



centre for research on
families and relationships

CRFR Response Document

**CRFR Response to discussion paper on tackling
poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland**

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Introduction

The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this very important consultation document.

CRFR produces, stimulates and disseminates high quality social research and commentary on families and relationships. We are a consortium research centre whose main office is at the University of Edinburgh, with partners at the University of Aberdeen, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, UHI Millennium Institute and the University of Stirling.

CRFR undertakes social research on families and relationships across the lifecourse using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Our research programmes encompass diverse themes and inform policy, practice and debate in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

We build research capacity through supporting new researchers, offering research training and through our PhD and Post Doctoral programme. We provide a stimulating research environment through a programme of seminars, conferences, visiting fellow, associated researchers and our Register of Research Interests.

Drawing on our collaborative and inclusive approach, we generate and build on partnerships across and within the statutory, voluntary, and academic sectors, through our collaborative research, knowledge exchange activities and a programme of CPD, events and research dissemination.

CRFR was established in 2001 by a SHEFC Research Development Grant but now attracts funding from a variety of sources including the ESRC, the Scottish Government, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Leverhulme Trust, Health Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland, the European Union, the Big Lottery, Care Commission and Scottish Local Authorities.

The combination of our research experience, the range of issues covered and our work across sectors makes CRFR well qualified to contribute to the debate on developing a Framework on tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland.

This response discusses the need to ensure that good academic research is at the heart of policy development and evaluation. We also highlight relevant CRFR research that will add to the debate and support policy development in these areas.

Evidence informed policy development

As acknowledged in the discussion paper, poverty is a complex issue. Policy can be improved by the experiences of practice or through developing different perspective on the problem – one that might combine macro and micro approaches (structural and individual concerns). Collecting evidence about the issues relating to poverty and policies designed to tackle poverty helps policy makers deal with these problems.

CRFR believes that policy-making can be enhanced through consideration of a range of evidence from a variety of sources and that high quality research has a key role to play. CRFR welcomes the inclusion of a Key principle commitment to consultation (Para 33) but believes that the development of the framework provides an opportunity ensure that the Scottish Government's approach to tackling poverty is informed by the best available evidence and wide consultation about the evidence.

Research on tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation

CRFR produces research on a variety of topics that can inform the debate about poverty and inequality in Scotland. Here is a list of relevant research, publications and research briefings from across the CRFR network.

Supporting research

Caring and providing – Lone and partnered working mothers in Scotland

Kathryn Backett-Milburn, Sarah Cunningham-Burley and Debbie Kemmer (2001)

Family Policy Studies Centre for The Policy Press in association with Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=350>

Work and family are core values within current UK government policy. Two strands stand out: paid work as the route out of social exclusion, poverty and dependency on welfare and an emphasis on family values, parenting skills and parental responsibility for the behaviour of children. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 30 women (15 single, 15 partnered) working in non-professional and non-managerial occupations and with children at primary school, this small-scale, qualitative study explores the views and experiences of working mothers. The authors set the women's accounts of the complex balancing acts they perform to manage their daily lives against the wider backdrop of changes in society. The study was supported by focus group discussions with a range of policy-makers and practitioners. The authors stress the importance of a holistic approach to policy and practice, one that supports flexibility and choice, and one that listens to mothers and their children.

The impact of poverty on children's experiences of services

Fiona Wager, Nick Bailey, Rosie Day, Douglas Hamilton, Malcolm Hill, Caroline King (2007)

Glasgow Centre for the Child and Society (Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde); Save the Children UK – Scotland Programme; and Scottish Centre for Research on Social Justice (University of Glasgow).

http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/media_62005_en.pdf

This study arose from the identification of a gap in knowledge and corresponding need for the development of a better contemporary understanding of children's experiences of poverty. Whilst there has been much quantitative empirical work and many official statistics produced documenting the extent and distribution of childhood

poverty within the UK and sometimes comparatively, less qualitative research evidence existed considering children's own perceptions of their experiences of poverty. Therefore, the current study sought to build on the few studies that had explored children's own experiences of poverty, with a specific focus on children's perspectives in relation to services, and an emphasis on the effect of poverty on children's access to, perceptions of and use of services.

Life in low income families in Scotland: A review of the literature

Scottish Poverty Information Unit & Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR), Gill Scott, John H. McKendrick, Sarah Cunningham-Burley and Kathryn Backett-Milburn (2003)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/09/18064/25742>

This review was the first stage of a research project which explores the views and experiences of poverty amongst individuals and groups living within low income households with at least one child under the age of eighteen.

The reviewed aimed to identify and discuss the key themes and issues to emerge from relevant literature.

Life in low income families in Scotland: Research report

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships John H. McKendrick, Sarah Cunningham-Burley and Kathryn Backett-Milburn (2003)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/09/18143/26158>

This report is the second stage of a research project which explores the views and experiences of poverty amongst individuals and groups living within low income households with at least one child under the age of 18. It uses qualitative focus groups to explore and include the experiences of those living in poverty, including children. It will provide a useful resource for the Framework.

Gender equality in Scotland

Commissioned by The Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee
Sue Innes (2002)

[report now available from The Scottish Parliament](#)

The aim of the research was to identify gaps in research on gender inequality in Scotland with the following objectives:

- to identify policy areas which currently lack research on gender inequality;
- to identify the type and scope of research currently conducted in these areas - whether it is quantitative, qualitative, small or large scale;
- to identify research conducted in a range of contexts including academic but paying particular attention to research conducted by voluntary sector and community groups; and
- to inform subsequent committee work on gender inequality.

Cool with Change – Young people and family change

Scotland's Families/CRFR

Gill Highet and Lynn Jamieson (2007)

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/CWC%20final%20report%202007.pdf>

Cool with change was a three year research project funded by the Community Fund with support from the Scottish Executive. It is the result of a collaboration between Scotland's Families (Family Mediation Scotland, One Parent Families Scotland, Relate Scotland, Scottish Marriage Care and Stepfamily Scotland), a consortium of organisations with a long and impressive track record of providing support to families, and the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR).

Cool with Change breaks new ground by combining in-depth research of young people's experience of family change in Scotland, reflection by service providers on the implications for their services and consultation with young people about possible future development of support services.

The research consisted of a questionnaire administered to 361 young people aged 10-14 in five Glasgow schools. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 70 young people – 55 on a one to one basis and 15 in a focus group. A further 19 participants were interviewed a second time to follow up emergent themes and chart changes over time.

Family, Care and women's transitions to paid work

Sue Innes and Gill Scott (2002)

Rosemont Lifelong Learning Centre

A previous Rosemount Lifelong Learning study suggested that women using the centre do not experience the move from full-time motherhood into training or employment as easy. This study looked at the nature of family commitments that constrain women's choices, the cost of transition and the 'poverty trap', and the health of family members and the women themselves.

Research Briefings

CRFR Briefing 1: Solo-living in Scotland: Trends and issues (June 2001)

This first Research Briefing focuses on solo-living - that is the increasing trend towards one person households, and the personal and social implications of this trend for those at different stages of the lifecourse.

<http://www.cfr.ac.uk/Reports/sololiving.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 2: Gender care and transitions, in association with the Scottish Poverty Information Unit (January 2002)

This briefing considers how women with dependent children move into training or employment and the role of both formal and informal care in supporting them.

<http://www.cfr.ac.uk/Reports/Gender%20care%20and%20transitions.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 3: Family policy in Scotland (February 2002)

This briefing looks at the development of family policy in Scotland, considers the interplay between devolved and reserved matters, outlines the Departments of the Scottish Executive responsible for family policy, and considers the relationship between children's and family policy. It is a summary of a document produced with funding from Joseph Rowntree Foundation, looking at the feasibility of a Family Policy Forum in Scotland.

<http://www.cfr.ac.uk/Reports/Fam%20Pol%20Briefing%203.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 4: Understanding children's lives: How children and parents experience and understand social and health inequalities (March 2002)

Children's differing social circumstances and experiences are part of the pathways implicated in health and illness in adulthood. However, children's own perspectives tend to be absent from adult-defined data about health and illness. Little is known about social and cultural processes in childhood; even less is known about children's own agency in making sense of and recreating the health cultures in which they grow up. This research into children's lives was developed to address such gaps in research, interviewing children and parents in two contrasting localities.

<http://www.cfr.ac.uk/Reports/Children%20&%20inequality.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 9: Feeding families and influences on healthy eating in Scotland: findings from a qualitative study (May 2003)

Joint briefing with the Research Unit for Health, Behaviour and Change (RUHBC)

A series of policy documents in the 1990's highlighted the contribution of dietary factors to morbidity and mortality in Scotland. Primary care was identified as one setting where advice about diet and healthy eating may be effective. Less is known, however, about attitudes and practices relating to food and feeding in families. This qualitative study explored these issues with couples who had primary school children.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/ResbriefingRUHBC.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 13: Caringscapes: experiences of caring and working (February 2004)

There is growing interest in ways in which people combine working with caring, and what can be done to make the balance of work and care more manageable. In this paper, Linda McKie, Susan Gregory and Sophia Bowlby explore experiences of caring and working, arguing that new ways of thinking need to be developed.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb13caringscapes.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 19: Supporting vulnerable young people (January 2005)

This study looked at young people who took part in programmes of planned mentoring. In this briefing we focus on what young people thought about the relationship with their mentors.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb19.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 20: Solo living across the adult lifecourse (February 2005)

This study has created snapshots of solo living in contemporary society and developed an understanding of the social and economic factors involved in transitions in and out of solo living.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb20.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 21: Work-life balance across the lifecourse (March 2005)

In Summer 2004, CRFR held an international conference to explore work-life balance across the lifecourse. This briefing outlines some of the main issues from the conference, explores what we might learn from international comparisons, and makes recommendations for policy and for further research.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb21.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 27: Home and School (February 2006)

This briefing reports findings from a Scottish study of the links between mental health and behaviour in schools.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb27.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 32: Fertility variations in Scotland: actual, expected and ideal fertility (April 2007)

This briefing reports some key findings of a research project that investigated the attitudes to fertility of men and women of child-bearing age in Scotland. This study found that there are links between deprivation and fertility.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb32.pdf>

CRFR Briefing 37: Understanding cohabitation: A critical study of the living together as husband and wife rule in UK social security law (March 2008)

Drawing on research with men and women who have had relevant personal experience of 'the cohabitation rule', this briefing identifies problems with its underlying assumptions about unmarried couples' relationships and their financial support obligations to each other.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/Reports/rb%2037.pdf>

Publications

Families in society - boundaries and relationships

Edited by Linda McKie and Sarah Cunningham-Burley (2005)

Policy Press: Bristol

The changing nature of families, their enduring and multi-faceted significance in society, and their value as a focus for the exploration of social change have ensured that families have remained a prominent focus of academic enquiry. Acknowledging the increasing diversity and complexity of families, this innovative book proposes a new conceptual framework for understanding families and other relationships that both challenges and attempts to reconcile traditional and contemporary approaches.

For further information about this response contact:

Jennifer Flueckiger
Information and Publications Officer
CRFR
The University of Edinburgh
23 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh
EH8 9LN
0131 651 1832
j.flueckiger@ed.ac.uk