Mums in the South of England have to work one week more than those in the North before they break even on their childcare costs

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Mums in the South West need to work for 18 weeks a year before they cover their childcare costs – compared to 15 weeks for those in the West Midlands.

Analysis of average earnings and childcare costs by Family Investments, a leading supplier of financial solutions for the family, has found that working mums in the South of England have to work 42 hours a year more than those in the North to cover their childcare costs – equivalent to an additional week's work for most mums*.

Regionally the differences are even greater. Mums working full time in the South West earn an average of £10.72 an hour and need to work a total of 18 weeks a year (or 674 hours) before they break even and meet their childminder or nursery costs which amount to an average of £7,228 over a year

Mums in the West Midlands by contrast earn an average of £10.97 an hour and need to work for 15 weeks a year (or 554 hours) before they cover their costs which are equivalent to an average of £6,086 a year.

The full findings can be found here

The analysis** is based on childminder and nursery cost data from local authorities across the country as well as earnings data from the Office of National Statistics.

Outside of England, the analysis found that mums working full-time in Wales need to work for 17.6 weeks before they break even on their childcare costs, while those in Scotland have to work for 16.8 weeks.

Commenting on the research Kate Moore, Head of Savings and Investments at Family Investments said: "In the North versus South stakes, affordability of care means mums in the North have to work fewer hours before their care costs are met and the difference is equivalent to a week a year. The differences in affordability of childcare are even greater when you dig down and look at the regions with mums in the West Midlands having to work significantly fewer hours before they break even on their childcare costs than those in the South West.

"These figures highlight the very significant costs mums face if they choose to return to work after maternity leave and the fact that they will spend up to four months of the year simply working towards these costs. Mums can get up to 15 hours of care per week for free once their child turns three, but for the first couple of years parents must saddle these costs on their own.

"What really jumps out from these figures is both the scale of the costs involved and the disparities in local affordability. It is important that the government address this disparity which at present means, parents in some parts of the country find childcare, much less affordable than others. We hope that the government acknowledge this issue in the Childcare Commission which is due to report back soon and we believe further research is required to determine why these regional disparities exist."

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors
- Based on a working week of 36.3 hours. Office of National Statistics - Hours worked in the labour market – 2011, 8th December 2011 - http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_247259.pdf
- In looking at the "North", data on the North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humberside has been grouped. In looking at the "South", data on the South East, South West and London has been grouped
- Family Investments commissioned a survey of 124 local authorities undertaken by economics consultancy SQW who provided care costs for childminder and nursery costs. ONS data on full time pay for females has also been taken into account

About Family Investments
- Family Investments is dedicated to being the trusted provider of financial solutions for the family
- Family Investments currently looks after nearly £4 billion of family money for more than 1.75 million people in the UK

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- Family Investments is a mutual with over 35 years' experience providing investments for families. They are owned by their customers which means that they are directly answerable to them
- Family Investments is the UK's favourite Child Trust Fund provider with 1.3 million Child Trust Fund accounts
- Family Investments' Child Trust Fund was voted best CTF at the 2010 and 2011 Moneyfacts awards and Best Junior ISA Provider in 2012
- Family Investments was the first provider to announce details of a Junior ISA and is market leader in the provision of equity based Junior ISAs
- Family Investments was awarded best Children's Finance Product Provider at the Personal Finance Awards 2011/12
- Family Investments also developed Family Nest (www.familynest.co.uk), the website that aims to make family finances simple
- Family Investments offers an Ethical CTF and Junior ISA which tracks performance of companies included in the FTSE4Good UK 50 Total Return Index
- The company's expertise is widely trusted and recognised, which is why Family Investments has been chosen to provide ISA products for the Post Office and Bounty
- Family Investments has also previously provided Child Trust Funds for the likes of Barclays Bank, Santander and the Post Office
- Family Investments is the trading name of Family Assurance Friendly Society and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority

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