeah. I think it is the immediacy actually, I'm sure it's
599 very easy – well I'm sure it's not very easy – but if you get the 7 o'clock
600 train to London and you're not back til 7 in the evening, your gone before
601 the children are awake, so you don't see them for breakfast and you 'may'
602 get to see them to kiss them goodnight, well depending how you organise
603 your life, everybody organises... keep their children up late or whatever,
604 but you know, that time between 7 and 7 your out of the house you may be
605 aware of the conflict, you may be concerned that you're neglecting your
606 family or whatever but I guess you reconcile that against providing for
607 them financially, but whatever it is, it's what you do everyday, off you go,
608 now what I'm finding here particularly when Helen and Henry are at home,
609 when they're here and I'm here and I'm trying to work, I find that more
610 difficulty and what I actually find I'm doing is - I always work all of my
611 hours, I'm doing at least 40 hours and often more - so if I'm taking time
612 out during the day to spend with Henry then normally that time's being
613 taken out of the time I would spend with Helen in the evening after he's
614 gone to bed, so it's a case that there are only so many hours in the day, and
615 if I've chosen to sell however many of those hours to my employer, there
616 are only so many hours left for Helen and Henry, I don't think I ever think
617 of it quite like that but I am conscious of this decision, hour by hour, and
618 goodness me the mechanics of that may be different because I'm selling
619 my time. I have an occupation, but it's probably no different to what people
620 experienced, you know 200 years ago working in their homes.

621 K – Do you think working from home's changed how other people see
622 you?

623 J – Well not in terms of professional colleagues, I suspect, nobody's ever
624 said anything, I suspect a lot of the people I know around here or I see
625 around here, probably wonder what it is that I do, some of the time he's
626 here and some of the time he's not here and if he's here what is it that he's
627 doing, so I think there's that angle. And there's another point around that
628 which is around status symbols that maybe I'll come back to. My parents
629 are interesting because my parents live close by and, my parents are about
630 a mile and half away and they typically look after Henry a morning or may
631 be a day a week, my mother in particular doesn't seem to be able to
632 understand that when I'm here during the week that I'm supposed to be
633 working and that's a problem, sometimes, I have to be very clear with here
634 and Helen too she has to be very clear with her, so that's something. And
635 finally just back to the point on status symbols, the environment I work in,
636 a lot of the people I work with are sales guys and they're very into their
637 conspicuous trappings of success and wealth you know be it cars or smart
638 watches or whatever it is, and I'm not and I know Helen's not, and in a
639 work environment that's fine, the people I work with know where I sit in
640 the organisation so they've got an idea of me from that – not that I care
641 really, what any of them think. What's more interesting I would think is
642 people locally, we live in this house which is plenty adequate for our needs
643 and we drive used cars which are perfectly adequate for our needs and I'm

644 knocking around at home and that gives on perception to people and that's
645 fine, but if I chose to have an E class Mercedes on the drive or a range
646 rover or whatever would that give them a different idea, and put the fact
647 that I'm working from home a different context? - I don't know. I think
648 that's an interesting question, I'm not sure if this is helpful or relevant, one
649 of my other colleagues he and his wife have a farm in Yorkshire where she
650 runs a riding stables and stud, and he basically, rather than teleworking, the
651 way he runs his life is he weekly commutes down to the office once a week
652 and lives in a hotel during the week, he could telework a lot of the time his
653 clients are in the south east, but he, I went to stay with him a few months
654 back, and he took me to his local pub, where he's a well know face with
655 the regulars and he's regarded as this very interesting character because
656 he's conspicuously wealthy and he disappears every week and nobody is
657 quite sure what he does, so his experience may be different to telework,
658 I'm not sure if that's a useful reference point or not but I thought I'd share
659 it with you

660 K – Do you think it's changed how your son sees you? Or is he possibly
661 not old enough to...

662 J – I think he's too young. One of my colleagues in California, his son's
663 about year older than Henry and he has a calendar on the wall at home, a
664 sort of tear off calendar, and he said that, week days are black on the
665 calendar, and weekends are red, and his son's question to him every
666 morning was 'is today a black day or a red day?' Because the black days he
667 goes into the office and he's there until late, I think it's going to be really
668 interesting with Henry and this probably merits some thought from Helen
669 and me actually rather than blindly continuing - how we are how are we
670 shaping Henry's expectations of parental presence by having me around? I
671 always try and explain, if I'm going away I often have to leave before he
672 wakes up, so if that's going to be the case I'll try to explain that to him
673 when he goes to bed, because I don't want it to be a surprise for him in the
674 morning, I want him to know when he goes to bed that I am going to be
675 there in the morning unless I've told him I'm not going to be, because I
676 think that those expectations are really important for children to know
677 where they are and so I'm not really sure how things are going to work out
678 in the future if I change my pattern of work, once he goes to school I'm not
679 sure it'll make much difference, but then we'll have other children to think
680 about as well, so we'll see.

681 K – Finally then do you think it's changed how your wife thinks about
682 you?

683 J –Mm. I don't think so. I mean it certainly changes the way we interact
684 because there's stuff that, I guess we've always called each other during
685 the work day and said 'ooh I've forgot the such and such', or 'oh I was just
686 thinking about the whatever', so we've always done that to some extent
687 and that's so much easier now and there is this issue about sorting out our
688 working environments, I think Helen feels at the moment that she needs to
689 be careful about disturbing me when she's around and she makes a
690 particular effort to get out of the house to toddler groups and so on, to
691 make sure I have time to get on with things, so all of those things are issues
692 and I would like to get to a situation where, just logistically the fact that
693 I'm working from home isn't impinging on how daily family life works, so

694 that's an issue, but in terms of how she regards me, I don't think there's a
695 change there

696 K – We've come to the end of the questions, is there anything you'd like to
697 add anything that you don't think we've touched on that are issues for you
698 about teleworking?

699 J – No I don't think so, I think I've mentioned pretty much everything,
700 nothing leaps to mind, I think the really interesting challenge, is just a
701 bigger life balance thing, if I... just framing it in the context of the
702 organisation I'm in, if I aspired to my immediate bosses job, I could do that
703 in the current pattern perfectly ok, if I aspired to his boss's job I think I'd
704 have to be in the office a lot more and geographically I couldn't do that.
705 house moving, and I think whatever organisation I look at that's going to
706 be the case so there's a real career question of how to manage that. and
707 there are ways to manage it, I could spend two or three days in the office a
708 week, and weekly commute, but again it's the whole balance with family is
709 an issue, but then I think the only way I can reconcile all of this is by going
710 into business for myself but then maybe I'd be working all the time, so who
711 knows...

712 K - Thank you very much for taking part, could you give me some
713 feedback about how you felt taking part in this project?

714 J – Yeah, completely happy. I think the questions are very reasonable, I
715 think I'll be honest, some of the questions are so deep and they're not
716 things I've really reflected on so I've given off the cuff answers. so if I sat
717 down and think deeply about some of it I might come up with something
718 rather different

719 **(Looking at James's workspace)**

720 J – So, it's very untidy if you'd come yesterday it would have been even
721 more untidy, it's a perfectly adequate space, actually as a work space it's
722 more than adequate, it's far more disorganised and untidy than any office
723 I've ever had in a formal work place, I guess one of the issues in this room
724 is we've got a complete mix of all our personal admin and my work, we've
725 got these two mini filing cabinets and that's predominantly personal stuff,
726 I've got almost no work paper work in that sense, although a lot of what's
727 on the shelves is I guess personal, is I guess professional, it's work related
728 but it's not directly company related, and in terms of the IT equipment and
729 so on, that's kind of standard, we've got a fax machine which I hardly ever
730 use, very rarely need to do a fax. and the broadband connection which is
731 great, basically from here over the broadband connection I've got secure
732 access into our company network, I can access all the file servers and so
733 on, so basically my IT here is as good as it would be in the office, so that's
734 great.

735 K – Is that part of the office equipment?

736 J – This one, no, this is Henry's keyboard

737 K – For when he's typing with Dad is it?

738 J – Yeah, so, this is an area of controversy between Helen and me - I think
739 it's great, early IT learning, she says it's just encouraging him to become a
740 computer games addict

741 K – Does he come in here often

742 J -- He only comes in here when I'm going to let him come and play on that
743 because if he comes in here he wants to play on that and we ration it to

Interview 6: James

744 only 10 maximum, 15 minutes at a time because it's not really terribly
745 good for a little person to be staring at a screen. and when he's looking at
746 the screen he doesn't blink he just goes 'ooh' - completely transfixed
747 K – So that goes on to the computer and you can see what he's typing?
748 J – Yeah, it sits on top of the keyboard, it's what's known as a keyboard
749 topper, it's fisherprice and I'll fire it up, just switch to the other computer.
750 we've got two PC's here ones my work one and ones my own. for
751 convenience, Henry has this rather wonderful peice of software, I think it's
752 wonderful, which I got in America and the problem with it, it's teaching
753 him to say 'Zee', and other tings, but basically he'll sit here and he'll play
754 with that
755 K – That's wonderful
756 J – He'll play with this for age and he'll just play and play and play, sooner
757 or later he'll choose something else...
758 K – And does he realise this is Dad's space? This is Dad's office?
759 J – And so the problem, the problem with this room is to do with precisely
760 that, to do with this open studwork
761 K – Oh I see, looks straight through to the kitchen and dining area
762 J – Exactly and this room we look through to is where we've got all
763 Henry's toys and so on, which was fine when I was working at home and I
764 was on my own there might have been one day a week with other people
765 around, and so obviously if I'm working then I have to dash in there with it
766 otherwise whoever's on the end of the phone hears this baby voice in the
767 background, this toddler yelling and thinks I'm not working, and equally if
768 he sees or hears me though there he wants me, so it's not really – so the
769 choices are we block up that studwork. but that wouldn't be good for that
770 room from a light point of view, so that's not a really good option, you
771 could glass it in but he's still be able to see me, and of course it doesn't
772 solve the problem of where Helen works. so we have an old brick shed out
773 the back which we've decided that we at least want to get quotations on
774 getting converted into office space and that would provide office space for
775 the two of us and we'd probably annoy the heck out of each other, by
776 sitting in there working together and seeing each other for the rest of the
777 time but it seems like the only solution, so that's the plan.

Interview 7: Adam

1 K- Could you state your name and occupation for the tape?

2 A – Yeah, Adam Smith, self-employed company owner

3 K – Great and could you describe role?

4 A – Well as I'm the only person there I suppose do everything. I'm the
5 owner and manager if you like, I do all the marketing and everything,
6 accounts, the lot

7 K – It's called 'Researchcom'

8 A – It is yeah, basically I used to be in research and one of the things that I
9 have been doing, although it's gone a bit quiet now. is data entry and
10 tabulation for market research companies, which, when I first went self-
11 employed, is the route I thought I would follow, so it made sense to try and
12 you know, give it a research based name. However at the moment I tend to
13 do a lot of manual counts, that's basically putting on streets, shopping
14 centres, wherever, clicking away, counting people, so that is more or less
15 the core of my business now.

16 K – How did you get into working for yourself?

17 A – Well I used to work, as I say I started working in research about 10
18 years ago down at Shopper's World... *(a child walk in and stands in front*
19 *of the camera)* Come out the way. Go and find Mummy then.

20 W – No

21 A – *(whispers)* Come out the way *(the child leaves)*. That's thrown me.
22 Yeah right, 10 years ago doing market research, then they moved to
23 Brighton so I was taken on by a company called Stepcount who do
24 electronic people counters again working at Shopper's World and then they
25 had a restructure and I was actually made redundant so I took the decision
26 then – I'd already got some work coming in, freelance – to go full time self
27 employed, so it was something I was thinking about, but when your already
28 working it's quite a big step unless you've got a nice chunk of work, but
29 just to suddenly do it when you've just taken on a mortgage, you know and
30 a child...

31 K – A big step

32 A – But I was kind of forced into the decision, and I wasn't sure what I
33 wanted to do, so I thought right let's give it a go.

34 K – Have you always had a background of research?

35 A – No, when I first left school I was working in retail and I actually went
36 into manufacturing, then back in '89 it wasn't really going anywhere and I
37 needed a change and again I was kind of forced into it because the
38 company went bust, so it was a perfect opportunity to retrain so I actually
39 went into IT. And through the training course I did an opening came up at
40 Shopper's World and cos I live very close to there I thought I'll go for that
41 and it just happened to be in research, so it wasn't a conscious decision, it
42 just opened up for me.

43 K – So now you work for yourself and from home, typically how many
44 hours do you spend at home working?

45 A – Well it does vary, it depends on the type of week I've got. Mondays
46 are almost exclusively. I work for a company in Birmingham, for a
47 company down there, Stepcount, and quite a few Tuesdays at the moment,
48 so that takes those days out, and Wednesday, Thursday, Friday -- Fridays
49 I'm usually at home so you can definitely count Fridays as a home day and
50 mostly Thursdays. The other days I do a lot of validations for Stepcount so

Interview 7: Adam

51 I might be out and about, I go all over the country, so it's very difficult to
52 say a typical week, but it could be typically between 16 and 24 hours

53 K – And are you happy with the position...?

54 A – *(he nods)*

55 K – Do you have aims for a future career then. staying in this field I
56 presume?

57 A – Yeah, I want to expand the business, and I want other people do the
58 hard work. simple as that, you know

59 K – So what kind of worker would you say you are?

60 A – What kind of worker?

61 K – Yeah it's a very broad question, just anything that comes to your head

62 A – That's a very difficult one. Fairly lazy, if I'm honest, and that's why I
63 like what I'm doing

64 K – Fair enough, fair enough, and what does career mean to you?

65 A – Career, I hate the word, I'm not somebody who pursues a career at the
66 expense of all else, again that's why I like what I'm doing, I've always
67 seen a job as a means to an end. if I didn't have to I wouldn't work, I'd
68 rather spend it with my family, and this gives me more time to spend with
69 them.

70 K – Do you think your career's been affected by working from home?

71 A – I wouldn't say affected, again I wouldn't see it as a career, I'm not
72 someone who's got this career path that must be followed at all costs. so
73 there's nothing really to be affected

74 K – So you live here with your 2 small children, how old are you children?

75 A – Well William's four and Jo's 20 weeks

76 K – Currently how are childcare and schooling arranged?

77 A – Well Ellen's not working at the moment so that's fine, there's no real
78 pressure, so William goes to school one afternoon and nursery 2 days and
79 obviously she takes care Jo

80 K – And how about domestic work, in the house, how's that shared?

81 A – A good question

82 K – A cheeky question

83 A – No, it basically gets done when we get chance

84 K – Does one of you take the lion's share?

85 A – I'd say Ellen does, to be fair.

86 K – Did you have time off work when your children were born?

87 A – Yes I did, yeah. I had 2 weeks when William was born, when I was
88 still employed, and with Jo, I tried to take as much time as... it's more
89 difficult. it's not like when you go into an office and you say I'm having
90 these two weeks and the phone stops, being self employed means the phone
91 can go anytime, so I did take time and maybe over a longer period, maybe
92 2 or three days a week.

93 K – I see, and another general question, what kind of parent would you say
94 you are?

95 A – Em, very loving and I really enjoy it, I have a lot of fun with my
96 children

97 K – Do you think your role in your family's since you began working from
98 home, I mean, were you working from home between the 2 children were
99 you?

Interview 7: Adam

100 A - To be honest, even with Stepcount, I did spend a bit more time at home
101 then, even though I was employed, so I've always had more time to spend
102 with, you know certainly with William, I still had 2 or 3 days I'd be at
103 home, so it's not changed significantly. I've always got to spend more time
104 than somebody who does 9-5 in an office

105 K - And what do you think you've learnt since becoming a parent?

106 A - What have I learnt? Blimey. What I'm trying to learn is to remember
107 their needs more. It's too easy to go around doing your day and forget
108 William's not had his lunch or perhaps he needs a drink and try and see the
109 signs of when he needs a bit more attention, which is fairly obvious, starts
110 playing up more, and try and give attention

111 K - Are there times... (*William interrupts*)

112 W - Need to have a drink

113 A - Ok

114 K - Are there times when you're trying to work from home and Ellen's not
115 around and you've got the kids and feeling...?

116 A - Generally if Ellen's not around I won't bother trying to work, it's just
117 not worth, there are times when Ellen is around and I'm trying to work and
118 William perhaps wants me but then you know the advantage is if he does,
119 unless it's incredibly urgent, I can break off and give him some time which
120 is nice.

121 K - Great. So you've worked from home for about 18 months and that was
122 entirely your decision following the termination of another job, so what
123 were the key features of your thinking, your decision-making when you
124 decided to base yourself from home?

125 A - Because a lot of what I do, a lot of it is out of the office if you like, 2
126 days a week in Birmingham anyhow (*babytalk from William*) shhh, there's
127 numerous days out at various shopping centres, I didn't need any staff,
128 there were no start up costs, I'd just bought a PC so all I had to do was
129 install a bit of office furniture and there's no need for the extra expense of
130 getting an office.

131 K - Absolutely, so who did you discuss your decision with? Did you
132 discuss it with your family?

133 A - With Ellen yeah, there's nobody else I needed to discuss it with really

134 K - And what was her reaction?

135 A - Well when you first come home and said, and it was just before
136 Christmas, I'm being made redundant, it was quite a shock. I still
137 remember the day I was told, and you get over the initial shock and you sit
138 down and think 'well what am I going to do?'. I had a nice cushion of 3
139 months notice, plus quite a bit of redundancy, so that effectively gave me
140 about 6 months of not having any pressure to actually earn anything, to get
141 it up and running, so I straight away decided 'yes let's do this' and I did a
142 training course with the local enterprise agency and it just seemed the right
143 time.

144 K - And so was Ellen happy with your decision?

145 A - Yes

146 K - Great. Is it what you expected, being able to work from home? Or is it
147 better or worse?

148 A - Em, I'm not sure what I was expecting. It was kind of thrust upon me.
149 I think it's better, there's always the fear that you haven't got the salary

Interview 7: Adam

150 every month guaranteed, so if you haven't got anything coming in you
151 wonder where the money's going to come from, but touch wood it's been
152 ok. And it's perhaps harder than I anticipated, I'm perhaps busier than I
153 though I was going to be and I've actually probably spent less time here
154 than I would have hoped, some days I might only get one day here. and
155 actually I moan about having a 4 day week if I'm really busy which seems.
156 you know when I say to other people and they're 5 days in an office, you
157 know it puts it into perspective

158 K – Before you began working from home. what were your opinions of
159 other people who worked from home?

160 A – I'm not sure I had any of people who worked from home particularly, I
161 didn't really know anybody, I suppose it's getting more popular, I think if
162 I'd known anybody I'd be quite envious actually, cos it's nice, it gives you
163 more freedom.

164 K – So now that you work from home, do you have any idea what a typical
165 teleworker or home worker might be like?

166 A – I don't know whether there is a typical one, it depends what you're
167 doing, there'll be some people who work exclusively from home and don't
168 have to go out on the road, and then there's me that might spend 4 or 5
169 days away and I do have to spend quite a lot of nights away aswell

170 K – Did you have any idea about the kinds of people who might telework

171 A – Not particularly, no

172 K – Ok, how do you keep in touch with your colleagues and your clients?

173 A – Generally by phone, phone and email I guess are the two biggies at the
174 moment, but I generally prefer to use the phone if I can, but it's just more
175 personal isn't it? Emails fine for a lot of things, but the phone's better,
176 although I have a lot of personal contact as well, I mean my biggest client
177 is Stepcount and I'm there twice a week anyhow, so I get a lot of face to
178 face contact

179 K – A lot of people who work from home say they've got issues of
180 isolation, have you experienced...?

181 A – Well no I don't, I think if you were purely from home, I wouldn't
182 enjoy that, even if I do just one day a week in the office, I still get the
183 office culture, so I get to see people, because I'm used to that and I do like
184 that, I think you need some contact, plus I'm out doing the validations, so I
185 don't have a problem with that

186 K – Do you think you have more control over your work now?

187 A – There is some control yeah, but having said that, when you're in the
188 early stages I do tend to find that I do what ever it takes to get a particular
189 project done, maybe if you were bigger you could say it's really not worth
190 my time, so I do sort of bend over backwards than if I were a bigger
191 company

192 K – Do you think you're a better worker now you work from home,
193 perhaps more efficient?

194 A – Em, I think you have to be, at the end of the day, the difference now is
195 whatever I do is for the benefit of me, when you're working for someone
196 else, it doesn't matter how successful or how many jobs you get it
197 somebody else is always going to feel the benefit of that, so you know the
198 better I am and the more efficient and the better I am with clients, the better

Interview 7: Adam

199 the benefits and the more secure the business becomes, so it's got to give
200 you extra motivation to do things better

201 K – What was the learning curve for you, starting working at home?

202 A – Em, well, given that most of the work I started doing, was stuff I'd
203 already been doing, in terms of the work, not particularly big. In terms of
204 accountancy and tax issues and employment law it was huge and I'm still
205 learning now, on that side.

206 K – With respect to working from home did you have to develop certain
207 strategies, I'm thinking perhaps some people try to keep like separate
208 spheres, they try to keep their family very separate from their work

209 A – No I don't think I did, no, the office is upstairs and it's just one of the
210 bedrooms, I don't shut the door, I don't keep William out, if he wants to
211 come and see me he can, I don't want it to become this isolation zone
212 where nobody's allowed, I get on with my work and if somebody needs me
213 I'll be there and I won't just say no you can't talk to me I'm in work mode
214 now

215 K – What do you think the overall impact has been on your family?

216 A – I think it's been quite positive, the amount of time that I've been able
217 to spend with William compared with working full time, the amount of
218 things we can do now, so long as I've not got anything particularly urgent
219 on, I can take him to school, take him to nursery, pick him up again, if we
220 wanted to go out for the day, if we need to go into Sheafstown, if we need to
221 go to Shopper's World, you know everyday things that you can do, that if
222 you're in an office you just can't get to do, it just gives me so much more
223 flexibility and the amount of time I can give to the family than if I was
224 stuck in an office is something I would never want to give up now

225 K – And on the flip side, what do you think the impact's been overall on
226 your career?

227 A – Again, as I say, I've never really seen myself as a career person, I
228 don't see as there's an impact as such, I haven't got, you know I'm a
229 doctor, or I'm a specific job where, if I were to take time away I'd
230 suddenly be out of the loop, I run a business where I'm doing something I
231 know how to do, I don't see an impact on a career.

232 K – So the impact on your life generally has been a positive one?

233 A – Incredibly positive, yeah.

234 K – Is there anything you'd change about working from home, would you
235 ever consider going back to traditional work?

236 A – I would say no, a while back I would have said for the security but
237 having said that I've been in jobs, my last job, I was made redundant so is
238 there security? You know, has anybody got it? So I trade that for the
239 freedom and flexibility that I have now, I don't think there's anything else,
240 because I already do days in the office, it's not like I even miss that, and
241 would want that back, because if I was solely at home perhaps I would say
242 I yes I would like the contact of the office, or anywhere, you know
243 probably one of the happiest times was in the factory I used to work in it
244 was great fun, but as I've got a bit of that, I'm out and about a lot, no I
245 can't think of anything

246 K – Great. Is telework an effective way for parents to reconcile work and
247 family life then?

Interview 7: Adam

- 248 A – I would say so yeah, I mean the freedom and flexibility you get,
249 provided the work's there, um, is great, yeah.
- 250 K – Great. My overall research question is 'how does home-based telework
251 impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?'
252 Have you any idea what the findings might be for that?
- 253 A – Ooh, I guess that depends on what your business is. If you're the kind
254 of person, as you say, has an office at home and excludes everyone from
255 that and puts yourself in work mode and shuts the door, then maybe it has
256 an impact, I don't know, I means I try and put, the family comes first and
257 the work comes second, whether that's the right way to do it or not, it's just
258 the right way for me and there are times when I've perhaps not done some
259 particular work because there was something more pressing here, so for me
260 it's been a positive impact in that I get to spend more time, professionally, I
261 wouldn't let it impact on me professionally, no I don't think anybody's
262 particularly aware that my office necessarily is upstairs in a bedroom, my
263 contact number is my mobile, simply because I am all over the place and a
264 phone line here, they wouldn't get me most of the time, so I don't think
265 there's any impact professionally of work from home.
- 266 K – And looking at the gender issue then, would you speculate on how you
267 think working from home might affect women
- 268 A – Well I can only see it being a good thing, if you're a career woman
269 who doesn't want children, then I can't see it making much of a difference,
270 cos you can do that in an office and it might be better for you, if however
271 you've got a family and you can get work that you can do around their
272 commitments and needs I think it's fantastic and the best way to do it I'm
273 sure
- 274 K – I think we've covered this already – how would you categorise
275 yourself firstly, as a father or as a researcher?
- 276 A – Father
- 277 K – And do you think working from home's changed this?
- 278 A – I can only see it as being of more benefit cos as I say the time that I get
279 to spend is brilliant
- 280 K – Has telework and working from home changed how you think about
281 yourself and who you are? – It's a deep one
- 282 A – It is a deep one, em
- 283 K – Or perhaps how other see you?
- 284 A – I think it's certainly changed how other perceive me, I think there are
285 quite a few people who are quite envious actually, cos they're stuck in, I
286 won't say stuck in cos it's probably what they want to do, but they're in 9-
287 5 jobs, where as there are times when somebody calls me, ah - a good
288 example, a friend of mine called me, he was stuck on a train back from
289 London, and we were on a steamer on Ulswater, I'd been working in
290 Scotland, and that's the other thing I get to take them with me, you know, I
291 was working in Scotland, I'd only had to be there an hour in the morning
292 but it needed to be done, so on the way back we called at one of the lakes
293 and went on the Ulswater steamer, that to me is a prime example why I like
294 it so much, I did that, we were in no rush to get back, and I can take them
295 and do that
- 296 K – Do you think working from home has affected how your children see
297 you? Obviously one's a little too young...

Interview 7: Adam

- 298 A – They're used to it, I don't think there's anything to affect because as I
299 say when I was employed I did have more time here, I was still home-
300 based as such even though I was employed. it would be interesting to see if
301 I'd had William a little earlier, when I was a 9-5 person. whether my
302 relationship with him would be as strong as it is now. because I'd of only
303 seen him an hour or two at night and then weekends, I would had to have
304 made more of weekends because I wouldn't have seen him, I mean my
305 brother puts his son in full time care you see and only see's him... whereas
306 I get to see him a lot, and I think my relationship with William's brilliant, I
307 wouldn't want to change it
- 308 K – Do you think it's changed how Ellen sees you?
- 309 A – I don't know, she'd be better to ask that
- 310 K – She probably would actually – or has anybody mentioned they've
311 changed perception of you?
- 312 A – Whether I've changed in their eyes... no I don't think they have. I'll
313 have to ask people and see
- 314 K – And then email me
- 315 A – Whether I've become more relaxed or more mellow or more stressed –
316 I mean I am more stressed but there are more times when I'm having more
317 fun so I can live with that
- 318 K – I've had people say that when tradesmen have come to the door and
319 seen that there's a man at home in the daytime they've made assumptions
- 320 A – I am convinced that people make assumptions about me because a lot
321 of the time if I'm not going into the office I might not have a shave in the
322 morning, I might just get up and get on with what we're doing and yes I am
323 around a lot and might take them shopping and maybe people think I'm
324 unemployed – I actually don't care anymore. I know what I'm doing, I look
325 at a lot of people and I think – I had to go on the train to London and I see
326 all the people getting on, you know I was on the 5 o'clock train last week
327 cos I had to be in London early and for me that's a one off but you get on
328 and there's all these people commuting to London, backwards and
329 forwards, and I have a bit of a snigger cos I don't have to do that
- 330 K – We're pretty much at the end of the interview so thanks for taking part
- 331 A – That's ok, hope it was useful
- 332 K – Is there anything you want to add, anything that you can think of
- 333 A – Only that if anybody's thinking about it I'd give it ago, there's always
334 with anything in life there's always the 'what if?' question, ten years later
335 'if I'd done this where would I be?' Working for somebody else is fine. but
336 the majority of people will never get any reward from that because it's
337 someone else's company, so go for it, do the best you can and if it works
338 out you'll be laughing, especially if you've got a family, it's the time that
339 you get to devote to them, is fantastic
- 340 K – Is it possible I could look at your office space
- 341 A – It'll be a mess
- 342 K – That's fine, it'll be realistic
- 343 A – Ok
- 344 K – So you've got nice big bookshelves
- 345 A – Yeah the left hand one's actually Ellen's so the right hand one's mine.
346 lots of files
- 347 K – Some family stuff on there as well

Interview 7: Adam

348 A – That's right, yeah

349 K- And then you've got your more officey stuff, your work files, little
350 shredder in the corner, some furniture that you're going to move out, filing
351 cabinet in the corner

352 A – Nice leather chair

353 K – Lovely leather chair, that looks very comfy

354 A – It is actually

355 K – And then printer

356 A – Two printers, other one there, laser one there

357 K – Lovely, and Computer, and you've got a picture there, one of
358 William's?

359 A – Yeah it is yes

360 K – All the glitter, great and your sporty car calendar. That's brilliant

361 Adam thanks very much. I suppose the final thing that I should have asked

362 you downstairs is do you have any feedback about the process that you've

363 just been through, taking part in this interview, is there anything that you

364 would have changed, didn't mind being filmed?

365 A – No I think that, having been in research, you don't want to be taking

366 notes because it'll take far too long and you might miss something, you

367 could just record the voice, you're right, but no I think a lot of companies

368 do video research now so I had no problem with that

369 K – Thanks again then.

370 A – No problem.

Interview 8: Magnus

1 K - To start off could you describe your job to me?

2 M - Yes, I'm a management consultant and I specialise in
3 telecommunications. so I do work for companies that want to know
4 something about either telecommunications as a subject or looking at
5 companies on behalf of other companies who are involved in
6 telecommunications.

7 K - How did you get into that kind of work?

8 M - Well I worked for Nat-tel for 36 years, and I took early retirement in
9 the year 2000 and set up my own business which is Magtel Limited, and I
10 advertised for jobs and eventually I got some work and at the moment I'm
11 working for private venture capital company based in New York, and I'm
12 looking at a number of companies, the technology that they use in
13 telecommunication, I'm advising the bank whether the company is worth
14 investing in or not.

15 K - So you work from home for about 90% of the time. what do spend
16 other time doing? - Are you on the road or do you have traditional office
17 you can go in to?

18 M - No I don't have an office at all, the other time is meeting my partner
19 who lives in Dublin, he also has a house in Manchester, so occasionally I
20 go to Manchester, he comes here, or I go to Dublin, and other things are
21 like attending conferences and meetings with companies, the last company
22 I was looking at was in Stuttgart so it meant me going over to the company
23 there and looking at some records and getting a few presentations and so on

24 K - Are you happy with your role at the moment?

25 M - Mm yes, I would say so

26 K - Do you have aims for your future career?

27 M - Well obviously I'd like to retire at some stage, I'm 56 now and my
28 normal retirement age would have been 60 with NT but I'll continue to
29 work as long as I want to really, when I can financially stop, and I want to
30 stop, I'll stop

31 K - What kind of worker would you say you are? - Quite a broad question.
32 just say anything that comes into your head

33 M - In terms of lazy or hard or...?

34 K - Yeah possibly, I'm thinking in terms of - some people would say
35 they're very committed workers or very hard workers, kind of along those
36 lines, how would you position yourself?

37 M - I'd consider myself probably a hard worker. certainly with NT when
38 ever I worked with NT my hours were 40 a week and it wasn't unusual to
39 work double that, you know 70, 80 hours a week, depending on the sort of
40 work load, but it was fairly steady, well above the 40 hours, nowadays I
41 tend to be more what you would term flexible working because some days
42 are quite long, other days I've got quite a bit of private time. I tend to work
43 Saturday and Sundays when the job involves it, work right through 7 days
44 a week, and then the next few weeks I might only work 2 days

45 K - what does your career mean to you?

46 M - Well there's the money aspect to in obviously, particularly this
47 contract I'm on now pays quite well, but there's also the reward of doing
48 something useful, a large part of the work is doing research, largely on the
49 internet, but some background reading as well, but basically all of it is
50 research, finding out about new things, you know broadening the sort of

Interview 8: Magnus

51 knowledge. I suppose it keeps your mind occupied at the same time as
52 getting some recompense for it

53 K – And do you think your career's been affected since you've worked
54 from home?

55 M – It's obviously a different career but it hasn't been affected in the sense
56 of promotion aspects or it hasn't been detrimental to my lifestyle or
57 anything like that no, it's a different way of working. and one which I
58 prefer actually, but it hasn't been detrimental or positive to my long term
59 career. it's just something different

60 K – So you're married and you've got 3 children. how are childcare
61 arrangements managed at the moment?

62 M – We don't have any formal childcare arrangements, the 2 oldest girls
63 are at primary school so they're out of the house from nine til half past
64 three say, four o'clock, and the youngest one. he's at nursery in the
65 mornings so he tends to be here at home in the afternoon, and at the
66 moment my wife doesn't work, she has worked in the past, you know, I've
67 had Luke to look after as well as working, but at the moment Diane looks
68 after him in the afternoon, so for most of the working day I've got virtually
69 undisturbed time

70 K – And how about the domestic work in the home, how's that managed?

71 M – My wife does most of it. We tend to separate tasks, I tend to get the
72 children up in the morning, give them breakfast, the girls get themselves
73 dressed, but I normally dress Luke. Diane does their packed lunches and
74 then they go to school. Diane does virtually all the cooking, so the meals at
75 night – I normally just have a sandwich at lunch time, but the meals at
76 night Diane normally cooks, anything outside, you know the garden,
77 cutting the grass and that sort of thing. and when the house needs it I do the
78 decorating, so that's kind of how we split up the functions.

79 K – Did you have time off work when your children were born?

80 M – No, well apart from 2 or 3 days holiday. I didn't have paternal leave or
81 anything like that

82 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are? Again it's a broad
83 question so...

84 M – I'm probably not the person to judge that actually, but I'm in the
85 unusual situation that this is my second marriage, to my first wife I had 2
86 daughters and they're both grown up now. so to a certain extent it's like
87 doing a rerun of what my earlier life was, so I guess I learnt a lot from the
88 first two and I'm probably a better parent for that experience, but you know
89 I'm probably not the best person to judge

90 K – It's interesting you say about learnt from past experience, because my
91 next question was going to be what have you learnt since becoming a
92 parent?

93 M – Oh right

94 K – Are there any ways in which you've changed as a person since you've
95 been a parent – either time round?

96 M – Well from both times, the first child changes your life. not just your
97 business life, but your whole life because every thing has to revolve around
98 the child, the second one coming along is more of the same really it's not a
99 big step change like having the first one is, so that isn't such a big burden.

100 and the third one is much the same as the second one really. What
101 changes...?

102 K – Made you develop as a person. your personality's changed due to
103 becoming a parent?

104 M – I mean I find that probably more tiring, especially as I'm older now,
105 having 3 children as well as having the 2 before I think find it more tiring
106 than had I been younger, but apart from that I don't think there's much
107 difference

108 K – Has your role in your family changed since you began working from
109 home?

110 M – Er, yes, I probably see a lot more of the children than I would have
111 with the first 2 because I tended to be out before they were up in the
112 morning and they were either in bed or going to bed by the time I got in at
113 night. Whereas here I see them, apart from the times they're at school and
114 nursery I see them all the time, so that's quite nice, quite nice to have that

115 K – So you've worked at home for about 4 years now, and that came about
116 because you set up your own business?

117 M- Yes

118 K – Why did you decide you'd work from home rather than find a
119 traditional office space?

120 M – Well I think the first reason was that I had the facilities at home to do
121 it, the second reason was the expense of having an office when I didn't
122 really need it, so you've got the expense of the floor space but you've also
123 got the telephone and electricity and all the rest to pay and I wasn't sure if
124 the business was going to be financially successful or not at that stage, so I
125 think prudence got the better of me, and luckily now we've got broadband
126 it's a lot easier to work from home and it's pretty invisible that I do work
127 from home from anybody outside

128 K – Who did you discuss it with when you were deciding to work from
129 home? Did you discuss it with your wife and children?

130 M – Not the children no, I discussed it with my wife I think and we decided
131 that initially that was the best thing to do. At the moment there's
132 effectively only me in the business, although I've got a partner, there's no
133 employees as such so I don't have to worry about payroll and welfare
134 facilities for employees or anything, so I should think that, as long as it
135 remains just me, in the business that the way it will stay I think

136 K -What were other people's reactions? So how did your wife feel when
137 you said you were thinking about working from home?

138 M – I think she was quite pleased because you know I'd be around, I'm not
139 always helping but I'd be around if needed and the children would see a lot
140 more of me. I don't think she would have relished me having the same sort
141 of operating style as when I worked for NT, i.e. out before the early
142 morning rush and back late evening, I don't think she would have relished
143 that

144 K – What have your children's reactions been, having you around the home
145 more?

146 M – They've not really known any difference, the older two are in
147 Aberdeen, so they're not here anyway, but the others ones are too young
148 really to notice any difference cos they've always known me to be working
149 from here

Interview 8: Magnus

- 150 K – Is it what you expected, the experience of working from home?
- 151 M – Em. I think it probably is yeah, I think it probably is
- 152 K – So before you began working from home, did you have an opinion of
153 other people who worked from home?
- 154 M – Well I think the tendency was, certainly with NT, if you rang them up
155 and their secretary answered and said ‘he’s working from home today’,
156 they really meant he was having a day off, so I suppose people who
157 alternate between the two, having a full time office and working from
158 home, at that stage, you know 4 or 5 years ago it was regarded as a bit of a
159 cop out if you like, nowadays I think it’s more and more accepted, because
160 more people do it, and businesses themselves have grasped the advantages
161 of not having to have marble palaces to house people in if they can get
162 them to work from home, so I think it’s becoming more and more accepted
163 that it’s a genuine way to work
- 164 K – Now that you work from home do you have an idea what a typical
165 teleworker might be like
- 166 M – Yes I do
- 167 K - So what kind of person might be a teleworker?
- 168 M – It’s someone in the jargon who would be information intensive,
169 somebody who’s working a lot with information systems, an IT
170 programmer, an internet researcher. NT tried at one stage to have directory
171 enquiries operators working at home, and that’s the sort of person or job, as
172 it were, that lends itself to working from home
- 173 K – And how to you keep in touch with your partner and clients?
- 174 M – Occasionally we meet, occasionally we have meetings, I don’t go to
175 the expense of going to New York if I can avoid it, so I don’t actually go to
176 the company that I’m working for all that often, so usually we keep in
177 touch by telephone and email, email we use quite a lot
- 178 K – Have you had any issues of isolation, being based in your home?
- 179 M – Not really, I suppose I enjoy going out with friends certainly more
180 than I did before, certainly look forward to going out for a wee drink and
181 getting out of the house as it were. I think the things I don’t miss about
182 working are firstly the office politics, which is all about people, and
183 secondly – I mean I could have avoided that by just working on my own in
184 an office I suppose but that’s just something I took as a necessary evil, and
185 the second thing is commuting – I don’t miss commuting at all, that’s
186 something which is a great benefit with being able to work from home I
187 think
- 188 K – Do you have more control over your work now?
- 189 M – Yes, yes, definitely
- 190 K – I suppose that part of that is that you’re self-employed now as well
- 191 M- Yes, yes it is
- 192 K – And do you think you’re a better worker now, than you were when you
193 were office based?
- 194 M – It depends how you define ‘better’ I think, I’m probably more
195 productive, you know I get though more work in a day than in the office
196 where there’s distractions. The quality of my work probably isn’t any
197 better, it’s probably the same as it was when I worked full time. But on the
198 whole I think anybody employing, me would probably get – it’s probably
199 more cost-effective than with me being half an hours drive from the office

Interview 8: Magnus

- 200 K – What was the learning curve for you, working from home. did you
201 have to develop any strategies?
- 202 M- No. mainly it was the difference between working for a company and
203 being a limited company because I had to learn all about Value Added Tax
204 and all the rest of it, I've had to employ an accountant and keep accounting
205 records and tax records and so on, so that's been a bit of a learning curve,
206 particularly the red tape surrounding just a small business like mine –
207 keeping the inland revenue at bay – that's quite a problem, but apart from
208 that I've obviously had to learn in depth things like Microsoft word and
209 PowerPoint and I could use them before but cos I use them all the time now
210 I need to use more facilities, I've had to learn them in more depth
- 211 K – Did you have to develop strategies to make sure that you kept work
212 and family life separate?
- 213 M – I find it difficult to keep them separate, partly that's because the job
214 I'm doing, but also the time difference between New York for example and
215 here means that I'm working in the morning when they're out of the office,
216 then we both share the afternoon as it were. because afternoon here is
217 morning there, but then they ring at night because that's their afternoon, so
218 that disrupts the life – even without that I would be working into the
219 evenings when I needed to, to meet deadlines and probably Saturday and
220 Sunday as well, but when I don't need to meet deadlines in the week I'd be
221 doing something during the week with the children
- 222 K – So what's the overall impact been of working from home, on the
223 family?
- 224 M – I think overall it's been positive, they certainly see more of me than
225 they would have before, perhaps they don't want to nevertheless it's
226 probably better that both of their parents are here most of their waking
227 hours
- 228 K – And overall what do you think the impact of working from home has
229 been on your career?
- 230 M – It's been neutral I would say. yeah neutral.
- 231 K – So the impact generally on your life, would you describe that as
232 positive or negative?
- 233 M – Oh definitely positive yeah
- 234 K – So overall you're quite satisfied with working from home, but is there
235 anything you'd change? Would you ever go back to traditional office
236 work?
- 237 M – Em. Well I suppose the short answer to that is no, but that would have
238 to tempered with the practicalities of the situation, if for example I didn't
239 manage to get another contract in after this and there's no money coming
240 in, I'd probably have to resort to either full time or part time employment
241 but that wouldn't be my preference, as it were, my preference would be to
242 get more work into our company
- 243 K – Do you think overall then that telework, or working from home, is an
244 effective way for parents to reconcile work and family life?
- 245 M – Yes, if they've got a job that, you know a function, that's particularly
246 suitable to working from home, some professions obviously aren't,
247 salesmen have got to be on the road the time most of the time and so on
248 and so on, so for those who working at home is suitable, yes I would say
249 so, yes.

250 K – My overall research question, I've already discussed with you. is 'how
251 does telework impact upon the professional and parental identities of men
252 and women?', what do you think the findings might be, would you be
253 prepared to speculate?

254 M – Em, I would think most people would prefer to work from home.
255 again if the job was suitable, I think from the employers point of view, on
256 the one hand they've got a more productive person, but on the other hand
257 there's a bigger trust relationship has got to come to play and it would be
258 much more difficult I should imagine to manage a dispersed work force
259 than if they're all in one tight group, some jobs also need a good degree of
260 team work, and I think forming a team and keeping them congealed is a lot
261 easier if they're all in one place than if they're distributed. On the social
262 side, I think personally I don't suffer being alone here most of the day to
263 get on with work because I've got a social circle outside that but I think
264 some people would certainly miss the social side of work and the
265 interaction and the office gossip over coffee and so on and so on, work is
266 an important social aspect of life to some people, so I think some people
267 would miss that quite a bit

268 K – Has telework changed how you think about yourself and who you are?

269 M – No I don't think so, I think that has changed but it's more I'm working
270 for myself in my own company rather than working for a big corporation
271 with a lot of employees, so it's mainly the move from the corporation
272 sector to the private one man business sector that's affected me rather than
273 whether I work in an office or work at home.

274 K – I see. And how would you categorise yourself firstly, as a father or as a
275 self-employed businessman?

276 M - Em. Probably as a self-employed business man, because if you meet
277 people they say 'what do you do?' I would automatically respond 'I'm a
278 management consultant' rather than 'I'm a father'. The two jobs are
279 obviously different but equally important, so I'm trying to devote as much
280 time to each as I could but on balance my answer to that question would be
281 as a management consultant

282 K – Do you think it's changed how your kids see you, the fact that you
283 work from home?

284 M – No as I say Katy, they've always known me to work from home

285 K – Ok.

286 M- Cos Anna the oldest one was probably, what 2 or 3, when I started
287 working from home so to all intense and purposes they remember me as
288 just working from home

289 K – Do you think it's changed how your wife sees you, thinks about you?

290 M – Yes, I think it probably has, yes. I think she would view me as more of
291 a father

292 M – She would want me to have family responsibilities when I'm at home
293 rather than just business responsibilities, so there is a bit of a difference of
294 view there

295 K – So have you had to develop strategies with her, to say 'right I'm in
296 work-mode now' or...?

297 M – Mm.

298 K – That was the way that you managed it?

299 M – Generally it works quite. what does cause a bit of friction is the times
300 when Diane`s been working part time and the kids are on holiday or
301 whatever, when we`ve got to juggle looking after the kids, her going to
302 work, and me going to a meeting in Germany. there`s sometimes clashes
303 and it`s unreasonable of me to expect her to take the day off work for no
304 reason, but the kids need looking after, but I also need to be in Germany as
305 well, so it`s just a bit awkward. so it`s a lot easier from a management or
306 managing the situation perspective if Diane isn`t working

307 K – Do you think it`s changed how people see you generally? I mean
308 you`ve said that probably for your clients it`s almost irrelevant because it`s
309 an invisible fact -

310 M – Mm

311 K - ... that you`re from home, for example when people come to the door
312 during the day and see a man at home, do you think it affects how people
313 see you?

314 M – Em. I don`t know that there`s a... em I think that people who know me
315 and have known me for several years I don`t think that there`s a difference
316 but there`s subtle differences when you get introduced to new people and
317 you say I have my own company and I`m the only employee, compared to
318 I`m the super-duper manager of so many thousand people, so I guess
319 there`s a sort of status thing that people would act differently towards me
320 when they don`t know me, but all the friends I`ve had for years it`s not
321 made a difference no. I don`t think they look at me as a second-class
322 citizen or anything like that, no.

323 K – That`s pretty much all the questions I wanted to ask you, is there
324 anything you wanted to add or ask me about the project?

325 M – I think it`s an interesting project, the social aspects of it are quite
326 interesting, quite apart from the business, how productive people are and
327 how satisfied they are with work and so on, just the social sides of working
328 from home I think will be quite interesting, I`d be interested in other
329 people`s views, of how they`ve got on compared with mine to see if I`m
330 unusual or in a similar sort of group

331 K – Do you think the experience of working from home for a man is
332 different to the experience of working from home for a woman?

333 M - I think it would probably be more difficult for a woman because she
334 would be expected to do everything that a normal wife and partner would
335 be expected to do in a home, plus the job. I think that would be the
336 expectation. Whereas with the man there`s a hidden expectation that he`s
337 the breadwinner and he ought to be left to get on with his job whether he`s
338 at home or... so on balance it would probably be more difficult for a
339 woman

340 K – Thank you very much for taking part in the project

341 **Looking at Magnus`s working space**

342 K - So this is Magnus`s office, we`ve just come up the stairs, and there`s a
343 nice toy box up the stairs and as we come around there`s a lovely big book
344 case which is like your library, your working library isn`t it Magnus?

345 M- That`s right yeah

346 K – And Magnus`s office is tucked in the corner on the landing, and he`s
347 got lots of nice storage space. is that all work related storage space

Interview 8: Magnus

- 348 M – Yeah, there's CD's there. various bits of paper. files. files in here as
349 well. And underneath, behind these doors.
- 350 K – On the bookcase
- 351 M - There's lots of files from various projects and so on
- 352 K – I see, and one thing that's a bit different about the office space to other
353 places I've been to is that you've got a sound system set up which is lovely
354 and is what I think I would do if I was working from home as well
- 355 M – That's music off the internet, streaming through
- 356 K – Oh I see, and you've got it coming through your speakers there. So
357 you've got a fax system set up there and you've got your broadband
358 computer link for your email and things
- 359 M – this is a laser printer and colour printer's underneath there
- 360 K – I see, 2 printers as well
- 361 M – And I've got a headset for voiceover IP calls
- 362 K – Oh right, so do you do a lot of that sort of thing?
- 363 M – Yeah I do, particularly to the states because the calling rates are
364 cheaper, this is a synchroniser for my palm organiser
- 365 K – You've got all the gadgets!
- 366 M – And this is actually a networked wireless modem, so I have a modem
367 card in my laptop which is in the bedroom, and Anna's computer is
368 networked in as well, so Anna's computer can use this printer and we can
369 share files between...
- 370 K – Oh I see so that whole house is networked to the main printer here. So
371 Magnus you were saying that originally you'd set up your office in one of
372 the small bedrooms and that's been... you had to change your plans for that
373 didn't you?
- 374 M – Yeah, because originally we didn't expect another child, so when the
375 last one came along I had to move out of his bedroom effectively
- 376 K – So you've ended up on the landing
- 377 M – Yeah
- 378 K – But does this space work well for you?
- 379 M – Yes it does yeah
- 380 K – Is it ideal
- 381 M – Well ideally I would like to have more desk space, but it's manageable
382 and doesn't give me much problems really
- 383 K – Ok I shall leave it there Magnus, thank you very much again.

Interview 9: Sam

- 1 K- For the camera, could you say your name and job title?
2 S – My name is Sam Benson and my job title is Territory project co-
3 ordinator
4 K – And could you describe to me Sam, what that role is all about?
5 S – The role is er... the organisation I work for, ABC, I work for the field
6 services part of that, all the engineers who do the work on the ground, the
7 UK's split up into three territories, the south, central and the north territory,
8 I'm in charge of the north territory, which is basically from Yorkshire, up
9 to Scotland, and the whole of Ireland, and the remit I have is to control and
10 manage all project work which comes into field services, not the day to day
11 fixing PC's but the billable project work, so all that work comes to me and
12 is channelled through to me from various places and I manage that and
13 have the overall say of 'yes', 'no', whether it happens and make sure that
14 field services as a whole in the north understand what's going on and that
15 we have the resources to do that work
16 K – Great. And how did you get into this line of work?
17 S – My present role seemed to come, it was like all my roles seemed to just
18 move on from one, I don't actually apply for them. I've been working for
19 field services, em, all my career, just about, which I started, my IT career,
20 back in eighty-..., when was it? Do you know I can't remember when it
21 was... ninety-five, yeah ninety-five, I think it was. So I joined the Mailcom
22 group as an engineer an IT engineer doing national projects, moved into
23 field services then, of which er, that was just a trans... a reorganisation,
24 started line management of two or three staff and over the years my hands
25 on role disappeared and I took on up to I think it was 18, 20 engineers,
26 looking... er controlling the north east of England for Mailcom and the
27 north west as well in the end, so I was doing that until about a year and a
28 half ago, no a year ago – it was exactly a year ago and I was approached by
29 the territory manager, the overall person in charge of field services in the
30 north, and what he found was he didn't have any control of projects going
31 off, it was all dealt with by 101 different managers, we didn't know where
32 the resources were and stuff like that, so it was a brand new role and said
33 'Right Sam we need to have control of that, I want you to have the whole
34 control of it', still field services, but specifically on billable profit making
35 project work, so that's my, how I came to where I am now
36 K – Great, you've been working from home for 5 years now
37 S – That's right
38 K - And you're pretty much full time from home?
39 S – Yeah, that's more this role, in the last year I became 5 days a week,
40 year before that, or a couple of years before that, I was probably 3 days a
41 week, and years preceding that cos I was a field engineer, so to speak, with
42 line management responsibility, in the Mailcom all field engineers are
43 'location independent working' because they've got a big patch they don't
44 just working one office, so I could work from home, my base was home,
45 but I spent a lot of time travelling so to speak.
46 K – Are you happy with your role at the moment?
47 S – Yeah, it's ok, it's been interesting cos it's a brand new role, to be quite
48 honest because I'm getting to the stage, because I set the role up, and it's
49 running itself now, still very busy, I don't find it challenging anymore, I'm
50 looking to move on

Interview 9: Sam

- 51 K – Oh right, so you have aims for your future career then?
52 S – I have what sorry?
53 K – You have aims for your future career?
54 S – Oh yeah definitely
55 K – Would you say you're quite ambitious in that way?
56 S – Em, yeah, yeah I am ambitious I want to move on but because I've got
57 a young family there is an added aspect that I want to balance that as well
58 K – Mm absolutely. Quite an abstract question now – what kind of worker
59 do you think you are?
60 S – Em. I'm very well recognised for doing things very quickly, so I don't
61 know if that's efficient or whatever, but yeah I certainly manage myself
62 very well, time management, making sure things are done, and probably
63 put in... I do get recognised because I put a lot of hard work in to, and I am
64 hardworking I have to say
65 K – Great, and what does career mean to you?
66 S – Career means to me, is basically advancing up the chain, you know, it's
67 to do with, there's two part to career, increasing the challenges and making
68 it harder and harder for yourself, so that's the main thing and that's were
69 you get enjoyment you know, and the other thing is to earn more money as
70 well
71 K – Absolutely
72 S – That's why you go to... But primarily it is about the job and the
73 challenges but I wouldn't be challenging myself if I didn't get rewarded for
74 it at the same time
75 K – Do you think your career's been affected by working from home
76 S – So so, yeah
77 K – In what kind of ways?
78 S – I don't know if it's to do with working from home or to do with the line
79 of service I'm doing and so – cos you're out in the field and not based in
80 the head office I think there's a general assumption that you can be
81 removed where it's all happening seems like it seems like if you're not in
82 Churchtown in the main office you don't always see the opportunities and
83 get the face to face when you're sitting out in the field and on top of that
84 you working from home as well you know that if you want to put
85 something I'd probably agree to that you know you don't have face to face
86 contact
87 K – Yeah. So am I right in thinking you live here with your wife?
88 S – That's right
89 K – And you have 2 children who are...?
90 S – 4 & 3
91 K – 4 & 3 that's right, and at the moment how's childcare and suppose
92 schooling, how are they managed?
93 S – It's just changed actually for the past year both my children have been
94 going to full time nursery on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, that
95 tied in with my wife working those 3 days part time, but she was made
96 redundant back in October, but we carried on with them both going 3 days
97 a week, but on Monday this week the oldest one's actually started full time
98 school
99 K – A big step
100 S – Yeah that's right

101 K – So how is domestic work organised in the home?

102 S – In what way

103 K – Is it balance equally between you and your...?

104 S – Yeah... it's different, when my wife was working. I probably. it all
105 depends how busy I am, but I would do some domestic work during the
106 day if I get chance but I tend to think we share it 50/50, in different ways. I
107 don't think you can balance it out, but we do pretty much 50/50 share in
108 this household

109 K – Did you have time of work when your children were born?

110 S – Yeah that's about... I can't remember, yeah it was 2 weeks off 2 or 3
111 weeks off for each one

112 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are?

113 S – Oh blimey! Um. My role is, I'm the... I'm Dad who does all the
114 playing and messing around whereas Mum does the domestics on the side.
115 But I also I seem to be the one that they'll listen to if there's any discipline
116 to have, I think my wife gets a bit um... runs round and does things and the
117 kids don't listen to her much as if I say 'Stop' you know. but I balance it
118 with lots of fun and lots of loving, my wife loves them very much. but I do
119 all the play stuff but also do the discipline as well

120 K – What have you learnt since becoming a parent?

121 S – What have I learnt since becoming a parent? Bloody hard work!

122 K – *(laughs)*

123 S – There's 2 things, firstly your life as you've known it before changes
124 and it's not bad or worse, it's just your... what's important to you changes,
125 you don't go out so much, you can't stay in bed, your life does turn upside
126 down, but that's a good thing, you wanted children, so you know that's...
127 but your life does change because they're there 100% of the time so you
128 don't get much space to yourself

129 K – And do you think your role in your families different because you
130 work from home?

131 S – Yes I do, because I'm at home, especially on Mondays and Fridays,
132 when the boys and my wife are at home I do seem to have more hands on
133 than some one who works away. you know going out in the morning,
134 coming home at night, definitely a more hands on role. and I get to see my
135 kids a lot more

136 K – So working at home was mainly instigate by your employer. would
137 you say?

138 S – No, I actually instigated it, all those years ago, it's because I was
139 actually based out in Matlock and we moved here when I got married. and
140 it's an hour and 20 minutes, which I didn't mind doing and I still have to
141 do it. but Mailcom was just kicking off working from home then, I was one
142 of the first few who took it on and I just said 'look can I work from home. I
143 don't need to be here. If I'm travelling to Scotland I don't need to be in
144 Matlock in the morning' so I actually instigated it

145 K – So you decided that it would be a good idea mainly because of all the
146 travelling you were doing anyway?

147 S – Yeah and also it was a lot of hard effort when it didn't need to be. and
148 the opportunity was there so I took it

149 K – And did you discuss it with your wife?

150 S – Yeah, I can't remember what we discussed...

151 K – And she was pretty much pleased that you'd be working from home
152 or...?

153 S – Em, yeah, it was a long time ago, I think obviously she was pleased
154 because it would be saving quite a bit of money in travelling to work, we
155 used to live in Sheffield before and we moved over here when we wanted a
156 family so I wasn't LIW status it was when we moved here – what
157 happened was we moved to this house from Sheffield to this house and that
158 was when I asked if I could take LIW status so it was quite natural and we
159 both agreed it was the best thing to do

160 K – And what was the reaction of the people you were working with?

161 S – Em yeah they were ok, my line manager was really good about it, the
162 only thing he did say was if you were working from Matlock he still
163 expected me to be there at nine o'clock in the morning and leave at 5
164 o'clock at night, even though my contract, my base was at home, so really I
165 could set the case that my contract had changed that I would get to Matlock
166 at quarter past ten in the morning and I'd leave at half three in the
167 afternoon, so I could see his point of view and because he was
168 accommodating and letting me do it in the first place, I said fair enough, so
169 yeah, that was the only thing that I can remember, although my contract
170 changed and LIW said when you leave home this is when you start, I had
171 to compromise a bit, which is you know the only issue

172 K – How about other people's reactions? Where there any reactions from
173 your clients or customers or anyone?

174 S – No because they never noticed, they never notice the difference, you
175 know, and logistically wise if I was working up in the north it was probably
176 better for them, instead of saying that I've got a 3 hour journey to make I
177 could probably do it in an hour, so it means I could start work earlier, you
178 know, all depending on geographically where I needed to be

179 K – So your children have always known you as Dad who's worked from
180 home?

181 S – Mm

182 K – Have they, kind of, noticed that you've spent more time at home in the
183 last year? Or have they had any kind of reaction to the fact that Dad works
184 at home and that perhaps some of the Dads of their friends don't?

185 S – Well I think they're still a bit young to know about that, that's still to
186 come cos they haven't had a self-realisation yet, but they do know that
187 Dad's home a lot, which is probably different to a lot of their friends at
188 school, because Dad goes away at 7 o'clock in the morning, comes home at
189 7 o'clock at night or whatever, so I think that's good for them, that's one of
190 the advantages of working from home

191 K – Is it better than you expected or worse?

192 S – Working at home? It's a balance, there's some really good things about
193 working from home and some really bad things – well not bad things but
194 you know disadvantages

195 K – Do you want to expand on those?

196 S – Yeah, the good things are like, as you say, you get to see your family,
197 there's no rushing around, you can save a lot of money working from
198 home, you can go at your own pace, and if it's quiet - if you get an hour or
199 something, or even for lunch break you're in a more comfortable
200 surrounding, instead of sitting in the canteen you can actually go down, and

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201 watch TV, watch the news, which you just can't do at work so that's really
202 good. And also – I was going to say this was a bad thing but it's a good
203 thing – you're far more flexible at home, that, you work during the day,
204 and if it's really busy you don't stop, on the other hand if you need to pop
205 out for half an hour you can do and if you're really busy during the day or
206 you need to have an hour off to go some where, I will just work at night,
207 you know put the kids to bed at 7 and do a few hours at night, so the
208 flexibility is good, the down fall to flexibility is I personally think I do a lot
209 more work, a lot more constructive hours work at home than I do when I
210 was in an office, the first thing you notice, when you work from home, is
211 how much time you waste in an office talking, and because you're at home
212 by yourself and when you do talk, it's on the telephone for a specific
213 reason about work, you just realise that 50% of your day in an office is just
214 not productive, and it's good, it's nice, but you're far more productive
215 working from home than you are in an office

216 K – What were your opinions of other people who worked from home
217 before you started working from home yourself?

218 S – Cos I was one of the new ones, cos it was quite new, yeah, I thought for
219 the same reasons I've given you, there are advantages and disadvantages I
220 didn't have any real thoughts to it all because I was one of the first ones to
221 do it in Mailcom, I didn't have much base information to work on, but if I
222 was looking at it now, you know a lot of people have gone LIW on the
223 basis of talking, you know, asking to me, I didn't ask anybody because I
224 didn't have anyone but a lot of people have asked me and gone to do it so
225 that's it. This is, do you want me to talk about, you know disadvantages
226 you can, when you're busy, which you know is quite often, and your
227 children your wife at home, I've got to be honest, it's a nightmare, they can
228 disturb your work and I get very frustrated and somebody's shouting and
229 screaming downstairs and I'm busy and I say 'I'm busy', 'oh can you come
230 here for a minute', and you know, not so much this year because I haven't
231 had the opportunity, but the years before I would try and get out on a
232 Monday an Friday, if the children are in and my wife's at home, obviously
233 not so bad if my wife's at home by herself, I think the main disadvantage is
234 your family understanding that just because you work at home that, you
235 know, I'm there for anything: 'come and do this' or 'come and do that',
236 and that's the hardest thing is like saying that 'I'm at work' I can handle it
237 but I find the family don't understand just because I'm at home I can jump
238 and do anything, so that's the big disadvantage.

239 K – Absolutely, so have you had to develop strategies to manage that?

240 S – Screaming, shouting

241 K - *(laughs)*

242 S – Em, yeah it does work sometimes, yeah especially this year because
243 I've been working at home 5 days a week and before it didn't happen all
244 the time because I probably was out on a Monday on Friday because that
245 was part of my job, now it's 5 days I've had to say 'Look, don't let the
246 children come in the room, don't shout me every 2 seconds, if I come
247 downstairs and have a coffee break talk to me then, but I just can't do it' if
248 I'm really busy I just can't do it. So that has sunk in a bit, it doesn't always
249 work, but you know the children know they can't come into Dad's office
250 when he's busy, and they've slipped up once or twice. If they've been out

Interview 9: Sam

251 and they come running in and your having a meeting or Manager's on the
252 phone or something like that, so words have been said, and it is better, it's
253 not perfect, but it's ok

254 K – Do you have an idea what a typical teleworker might be like?

255 S – A typical teleworker? Em no not really. It all depends, on the basis of
256 having a PC and using your PC to connect to systems to do your work and
257 having a telephone and a PC at a desk is you know, my understanding by
258 speaking to people, is that a lot of people don't have what I have, a lot of
259 people may be sitting at the dining room table and don't have the room
260 specific, and I'd find that quite hard, I personally don't think I could do
261 that, I'm quite lucky that I've set a room aside for myself and I've set it up
262 as a working environment in my home and I think that's quite important,
263 you know, kids running around – I don't know how they do it, I think that
264 would be very disadvantageous to do that, you need certainly need a
265 special place to work from home

266 K – How do you keep in touch with your colleagues and clients? Is it
267 mainly through the computer and the phone?

268 S – Telephone and through the computer, me personally, I'm one of those
269 people who likes using the telephone, I use the telephone an awful lot,
270 whereas a lot of people do it by electronic email and stuff like that, but if
271 I'm working I use the telephone, I don't have to but I think that
272 communication by word is better than communication by email

273 K – Have you had any issues of isolation?

274 S – In what...?

275 K – A lot of people tend to report that they feel quite isolated working from
276 home

277 S – Yeah you can, yeah yeah. There is a big thing where I've said that
278 you're very productive at home, but if you think you spend the majority of
279 your life working, more so than seeing your wife and kids, yeah it is
280 isolating and you do realise the importance of being with colleagues at
281 work, and talking and having that break from the home life, so yeah it can
282 be isolating and you can sometimes, it doesn't happen always, well no it
283 does happen quite a lot, I can look back and apart from taking the bin out I
284 can be shut inside my house for days not going out, I think the longest I've
285 been without going outside is like 7 days, and you think 'Jesus – I haven't
286 been out', so yeah it is it can be, it is isolating, yeah.

287 K – But do you think you have more control over your work now?

288 S – Definitely yeah. More control, very self-managed, you know get on
289 with it. Yeah, you do get more control and more management over how
290 you do things, when you do things, obviously you do get time scales to
291 meet but yeah

292 K – So overall do you think you're a better worker now that you work from
293 home?

294 S – Yeah definitely, more productive. For the good of the company, so to
295 speak, and for productivity and work-wise, yeah you get far more out of
296 somebody working from home

297 K – I think we've touched on this slightly already, what was the learning
298 curve of becoming a teleworker?

299 S – Everybody thinks, and it might be other people, but for me, everybody
300 say 'ooh I couldn't work from home, the commitment required for working

301 from home, I couldn't motivate myself, I didn't actually find that really
302 happen for me, I don't find it hard working from home, I don't have to drag
303 myself out of bed in the morning and I certainly don't turn off the phone
304 and sit down and watch TV, whereas a lot of people say 'oh I'd just watch
305 TV all day', I have this swings and roundabouts thing in my head
306 sometimes I'll work from half eight in the morning til half six at night with
307 no lunch break maybe coffee and stuff like that. if I'm really busy, I'll just
308 do it, and I'll work some more from 7 til 11 o'clock at night if I have to and
309 they're busy days. on the other hand you know sometimes it can be quiet,
310 it's seasonal, just before Xmas or something, it can be really quiet, and so
311 you know I'll do something, or in the summer I can go and sit outside and
312 I don't feel guilty for sitting outside for 2 hours, you know I'll have the
313 phone on, obviously I don't count it but the over all way of things, I work
314 really hard, they get twice as much out of me, really long hours. and also I
315 don't mind working at night, if I've got something to do, and then on other
316 occasions I'll take it easy, it's just the periods when you're working hard
317 for weeks on end, and you know you're doing it. it's none stop, there's no
318 stopping to it, but I don't have, I don't feel guilty when I get chance I'll go
319 and sit down

320 K – Overall, what do you think the impact is your family of having a dad
321 who's based at home?

322 S – I think it's really good because they get to see their Dad a lot more than
323 a normal dad, you know I can send them off to school in the morning, I can
324 even take them to school, to nursery, if that means I'm back for quarter
325 past nine in the morning after dropping them off, you can do that, if you've
326 got a job and you have to be 20 miles away by nine o'clock in the morning
327 you can't do that, and I get the opportunity to see my kids when they come
328 home from school, I get the opportunity to take my kids, I get the
329 opportunity that if I do get a break during the day I can go and sit down and
330 do a jigsaw puzzle for half an hour during the day, so I do get to see... I'm
331 a lot more family-orientated than I would have thought most working men
332 would be

333 K – And just to recap then, overall what do you think the impact of
334 working from home has been on your career?

335 S – Em. It's two fold, firstly I think that the good impact is because I work
336 harder that's recognised and especially in this new role I'm doing, I've got
337 high recommendations of the work I've done, and that will do me in good
338 stead, very highly recognised right across the UK for the job I'm doing,
339 mainly because I put the effort in and I've got the opportunity to put the
340 effort in. I don't know if this is true or not, but I suppose it sticks in you
341 head, because I'm not working in a main office, although I'm recognised
342 for an excellent job, am I missing the opportunities that could come to me
343 because of doing an excellent job? - because I don't get to see them, you
344 know my ears not on the street to hear about it, the only way I'm going to
345 hear about it is if somebody tells me on the telephone. I'm not going to
346 hear about it in the corridor or see a company notice on a board, cos I don't
347 get company notices and stuff like that, so that's the two, there's two sides
348 to it anyway

349 K – And overall then the impact on your life generally of working from
350 home, has that been positive or negative?

351 S – Again I’m sorry to give two sides of the coin here, but there’s definitely
352 two sides of the coin. Positive side is I get to see my family more. I like to
353 think I get more flexibility. if I need to take an hour off during the day and
354 I can put an hour on at night time, if it’s important I can pop down the
355 shops or something like that, or start work a little bit later, so the flexibility
356 and seeing my kids is good. The negative side, which doesn’t seem to
357 worry me, I don’t worry about it but definitely a negative side. I just don’t
358 get to see anybody, I’m very isolated, I don’t you know, it’s... you
359 understand how important it is to see work colleagues, all I get to see – and
360 I love them dearly – is my wife and kids, and because I’ve got kids I don’t
361 go out either, very often, you know down the pub, so it is quite a lonely
362 existence, although you know you’re on the telephone, but you never get to
363 see faces and faces are quite important

364 K – So how would you change things? Would you ever go back to
365 traditional office-based work?

366 S – Em. No – that’s the strange thing - so there’s something in there that
367 sticks in me, I can’t see myself like getting up at 8 o’clock in the morning,
368 I’ve got a good example, I was offered a job near York, very well paid,
369 extremely, you know more money than I’m on, you know good car, good
370 career progression for me, it meant leaving the company but it was good,
371 so yeah you get to see people, you’re on more money, you get a BMW and
372 everything - but I turned it down, because you know although I’m very
373 ambitious and want to get on, that meant getting up, leaving home at 7
374 o’clock in the morning, getting home when the kids have gone to bed at 7
375 o’clock, 8 o’clock at night, so that’s when the balance kicks in. you’re
376 quite prepared to forego that, there’s a limit to... I’m very ambitious but
377 there’s other factors cutting into... yeah if I had the choice about working
378 in an office or working from home, I’d work from home, but the change is,
379 somehow, I need to get some more contact with the outside world – love
380 working from home, but you need some outside contact as well

381 K – So is telework an effective way for parents to reconcile work and
382 family life?

383 S – Say that again...

384 K - Is telework an effective way for parents to reconcile work and family
385 life?

386 S – Yes, definitely very good for family life, it is, you know for balancing
387 it, you can get away with a lot more, where other parents have to struggle,
388 I’ve got the flexibility to do more. It has its disadvantages as well

389 K – So my overall research question is ‘how does home-based telework
390 impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?’

391 S – Right

392 K – Have you any idea what the findings might be of that? How has it
393 affected your professional and parental identity?

394 S – Yeah ok, let me just read the... *(he takes the interview guide from me*
395 *and reads it)*

396 K – The top one

397 S – How does home-based telework... Ok, professionally, I think because
398 your productivity is greater for the company, that’s a very good thing and
399 you can be recognised for that, just by doing work, you know in an office
400 you might ask somebody to do something and they might get back to you 2

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401 days later, I might be able to respond within half an hour, and that's really
402 good for the company and good for yourself, because in a good
403 organisation you get recognised for that

404 *(A pause while Sam answers a ringing phone)*

405 S – Yeah professionally you get a lot in a good company you get respected.

406 K – So that's your identity as other people are seeing you?

407 S – Yes, my identity as other people – and the downfall to that is you're
408 faceless, so I'm somebody who, I've got a lot of people I know but I've
409 never met, they might think I'm good but because I'm a faceless identity,
410 they can think I'm wonderful, whether that helps my career or not is a
411 different thing, it's a key thing there. Parental identity, for a male, moving
412 over to a position a lot of working men have not had the opportunity to do,
413 my children get to see a father identity much more than somebody working
414 who's not tele-based, teleworking based, home-based so that's a good thing
415 for the future, balancing family life, I think it's historically the male, the
416 man goes out to work and earns the money and doesn't get to see his
417 children much, and whether that... children get to grow up ok with that, but
418 at least my children will grow up with a more father figure and
419 understanding and I have a close relationship, I'm saying that anybody in
420 an office doesn't have a close relationship... I've just had the opportunity
421 to experience it that much more, I see my kids growing up that much more,
422 does that answer your question?

423 K – Pretty much, I suppose the other side of that question is how do you
424 think that question do you think that would be different if you were a Mum
425 instead of a Dad? Do you think there would be a difference?

426 S – Yeah, cos I'm still, the difference is, although I have the opportunity, I
427 think that a mother may find it a bit harder to work from home, I can,
428 although I have problems, I can still work from home, come into this room
429 and think I'm at work, the balance - I can separate that easier than a mother
430 working from home – I don't know, I'm just saying what I think, it could
431 be true

432 K – That's fine, that's what I'm after

433 S – Although there are still commitments and if I've got time I still Hoover
434 or maybe do the veg for dinner, I think if a mother were at home she'd be
435 trying to do more than she could actually do, I think she'd find it harder to
436 balance

437 K – Has telework changed how you think about yourself and who you are?

438 S – Em

439 K - It's quite a deep one

440 S – Er... it is a very deep one, I'm just trying to see... if I chose to... yeah,
441 it certainly changed... you become far more resilient and you work hard,
442 but it's quite sad though because you work harder which is a good thing
443 but you lose as well because you do get isolated, and I can handle that,
444 that's something that's changed I don't get that interaction with the outside
445 world, so yeah it has changed it doesn't bother me - or I don't think it
446 bothers me - but you certainly lose a big chunk of interaction with other
447 people

448 K – And has it changed how you would categorise yourself? Do you think
449 of yourself more as a father or more as a territory project co-ordinator?

- 450 S – Em. Bit of both really. I do see my self as a father. it's hard to balance.
451 I'm glad I've got that opportunity, yeah. I get that opportunity and also I
452 can commit more to my role as well, just think the roles a bit faceless
453 K – Do you think it's changed how your kids or your wife think about you
454 or how other see you?
455 S – The boys know that Dad's going to be there when they get home so
456 that's really good for them. Working from home. I think a lot more,
457 because you're in that position, the downfall to that, I think your wife and
458 children expect a lot more from you because you're there, 'Dad's at home'
459 or 'my husbands at home' so 'oh he can just do this'. so that's quite hard,
460 so they do see me different, they don't actually see me working, going off
461 to work, cos think they'd think of me differently. come back and 'oh
462 Dad's been working hard, give him a chance' – Dad works harder at home
463 but I don't think they, that's not expressed anymore. 'oh you've been at
464 home all day'
465 K – Pretty much at the end of the interview, what I try to do know is scan
466 the camera around the room
467 S – Yeah sure
468 K – So this is upstairs, it used to be a spare bedroom did it?
469 S – Yeah that's right
470 K – And is this how you'd ideally have the office set up?
471 S – Well it's how I set it up, what in the sense of other people setting it up?
472 K – Yeah, I mean, is this ideal? - So you chose you'd have a corner unit?
473 S – Very ideal yeah
474 K – Great
475 S – It's quite big
476 K – So you've got – oh blimey are those like antique skis in the corner?
477 S – Antique skis yeah
478 K – Fantastic. You've got your little notice board, they're mainly work
479 notices are they?
480 S – That's right yeah
481 K – Those fantastic skis and you've got an old printer on the floor there
482 S – It's actually brand new
483 K – Oh sorry, sorry
484 S – Didn't have space for it up here. got lot of kit...
485 K – Great. Got another printer there, this is just to kind of get an idea of
486 how you've got it set up. You've got a great mug there that says something
487 about 'my dad's an England fan', great, great. And you've got your slim
488 screen computer, and is the bookcase mainly work related?
489 S – It's mainly personal actually, there are workbooks in there
490 K – And you've got the old stereo up there, lovely. So that's pretty much
491 the end of the interview, is there anything that you'd like to add, any
492 further comments?
493 S – Er let me think... Working wise when you're working from home, any
494 personal business, banking and stuff, you get a better opportunity to do as
495 well, I've got my own computer there, I've got network banking so if I
496 need to do anything personal business wise, you get a better opportunity to
497 do that

498 K – Yeah. that’s another dimension of it I suppose. Thank you very much
499 for taking part in the project, could you give me some feedback about how
500 you felt taking part?

501 S – I think it’s important that working from home is understood and I think
502 for businesses it’s got a lot of cost-savings for them. I don’t know if they
503 realise it’s got a lot of productivity... for personally they get a lot more out
504 their staff from working at home, and again the psychological thing of
505 isolation is, needs looking at as well. I still want to work at home but
506 whether you should have visits or somebody come to see you or you know,
507 the opportunity that you get out at least once... every six months is good

508 K – *(laughs)*

509 S – But no, it’s good, I’ve enjoyed it. I wanted to do it, I’ve been doing it a
510 long time as well, I like to share my experiences

511 K – Quite an authority on the matter now

512 S – I get to see somebody to turn up, I get to see somebody new... shows
513 how sad I am– ‘can I come to see you?’, ‘yes of course you can, anytime!’

514 K – Brilliant, I’ll conclude it at that then, thanks again.

Interview 10: Tina

1 K- Could you just say your name and job title for the tape please?

2 T – It's Tina Keane and I'm a Solutions Manager

3 K – Could you tell me what your job entails?

4 T – Basically what I do is I look for, when customers want something
5 that's not normal practice in Mailcom, I look for different ways to actually
6 supply what they're looking for, maybe they want it early. maybe they
7 want it sorting before they get it, maybe they want it screening or opening
8 before they get it and I look for a way that we do that and cost that up and
9 put it in a proposal to the customer. Also work on tenders, which is a lot to
10 do, basically it's project management so that you've got a lot of people
11 who are expert in their own field, you bring those people together just to
12 find a solution for your customer, what ever it is they're looking for.

13 K – And how did you get into this field?

14 T – How did I get into that? I used to work in sales in Mailcom before that
15 and I worked as a new business manager and I worked as a contacts
16 manager, and while I was working as a contracts manager I was heavily
17 involved with... the customers I was looking after were trailing postal
18 voting at the time so I spent a lot of time identifying ways that they could
19 get what they want and still use normal products within our network and so
20 because I did that, that got me interested in actually providing solutions, so
21 there on after, a couple of reorganisations, a couple of restructures and I
22 went into the solutions team

23 K – Have you always worked for Mailcom?

24 T – No. I've worked for Mailcom about 11 years now.

25 K – And what was your background, kind of from school?

26 T - From school I went to work a retail outlet, just a local village shop then
27 I ran my own business, I had my own village shop, did that for quite a few
28 years, and then when I had my second child, it was just too much like hard
29 work, looking after 2 children and running my own business, so I decided
30 that I'd stop work, didn't like not working at all, so I went part time and I
31 worked for Drinksco and I worked for Lo-Cost and then I went to be a
32 delivery woman, and that's how I ended up working for Mailcom

33 K – So you said that you pretty much work from home full time and you
34 haven't got a physical office that you go to, but how long do you actually
35 spend working at home as opposed to going out on the road, at clients
36 office...?

37 T – This is really, really, really hard to put a time on that, cos one week I
38 might be at home every day and then for 3 weeks I might not spend any
39 time at home at all, so it is really difficult say how much time I spend in the
40 house working

41 K – That's fine. And are you satisfied with your role at the moment?

42 T- Oh yeah, I love it

43 K – Have you got any aims for a future or career, or to move on?

44 T – Well, because of the role that I'm currently doing, I've only been doing
45 it for about 18 months and I really, really like it, so at the moment I'm
46 happy what I'm doing and maybe in another years time I might think about
47 at going into product development or something like that rather than just
48 solutions

49 K – What kind of worker do you think you are? A difficult question

50 T - *(laughs)*

Interview 10: Tina

51 K - Any words that come into your head...

52 T - I think I'm, you know because I work from home. I over-compensate
53 for the fact I don't go into an office, and instead of working like most
54 people would - 9-5, an hour for lunch, twenty minute break in the morning,
55 twenty minute break in the afternoon - I tend to start working at 8 o'clock
56 and when my husband comes in at half past five I'm often still working and
57 it's rare that I've actually knocked off had any breaks at all - this is a rare
58 break for me and I'm taking advantage and having a coffee!

59 K - And what does your career mean to you?

60 T - More now than it used to, because I wasn't really interested in having a
61 career, I don't think when the kids were little, but now they're older, I'm
62 really enjoying it and I'd be upset I suppose if I lost it now, because they're
63 going to have left home and I'd be left at home with nothing wouldn't I?
64 But now I've got some sort of career and future ahead of me

65 K - Do you think your career's been affected at all by the fact that you
66 work from home?

67 T - No I don't. It's difficult for me to say that, because you're asking me in
68 respect of: I worked in an office, would I have been noticed more? Would I
69 have done more things? - I've never ever worked in an office, so it's very
70 difficult for me to say what would have happen had I been in an office
71 environment, I might have got lost amongst the ether!

72 K - So you live here with your husband and two kids, are they quite young
73 still?

74 T - No I've got one 18 and the other one's 14

75 K - Right, and at the moment how's childcare and schooling managed?

76 T - Well they just manage themselves now. But I've always worked, when
77 they were younger, when I've worked from home, they've always in the
78 position that they could come home from school and go to school
79 themselves, they've always been at that age, well saying that I've worked
80 from home for 5 years, our Mark would have been 9 wouldn't he? So he
81 could, you know what I mean, there's been no problem with him going to
82 school and coming home, and because I've worked while I was at home if
83 I've had to take them to school cos it's been raining I've taken them to
84 school because it's been raining, but I'm not a very good mother I don't
85 think

86 K - Why's that?

87 T - Cos if I were busy and it were 3 o'clock, coming home from school
88 time, and it were raining, I'll just think 'oh they'll get wet'! I don't think
89 'oh it's raining I'll have to go and fetch them'

90 K - I'm sure that doesn't make you a bad mother. So how about the
91 domestic work in the home, how's that organised?

92 T - Better now that they're older. I pay my son once a week to clean,
93 which he doesn't do as thoroughly as he could do, I used to pay my
94 daughter, that was much better, girls are more conscientious, but now he
95 does it for me, he only does it once a week, but I can keep on top of it then,
96 now that they're older it's easier anyway cos we've not got toys all over
97 everywhere, I used to find it really difficult and we used to live with papers
98 and magazines and people's socks all over the floor but I've gone beyond
99 that thankfully

100 K – So you had some time – you weren't actually in work when the
101 children were born then?

102 T – I did when my daughter was because I used to work for myself, I used
103 to take her to work with me, but when they're that age they're too small to
104 make too much mess when they're on there own aren't they? But when
105 they were both little I worked part time then

106 K – So, I think you're touched on this already, but if you just want to
107 expand on what kind of parent you think you are?

108 T – Cruel – that's what they tell me. I once said to my son, I sometimes feel
109 awful because it's difficult to strike a balance, because when they come in
110 when I'm at home, they think that I'm at home as Mum, I've moved up,
111 my work, into the bedroom now, because I used to work in the dining room
112 and when they came in it was 'Mum this', 'Mum that', 'Mum the other'. so
113 now I'm in there they don't tend to see me, so they don't tend to assume
114 that I'm at home and they don't start talking to me, cos they are of an age
115 where they do understand, I mean they're not little kids, but I once said to
116 my son that it's difficult for me to strike a balance and I feel guilty because
117 they come in and I still can't give them the attention, but the fact that I'm
118 not in office or I'm not out of the house and about doesn't mean I'm not
119 working, and that makes me feel guilty that I'm neglecting them, and he
120 said to me 'Mum, you're working, you're earning some money, of course
121 you're not neglecting us, you're providing what I need'

122 K – Aw, he sounds very mature, and what do you think you've learnt since
123 becoming a parent?

124 T – What have I learnt since becoming a parent? – If I had my time back
125 again I wouldn't do it! Em. I've been a parent so long I can't remember
126 what it was like before, so it's difficult for me to say. I've learnt that I've
127 not got as much patience as I used to have, but I'm getting that back again,
128 cos there's been a time where, you know, slightest thing and I would have
129 been – and you know that's because I'm trying to work, I'm trying to keep
130 a home running, trying to keep kids, you know trying to keep everyone
131 happy, but now they're older, it's not such a pressure

132 K – Do you think you're role in your family's changed since you've been
133 working from home? I mean I suppose you've always worked from home,
134 have you, for the time they can remember?

135 T – I've been here a lot when they kids have been, you know even when I
136 worked part time, it's not been very often that I've not been here when the
137 kids have been here, do you know what I mean, my Mum only lives a few
138 doors down so she's looked after them when I've been at work, but yeah I
139 think the fact that I'm at home does change things, cos they're there,
140 wanting attention, and some people might think, 'oh I'll go and put
141 washing out', or 'I'll go and start getting tea ready' but unfortunately I'm
142 not like that, I overcompensate working from home, so I would make them
143 have their tea later rather than do that, cos I don't feel... somebody's
144 paying me to do some work and that is what I'm doing, I work for them

145 K – So you've worked from home pretty much for 5-6 years, and who kind
146 of instigated that your role was going to be based from home?

147 T – What do you mean?

148 K – Did you decide that you'd work from home or was that just part of the
149 job?

Interview 10: Tina

150 T – Well when I moved from actual operations in Mailcom, you know in
151 the actual mail centre, I applied for this job which was working from home,
152 well they said it was working from home tagged to an office, but they
153 never gave me one

154 K – So why did you decide that you wanted to go for – was it the fact that
155 it was working from home that attracted you to the role?

156 T – No it was the role that attracted me to the role, work from home was
157 just a by-product of that really

158 K – And did you have to think about that, did you think that that would
159 change things for you or...?

160 T – No not really, I just wanted to do that job, because it was promotion at
161 the time, so I just went for that job

162 K – Did you discuss it with your maybe family, your husband, the fact that
163 you might be based from home?

164 T – Not that I remember, I just hoped I'd get it, it's a promotion

165 K – Can you remember what people thought when you said you'd be
166 working from home?

167 T – Yeah, people were very envious of people that work from home I find,
168 but there's certainly nothing to be envious about – you know, you're not
169 socialising with other people, you don't have that... especially, you know
170 like at Christmas, they all go out for a drink don't they, but you never get
171 invited because you're not part of their little clique

172 K – So was it not as good as you expected it to be?

173 T – I don't think I particularly had any expectations, because I
174 overcompensate I find it's harder work than if I just went to an office and
175 worked 9-5 and came home, because you don't leave it at work, it's always
176 there, and sometimes at weekends, because I work from a laptop, at
177 weekends I think 'ooh I'll just do such and such' and that, already done,
178 and I do find that I work at weekends, when I shouldn't really be doing it at
179 all

180 K – What were your opinions of other people who were based at home?

181 T – I don't think I really knew any, so I didn't have any, I probably felt the
182 same - 'oh the lucky sods'

183 K – And now do you have an idea what a typical home-based worker might
184 be like?

185 T – No, I only know what I'm like I know a lot of other people who work
186 from home, but you only know what they tell you, don't you, I don't know
187 if they're working, skiving, or whatever

188 K – How do you keep in touch with your colleagues and your clients?

189 T – Phone, email, we have what they call work time listening and learning
190 sessions, which is a conference call that we do once a week, I have one to
191 one sessions with my line manager once a month...

192 K – Is that actually in person?

193 T – Yeah, that's in person that one, but I have to go to Leeds for that which
194 is like an 80 miles round trip to go there and back. We have team meeting,
195 we've got one next week, we try to have those - I think we're going to have
196 them monthly, but we've just started them. then it was Christmas, so we
197 had one in November, then we didn't have one because everybody was
198 together anyway at Christmas cos it was a master team meeting – so we

- 199 have master team meetings and smaller team meetings but we only have
200 the master team meetings once a quarter
- 201 K – Have you had any issues of feeling isolated?
- 202 T – Isolated, no I haven't, I'm not a person that needs a lot of direction,
203 you tell me what you want doing and I will find a way of doing it. I don't
204 need someone to hold my hand and push me and explain what the next step
205 is and the next step is, and I don't really need anybody to motivate me,
206 because waking up in a morning is good enough for me
- 207 K – Do you think you've got more control over your work now you work
208 from home?
- 209 T – Got more control over my work? Well cos I'm doing a totally different
210 job, I can't compare it as if – if I'd been doing this job in an office and then
211 came to do it at home I could compare it, unfortunately I can't help you
212 there
- 213 K- Fine. Do you think you're a better worker now?
- 214 T – No I've always been a good worker
- 215 K – You've mentioned already things that you seem to have more, you
216 seem to be more of an intensive worker since working from home
- 217 T – I've always done, I've always been like that, cos before I worked for
218 myself and that's like 24 hours a day, seven days a week, you can't leave
219 it, can you, to somebody else when you're working for yourself? And I've
220 been brought up like that really
- 221 K – Was there a learning curve that you had when you started working
222 from home? Did you have to develop any strategies to manage working
223 from home?
- 224 T – Yeah, I think discipline, because I do overcompensate and trying not to
225 work from 7 while 9 is quite a major learning curve that you having to go
226 through, only that sort of thing, disciplining myself not to be a workaholic
- 227 K – Overall what's the impact been on your family of having you working
228 from home?
- 229 T – Em, I think it's been a good impact really, because, although I am
230 working and although I try and not let them interrupt me, I am here should
231 there be any emergency, but I'm really fortunate in that I'm never really ill,
232 my husband's never ill, and my children are never ill, so had they been,
233 they'd be maybe ill in bed and I'd be at home and able to look after them,
234 but I've never ever had to do that
- 235 K – And then talking about career again, what's the overall impact been on
236 your career of working from home?
- 237 T – Em. I think that's cut two ways in some instances it's probably gone
238 quite badly for me. and in other instances I think it's worked quite well for
239 me, because I've never been in the office environment, I know that a lot of
240 the people I've worked with in the past have been originally in an office
241 environment, so they've all been like a little clique together and they've
242 known each other a long time, so when it's come to any restructuring
243 they've tended to be picked for the jobs rather than myself. who's although
244 I've been doing my job a long time and I do what I do well, I've still not
245 been part of the little clique if you see what I'm saying
- 246 K – So overall, the impact on your life, has it been positive or negative?
- 247 T – Oh positive

248 K – So overall you're satisfied, is there anything that you'd ever change –
249 would you ever go into a traditional office role do you think, or a different
250 kind of work?

251 T – Em, I can't rule it out, cos I wouldn't want to be not working. but I
252 don't know how I'd react, cos I've never ever worked in an office ever –
253 that's why I don't find that programme at all funny. The Office. I don't
254 know what they're laughing at, apparently if you've worked in an office
255 it's really, really funny, but I never have and I really can't see the joke.

256 K – Do you think overall that working from home is an effective way for
257 parents to reconcile work and family life?

258 T – Em. I'd like to say yes, but I'd say yes based on, judging everyone to
259 be like myself, but I think if you're a mother and you're working from
260 home, I think if they are ill, you would neglect your work to look after
261 them, rather than have a days holiday, which if you're going to stay at
262 home and look after your children or devote that day to them you should
263 have that days holiday, but having said that if they only want 2 hours of
264 your attention, you can tag 2 hours on to the end or on to the beginning and
265 still work that, and providing people are prepared to make sure they put the
266 hours in there's nothing wrong with that, but maybe it's just an issue of
267 trust isn't it – I'm trusted to do it, so yeah it probably is an effective way
268 then – talked myself into it!

269 K – My overall question is 'how does working from home impact upon the
270 professional and parental identities of men and women?' do you have any
271 idea what the findings might be?

272 T – No. I think it would probably bode better for men because men at home
273 aren't seen the same as women at home and that's probably historically,
274 socially, women are seen to be the person who does the housework, the
275 cooking, the washing, the ironing, the looking after of the children, the
276 nursing, etc. etc. I mean when hubby's ill everybody has to rally round and
277 nurse hubby, nobody tends to nurse Mummy if Mummy's ill, thankfully I
278 don't get myself in that position, but men don't have to look after running
279 up to school, they don't have to be the one that sees to children who are
280 poorly, or doing the housework – they might do – but they're not perceived
281 as doing it, so if they're at home working, they'd be perceived as being at
282 home working and working but women would probably be perceived as
283 being at home working but doing their housework and their other chores
284 they have to do – it's a shame we have to have two jobs isn't it? They only
285 have one job, men

286 K – Do you think working from home (*Tina's home phone rings*) sorry do
287 you want get that?

288 T – I'm not bothered, I don't normally answer it

289 K – That's it then

290 T – I'm at work! I don't answer it, I just leave it!

291 K – Has working from home changed how you think about yourself and
292 who you are?

293 T – No I don't think so, I've always known who I am really. No I don't
294 think so, it's difficult to go back a long time and say definitely or definitely
295 not, but I don't think it has no

296 K – You seem to know yourself quite well

297 T – Yeah – I'm 44! I've been living with myself for a long time.

298 K – And how would you categorise yourself. as a mother firstly. or as a
299 Mailcom manager firstly?

300 T – Em. Right, when I'm on me holidays and out of working time. then
301 firstly I'm a mother, if God forbid something happen to them or they were
302 ill or they needed me in some way that nobody else would do. I don't mean
303 picking them up from school, I mean if they broke an arm. a leg, or they're
304 ill or whatever, then I'm a mother firstly, obviously. But generally. 8 while
305 5, 5 days a week, I'm a Mailcom Manager first, that's probably not what
306 people want to hear but it's true – if I were at work in an office that's what
307 I'd be doing, and that's what I try to say to myself, that's what I'm doing

308 K – Do you think it's changed how your kids see you, the fact that you're
309 working from home?

310 T – Yeah, I think they think I'm idle.

311 K – Really?

312 T – Yeah. I know they think I'm idle, they tell me they think I'm idle. Cos
313 they think that I might spend 75% of my day on the telephone. so what
314 they say to me 'All you do Mum is talk on the phone all day'. and I say
315 'Will you just Hoover up' – 'Why don't you do it? You don't do anything
316 else', you see what I'm saying? And then I might be on my laptop. which
317 I'm writing emails and things like that, and you spend a lot of time thinking
318 when you're trying to find a solution for something, and they think that
319 that's not working, so they think I do nothing, apart from that you see my
320 husband does all the cooking, so when he comes in at half past five. he'll
321 come in and he'll make me a cup of coffee, because I'll be still upstairs
322 working away

323 K – Do you think it's changed how he thinks about you then?

324 T - Em. No, I think he thinks that I can do things for him because I'm at
325 home, like for instance say the insurance of the car want renewing I can
326 just ring up and do that, because I'm at home and he's at work, but having
327 said that he's always thought I could do things like that for him. that's not
328 changed, and he doesn't like using the phone, so anything using the phone
329 he passes to me anyway, so no, it's not different I don't think.

330 K – What about anybody else, maybe your extended family, how they
331 think about you because you're working from home, do you think that's
332 affected that?

333 T – I don't think they think any different of me, because they know me and
334 they know I work quite hard, but they say things to me like 'Did you see
335 such and such on morning TV?' and I say 'No' – 'Well you were at home
336 weren't you?' – 'Yeah but I don't watch morning TV – I'm working'. I
337 mean to be honest I don't put TV on til – well the kinds come in and they
338 put it on – but other than from that it doesn't go on until about 7 o'clock at
339 night

340 K – Does anyone from work or your customers realise even that you work
341 from home? Has it ever been an issue?

342 T – Em, when I worked in sales it was an issue I think, because the people
343 that worked in the telesales centre couldn't get their heads round the fact
344 that - they thought that you were doing exactly what they were doing but
345 you were doing it at home, and in actual fact I was probably going out and
346 visiting customers, so they might send me an email at like 9 o'clock in the
347 morning and be moaning and groaning or shouting and balling cos I hadn't

348 responded by half past ten, whereas I might be on a 2 hour drive to
349 Newcastle to see a customer and I wouldn't be able to access any emails,
350 so in that circumstance I would have been far better if they'd just rung me
351 up and asked me whatever it was they wanted, because they would have
352 got an answer whilst I was driving up there

353 K – That's pretty much it, unless there's anything you want to add, any
354 issues that have come up for you?

355 T – No

356 K – Finally then, if it's alright can I scan the camera to see your working
357 space?

358 T – Er, you can but I don't work in here

359 K – Is it upstairs?

360 T - Yeah

361 K – Is that alright then?

362 T – I'd rather you not

363 K – Oh alright then, if that's a problem that's fine. Is it set up in a spare
364 room?

365 T – No, it's in my bedroom

366 K – Oh that's fine then

367 T – I used to do it on the table in the dining room and I'm quite happy if
368 you want me to fetch my laptop down so you can do it in there?

369 K – No it's fine, just to talk about your current working space then, why
370 have you got it like that? Is that an ideal situation for you?

371 T – No, I would much rather have an extra room where I could go, and I
372 keep trying to get my daughter to leave home, so I shove my son into her
373 room and... if she goes to university then I will seriously consider doing
374 that, but we were going to move it up into the loft because we moved here
375 around the same time I started working from home and we were going to
376 do that but I ended up with, first of all I had a little space in the
377 conservatory and then in the winter quite cold and in the summer it's far
378 too hot and you can't see the screen, so I moved into the dining room, but
379 because I was in the dining room and we tend to use the back door for
380 coming in and going out – they come in, see me and straight away think
381 they think that – or they come in shouting when I'm on the phone which is
382 worse especially when you're talking to a customer, so my husband
383 suggested that I move up into my bedroom so I now use my dressing table
384 and I've got, I keep my printer, photocopier, that still remains in the
385 conservatory, but my business line has been put through up into my
386 bedroom, so I've got my business line plugged in up there, and I just put
387 my laptop into my business line

388 K – Well thank you very much for taking part, could you give me some
389 feedback about how you felt taking part in this project?

390 T – How I felt taking part in it?

391 K – Did you mind being videoed? – I know it came as a bit of a surprise

392 T – It did, cos I'd read it actually on the first email and it said maybe
393 videoed and I thought I don't have to do that

394 K – It's a bit of a sneaky way of doing it

395 T – I'd forgotten about it actually

396 K – Well thank you very much you've been a very good interviewee

397 T – No problem at all

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

1 K- Could you say your name and job title?

2 Ke – Ken Lear, Computer Analyst

3 K – And Ken. what does your role entail?

4 Ke – My role entails, it's sort of analyst come researcher area really. I've
5 recently been involved in, it could be from a technical nature or a general
6 business nature. Technical wise a couple of projects I'm working on at the
7 moment is looking at options for image capture, using scanning devices,
8 bar-code reading devices, stuff like that, extracting the data, reading the
9 data, and feeding it into databases for use within systems. The current work
10 I'm involved in is governance processes and relationships, so that's more
11 of capturing what is happening within the organisation at the moment, with
12 regards to how business strategy aligns with I.S / I.T. strategy, so it's
13 varied, it varies.

14 K – And how did you get into that kind of role?

15 Ke – How? That's a very good question. It started off as an evaluation
16 team, really hardware and software evaluation team, my role was then an
17 evaluator and as we've had reorganisations and stuff like that my role's
18 changed away from, how can I say... specific I.T. stuff, how can I say, it's
19 more business involvement, so it's not I.T. for I.T.'s sake, it's a case of, we
20 look at the business requirements and I suppose through our experience and
21 knowledge, try and map solutions or options with those requirements, we
22 don't just go out and evaluate things for evaluations sake, and over the
23 years it's got less hands on, less getting involved in the nitty gritty, the bits
24 and bites, it's more dealing with business people, finding out what their
25 problems are and you know just providing consultancy really and that's
26 what it boils down to now.

27 K – Is that your background then in computers, or in business? Kind of
28 from school, did you go straight into that?

29 Ke – No, not at all, no. What do you want to know?

30 K – Just a little bit of history would be...

31 Ke - No, never got involved in computing until '86. September '86 an
32 opportunity came up to join the mainframe support group, general clerical
33 type stuff and then within I think 6 months a job came up in I.T. support,
34 P.C. support, I had no experience, no training, it was just get stuck in,
35 hands on, and that was it really

36 K – So you spend on average 3 days a week working from home, and is
37 that 3 solid days and the other days you're on the road or in the office?

38 Ke – I would probably say 2 solid days, the other days probably mixed
39 up... you see Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, my wife works, you know
40 from 9-5 or whatever, so I have to, at the time... we've got no parents or
41 helpers around, pick up the kids or whatever, so I drop the kids off 9
42 o'clock, and I'll pick them up again at 20 past 3 and carry on working from
43 home, so yeah as I say two solid days at home

44 K- And do you meet a lot of clients who are outside of the business you
45 work for or is it mainly internal customers?

46 Ke – It's internal customers, yeah

47 K - So a lot of time would be spent, when you're not in the home, going
48 and overseeing their projects and things?

49 Ke – Yeah that's right. There's a couple of projects I'm involved with at
50 the moment, where I'm setting up meetings with suppliers, particularly

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

- 51 around this image capturing system is trying to see what the options are
52 and going to see demonstrations by these companies
- 53 K – Are you enjoying your job at the moment?
54 Ke – Love it
- 55 K – Great, have you got plans for a future career, any progression or...?
56 Ke – It's difficult in the organisation. I'll be honest, about 5 years ago I
57 deputised for a boss of mine, who was a grade or two above me. I did the
58 job, covered it for think 2 years, had 5 people working under me, I mean I
59 thought I did enough to get promotion you know, I think I've asked once
60 since then, but at the end of the day I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing,
61 if it comes it comes, you know it's no skin off my nose whether I get
62 promoted or not.
- 63 K – I was wondering if you could tell me what kind of worker you think
64 you are? Just anything that comes into your head
- 65 Ke – I think I'm conscientious, hard working, I mean I meet deadlines. I've
66 never been pulled up for going over budgets, if someone gives me a job to
67 do and they want it doing by a specific time or date or whatever, then I'll
68 bend over backwards to meet those timescales
- 69 K – What does your career mean to you?
70 Ke – Oh blimey, what does career mean to me? Job, work, I don't know,
71 it's a difficult one that, what does it mean to me?
- 72 K – For example some people will say 'well I just do it because I have to, it
73 brings in the money', does it mean more than that to you?
74 Ke – I don't really think it as that, I don't know I have felt a couple of
75 times, I don't know when it would be, when I've felt fed up with the job
76 and all the rest of it, and maybe I felt I was just going through the motions,
77 but I don't really know, I can put my finger on it. I just enjoy what I do,
78 enjoy the people I work with
- 79 K – Is it one of the more important things in your life?
80 Ke – Apart from well obviously the family, but if you haven't got a job,
81 haven't got money coming in etc, I think it's part of the same, obviously
82 the family come first, the kids come first and all the rest of it, I'd say it's
83 quite important, yeah
- 84 K – That's fine, they're quite tricky questions these, I do apologise. The
85 next question then is do you think you're career's been affected by the fact
86 that you work from home?
87 Ke – No
- 88 K – Not in any way you can think of
- 89 Ke – No, not at all, I mean, I don't know what other people think at work,
90 say from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I have to leave early, or I don't get
91 in as early as most other people, I don't know if they think 'he just goes
92 home and doesn't do any thing' or whatever, has an early day or stuff like
93 that, whether that has any effect, but again it depends on what you're
94 doing, if I'm involved in a project that needs me to be there 7 / 8 hours a
95 day, then that's going to cause a problem and we'll maybe have to look at
96 childcare and stuff like that, I don't see it causing any problems
- 97 K – And you live here with your wife is it?
98 Ke – Yes
- 99 K – And you have 2 children. Are they of school age?
100 Ke – Yes, 7 & 10

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

101 K – And so currently how's childcare and schooling arranged?

102 Ke – Again that's, if my wife's working, generally I'm available to take
103 them to school and pick them up, that's the beauty of having LIW status

104 K – So they don't go to any, they don't go to a ...

105 Ke – No after school clubs or anything like that

106 K – They don't have a nanny or anything like that

107 Ke – No, and we've got no family around to rely on anyone, we've got
108 friends we can rely on, you know if I'm in a meeting and it goes on until
109 gone 3 o'clock, I ask friends just to take them for an hour or so, but we try
110 not to do that if we can possibly help it K – And such as today, your son's
111 ill and you're able to keep an eye on him cos you're at home

112 Ke – Yeah, and that was a case of dialling in, obviously making sure I
113 didn't have anything in my diary and saying to Gareth 'yeah you can stay
114 at home'

115 K – And how about domestic work, how's that organised?

116 Ke – Well generally if my wife Sarah's working I'll do the cooking, I sort
117 the kids out, my youngest, Kayley, she's 7, she goes to gymnastics 3 times,
118 twice during the week, around 5ish so I'll get her to that. Gareth does
119 things in the evening, football and that

120 K – How about the housework more generally?

121 Ke – We share

122 K – Pretty much 50/50?

123 Ke – Oh yeah

124 K – And did you have time off work when your children were born?

125 Ke – Yes, it would have been the statutory week or whatever at the time

126 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are?

127 Ke – *(laughs)*

128 K – Again any words that come into your mind to describe that

129 Ke – Caring, loving, I don't know

130 K – That's great, what do you think you've learnt since becoming a parent,
131 if anything?

132 Ke – What have I learnt? Oh dear.

133 K – Have you changed much since you've been a Dad?

134 Ke – I don't think I have, what can we say? Well one of the things with
135 children is learning, well we don't go out that much, as we did pre-kids, we
136 tend to spend more time with, obviously I like to spend more time with the
137 kids, we spend more money on the kids, so we don't spend money on
138 unnecessary things I suppose at the end of the day, so we've learnt how to
139 deal with that. Tolerance I suppose, yeah, my wife would probably say
140 quite a lot about what we've learnt

141 K – That's fine, and do you think that your role in the family's different
142 because you work from home? So I suppose you've been working from
143 home for 7 years, so for the youngest one she won't have known any
144 different and perhaps not even for your older child, do you think it might
145 have been different if you were traditional, office-based worker?

146 Ke – Well we were originally, pre-kids, the wife and I, before we got
147 married, we lived together for a while, and both had jobs in London,
148 commuted to, lived in Southend at the time, I'm not one of these who say a
149 woman should be in the kitchen or stuff like that, I'll do the ironing...cos I

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

- 150 used to live on my own so I know exactly what it's like. no I don't think
151 it's made any difference
- 152 K – So you've worked from home for 7 years. and who kind of instigated
153 that then, was it just part of the job that you got?
- 154 Ke – Well it was me, I didn't ask for it, I just said 'any chance of having an
155 extra telephone line in', so that I could dial in, get my emails before I came
156 into work and all of a sudden it just spiralled into Location Independent
157 Working, I had to have all the health and safety, sign all the necessary
158 forms, make sure I had the proper screens everything like that, ISDN was
159 put into the house, so I never, I don't think I ever officially asked for it, I
160 was just the guinea pig for the group at the time
- 161 K – Why did you decide you might like to work from home?
- 162 Ke- Why? Just convenience really, the flexibility, rather than coming into
163 work to get your emails you know, all that aggravation of trying to get
164 parking, well it's the same now quite honestly, trying to get parked in any
165 of our buildings, if you've seen the list of people who want to get a parking
166 space it's a case of having to wait for someone to die or leave the firm, it's
167 just flexibility really
- 168 K – So who did you discuss your decision with? You went to your
169 employers and say it might be good...?
- 170 Ke – It was my line manager yeah.
- 171 K – And what was their reaction to that?
- 172 Ke - I think they just said fine no problem, there wasn't that much
173 discussion quite honestly, I think the way the business was running at the
174 time, there was no constraint on budgets you know funding and stuff like
175 that, I think that now, now they're not so hot on giving people LIW status
176 because of the reasons of budgets and costs and stuff, I mean I've no idea
177 how much this costs the company, don't get any bills, no idea at all
- 178 K – And thinking about other people's reactions to your decision to work
179 from home, first of all at work, your colleagues, and maybe your clients,
180 did they have any issues with you coming home, working from home?
- 181 Ke – No, not that I can think of, no
- 182 K – And did you discuss it with your wife, that you might like to work
183 from home?
- 184 Ke – Discuss? No. It was a case that I'm doing it and that's it
- 185 K – Yeah, and did she have a good reaction to that or...?
- 186 Ke – Oh yeah, yeah, no problem
- 187 K – Great, and probably at that time, as I've said before your children were
188 a bit too small to discuss it with them, were they?
- 189 Ke – Yeah
- 190 K - What was your wife's reaction when you started working from home
191 then? Did she find it as perhaps useful as she thought she might?
- 192 Ke – Well I think at the time, because she didn't have a job, Sarah's one of
193 these that, because some people have to do I know, but we had
194 opportunities for her to stay at home with the children until, they were, you
195 know Gareth was able to go to nursery school and stuff like that, so for
196 those years she stayed at home you know, and she's currently got, well she
197 has had part time jobs ever since really, so she was home a good part of the
198 time when I was home really, it didn't affect work or relationships or

- 199 anything like that, it was no problem at all, nice to be home actually every
200 now and again
- 201 K – Yeah, do you think your kids kind of appreciate having their Dad at
202 home more than perhaps a traditional Dad would be?
- 203 Ke – I don't know, I've never asked them I don't think. they probably do,
204 they probably do I should imagine
- 205 K – Is working at home better or worse than you expected? – Did you have
206 any expectations?
- 207 Ke – Er. I would say at first it was quite, quite difficult at first. because the
208 situation, I don't think houses around, I don't think the house I was living
209 in, it wasn't built, designed to have location independent working or
210 whatever, a separate room, so having the room I'd built was great. The
211 problem was it was right next to the lounge, with the TV and stuff like that.
212 that was quite a problem you know having to shut that out. That was quite
213 an issue at the time and of course the wife was at home quite a bit at the
214 time, watching morning and afternoon TV, and she'd have people round,
215 which caused you know, which was a bit of a pain. But er, I suppose since
216 we moved here, she's been working, I think that's improved, the fact that
217 it's quite, you can get on with your work, I mean that's one of the beauties
218 of working from home, there's no constant noise, no phones ringing, you
219 can get on with your work, depending on what your doing, if you're going
220 to write a report, this is the best way to do it
- 221 K – Before you started working from home did you have opinions of other
222 people who worked from home?
- 223 Ke – Not really, I thought I'd like to, basically I want that as well, yeah
- 224 K – Great. And now that you work from home do you have any idea what a
225 typical home-based worker might be like?
- 226 Ke – Not really, I can't, any different from me really, I mean I know a few
227 senior people who've got the same status and I've spoken to them about
228 their environment, and a lot of them have got big houses, have got a
229 separate room away from anything else. better environments than this I
230 would say
- 231 K – How do you keep in touch with your colleagues and clients?
- 232 Ke – Telephone, email
- 233 K – Great, and have you had any issues of isolation, not being in a
234 traditional office?
- 235 Ke – I think when I was working last year, I had to work quite a lot from
236 home, I was probably going in once every couple of weeks, so that was
237 quite strange when you go into the office see the colleagues, bit of a
238 strange feeling, and you ask what's been going on for the past two weeks
239 and try and play catch up you know with what's going on I the office, I
240 don't think I'd like to do it for a long period of time with out going into the
241 office, I mean I would make a point of going into the office anyway, yeah
242 it would drive me up the wall staying here all the time
- 243 K – So you have missed the face-to-face contact?
- 244 Ke – Yeah, oh yeah
- 245 K – Do you think you have more control over your work, now you work
246 from home?
- 247 Ke –I think I've always had it. I mean the beauty of the job that I'm in,
248 involved in is autonomy really, you're given a task and job to do and you

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

- 249 do it, I mean you keep your boss up to date with what's going on, meet
250 deadlines, keep up to date...
- 251 K – And do you think in any ways you're a better worker now you work
252 from home? More focused or efficient?
- 253 Ke – More focused yeah, more productive I'd say, you get through so
254 much work, well for a start in the mornings if I'm working here. 8 o'clock.
255 well half 7 sometimes, the computer goes on and generally just carry on
256 working through, I'd say I probably have a break once in the morning,
257 lunch, once in the afternoon, if I've got deadlines to meet, I'd probably just
258 carry on and carry on to the small hours if you wanted
- 259 K – And what was the learning curve of coming to work from home, did
260 you have to develop any strategies to manage it? For example some say
261 that they need to shut the door and tell the kids 'right, Dad's at work for the
262 next so many hours'
- 263 Ke – Oh I have to yeah, there's stuff like that or if I'm having a
264 teleconference, making sure everybody who's in the house is aware that
265 I'm working because sometimes the children come and say 'are you
266 working Dad?' at half past three want me to play football in the garden or
267 something, but no.
- 268 K – Must be tempting though
- 269 Ke – Yeah very
- 270 K – What's the impact been overall of having you working from home on
271 your family?
- 272 Ke – I think it's quite positive, it fits in so well with home life, work life. I
273 can't think of a better way of working quite honestly
- 274 K – And the overall impact on your career? Has that been positive,
275 negative, or pretty indifferent?
- 276 Ke – Indifferent I'd say, indifferent.
- 277 K – And then overall, the impact on your life generally, has that been
278 good?
- 279 Ke – Yeah.
- 280 K – Great. Is there any you'd change, or would you go back to traditional
281 working ever?
- 282 Ke – I really wouldn't like to go back to it, traditional way of working,
283 going into the office every single day, no, I wouldn't no, would not like
284 that at all
- 285 K – One of my research questions is 'is telework an effective way for
286 parents to reconcile work and family life?', would you think it was?
- 287 Ke – Yes
- 288 K – Great. On to these questions about identity then. The overall research
289 question I'm asking is 'how does home-based telework' – so how does
290 LIW – 'impact upon the professional and parental identities of men and
291 women?', so your identity as a parent and your identity as a career person.
292 Do you have any idea how it's impacted on your parental or professional
293 identity?
- 294 Ke – Who's this from the eyes of?
- 295 K – From yourself, how you feel about yourself?
- 296 Ke – I don't know
- 297 K – It's a hard one
- 298 Ke – It is

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

299 K – Just basically whether working from home's changed how you think
300 about yourself and who you are. Or perhaps to look at it another way, how
301 other people might see you

302 Ke – Other people, I mean picking the kids up, I always get the little jokes
303 about, you know 'working hard today?', and all that sort of stuff. it's just
304 the little comments you get, I suppose they think I'm swanning around at
305 home not doing sweet F.A. but other than that it's. can't really think of
306 anything else

307 K – Thinking about how other people see you then, do you think there is a
308 bad perception of Dad's who stay at home rather than working in a
309 traditional office?

310 Ke - I don't think there is a bad perception, a lot of the people, when I go to
311 school, it's generally wives, obviously the mums, who pick the kids up,
312 they have husbands or whatever that work from home. because they see me
313 more than most, it must look... I don't know. I don't know

314 K – That's fine, has it changed how your wife and kids think about you?

315 Ke – No, don't think they know any different

316 K – How would you categorise yourself firstly, as a Dad firstly or as a
317 computer analyst firstly? It's a tricky one

318 Ke – Er. It's a tricky one that. Will I say Dad first? I'd say Dad first really,
319 now why would I say that? Mm. Probably because, I don't know, because
320 of flexibility I suppose, you know, I can concentrate on my kids, as well as
321 being at home

322 K – Great, that's pretty much all the questions I've got for you Ken, thank
323 you for being so frank and answering them like that. Have you got
324 anything you'd like to add about the experience of working from home and
325 how it's affected either your family life or your career?

326 Ke – No, I just think it... if I didn't have the option of working from home,
327 if I didn't have all this equipment here, we'd find it extremely difficult to
328 manage –we would manage but having to farm the kids off to after school
329 clubs and stuff like that – we did it originally and in some respects it's
330 good for the kids to have a social bit and play and stuff like that, but I think
331 we're quite a close family unit, I like and see my kids as often as I possibly
332 can, I want, what I didn't get, I want my kids to have all the things that I
333 didn't have when I was at home, I didn't see my parents, they were
334 working all the time, I try and do as much as I possibly can with kids really

335 K – Great. The final thing that I'd like to do, if it's ok, is to scan the camera
336 around and see your working space

337 Ke – Yeah

338 K – Ok, so we're in the dining room right now, which is a downstairs room
339 at the front of the house, in the corner, are these your working files there

340 Ken?

341 Ke – They are at the bottom

342 K – On the book shelf next to your CDs and things and then your kind of in
343 this little cubby hole, under the stairs there, and you've just got room there
344 for your laptop and one of the big old fashioned printers you were saying

345 Ke – That's right yeah

346 K – And some papers on a pine, kind of desk there

347 Ke – Just below, at the back of the desk's the ISDN lines, the box is there

Interview 11: Ken (Ke)

348 K – And we were saying before, but if you could just expand on this. is this
349 an ideal set up or not?

350 Ke – No, no

351 K – And when you worked from your previous home, it was a bit more
352 ideal?

353 Ke – It was a purpose built – it was my room yeah, it had all my stuff in it,
354 it was only 8 by 6, but no one else invade that space, that was the office

355 K – So ideally are you aiming to do something similar to that here?

356 Ke – Yes

357 K – So that's your plan for the future?

358 Ke – That's right

359 K – That's great. Thank you very much for taking part again

360 Ke – Thank you

Interview 12: Anthea

1 K- Could you state your name and your job title?

2 A – Anthea Barlow, Sub-editor

3 K – And could you describe your job to me?

4 A – What I do, I work for various sections of the newspaper, national
5 newspaper, weekend section, personal finance on the weekend section, the
6 foreign desk, and the daily sections, features sometimes. I work all over
7 basically, they send me copy at certain times of the day when they need
8 help and I edit it

9 K – Great. How did you get into journalism?

10 A – Probably always wanted to. Two ambitions, wanted to be a journalist
11 or a teacher, nearly went into teaching but then opted for journalism cos I
12 thought it was more of a challenge, it's harder to get into, I thought it was
13 harder to succeed in but I was probably completely deluded there. What did
14 I do? I started working when I was at uni, for a local paper doing voluntary
15 work, eventually when I left college went work at United Defence in
16 technical publications which was incredibly tedious but I worked with a
17 woman who really gave me lots of guidance, a lot of good advice, and I
18 ended up working on various publications in London. So it was an unusual
19 route, I could have opted for a more practical route course run by Express
20 Newspapers, the Wolverhampton Express and Star group, did a 4.5 year
21 course I think it was, you had to pass, compete with lots of others for that
22 course, and I didn't do it, I didn't want to live there for that length of time,
23 it was sort of like an old-fashioned apprenticeship), which would have been
24 a great all round experience, but you really had to commit yourself a long
25 time. I went an unusual route in.

26 K – Lovely, so at the moment how do you split up your working time?

27 How much time's spent in the home?

28 A – What I do is, I tend to work Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, after
29 the children have gone to school, so basically I come home, clear the
30 dishes, do bits and bobs around the house, and then log on and I'll work up
31 til 1ish. On Thursday and Friday I work most of the day, I pick the children
32 up at three, they used to go to a childminder but don't see the need to do
33 that now, they come home have a snack, I finish off my work, so it's a
34 fairly shortish day, occasionally I'll log in later on in the evening, not
35 often, and sometimes on a Monday, don't often work on a Monday, it
36 depends I'm flexible when they need to do it

37 K – Are you happy with your job at the moment?

38 A – Yeah, very convenient

39 K – Great. Have you got any aims for a future career?

40 A – Em. There's loads of things that I could do. I could leave journalism
41 completely, possibly go into teaching, I do still enjoy – I help at the local
42 school, so I do still really enjoy that side of it and whilst I've never done it
43 professionally, I go in as a parent helper, probably won't to that cos the pay
44 is so awful, I'm paid quite well for what I do and it's very convenient,
45 there's no travel, as the kids grow older, possibly go back to work in
46 London, possibly work as a reporter for the paper, doing writing, but that
47 would require me to be out and about and not tied to home quite so much

48 K – What kind of worker would you say you are? Quite a broad question.

49 A – Yeah, em. Quite disciplined, which is unusual for me because I'm not,
50 in my life, I'm not disciplined at all, my other life, home life etc. Em. Very

Interview 12: Anthea

51 conscientious, which again is unusual, but in my work I am. I'm very
52 conscious of the fact, at the moment, I'm allowed to work from home.
53 unlike most journalists, on the editing side of most newspapers. I don't
54 know of many at all who do what I'm doing, so I'm in quite a lucky
55 position, I'm paid very well, and so I always feel that I have to earn that,
56 that position and the money, so I work quite hard

57 K – What does your career mean to you?

58 A - Quite a lot, I think a lot of girls grow up and they're taught to be
59 ambitious, and to get exams and so on, go to university, especially these
60 days, everybody's expected to go to university, then have children.
61 Especially these days, more and more women have careers, lots and lots of
62 my friends have been to university, given it up and they're at home full
63 time, or they're doing a lot less challenging jobs to fit in with the family. I
64 don't think women should really have to do that, it's a choice, but it sort of
65 grates on you a little bit, that women are told up to a certain point to work
66 hard and use their brains, then have to put that on hold for so many years, it
67 doesn't quite follow, so I'm quite keen on women being able to do both,
68 but at the same time I'm not really for when you've got a family, working
69 full time, there is that sort of paradox I suppose, that sort of conflict.

70 K – Do you think your career's been affected by the fact that you working
71 from home?

72 A – Yeah, definitely, you can't do what I do, the nature of my job fits in
73 really well, but there's no promotion involved, there's no advancement of
74 career, that side of it's put on hold

75 K – so you live here with, is it your husband, and you have 2 children is it?

76 A – Yeah

77 K – 2 children, lovely, I think you've touched on this briefly already, but
78 how is current childcare or schooling arrangements managed?

79 A – Holiday times, I'm lucky, I do get a lot of holiday at the newspaper,
80 more weeks than most companies would give, so I can cover most
81 holidays, we also have a childminder we've used since they started school,
82 so generally only use that on the full days I work, Thursday, Friday, we
83 have the option of using the childminder, try not to use her now during the
84 week, but I used to, so I take the kids to school each day pick them up each
85 day and I work around it really

86 K – How about domestic work in the home, how's that balanced?

87 A – I probably do most of it actually. Because I'm part time I feel I should
88 do more than my husband and you'd be surprised at how easily men fall
89 into that little pattern, they work full time so they do less, and that's
90 happened for years really, probably particularly since we've had children,
91 so I do most, I do the shopping, I do the cleaning, he'll do anything that I
92 ask him to, but at the same time - God you don't want to be a Mum to your
93 husband do you? – telling him what to do, but generally I'd say I do most
94 things and I'm sure he'd agree

95 K – Did you have a bit time of work when your children were born?

96 A – Yeah about 10 months off for both

97 K – And what kind of parent would you say you are? Another broad
98 question

Interview 12: Anthea

- 99 A – I'm very home, homey in my thinking. I'm quite a conscientious
100 parent, without wanting to be, we're a very close family. Quite tricky that
101 one, how to say it without trying to flatter yourself
- 102 K – Go ahead
- 103 A – *(laughs)*
- 104 K - I mean if you think you're a good parent then...
- 105 A – Family come first before my job and my career, and you don't realise
106 that until they come along, I mean you sort of realise that, even my
107 husband was saying that work pales into insignificance really, compared to
108 your family, so they come first. So I am very family-focused. It dominates
109 my thinking, everything, so that's the sort of parent I am
- 110 K – So did you, sort of, work from an office base whilst you had your
111 children?
- 112 A – Yeah I did, to start with, what happened, I went part time after my first
113 child, and work was fairly good, I used to work nights in a newspaper,
114 which was sort of all night until 12, 1 in the morning, newspaper deadlines
115 go on and on and on, for various editions, but when I had my child it
116 wasn't very good, so they let me work shorter day time hours, which was
117 very good, and they went to nursery on the days I worked, they went to the
118 nursery where my husband worked which was in Leamington Spar, and
119 that worked quite well until it was time for the children to go to school, so I
120 faced, one of us, myself or my husband, we felt, needed to be near where
121 were going to school which was where we lived, so choice I had a choice:
122 work for the Finance News, leave the Finance News, or get them to agree
123 to let me work from where I live and fortunately they did
- 124 K – Great. Does your organisation, is it quite a common practice to have
125 people...?
- 126 A – No, very rare, I was the first one, I don't think I was the first one, I
127 think a few people had worked from home in the past due to illness, so they
128 hadn't been able to travel to work it's been too difficult on them physically
129 and mentally, I think I know someone who suffered with depression, so she
130 was allowed to work from home a couple of days a week - temporarily, but
131 when I faced this sort of dilemma, either leave the Finance News, stay at
132 the Finance News, I went to them and I asked them could I work from
133 home, I knew it would work as long as the technology enabled it to work in
134 practice, and at the time I had a manager who basically was very open,
135 didn't think about the political ramifications of it at all and he said 'well
136 we'll look into it, if it can be done you do it', since then a lot of people
137 have wanted to do it and they've been very reluctant to let them
- 138 K – Right. Do you think your role in your family's changed since you've
139 worked from home?
- 140 A – No, no I don't think so, even on the days that I worked, before when I
141 worked in London, I would still organise everything around the kids,
142 they'd go off to nursery, but I would get everything ready, I would ensure
143 they were eating the right foods and so on and for when they came back
144 from nursery everything would be laid out for them, so all my husband had
145 to do was ferry them there and back, so although they weren't with me all
146 day on a couple of days a week then, I was still there in the background,
147 even though I wasn't there physically, so I don't think my mental outlook

148 didn't change and I don't think - they were so young - they were aware on
149 a couple of days that I wasn't there physically there

150 K - So you've worked from home for about 3 and a half years, and that
151 was pretty much instigated by yourself

152 A - Yeah

153 K - You arranged that through work. So what was the key reason you
154 decided to work from home? I think we've touched on that briefly already

155 A - I felt it important, if you have children, at least one of you is with them
156 most of the time, but I didn't want to give up my career, but I was prepared
157 to give up my career, when I asked the newspaper 'could I work from
158 home' I did say 'if you say no I will leave' and I would have - very
159 reluctantly, so that's it really, I mean I wanted to primarily look after the
160 children myself, most of the time

161 K - So you discussed it with your manager from work, and you discussed it
162 with your husband as well?

163 A - Yeah

164 K - And what was his reaction?

165 A - 'Wow, fantastic, if they'll let you work from home wouldn't that be
166 brilliant? You manage to be the mum and have a career, bring all the
167 money in as well'

168 K - Excellent, so it was seen as quite a good...

169 A - A very positive thing, yeah

170 K - Great, and did you discuss it with your children themselves?

171 A - No they were small, no they were too small

172 K - Ok. Is it what you expected? Is it better or worse in any way?

173 A - No, exactly as I expected, a lot of people in work, and I do go in to
174 work probably every few months, and people always say to me 'I couldn't
175 do, I wouldn't be able to get on with the work' but I was always, I'm quite
176 happy being on my own so I'm quite happy working on my own as well
177 and surprisingly, with the computer we have a system where you can
178 message people live, continually, it's far faster than email and it pops,
179 messages pop up at the top of your screen, so I tend to find that I'm
180 constantly talking to people, so I've never really, although I'm in the house
181 on my own, I very rarely work with anybody in the house, occasionally I
182 do, but even when I'm on my own, I don't really feel I'm on my own, so
183 it's never been a problem, I'm quite disciplined in how I do it and I treat it
184 as a days work and I always expected it to be like that, I was quite realistic

185 K - Before you began working from home, did you have any
186 preconceptions of what a typical teleworker might be like?

187 A - No, I've not even thought about what other people do at all

188 K - Right, and you keep in touch mainly through your computer, through
189 email and through the messaging service?

190 A - Yeah, and I go into work about every three months as well, and I often
191 go on courses and things

192 K - Right, so you haven't really had any issues of isolation?

193 A - None, but probably what's helped me avoid that is I'm part time, so I
194 do have other life apart from my work, I couldn't do this full time, I
195 wouldn't want to do it full time because I do like talking to people and I
196 like interacting with people and I just enjoy just being with people and

Interview 12: Anthea

197 being in a working environment, full time I couldn't do this, and I would
198 feel isolated and very bored frankly

199 K – Do you think you have more control over your work more now you
200 work from home?

201 A – Em, yeah I do, I choose the work far more and I'm my own boss more
202 or less

203 K – And do you think in any ways you're a better worker now?

204 A – I'm not sure I'm a better worker, I probably get a lot more done
205 because there's fewer people to chat to, and I also feel, I always have since
206 I started home-working, I feel I have to almost compensate for the fact that
207 I'm allowed to work from home, so I do tend to, I'm definitely more
208 productive than people in the office, definitely

209 K – Was there a learning curve for you, to coming and working from
210 home? Did you have to develop strategies or...?

211 A – Not... let me think

212 K – Perhaps in the respect of keeping...

213 A – The only thing I had to learn was to work in a quieter environment,
214 now the office, when I go in now and occasionally would log on, I very
215 rarely do a lot of work when I go into London, but it's noisy, it's so noisy,
216 and I obviously didn't notice that at the time, and I do find I need a bit of
217 noise so I have the radio sort of below my hearing threshold, that was the
218 only thing really

219 K – And what would you say is the overall impact on your family of you
220 working from home?

221 A – The children benefit from me being here all the time, they don't notice
222 the fact that I work very much, but now they're older they are aware that I
223 work and they like the fact that I work because I talk about it in such
224 positive way and I think it's important for them to know that I work and
225 I'm not – when you say 'just a Mum' it sort of makes it sounds like that's
226 not important and it is the most important thing – but for them to realise
227 there's other sides to you as a parent - but they benefit financially as well
228 and also the fact that I'm happy in being able to do both, so really
229 everybody benefits from a happy Mum

230 K – And what would you say the overall impact on your career has been?

231 A – Slows your career, absolutely and definitely, there's no doubt about it,
232 I wouldn't ever receive a work bonus, they have bonuses each year, since
233 I've worked from home I've never received one and I would never expect
234 to, purely because you're out of sight, out of mind, but also because I've
235 done the same thing for 3 and a half years and that isn't seen as progression
236 in the company's eyes, so em...

237 K – Do you think some of that's to do with being part time as well
238 perhaps?

239 A – Yeah, yeah, when I went part time and I was in London, I went part
240 time, I remember applying for it was a news editors job, one of the UK
241 news editors jobs, and I felt like I'd almost got it, brilliant interview with a
242 couple of the news editors there, and the main news editor on the paper
243 there, until they said, one of them said to me 'the hours won't be a problem
244 will they, I know you're part time now', and I said 'well it won't be a
245 problem if you allow me to stay part time' and they said 'well the job is
246 full time', now I knew that and I wasn't about to quibble it, I just wanted to

247 see really how far I could get and as soon as I said, I then said 'I would
248 want it part time' and they said 'well there's another news editor who's
249 already part time, we don't really want another' so that was the end of that.
250 so maybe it's more to do with being part time than being a teleworker, but I
251 can't go for the sort of jobs that would interest me because they're office
252 based, and a lot of the jobs in a newspaper is to with talking to teams of
253 people and getting them to do certain things

254 K – Sure, so the impact on your life more generally then, would you say
255 it's been positive or negative?

256 A – Oh very positive yeah

257 K – Great, is there anything that you'd change or would you ever go back
258 to traditional working in an office?

259 A – I prefer, you sort of miss bits in the office, when I go in occasionally, I
260 miss the sort of buzz in an office, when you're on a newspaper when
261 you're reaching deadlines it's very exciting and you don't tend to get so
262 much of that at home, em, but I think being away from work you get a lot
263 of perspective, it makes you realise that isn't such a big deal, and I avoid
264 all the politics in work, so I enjoy that side of being at home, don't get so
265 bogged down in that

266 K – Do you think telework's an effective way for parents to reconcile work
267 and family life then?

268 A – It is, but it depends on your job, not all jobs can be placed at home. I'm
269 trying to think of jobs that would be, very few I'd imagine, lots of sales
270 people I expect and then they're out and about as well, it depends on the
271 nature of the job. I'd have thought most people's jobs couldn't be done at
272 home and they would find it very difficult, and they'd have to face the
273 question that I faced, you either give one up, have one or have the other, or
274 take a lesser job in a different field, which tend to be less intellectually
275 challenging jobs

276 K – So for you has it been a good way to reconcile work and family life?

277 A – Totally yeah, totally

278 K - My overall research question is 'how does home-based telework impact
279 upon the professional and parental identities of men and women?', would
280 you be able to speculate what you think any of the findings might be, so for
281 example how has it affected your identity as a Mum and as a journalist?

282 A – As a journalist, I think in my bosses eyes, it would be, they know my
283 family come first, my choice to a. work part time and work at home, means
284 I want to keep on working, but I'm not as ambitious possibly as I used to
285 be. My own identity, I don't feel I've changed at all, I've always been like
286 this, you know

287 K – So teleworking hasn't really changed how you think about yourself
288 and who you are?

289 A – Don't think so.

290 K – How would you categorise yourself, as a Mother firstly or a journalist
291 firstly?

292 A – Mother

293 K – And telework hasn't really changed that, that's always been the case?

294 A – No. Obviously before I had children, work was very much the focus,
295 but I always knew I would have children, hoped I would have children, and
296 that they would be, they would come first, so its not really changed

297 K- Do you think it's changed how your kids see you, the fact that Mum's at
298 home most of the time?

299 A – They've never known any different, because when I worked in the
300 office they were really too young to notice. it was only when Annabel was
301 4 and a bit that I started working from home, and also because I was
302 always part time when they were born I was here most of the time any way

303 K – Do you think it's changed how other people see you, your husband for
304 example, how they think of you?

305 A – I don't know, interesting one that, I don't really know

306 K – Em. We're pretty much towards the end of the interview. is there any
307 thing else that you'd like to add about your experiences of working from
308 home?

309 A – Not really, it is a positive experience and I feel I'm in control, a. of my
310 career – even though that's not progressed really since I've been at home,
311 but I've always felt really that that's my choice, so I have felt in control of
312 what I do at home and at work, so it has been yeah totally positive

313 K – Great, what I'd like to do now, if that's ok, is just scan around the
314 office with the camera

315 A – Yeah, yeah

316 K - Just to get a bit of a visual impression of it

317 K – So we're into a downstairs room here, and it's the room that we step
318 into just off the main hallway as we enter the front door

319 A – Yeah, it's just a small study

320 K – And is this an ideal set up for you?

321 A – Yeah, yeah, the area's quite quiet and don't really get many
322 distractions

323 K – So we've got lots of book cases floor to ceiling, with CD's more than
324 anything, some books at the top too, some family photographs in the office
325 too, that's nice. So is this used just for work this office?

326 A – No not really, it is my office when I'm working, but it's the main
327 computer in the house, it's used by the children as well and they use the
328 internet or playing games, it's used by my husband. his computer's down
329 there, it's used for putting photos on the computer and generally bits and
330 bobs of work, writing letters, home finances we do in here, and generally
331 study as well as an office

332 K – Ok. That's great, and is there anything that you would change about
333 this working space, or are you pretty happy that it's used as a communal
334 area?

335 A – No I like that, I like it being used by everybody

336 K – Ok, that's great. I've got a good panorama of that. Thank you very
337 much then, thanks for taking part

338 A – You're welcome.

Interview 13: Sandra

- 1 K- Could you say your name and job title?
2 S – My names Sandra Jones. I work for Redham Borough Council and I'm
3 a Revenue and Benefits officer
4 K – Lovely, and what does that entail?
5 S – I work collecting council tax, arrears with courts, er, liability orders,
6 and summonses, summons people who haven't paid their council tax. work
7 with external bailiffs, sending bailiffs out to peoples houses – not very nice
8 really but you don't tell a lot of people your work
9 K – How did you get into that kind of work?
10 S – Em, it was just really em, my brother in law asked me if I wanted to go
11 and work at the council for about 6 weeks, that was 12 years ago. to go and
12 sit at the side of visiting officers, who went out and visited people in their
13 homes, and it was a job on that side of the council. but then I got moved up
14 and went onto the recovery of council tax
15 K – You been with the council pretty much since you left school then?
16 S – No, I've worked there 12, 13 years I've worked. So cos I'm... 46 – I
17 had to think
18 K – So before that you were raising your family obviously?
19 S – I was yes, we had a pub
20 K – Oh lovely, right so you've been your own boss for a while as well
21 S – Yes, I've worked at one or two different jobs
22 K – What kind of thing then predominantly?
23 S – We had a pub and I was the landlady, then I worked at – I was a hair
24 dresser – from school I worked in hairdressing and I worked in
25 hairdressing for 9 years, and after that I did stop to raise a family, and we
26 took on a pub, and after we stopped at the pub I finished up going to the
27 council, and work at the council
28 K – Lovely, so how long would you say you spend at home as versus to
29 going into an office, if that's what you do?
30 S – Per week?
31 K – Yeah
32 S – I work the 37 hours per week
33 K – Right and you're pretty much from home all the time is it?
34 S – Yeah, permanently
35 K -And are you enjoying your job at the moment?
36 S – I love it. I was very doubtful whether to go for it when it was, they said
37 there was going to be a meeting, whether people were interested in home-
38 working, I always said 'no' I weren't going to go home-working, I thought
39 I'll go to the meeting and see what it entailed and me Dad wasn't very well
40 at the time, and I thought right I'll go and have a see, see what it entails and
41 what was said in the meeting about the different things, and I thought I'll
42 give it a try, so that's why I decided I'll put my name down, didn't know
43 whether I'd get picked, but I did at the end of the day
44 K - Great
45 S - And it was only a pilot scheme for 3 months, and I thought if I didn't
46 like it I could always go back in the office
47 K – Have you got any aims for your future career?
48 S – No, not really, no, cos I'm quite happy with what I'm doing. I'm quite
49 comfortable
50 K – Great

Interview 13: Sandra

- 51 S – It runs round my family, it works for me, I'm quite happy at what I do
52 K – What kind of worker would you say you are?
53 S – I'm quite conscientious. People think that because you work at home
54 you're going to be messing about, but I don't, I work at home like I used to
55 work at work, I log on at 8, and I work through, I have half an hour for my
56 dinner, but do I work through, I don't switch off and do this. do that. I
57 work constantly
58 K – And what does your career mean to you?
59 S – Well, it gives me my independence, and it gives me my own money. it
60 gives me money to be able to spend on my family and things. but I'm not
61 really career minded, I'm just a normal housewife who's got a full time
62 job, with a nice family
63 K – And do you think your career might have been affected by starting to
64 work at home?
65 S – No, not really
66 K – And so you live here with your kids. how many have you got?
67 S – Got 3 children, 1 lives at uni though
68 K – Away at uni, ok. How is childcare, schooling, arranged at the moment?
69 S – Ok, because I'm here for Lee in a morning when he gets up, sort him
70 out, he sits and watches telly before he goes off to school, and then I'm
71 here when he comes home at night, whereas when I used to work before
72 my mum used to be here for Lee, so it's taken the pressure off of me Mum
73 K – And how about domestic work, do you share that?
74 S – Yeah, yeah we do, we do quite a bit on a weekend, I run round with
75 hoover in me dinner hour, was bathroom round and things, strip beds in the
76 morning, get it in the washer
77 K – Is it pretty much 50/50? - You live here with you husband?
78 S – Yes. Oh no, no, no, the housework I do quite a lot of it
79 K – *(laughs)*
80 S - They do bits but not to call owt.
81 K –And did you have some time off work when you're children were born
82 then? You had a bit of time where you stayed at home...
83 S – Maternity leave or...?
84 K – ...and did the Mum bit?
85 S – Yeah
86 K – How much time off did you have?
87 S – I only worked part time
88 K – I see
89 S - I only started working full time in the last 12 months
90 K – Right, right
91 S - I've only ever worked part time
92 K – And what kind of parent do you think you are?
93 S – Em, I try to be a nice friendly parent with me children, I try to do a lot
94 with them, I try to take an interest in what their doing, I try very hard to be
95 approachable, to be there to guide and advise them. and just for 'em to be
96 happy and that's it
97 K – Lovely. brilliant, and what do you think you've learnt since becoming
98 a parent?
99 S – It's very hard
100 K – *(laughs)*

Interview 13: Sandra

- 101 S – Nobody gives you a hand with this, and you don't really know if you're
102 doing it right or not, so that's one of the hardest things
- 103 K – Do you think your role in your family's changed since you started
104 working from home?
- 105 S – No, I don't, no.
- 106 K – How long have you worked from home now?
- 107 S – Since September
- 108 K - Since September, so we're talking 8, 9, 10 months is it?
- 109 S - No, September, October... 7
- 110 K – 7 months – you're better at maths than me. And that was instigated by
111 people at work saying 'we'd like a group of people who can be home-
112 based'
- 113 S – They asked, yeah
- 114 K – And you went along
- 115 S – If anyone was interested and would like to come to a meeting to hear
116 the details
- 117 K – So you were quite undecided at first then?
- 118 S – I was very, very against it
- 119 K – (*laughs*)
- 120 S- No I wouldn't go home-working, because I thought I'd lose me friends
121 and I'd miss the company
- 122 K – So what persuaded you to do it in the end?
- 123 S – Because me Dad wasn't very well, and me Mum came every teatime
124 for Lee, after school and things, and it put pressure on her. and I just
125 thought it'd just ease it for everyone, and I just thought I'd just have a go at
126 it and see if I liked it
- 127 K – Yeah cos it was only going to be a short trial
- 128 S – It were a pilot scheme at first yeah
- 129 K – Who did you discuss it with? – Did you talk to your husband about it?
- 130 S – I spoke to my husband and he thought it were a brilliant idea, I spoke to
131 me kids about it and they were 'oh stay at home Mum it'll be great', so
132 yeah we discussed it between us and nobody said 'I don't want you at
133 home full time'
- 134 K – And how about your colleagues at work, was anybody a bit worried, or
135 were they happy for you?
- 136 S – Oh yeah very happy, I just don't know if they thought it'd be more
137 work involved for them
- 138 K – Right
- 139 S – They were quite alright about it, you know
- 140 K – So was it better than you expected or worse
- 141 S – Hmm, it's lovely
- 142 K – Oh good, better than you thought it was going to be then?
- 143 S – It's wonderful, I do find sometimes I do get a bit lonely and I do miss
144 the company, but apart from that I'm absolutely – I'm great
- 145 K – Before you started working from home, did you have any opinions of
146 what other people who worked from home might be like?
- 147 S – No I didn't, no, because we didn't ever really get any feedback from
148 anyone who worked at home, because we didn't know who did it cos I
149 think we were one of the first boroughs around to do it. everyone was in
150 the process of doing it, but it wasn't done

Interview 13: Sandra

151 K – Do you have any idea what a typical teleworker or home-based might
152 be like?

153 S – No

154 K – And how do you keep in touch with your colleagues and clients?

155 S – By phone, cos sometimes I have to have to phone the office about
156 work, by phone, we go in once a month for office meetings, so I do leave
157 me self half an hour to go round and speak to me friends who I haven't
158 seen for a while, so I keep in touch with them like that

159 K – Yeah, when you go into the office, you have a good chat.

160 S - Yeah

161 K - And do – are you ever out and about, on the road, visiting people?

162 S - No, no

163 K – And have you had any issues of isolation then? You mentioned you
164 felt a little bit lonely sometimes

165 S –I do feel a little bit lonely sometimes, but I think I just get used to it, I
166 have me music on, and I just get me head down and just get on with it, so I
167 don't wallow in it, I just think it was my decision to do the home-working,
168 and I do enjoy it most of the time

169 K – Do you think you've got more control over your work now?

170 S – I feel as if er, I'm not under as much pressure and I just feel as if I'm
171 taking control of my work more than whatever I have done, yep

172 K – Do you think you're a better worker now?

173 S – Yes

174 K – In what kind of ways?

175 S – Because there's no pressures on, you're not, there's no pressures on
176 answering the phone, dealing with the general public though the phone, I
177 just feel as if the pressure's off that way and I can concentrate more on
178 what I'm doing rather than having interruptions and things

179 K – And what kind of things did you have to kind of think about when you
180 started working from home? Did you have to develop any strategies to
181 manage being based at home?

182 S – No I just think it was a case of being strict on me self, knowing that I
183 was at home, I knew that I'd got to get me head down and get me head
184 round working from home and not thinking oh I can sit and have a chat – I
185 do, I mean, me Mum'll call occasionally and we'll sit and I'll stop and
186 have a drink and things, but it was just getting me self motivated to do that,
187 actually staying and working at home

188 K – Did I see in the hallway, is that your little set up?

189 S – That's the office

190 K – Lovely, just in the entrance hall. Did you have to do anything to kind
191 of keep your work separate from your home stuff? Did you find that a
192 struggle at all?

193 S – No, no, no because it was all –

194 K – Did it fit in well?

195 S - When the kids, when I first coming to work from home, Lee me little
196 lad 'oh great we can go on the computer and things' so I had to sit down
197 and explain to him that it's all done through work and it was all for work
198 and it wasn't for their pleasure that the actual computer was coming, and
199 from then I've had no trouble, never asked to go on it, never been on it.

Interview 13: Sandra

200 they know it's my work and once I log on it's for me and once I log off
201 that's it, it's out of – it's nobody's only mine for work

202 K – So overall do you think the impact on your family's been positive?

203 S – Very

204 K – Great. In what kind of ways? Have your children said particular
205 things?

206 S – Em. I just think it's been nice for 'em cos they know that there's
207 somebody here 24/7, not just for me children, but for me parents as well,
208 cos me Mum's been in hospital this week, well last week, so I've been able
209 to alternate the hours that I do and work around going to see me Mum and
210 looking after her. But also the impact of being at home, with Lee, when he
211 comes home from school, it worked well with that. It's worked well with
212 Sonia coming home from university, I'm not always at work – I do work
213 but she knows I'm here so we can still a conversation so she's not feeling
214 lonely, so yeah it works

215 K – Great. And overall what do you think the impact's been on your
216 career? We've kind of touched on that already – do you think it's had a
217 negative impact on your career or positive or...?

218 S – No it's just the same as when I was in the office, it's not, it's not, I just
219 do worry sometimes that we do get a bit left out, feel a bit left out when
220 we're at home, we get forgot about sometimes, but I don't know if that's
221 my insecurity or through not being in the office and sat dealing with
222 everyone and things

223 K – Do you think the impact on your life generally has been positive then,
224 of working from home?

225 S – Yeah, yeah

226 K – So overall would you change anything – would you ever go back to
227 work in a traditional office?

228 S – I would never say I would never go back to work in a traditional office,
229 but taking er, if I'd got the choice I'd rather stay at home, I'd sooner stay at
230 home, cos I find it's a lot, it's a lot less stressful at home, a lot less stressful

231 K – Overall then is working from home an effective way for parents to
232 reconcile work and family life?

233 S – Yeah, I think so, yeah

234 K – Right, the overall research question I'm asking is 'how does working
235 from home impact upon people's professional and parental identities?' and
236 I was just wondering if you had any thoughts on that and how it's affected
237 your identity as a Mum and identity as a council worker?

238 S – Mm, don't know really, I don't know, I can't really answer that one
239 because I don't feel that me family look at me any different, and I don't
240 feel me friends at work look at me any different, I just think my identity
241 seems the same, although it's just different surroundings

242 K – Yeah, and how about how you think about yourself, has that been
243 changed by working from home?

244 S – I feel as if I'm a better person for it, because as I say I feel a lot less
245 stressed, with the travelling cos I don't drive, the bus journeys, it takes you
246 an hour to get there, an hour to get back, I can to the hour on the computer,
247 less stress great

248 K – And how would you categorise yourself first, as a mother or as a
249 professional council worker?

Interview 13: Sandra

250 S – Both actually

251 K – Yeah

252 S – Yeah cos I switch me self on to me council worker mode when I'm on
253 me own, the kids have gone to school and I'm, I can switch me self back
254 on to a Mum

255 K- And do you think working from home's changed that at all. or is that
256 how you've always been?

257 S – Em. No. I used to find that I got home, I'd need to unwind and come
258 down and really think you know 'oh I've got to start tea and I've got to do
259 that' and I'd get myself really anxious, where as now I don't so I just think
260 it's made me more sure of myself

261 K – Great, would you say it's kind of allowed you to enjoy being a Mum?

262 S – Mm.

263 K – Yes it seems like it

264 S – But I've always enjoyed being a Mum

265 K – Yeah. Do you think it might be different if you were a man and I was
266 asking you these questions?

267 S – Yes, Yeah

268 K - Mm, I wonder, that's part of what my research is seeking to find

269 S – Yes I do because at the end of the day a man doesn't have to fit in
270 housework, the guidance that a Mum gives – I'm not saying my husband
271 doesn't guide the kids cos he's a fantastic Dad him, but I think kids always
272 seem to turn to the Mum, learn from their advice and stuff, but yeah I just
273 think it's different for a man

274 K – Hopefully I'll find out what kind of ways it's different, cos I've done.
275 so far well I'm hoping I'll have done at the end of it 7 interviews with men
276 and 7 with women, so I'm hoping to compare that and see what's different
277 really. Em, do you think it's changed how other people view you, perhaps
278 people who don't know you so well, are people aware that you work from
279 home?

280 S – Oh no, em, as months have gone on and people have said 'oh are you
281 still working for the council Sandra?' and I say 'yeah I am but I work from
282 home now' – 'what do you mean you work from home?' – 'well I work
283 from home' – 'God, aren't you lucky, how fantastic, what do you do?' – 'I
284 do the same as I did before, collect council tax' – 'how do you do it?' - so
285 you have to go through all the rigmarole of explaining how it's set up and
286 how it works and then they look at you 'oh it's great, must be great that'.
287 quite a few people seem envious, 'wish we could do it'.

288 K - (*laughs*)

289 S - Yeah, when people know, they want to know the ins and outs the whys
290 and wherefores

291 K – I wonder if more people would like to work from home actually

292 S – I think so, yeah

293 K – Do you know that's gone really quickly – that's pretty much
294 everything I wanted to ask, other than if there's anything you want to add
295 about working from home, your experiences?

296 S – No not really, just that I enjoy it and I'm sure that if people were
297 allowed to do it, cos there's one or two in our office that can't do it or have
298 been told that they're not allowed to do it cos there's not enough staff on, I
299 think there's one or two would thoroughly enjoy it. No, I just think some

- 300 people it'll work for and people it won't and I'm fortunately one of those
301 people that it works for
- 302 K – Great, thank you for taking part and could you give me some feedback
303 about how you felt taking part in this project?
- 304 S – Very comfortable
- 305 K - Good
- 306 S - Very relaxed, I was a bit anxious before you arrived, wondering what
307 was going to go off, but no problem
- 308 K – And the camera was it...you were a bit nervous?
- 309 S – Yeah no problem, I'm not really bothered about having the camera
310 pointed at me and having to talk at it
- 311 K – I'll not be broadcasting it on national telly or anything!
- 312 S – No, no problem
- 313 K – The last thing I'd like to do is look at how you've got the office set up
314 with the camera
- 315 S – Yeah no problem
- 316 K – We're just having a look at Sandra's working space, which is in the
317 entrance hall of her house, where all the coats and all the entrance bits are,
318 do you ever find any problems with it being this close to the front door
319 Sandra?
- 320 S – No, only that I can see somebody coming up the path before they
321 knock on the door – no I'm only kidding
- 322 K – But they can see you unfortunately, they know you're in – and it's nice
323 and easy to collect your post I should think
- 324 S – Yeah
- 325 K – So you're right next to the kitchen as well so that must be very handy
326 for cups of coffee
- 327 S – Yep it is
- 328 K - And you've just got your plasma screen and computer and keyboard,
329 got your in and out drawers, and a little bit of storage space underneath
- 330 S – When I first came home working, I had me desk and me chair and
331 everything in the front room, and we moved the suite though, because I
332 didn't have a spare room, because all this wasn't built on, but there was a
333 panic on, where we were going to put the Christmas tree, so my husband
334 was in the middle of building this, and he got it done for Christmas and we
335 moved in here, and I had the idea of putting the desk in here and we
336 weren't sure if the desk was too big, but it's worked out fine actually, and
337 it just feels as if this now is my space, it doesn't interfere with anybody and
338 the front room is back to normal as it should be and that is why I'm here,
339 because all me bedrooms are taken up, we haven't got no spare bedrooms,
340 so I just class this as my little working office
- 341 K – Lovely, and is this ideal for you then?
- 342 S – It works out fine, yeah
- 343 K – Great thank you very much

Interview 14: Ruby

- 1 K- Could you just say your name and job title for the camera please?
2 R – Ruby Richardson and I’m a benefits officer
3 K – And what does that job involve?
4 R – Well it’s basically, people who are on a low income or on benefits such
5 as income support jobseekers it just gives them some help towards their
6 rent and council tax benefit
7 K – How did you get into that occupation?
8 R – Sort of fell into it really, it’s not something that I aspired to be, I
9 worked for the council, on the councils agency, the have their own agency
10 which not many people know about and what they tend to do is hire people
11 to go out and work at schools as admin, and you know teaching assistants,
12 so I applied for that and the lady who was in charge of that actually needed
13 some cover in the office in the council offices and she hired me and I
14 started that and I did that temporary for about 3 months and this job came
15 up and I just applied for it and got it, it’s not something I wanted to do
16 necessarily, it was just that it came up and the pay was a lot better and it
17 was a permanent job, so I applied for it and got it
18 K – Have you always done something kind of with an administration
19 background?
20 R – No not really, I’ve done all sorts, from bar work to working in a
21 factory, depending on what my life’s been like at that time and what I’ve
22 wanted out of a job
23 K – Sure, and you spend pretty much all your time working from home
24 then, just with the occasional meeting in town then?
25 R – Training, if we’ve got training, go into the office for that, meetings -
26 we have regular meetings once a month, which we have to go into the
27 office for and that’s about it really just training and meetings
28 K – And are you happy with your job at the moment?
29 R – Yeah, yeah I’m a lot happier being at home than in the office
30 K – And have you got any kind of aims for a future career?
31 R – I don’t know, because being at home actually - well personally I feel
32 being at home stops you from moving up the career so to speak because
33 you’re that content with being at home and the situation that you have, you
34 sort of think to yourself well in order for me to get me self back into the
35 office it’s going to have to be going some to be, you know to give you that
36 incentive to give up what you’ve got, because it’s not just, being at home,
37 it’s not just a job, you can, you fit your work around your life, rather than
38 the other way, when you’re in the office your life has to fit around work so
39 to speak, so it’d have to be a very, very, either very interesting job that I’d
40 love doing, or a very well paid job to make me even contemplate stop
41 doing what I’m doing now, it’s not the job itself it’s that actual home-
42 working experience
43 K – So it would be good for you if someone came along and said you can
44 have a promotion but...
45 R – But still stay at home – that would be brilliant
46 K – (*laughs*)
47 R – Whether that would be likely to happen I don’t know
48 K – What kind of worker would you say you are? Any thing that comes
49 into your mind
50 R – In what sense, what kind of worker?

Interview 14: Ruby

51 K – Well I suppose some people would say ‘I’m very committed’, ‘I’m a
52 real go-getter’ or...

53 R – That might have been so when I was in the office, I was very go-getter
54 and trying to prove me self all the time, again, because you’re always
55 thinking about promotion, but since I’ve been at home working, you know,
56 that’s not necessarily been the case, I’m still committed to my work you
57 know, I do still give 100% when I’m working, it’s just, I don’t feel that
58 I’ve got to try and impress anybody, there’s no bosses walking around
59 looking and monitoring how you’re working, if you nip to the toilet, how
60 long you spend in the toilet – that’s all gone really, so I don’t tend to be ‘go
61 get ‘em’ but I am committed

62 K – Are you quite organised, meet deadlines and things?

63 R – Yes, you have to, in our role we have targets that we need to meet
64 weekly and er, so you do have to prioritise on a day to day basis

65 K – And what does your career mean to you?

66 R – Well it used to mean quite a lot, I don’t think it means quite as much to
67 me now as it used to, I think that since I’ve started home-working my views
68 on what’s important has changed

69 K – And do you think your career’s been affected by working from home?

70 – Kind of already covered that, haven’t we?

71 R – I don’t think it’s been affected in a bad way – I’d just be less likely to
72 go and push for promotion being here now than I would in the office, if I
73 was in the office I’d be pushing all the time for promotion and applying for
74 other roles within the office but being at home - no. So I suppose if
75 somebody’s a really strong career person then yes you would say it’s
76 affected your career, but I don’t feel personally it’s affected mine

77 K – You live here with - is it your husband? And 3 children...

78 R – And 2 cats and a fish

79 K – Little tiny fish, who we’ll get on the camera in a bit actually, and could
80 you tell me again the age range of your children?

81 R – Yes, my eldest is 14 in a couple of weeks, and I’ve got a middle one
82 who’s 9 and a little one who’s 7.

83 K – And has any of them got any special needs or anything like that, need
84 extra care?

85 R – No

86 K – Ok, so how do you arrange childcare and schooling and things?

87 R – Well luckily my husband works 12 hour nights on a 4 on, 4 off rota, so
88 he takes the kids to school every day and he picks them up everyday – it’s
89 not very often I would actually take the children to school or pick them up
90 – he does that, we sort of meet in the middle, you know we’re passing ships
91 at night really when he’s working, but then we get 4 shifts, 4 days when he
92 doesn’t work at all, so we get to see a lot of each other then

93 K – Excellent, so how about if one of the kids was ill from school, how
94 would you manage that?

95 R – Well that has happened actually, and luckily it did happen on a day
96 when Chris wasn’t working so there was no problem but if Chris was
97 working I can actually work up to 10 hours a day or a minimum of 4 hours
98 a day, without using any flexi or holidays, so if that was to happen and one
99 of the children wasn’t very well, I would actually just work 4 hours and I’d

Interview 14: Ruby

- 100 work that when me husband was available to look after which ever child it
101 was, and the rest of the time I'd just look after them me self
- 102 K – And how about domestic work in the home, how's that shared?
- 103 R – Well in terms of washing up me husband does it all, I'm coming across
104 as very idle here
- 105 K – Oh no, no
- 106 R – We have a cleaner so neither one of us does cleaning. we do have a
107 cleaner, but pots we sort of share between ourselves, when me husband's
108 working I do em, if he's not he does em, and washing I do, and that's about
109 it really, everything else is done by the cleaner
- 110 K – Great. So when you had your kids were you working at the time, or did
111 you take lots of time off?
- 112 R – No, when I had me first child Joey, he was. I was working full time
113 and I decided when I had him that I would to take some time off and I
114 didn't work probably for about 4-5 years and I'd only just gone back into
115 part time work when I got pregnant with Kyle, my second and I had Kyle
116 and then I straight went back into part time work again. and I had Keely,
117 and I went back into part time work, and I continued to do part time work
118 until I felt the children where at an age –well until they started school
119 really – and then I started full time work when Keely was at nursery school
120 I started full time work
- 121 K –and what kind of parent would you say you are?
- 122 R – A very good one
- 123 K – Excellent
- 124 R – The best – that's what my children would say
- 125 K – Are there any kind of words you'd use about your parenting – are you
126 very hands on or...?
- 127 R – I suppose I'm the one that disciplines the children most, but that was
128 the same for being in the office as it is for home-working, you know it sort
129 of - that hasn't altered at all – I've always been the one that's disciplined
130 the children and been the one 'Wait while your Mom... wait while I tell
131 your Mom'
- 132 K- What do you think you've learnt since becoming a parent?
- 133 R – Oh God – I don't think you've got enough reel in your video to –
- 134 K – (*laughs*)
- 135 R - You learn so much, it's very hard to actually put your finger on what
136 you've learned – you become less selfish and less self-absorbed, sort of
137 your children become an extension of you really, you think more of them
138 than you do of yourself, they come first always. You do learn a bit about
139 yourself and your own needs and personality, but I suppose that's true of
140 all people
- 141 K – Do you think your role in your family's changed since you started
142 working from home?
- 143 R – No
- 144 K – Pretty much the same?
- 145 R – Pretty much the same
- 146 K – Ok. And how long have you worked from home?
- 147 R – Since last September
- 148 K – So that would be...?
- 149 R – June, July...

Interview 14: Ruby

- 150 K – 10 months ish, ok, and who instigated that, was it yourself asking for it
151 or was it something that came along?
- 152 R – The council was piloting it and they wanted some volunteers to try it
153 out, and I was actually, out of all the volunteers, there was probably 5 or 6
154 Benefits Officers that went for it, and out of the 5 or 6 Benefits Officers I
155 was the one who was the most negative about the whole experience – I
156 didn't think it'd work
- 157 K - Right, why was that then, had you heard other things?
- 158 R – No I hadn't heard anything at all – but the others that had volunteered
159 for home-working didn't have any children or their children that they had
160 were a lot older than mine, and I just didn't think it was going to work. I
161 thought the kids would probably not be able to differentiate between when
162 I'm working and when I'm not, I thought they'd be asking me for problems
163 all the time, I thought when they were in the house bickering I wouldn't be
164 able to switch off from it, so I expected - I came in to the home-working
165 experience on the pilot scheme, expecting myself to be back in the office at
166 Christmas when the pilot was over, I was most surprised to find that it was
167 actually wonderful and it worked fantastic
- 168 K – So why did you decide to do it then if you thought it was going to be
169 ... a bit of a struggle?
- 170 R – I don't know really – I was interested in the idea of working from
171 home but I didn't think it was going to be for me because I'd got young
172 children, so I went on it because they need to have that perspective, from
173 someone who's got young children.
- 174 K - Yeah
- 175 R - I mean the pilot scheme was all about whether it was going to be
176 successful, whether productivity was going to increase, and so forth, and I
177 felt that the pilot needed someone who was slightly negative, who didn't
178 think it would work on it, so I did
- 179 K – And who did you discuss it with?
- 180 R – Well I discussed it with me husband, the children, and then again at
181 work with me line manager, and that's about it really, I didn't really
182 discuss it with anybody else
- 183 K – What was your husband's reaction when you said you were thinking
184 about it?
- 185 R – He didn't think it would work, much in the same – well he didn't think
186 it would work because he thought I'd stay in bed all day and I have no
187 motivation to get up and do work but again he didn't think it'd work
- 188 K – What about your kids?
- 189 R – They couldn't wait they thought it was going to be brilliant
- 190 K – Right, cos they could have Mum on hand all the time?
- 191 R – Yeah. Just the fact that I was here, they thought was wonderful, that
192 when they came home from school that they could pop in here and say
193 'Hiya, we're back, we've had a great day', give me a kiss and then go and
194 watch telly or whatever they want to do
- 195 K – And I take it that it's been better than you thought it was going to be
- 196 R – Yeah, I wouldn't still be doing it if it wasn't, I would have stopped.
197 And we did have - the pilot - people who were on the pilot scheme did
198 have the option, after the pilot had finished, of deciding whether they
199 wanted to go back into the office or remain at home, whereas once the pilot

Interview 14: Ruby

- 200 was over and it was rolled out to the rest of the council, it was a situation
201 where you did it and if you didn't like it – tough. So I was glad that I did
202 go on the pilot cos I might never of done it otherwise
- 203 K – Mm. So what were – did you have any opinions of other people who
204 teleworked, did you think they might kind of not work from them or...?
- 205 R – Not really, no, I thought it would work for everybody else who put
206 their names down for the home-working scheme, I thought it would work
207 for all of the people involved, because they'd either not got any children or
208 any commitments at all other than themselves and their partner, or like I
209 say they had got children but they were of an age where the children
210 wouldn't be a problem, so I didn't expect any of the other people on the
211 home-working scheme to have any problems anyway
- 212 K – And now that you work from home yourself do you have any idea
213 what a typical home-worker might be like?
- 214 R – I would imagine they'd be very much like me. Depending again on
215 what they've got, I would imagine all home-workers work in the same way
216 as I do, in so far as they prioritise what they've got going off in their lives
217 that week around how much work they can do on set days. and I would
218 imagine that's true of all home-workers, I mean I'm only summarising
219 because don't know, but that's what I'd say
- 220 K – And how do you keep in touch with your colleagues and your clients?
- 221 R – Well like I say we have monthly training - not training days – monthly
222 team meetings, but I've got a work line on my desk and I can speak or
223 email if I'm, you know if I need to discuss anything with them
- 224 K – Right. Have you had any issues of isolation?
- 225 R – I thought – that was another reason I didn't think I would like home
226 working – because I did think that I would become very isolated and to me
227 part and parcel of being at work was the social aspect of it, and I did think
228 that I would miss that really, really badly and I haven't really no, I haven't
229 been isolated at all, I think just the advantages of being at home just totally
230 outweigh any isolation that you may feel, I mean at the end of the day you
231 can work from anything up to 10 hours a day to as little as 4, so if I was
232 feeling isolated I'd perhaps have a short day and go and visit a friend
- 233 K – Yeah so you've got the flexibility in that respect
- 234 R – Yeah, yeah
- 235 K – Do you think you've got more control over your work now?
- 236 R - No. I think the work is still controlled by the people in the office
- 237 K – So that's pretty much stayed the same
- 238 R – I don't think that's changed in so far as you know. they would still
239 send you X amounts of claims in the morning and top your tray up
240 throughout the day, I don't think that's altered at all, the atmosphere's
241 altered because obviously you've not got bosses walking up and down,
242 looking over your shoulder. but the actual amount of work and the way that
243 that work's given to you hasn't changed at all
- 244 K – Ok, and do you think that you're a better worker now?
- 245 R – Well my productivity's increased since being working at home
- 246 K – Right, that's being measured centrally is it?
- 247 R – Yes, that's measured on a weekly basis
- 248 K – And what was the learning curve of becoming a home-worker for you?
- 249 R – I don't know really

Interview 14: Ruby

- 250 K - Did you have to develop strategies to keep the kids away or...?
251 R - No, I mean the door, this is my office as you can see and this door's
252 open all the time. when the children have gone to school the house is quite
253 quiet anyway and when the children come home they instantly come in to
254 the room, say 'hello', give me a kiss, tell me what kind of day they've had,
255 which takes probably 5 or 10 minutes
256 K - So all the things they were hoping they could do -
257 R - They can
258 K - They can - oh that's good then
259 R - And the oldest boy, he comes in first and he'll tell me what kind of day
260 he's had, how much he hates his teachers etc. etc., and then he'll go
261 upstairs and get on with his home work and I don't really see him then until
262 I've finished work, and then the children, the younger two, they come in
263 and they say hello and what not and then they go back into the room next
264 door and either play on the Playstation or X-box or watch television,
265 whatever and they don't tend to bother me then really
266 K - So what do you think the impact's been on your family overall then,
267 has it been quite positive?
268 R - I think it's a positive thing, yeah definitely a positive thing. I mean
269 both me and me husband were quite surprised at how good it was and how
270 it did effect, well just the relationship, we were, very much, when I was
271 office-based, we hardly ever saw each other, whereas now we do see each
272 other far more of each other than we did before, and the children they just
273 think it's great, if they do need me, if there was an emergency, I'm here.
274 It's not like they've got to phone the office, wait 25 minutes for me to get
275 through traffic to get to them, I'm here instantly
276 K - And what do you think the impact on your career has been overall? It's
277 probably something we've covered...
278 R - Yeah, we have, I mean I don't really, I wouldn't say that I am now a
279 career person, I would say that I am now quite happy to stay as I am and
280 mull along and continue what I'm doing now, the job itself isn't a very
281 nice, I wouldn't say it's a very satisfying job but the advantages of being at
282 home just outweigh that - like I say, I think if I was based in the office I
283 would not be doing that job anymore, but because I'm at home it makes it
284 doable
285 K - Great, so the impact on your life generally has been positive?
286 R - Yes, definitely positive
287 K - You wouldn't change anything then, you can't ever see yourself going
288 back to traditional work?
289 R - I can't see myself ever going back into an office, no. What I have
290 thought about is becoming self-employed and working for myself
291 K - Right
292 R - From home - that has crossed my mind I have to say. Doing something
293 that I enjoyed and being at home, I don't think you could get better than
294 that
295 K - So overall then do you think that telework or working from home is an
296 effective way for parents to reconcile work and family?
297 R - That depends on the parent. I would say, definitely. I mean a lot of
298 parents actually go to work to get away from their children and especially
299 Moms I think tend to need that time away from their husbands and their

Interview 14: Ruby

300 children to be their selves, and obviously in their situation I wouldn't
301 advise home-working

302 K – And on to these identity questions then. my overall research question is
303 'how does working from home impact upon the professional and parental
304 identity of men and women?' do you have any idea what the findings might
305 be, or what you think for yourself?

306 R – Well I think it becomes more morphed if you like. it's not two separate
307 identities anymore really, you're not 'work Ruby' and 'home Mom'. it sort
308 of just combines the two, in fact I would say it probably you become more
309 of a... you're a Mom more than a worker really, and the work sort of fits in
310 around everything else you've got to do which as a parent myself I think
311 that's how it should be really, you know the work should fit around your
312 family

313 K – I'm also interviewing men, I was just wondering if you could comment
314 on what you think...

315 R – I should imagine the men feel the same as the women in so far as they,
316 some people they need to go to work, I think it depends again on how
317 strong a personality a person has got, male or female. if someone has not
318 got a very strong personality and they sort of 'Mom' all the time then they
319 probably would need to go out to work and be that person, I personally
320 don't feel as if I need that, I think I'm quite a strong character and, you
321 know, when people come round to see me whether it be me friends or if
322 someone from work comes, I don't think I've changed at all from when I
323 was in the office to now, personality wise I'm still as strong and
324 independent as I was in the office

325 K – So it's not changed how you think about yourself?

326 R – No, not at all

327 K – I think we've covered this again, how would you categorise yourself
328 firstly as a Mum or as a Benefits Officer

329 R – I would categorise myself as a Mom first and a Benefits Officer
330 second, but can I just say I would have said that even if you'd asked me
331 when I was office-based,

332 K – Sure, sure

333 R – I would have still been a Mom first and a Benefits Officer second,
334 because you prioritise with what's important in your life and obviously my
335 family are more important than any work, you work because you have to,
336 to support and give privileges and treats if you like to your family, if you
337 didn't get paid nobody would work so obviously I think that's true of
338 everybody, anybody who says that they put their career first and their a
339 career person because they love their job, I don't think that's true, because
340 if they didn't get paid for it then would they still be doing it

341 K – Absolutely, and has it changed how your kids see you and think about
342 you?

343 R – I don't think it's changed how they see me. but I think that they're glad
344 because I'm there instantly, like I say, when they come home from school,
345 I think they're happier because I'm at home, they sort of come home from
346 school and they might be 2 or 3 hours before I come home

347 K – How about other people, perhaps how your husband thinks about you?

348 R – I don't know... I think he's quite happy as well because we do get to
349 do things, I plan my week's work around whatever we've got on, so if we

Interview 14: Ruby

- 350 want to go to the pub for a pub lunch then we can do, whereas if I was
351 office based I'd have been watching the clock thinking 'I've got to get
352 back, I've got to get back' and it spoils the whole idea of going for a nice
353 romantic pub lunch, you know that's spoiled totally if you're time
354 watching all the time
- 355 K – How about how other people see you generally, knowing that you
356 work from home?
- 357 R – Other people in terms of friends and family like me Mom, I think they
358 struggle, they don't see that I... they sort of think 'oh she's at home, I can
359 go round and see her whenever I want and I can call whenever I want' and
360 they don't realise that I still have that work to do, so I do have to have
361 some boundaries there and you know if friends or me Mom is on the phone
362 I have to say 'I've got to go, I've got work to do and I'll call you when I've
363 finished' and I do have boundaries there, but I don't think it's altered their
364 perception of me at all
- 365 K – That's pretty much it, I was just wondering if there was anything at all
366 that you wanted to add about your experience of home-working?
- 367 R – I would suggest that if anybody got the opportunity to try it then do so,
368 because as I said there was nobody on the pilot scheme as negative as I
369 was, I definitely didn't think that people with young children could work
370 from home, I just thought that the mother in you would sort of get in the
371 way if you like, when you hear your children bickering, you'd have to sort
372 of stop what you were doing and go in and sort it out but that doesn't
373 actually happen, me husband, who would do that if I was office-based, still
374 does it now, so I would suggest that if people could try it to see if they like
375 it to do so, yeah definitely
- 376 K – Great. What I'm going to do next then if this is ok, is scan round the
377 office with the camera.
- 378 R – Yeah no problem
- 379 K - So we're in a downstairs room which is just off the front door and was
380 it specifically designed as an office this room?
- 381 R – No this was originally my dining room, and we actually decided we'd
382 make it more of a sit in movie type room, and we had our home PC in here
383 so it just seemed to be the logical place to put the work PC
- 384 K – Right. And is this ideal do you think, or would there be any other
385 things you would like do to get it perfect for you?
- 386 R – I think it's ideal for me, em, because I think it's quite a relaxing room,
387 I don't think it's fussy, I don't think there's that many distractions for you
388 in here, I don't know I suppose if it was a bit bigger that might be slightly
389 better, cos the room's slightly small now we've got 2 workstations in, so
390 now it is quite small, so if I could make the room bigger that would
391 probably be the only thing I would change
- 392 K – Could you finally then give me some feedback about how you felt
393 taking part in this project? – Did you mind awfully having me...?
- 394 R – No I don't mind at all – bit worried about how I'm going to look on
395 camera but that's about it
- 396 K – I can play some back if you like
- 397 **(Looking around the room)**
- 398 K – So Ruby's sitting on what looks like a lovely comfy settee
- 399 R – It is lovely and comfy

Interview 14: Ruby

- 400 K - With a Winnie the Pooh throw over on there, got all your... is it Buffy
401 and Angel?
402 R - I'm a big Buffy and Angel fan, I meet all the cast
403 K - Oh fantastic
404 R - I've actually met most of them
405 K - Right. So, you've got the action figures, collectibles, in the corner in a
406 glass cabinet there as well - fab, and then all the prints
407 R - All that bump that you can see down there is all more signed pictures
408 and autographs waiting to be framed and go up
409 K - Brilliant
410 R - I've got another four of these to do
411 K - Excellent, so you make these yourself with all the signatures and stuff
412 R - Yeah I do
413 K - Fantastic
414 R - I've got another 4 of them to do
415 K - So, then you've got like a fireplace, which... got some nice dried
416 flowers, some pictures of the family and you meeting people from Buffy
417 and stuff?
418 R - No they're all friends
419 K - Ah right they're friends, right, lovely. Little goldfish and this is like the
420 movie area with the huge... screen telly, all your videos which you've
421 collected, ok, is that a few pictures of family next to the telly as well?
422 R - Yeah it's the children
423 K - Then you've got this lovely big black leather chair that I was sitting it
424 - has your office given you equipment or is that something you bought
425 yourself?
426 R - The council's provided the desk, this desk, this chair and the PC and so
427 forth. As you can see my workstation, well both of them are quite cluttered
428 actually
429 K - So this one I'm looking at now is like your home PC
430 R - That's the home station yes
431 K - We don't need to look at that too much, just get a bit of an impression,
432 then you move round and you've actually got your work station, office PC
433 as well there then, and that's got just your worky things on
434 R - It's actually just exactly the same as it was in the office
435 K - Great, pictures of McFly, boybands
436 R - Jonathan from G4, me children and me husband
437 K - Excellent, all the great loves of your life then - fab. And I think that's
438 all I need then, I shall turn it off then.