

## Child Poverty in Scotland: a brief overview of the evidence

### Introduction

The Child Poverty Discussion Paper outlines the Scottish Government's vision for, and current approach to, tackling child poverty in Scotland and poses some questions for respondents on this vision, direction and the best ways of taking it forward. This analytical paper presents a brief overview of the evidence around child poverty in Scotland. It is designed to accompany the discussion paper and provide readers with some background on current issues around child poverty in Scotland.

To see the Child Poverty Discussion Paper click on the following link:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/childpovertydiscussionpaper](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/childpovertydiscussionpaper)

### Recent child poverty trends in Scotland

The UK Child Poverty Act set out four main targets which are designed to capture different aspects of child poverty. These are relative poverty; low income and material deprivation combined; persistent poverty and absolute poverty. Explanation of these measures is provided in Box 1 below. This section presents recent Scottish trends for these indicators.

#### Box 1 - Poverty targets defined by the Child Poverty Act<sup>1</sup>

*To drive progress towards the 2020 vision to eradicate child poverty, the Child Poverty Act sets out four challenging UK-wide targets to be reached and sustained from 2020:*

- **Relative poverty** – *Individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of UK median income in the same year. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole. In 2008/09 the relative poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of £244 per week (Income from all sources before housing costs and after income tax, national insurance etc...). For a couple with children the threshold would be higher and for a single person (without children) the threshold would be lower. The Child Poverty Act target is to “reduce the proportion of children who live in relative low income (in families with income below 60 per cent of the median) to less than 10 per cent”.*
- **Absolute poverty** – *Individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) Great Britain median income in 1998/99. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their incomes rise in real terms. In 2008/09 the absolute poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of £209 per week (Income from all sources before housing costs and after income tax, national insurance etc...). The Child Poverty Act target is “to reduce the proportion of children who live in absolute low income to less than 5 per cent.”*
- **Combined low income and material deprivation** – *This measure aims to understand more about what families with children can afford to spend money on. 'Material deprivation' is calculated from a suite of questions in the Family Resources Survey about whether people can afford to buy certain items and participate in leisure or social activities. This measure is combined with information about which households have incomes below 70 per cent of median income to create the 'material deprivation and low income combined' indicator. This indicator aims to provide a measure of children's living standards which, unlike relative and absolute poverty, is not solely based on income. The target in the Child Poverty Act is “to reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and have a low income to less than 5 per cent”.*

<sup>1</sup> Although these targets are specified by the Child Poverty Act some details of the measures used still have to be set out in regulations to the Act

- **Persistent poverty** – Persistent poverty is defined as being in relative poverty in at least 3 out of the last 4 consecutive years. This measure is designed to detect families which are consistently in poverty over a long period, rather than those which dip in and out of poverty. The persistent poverty target has not been set by the act due to limitations of the available data. The act states that *the specific target will be set at a later date*.

**Relative poverty** - Between 1998/99 and 2004/05 the percentage of children in relative poverty (before housing costs) in Scotland fell from 28 per cent to 21 percent. Since then relative poverty rates have remained fairly flat. In 2008/09 21 per cent of the population of children (210,000) were living in relative poverty<sup>2</sup> (before housing costs). The overall reduction in relative poverty rates between 1998/99 and 2008/09 was one of the largest seen in any UK region.

There are 260,000 children (26 per cent of children in Scotland) living in relative poverty<sup>3</sup> (after housing costs). All other figures throughout this document refer to relative poverty 'before housing costs'.

**Absolute poverty** - Trends for absolute poverty among children have been similar to those for relative poverty, though more marked. Absolute poverty among children fell from 28 per cent in 1998/99 to 12 per cent in 2005/06. Since then rates have not changed much and the 2008/09 figure was 11 percent. This equates to around 110 thousand children in absolute poverty<sup>4</sup>.

**Material Deprivation** - Figures for the percentage of children in low income and material deprivation combined have only been available since 2004/05. Over that period they have not changed much and have remained around 15 or 16 percent<sup>5</sup>.

**Persistent Poverty** - In Scotland 13 per cent of children experienced persistent poverty between 2004 and 2007. This figure fell from 15 per cent during 2001 to 2004<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

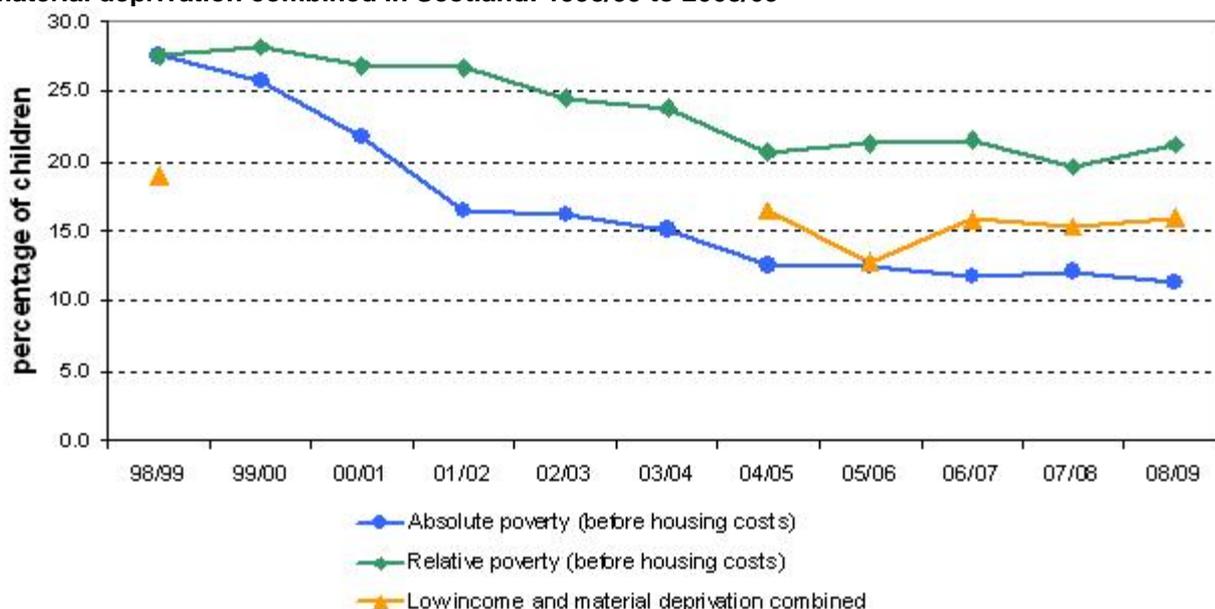
<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> DWP analysis on British Household Panel Survey

**Figure 1 - The percentage of children in relative poverty, absolute poverty and low income and material deprivation combined in Scotland: 1998/99 to 2008/09**



Source: Family Resources Survey, Households Below average Income datasets.

Children in working families form a significant proportion (42 per cent) of those in relative poverty in Scotland. However, the risk of poverty is far greater for those in workless families than those in families where one or more adults is employed or self-employed (71 per cent of children in workless families are poor compared to 11 per cent of children in working families)<sup>7</sup>.

There is some evidence that relative poverty is lower in rural areas. Figures from the Family Resources Survey show that in 2008/09 18 per cent of people in urban areas and 13 per cent of people in rural areas were in relative poverty<sup>8</sup>.

Child poverty is more concentrated in deprived areas than in the rest of the country. In 2008/09, 45 per cent of children in the 15% most deprived areas were living in relative poverty (before housing costs). This figure compares to 17 per cent in the rest of the country<sup>9</sup>.

Children from ethnic minority communities are more likely to be in relative poverty than white children. From 2002/03 to 2008/09, around 21 per cent of children living in “White” households were in relative poverty compared with 40 per cent of children in “Asian” households and 34 per cent of children in households of “Other ethnic groups”<sup>10</sup>.

Child poverty levels in Scotland (21 per cent) are similar to those in the UK as a whole (22 per cent)<sup>11</sup>. Figure 2 presents some Europe-wide figures about relative

<sup>7</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

<sup>8</sup> SG analysis on Family Resources Survey published at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty/CoreAnalysis>

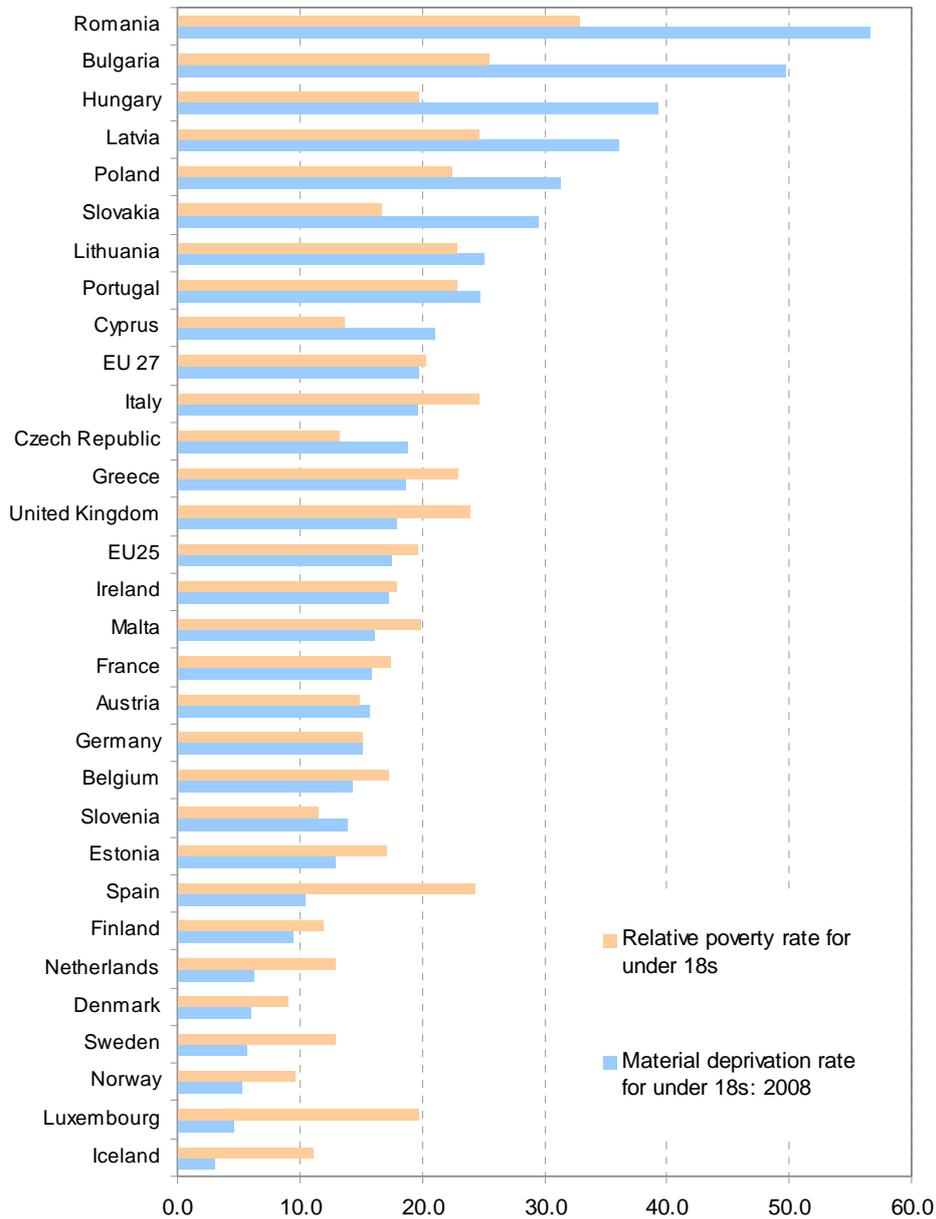
<sup>9</sup> SG analysis on Family Resources Survey and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

<sup>10</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

poverty and material deprivation. It shows that in 2008, a greater percentage of children aged under 18 were living in relative poverty in the UK than in the EU27 as a whole<sup>12</sup>. The UK performed slightly more favourably in comparison to other EU nations when examining material deprivation for children aged under 18, although the rate is slightly higher than the EU25 average<sup>13</sup>.

**Figure 2 - Relative poverty (before housing costs) and material deprivation across the EU: 2008**



Source: Eurostat, *At Risk of Poverty by Age Rate and Material Deprivation Rate*. Data for the UK and France are provisional.

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat, *At Risk of Poverty by Age Rate*, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc230&plugin=1> with poverty is defined as 60% of median national income.

<sup>13</sup> Eurostat, *Material Deprivation Rate*, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupModifyTableLayout.do>

## Education and Employment

The risk of poverty is reduced as access to work increases. Figure 3 shows that the number of children living in poverty is lower in households where more adults are working<sup>14</sup>.

**Figure 3 - Number of children in relative poverty (before housing costs) by economic status of family: Scotland 2008/09**

	Not in relative poverty		In relative poverty		Total 000s
	000s	%	000s	%	
Lone parent - Works full time	50	92	< 5	8	50
Lone parent - Works part time	60	86	10	14	70
Lone parent - Unemployed or economically inactive	40	29	90	71	130
Couple - Both work full time	140	100	< 5	0	140
Couple - One full time/ one part time	220	97	10	3	230
Couple - One full time/ one not working	170	84	30	16	200
Couple - No full time/ one or both part time	20	57	20	43	40
Couple - One or more self employed	80	79	20	21	100
Couple - Head unemployed	< 5	25	10	75	20
Couple - Head economically inactive	10	31	20	69	30

Source: Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income datasets.

The number of children living in workless households in Scotland is 170,000, this represents 17 per cent of the population<sup>15</sup>.

In 2008, around 30 per cent of Scotland's workers received a low wage of less than 60 per cent of median hourly pay. The risk of poverty for those receiving low pay is greatly increased for families with children: 44 per cent of workers receiving low pay and who live in relative poverty have children compared to the 33 per cent of workers who receive low pay but escape relative poverty<sup>16</sup>.

This is likely to be even more of a problem for rural areas, where incidence of low pay and the prevalence of part-time and seasonal work is higher<sup>17</sup>.

Education is strongly linked with employment for parents, with those parents taking part in Working For Families<sup>18</sup> who did not have any qualifications having a lower likelihood of entering paid employment<sup>19</sup>.

Enabling children who have lived in poverty to gain access to better educational and employment opportunities has been seen as a cost effective way of reducing child poverty rates<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Economics Statistics 2008, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>17</sup> House of Commons Scottish Affairs Select Committee: Poverty in Scotland, Second Report of Season 2007-08 Volume 1

<sup>18</sup> Evaluation of the Working for Families Fund - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/20092521/0>

<sup>19</sup> McQuaid et al (2010) How Can Parents Escape From Recurrent Poverty? York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Living in a deprived area is linked to both lower participation in education and higher unemployment for recent school leavers. In 2008/09, 78 per cent of school-leavers from the 10 per cent of least deprived areas entered higher or further education whilst 5 per cent were unemployed and seeking work. In contrast, 48 per cent of school leavers in the 10 per cent most deprived areas entered further or higher education whilst 20 per cent were unemployed and seeking work<sup>21</sup>.

The gap in attainment scores between the highest and lowest performers in reading, maths and science according to tests for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is smaller in Scotland than in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, except for maths where the difference is smaller in Wales. Average performance in Scotland is higher than or similar to other areas of the UK<sup>22</sup>. However, while the impact on performance of a pupil's socio-economic background is similar to the rest of the UK, it is greater than in many other countries across the OECD<sup>23</sup>.

Pupils living in deprived areas are more likely to be excluded from school, with those living in the 20 per cent of most deprived areas being 8 times more likely to be excluded than those living in the 20 per cent of least deprived areas<sup>24</sup>.

Children born into families with lower incomes are less likely to be ready for school and are more likely to have problems relating to conduct than their more affluent peers<sup>25</sup>. Children experiencing either current or persistent poverty are also more likely to play truant and leave school at the age of 16<sup>26</sup>. As educational attainment is related to later life outcomes, such as entry to higher education and hourly wage<sup>27</sup>, experiencing poverty can have long-term consequences for individuals and families.

## Childcare

The majority of parents who use childcare do so in order to work. Use of childcare is closely related to parental work patterns, with increasing rates of formal childcare use amongst working parents. The general trend is that the more hours parents work in total, the more formal childcare is used.

When cost-free childcare has been made available, there is close to universal uptake of this provision amongst parents in Scotland<sup>28</sup> and similar patterns in England and

---

<sup>20</sup> Estimating the Cost of Child Poverty in Scotland – Approaches and Evidence, *The Scottish Government Social Research*

<sup>21</sup> Destinations of Leavers from Scottish Schools: 2008/09, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>22</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2006: Highlights from Scotland's Results, *Scottish Government Social Research*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>24</sup> A Scottish Government National Statistics Publication: Exclusions from School 2008/09, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>25</sup> Hills et al (2010) An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel, London: Government Equalities Office

<sup>26</sup> Ermisch, J et al (2001) The Outcomes for Children of Poverty. DWP Research report 158.

<sup>27</sup> Hills et al (2010) An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel, London: Government Equalities Office

<sup>28</sup> Poverty and income inequality: A review of the evidence. Scottish Government.

Wales<sup>29</sup>, indicating that most parents will make use of childcare when it's provided free. Data from the second sweep of the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS) indicates that close to 100% of families with a child aged 3-4 years old in 2006/7 were using some form of childcare provision (up from nearly 80% amongst 2-3 year olds in wave 1). In between the two waves of data collection this cohort had become eligible for free statutory pre-school provision which largely accounted for this rise in childcare use<sup>30</sup>. Results from the same report also demonstrated that where provision of free childcare was not available (as was the case for the birth cohort where children were aged 1-2 years old), the use of childcare was very much related to maternal employment; in contrast, no differences were found according to employment patterns for the child cohort.

**Figure 4 - Percentage of families using any childcare by age of cohort child and annual household income**

Annual Household Income	Age of cohort child			
	0-1 years %	1-2 years %	2-3 years %	3-4 years %
< £15,000	50.4	56.9	67.4	97.4
£44,000+	73.8	84	91	99.3

Source: *Growing Up in Scotland study: Exploring the experiences and outcomes of advantaged and disadvantaged families*

A second point about the impact of universal childcare is the narrowing gap in accessing childcare between families of different incomes, as presented in Figure 4. This data suggests that without universal provision (that is, at all ages under 3 years), use of childcare amongst parents with incomes less than £15,000 is around two-thirds of that amongst parents on incomes of over £44,000. However, at age 3-4, with the onset of free, statutory pre-school provision, it can be seen that those on the lowest incomes are accessing childcare at similar rates to those on higher incomes (although the amount and type of provision used may differ).

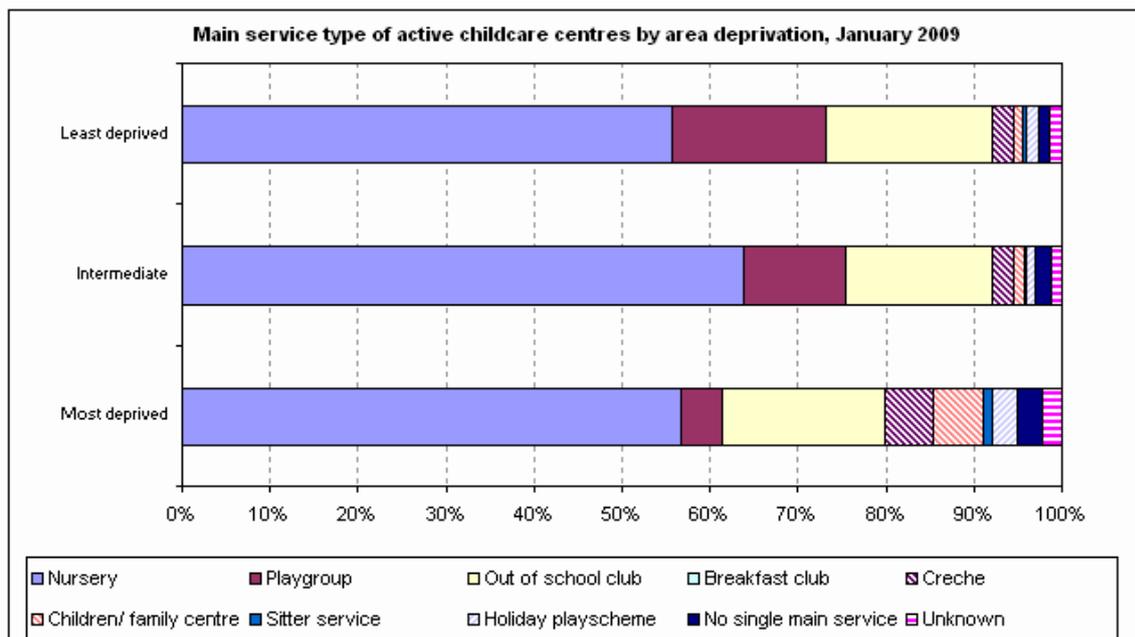
Childcare provision differs between areas according to the level of deprivation. Although nursery care is the most common form of childcare in all areas, a greater proportion of families in less deprived areas use playgroups whilst those in the most deprived areas had greater recourse to crèches, sitter services and family centres<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey 2007: Parents' Use, Views and Experiences. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

<sup>30</sup> Growing Up in Scotland study: Exploring the experiences and outcomes of advantaged and disadvantaged families. Edinburgh: *Scottish Government Social Research*

<sup>31</sup> High Level Summary of Statistics data for Children and Young People trends, *The Scottish Government*

**Figure 5 - Type of childcare by area deprivation, Jan 2009**



Source: High Level Summary of Statistics data for Children and Young People trends, The Scottish Government

Although childcare on its own is insufficient to enable families to make a transition into work, access to childcare is seen as a key factor influencing whether out-of-work parents are able to enter employment<sup>32</sup>.

Poor families are less likely to use childcare. 15% of families experiencing persistent poverty used childcare throughout a child's early years compared to 68% of families that have not experienced poverty<sup>33</sup>. There is some evidence however, that the effect of deprivation on ability to access childcare is slight. The Growing Up in Scotland study found only very marginal differences in how difficult families found it to get childcare depending on the SIMD quintile in which they lived<sup>34</sup>. This suggests that access to childcare is not a particular problem in poor areas.

In terms of enabling parents to make a sustainable transition into employment, sitter services were identified as 'not sustainable' by a majority of local authority co-ordinators of the Working For Families programme, whereas nurseries and playgroups were regarded as sustainable<sup>35</sup>. This indicates that the difference between care availability in areas according to deprivation levels may mean there is less opportunity for families living in the most deprived areas to make sustainable transitions into employment compared to those in more affluent locations.

<sup>32</sup> McQuaid et al (2009) Evaluation of the Working For Families Fund 2004-2008, *Scottish Government Social Research*

<sup>33</sup> Growing up in Scotland: The Circumstances of Persistently Poor Children; *Scottish Government 2010*

<sup>34</sup> Growing Up in Scotland - Sweep 2, *Scottish Government*

<sup>35</sup> McQuaid et al (2009) Evaluation of the Working For Families Fund 2004-2008, *Scottish Government Social Research*

A number of studies have asked attitudinal questions in order to explore the relationship between employment and childcare further. In sweep 1 of GUS for example<sup>36</sup>, the majority of parents working full-time and using childcare explained that they used childcare so that they could work (69%). Lesser numbers reported using childcare so that they could socialise, attend an appointment or go shopping (32%) or because their child likes spending time at childcare (32%). Amongst unemployed parents, 55% reported that they would prefer to work or study if they were able to afford good quality, reliable and convenient childcare; similarly 62% of non-working parents and 53% of working parents in a separate Scottish Government report<sup>37</sup> reported childcare as a major factor in their decision to work. Such findings suggest that parents are likely to use childcare in order to work, and that when childcare is not available this is acting as a barrier in seeking employment.

## Housing

In terms of tenure, 63 per cent of children living in poverty in Scotland live in local authority or housing association housing compared to 16 per cent of those not in poverty. A relatively high proportion of those children in private rented accommodation, 32 percent, are in poverty although these make up only 10 per cent of the total number of poor children. A higher proportion of children in poverty, 18 percent, live in properties which are being bought with a mortgage although the poverty “risk” for this group is lower<sup>38</sup>.

The proportion of homes which have failed to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) has fallen in the last 5 years, but has fallen more quickly in the social housing sector compared to the private housing sector. In 2008, 66 per cent of private sector homes failed the SHQS compared to 61 per cent of social housing units<sup>39</sup>.

If a household is required to spend more than 10 per cent of its income on fuel, it is deemed to be in fuel poverty according to the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement. A household is defined as being in extreme fuel poverty if it has to spend 20 per cent or more of its income on fuel<sup>40</sup>. It is estimated that 27 per cent of households in Scotland (618,000) are in fuel poverty with 182,000 of these facing extreme fuel poverty in 2008. This is a substantial decrease since 1996 but the proportions of households facing fuel poverty has risen in the last 6 years.<sup>41</sup>

A smaller proportion of single parents live in fuel poverty than single-adult households without children. In 2008, 20 per cent of single parent families lived in fuel poverty compared with 29 per cent of single adults without children. No single parents lived in extreme fuel poverty while 11 per cent of single adults without

---

<sup>36</sup> Growing Up in Scotland: Sweep 1 overview report, *Scottish Government*

<sup>37</sup> Parents' access to and demand for childcare survey 2006: Final report. *Scottish Government Social Research*.

<sup>38</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

<sup>39</sup> Scottish House Conditions Survey: Key Findings 2008, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*

children did. Incidence of fuel poverty for large and small families is lower than for large households without children<sup>42</sup>.

A significant minority (31 per cent) of homelessness applications came from families with children. Single parent families put forward the bulk of these applications, amounting to 24 per cent of the total number (28,862) between April and September 2009<sup>43</sup>.

More than one in eight (13 per cent) of children leaving care between April 2006 and March 2007 experienced one or more episodes of homelessness. This compared to nearly two in five (37 per cent) children leaving care between April 2004 and March 2005 who experienced at least one spell of homelessness<sup>44</sup>.

## **Disability**

Approximately 170,000 children live with families where at least one adult is disabled. This represents 17 per cent of the population of children in Scotland<sup>45</sup>.

The risk of poverty is higher for children living with disabled adults. One in three children who live with a disabled adult also live in poverty (60,000) compared to 19 per cent of children who do not live with a disabled adult (160,000)<sup>46</sup>. This risk is also higher in families containing children with disabilities. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) of people in families containing a disabled child are in relative poverty compared with 19 per cent for families containing children with no disabilities<sup>47</sup>.

Parental disability can be a barrier to labour market participation, preventing families with children from gaining sufficient resources from employment to escape poverty<sup>48</sup>.

## **Debt and Financial Exclusion**

The ONS Wealth and Assets Survey (first wave 2006 - 2008) show that, at a UK level, household borrowing varies dramatically by household type. Around two thirds of couples with dependent children (65 per cent), lone parents with dependent children (65 per cent) and couples with non-dependent children (63 per cent) owed money due to non-mortgage borrowing. In contrast these proportions for single pensioner (14 per cent) and pensioner couple (18 per cent) households were below one fifth.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Scottish House Conditions Survey: Key Findings 2008, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>43</sup> Operation of the homeless persons legislation in Scotland: quarters ending 30 June and 30 September 2009 (including households in temporary accommodation at 31 December 2009), *The Scottish Government*

<sup>44</sup> Health and Care Series: Children Looked After Statistics 2006-07, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>45</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2008/09

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income 2008/09

<sup>48</sup> House of Commons Scottish Affairs Select Committee (2008) Child Poverty In Scotland: Third Report of Session 2007/08, London: HMSO

<sup>49</sup> Wealth in Great Britain: 2006-08, Office for National Statistics

A significant minority of families with children in Scotland were in credit arrears in 2004, representing 17 per cent of all families. A further 23 per cent of families with children were falling behind with bill payments<sup>50</sup>.

Families with children living in Scotland did not have a significantly different risk of being in credit arrears compared to similar families in London<sup>51</sup>.

During 2008/09, 9 per cent of children in Scotland were living in households where no-one had a current account. This compares to 8 per cent in England and 12 per cent in Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>52</sup>.

During 2008/09, 40 per cent of children in Scotland were in families where the adults said they would like to, but could not afford to, make savings of “£10 per month or more”. For families that were in relative poverty this figure rose to 74 percent<sup>53</sup>.

Most families in Scotland did not have any debts in 2004, with more than four out of five families (81 per cent) being debt free. One in ten families had one debt whilst 5 per cent had two debts and the remainder three or more debts<sup>54</sup>.

### **Crime, Disorder and Justice**

The risk of being a victim of crime is higher in deprived areas. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2008/09 estimated that 26% of adults in deprived areas were victims of crime compared with 19% in the rest of the country. This risk is higher for both property crime (23% compared with 17%) and violent crime (6% compared with 4%)<sup>55</sup>.

One in three individuals experiencing domestic abuse were living with dependent children at the time of the most recent or only incident. Experience of domestic abuse is higher in areas of greater deprivation<sup>56</sup>.

It is estimated that more than half of all crime and one third of non-criminal offences in Scotland are committed by individuals who are aged 21 or below<sup>57</sup>.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Living in more deprived areas is associated with poorer maternal and child health. More than two fifths of mothers (41 per cent) living in the 20 per cent most deprived areas smoked when their child was in early infancy compared to 8 per cent of mothers living in the 20 per cent least deprived areas. Children living in the most

---

<sup>50</sup> Kempson et al (2004) Characteristics of Families in Debt and the Nature of Indebtedness, Research Report No 211, London: DWP

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income 2008/09

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Lyon et al (2006) Families with Children in Britain: Findings from the 2004 Families and Children Study (FACS), Research Report No 330, London: DWP

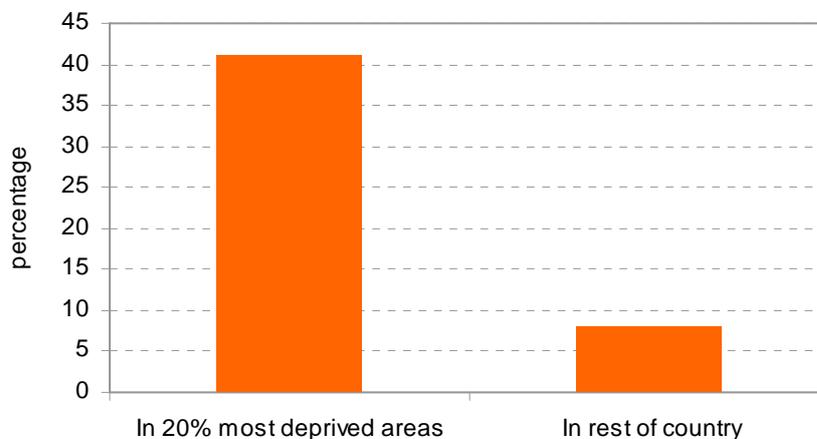
<sup>55</sup> 2008/09 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: First Findings, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>56</sup> 2008/09 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: Partner Abuse, *The Scottish Government*

<sup>57</sup> DTZ Piedad Consulting (2005) Measurement of the Extent of Youth Crime in Scotland, Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive

deprived areas were also more likely to eat no, or only one, portions of vegetables each day and were more likely to have low levels of physical activity<sup>58</sup>.

**Figure 6 - Percentage of mothers that smoked when their child was in early infancy: Scotland**



*Growing Up In Scotland: Health Inequalities in the Early Years, The Scottish Government*

Girls and young women in Scotland who live in more deprived areas are more likely to smoke and drink alcohol regularly than those from less deprived areas. For boys and young men however, there is no association between regularly smoking or drinking alcohol and the deprivation levels of their area of residence<sup>59</sup>.

There is not an established definition of child wellbeing, but UNICEF have identified six elements which can be used to measure wellbeing. These are material deprivation, educational wellbeing and behaviours and risk (which have been previously discussed), as well as health and safety, relationships and subjective wellbeing<sup>60</sup>.

According to UNICEF's definition of wellbeing, the UK performs the least well out of 21 rich countries. England, Scotland and Wales are not considered separately<sup>61</sup>.

Similar proportions of young people in Scotland (80 per cent) and England (81 per cent) report excellent self-rated health. Young people from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to report that they have excellent self-rated health than those from more deprived backgrounds. In 2006, 87 per cent of young men and 79 per cent of young women in Scotland from high affluence backgrounds reported they had excellent self-rated health compared to 76 per cent of young men and 74 per cent of young women from low affluence backgrounds<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> *Growing Up In Scotland: Health Inequalities in the Early Years, The Scottish Government*

<sup>59</sup> Corbett et al (2005) *Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALUS) National Report*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF (2007) *Child Poverty In Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries*, Florence: The United Nations Children's Fund

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>62</sup> Brooks et al (2009) *Young People's Health in Great Britain and Ireland: Findings from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey 2006*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh

Similar proportions of young people in Scotland (84 per cent) and England (85 per cent) report positive life satisfaction. Young people from more affluent backgrounds were also more likely to report positive life satisfaction than those from less affluent backgrounds. In Scotland, 90 per cent of young men and 85 per cent of young women from the most affluent backgrounds reported positive life satisfaction compared to 82 per cent of young men and 72 per cent of young women from the least affluent backgrounds<sup>63</sup>.

Young men and women in Scotland are more likely to have a poor body image if they are from less affluent backgrounds than if they are from more affluent backgrounds. Young people in Scotland are also more likely to have a poor body image than their counterparts in England, with 33 per cent of young people in Scotland feeling that their bodies are 'too fat' compared to 30 per cent in England<sup>64</sup>.

There is not a great different between the proportion of young people from more and less affluent backgrounds reporting three or more close friends. Those from more affluent backgrounds were slightly more likely to have close friends than their peers from less affluent backgrounds. Of young men, 95 per cent of those from more affluent backgrounds reported having three or more close friends compared to 91 per cent of their less affluent peers, whilst 96 per cent of affluent young women and 93 per cent of less affluent young women reported close friendship with three or more individuals<sup>65</sup>.

Less than one in ten young people in Scotland (9 per cent) reported that they had been recently bullied, similar levels to England and Wales. Young people from less affluent backgrounds were slightly more likely to report that they had been recently bullied than their peers from more affluent backgrounds in all countries<sup>66</sup>.

The number of looked after children in Scotland has risen since 2001, and in March 2009 stood at 15,288. Looked after children have increasingly been cared for by parents in their own home, relatives and friends and formal foster carers. The number of looked after children living in residential homes has declined<sup>67</sup>.

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

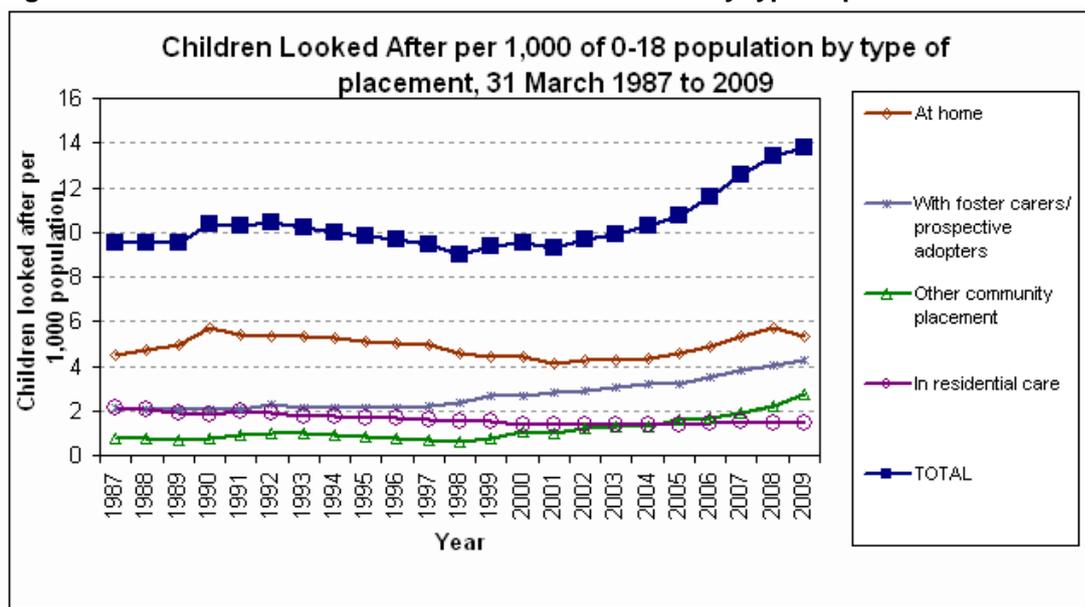
<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Brooks et al (2009) Young People's Health in Great Britain and Ireland: Findings from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey 2006, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh

<sup>67</sup> Child Safety and Wellbeing - Children Looked After: High Level Summary of Statistics Trend, *The Scottish Government*

Figure 7 - Numbers of looked after children in Scotland by type of placement 1987 - 2009



Source: *Child Safety and Wellbeing - Children Looked After: High Level Summary of Statistics Trend*, The Scottish Government

## Social Mobility

The extent to which children have a different occupational class to that of their parents (higher or lower) is similar in Scotland to other parts of Great Britain. It is estimated that approximately 24 per cent of individuals aged between 23 and 62 in 1999 had the same occupational status as their parents<sup>68</sup>.

There has been more upwards social mobility than downward social mobility. Approximately 45 per cent of individuals aged 23 to 62 in 1999 had a higher and 31 per cent had a lower status occupation than their parents in both England and Scotland. This is partly due to the rise in non-manual jobs<sup>69</sup>.

Looking at the UK as a whole, evidence suggests that access to certain professional occupations has become less fluid over time. The proportion of lawyers, doctors, journalists, accountants, bankers and engineers who grew up with families with above average incomes has increased for the cohort born in 1970 compared to that born in 1958<sup>70</sup>.

There is some evidence that upwards social mobility has historically been lower in the UK than in other European countries. One study using data from France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK found that the UK had the lowest levels of social mobility for women and the second lowest for men<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Patterson and Iannelli (2007) Patterns of Absolute and Relative Social Mobility: A Comparative Study of England, Scotland and Wales, *Sociological Research Online*, v 12 (6), <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/6/15.html> (accessed 27/08/2010)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Milburn et al (2009) *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*, London: The Cabinet Office

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

Communities Analytical Services Division  
Scottish Government  
November 2010