



News

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

CRFR News 7 Summer 2005

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The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships was set up in January 2001 to produce research and commentary on families and relationships relevant to Scotland and to disseminate such work widely. It was established with a grant from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and receives funds from the Scottish Executive and various other 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.

CRFR four years on



It is hard to believe that CRFR has now entered its fifth year! Time goes by so fast and although we sometimes feel as if we are running to keep up, we have also had time to reflect on our achievements and further aspirations.

Our period of funding from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, Research Development Grant enabled us to establish ourselves, both at the University of Edinburgh and in the collaborating institutions. This tapered to an end during 2004, but we have been able to consolidate a range of income streams that will hopefully ensure that we'll be celebrating our tenth year with you all. This includes a funding agreement with the Scottish Executive Office of the Chief Researcher for a range of activities which support our aim to make research relevant to Scotland today.

Our research activities have been wide and varied, ranging from smaller studies of specific issues, to larger projects involving collaborators and longer time scales. We hope this newsletter helps bring attention to this work. We still try to stick to our key principles of conducting high quality research, being collaborative, making research accessible and supporting new researchers. A key success has been the number of PhD students we now have

attached to CRFR – see page 5 for some examples.

Our commitment to wide dissemination and bringing together the research, policy and practice communities remains strong. Funds from the University of Edinburgh, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Knowledge Transfer Grant and from our funding agreement with the Scottish Executive, along with some income generating activities of our own, has meant that Sarah Morton, our Research Liaison Officer, is now supported by two other staff. Our activities have grown and developed, and we are now branching into the Continuing Professional Development field as well as continuing with our other events such as seminars and conferences.

CRFR is what it is because of the people working with us – not just all the staff at 23 Buccleuch Place, but in the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian and Stirling, all our other collaborators in the academic, policy and practice communities, and those who are interested in what we are doing and trying to achieve. As we said at the very outset, family and personal relationships are crucial to quality of life and we need evidence based understanding for good policy and practice.

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

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In consortium with Glasgow Caledonian University and the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling

Children's concerns



about the health and well-being of their parents and significant others

Sharon Ogilvie-White

This one year collaboration between CRFR and ChildLine Scotland (funded by the ESRC) has explored children's concerns about the health and well-being of their parents and significant others and how this impacts upon their lives.

ChildLine Scotland is a free telephone helpline for children and young people in danger or distress. It provides a counselling service for any child with any problem. Thousands of children call ChildLine every year to talk about their problems. The most common things that children call ChildLine Scotland about are bullying, worries about growing up, abuse and family problems. ChildLine listens to children and young people, gives them information and helps them look at options open to them. ChildLine never tell other people about children's problems unless they are asked to by the caller or they are in danger of being seriously harmed.

Calls to ChildLine Scotland represent unsolicited communication from children and young people, which are not mediated by research questions or agendas, methods or researcher interaction. We therefore considered ChildLine Scotland's database to be a unique resource with potential to allow research insights into children's self-identified concerns and problems.

The study

We worked collaboratively with ChildLine Scotland to access this unique caller database. We focused on calls to ChildLine where children expressed concerns about the health and well-being of parents and significant others. These calls represent a minority of calls to ChildLine but were the focus of our interest in this study. Data from calls over four years were transferred into a qualitative data analysis package to aid coding and retrieval and help identify key themes.

Our interests centred on exploring what children's concerns were, the range and content of these concerns, and how children expressed the worries

they had. We also looked at the impact of these concerns on children's lives, identifying the strategies that they used for 'getting by' in difficult circumstances.

We restricted our analysis to records of calls made by children in the 11 to 15 age range as the majority of calls to ChildLine are received from this age group. We conducted a basic quantitative analysis on 9,363 calls to highlight children's concerns and explore interactions between different worries. This was followed by an in-depth qualitative analysis on a 12 month cross-section of calls which was guided by our research interests but remained flexibly aware of the nature of children's own expressed concerns.

Findings

Whilst we found that children called about a wide range of significant others and discussed a diverse range of health and well-being problems, our analysis highlighted that children concerns were primarily about parents and friends. However, there were clear qualitative differences in the kinds of issues they talked about in relation to parents and friends.

Concerns about parents were primarily about alcohol misuse, bereavement, depression and mental health problems, domestic violence and occasionally more traditional health problems such as cancer. On the other hand concerns about friends were centred around worries about eating problems, smoking and occasionally alcohol misuse.

In talking about the health and well-being of parents and friends, children seldom discussed only one health problem. Calls tended to be complex and children often described, in detail,



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multiple health issues and a range of other problems in their significant others' lives and / or their own. They also gave detailed accounts of how these multiple problems, concerns and issues interacted. Children often clearly identified links between, for example, bereavement in the family and the onset of depression in a parent or the development of an alcohol misuse problem. This highlighted the effect upon health and well-being that can occur as a result of changing life and family circumstances.

However, children's main concerns were about the effect of parental health difficulties on their own daily lives as children. In particular we found that the most frequent reason for the call to ChildLine was physical abuse. Of the calls we analysed around 42% cited physical abuse as a problem for the child. In calls about parental alcohol misuse, the frequency of this as a problem peaked with around 58% of children presenting physical abuse as a major concern. Many children directly related the physical abuse they experienced at the hands of parents to the health difficulties of parents.

Children also discussed a range of other ways in which parental health problems affected their daily lives. They discussed material consequences, such as a lack of clothing or food due to family money being used to support a parental drug problem; having to look after others within the family 'as adult' because their parent was unable

to perform caring duties; and being bullied at school as a consequence of the stigma of having a parent with health problems.

When children called to talk about friends' health and well-being problems they tended to be directly concerned with the health and welfare of their friends. For example, in discussions about smoking and alcohol misuse, they frequently discussed their fears that these health behaviours would lead to more serious forms of substance misuse. Here, children often sought guidance on how to get their friends to 'stop'. Unsurprisingly, they not only discussed the effects of peer pressure to smoke and drink and how this impacted on their friends' behaviours but also their concerns about being pushed into smoking and drinking themselves. However, our findings about how children 'get by' in difficult circumstances also draw attention to the positive and crucial role that peers play in children's lives.

Whilst children adopted a range of strategies as individuals, including avoiding the home and running away, their friends were a key source of disclosure and informal support. Friends often gave practical support and offered refuge and protection where there was a real risk of physical harm. Children would often stay with friends and friends would occasionally report staying at the homes of children at risk even if this meant endangering themselves.

We found that around 29% of children said they turned to friends for support. This is in stark contrast to the lack of children's help-seeking from adults. Children would seek informal support and help from parents (approximately 22%); they rarely sought or considered disclosing their problems to other adults such as social workers or teachers. Indeed, only 4% of children reported having told teachers and only 1% had told statutory service workers. This highlights the hidden nature of these problems for children in Scotland.

The reasons that children gave for not telling adults give cause for concern. Many children who discussed their reasons for non-disclosure to adults said that they felt that adults did not believe them. Others did not disclose because of the risk (sometimes threatened) of further abuse. Some were worried that adults would take the situation out of their hands, effectively disempowering them; others were afraid that they would be taken into care or their parents would be taken away.

The study finished in April 2005, and is being followed by a further collaboration between CRFR and ChildLine to examine calls made about sexual health. This is being funded by the Scottish Executive and will conclude early in 2006.

For further information about this study please visit www.cfr.ac.uk or contact us for copies of the reports.

innovation... collaboration... dissemination...

Making sure that this work with ChildLine has an impact has been at the heart of the project, and a multifaceted dissemination programme was planned at the start and funded by the ESRC.

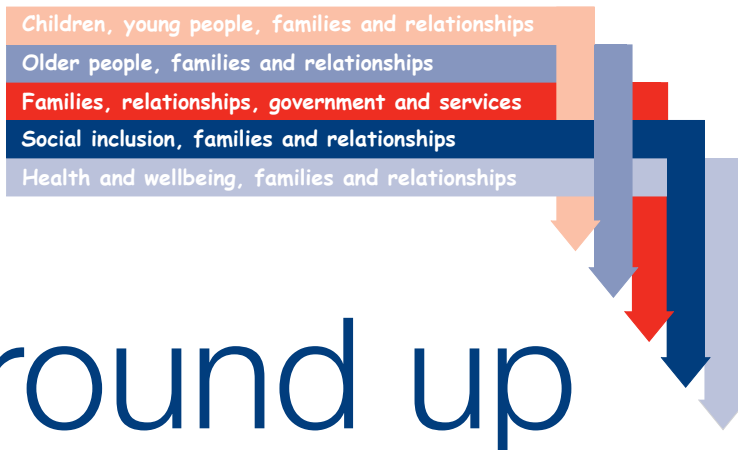
Involving practitioners: in order to draw out policy and practice implications, a seminar was held with interested practitioners to discuss the research. The comments from this are being disseminated alongside the research briefing.

Involving children: we wanted to reflect children's voices in the dissemination, and through a collaboration with the Children's Parliament, groups of school children of similar ages to those in the research were asked to consider some aspects of the findings. In particular they were asked to think about why children don't want to tell adults about their problems, and which adults they thought might be able to help. These comments are also being disseminated with the findings.

Involving decision makers: key decision makers from all sectors, along with MSPs were invited to the launch of the research, and those who didn't attend were sent the research briefing and other publications. A presentation was given at the conference of the Association of Directors of Social Work and one is planned for the Association of Directors of Education.

Making research accessible: all of these publications are available on our website, or can be sent in hard copy from our offices in Edinburgh.

This is a summary of our new or recently completed projects. For our full range of research activity please visit www.crfr.ac.uk



Research round up

Children, young people, families and relationships

Children's Concerns about Sexual Health

Funded by the Pupil Support and Inclusion Division within the Scottish Executive, this study has emerged out of our current collaboration with ChildLine Scotland (a telephone counselling service for children) and aims to explore children and young people's self-identified concerns about their sexual health and well-being.

The study is utilising ChildLine's caller database to examine two years of retrospective call records from children aged 5 to 18 years. It is focused upon informing policy within the area of sex education and is closely tied to the aims of objectives of the recently released Sexual Health Strategy for Scotland. Given that the calls ChildLine receive represent children's own agendas, the data we are using provides a unique insight into the sexual health needs of children and young people in Scotland. It is hoped that this study might make some headway towards getting to grips with what sexual health information / education children and young people in Scotland actually want and need - a perspective which is currently lacking.

Whilst the research is currently in the early stages of data collection, a formal interim report of key findings to the Scottish Executive is scheduled for August.

For further information contact Sharon Ogilvie-Whyte at CRFR.

Cool with Change

The initial survey phase of the Cool with Change project has now been completed, with 450 Glasgow school-

children filling in the questionnaire. The project, a collaboration between CRFR and Scotland's Families, aims to explore the effects of family change on young people's informal support systems and their coping mechanisms, as well as getting young people's views on services. The survey has gathered baseline data from Scottish pupils and has also recruited young people with experience of family change for the next part of the project. The research team are now conducting qualitative interviews with participants aged 11-14 from four Glasgow schools. Second follow up interviews will also be held with some of the participants.

The research team have also recruited two groups of Cool with Change young consultants through the survey from the two participating secondary schools. These young people, most of whom have themselves experienced family change, have assisted the research team in developing and piloting the interview guide. They will continue to advise the research team at key stages throughout the life of the project, in particular in relation to dissemination strategies and ideas for service development.

See the Cool with Change web page for further details: www.crfr.ac.uk/Research/coolwithchange.html

Social inclusion, families and relationships

Young Parents' Project Evaluation 2005

CRFR is working with Scottish Marriage Care to support them in an evaluation of a new project, funded by the Camelot Foundation. The project will provide

a new parenting and relationship support service for young parents in Easterhouse, Glasgow. The service will involve peer educators and a series of workshops. As an innovative service with a hard to reach group, Scottish Marriage Care were keen to build in an evaluation study to run alongside the project. The evaluation will involve a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, focusing on processes and outcomes.

ESRC Fellowship Sarah Wilson

Biographical Disruption and Construction: exploring the effects of living with HIV and parental substance use problems

This programme will consolidate Sarah's previous work from her PhD on the service use of HIV-positive mothers, and from her project exploring the impact of parental substance misuse.

Her PhD findings emphasised the enormous disruption that a diagnosis of HIV caused mothers, and the importance of a process of narrative reconstruction over subsequent years. The project on resilience of young people affected by parental substance misuse identified a series of breaches of trust with parents and disruption of young people's expectations of parental support.

Part of Sarah's programme will be focused on developing innovative research tools to collect and analyse these narratives and to disseminate findings to policy and practice audiences.

Sarah has just returned from maternity leave and is in the process of planning her fellowship work. For more information please contact sarah.wilson@ed.ac.uk

ESRC Fellowship Rachel Adam

People at the Centre of Care: developing personal care in health and social services

The ESRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship awarded to Rachel Adam last year is due to commence this coming June. These ESRC awards provide career development support to those who have recently completed their PhD. Rachel will develop the work of her thesis on the concept of personal care in General Practice medicine.

Specifically, during the period of the Fellowship Rachel plans to focus on the following areas:

- Writing four papers on different aspects of her thesis to submit to both social science and medical journals
- Disseminating the findings of her thesis at approximately three conferences
- Taking up training opportunities e.g. seminars, transferable skills courses and MSc Modules
- Developing ideas from her thesis to write new grant and fellowship applications. One current idea is to explore the potential to develop a programme of work on children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Families, relationships, government and services

Sure Start Scotland Evaluation: mapping exercise 2004

CRFR, in collaboration with the Scottish Centre for Social Research, has just completed a second mapping of Sure Start Scotland Services across Scotland for the Scottish Executive Education Department. Sure Start Scotland aims to improve children's social and emotional development; children's health; children's ability to learn and to strengthen families and communities. The evaluation has involved collecting data on all Sure Start services across the Scottish local authorities in order to assess the range of services provided and numbers of places offered, compared with 2001. We have also spoken to Sure Start Contact officers and key planners in each local authority to develop a description of Sure Start Scotland developments, how different local authorities have moved towards integrated planning and

service delivery, and what challenges remain. We are very grateful for all the effort local authorities made to provide us with such detailed information. The findings will be available later in the summer.



Growing Up in Scotland

The beginning of April saw the fieldwork launch for a major new cohort project, the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) Study which will follow the lives of groups of children in Scotland from early childhood through to their teenage years. Unlike other cohort studies (like the Millennium Cohort), this one has a specifically Scottish focus and will be used by the Scottish Executive to inform policies relating to children and families. The study is designed to produce both cross-sectional and longitudinal data on a Scotland wide sample of 8000 children from two cohorts – 5000 babies (aged around 10 months) and 3000 toddlers (aged around 34 months). The interview collects information from the child's main carer about the characteristics, circumstances and experiences of young children and their parents and explores issues such as health, education, pregnancy, birth, childcare and parenting. Over time, it will generate a better understanding of how a child's start in life can shape his or her longer term prospects and development. The project is being funded by the Scottish Executive and carried out by the Scottish Centre for Social Research in collaboration with CRFR.

To find out more about the Growing Up in Scotland study, visit the website at www.growingupinScotland.org.uk.

Health and wellbeing, families and relationships

Fertility Variations in Scotland

Scotland had a total fertility rate of 1.48 in 2002 – well below replacement rate and typical of the low fertility rates in the EU. The General Register Office for Scotland has identified low fertility in Scotland as a major contributory factor in population decline and population ageing. However, fertility rates vary widely across the country.

A research team including Ian Dey, Lynn Jamieson, Kathryn Milburn and Fran Wasoff from CRFR, the Scottish Centre for Social Research and Paul Boyle and Elspeth Graham from the University of St Andrews were successful in our bid to the joint ESRC/Scottish Executive programme on Scottish demography, for research on fertility variations across Scotland. The 18 month project began in March 2005.

This project concerns differences in individual attitudes and social interactions which may underpin the variation in fertility rates within Scotland. It aims:

- To increase our understanding of attitudes to fertility and their relationship to fertility behaviour within Scotland.
- To investigate the influence of socio-cultural interactions on fertility attitudes and behaviour.

The study involves a module on fertility incorporated into the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, augmented by local geographic data. The study will survey a sample of about 800 people comprising men aged 18-49 and women aged 18-44. The project will further theoretical understanding of fertility variations while generating insights relevant to policy.

Older people, families and relationships

Dementia, Families and Relationships Research Programme

CARE - growing older with a learning disability and dementia

This project is a collaboration between CARE (an organisation that provides residential and day services to people with a learning disability) and CRFR at the University of Edinburgh.

Phase two of this project has now been completed involving a range of methods and approaches to understand what different stakeholders perceive to be important when a person with a learning disability develops dementia. People with a learning disability and dementia at CARE were interviewed, along with their paid supporters, practitioners and family members. The final phase will look at implementing good practice protocols across CARE and wider good-practice implications.

For further information please contact Liz Forbat.

Postgraduate students at CRFR

There is a group of postgraduate students attached to CRFR, with some based at the University of Edinburgh, and others in our collaborating institutions. Some are funded through collaborative studentships (known as CASE studentships) by the ESRC, whilst others are funded through the ESRC's open competition, or other means.

To find out more about about all our PhD students and their research go to www.crfr.ac.uk/Research/phdpage.htm



Ruth Lewis

Let's Talk About Sex: a qualitative exploration of intergenerational communication about sex and relationships in families in Scotland

This research explores the issues surrounding how families communicate about health, and particularly sexual health, in Scotland. Recognising that families play a major role in how people understand and learn about bodies, sex and relationships, the project investigates some of the processes and issues involved in the transmission of information, values and attitudes between parents and children. It also considers how dynamics of gender and socio-economic status may frame the challenges faced by families when communicating about sex and relationships.

Drawing on data from a number of case study families, this research reflects the views of both children and parents by exploring how intergenerational communication about sexuality is experienced by different members of the same families.

Ruth is studying for a PhD and is funded by a joint ESRC/MRC studentship under the supervision of Professor Kathryn Backett-Milburn and Dr Katie Buston. Ruth previously studied Geography at the University of Leeds, graduating in 2003, and completed the MSc Social Research programme at the University of Edinburgh in 2004.



Nicola Coates

Syndrome Without a Name? The experience of living without a diagnosis for parents of children with disabilities

Many families with children with disabilities do not have a diagnosis for their child's difficulties, yet there is very little research looking at the experience of living without a diagnosis for parents of children with disability. The principal aim of this PhD research is to explore the views and experiences of parents of children with disabilities for which there is no diagnosis. The work will also explore issues of diagnosis with health practitioners involved in the care of children with disabilities; develop understanding of the issues of diagnosis/non-diagnosis in a family

context; and advance knowledge in the field of the 'sociology of diagnosis' including expanding this field to include the study of non-diagnosis.

Nicola's progress so far includes a review of health research and medical literature focusing on various aspects of childhood illness and disability, and analysis of theoretical literature from a variety of disciplines relevant to the study of non-diagnosis. Both of these reviews will be on-going. She has also succeeded in getting ethical approval from the research ethics committee (MREC) for the study. Some quantitative information will be gathered for the research, including the collation of information of the prevalence of 'undiagnosed' disability in the catchment areas of the study. However interviews will form the main data - primarily with parents, but also health professionals, at selected children's hospitals in Scotland, and will explore issues surrounding non-diagnosis and the experience of living without a diagnosis. Interviews with parents have already been carried out as part of a pilot study. The main interview study with parents will start in June 2005.

Nicola has been studying part-time for the PhD for 2 years (she also cares for her young daughter and writes novels!).

recently published

Kerr D and Wilkinson H (2005) **In The Know: a toolkit for working with people with a learning disability and dementia**. London, Pavillion Press.

The toolkit is the outcome of a project supported by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This pack has been developed to try and help anyone trying to support a person with a learning disability who develops dementia.

Copies of the pack are available from www.jrf.org.uk

Forbat, L. & Atkinson, D (2005). *Advocacy practice: The troubled position of professionals*. **British Journal of Social Work**. 35(3): 321-335.

Allman, D. (2004) *Anti-gay, Condom, STDs, Telephone sex, Two-spirit*. In Eadie, J. (Ed) **Sexuality: The Essential Glossary**. London, Hodder Arnold Publishers, ISBN 0-340-80676-1.

Malone, C., Forbat, L., Robb, M and Seden, J (2004). **Relating experience: stories from health and social care**. London, Routledge.

McKie L (2005) **Families, Violence and Social Change**. Open University Press. Order from: <http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/html/0335211585.html>

Forbat, L (2005) *Matter of Discourse*. **Community Care**. 24th March 2005, p38-39.

crfr events

conference

New Researchers in 'Families and Relationships'
25th October 2005, University of Edinburgh

Our third New Researchers' Conference will provide an opportunity to discuss research issues and present findings in a supportive environment. It will consist of presentations by new researchers, on either substantive topics or on theoretical or methodological issues on families and relationships.

This is a multi-disciplinary and cross-sector event for new researchers from a range of voluntary organisations and academic disciplines and institutions.

Who are 'New Researchers'?

By new researchers we mean people who have been working in a research environment for five years or less. This can be either within or outside the academic sector including PhD students, other postgraduate students, researchers/lecturers within five years of completing their PhD, academics returning to research, and researchers

from the voluntary sector, Local Government, National Government and the private sector.

Call for Papers

Abstracts of up to 250 words should be submitted by 1st August 2005 from new researchers who wish to present a conference paper.

Abstracts can be emailed to crfr@ed.ac.uk, or submitted via our website www.crfr.ac.uk

Costs

Registration fee of £40 covers the cost of the conference pack, buffet lunch and light refreshments.

Further information, registration and receipt of abstracts:

www.crfr.ac.uk or email crfr@ed.ac.uk

national conference

Smaller Households, Smaller Families: implications for policy, planning and support
8th November 2005, University of Edinburgh

Changes in the way we live are going to have huge implications for how we plan our towns and cities, how we support individuals and families and how we shape policy to reflect the new reality of smaller households and smaller families. This one-day conference offers an opportunity to consider these changes, where we are today, where we might be going, and how what we do should evolve as families and households shrink.

Speakers

Paul Boyle - Centre for Longitudinal Studies, University of St Andrews

Fran Wasoff - Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

Duncan Macniven - Registrar General, Scotland

Who should attend?

All those interested in the implications of family change, including academics, planners, policy makers and service providers.

Cost: £90

CRFR short courses

As part of CRFR's commitment to enhancing research skills, making research accessible and providing access to research for a wide audience, we are pleased to be offering a range of CPD courses, open to any interested parties.

More information is available on our website or contact us for a brochure.

Evaluation in Practice	June/October
Quantitative Research	
Introduction to Quantitative Research	September
Survey Design and Administration	October
Introduction to SPSS	Nov/December
Listening to Children	October
Work-Life Balance	September

crfr people

new staff

Vivien Smith

Centre Manager

Vivien has been appointed to the post of Centre Manager, starting in June 2005. Originally from Edinburgh, Vivien spent ten years working in London for Debenhams and then Reuters as Finance and Administration Manager. Latterly she moved into a Training and Development role. Six years ago she returned to Edinburgh and took a career break to look after her children who are now at school.

Kathryn Dunne

Centre Officer

Kathryn has been promoted to the part-time post of Centre Officer, where she will take responsibility for day-to-day finances and HR.

Centre Secretary

A new post of full-time Centre Secretary has been created to take over the duties of dealing with enquiries, supporting research projects and the Directors.

goodbye and thanks

Anne Margaret Campbell

Anne Margaret, our Centre Manager, has left us after 2½ years and is now travelling around Europe! We are very grateful to her for getting CRFR into such good shape as an organisation and wish her all the best for the future.

Amanda Carty

Thanks also to Amanda Carty who was the researcher working on the Sure Start Mapping project. Amanda is now working in the Scottish Executive Education Department Analytic Services Division, 'Children, Young People and Social Care'. We are delighted that we shall still be collaborating with her over the GUS survey.

Alan Prout and Gill Scott

Associate Directors

We are also saying goodbye to two of our Associate Directors. Alan Prout is moving to a new post at the University of Warwick and Gill Scott is concentrating her time on the Scottish Poverty Unit and her current involvement with the Social Justice agenda at the Executive. Both have been greater supporters of CRFR and we hope to maintain contact and collaborations with each of them.

research briefing series

CRFR Briefing 22

Children's concerns

April 2005

CRFR Briefing 21

Work-life balance across the lifecourse

March 2005

CRFR Briefing 20

Solo living across the adult lifecourse

February 2005

CRFR Briefing 19

Supporting vulnerable young people

January 2005

CRFR Briefing 18

Women and health technologies

September 2004

CRFR Briefing 17

Growing older with a learning disability and dementia

June 2004

CRFR Briefing 16

In love or just curious

May 2004

CRFR Briefing 15

Participation for change

April 2004

CRFR Briefing 14

Young people, cannabis and family life

March 2004