This report presents the findings of the first, information-gathering phase of this research project. The first and main source of our data was an online survey with 966 respondents, which provided some quantitative data supported by narrative comments. This was followed up with some interviews and focus groups with individuals and with groups of employees of our partner theatres and theatre companies.

Overview of this Report
This report does not go through the survey question by question. We will provide a detailed breakdown of responses in our final report. Instead, this document is structured by the following questions:

• Who responded to the survey?
• What does it suggest are the consequences of caring responsibilities for people working in theatre?
• What could be done to support people facing these challenges?
• Are there conflicts between the agenda of supporting people with caring responsibilities and the working culture in theatres?

Who responded?
Gender

We can say, with a few caveats, that our 966 respondents are a representative sample of people currently working in theatre. We see here that our respondents were substantially more female than the population as a whole (see the census data on the right), and more female than the staff of our partner theatres (whose employee data is on the left). As we’ll see, this reflects the persistent belief that caring is women’s work and that the survey will therefore be of greater interest to women than to men.
Marital Status

In terms of their marital status, our respondents were broadly in line with 2011 census data, though slightly less likely to be divorced or widowed, which probably reflects the comparative youth of our sample compared to the population.

Ethnicity
Looking at ethnicity, a large majority of our respondents were White British (76%) and a further 10% were White European. That fan at the top represents all of the non-white categories.

If we compare this to 2011 census data, we see that our respondents are whiter than average (93.7% in all white categories as against 86%). The biggest discrepancy is in the representation of British Asian people, (7.5% of the population but only 1.1% of our respondents).

Age
In terms of age, we have a reasonably good spread, though our respondents are mainly under 44 and people over 55 are not well represented by the data.

**Role**

Looking at the roles of respondents, we see all groups represented, though maintenance and front of house staff only in very small numbers. This may well reflect that people working in these areas are more likely to be temporary (possibly agency staff), working a flexible shift pattern, and that they may not therefore identify themselves as ‘working in theatre’.

Performers and stage management and technical/production staff are probably somewhat under-represented as against ‘creatives’ and ‘administration and management’. This may reflect some narratives about the perceived relevance of this study to self-employed people that we will come to.

**Income**
If we compare the income of our respondents to the population as a whole, it is slightly lower. The average salary in the UK for the tax year ending 5 April 2015 was £27,600, which would fall into the most common category on this graph, but we see notably fewer people above this median than below it. Our respondents are therefore likely to be earning less than the national average, which we should bear in mind, for example, when it comes to considering the costs of childcare.

Terms of Employment

Again, we see a broad spread of kinds of work being done by our respondents, but they are much more likely to be self-employed than the average worker. Nationally, the share of self-employed people in total employment between January & March 2016 was only 14.87% and here we see that 45% of respondents were self-employed. We should note, however, that self-employment is growing nationally, however: the level of self-employment in the UK increased from 3.8 million in 2008 to 4.6 million in 2015, so our data is ahead of what seems to be a national trend towards self-employment, which may become significant as we consider the findings.

Consequences of Caring

Gendered Differences

Moving on to the question of what the consequences of caring responsibilities are for people working in theatre, we see, first of all, a clear difference between the consequences for men and for women. 68% of people agreed that men and women are treated differently by the organization they work for after becoming a parent, and very few actively disagreed with this statement (only 9%).

These findings are supported by narrative comments from the survey that overwhelmingly identify gendered assumptions governing the treatment of parents and carers in the workplace. Of those who added comments to this question, 45%
made reference to the burden for parenting falling disproportionately on women. The following comments were characteristic:

• “I think the expectation is that the mother will take the time off and cover all unexpected appointments etc. I think both sides lose out to be honest.”
• “Women are often discriminated against after becoming parents, not given the same role as their pre-parental days, often not the same pay.”
• “It is assumed that women will bear most childcare responsibilities and therefore be less available.”
• “There is an assumption that the male leaves childcare and its organisation to the female.”
• “Men who have kids are seen as 'men with kids'. Women who have kids are seen as 'mothers'.”

**Gendered Divisions of Childcare**
When we ask ‘if you are living with a partner, how is your childcare normally divided between you?’ (the first percentage is the respondent and the second their partner), we see the following patterns:

- About twice as many men as women reported doing 10% of the childcare
- About the same number of men and women reported doing 20% of the childcare
- About twice as many men as women reported doing 30% and 40% of the childcare
- No one reported an equal share of the childcare
- Slightly more women than men reported doing 60% of the childcare
- Four times as many women as men reported doing 70% of the childcare
- Only women reported doing 100% of the childcare

So we can conclude that:

a) women working in theatre are much more likely to be taking a substantially larger share of the burden of childcare than men working in theatre, and

b) where childcare is shared, and even when it is relatively evenly shared, men who work in theatre are much more likely to identify as having a smaller burden of responsibility than women working in theatre are.

It’s important to note that where men are evidently usually the beneficiaries of this inequality, in a minority of cases they also suffer from it in that they report:

- the assumption that they will not have caring responsibilities, even when it is known that they have children, and
- (in the case of some performers) being advised not to mention caring responsibilities at interviews for fear of either creating an impression of limited availability or appearing less masculine than they otherwise would.

We see this pattern in narrative comments such as:

- “My partner has never had his needs taken in to consideration as a parent - even when he was full time carer and worked 2 evening shifts a week. I have had more put in place to get me back to work.”
- “Men don't get enough consideration for the time they need to be spending with their new child and women are often expected to have lost interest in work entirely. I don't think it's organisations to blame as much as it is society.”
- “Women have the luxury of flexible working and an understanding that they have child care commitments. Men are expected to return to normal although we do as much, if not more, childcare than our partners.”
- “There is still a lack of understanding about the importance of being a new Dad. My husband was lucky - but to be honest, many organisations are unaware that Dad may well be looking after both mother and child and himself be under great emotional stress, especially in the early days.”

**Gendered Differences in the Workplace?**
If we try to ascertain whether there are also gendered patterns of employment, we can see:

- 6.98% more self-employed women (not a particularly significant finding given the size of data set with many more female respondents)
- 17.93% more full-time men (over 50% more than there are women)
- 6.58% more part-time women (more than three times as many as there are men)

We can therefore say that, in the theatre, men are more likely than women to be employed full-time and women are more likely to be part-time (though part-time jobs seem to be relatively scarce overall). It’s important to note that current support for employees is steered towards employed, full-time workers.

Loss of Earnings
Moving on from gender, we can use the data from the survey to provide some simple measurements of the impacts of caring responsibilities on all workers.

To begin with, we see, unsurprisingly, that people with caring responsibilities are forced to turn down work.

They report that, for example:

- “I can't work as I can't guarantee my hours and child care needs would not fit with this.”
- “I chose to not work away from home and to move more into creative and management roles that didn't require me to work full runs of shows.”
- “I have turned down designing jobs which are either too far away and not practical and/or because I know the work load isn't feasible with my childcare issues. I have also not be thought of for jobs because of these reasons too and this is then accepted as a legitimate reason for not employing. I took on teaching as a way to have a more stable income as a freelancer with a child I found myself rarely taking any time off and spending two thirds of my income on childcare.”
- “When the children were small, I turned down opportunities at other theatres – I used to work in Stage Management, but this was not a practical career choice for me with young children”
- “I had to become part time and abandon any chance of career development.”
- “I can't work the hours demanded of me in a stage management role so looking for other roles.”
- “I had to leave my last job as a company manager because of the out of hours nature of the work and take a job which is on the whole more fixed office hours.”

Even those who have not decided to stop work or to change their job reported having to turn down work because of a conflict with their caring responsibilities. Predictably enough, this affects self-employed people more than it does the employed, with only 17% of self-employed people not having had this experience. But our findings suggest a degree of overlap or porosity between these positions, with some people reporting that they work in both capacities, and the majority of employed people (57%) reporting that they have also turned down work as a result of a caring responsibility.

This overlap or porosity between employment may, we surmise, be a growing trend beyond theatres and arts organisations as we see a rise of ‘portfolio careers’ and working in the ‘gig economy’, which means that this work may well have applications in other contexts in the coming years.

**Loss of potential earnings/career opportunities**

We also see that people with caring responsibilities also miss out on opportunities to gain work. This graph is divided into people (either employed or self-employed) who have caring responsibilities not involving dependent children (top line), employed
people with child dependents (middle line) and self-employed people with child dependents (bottom line).

These charts show that whether they are employed or self-employed, people with child dependents are likely to be missing opportunities to earn money and/or advance their careers up to once a month. More employed than self-employed people reported missing such opportunities once a week, but this presumably reflects the relative infrequency of such opportunities for the self-employed.

I’d also like to highlight that there is an important (and probably growing) minority of workers in theatres who have caring responsibilities for people who are not children (and sometimes these people have children to care for as well). Although the largest proportion of these people never experience loss of potential earnings or career opportunities, they are also the group who are most likely to face these challenges very frequently: a higher proportion of them face such challenges once a week than any other group. We should also that the relatively small number of people in this group means that the percentage is inflated, but when put alongside other findings about what we are referring to as ‘hidden caring’, this information gains significance.

Nonetheless, we should also observe that a large number of people reported only missing out on earning opportunities once a year or never, so we might conclude that these findings reflect the fact that many people are able to arrange childcare to enable them to continue working. That observation raises two further questions:

- What forms does this childcare take and is it widely available or dependent upon other forms of social advantage?
- How many people are excluded from even attempting to make such arrangements and are forced to stop working or change role by the onset of caring responsibilities?

**Organising Childcare**
The data shows that people are using a fairly wide range of childcare solutions, but it is notable that the most flexible forms of care (nannies and au pairs) are hardly used, and other family members are frequently relied upon:

- “[It] requires flexibility and the help of family and friends.”
- “We have very understanding grandparents!”
- “I use family to help but it's not easy to organise.”
- “[I’ve] always managed to find some assistance via other parent/family/friend though sometimes with difficult.”
- “Family have normally been able to step in, but I feel uncomfortable relying so heavily on their availability to allow me to work.”

Inevitably, this raises the question of the role played by social advantage in managing childcare: grandparents do not have only to be ‘very understanding’, they need to have a sufficiently high income to enable them to offer free childcare support, they need to be living nearby or able to travel, and they need to be fit and healthy enough to do the childcare.

**Costs of Childcare**
Although we can’t currently tell you what proportion of income people are usually spending on childcare, we can assume from these figures that it is not insignificant.

**Lack of support for the self-employed**

We can see from this graph of forms of childcare support offered by employers that although self-employed people are more likely to take advantage of *ad hoc* childcare than employed people, only a very small number of them do. Although a few self-employed people used ‘other’ forms of childcare support, all other areas of provision listed here appear to favour employed people, with twice as many taking advantage of flexible hours and part-time work, for example, both of which could equally apply to employed or self-employed people.

The major finding here, though, is that 55% of self-employed people with child dependents think that these forms of support do not apply to them. It even seems that many may be unaware of the availability of Maternity Allowance for self-employed
people based upon Class 2 National Insurance Contributions (NICs). This is even more concerning because the rules governing the calculation of the amount awarded have recently been changed in a way that seems likely to disadvantage some people working in theatre. [Recipients must have worked for 26 weeks of a 66 week ‘test period’ in the run-up to the birth and paid Class 2 NICs for 13 of those weeks to qualify for the standard (higher) rate of maternity allowance].

Typical comments from self-employed respondents stated:
- “I am freelance/self-employed so there is no organisation offering support or training.”
- “I am self employed so it is not really relevant.”
- “I'm self employed therefore I don't have anyone to give me that support.”
- “This is not applicable as I work freelance and have never been offered any care support.”

Possible Actions
Improving Current Provisions

We can see that childcare provided by employers is a very popular idea with both employed and self-employed staff, but is currently almost never available. We might have expected self-employed workers to be much more keen on emergency childcare and they are a bit more enthusiastic than employed people about flexible childcare, but not much. These findings further support the theme emerging that the differences between challenges faced by employed and self-employed people working in theatre are not as big as we might have expected.

We can also see that part-time work is currently much more popular in theory than it is in practice, and reduced hours likewise, and these are both more popular with employed people than self-employed.
Long term scheduling of employee commitments is equally popular with both groups, and the impression of most workers is that this is not common practice. The most popular measure among employed people, however, and the second most popular among the self-employed, is flexible hours.

**More Flexible Working**

Here we can see that flexible working is currently used by twice as many employed as self-employed people, but is a very popular potential solution with both groups.

We can go further and say that a huge majority of respondents with and without caring responsibilities thought that flexible working arrangements would be of benefit to everyone, regardless of caring responsibilities: 89% agreed or strongly agreed with only 2% disagreeing.

That said, we should introduce a caveat: not very many of these people are likely to have experience of flexible working, and there are a few warning signs from the narrative comments of those who do that it can be used in ways that are not beneficial for employees. There are mentions of late-night phone calls and regular out-of-hours emails, and no mention of measures taken by organisations to prevent these or similar working habits that could expose employees to the feeling of being continually on-call.
Therefore, while the research shows overwhelming support for the idea of flexible working, it does not yet tell us very much about how it is best implemented. The survey suggests that exploring flexible working is a good idea, but also that organisations need to develop ways of managing it proactively.

**Working Culture**

**Last Minute Commitments**

Taking into account both employed and self-employed people with any caring responsibility, we can see that the working culture in theatre organisations frequently involves last minute commitments. This will come as a surprise, I am sure, to no-one, but is worth noting because workers report that they represent a significant challenge in relation to their caring responsibilities:

- “It puts an immense strain on my partner who also has a reactive and stressful job.”
- “When [my daughter] was younger, this caused strain for my child and my parents who had to change their arrangements to care for her.”
- “It is a nightmare.”
- “It frustrates everyone and creates tension.”
- “It's a waking nightmare. I often need to work 90 hours a week but can't due to childcare and wife is a TV actress so cannot possibly ever have a day off without booking it weeks in advance. Every week is different and often it is fine but when it gets busy it really takes its toll on us all.”
- “[It places a] huge pressure on my family and gives wrong message to my children about my priorities.”
- “[It] adds anxiety. I am always pulling favours with people. [It] causes resentment between us.”

Breaking this data down into employed or self-employed people, we see again a smaller difference than we had anticipated between the working patterns of employed
and self-employed people, with a majority of employees experiencing last-minute changes to their working commitments.

Extended/ Family-Unfriendly Hours

- ‘It means I often see little of my kids in the working week, and when I am with them I'm exhausted, stressful and grumpy. It puts a massive burden on my husband, and therefore our marriage.’
- ‘It can be difficult to juggle work commitments with family life and it can feel that work takes over. It is difficult to address the balance between work and family life, particularly when you work full time.’
- ‘I regularly miss family time (usually weekends) and events.’
- ‘I do feel that the entertainment business is not family friendly; early or late call times or finishes, long distance travelling etc.’

The quotations here are taken from a range of respondents, but narrative comments and interviews and focus groups have all suggested that stage managers and technical and production staff seem to be among those who suffer most from extended and/or family-unfriendly hours.

Comments included:

- “[I] can't work the hours demanded of me in a stage management role so looking for other roles.”
- “It's difficult to arrange childcare for evening commitments or when travelling for work. I spend less time with my children than I would like.”
- “There are a lot of evenings required in working in theatre - performances, tech rehearsals - It is hard to balance this around being there for bedtimes.”
- “[I] left my role in a theatre to work freelance as I couldn't juggle the ongoing evening and weekend commitments, plus in the week commitments with childcare and my partner's work.”
Clearly some of these issues are very hard to address: needing to work in the evenings is not going to change, but these comments suggested area for further exploration to us, such as:

- Discussing solutions with employers: how possible is it for staff and their employers to make alterations to working patterns to mitigate these issues?
- Support for changing role: where staff decide to change their role to better accommodate caring responsibilities, is support and training available to help them to do that?
- And are there deeper assumptions embedded in the working culture of theatres that make extended hours more likely at key points: for example, do production schedules tacitly depend upon the flexible and extended availability of key people or teams and could this be reduced by changes to the planning process?

The final part of this presentation will address these points.

**Discussing Caring Responsibilities**

The good news for theatres is that workers who are parents with child dependents are more likely to feel confident asking for practical measures to be taken to help them to balance work and caring responsibilities than not (36% would/32% wouldn’t). But it is still significant that a third (32%) of parents with child dependents would not feel confident discussing practical support with their employer, though some of them seem to take this position on principle rather than because they feel they would be dealt with unfavourably:

- “They care about the show. That's it.”
- “They're just trying to put on a show and I am a small cog - I don't find it surprising that they don't engage with my childcare needs”
- “They are not interested in me. They are interested in getting the job done”
- “I don't think they think about it. Plus, it is none of their business.”
• “I don't think they could care less - to be fair though, I'm an actor - I wouldn't expect them to.”

Two further findings can be drawn from this data. The first is that the people most likely to feel confident about asking their organisations for support to enable them to balance work and caring responsibilities are the people who do not have any caring responsibilities. This seems significant because it suggests that there is reason to believe that theatres would handle such requests sensitively and constructively, but that when people find themselves in this position, they seem to lose confidence in that.

This correlates with another finding: the large majority of people who added narrative comments to the survey after saying that they made changes to their working pattern on returning to work after maternity or paternity leave say that they initiated or took responsibility for the conversations that led to these changes. Very few reported that enquiring after and taking carers’ needs into account was a policy of their organisation.

Perhaps relatedly, those people least likely to feel confident about proposing alterations to their working pattern are those most likely to be able to conceal their responsibility: those with caring responsibilities and no child dependents.
Even if we lower the bar by asking simply if people are happy discussing their family-related needs with the organisations they work for, we see the same patterns, with a third of people consistently saying they would not feel confident doing this, and the highest proportion of people who would being those who do not have any caring responsibilities.

There is reason to believe, however, that this comparative reticence to enter into discussions may have something to do with the perceived requirement, on the part of the employee, to initiate these discussions. Where respondents included narrative comments about these discussions, 43% mentioned that they had taken responsibility for initiating the discussion. Only 25% reported a management policy of making enquiries about caring responsibilities to initiate these discussions.

**Discussing Caring Responsibilities: Hidden Carers**

If we look at these responses to the question ‘have you ever been asked about your needs as a carer?’, we see that even those with children are much more likely not to be asked about their caring responsibilities than to have been asked. It is even more striking that three quarters of people with caring responsibilities other than for dependent children have never been asked about these responsibilities by their manager or another representative of their organisation.

- “I had spent some time out of work looking after my Mother. My agent once told me to pretend I’d been away doing a low budget movie because looking after you’re your family was not masculine.” (Actor and long-time Carer)
- “Having kids is considered a joy and a celebration but caring for an elderly relative is supposed to be an embarrassment.” (Actor and long-time Carer)
- “I don't think [it] would be appropriate [to discuss my caring responsibilities] and may jeopardize my position.”
- “I think it may be perceived that my personal situation would affect my professional one, so I only discuss matters when they are essential.”
• “No one wants to tarnish their relationship so I tend to keep it quiet.”

Changing/Adapting Role

When we ask about support and training to change role because of caring responsibilities, we see that it is very uncommon (only 14% agreed or strongly agreed that they were given good support and training). When we look at the narrative comments, though (see bar chart above), we see that support is not offered much more often than it is refused, but also that employers being generally supportive is much more common than concrete offers of support. We also see that where people reduce their hours, there is always a reduction in responsibility.

Summary of Main Interim Findings

The burden of childcare falls disproportionately on women. Among working people with caring responsibilities for child dependents, women were much more likely than men to report that they were doing a larger proportion of the childcare than their partner. Only a very small group of men reported doing over 40% of the childcare. This finding is in line with other research into childcare responsibilities. It is particularly significant in this context, however, because it suggests that addressing the barriers to work and challenges in the workplace experience by carers is one practical way of addressing the gender imbalance in theatre that has been widely reported recently.

Self-employed people are significantly disadvantaged by current provisions for childcare support. There is a clear lack of childcare support provision for self-employed people as against employed people, which seems to be further exacerbated by a perception of exclusion from provision on the part of the self-employed.

Employment and self-employment are not mutually exclusive categories. In addition to the financial costs of arranging care, people with caring responsibilities reported both losing income and losing opportunities to secure work as a result of
those responsibilities. Predictably, a higher proportion of self-employed people than employed people reported these challenges, but it was striking that a majority of employed people with caring responsibilities also reported losing both work and opportunities to secure work. This suggests a higher degree of overlap or porosity between employment and self-employment than we had anticipated. We surmise that this may be a growing trend as we see a rise of ‘portfolio careers’ and working in the ‘gig economy’.

Flexible working is popular but largely untested. The idea of increased flexible working was the most popular suggestion for enhancing provision for parents and carers and was almost unanimously popular across all respondents regardless of their circumstances. On the other hand, there seem to be few tested models for structuring flexible working to protect both employers and employees, and some respondents reported what appear to be misinterpretations and abuses of flexible working arrangements from colleagues and managers.

Most solutions to balancing work and caring responsibility are informally arranged at the instigation of the employee. In the majority of cases, respondents reported that, where they had changed role or adjusted their responsibilities in the light of a caring responsibility, they had taken responsibility for proposing, implementing and managing the change in their role or working pattern. Very few respondents reported receiving support or training during this process.

Part-time work is commonly seen as a form of demotion. Part-time working was a common solution to the challenges of balancing work and caring responsibilities but seems almost without exception to involve a reduction in the level of responsibility, and a concomitant reduction in opportunities for promotion or advancement. There was no evidence of strategies such as job-sharing or restructuring roles being used in order to sustain the career development of part-time workers.

Some caring responsibilities are invisible to employers. There are a significant minority of people with caring responsibilities for people who are not dependent children. We are referring to this phenomenon as ‘hidden caring’ because these people are much less likely to have had these responsibilities recognised by their employer and much less likely to be confident in asking their employer to adjust their working pattern to accommodate them. They were also the group who were most likely to experience very frequent interruptions to their working pattern as a result of their responsibilities.

There is a working culture in theatres that disadvantages people with caring responsibilities. A large majority of respondents reported unpredictable working patterns and those with caring responsibilities commonly noted anxiety around leaving work at unusual times and/or not being able to commit to working extra hours and/or at times that coincide with their caring responsibilities. Respondents were almost unanimous in reporting this culture positively as evidence of a high level of
commitment to the work of the theatre, but were equally clear about the difficulty of reconciling it with their responsibilities as parents and/or carers.

**Timeline for Stage 2 of the Research**

- December 2016: First day-long symposium to design specific best practice strategies for each theatre
- December 2016 to March 2017: Theatres implement specific best practice strategies
- March 2017: Second day-long symposium to share learning and re-evaluate best practice strategies.
- March 2017 to June 2017: Theatres either continue a modified trial or explore other options.
- June 2017: Final day-long symposium to feedback experiences, successes and weaknesses with PIPA. Formulate a draft Best Practice Charter.
- July/September 2017: Final presentation and publication of report.

**Some Questions to Address in Stage 2**

- Hidden Carers: What strategies can be developed to support people with caring responsibilities, including those without dependent children, to safely communicate their needs?
- Self-Employed People: How can we tailor support for parents and carers to cater better for self-employed people?
- Flexible Working: How can we make flexible working widely available whilst being efficient and effective?
- Working Culture: What practical measures can be taken to minimise and/or mitigate unpredictable/extended/family-unfriendly working hours?
- Part-Time Working: How can roles be adapted without limiting career progression and responsibility?
- Changing Role: How can those returning to work in new or altered roles be best supported and/or trained?
- How can we support and empower the workforce to help themselves?