



CRFR ten years

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## Influencing society: the impact of social research



*"The next ten years pose challenges about how research is used in the development of policy and practice. We need to keep innovating in how we communicate research, especially through new social media, but also think about how research finds its place in the development of smarter services in a time of shrinking budgets. Our experimental project About Families funded by the Big Lottery is one way we are trying to explore these issues".*

Sarah Morton

CRFR Co-Director, Knowledge Exchange.



CRFR's knowledge exchange work has been acknowledged as 'outstanding' by the ESRC, as a 'market leader' by the Scottish Government, and at our anniversary celebration Ann Millar from the Scottish Funding Council said that a "sustained and mature engagement with both policy-makers and practitioners from both central and local government and the voluntary sector" had been a key achievement. As part of the CRFR 10th anniversary celebrations, our national conference focused on knowledge exchange in social science: an opportunity to explore CRFR's knowledge exchange secret, and to bring together others who are developing ways which social research can influence society.

Through exploring what is research utilisation, some of the lessons from CRFR's 10 years experience, and considering approaches from different sectors and countries the conference explored how social research can impact on society. The conference addressed communication and translation, collaboration, knowledge brokering and research impact. A market place showed films and photographs as ways of engaging people with research, showcased innovative discussion and development projects and gave an opportunity to meet knowledge exchange practitioners and discuss innovations.

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## Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

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**The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships was set up in March 2001 to produce research and commentary on families and relationships relevant to Scotland and to disseminate such work widely. It receives financial support from a range of sources. CRFR facilitates a network of researchers and those interested in families and relationships research, produces regular research briefings and information bulletins, and holds events.**

A consortium of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Highlands and Islands and Stirling.



## Twenty+ Futures:

recession, global threats and young people's anticipated futures as partners and parents

**Lynn Jamieson**



How do young adults think about their future lives, about becoming partners and parents, in a time of global threats, concerning the economy, security or the environment? The 20+ futures project is a small scale qualitative study that is part of the Centre for Population Change ([www.cpc.ac.uk](http://www.cpc.ac.uk)). It sits alongside other larger-scale projects exploring household formation and fertility funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Our sample deliberately excluded parents, in order to focus on young adults for whom there is uncertainty about becoming parents. We similarly excluded those who signalled a settled partnership by marriage or civil partnerships. We included cohabiting couples, who are a significant proportion of the age group. Although cohabiting can indicate life-long commitment, this is not always the case.

Following a small set of sensitising group discussions with a convenience sample of young adults, 35 in-depth interviews were conducted with unmarried childless men and women aged 20-29. Recruited through further and higher education, employers, an unemployment agency, and personal contacts, all interviewees were currently living in urban Scotland and had received their school education in the UK. The sample was deliberately similar in terms of educational qualifications, occupational histories and social class background.

Uncertainty and lack of economic security associated with the recession were themes in most of the interviews, although a few felt that media 'scaremongering' created unnecessary anxiety. Other themes concerning global insecurities were muted in comparison. Climate change and environmental issues were occasionally raised spontaneously but terrorism and security threats were typically only discussed as a result of direct questions. Vulnerability to economic insecurity was expressed by those in and out of employment and those still completing education.

Many young people had a strong sense of the future being stalled or on hold. This was particularly so among those experiencing unemployment but many of those in jobs and higher education felt their career and promotion prospects were now less than they had anticipated a few years ago. A sense of historical or generational time could modify how people saw recession with some referring to the cyclical nature of it, and stressing it would pass, but others feeling that their generation was particularly unfavoured: *'we've got student debts to pay off, trying to save up for a house, trying to save up for our children's university fees'* (Fran, 26yr old, employed professional living with partner).

After employment, housing was the issue raised most frequently when young people

were asked about how the recession had modified their future plans. Very few of the interviewees owned their own homes although most wanted home ownership to be an aspect of their future. The majority were renting from private owners. Young adults with tenancies in social housing and living in their parental home were also represented in the sample. Whether interviewees were disappointed at not yet being 'on the property ladder' varied with other aspects of their circumstances. For example, Sarah, a middle-class graduate in her late twenties in a career job, described disappointment at lack of progress in buying a home with her boyfriend. Accumulating the necessary savings became more difficult than anticipated because of her boyfriend's struggle to find an appropriate graduate job and as the amount needed for a deposit became, in her words, *'quite horrendous'*. On the other hand, Lynsey, working-class, in her early twenties, also employed and living with a partner, expressed relief at not having a mortgage to worry about during a period of recession.

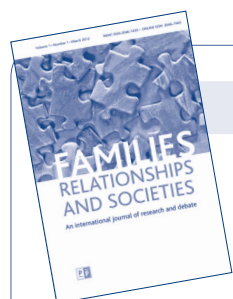
For those with a sense of progress in employment, the reported impact of recession on plans and planning is less bleak than for working-class unemployed. For example Ben felt: *"It's stopped everybody's plans really."* But rather than next steps, some interviewees were more focused on contingencies for when things go wrong. Their family and parental home

were often cited as background security. For example, unemployed Kate, who became an early home owner before losing her job in the recession, noted: *"even if the worst happened and I couldn't pay my mortgage and my house was repossessed, I wouldn't be homeless ever. Like, I know my mum would take me in or I would stay with friends or something. That's quite a comforting thought."* Preoccupation with budgeting and getting by often dominated interviews of those on low incomes and a few interviewees knew they could not turn to their family for support. Most of these had neither mortgage nor car and their concerns focused on rising costs, such as of food, rent, energy and transport.

The sense of delayed future created by recession was impacting on parenting for this group. All but three wanted children. None had achieved what most saw as the right circumstances— a secure relationship along with stable employment, savings and an appropriate home. A number of interviewees explicitly linked an imagined future as a parent to having settled with a partner in a particular ideal-type of family-home. Some unemployed respondents who did not already have a partner reported difficulties in meeting people and some young men expressed anxiety because of the conventional link between earnings and the male role. However, many interviewees remained optimistic that such difficulties would be resolved within five years.

The research team was Emma Rawlins (who conducted the interviews), Kathryn Backett-Milburn, Sarah Cunningham-Burley and Lynn Jamieson.

For further information go to: [www.cpc.ac.uk](http://www.cpc.ac.uk)  
[www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp\\_recession.html?link=recession\\_globalthreats.php](http://www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_recession.html?link=recession_globalthreats.php)



## Families, Relationships and Societies

Families, Relationships and Societies is a new social science journal designed to advance understanding and debate in the field of families and relationships across the life course. It draws on the experience of many academics closely associated with CRFR, and explores family life, relationships and generational issues from interdisciplinary, social science perspectives, whilst maintaining a solid grounding in sociological theory and methods and a strong policy and practice focus. It encompasses the fluidity, complexity and diversity of contemporary social and personal relationships and their need to be understood in the context of different societies and cultures.

For further information go to: [www.policypress.co.uk/journals\\_frs.asp](http://www.policypress.co.uk/journals_frs.asp)



## Anniversary Reception

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June a reception was held in the Playfair Library to mark ten years of CRFR. It was the first in a number of special anniversary events which took place in 2011 and was attended by colleagues, associates and friends of CRFR past and present. Speakers Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Michael Anderson and Ann Millar touched on the origins of CRFR and looked forward to a positive and productive future.

## CRFR Anniversary Seminar – June The environment, families and relationships

This seminar, led by Lynn Jamieson, examined the interaction between family and personal relationships and behaviour regarding the environment.

Its aim was to open up discussion and initiate debate about connections between personal relationships and environmental issues.

## CRFR Anniversary Seminar – November What can children's rights learn from human rights?

For this seminar Kay Tisdall came together with the Scottish Human Rights Commission and Together (The Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) to explore the potential of human rights and in particular children's and considered these in the context of current policy activity in Scotland.

# Project update

Following the progress of selected CRFR research projects



Image © NHS Health Scotland, 2011.

## Embedding information rights in schools

CRFR has recently won a research tender from the Information Commissioner, to explore how information rights could be embedded within primary and secondary school curricula. Previous research has shown that, despite efforts by the Information Commissioner's Office and others, that children and young people still have low knowledge of their information rights – from privacy settings on social network sites, to their rights to access information. Kay Tisdall (CRFR) and Carole Ewart (public policy and human rights consultant) will be working together on this research, with assistance from contacts elsewhere in the UK.

**about families**  
gathering evidence • informing action



## About Families: gathering evidence, informing action

About Families works with voluntary and public sector agencies to develop evidence-informed services so the changing needs of parents, including families affected by disability, can be met more effectively.

An innovative 'evidence to action' process has been developed to facilitate knowledge exchange, and to work with agencies to involve service users in their planning.

To date, About Families has produced two evidence reports: Parenting Teenagers – relationships and behaviour and, most recently, Together and Apart – supporting families through change, which was launched at a participative event involving over 40 practitioners and policymakers from organisations

including local authorities, the Scottish Government, and a range of third sector agencies. A second event, in partnership with Capability Scotland, has focused on organisations supporting families with disabilities.

About Families supports voluntary and statutory organisations to plan, implement and evaluate service developments. Currently we are working with a voluntary organisation to develop an approach for engaging service users and monitoring service impact; supporting a charity to increase the involvement of parents in their work; supporting organisations to carry out Equality Impact Assessments; and sharing key messages from the research with policy makers.

About Families is also carrying out a pilot of an Evidence Request System, which will be evaluated and launched in early 2012.

*About Families is a partnership between the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR), Capability Scotland and Parenting across Scotland. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund.*

[www.aboutfamilies.org.uk](http://www.aboutfamilies.org.uk)

## Secretly connected? Anonymous semen donation

Jennifer Speirs's Postdoctoral Fellowship builds on her PhD 'Secretly connected? Anonymous semen donation, genetics and meanings of kinship' which explored what it means to men that they donated 25-40 years previously, anonymously and in many cases for money or other material reward. Her research involved interviews with these donors as well as participant observation amongst stakeholders in the contemporary infertility treatment field.

In January Jennifer presented a poster at the British Fertility Society conference in Dublin on the question of whether a donor's wife is related to her husband's donor offspring. In April she gave presentations to staff and students of social anthropology at the University of Pardubice and the Charles Johnson University, Prague, Czech Republic. In November Jennifer will give a paper at the American Anthropologists Association conference in Montreal and will be an invited contributor to a constitutional law symposium at the University of Toronto, Canada.

Her fellowship is supported by the ESRC.

For information on all our projects visit [www.crfr.ac.uk](http://www.crfr.ac.uk)



Me and my befriender

## Me and My Befriender

Me and my befriender explores how children from lone parent households view the gender of their adult befriender and will finish at the end of March 2012. Interview and visual data have been gathered from 26 children, aged 6-15 years attending 9 befriending projects in Scotland and England. Seventeen children were interviewed prior to knowing who their befriender might be; 19 were interviewed after they had spent time with their befriender; and ten were interviewed both before and after. Interviews were held with 21 lone mothers/female carers, 3 lone fathers, and documents examined and interviews held with 9 befriending projects.

The research findings are likely to be of interest to organisations working with children and young people and those using volunteers to provide one to one service for vulnerable groups. The project advisory group, which includes representatives from: the University of Aberdeen; the Scottish Government; Befriending Network Scotland; Children 1st; and Men2Mentor are planning to invite practitioners from befriending, children's and volunteer projects and policy makers to an event in January 2012. This will provide an opportunity for specific policy and practice implications to be identified and prioritised.

*This project is funded by the ESRC and conducted in partnership with Befriending Network Scotland.*

[www.crfr.ac.uk/befriending](http://www.crfr.ac.uk/befriending)

## Evaluation of the Personal Development Partnership (PDP) (2010-2013)

PDP is funded through Cashback for Communities, Scottish Government and comprises four voluntary sector partners providing a range of activities designed to improve personal and employability skills of young people (14-17yrs) at 'significant risk of offending'. The evaluation is being carried out by CRFR and CHRE. The evaluation combines two theoretical approaches, Contribution Analysis and Pluralistic evaluation, to identify and assess the potential outcomes of the PDP project. The evaluation is mid way through its time period: the first half has focused on the process/development elements and the findings have been fed back to the funders, PDP partners and referral

agents through evaluation team workshops and through service development workshops. More recently, case studies of young people and their families, led by Sue Milne at CRFR, have started across the three PDP sites. This work takes a more in depth look at the impact of PDP through longitudinal interviewing, focus groups and video diary techniques. An interim report is currently being prepared that summarises the findings thus far.

[www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp\\_pdp.html](http://www.crfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_pdp.html)

## Growing Up in Scotland findings from the first 5 years



Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS), the longitudinal research study following the lives of thousands of children across Scotland from birth through to adolescence has now been running for 6 years. Four new reports using data from the first five years of GUS were launched at our annual conference in June.

Some key findings\* from the new reports:

- Around one in ten children in Scotland experience their parents separating in the first 5 years of their life.
- The gap in cognitive abilities between children from more and less advantaged social backgrounds found at age 3 persists at age 5.
- Mothers living in disadvantaged circumstances are more reluctant to engage with services aimed at supporting parents.
- Child health and health behaviours are less favourable in families experiencing adversity.

Interest in GUS continues to grow. Members of GUS team from CRFR, Scotcen and the Scottish Government have been busy travelling throughout Scotland speaking about the new findings. This year we are recruiting a further 6,000 families with babies born during 2010 and 2011. Information from these families will help us to find out whether the experiences of children 'growing up in Scotland' are changing.

*\*To download full research findings or to listen to the presentation from our conference, please visit the GUS website: [www.growingupinScotland.org.uk](http://www.growingupinScotland.org.uk)*

*You can also follow us on Twitter: @growingupinScot*

# In the spotlight

This section profiles two students or project staff who are part of the vibrant CRFR research community. For a full list of projects see [www.crfr.ac.uk](http://www.crfr.ac.uk)



## Exploring non-resident fatherhood in Britain: Dynamics, child well-being and implications for law and policy in children's early years

Sarah Rogers

Non-resident fatherhood has long been an issue of concern to policy makers, practitioners and society at large. Contact and the maintenance of relationships between non-resident fathers and children is widely regarded as beneficial, if not crucial to child well-being, with such an approach being evident in the law and policy of Scotland and England & Wales. Despite the wealth of research on non-resident fatherhood, such assertions find no conclusive support in empirical evidence. Previous research however, has predominantly focused on adolescent well-being following relationship breakdown with little consideration of non-resident fatherhood in children's early years. The considerable increase in early years' non-resident fatherhood, changing views of fatherhood and growing evidence of the importance of the early years to future outcomes provides support for the assertion that the experience of non-resident fathers in the early years' may be different from other stages.

Sarah's research will explore the dynamics of non-resident fatherhood and its impact on child well-being in the early years through secondary quantitative data analysis of two large national datasets, the Growing Up in Scotland and Millennium Cohort longitudinal studies. The legal and policy implications of the project's empirical findings will be considered for Scotland and England & Wales.

Sarah graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2007 with an Honours degree in Law and holds a postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. She has recently completed an MSc by Research in Social Policy and is in the first year of her PhD studies.



## Calling NHS 24: An exploration of illness behaviour amongst patients using the service

Emma Doyle

Demand for health services is rising in Scotland and the pattern of demand is changing. In particular, demand for out of hours care is rising and there is an identified need to understand why this is happening and the decision making process that people go through when determining when, where and how to seek health care, particularly out of hours.

NHS 24 is a 24-hour helpline providing assessment, triage and where necessary, referral to out-of-hours services. It receives over 1.5 million calls per year. The premise of this PhD research is that the service is likely to be transforming aspects of illness behaviour as options for patients increase and they interact in different ways with service providers. The research will use in-depth qualitative interviews with callers in order to explore their motivations and decision-making around seeking health care, particularly for minor illnesses in the out-of-hours period.

The research will seek to answer questions such as how do patients make decisions regarding symptoms in themselves or for those they are caring for, how do they experience NHS 24 input and their own self-care and what differences are there in terms of gender, age and region?

Emma graduated from National University of Ireland, Galway in 2006 with a BA in Sociology & Political Science and French. She completed an MSc in Anthropology of Health and Illness at the University of Edinburgh in 2008 and then spent two years working for NHS Lothian in the field of mental health information. She is now almost a year into a PhD in Public Health Sciences.



## International links

From 2007 to 2010 Kirsten McAllister was an honorary fellow with CRFR. Funded by a grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada she conducted research on the role of the arts in creating inclusive public spaces for newly arrived asylum seekers who were dispersed to the City of Glasgow.

As a result of some of this work Kirsten has edited a special issue of the journal *West Coast Line* (Simon Fraser University arts and culture journal) devoted to *Transnational Publics: Asylum and the Arts in Glasgow*.

*"In addition to bringing together the knowledge of a range of people and organisations working on asylum issues in a format that could be shared more widely, I wanted to introduce the work that is transforming cities like Glasgow into more inclusive transnational public spaces to communities in Vancouver and more broadly to researchers, artists and activists across Canada where asylum seeker and migrant workers can be rendered invisible underneath the rhetoric of multiculturalism".*

Kirsten McAllister

# CRFR Events

## Coming in Spring 2012

### Growing Up in Scotland Data Workshop 2012

The University of Stirling  
Tuesday 17 January 2012



This workshop will look at accessing and using data from the first 5 years of GUS

### Gender based Violence Research Network

Annual conference  
14 March 2012

### Me and My Befriender Seminar - January 2012



### About Families Stakeholder engagement event Early Spring 2012



## CPD courses 2011

Research and consultation with children and young people

### Involving Children and Young People in Research and Consultation

22nd and 23rd March 2012

Exploring how children and young people can be meaningfully and ethically involved in research and consultation, at an advanced level.

### Using Digital Media in Research with Children and Young People

10th and 11th May 2012

Exploring the use of a range of different technologies in research.

### Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People

1st and 2nd March 2012

This new course will explore using arts and creative based methods in research with children and young people.

For further information on all these courses go to [www.crfr.ac.uk](http://www.crfr.ac.uk) or contact [k.dunne@ed.ac.uk](mailto:k.dunne@ed.ac.uk)

For further information about any of our events  
or to make a booking please visit our website

[www.crfr.ac.uk](http://www.crfr.ac.uk)



## Postdoctoral Fellowship news

Valeria Skafida has been awarded a highly prestigious British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship to carry out her project 'An appetite for life? Changing food habits and health from infancy to childhood in the context of family life in Scotland'. This is a 3-year project which will commence in January 2012. It will build on Valeria's doctoral work at CRFR which looked at child nutrition from birth to age 2. Using upcoming longitudinal data from the Growing Up in Scotland survey, Valeria will explore how dietary habits continue to develop over time as children turn 5 years old. The research

will provide a unique understanding on how children's eating habits evolve from birth through the toddler years, within the context of family meal patterns and parent's ideas about health. It will also explore how nutrition in infancy and early childhood relates to young children's weight, their dental health, and their participation in physical activity.

The project is expected to provide a comprehensive, policy and theory embedded analysis of children's nutrition and health in the early years. It is hoped that the findings will inform health policy which addresses the growing problems caused by sub-optimal nutrition in infancy and early childhood. Valeria will be co-based at the Centre for Population Health Sciences and the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at The University of Edinburgh, and mentored by Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley.

# CRFR News

## CRFR people

### Amy Chandler

Congratulations to Amy and family on the safe arrival of baby Theo - born on the 7th October.

### Emma Rawlins

Emma leaves CRFR to join the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol as a Qualitative Research Associate. She will be working on the Active for Life Year 5 Intervention study.

### Kirsten Thomlinson

Kirsten will be joining CRFR in January 2012 as the Communication and Knowledge Exchange Co-ordinator. Kirsten has a background in communication and dissemination within different work settings and is also experienced in developing and delivering training workshops.

## Recent publications

Clarke, C. L., Wilkinson, H., Keady, J. and Gibb, C. E. (2011) *Risk Assessment and Management for Living Well with Dementia*. Jessica Kingsley.



de Lima, P. (2011) 'Boundary Crossings: migration, belonging/un-belonging' in rural Scotland' in Hedberg & de Carmo (eds) *Translocational ruralism: Mobility and connectivity in European rural space*. New York: Springer <http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/population+studies/book/978-94-007-2314-6>

Kerr, D. and Wilkinson, H. (2010) *Providing Good Care at Night for Older People*. Jessica Kingsley. (Now also translated into German).

Miles, J., Mordaunt, E. and Wasoff, F. (2011) 'Cohabitation: lessons from research north of the border?', *Child and Family Law Quarterly* 23 (3), pp. 302-322.

Pickersgill, M., Cunningham-Burley, S. and Martin, P. (2011) 'Constituting Neurologic Subjects: Neuroscience, Subjectivity and the Mundane Significance of the Brain', *Subjectivity*, 4, 3, 346-365. (special issue on 'Neuroscience and Subjectivity').

Punch, S., McIntosh, I. and Emond, R. (2011) *Children's Food Practices in Families and Institutions*, London: Routledge.

Rosie, M. and Wasoff, F. (2011) 'Religion, Family Values and Family Law', in Mair and Örucü (eds), *The Place of Religion in Family Law: A Comparative Search*, *European Family Law Series* Vol.30, Cambridge/Antwerp: Intersentia, ISBN 978-1-78068-015-6 333-356.

Scottish Dementia Working Group, Weaks, D. and Wilkinson, H. (2012) *Supporting relationships through involvement in campaigning*. Perspectives Commissioned article for Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Smith, M., Cree, V., Gallagher, M. and Wilkinson, H. (forthcoming 2012) *Engaging with Involuntary Service Users in Social Work: findings from a knowledge exchange project*. *British Journal of Social Work*.

Tisdall, E. K. M. and Hill, M. (2011) 'Policy change under devolution: the prism of children's policy', *Social Policy & Society*, 10(1): 29-40.

## Out now - CRFR Books

### Understanding Families: A Global Introduction



Understanding Families: A Global Introduction is set to be a core text book for students on social science, nursing, health and business courses. Written by Samantha Callan (CRFR Honorary Fellow) and Linda McKie (CRFR Associate Director) The book addresses the wide range of issues which affect our understanding of families, including relationships, sexualities and work, and critically:

- Applies key social theories
- Explores best practice for research
- Highlights relevant government policies and practices

[www.uk.sagepub.com](http://www.uk.sagepub.com)

### Researching Families and Relationships



This book will be invaluable to students, researchers, professionals and anyone planning to conduct research on families and relationships. It contains accounts and reflections from over 40 researchers on some of the dilemmas and issues encountered while researching and communicating research in this area.

The contributors – many of whom have strong links with CRFR – provide a variety of insights into subjects such as ethical considerations, complexities of time and place and getting research into policy and practice.

[www.palgrave.com](http://www.palgrave.com)

## Latest crfr research briefings

CRFR Briefing 56	October 2011	Women in management: gender, age and working lives.
CRFR Briefing 55	April 2011	Someone to talk to: views and experiences of emotional support.
CRFR Briefing 54	February 2011	Young people's attitudes about violence.

Research briefings can be downloaded from our website [www.cfr.ac.uk](http://www.cfr.ac.uk), or contact us for printed copies