**Reasons why young women feel life is 'on hold'**

By Liz Jackson BBC News 22 September 2016

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**A survey of more than 4,000 18- to 30-year-olds in Britain suggests many feel their lives are "on hold" because of work, financial, housing and mental health problems.**

Many of these issues particularly affect young women, the [**survey by the Young Women's Trust**](http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0000/4258/No_country_for_young_women__final_report.pdf) found. The BBC spoke to four young women to find out what they feel is holding them back in life.

**'We're skint and can't get good jobs'**

Finding a secure, well-paid job can be a struggle for young people, the report said. Almost a third (28%) of those surveyed said they worried they didn't have enough paid hours, and more than one in five reported having been paid less than the minimum wage.

"There's no chance to put money towards the future. We have spent lots of nights sat down crunching numbers and it keeps me awake at night," said young mum Laura Davies.The 26-year-old lives with her partner in Bournemouth, and said that together they earn the equivalent of a full-time salary but it's only enough to get by on.

Laura says there is "no opportunity for progression" in her current job, so she has taken courses to gain additional skills but feels her career is "stagnant". "It's left me in the same position financially as I was five years ago. If I am going to succeed it's going to take a long time because there's not the support."

The Young Women's Trust found nearly half (48%) of respondents were worried about how much they were being paid, while another 38% were worried about job security. Laura added: "In my old job they had me in a situation where because I was a young mum I was a potential liability for them. I ended up getting signed off, and then I quit. Mentally I couldn't cope with it," she said.

**'We don't feel confident in ourselves'**

For Evee Eleanor, having enough self-confidence is key to her succeeding in her job hunt and not feeling overwhelmed. Although she had a career in childcare before she moved, Evee said she was worried about "starting from scratch". "I don't know what schools are looking for here so it sets me back a bit," she said. "I don't have any contacts around here, and so I have to jump in head first which makes me nervous."

More than half (54%) of young women said they lacked self-confidence, compared to just 39% of the young men surveyed for the report. Evee also experiences anxiety and depression, and was bullied when she was younger - something which she says she has only been able to process recently. Concerns about mental health were found to affect women more than men, with 38% of young women expressing this worry compared with 29% of young men.

Evee said being far away from family and support networks sometimes made things harder for her, adding: "I'm a complete stress-head. I have good days, but then some days I just want to curl up in a ball and not bother."

**'We can't move out of our parents' home'**

"I'm at that age now where I'm looking at other people and thinking, oh my god, I'm still stuck in my parents' home," said Emma Harris, 27. "I pay my mum rent because she doesn't have the funds to pay for a deposit for me." "Living at home, I don't have my own space - my room is tiny because I'm in a box room, so after a stressful day at work I go to the gym and come home at 9pm. Basically, I just sleep there," said Emma.

"I'm trying to save £100 a month for a mortgage because you need at least a 10% deposit, but I would be saving for a long time. I'm thinking about getting a second job."