



others to inform the development of policy to tackle multiple deprivation in their areas. It also allowed practitioners to provide an insight into their needs so that as GUS goes forwards they are taken into account. It also provided an opportunity to bring together practitioners from across Scotland to share their real life experiences and provide a forum to air problems and discuss strategies.

This learning point captures the key points from the presentation as well as providing a summary of the main issues, lessons and learning identified by participants at the event.

Speakers were as follows:

- Paul Bradshaw, Project Manger for the GUS study at Scotcen who presented on 'The Growing Up in Scotland study: improving our knowledge on influencing child outcomes'.

Group Discussion focused on:

- Current data/analytical provision as well as practitioner needs and requirements.
- The relevance and usefulness of GUS as a national comparison for developing policy to tackle area based multiple deprivation.
- The findings to date and whether the needs and views of children and their parents have enough prominence in community planning for regeneration.

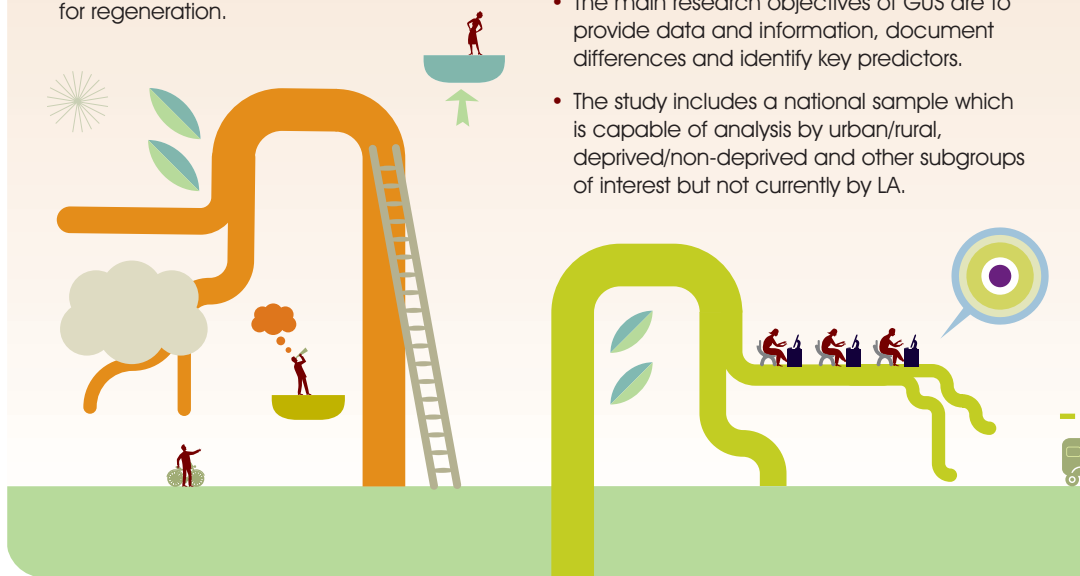
## What do we know already?

- GUS follows the lives of a national sample of Scotland's children from infancy through to their teens.
- It is one of the largest longitudinal studies ever done in Scotland and will provide information that will help develop policies affecting children and their families in Scotland.
- The study is following 8,000 children annually. The second stage of GUS (2008-2013) has recently been commissioned by the Scottish Government.
- The Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotGen) will continue to lead the study, in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at the University of Edinburgh and the Medical Research Council, Social and Public Health Sciences Unit at Glasgow University.
- Practitioners are searching for ways to evidence the impact of preventative early years interventions and are interested to find out more about GUS.

## What have we learned?

### ➤ How the GUS methodology works

- The main research objectives of GUS are to provide data and information, document differences and identify key predictors.
- The study includes a national sample which is capable of analysis by urban/rural, deprived/non-deprived and other subgroups of interest but not currently by LA.



- The team have conducted a number of 'sweeps' involving two groups of children since 2005-2006. Sweep 1 included 5,217 children aged 10.5 months in the 'birth cohort' and 2,858 children aged 34.5 months in the 'child cohort'. These sweeps have continued to look at these children annually to track their development.
- Face-to-face surveys of parents take place annually until child reaches five (almost six) years of age and then at selected stages of interest.
- Core topics in the surveys include household composition, parental support and parenting styles as well as childcare and child health and development. It also includes questions regarding education, employment and activities as well as income, benefits, accommodation and transport.
- Additional survey topics covered include parental health and well-being, pre-school and school experiences, pregnancy and birth, involvement of grandparents, material deprivation, food and nutrition, the effects of housing and neighbourhood as well as social networks and social capital.

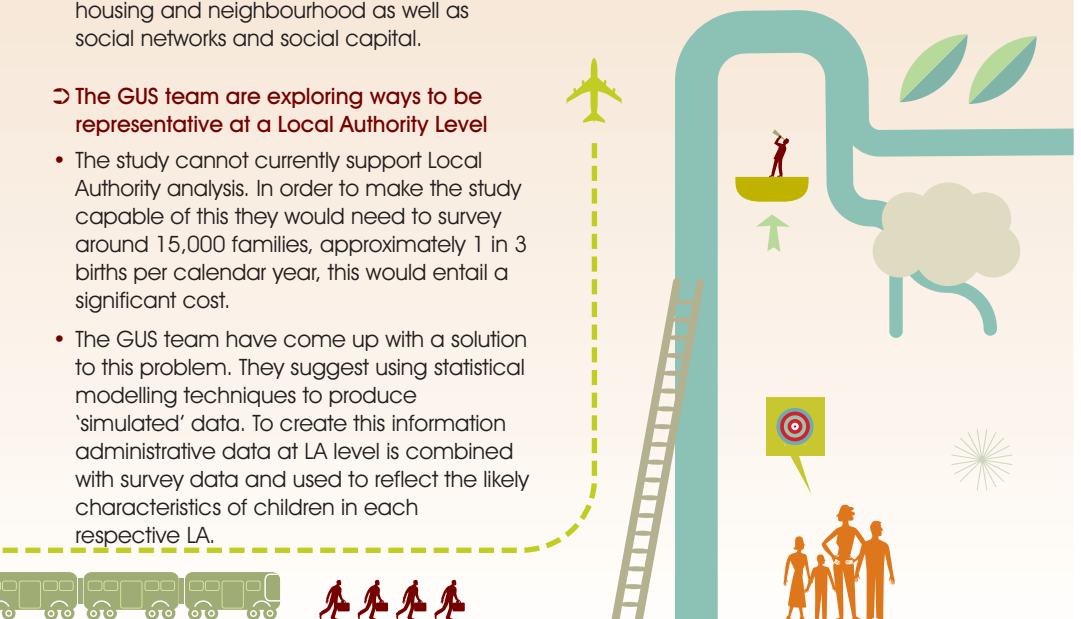
➤ **The GUS team are exploring ways to be representative at a Local Authority Level**

- The study cannot currently support Local Authority analysis. In order to make the study capable of this they would need to survey around 15,000 families, approximately 1 in 3 births per calendar year, this would entail a significant cost.
- The GUS team have come up with a solution to this problem. They suggest using statistical modelling techniques to produce 'simulated' data. To create this information administrative data at LA level is combined with survey data and used to reflect the likely characteristics of children in each respective LA.

- However, this sets out the expected results not the actual results and as such cannot be used to measure change accurately over time.

➤ **Longitudinal data can support the National Performance Framework**

- Regeneration is a long term commitment. We need long term data to demonstrate the impact to communities.
- GUS is unique in its ability to explore the influence of early individual and family characteristics, circumstances and experiences on later outcomes. Annual surveys allow for detailed exploration of changes in circumstances and experiences, and the effects of any such change. This includes the exploration of long term effects of exposure to persistent poverty.
- GUS allows us to explore not just whether circumstances have changed, but for whom, in what way, why and with what outcome.



### ⇒ GUS can provide context, comparison and understanding

- GUS data can supply a national 'baseline' or benchmark against which local performance can be judged.
- GUS samples provide a 'control group' against which to test the effect of locally implemented interventions.
- The combinations of factors which produce positive outcomes in the national dataset will have relevance for local situations and can influence service planning and delivery.
- Delegates suggested that it was useful to be able to see national evidence to back up what they are aware of at an anecdotal level.
- Gus allows practitioners to unpick the stories behind the numbers and to enhance quantitative evidence with qualitative information.

### ⇒ Some key findings

- The study shows that the rich-poor divide is perhaps more stark than originally anticipated. GUS supports the argument that early intervention is key to ensure our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Factors associated with parenting behaviours as identified by the study are:
  - Area deprivation
  - Urban-rural classification
  - Existence of social networks
  - Assessment of local facilities
  - Household income
  - Level of education
  - Tenure
  - Length of residence
  - Mother's age at child's birth

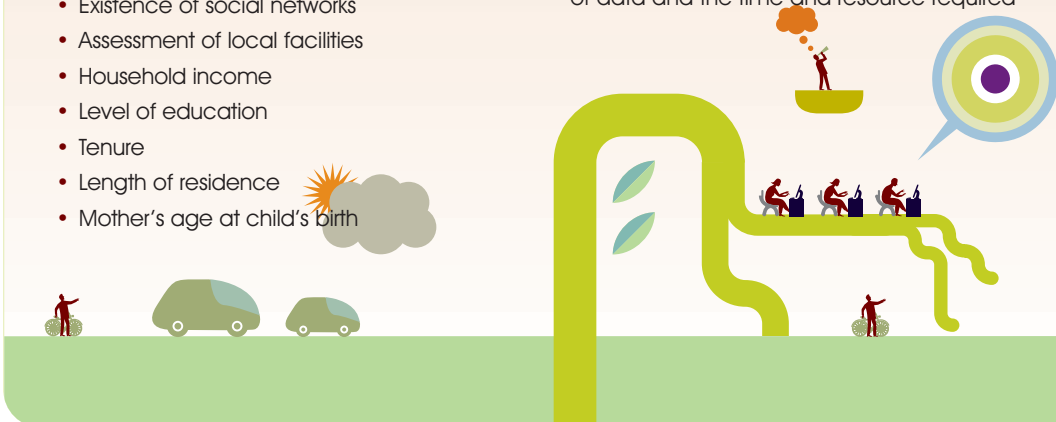
- Younger mothers, lone mothers, those with fewer educational qualifications, those on low incomes, and those living in areas of relative deprivation were less likely to breastfeed. Maternal level of education was proven to be the strongest predictor of breastfeeding.
- Non-attendance at ante-natal classes was associated with younger age, lower income, socio-economic classification and lower educational attainment. After first time motherhood, maternal age at child's birth was next strongest predictor of attendance.
- Living in social housing or having a home in a deprived area and lack of educational qualifications are all strongly predictive of smoking.

### ⇒ Some Local Authority areas are developing their own data management systems

- The 'KnowFife' dataset is proving a useful tool for local practitioners. Information covering the Fife area from a variety of resources, for example the SIMD and Health is pulled together and broken down into area profiles for comparison at a local, regional and national level.
- South Lanarkshire have a system called 'Nip Tuck' to allowing tracking of raw data at a multi-member ward level including information such as the SIMD.

### ⇒ Practitioners would welcome greater support

- Smaller Local Authorities find the production of data and the time and resource required



to analyse that data a greater challenge than larger authorities. Some delegates suggested that greater external analytical support would be useful.

- Practitioners are keen and willing to share resources across Local Authority Boundaries to capture evidence of what works.
- There is a wealth of information on population, deprivation etc. However more needs to be done to record access to services and why those in deprived areas do not make use of them.
- Communication is key in dealing with data. Some Local Authority areas reported that they were able to access raw data but were at times unsure of the best way to interpret and use this information.
- Currently a lot of health-related data is used, particularly on oral health statistics, breast-feeding, smoking, in relation to early years. Delegates suggested that they would appreciate a broader range of information which includes more social indicators.

## What next?

The issues identified at this event will form part of a programme of activities for the Community Regeneration and Tackling Poverty Learning Network. This Learning Network supports Community Planning Partnerships, and their partners, to improve activity to regenerate communities and tackle poverty. It is led by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration, and links up with learning promoted by other parts of the Scottish Government.

The Learning Network will provide support and help people to exchange information and ideas. This will include organising further events to share good practice; identifying and publishing information about case studies of good practice; and developing other opportunities for sharing experiences through study visits and working groups.

You can join the Learning Network online at [Partners in Regeneration](http://Partners in Regeneration) or contact [Heather Smith](mailto:Heather.Smith@scotland.gsi.gov.uk), Learning Network Co-ordinator, on 0141 271 3735.

## Further information

GUS Website – <http://www.crf.ac.uk/gus/> or [www.growingupinScotland.org.uk](http://www.growingupinScotland.org.uk)

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### Scottish Centre for Regeneration

↳ This Learning Point is published by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration. The Centre is part of the Housing and Regeneration Directorate of Scottish Government. We help to achieve Scottish Government's Purpose, Targets and National Outcomes through supporting our public, private and voluntary sector delivery partners to become more effective at:

- regenerating communities and tackling poverty
- developing more successful town centres and high streets
- creating and managing mixed and sustainable communities.

↳ We do this through:

- coordinating learning networks which bring people together to identify the challenges they face in delivering regeneration and to support them to tackle these through organising events, networking and capacity building programmes
- identifying and sharing learning through undertaking research, developing capacity building tools and highlighting lessons learned and good practice
- developing partnerships with key players in the regeneration sector to ensure that our activities meet their needs and support their work.

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