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## Mums? work

STAY-AT-HOME mums are responsible for setting up the most home businesses in the UK, followed by young people and the over 50s. At a time when family finances are under more pressure than ever, many mothers are supplementing the household income by working from home.

According to a report by the government adviser Enterprise Nation more than 1,400 new home businesses are created every week, far more than any other type of start-up.

And most new businesses are being created by mothers who want to stay at home with their children.

Eleanor Postlethwaite established her business Photo Baby when she was pregnant with her first child, Ethan.

She says impending motherhood spurred her on to make the business the success it is today.

Ethan is two and a half now and has a nine-month-old sister, Freya.

They spend two days with a childminder so that Eleanor can concentrate exclusively on her business and studio in Ireleth, which means she can devote the rest of her time to them. Im very strict in that when its their time Im not allowed to do any work, because I think it could be very easy to do both. It means that you dont do your work properly and they dont get quality time with you. A lot of the work Im doing is in the evening, after Ive got them to bed. Im up till midnight, but I think it will pay off in the end. Song Jackson is juggling a business, Flowers by Song, whilst bringing up two young children. At 29, and a single mum, Song was determined to earn an income rather than rely on financial support. I am a single mum but I dont like to go to the government for help, she says. I go to the Job Centre and said I want to work and do something but I can get time with my kids as well. She explained how she made decorative flowers in Thailand and because she was bringing something new to the local marketplace she was entitled to grants to get her started.

She also attended a business start up course with Furness Enterprise. Now Ive got a good business, Im busy with craft fairs and Im part of Made in Cumbria, she says. From June through to Christmas, Song is busy selling the clay, hand-painted flowers shes crafting at her home on Walney. Her youngest daughter, Jasmine, is two so work has to fit around her, but Song tries to encourage the girls to get involved. When she goes to sleep I do flowers. When she wakes up I give her sugar icing to play with, to do the same as mum. She starts to do painting. I enjoy it and shes learning. Over 60 per cent of new businesses are started from home and most of them are being created by mothers who want to stay with their children. Running a business is also a great example to set to children. Angela Caulfields motivation in setting up her driving school is to be a role model to her children, particularly 15-year-old Dolcie, whos leaving school this year and starting to think about her own career. I want to show the kids you have to go out to work and it is important, says Angela, of Angelas School of Motoring. Theyre old enough now to be left on their own. Im quite proud of how theyve turned out and just because Im back to work I dont want that to spoil things. Ounces2Pounds and cosmetics giants Avon and Body Shop are all reporting a huge increase in the numbers of stay-at-home mums who are offering their services as party organisers and home-workers.

Almost one third of the UK workforce is employed by home businesses and they produce a combined turnover of over 364bn. Karren Brady has recently joined Avon Cosmetics to mentor their part-time female home-workers.

The vice-chairman of West Ham United has taken on the role because she wants to be able to motivate



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self-employed women. One of the key messages for all women is that you dont have to have an ambition to run a global bank and you dont have to be at home just running a family, says Ms Brady.

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