

FAMILY HEALTH

One in three children lives with a parent suffering **emotional distress**

ALMOST one in three children lives with a parent suffering emotional distress - the highest proportion on record, data shows. Analysis by Public Health England found that 29% of children in the UK are living with at least one parent reporting symptoms of emotional distress, the highest figure since records began in 2010.

Mothers are more likely to report emotional distress, with more than one in five (22.3%) children living in a household where the mother suffers. This compares with around one in eight (12.1%) children living in households where the father is distressed.

The figure for mothers is up on 20.2% the year before and the highest on record.

In some households, both parents are reporting emotional distress. Some 3.6% of children (around one in 28) now live in a household where both parents are in emotional distress.

The analysis showed that children were more likely to live with a parent reporting emotional problems if both parents were out of work. The data was taken from the Understanding Society study of around 40,000 households in the UK for 2016 to 2017.

In an associated commentary, PHE said: "Parental emotional distress can lead to mental health problems including anxiety or depression. It is associated with an increased risk of later behavioural and emotional difficulties in children."

Around half of all children (50.6%) living in families where neither parent was in work had at least one parent reporting symptoms of emotional distress. This compares with 26.4% of children living in families where at least one parent was in work.

For lone-parent families where the parent was not in work, 37% of children had their parent reporting distress. Where the parent was in work, the figure was 34.2%.



A third of all children live with a parent who is going through emotional distress

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