**The dynamics of shared care in the UK**

When parents separate there is a need for one or both parents to continue to

provide care. In some legal jurisdictions, such as Australia, there is a

presumption in favour of shared care arrangements, and they are often found in

several European. In the UK, the notion of the best interests of the child is

paramount in determining residence arrangements, with no clear assumptions

about how care might be shared (if at all). Father's groups have suggested that

shared care could be a more common outcome in Britain.

Few surveys measure shared care arrangements, but using the BHPS (and first

round of Understanding Society) this paper tracks the dynamics of shared care

arrangements over time (from 2001 onwards). It tracks their frequency and

trends, and their stability for parents and children. International research

tends to find greater shared care among more middle class parents, and we

assess the demographics associated with different kinds of shared care. The

paper also investigates differences in parental and child well-being associated

with shared care arrangements.

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