

# Intergenerational exchanges of practical and financial support within families

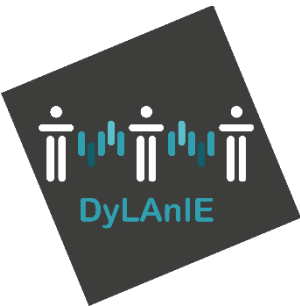
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**(Note: preliminary results, not for quotation)**

# Outline

- Motivation
- Data and definitions
- 4 key findings
- So what?



# Motivation

- UK not classified as a ‘familial’ welfare state
- But a great deal of welfare is provided within families
- Families extend well beyond the household
- We understand remarkably little about this major engine of welfare production, distribution and redistribution
- Specific focus: exchanges of financial and practical help between parents and adult offspring who are not co-resident



# Data and definitions

- *British Household Panel Study* waves 11 & 16 and *Understanding Society* waves 3, 5 & 7
- Respondents asked whether they have one or more non-co-resident parents (affirmative: 5,634 in first wave; 80,872 person-waves in total), their ages, and how far away they live
- ...and whether they have any non-co-resident offspring (affirmative: 3,915 in first wave; 59,899 person-waves in total), and how far away the most-contacted one lives
- Respondents may be adults of any age i.e. young adults through to great-grandparents
- Questions about regular practical help and financial help: given to and received from parents; given to and received from offspring



Nowadays, do you regularly or frequently do any of the things listed on this card for your parents

	Given to parents			
Lifts in your car	●			
Shopping	●			
Providing or cooking meals	●			
Washing, ironing or cleaning	●			
Personal affairs like paying bills, writing letters	●			
Decorating, gardening or house repairs	●			
Personal needs like dressing, eating or bathing	●			
Looking after your children				
Financial help	●			
Any	46%			

Nowadays, do you regularly or frequently do [receive] any of the things listed on this card for [from] your parents / your children who are not living here

	Given to parents	Received from parents	Given to children	Received from children
Lifts in your car	●	●	●	●
Shopping	●	●	●	●
Providing or cooking meals	●	●	●	●
Washing, ironing or cleaning	●	●	●	●
Personal affairs like paying bills, writing letters	●	●	●	●
Decorating, gardening or house repairs	●	●	●	●
Personal needs like dressing, eating or bathing	●			●
Looking after your children		●	●	
Financial help	●	●	●	●
Any	46%			

Nowadays, do you regularly or frequently do [receive] any of the things listed on this card for [from] your parents / your children who are not living here

		Given to parents	Received from parents	Given to children	Received from children
P r a c t i c a l	Lifts in your car	●	●	●	●
	Shopping	●	●	●	●
	Providing or cooking meals	●	●	●	●
	Washing, ironing or cleaning	●	●	●	●
	Personal affairs like paying bills, writing letters	●	●	●	●
	Decorating, gardening or house repairs	●	●	●	●
	Personal needs like dressing, eating or bathing	●			●
	Looking after your children		●	●	
→ Financial help	●	●	●	●	
	Any	46%	43%	57%	41%

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- ...and whether they have any non-co-resident offspring (affirmative: 3,915 in first wave; 59,899 person-waves in total), (their ages), and how far away the most-contacted one lives
- Respondents may be adults of any age i.e. young adults through to great-grandparents
- Questions about regular practical help and financial help: given to and received from parents; given to and received from offspring
- Limitation: lots of information about respondents but very little about the non-co-resident part of the dyad (regardless of whether that it is a parent or a child) – eg health, income
- Limitation: *irregular* financial help not captured; nor amounts (on-going further work...)





1. Some families exhibit a high tendency to provide mutual support: parents and their offspring are both giving and receiving help

- Moderate to strong positive correlation between tendency to give any type of help and tendency to receive any type of help, at a point in time
  - 0.23 unadjusted correlation, and 0.50 after controlling for age
  - tendencies modelled as latent variables, and adjusting for zero inflation
- Particularly for practical help
- Less so for financial help – but even here the coefficient is weakly positive



➤ practical help is often mutual, financial help less so

	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Giving <b>practical</b> help to parents and receiving <b>practical</b> help from parents	0.322 (0.006)	0.430 (0.010)
Giving <b>financial</b> help to parents and receiving <b>financial</b> help from parents	0.014 (0.012)	0.057 (0.030)

- Unadjusted figures are tetrachoric correlations (and standard errors)
- Adjusted figures are after adjusting for covariates, calculated using the random effect variances and covariances and the residual correlations (and standard deviations)
- Covariates include age, household income and travel time between respondent and parent
- At a point in time



## ➤ helping tendencies persist over time

- Respondents who give any help to parents at baseline are likely to be giving help to parents at the next year; likewise respondents who receive
- Moderate to strong lag effects for exchanges in both directions, after adjustment for covariates including changes in respondent's circumstances: 0.631 and 0.506 respectively
  - bivariate latent dynamic model, 5 waves over 14 years, allowing for unequal spacing
- Random effect correlation between giving and receiving parental support is positive, suggesting mutuality in help over time: reflects unmeasured time invariant characteristics eg quality of relationship, family norms
- Residual correlations also positive, suggesting mutuality at a point in time: reflects unmeasured time varying characteristics eg changes in parents circumstances



2. Practical and financial help are generally treated as complementary within families, rather than as substitutes

	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Giving <b>practical</b> help and giving <b>financial</b> help to parents	0.482 (0.008)	0.482 (0.010)
Receiving <b>practical</b> help and receiving <b>financial</b> help from parents	0.469 (0.006)	0.422 (0.019)

- Unadjusted figures are tetrachoric correlations (and standard errors)
- Adjusted figures are after adjusting for covariates, calculated using the random effect variances and covariances and the residual correlations (and standard deviations)
- Covariates include age, household income and travel time between respondent and parent
- At a point in time

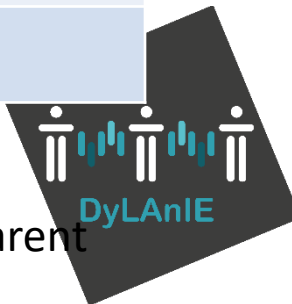


### 3. Travel time between parents and their offspring is a key mediator of the provision of practical help

Predicted marginal probabilities

Time to nearest parent	Practical help to parents		Practical help from parents	
< 15 min	0.58		0.46	
15-30 min	0.48		0.39	
30-60 min	0.38		0.32	
1-2 hours	0.27		0.24	
>2 hours	0.16		0.13	

Other covariates: respondent's age, gender, ethnicity, partnership status, health, hi qual, employment, log hh income, home ownership, youngest child, non co-resident child, siblings, age oldest parent, >=1 parent lives alone

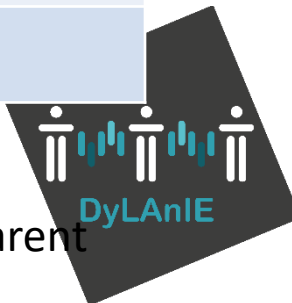


### 3. Travel time between parents and their offspring is a key mediator of the provision of practical help

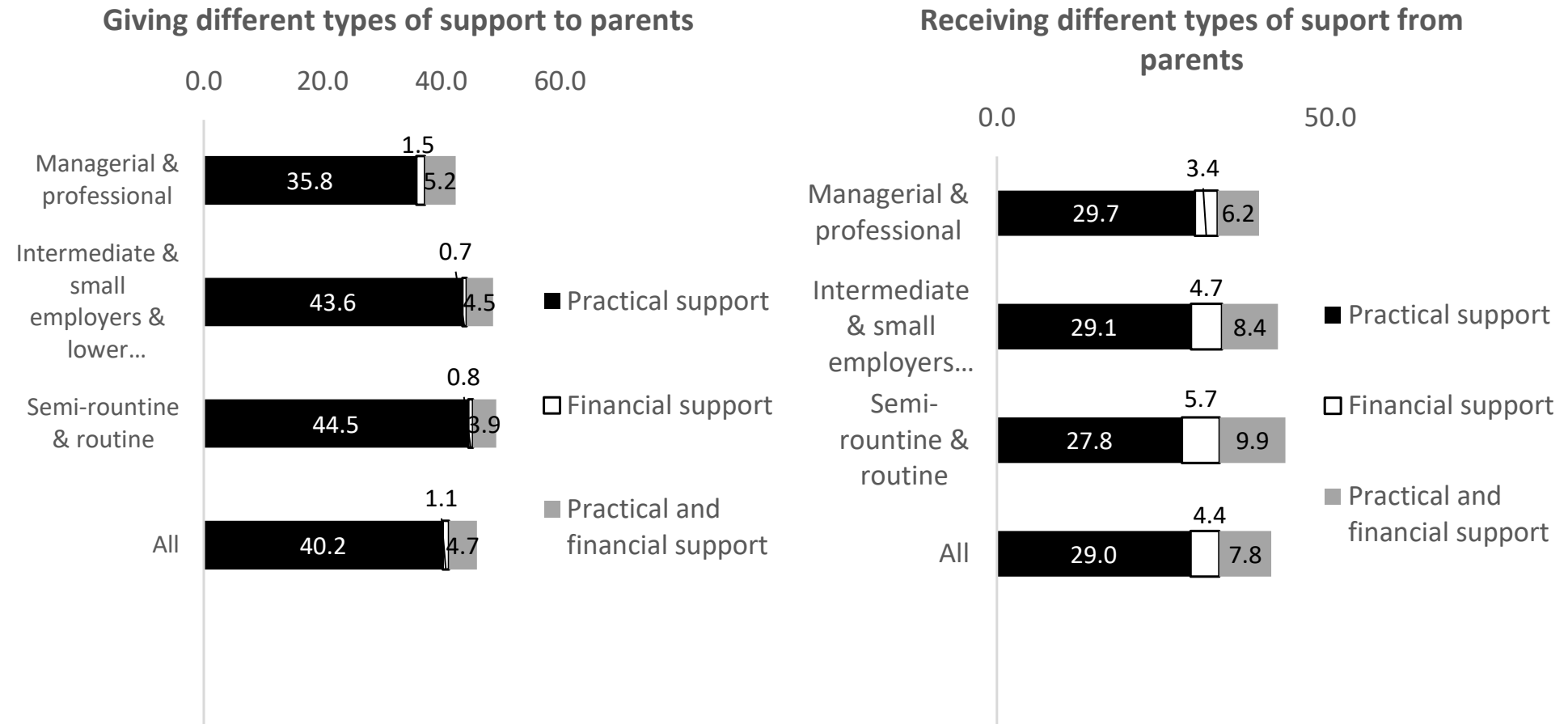
Predicted marginal probabilities

Time to nearest parent	Practical help to parents	Financial help to parents	Practical help from parents	Financial help from parents
< 15 min	0.58	0.07	0.46	0.15
15-30 min	0.48	0.06	0.39	0.13
30-60 min	0.38	0.05	0.32	0.13
1-2 hours	0.27	0.05	0.24	0.13
>2 hours	0.16	0.05	0.13	0.12

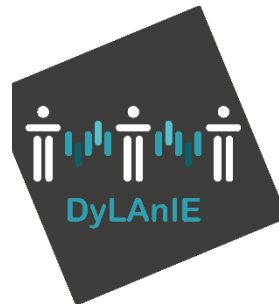
Other covariates: respondent's age, gender, ethnicity, partnership status, health, hi qual, employment, log hh income, home ownership, youngest child, non co-resident child, siblings, age oldest parent,  $\geq 1$  parent lives alone



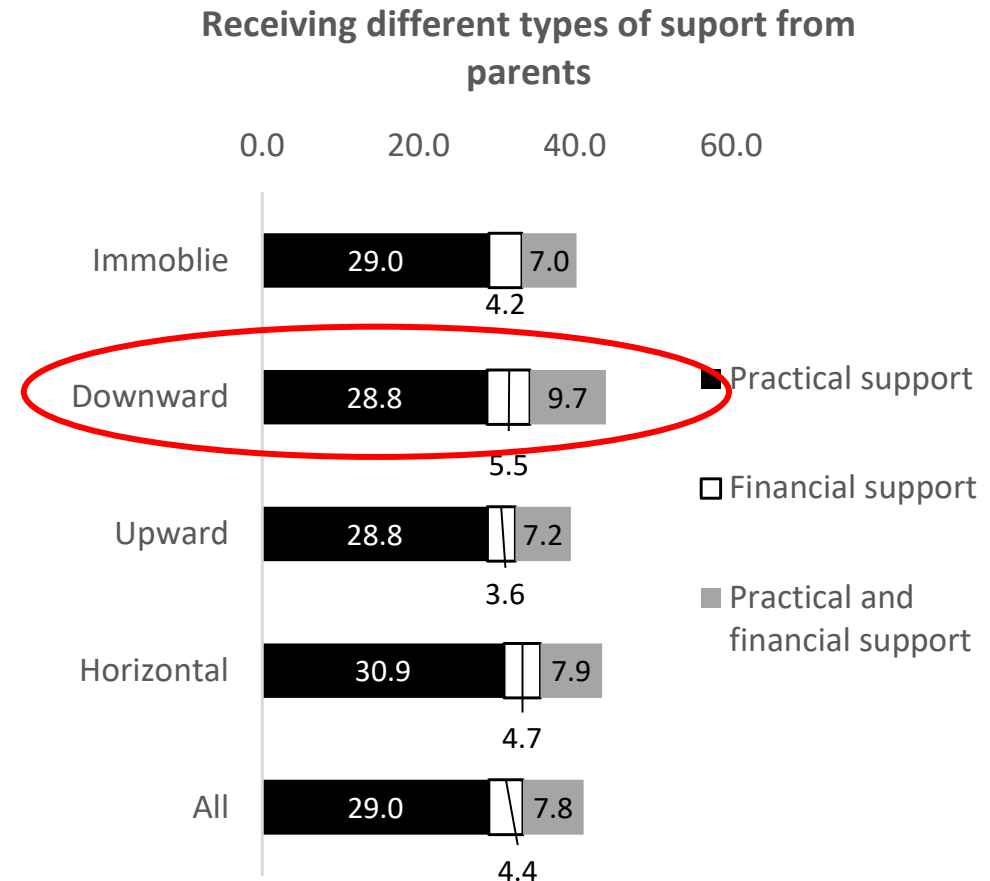
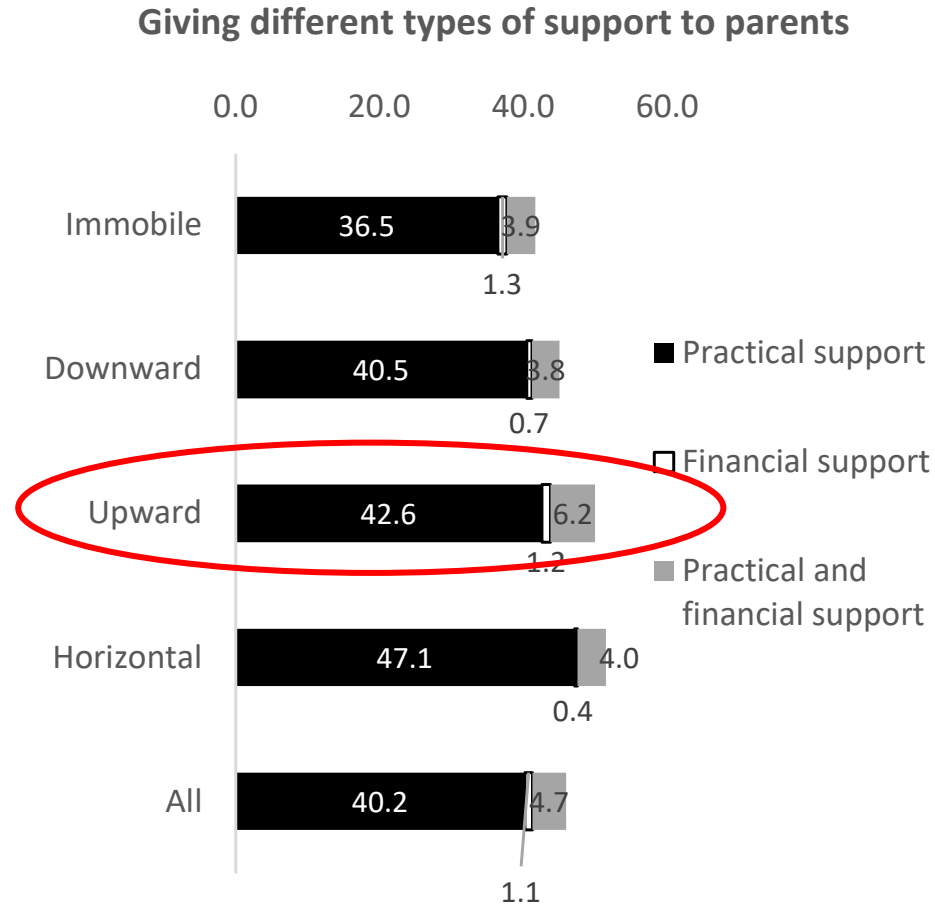
## 4. Patterns of support between parents and their offspring vary by social class...



(current NSSEC 5 for respondents aged 30-60 with at least one non-coresident parent)



## 4. ... and by social mobility...



(Absolute social mobility: respondent's current social class compared to social class origin = father's/mother's social class at age 14, whichever higher)



## 4. ... and by ethnicity

Predicted marginal probabilities

			Practical help from parents	Financial help from parents
White			0.36	0.13
Asian/A-British			0.30	0.11
Black /B-British			0.37	0.15
Other			0.35	0.12

Other covariates: respondent's age, gender, partnership status, health, hi qual, employment, log hh income, home ownership, youngest child, non co-resident child, siblings, travel time to parent, age oldest parent, >=1 parent lives alone



## 4. ... and by ethnicity

Predicted marginal probabilities

	Practical help to parents	Financial help to parents	Practical help from parents	Financial help from parents
White	0.42	0.05	0.36	0.13
Asian/A-British	0.56	0.15	0.30	0.11
Black /B-British	0.49	0.18	0.37	0.15
Other	0.46	0.10	0.35	0.12

Other covariates: respondent's age, gender, partnership status, health, hi qual, employment, log hh income, home ownership, youngest child, non co-resident child, siblings, travel time to parent, age oldest parent, >=1 parent lives alone



# So what?

- Welfare state and public services should not assume that everyone has access to a wider family to pick up the pieces
  - Those without surviving parents or offspring (not considered here)
  - Parents and offspring who live further apart – especially as financial support is not generally used as a substitute for practical support
  - Asian/Asian British younger generation
  - Families where mutual exchange is not the norm
- Patterns of exchange are consistent with *relative* needs and capacities of parents and their offspring
  - not reciprocity in the sense of expected return
  - nor straightforward altruism / warm glow



## So what?

- Exchanges within families are an important complement to formal welfare and social policies should be framed to work *with the grain* of existing patterns of exchange
- Recognise the heavy (and hidden) cost of policies that disrupt family networks, eg
  - housing policies that prevent young people gaining independence but remaining nearby (benefits caps, Local Housing Allowances, out of area tenancies for homeless families and social housing tenants)
  - regeneration schemes that disperse extended families
  - lack of *regional* economic policies and concentration in South East



Thanks for listening  
Comments and questions welcome

...but I might refer you to my colleagues on the project!

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