

THE TIMING OF MOTHERHOOD, MOTHERS' EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD OUTCOMES

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Research Questions

- What are the main determinants of the age at motherhood, and have these changed between the cohorts?
- What are the main determinants of maternal employment in a child's early life?
- What are the impacts of the childcare decisions, maternal employment and age at motherhood on cognitive and behavioural outcomes for children?

Possible Impact of Government Policy

- Will the policies of the last decade help to reverse the increasing polarisation of the age at motherhood and maternal employment that we saw develop in the second half of the 20th century?
- Will this help to reduce the social disadvantage felt by those who grow up in some of the most socially disadvantaged households in the UK?

Timing of Motherhood

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Figure 4.1: Mean age at all and first births, England and Wales, 1990-2006

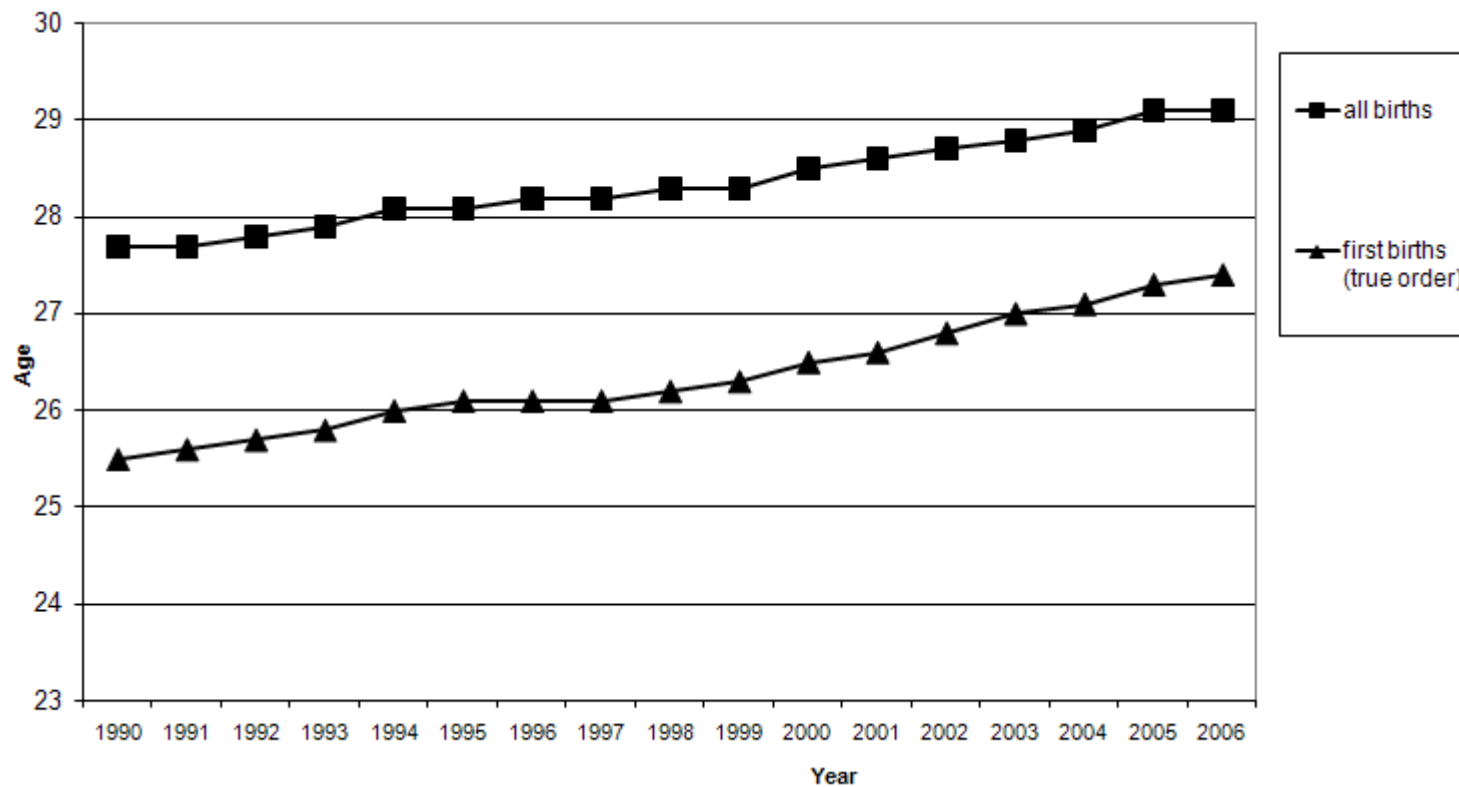
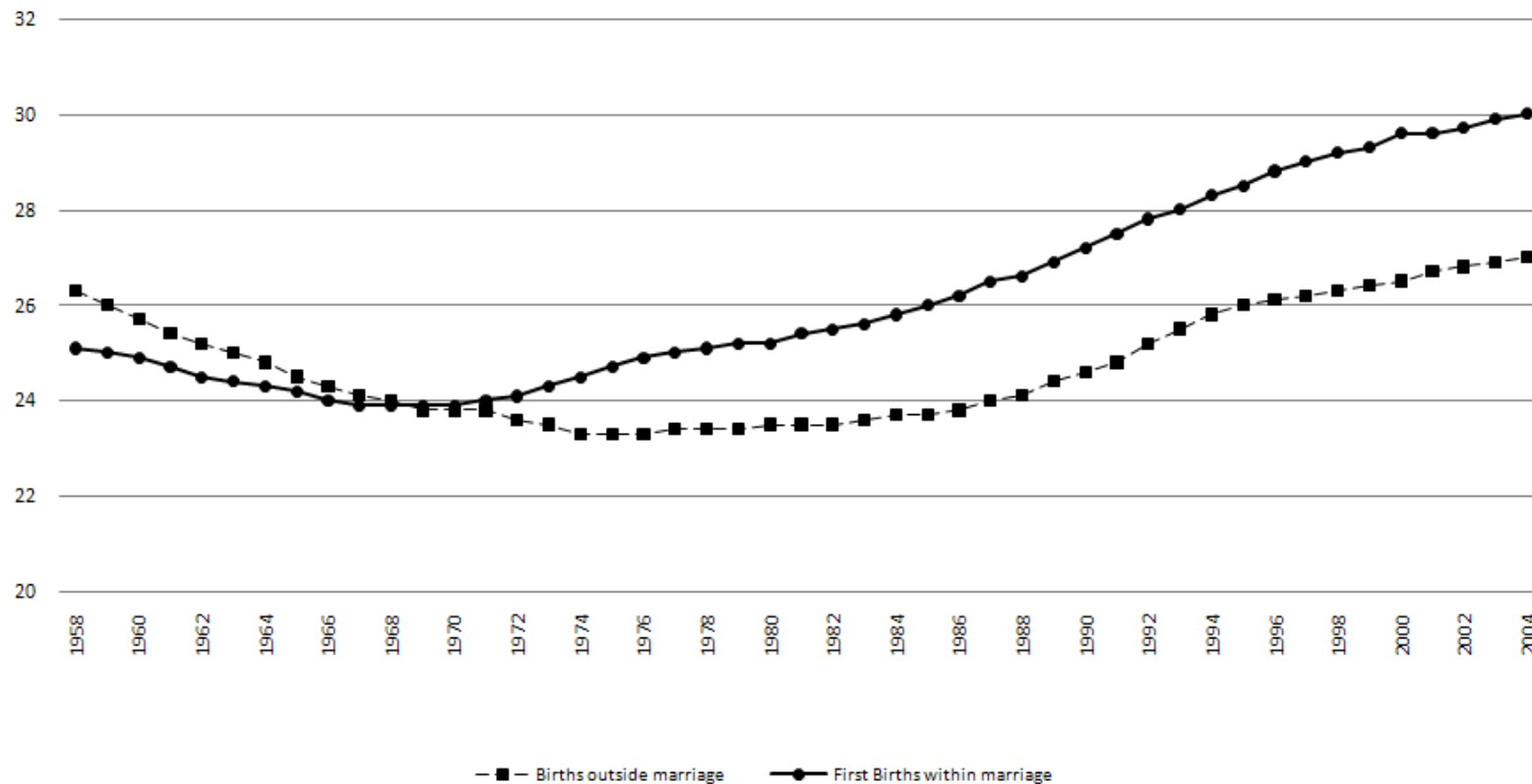


Figure 4.2: Average age at first births within marriage and all births outside marriage, England and Wales, 1958-2004



following lives from birth and through the adult years

Table 4.1: Age of mothers at first and all births, three birth cohort studies and registration statistics

	NCDS	BCS	MCS
Year	1958	1970	2000-1
Mean age of mothers having first birth	24.4	23.1	26.9
[95% Confidence Interval]	[24.3, 24.5]	[22.9, 23.2]	[26.5, 27.2]
Mean age of all mothers at birth of cohort	27.5	26.0	28.9
[95% Confidence Interval]	[27.4, 27.5]	[25.9, 26.1]	[28.7, 29.1]
Births of any order registered in England and Wales (ONS, 2005)	27.8	26.2	29.1

following lives from birth and through the adult years

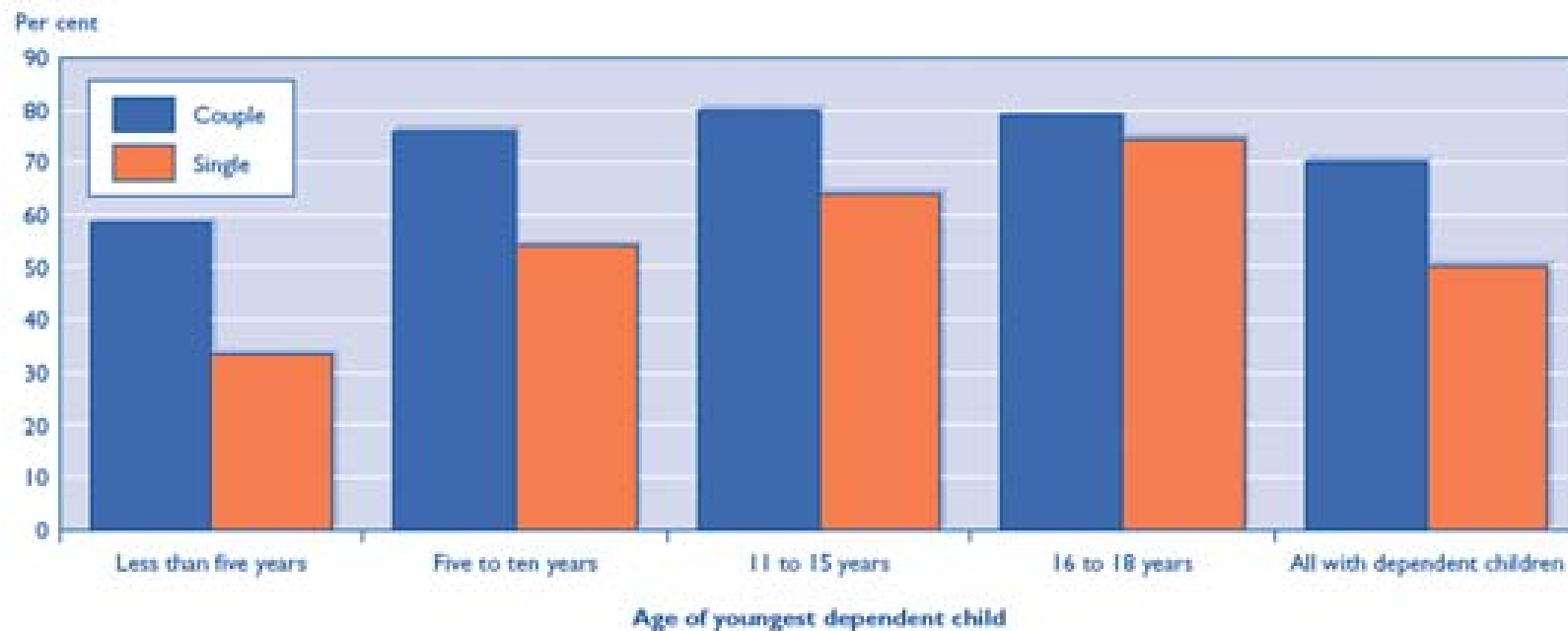
Our findings on this project

- Young motherhood is strongly linked to indicators of childhood disadvantage, such as having an unemployed father and experiencing family break-up, as well as being associated with the situation in the labour market.
- Education plays a key role in the timing of motherhood with those who invest in more education delaying their entry to motherhood, not only to extend their enrolment in post compulsory education, but to pursue employment careers thereafter.

MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT

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Figure 4.4: Employment rates for partnered and single women by age of youngest dependent child, UK, spring 2002, not seasonally adjusted (Duffield 2002)

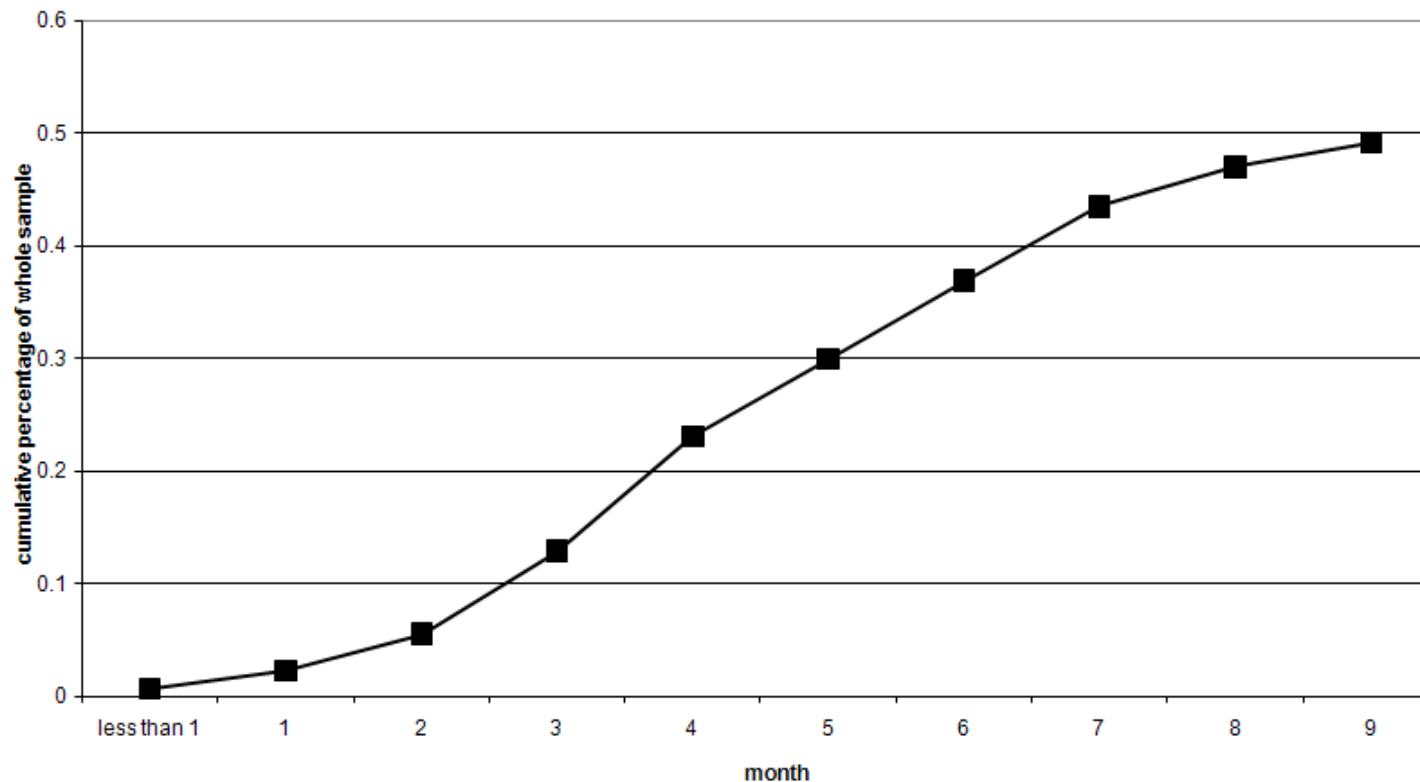


following lives from birth and through the adult years

Table 4.2: Percentage of mothers in work during time child aged under five years, across three birth cohorts

	NCDS	BCS	MCS
Employment in first 5 years	29%	48%	58%
Base sample of mothers	13,966	11,474	14,396
Coverage	GB		UK

Figure 4.5: Month of return/entry to employment after birth



following lives from birth and through the adult years

Our findings on this project

- Maternal employment is strongly linked to the mother's characteristics especially her education.
- International comparison between the UK and the US/Australia suggest that employment after child birth is also conditioned by the benefit system and maternity leave policies.

CHILDCARE AND CHILD OUTCOMES

Table 4.4: Any source of childcare for working mothers of young children across the three birth cohorts

	NCDS	BCS70	MCS**
	1958-1963	1970-1975	2000-2005
	(0-4 years)	(0-4 years)	(0-5 years)
Informal only	73.5	19.9	14.3
Formal only		39.0*	17.7
Both formal and informal		41.1*	63.9
At least some formal	26.5		81.6
Observations	4,144	4,246	12,392

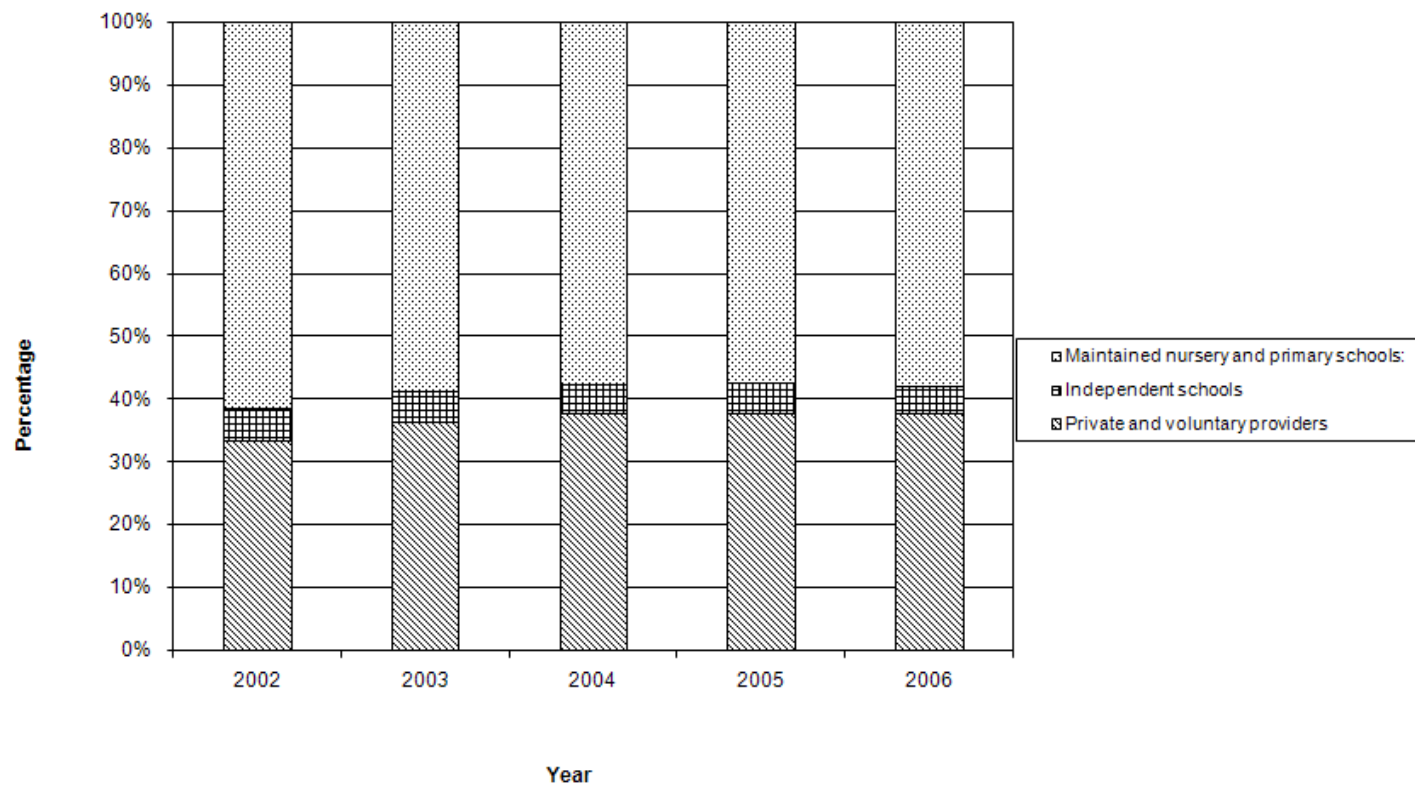
following lives from birth and through the adult years

Table 4.5: Use of provider types in the last week, by age of child

	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-7 %
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>			
Nursery school	2	10	+
Nursery class	1	22	+
Reception class	0	28	5
Day nursery	18	12	+
Playgroup or pre-school	9	18	+
Childminder	5	5	4
Nanny or au pair	1	2	1
Babysitter	3	2	3
Out-of-school club on-site	+	2	13
Out-of-school club off-site	+	1	4
<i>Informal childcare</i>			
My ex-husband/wife/partner	3	4	5
The child's grandparent(s)	29	26	22
The child's older brother/sister	1	1	2
Another relative	7	6	5
A friend or neighbour	5	6	9
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1451	1507	1348

following lives from birth and through the adult years

Figure 4.6: Percentage of children aged three and four taking up early education places by type of early education provider



Our findings on this project

- The impact on child outcomes of child care is very heterogeneous.
- Grandparent care is good for vocabulary development whilst formal child care is good for school readiness and behavioural development

School Readiness (Bracken)

	Coefficient	Standard error	
Mother's qualifications (baseline: no qualifications)			
NVQ Level 1	0.20	0.07	***
NVQ Level 2	0.28	0.06	***
NVQ Level 3	0.42	0.06	***
NVQ Level 4	0.54	0.06	***
NVQ Level 5	0.68	0.10	***
Overseas and other qualifc's	0.34	0.15	**
Mother's age at (first) birth (baseline: 14-19)			
20-24	0.14	0.06	**
25-29	0.30	0.06	***
30-34	0.41	0.06	***
35-39	0.35	0.08	***
40+	0.50	0.22	**
Returned to employment (baseline: not return to employment during the first nine months)			
First three months	-0.18	0.11	
Between four and six months	-0.19	0.11	*
From seven months	-0.12	0.11	
Child care whilst mother employed (baseline: not using child care)			
Informal non group	0.02	0.12	
Father/partner	0.00	0.11	
Grandparent	0.13	0.11	
Formal non group	0.08	0.12	
Formal group	0.23	0.11	**

R-squared

Observations

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0.23

4,647

Naming Vocabulary (BAS)

	Coefficient	Standard error	
Mother's qualifications (baseline: no qualifications)			
NVQ Level 1	0.19	0.08	**
NVQ Level 2	0.27	0.07	***
NVQ Level 3	0.31	0.06	***
NVQ Level 4	0.42	0.07	***
NVQ Level 5	0.39	0.09	***
Overseas and other qualifc's	0.03	0.13	
Mother's age at (first) birth (baseline: 14-19)			
20-24	0.06	0.05	
25-29	0.23	0.05	***
30-34	0.30	0.06	***
35-39	0.28	0.06	***
40+	0.24	0.15	
Returned to employment (baseline: not return to employment during the first nine months)			
First three months	0.08	0.09	
Between four and six months	0.10	0.08	
From seven months	0.12	0.09	
Child care whilst mother employed (baseline: not using child care)			
Informal non group	-0.22	0.11	*
Father/partner	-0.07	0.09	
Grandparent	-0.03	0.08	
Formal non group	-0.15	0.09	
Formal group	-0.18	0.09	**
R squared		0.19	
Observations		4,870	

following lives from birth and through the adult years

Total Difficulties Score (SDQ)

	Coefficient	Standard error	
Mother's qualifications (baseline: no qualifications)			
NVQ Level 1	-0.17	0.09	*
NVQ Level 2	-0.32	0.07	***
NVQ Level 3	-0.45	0.07	***
NVQ Level 4	-0.52	0.07	***
NVQ Level 5	-0.46	0.09	***
Overseas and other qualifc's	-0.31	0.15	**
Mother's age at (first) birth (baseline: 14-19)			
20-24	-0.06	0.06	
25-29	-0.22	0.06	***
30-34	-0.22	0.06	***
35-39	-0.26	0.07	***
40+	-0.12	0.15	
Returned to employment (baseline: not return to employment during the first nine months)			
First three months	0.20	0.10	*
Between four and six months	0.17	0.09	*
From seven months	0.15	0.10	
Child care whilst mother employed (baseline: not using child care)			
Informal non group	-0.30	0.12	**
Father/partner	-0.23	0.11	**
Grandparent	-0.15	0.10	
Formal non group	-0.24	0.10	**
Formal group	-0.29	0.10	***

0.19

5,101

Research Questions

- What are the main determinants of the age at motherhood, and have these changed between the cohorts? **EDUCATION**
- What are the main determinants of maternal employment in a child's early life? **EDUCATION**
- What are the impacts of the childcare decisions, maternal employment and age at motherhood on cognitive and behavioural outcomes for children?
HETEROGENEOUS

Possible Impact of Government Policy

- Will the policies of the last decade help to reverse the increasing polarisation of the age at motherhood and maternal employment that we saw develop in the second half of the 20th century? **POSSIBLY**
- Will this help to reduce the social disadvantage felt by those who grow up in some of the most socially disadvantaged households in the UK? **POSSIBLY**