

Breaking-down stereotypes and engaging fathers in services for children and families



Report and policy recommendations from the practice sharing events held in Glasgow and Aberdeen 2010



**Making the Gender Equality
Duty Real for Children,
Young People & their Fathers**



Acknowledgements

The principal authors of this report were Dr Katrina Allen, Children in Scotland and Kathy Jones, Fatherhood Institute. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the presenters, those running workshops and participants in the Glasgow and Aberdeen practice-sharing events for sharing their knowledge and experiences of working with men and fathers, and as service users. We hope to

have accurately reflected the wide range of views and experiences expressed during the two events and to have produced a summary that will be useful to both strategic planners and frontline practitioners in their work. We also thank our funders in the Scottish Government Equality Unit for their support of this project, the Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland and Fatherhood Institute for inputs to the events and Aberdeen City Council for hosting the Aberdeen event.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	4
Breaking-down stereotypes events	5
Gender equality policy context	6
Cross-cutting issues	7
Gender Equality Duty – a tool for cultural change	7
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) – everyone’s responsibility	7
Mainstreaming gender equality	7
Sharing good practice and learning	7
Supporting and engaging with fathers	8
Why must services engage positively with fathers?	8
Making services accessible to fathers – challenges	8
How projects have successfully engaged with fathers – practical tips	9
Existing resources	10
Addressing gender stereotypes through education	11
Why is it important to address gender stereotyping in schools?	11
Addressing gender issues in schools – challenges	11
How projects have successfully addressed gender stereotyping in schools – practical tips	12
Men working in childcare	13
Why should we be encouraging more men to consider a career in childcare?	13
Careers for men in childcare – challenges	13
How projects have successfully supported men and boys to train and work in childcare – practical tips	14
Policy recommendations	16
Services for fathers need to be better valued	16
Strengthen the connection between key policy frameworks and the outcomes of supporting fathers	16
Specific services for fathers should complement the development of universal father-friendly services	16
Early engagement with fathers is a key element of multi-agency working	17
Safeguarding children requires positive engagement with fathers as well as mothers	18
Professionalising the childcare sector will support better outcomes for children, benefit female workers and attract more men into this sector	18
Challenging gender stereotypes around parenting and childcare is a national concern that will require concerted, cross-sector action	19
Existing public service staff require support and training to challenge gender assumptions and facilitate change effectively	19
Next steps for the project	20
2010-2011 goals and activities	20
Longer-term goals and activities	20
Appendix 1 – Key policies summary	21
The public sector Gender Equality Duty	21
Single Outcome Agreements	21
Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)	22
Early Years Framework	22
Curriculum for Excellence	23
Human Rights Provisions	23
Appendix 2 – Event programmes	24
Appendix 3 – Contacts and links	27
Message from the Scottish Government’s Equality Unit	27

Introduction



'Making the Gender Equality Duty Real for Children, Young People and their Fathers' is a three year project funded by the Scottish Government's Equality Unit, 2008-2011. The project promotes the value and importance of involving fathers positively in their children's lives, and challenges gender stereotypes associated with caring roles.

Under the UK Equality Act 2006 (soon to be replaced by the UK Equality Act 2010), the Gender Equality Duty places a legal responsibility upon public bodies – including schools, health services and social work – across Scotland to identify specific gender equality issues and areas for action and, more broadly, to actively promote gender equality. This provides a key opportunity to challenge assumptions and ways of working which (often inadvertently) have perpetuated gender stereotyping and sexual discrimination.

Gender equality initiatives have (with good reason) tended to focus on promoting the needs and interests of women, particularly in the workplace and in political life. In practice, women still tend to take the lead responsibility in caring for children, but many men are taking on (or seeking support to take on) a more active caring role. Both the make-up of families and the respective parenting/caring roles played by women and men (including as step, foster and grandparents) are evolving rapidly. However, family services providing support around

birth and a child's early years, in particular, have a long history of dealing predominantly with mothers. Adaptation to an evolving social context in which caring roles are less gender divided and men play a more active fathering role will require changes to the organisational culture of public agencies and institutions, as well as their practices.

Related project goals include:

- Reducing occupational gender segregation in professions serving children and young people (particularly early years)
- Reducing gender stereotyping in the career choices of current and future generations
- Promoting family-friendly working practices for both men and women as parents.

Children in Scotland has been working in this area for several years because of our understanding – and the accumulated research evidence – of the importance of fathers to the development and well-being of their children. Whether good or bad, present or absent, biological or *de facto*, it is clear that fathers (and father figures) matter to their children. As a children's rights-based organisation, our interest is in helping to make the influence of fathers increasingly beneficial to their sons and daughters – and encouraging and assisting men to make a larger positive contribution to the development of children across Scotland.

Breaking-down stereotypes events

In 2010, Children in Scotland held two one-day practice-sharing events in Glasgow and Aberdeen: 'Breaking-down stereotypes and engaging fathers in services for children and families'. These events were supported by the Fatherhood Institute and the Aberdeen event was hosted by Aberdeen City Council. They included inputs from the Scottish Government Equality Unit, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and seven practice-sharing workshops, featuring projects and groups from around Scotland.

The events built upon the findings of a 2009 national survey by Children in Scotland. This questionnaire canvassed the Gender Equality Duty priorities and activities of the 32 Scottish local authorities and 14 NHS Boards in Scotland. The main findings of this survey were presented at the events together with an overview of how issues around fatherhood and caring roles fit into the bigger picture of national gender equality policy in Scotland. The results can be viewed on the project website:

<http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/gedsurveyreport26jan2010.pdf>

Our aim in holding the events was to share learning, to better understand the challenges of addressing gender inequality across different service areas and to explore practical solutions for tackling them. The events focused on sharing existing practice, in the following areas:

- engaging fathers in services for children and families;
- tackling occupational segregation by supporting men to work in the childcare sector;
- challenging gender stereotypes and opening up opportunities within education.

In total, 86 delegates attended these events. The majority were from local authorities, mainly working in education, early years and social work. These included professionals supporting particularly vulnerable individuals and families, including: young and single parents, non-resident fathers and families with members having disabilities or drug addictions. A small number of delegates working in national policy and research roles also participated, from the Scottish Government, academic institutions and other voluntary sector organisations.

This report summarises the key learning and discussion points from the two events, with a dual focus on both practice and policy issues. Keynote presentations are available on the project website <http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk/activities-and-outputs>, together with materials from some of the workshops. More detailed information about the case studies featured in the workshops is also available on the project website. Further case study details and related materials will continue to be added during the life of the project.



Gender equality policy context

The key legislative requirement in this area is the public sector **Gender Equality Duty**, which includes:

1. A general, **positive** duty on public sector bodies to **promote** equality and **prevent** unlawful discrimination.
2. **'Specific duties' for Scottish public sector bodies to:**
 - Publish a gender equality scheme
 - Assess the impact of policies and practices on both women and men
 - Set gender equality objectives, plan and take action to achieve these
 - Report annually and review progress every three years.

In practice, this means that all policies should be examined in light of the Gender Equality Duty and, where necessary, revised. The Duty does **not** require that all services must be provided equally to women and men. However, it does mean that potentially different needs must be assessed, and steps taken to meet the needs of both women and men. For further details, including the new **UK Equality Act**, which will come into force in October 2010, see Appendix 1. A fuller summary of wider policies that are relevant to work in this area is also provided in Appendix 1.

The Scottish Government has identified national priority areas for action under the Gender Equality Duty. To date, the focus has been on: equal pay, occupational segregation and violence against women. All of these are important areas. However, it is important not to lose sight of the connections

between the many different aspects of gender equality. Most obviously, changes in the workplace cannot be decoupled from changes in domestic life and the sharing of parental responsibilities. Both women and men are part of the process of change and policy makers will need to engage with both to effectively address inequalities.

Cultural definitions of 'appropriate' roles, attitudes and behaviours for women and men are constantly evolving. Public services, as well as policy makers, need to adapt to the changes. Service providers, as well as policy makers, inevitably play an important role in shaping cultural change (or, conversely, maintaining stereotypes) through their practices.

Key Messages:

Gender roles are evolving – all public services have to adapt to changing needs and expectations

Public services are also part of the process of change – key role in challenging (or perpetuating) stereotypes

Gender equality is about men and women as parents and carers, as well as in work and political life

Gender equality initiatives broadly, and specific services for fathers, need to become mainstream – not add-ons.



Cross-cutting Issues

The following section highlights some key cross-cutting issues that were discussed during the events.

Gender Equality Duty – a tool for cultural change

The aim of the public sector duties is to achieve **cultural change**. The Gender Equality Duty should be a **proactive tool of change** and not a tick-box exercise, which wastes everybody's time and energy. There is a need for consistency across a service, authority, health board or other public body. It is important to recognise that cultural change is a long-term process; not a goal that will be achieved overnight. **Indicators** should be developed and used to track progress.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) – everyone's responsibility

Equality Impact Assessment is the job of everybody providing front-line public services and not just that of equality officers. EQIA should be part of a cyclical process, constantly informing the development of policy and practice. In relation to improving gender equality, the focus needs to shift from processes to the **outcomes and impacts** of policies and practices.

Mainstreaming gender equality

Addressing gender inequalities and promoting gender equality needs to become an integral and consistent part of mainstream policy making and practice across services, public bodies and partnership working. To date, the focus of gender equality duty activities has been on identified priority areas. Gender equality work has tended to be treated as somewhat separate and carried out in parallel to mainstream service delivery.

However, gender equality issues have been addressed by specific services, often driven by

active 'champions' who are pioneering innovative methods and approaches, particularly within early years and education settings. In these cases, the primary drivers are anticipated improvements to services and benefits to service users and their families. Such initiatives rarely (if ever) use a gender equality label and have not tended to be recognised as contributing to fulfilment of the Gender Equality Duty. The exception to this is initiatives within schools that have encouraged girls and boys to consider 'non-traditional' education, training and employment pathways for their gender.

From a policy perspective, part of the process of mainstreaming gender equality will be to recognise the contributions of those existing initiatives that achieve gender equality goals without explicitly using gender equality language. This is particularly the case around approaches to support and engage with fathers, which are not currently on the radars of equalities staff and corporate level strategic planners.

Sharing good practice and learning

A small number of services explicitly tailored for fathers are being established across Scotland. These services have a potentially important role to play in addressing the needs of at least some fathers. Frontline practitioners from a number of sectors are looking for advice and information about approaches that have worked elsewhere. Staff members within established services are also keen to share their experiences and discuss the merits of different approaches; both to support others and to inform the continued funding and development of their own services.

The policy environment is ever changing. However, within the various governmental policy frameworks, there should be mechanisms in place to build on the good work already being done and to replicate/adapt successful approaches as widely as possible.

Supporting and engaging with fathers

Why must services engage positively with fathers?

In addition to the Gender Equality Duty on public service providers, there is a substantial and evolving body of research which examines the impact of fathers on the lives of their children and on the mothers of their children. We will not discuss the detail of the evidence base here. However, a range of research summaries about the impact and role of fathers is available at:

www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

Fathers have a tremendous impact on their children in a range of different ways – both positive and negative; by their presence or their absence. There is substantial evidence that where fathers are engaged positively with their children throughout early childhood there are beneficial impacts on outcomes for the child later in life, including: higher educational attainment, decreased involvement in criminality and increased self-esteem.

Where fathers are positively engaged with babies' mothers and well prepared for fatherhood there are also direct benefits for mothers. Documented benefits have included: experiencing less pain during labour, successful and longer breastfeeding, ante-natal smoking cessation and early identification of post natal depression.

Research indicates that couples are more likely to separate during the initial two years following the birth of a child. The stronger the attachment between father and child, the less likely the couple are to separate. If separation does occur, where there is good attachment between father and child, it is more likely that contact will be maintained following separation.

Fathers tend not to have access to informal parenting support networks and often feel very isolated, particularly if they are separated from their child's mother and/or are the main carer. For example, lone fathers are reluctant to join 'mum and toddler' groups.

In addition to the Gender Equality Duty, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities and Scottish ministers to promote parental involvement in their children's education.

Making services accessible to fathers – challenges

Day-to-day challenges revolve around how to adapt and develop services to make them both accessible and welcoming to fathers. An initial challenge for

service providers is often to get fathers 'over the threshold' in the first instance. However, evidence from current projects indicates that once fathers have seen for themselves that a service is 'for them' and is worth engaging with, they will keep participating.

Historically, parent support services have been perceived as (and often have been) aimed primarily at mothers rather than fathers. The terminology used often excludes fathers. Even using the apparently neutral term 'parent' tends to put fathers off because the assumption is still that this really means 'mother'. Working fathers can often not get time off work to attend daytime courses or groups, including antenatal classes. Fathers may also not feel comfortable accessing family centres, which are seen as female domains, or joining mainly female groups.

Dads generally have similar issues to mums but tend to be less comfortable, at least initially, discussing parenting problems and concerns. Fathers in groups tend not to 'connect' with each other as easily as mothers do – and fathers entering mainly female groups find it hard to feel part of the group.

Negative portrayals of fathers in the media and general cultural perceptions that fathers are less able or 'natural' parents than mothers discourage fathers from engaging with formal services as primary carers. Negative experiences of legal and formal processes associated with separation and access/care arrangements reinforce the distrust of many fathers in formal services.

Involving fathers can be a challenging and complex activity for service providers, particularly as a significant proportion of children have more than one "father" with whom to engage. The presence of a stepfather or foster father should not exclude the biological father – or vice-versa. Barring clear reasons for exclusion relating to child protection concerns, domestic abuse or compliance with safe contact arrangements, the effort should be made to engage with all parents, not just those currently resident with the child. This poses specific challenges for service providers where parents have separated and a non-resident parent is not actively seeking to engage with them. Particular difficulties arise where there is ongoing acrimony and the primary carer (usually the mother) and/or their subsequent partner, wishes to actively exclude the father or does not understand why they should be involved.

Fathers who have been referred to specialist support services through the courts or social workers often have low confidence, particularly in their parenting

Supporting and engaging with fathers

role, and complex, multiple issues of their own with which to contend. In many cases, it may be necessary to offer an element of individual as well as group support.

Certain groups of fathers have been identified as having specific circumstances and support needs that benefit from focused support. These include **young fathers**, who tend to require a lot of support around childbirth and infant care. Support to young fathers has also included encouragement to discuss issues such as birth plans, breastfeeding and choosing names with their partner, particularly when they do not live together as a couple.

Other groups that may benefit from specific support include, **fathers with disabilities** and **fathers of children with disabilities, asylum-seeking fathers** and **fathers in prison**. There is a very high rate of parental separation in families with a disabled child, and this increases the need for support for these fathers. Again, increasing the positive engagement of fathers both benefits the child and lessens the burden on mothers.

Workshop presenters and participants shared their experiences of practical ways to engage with fathers, which are summarised in the box below.

How projects have successfully engaged with fathers – practical tips:

- **Getting timing and place right** – daytime, evening and weekend sessions will suit fathers in different circumstances; crèche facilities may be required, depending upon the activity; location needs to be accessible; and negative associations, e.g. with formal education or agencies may put some dads off attending.
- **Being proactive** – e.g. carrying out home visits; arranging transport to venues or meeting points; having an identified and accessible contact person who is prepared to build relationships; and following-up with fathers after an initial contact or a course has ended.
- **Using 'hooks' to engage fathers in the first instance** – competitions through schools, gala days, cooking, sports and outdoor activities have all been used. Fathers Day and National Play Day are good opportunities to engage with fathers and children. The weekly Forest Nursery in Fife has proved very popular with dads and has led to an increased uptake of parenting workshops by dads.
- **Participation is voluntary**, not compulsory – involvement should be portrayed as a normal 'parenting' activity, not as a punishment for being a 'bad' father.
- **Building trust** – differentiating support or activities offered from formal education, (with which some participants will have had poor experiences) and agencies; making it clear that group's and/or workers' approach is (and remains) non-judgemental; and ensuring confidentiality is maintained within a group (especially important where sensitive issues are being discussed).
- **Valuing dads' own experiences**, learning and pooled knowledge over that of 'experts' – parenting support should be about engaging with dads, not lecturing.
- **Offering one-to-one support and advocacy** across a range of areas (e.g. housing, benefits, debt, health, finding work, education/training opportunities) – can also include signposting to other specialist sources of advice and support.
- **Allowing fathers' (and/or children's) needs and wishes to lead** – in terms of pace, activities, subjects for discussion and format. In parenting support, models and programmes can provide useful elements/building blocks, but they tend to work best when treated as adaptable, not as inflexible blueprints.
- **Facilitating the important social function of groups** – not all about learning or interaction with a specific service; promoting peer support, a sense of belonging and fun are also important.
- **Organising a range of engaging, low-cost activities** for fathers and children (e.g. visits to local attractions, camping trips, photography projects, cooking, meals together, badminton, competitions, circus skills, aromatherapy, health checks).
- **Embracing challenging issues and topics** (e.g. abuse, addiction, separation) – in providing parenting support, it is important to give fathers the opportunity to explore personal issues, including their own experiences as children, so they are able to better understand and consider their current role as fathers and to work out where and how to do things differently.
- **Building broader skills (i.e. non-parenting) development into a programme of support** – e.g. group facilitation skills, education and training.

Supporting and engaging with fathers

- **Having male support/link workers** is an advantage, but not always a necessity – much depends on the context. It may help to have a male worker as the initial point of contact and the gender of support workers may have an impact on group dynamics. Ability/confidence to communicate well with fathers is important, as is the consistency of the relationship between support/link workers and service users.

Existing resources

A variety of toolkits and materials designed to support service providers to successfully engage with fathers (including young fathers) are available from the Fatherhood Institute. The former UK Government Department for Education and Skills developed specific guidance for schools in England on how to engage with fathers: *Engaging fathers – involving parents, raising achievement*. This is

currently available through the Department for Education website as a free download:

<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publication&ProductId=DfES%25200314%25202004&>.

Although England-focussed, these resources contain guidance that will be relevant to Scottish service providers.



Addressing gender stereotypes through education

Why is it important to address gender stereotyping in schools?

Subject, career, training and work experience choices are still significantly gender divided in areas such as maths, physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, engineering, computing, nursing and childcare. This stems, at least partly, from cultural stereotypes about the roles and areas of studies to which males and females are suited. Differential rates of achievement of girls and boys in specific subject areas and using certain learning approaches have been documented – as have higher rates of exclusion from school for boys. Work to address gender inequalities and stereotypes in schools is concerned primarily with opening-up the full range of education, training and career pathway opportunities for all children and young people, regardless of their gender.

An important related area from the gender equality perspective is educational support for boys and girls to become good parents and carers in their turn. Falling outside of the traditional educational remit, work in this area fits with broader, core life-skills development approaches. Education has a potentially important role to play in challenging gender stereotypes relating to parenting and caring roles. Also, crucially, education has a role in supporting the development of good parenting and relationship skills for all young people, regardless of their home environment. Timely educational support has the potential to break intergenerational cycles of poor parenting, have a positive impact upon future generations of children and reduce the need for social work intervention further down the line.

More broadly, this type of gender equality work in schools supports young people to explore and develop their own understanding of gender identity and roles, and to question gender stereotypes. As such, gender equality work in schools is a key aspect – not only of personal development – but also of a much wider process of cultural change.

A recent report by the Coalition on Men and Boys (COMAB)¹ highlighted key weaknesses (from a gender equality perspective) with the school curriculum in England, which are also relevant to schools in Scotland. The report concluded that *“there needs to be a much more central space – ideally within the mainstream curriculum – for personal, social, emotional, moral and political education in terms of time, teacher training, status and resource allocation ... This part of the curriculum should involve learning about gender inequality, social justice and the risks and problems associated with current masculinities (and femininities)”*. In line with this, the COMAD report recommended that

the issue of violence against women should be included in the curriculum.

Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) guidance for pre-16 education providers in Scotland² highlights a need to challenge attitudes and beliefs towards gendered violence throughout school education. The guidelines suggest that sexist bullying, sexual harassment and violence against women should be addressed in *“formal school policies, in personal and social development classes, citizenship activities and throughout the school curriculum where relevant”*. The EOC guidance also encourages schools to:

“tackle persistent stereotypes about the parenting and caring roles that women and men play in society. Traditional views, such as it is the role of women to undertake the main caring responsibilities in the family, should be challenged. It is important that, in addition to challenging these stereotypes, gender equality is promoted. For example, it is important that schools actively encourage boys to explore men’s caring responsibilities and fatherhood”.

Curriculum for Excellence emphasises the importance of **inclusion**, described in Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) reference manual as:

“Taking positive action and intervening in order to enable achievement for all by building and fulfilling the potential of every child, pupil, young person and adult.” HMIE describes inclusion as *“particularly important in the context of lifelong learning, as not only does it relate to engagement and involvement in specific activities and experiences at the current time, it also enables future and continuing participation and involvement in the community, and personal development and empowerment.”*³

Addressing gender issues in schools – challenges

The overriding challenge faced by schools is that the gender socialisation process starts very young, with gender stereotypes already permeating children’s understanding and attitudes when they start primary school. The situation is further complicated by ‘nature versus nurture’ debates around gender attributes, which are not fully resolved. Ideally, gender equality should be addressed coherently (and in an age-appropriate manner) throughout a child’s education from pre-school. Even within secondary school, more could be done sooner. An example raised during the events was of parenting classes starting in 5th year, which was considered too late, with many students leaving at the end of S4.

Addressing gender stereotypes through education

Another major challenge for schools is to effectively manage the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence. In particular, schools need to balance incorporating cross-subject work in areas such as gender equality with avoiding overcrowding of the curriculum. This is a particular issue for secondary schools, which still tend to be very focused on core subject areas. Parenting and relationship skills are relevant to all pupils and there is a strong argument for treating these as core to the curriculum, rather than as optional or filler subjects.

A further challenge – particularly for secondary schools – is to shift the focus more towards

relationships and developing core skills such as parenting, and away from traditional sex education approaches. There may be gender equality issues within the delivery of relationship education, such as where contraception has been treated as primarily an issue for girls.

To effectively implement changes to the curriculum, it may sometimes also be necessary to challenge staff attitudes and assumptions around gender issues. This applies to relationships and parenting education, but also to areas such as opening up childcare as a potential career path for boys and men.

How projects have successfully addressed gender stereotyping in schools – practical tips:

- **Curriculum for Excellence provides real opportunities for creative thinking.** Exploring gender roles, attitudes and expectations can be tied into a wide range of subject areas and learning objectives. A good example of this is provided by the interdisciplinary curriculum project in Clackmannanshire secondary schools to analyse and present the results of a gender perceptions survey of local primary pupils.
<http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk/promoting-gender-equality-in-schools-educational-development-service-clackmannanshire>
- **Boys as well as girls can be positively engaged** in mixed classes, especially where the focus is on tackling stereotypes for both sexes (as opposed to an exclusive 'equality for women' focus).
- **Guidance staff can have a significant influence on the choices that girls and boys make.** Staff who have been trained to consider gender equality are more likely to encourage pupils to take up non-traditional workplace experience, training and course options.
- **Relationship and parenting education needs to start early.**



¹ "Man Made: Men, masculinities and equality in public policy" (2009).

² "Gender Equality Duty: Guidance on the duty for Pre-16 Education Providers in Scotland" EOC (March 2007).

³ "Inclusion Reference Manual (Internet Publication Ver.1)" HMIE (December 2008).

Men working in childcare

Why should we be encouraging more men to consider a career in childcare?

Scottish Government statistics show that in 2007, of the 32,800 people working in pre-school and childcare centres in Scotland, men made up less than 3% of the workforce.

Strong research evidence of the benefits of more men working in childcare is limited, mainly due to the lack of examples of gender-balanced workforces to study. However, the evidence from initiatives designed to address gender imbalance in the sector, such as *Men in Childcare*, has been very positive. <http://www.meninchildcare.co.uk>.

It is widely perceived that children benefit from male as well as female perspectives and approaches. Men are held by some to be more direct, to encourage children to risk-take more and to play differently – enabling more physical, outdoor, 'rough and tumble' play through differences in experience, skills and physical strength.

There is a perception that many children – especially pre-secondary school – lack a male role model in their life, and that many more have limited contact with fathers working long hours. It is widely believed that boys in particular, but also girls, can benefit from contact with positive male role models in early years and primary school contexts. Boys are often said to relate better to male workers, though it is recognised that this is by no means always the case. The male role model argument has been criticised, but research suggests that employers and parents view this as a benefit of employing men.

There is a perception that many fathers feel more at ease with male staff and that they are better able to relate to them. In a South Lanarkshire nursery⁴, staff noted that with the introduction of male staff, fathers started to engage more rather than simply dropping their children off. A single mother who felt isolated also enjoyed having positive contact with a 'friendly' man herself, as well as perceiving benefits for her children. Others felt that it demonstrated that men can be good at caring and associated this with more men taking on caring roles at home.

Research has found that the majority of parents are in favour of men working in childcare (e.g. 2002 Daycare Trust commissioned survey).⁵ Initiatives in some local authorities in England have been driven by the desire of parents to see more male staff in nursery and early years settings.

Men working in childcare report high levels of job satisfaction. Studies that have asked men about their experiences of working in childcare have found

that positive features include: variety within the working day, the satisfaction of helping children to learn, gaining understanding of a child's perspective and the relationships formed with children, families and other workers.⁶

A mixed workforce is more balanced and normalises men's involvement in childcare work; which in turn, helps to overturn gender stereotypes for future generations. In challenging stereotypes, the ability of men to engage in caring activities (whether for their own children or as a profession) is recognised. The perceived value of 'caring' work to society is raised and the rewards (including personal fulfilment) to both men and women who engage in this type of work are highlighted. All of this feeds into and supports broader visions of shared parenting, job satisfaction and better life-work balance for men and women.

Careers for men in childcare – challenges

Widely-held cultural assumptions and expectations of gender roles continue to underpin a prevalent failure to view careers in childcare as relevant and appropriate for men. This is reinforced by media images (e.g. in advertising and soap operas) that tend to portray women and men in traditional gender roles.

Men considering a career in childcare often feel at risk of unfounded allegations being made against them by parents or colleagues, fuelled by possible suspicions around their motives for wanting to work with children. The appropriate infrastructure of support to overcome prejudices is often not in place and managers themselves may be wary, especially where they have not previously worked with men.

It can be difficult to recruit men to childcare courses, despite high rates of initial interest. School-leavers can be particularly difficult to recruit, requiring more intensive support than for other courses and a longer recruitment time. There has also been a high drop-out rate on some childcare courses. In contrast, take-up by older, unemployed men has been strong, with growing demand. Some male school-leavers may require a slightly different kind and level of support from female school leavers in training – e.g. more direct instruction.

Post-training, many of those trained do not go on to work in the childcare sector. In the short term, many do work in out-of-school settings. Several reasons were cited for this fact. First, employment in the childcare sector can be difficult to find for men and some employers need 'convincing' to

Men working in childcare

consider male applicants seriously. Another likely reason is financial. Childcare work tends to be low paid, although there is considerable variation in the rates paid – particularly between local authority and private employers. Overall, work in the childcare sector is widely considered to be undervalued with limited opportunities for career progression. Finally, trainees may only undertake an introductory course, which focuses on giving them a good grounding and transferable skills, but does not prepare participants to go directly into childcare work without further training. Before starting the course, trainees lack awareness of key aspects of childcare work such as monitoring, inspection, child development and Scotland's Early Years Framework.

Research by COMAB found that despite recent government initiatives to expand the workforce and

increase the number of childcare places, "the sector has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. One reason for this is over-reliance on a small section of the labour force – predominantly young (white) women – however this is becoming unsustainable as they seek other opportunities. The recruitment of men is therefore increasingly regarded as a matter of necessity. But despite attempts to raise the profile of childcare as a career, and to advertise more widely, this has had little effect on the numbers of men in the profession. The Children's Workforce Development Council is running pilots across 20 sites in England and this may lead to the improvement of training, career development and workforce mobility, but the low pay and low status of childcare work continue to act as significant barriers to male recruitment."



Men working in childcare

How projects have successfully supported men and boys to train and work in childcare – practical tips:

- **Guidance staff in schools have a key role** to play in encouraging boys to consider taking up courses and training in early years and childcare work. However, guidance roles tend to be loosely defined and the advice given can be fairly ad hoc. Training for guidance staff may be required.
- **Giving out information packs to schools (or posting material online) is not enough.** Education staff (including guidance and head teachers) may require convincing that childcare training and work placements provide viable opportunities for boys and that boys themselves are/can become interested in this area.
- **Awareness-raising is an important and long- term activity**, which requires creative thinking and perseverance. Cultural change is a slow process – don't expect immediate success. North Lanarkshire 'Men into Childcare' programme produced an 'Education Gateway' DVD, which used theatre to depict a young boy choosing childcare as a career and to explore the reactions of his family and friends. The DVD is used with Secondary 3 and 4 mixed classes and is designed to enable teachers and pupils to facilitate discussion in the classroom.
<http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk/men-into-childcare-north-lanarkshire>
- **Targeted and creative advertising can be an effective recruitment tool** that does not have to be very expensive. For example, the North Lanarkshire 'Men into Childcare' programme found that local radio adverts and articles in local papers were effective recruitment tools for unemployed men.
- **Extra team-building and confidence-building** work may help with retention on courses.
- **Having a guaranteed year of post qualification employment** (like probationary teachers) would help with recruitment and retention.
- **Providing trainees with mentors** (peer and support workers) for ongoing support and encouragement can help with retention. However, unless done with sensitivity, 'buddying' schemes may increase divisions between male and female trainees/workers.
- **Ensure that managers have a good understanding of the challenges** that men working in childcare may face.
- **Encourage managers and female staff to treat male trainees and workers in the same way as women** and to identify their strengths on an individual basis rather than according to gendered assumptions. In trainee placements, there is often a tendency to make extra allowances for young men ('to mother them'), and to give men, generally, different tasks from female workers. Examples include: having lower expectations of men in arts and crafts activities; encouraging men to engage more in 'rough and tumble' play, move furniture or carry out repairs. Yet, equal treatment does not mean ignoring the strong contributions that many men can make in traditionally male areas such as sport and outdoor activities.
- Recognise that even if trainees do not ultimately enter a career in childcare, the **experience and knowledge they gain from the training can be useful in others sectors, and in being a parent.**

⁴ "See the Difference? A question of gender equality" Men in childcare DVD, featuring South Lanarkshire Council Childcare Partnership. (To request a copy email: info@meninchildcare.com).

⁵ Rolfe, "Men in Childcare" National Institute of Economic and Social Research Occupational Segregation Working Paper Series No.35 (2005).

⁶ As above.

Policy recommendations

Services for fathers need to be better valued

We need to move beyond the current '**postcode lottery**' of family support services. Only a minority of Scotland's local authority areas have significant services available, which are specifically aimed at fathers. The services that do exist are reliant on short-term funding streams and/or are extremely vulnerable to budget cuts. Knowledge and service continuity are lost when staff are forced to move on prematurely (which carries hidden costs, too). It is a false economy to axe services for vulnerable families. Using a 'social accountancy' model would capture the substantial wider and long-term impacts of these services, giving a more accurate reflection of their value than traditional cost benefit models.

The Concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) ended the ring fencing of local government funding and provides scope for much greater innovation in planning and resource allocation at local level.⁷ This provides opportunities to develop local services in new ways. National policy makers need to recognise that the availability of funding impacts on local ability to innovate. However, at the local authority level, it is also important to recognise that positive outcomes for vulnerable families **can** be achieved on a relatively small budget in this area – as is evidenced by the projects featured in our Glasgow and Aberdeen workshops and survey report. Funding shortage should not, therefore, be used as an excuse for inaction. At the same time, there is a strong argument for sustained investment to support the development and rolling-out of successful 'positive fathering' projects and approaches.

Strengthen the connection between key policy frameworks and the outcomes of supporting fathers

In addition to the gender equality requirements outlined at the start of this report, there are several key policy frameworks into which the development of father-friendly services fit well and with which links are increasingly being made. Good quality research into the specific outcomes of developing father-friendly services would inform the development of appropriate indicators by which to gauge impact.

The Scottish Government's National Outcomes provide an overarching framework for the strategic priorities of Community Planning Partnerships, as set out in each local Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).⁸ The key national outcomes to which the development of father-friendly services most clearly

contributes are:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society;
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk;
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The outcomes for children, families and communities of work by services to support fathers could (and ought to) be included in local Single Outcome Agreements.

Engaging positively and in a timely fashion with fathers, as well as mothers, will be required for effective implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Equally Well (including maternity service frameworks), Curriculum for Excellence and the Early Years Framework.⁹ The successful implementation of new/amended Scottish legislation such as, the Parental Involvement (Schools) Act, the Additional Support for Learning Act and the Schools Consultation Act, will also require effective engagement with fathers as well as mothers. Public services for fathers ought to be viewed as **core** to mainstream services addressing these laws and policies; not as expendable add-ons.

Specific services for fathers should complement the development of universal father-friendly services

Engagement with fathers across child and family services in Scotland is currently sporadic. Services targeting fathers tend to be limited in scope and patchily provided within specific local areas and/or to specific groups of fathers (e.g. young, disabled or with children under 4 four years old). There is a tendency for fathers' services to be offered exclusively through social work and court referrals to those already experiencing difficulties, rather than being offered more broadly to prevent the need for later intervention by public agencies.

In the longer term, the challenge will be to develop more joined-up, **universal father-inclusive services** that are accessible to all fathers across Scotland and able to meet the needs of all parents and carers.

The establishment of autonomous/semi-autonomous dads' groups to enable continued, peer-led support can contribute to local capacity-building and complement formal services. However, it is important that groups are not used as a place to

Policy recommendations

'dump dads' without a clear purpose and that groups are supported (especially in the early stages of their development) by a skilled facilitator. One-to-one support is often required, even within a group support context. Fathers' groups currently provide an important source of support – even a lifeline – for many dads. However, these groups ought to be seen as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, mainstream father-friendly services.

Formal parenting support services tend to be delivered in a group context. However, it is important to recognise that this is not always the most effective way to engage with either mothers or fathers. Recent research into the engagement of fathers in parenting education by the Fatherhood Institute concluded that:

*"Fathers tend to prefer one-on-one interventions to groups, and may be more willing to attend mixed-sex groups than 'fathers' groups', although attendees at male-only groups often value the single-sex environment. In some settings (e.g. ante-natal), mixed-sex groups may usefully divide into single-sex groups for individual sessions. Fathers' groups should always be regarded as only one among a range of ways for engaging with fathers."*¹⁰

This report recommends that staff engage informally with individual fathers before seeking their commitment to a parenting course.

Early engagement with fathers is a key element of multi-agency working

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) national policy framework sets out the basic guidelines for improved multi-agency working in child and family services throughout Scotland.¹¹ If they are to work together effectively, it is important for agencies to have clear, common goals and to develop shared protocols around the collection and timely sharing of key data. It is important to capture data on fathers (as well as key members of the extended family and significant others) who are likely to have a significant impact on the health, wellbeing and development of the child.

Many agencies are highly successful at engaging with mothers, as they have a range of systematic processes for capturing mother and child data, combined with a series of opportunities to do so. In contrast, fathers are more likely to be left out of meetings or communications concerning their child, particularly when they are not co-resident and the child's mother is the main conduit for information. This has also been a flaw within the otherwise very good 'Growing Up in Scotland' longitudinal study, where the focus of data collection has been on the

'main carer'. Although resident partners have been invited to participate, non-resident partners – in practice predominantly fathers – have not been included in the research. For further details see: <http://www.crfr.ac.uk/gus/index.html>

Scotland has a variety of policies and frameworks around maternity services. For obvious reasons, these have a primary emphasis on engagement with prospective mothers through antenatal care. This is also, potentially, a prime opportunity for engagement with prospective fathers. However, this aspect of antenatal services is largely still undeveloped and undervalued. While many men do attend appointments with their partner, many others do not because of: work commitments; because they are no longer in a relationship with the mother and may not even know about the appointment; lack of confidence; and/or because they do not feel they are welcomed and valued by the antenatal care providers. Explicitly inviting fathers to attend appointments can make a significant difference. This is likely to be most successful when:

- fathers are given sufficient notice;
- mothers are encouraged to invite partners;
- written information is made available that is aimed specifically at fathers (e.g. addressing issues such as support for breastfeeding, post-natal depression and how to provide support during labour);
- midwifery and healthcare staff are trained and given scope to engage positively and routinely with fathers, as well as mothers, of all ages, including clear protocols for handling challenging situations such as – where there are safety concerns for the mother and/or child; where there are multiple men with a reason to be involved; and where the mother is reluctant to involve the father (for reasons other than safety); and
- attendance by fathers is treated by antenatal services as the norm – without stigmatising single mothers or families where the father is unable to attend.

The majority of fathers already attend the birth of their child, whether or not they are in a stable relationship with the child's mother. Birth provides a key opportunity to capture the optimism of a new father and to build on his desire to support mother and baby (with potentially huge benefits for the whole family). The positive (or negative) nature of fathers' experiences of engagement with professionals and agencies around the birth of their child is likely to influence their trust in, and future engagement with, a range of child and family service providers – and may impact on their bonding with the child and subsequent behaviour as a parent and partner. This is particularly true in the

Policy recommendations

case of young fathers and vulnerable families where ongoing public agency support is likely to be required.

There are clearly limits to the roles that health professionals can be expected to fulfil. However, relatively simple measures – such as training staff and ensuring that written materials and waiting areas are father-inclusive – can have a significant impact. Outcomes include: making services more accessible and welcoming to fathers and ensuring that key information reaches fathers when it is most needed.

Safeguarding children requires positive engagement with fathers as well as mothers

“There are crucial issues in relation to engaging with and assessing fathers and father figures, where there are child protection concerns, which are still not being handled adequately in most local authorities. This amounts to a widespread failure of social care agencies to support the safe engagement of fathers and paternal relatives in their children’s lives. If the risks and protective factors of men in a child’s family are not assessed effectively (as is often the case – especially where the father lacks Parental Responsibility, and/or is non-resident), then the child is likely to be placed at greater risk.”¹²

One of the most compelling reasons for proactively engaging with fathers (and father figures) is safeguarding children. Services which fail to engage with, to assess, or to consider fathers will not have a complete picture of the circumstances of the children in their care – including the potential risks that they face. It can be particularly difficult to engage with fathers in separated families, especially when the mother resists the father’s involvement. Yet, if fathers are not engaged with by services, their potential to provide positive support and to take an active role in addressing risk factors (e.g. substance abuse, anger management issues) remains unknown and undiminished.

In families where the mother is particularly vulnerable (e.g. is very young, has mental health issues or other serious health problems), fathers have the potential to provide an important source of care and support to both mother and child. It is good professional practice to engage with fathers and with other significant adults in the lives of children. Family group conferencing has been used imaginatively and successfully to work with all family members and is supported by good data-collection processes that capture all relevant information about the family constellations surrounding children.

It is crucial to recognise that fathers and mothers both have the potential to be part of the solution when safeguarding issues arise, alongside other significant adults in the child’s life.

Professionalising the childcare sector will support better outcomes for children, benefit female workers and attract more men into this sector

There is general agreement that raising the professional status of childcare work through an increased emphasis on training and qualifications is desirable in terms of outcomes for children and will be necessary to substantially reduce the gender imbalance in this sector. This is supported by evidence from Denmark and Norway, where childcare work is more knowledge and education-based than in the UK.¹³ It will be important to tackle low pay and poor opportunities to gain skills and progress within the sector. There is evidence from existing programmes that providing a guaranteed year of post qualification employment would help to retain male trainees in the childcare sector. As well as helping to attract men into the sector, professionalisation will also benefit the predominantly female workforce and the children being cared for by them.

Providing good careers information for young people will be an important aspect of reversing the dominant stereotypes about work in the childcare sector. It will be particularly important to draw attention to the knowledge and skills required to work with children, to challenge gender stereotypes and to highlight the training and progression opportunities available within the sector.

Occupational segregation is a priority area for the Scottish Government in addressing gender inequality at national level. The importance of attracting underrepresented groups – including men – into the childcare workforce is highlighted. The Early Years Framework recognises the valuable contributions of the childcare workforce to the development of Scotland’s children and supports professionalisation within the sector. The recent Children in Scotland programme ‘Working it out’ debated future workforce development in Scotland <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce/index.htm>; and the current ‘Working for Inclusion’ cross-European programme looks at the role the early years workforce can play in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion. <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi/index.htm>

The Scottish Pedagogue model proposed in ‘Working it out’ would contribute to the

Policy recommendations

professionalisation of the childcare sector and increase the likelihood of – and opportunities for – male uptake of employment in the sector.

Challenging gender stereotypes around parenting and childcare is a national concern that will require concerted, cross-sector action

Challenging gender stereotypes and reducing associated barriers and inequalities is a national concern, which spans every area of life. Education and early years services have a particularly important role to play in changing attitudes, developing core skills and opening up opportunities for current and future generations.

The UK-wide ‘*Shaping a Fairer Future*’ review recommended: “*national guidance for teachers and early years childcare workers on how to ensure that the horizons of children in the 3-5 age group are not limited by stereotypes of what girls and boys can do*”.¹⁴ Curriculum for Excellence focuses on essential learning experiences for all young people from 3 to 18 years of age. It emphasises the need to enable all young people to achieve their full potential regardless of gender, background, interests or ability. The Curriculum for Excellence also provides opportunities for creative thinking, which are ideal for exploring gender roles, attitudes and expectations. This type of activity can be tied into a wide range of subject areas and learning objectives.

Changing prevalent cultural attitudes around men and women’s suitability for caring roles is a slow process. Societal changes in work, home-life and expectations are key drivers. However, public information and the media also have roles to play at the national level. Potentially, they could be harnessed to help to ease the process of change and to reduce tensions where there are competing

interests. For example, government leaflets and campaigns relating to children’s services could feature more men in parenting and caring roles. Advertisers of baby services and products could also be encouraged to feature men (fathers and grandfathers).

Existing public service staff require support and training to challenge gender assumptions and facilitate change effectively

Teachers and other professionals providing guidance to young people need to be fully equipped to challenge stereotyped attitudes effectively – and to support children, young people and their parents/carers to consider the whole range of educational, training and careers options available to them. Facilitating the development of good parenting and relationship skills by young people is a shift away from traditional guidance and sex education approaches. Teaching staff would benefit from support and training in this area.

Likewise, existing childcare workers and managers would benefit from support and training to improve understanding of the reasons for men entering (or not entering) the childcare workforce and to facilitate the integration of male workers in the sector.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for further details.

⁸ See Appendix 1 for further details.

⁹ See Appendix 1 for further details.

¹⁰ “*Fathers and Parenting Interventions: What Works*” Fatherhood Institute (2007).

¹¹ See Appendix 1 for further details.

¹² Bartlett, D., Fatherhood Institute (2008) Submission to the Lord Laming Review on Safeguarding.

¹³ Rolfe, “Men in Childcare” National Institute of Economic and Social Research Occupational Segregation Working Paper Series No.35 (2005).

¹⁴ Women and Work Commission (2006).

Next steps for the project

Our work at Children in Scotland in this area is continually developing – not least in response to the changing policy and political environment. The forward plans outlined below should therefore be read as a 'work in progress'. They provide a broad outline of how we intend to take forward and build on the project work to date, including the many invaluable contributions of practitioners and service users through our survey and events.

The two practice sharing events generated much debate about how to develop this complex agenda and, in particular, how to support changing parenting and caring roles for men and women in a joined-up and coherent gender equality strategy for Scotland. Dual roles for this project going forward will be to: 1) support policy makers to meet gender equality objectives in relation to parenting and caring roles (as well as stereotyping in education), through the provision of information and key messages, and through direct contributions to policies and guidance; and 2) support practitioners by facilitating the sharing of practice examples and learning, by promoting good practice and by developing appropriate tools to aid practitioners.

2010-2011 goals and activities:

- Build on earlier Children in Scotland work to identify and widely share case studies of good practice.
- Develop the project website <http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk> as an information resource including examples of good practice, summary research findings, presentation and workshop materials, links and contacts.

- Develop network of key organisations and individuals with interests in gender equality and/or engaging positively with fathers, with a view to working together towards identified common goals.
- Develop Policy into Practice toolkits for Scottish practitioners in: pregnancy/birth and early years.

Longer-term goals and activities:

- Embed good practice by developing tailored training for practitioners, as well as strategic learning events. We hope to address challenging issues such as safeguarding and engaging with non-resident parents and carers who play a key role in a child's life without being formally recognised as primary carers.
- Work with practitioners to develop indicators and sound monitoring/evaluation mechanisms to support the gender equality/inclusion agenda – with a focus on long-term outcomes for children and their families, intergenerational benefits and the cost-savings associated with positive outcomes.
- Through policy contributions and research, strengthen the connections between key policy frameworks – particularly the Early Years Framework – and the outcomes of supporting fathers. This should include contributions to the development of sound indicators for use in future reporting under the Equality Act and that can be tied into Single Outcome Agreements.



Appendix 1 – Key policies summary

This section provides a brief summary of key policies and responsible bodies that are of particular relevance to tackling gender stereotypes and engaging fathers in public services. Links to free, online resources are included at the end of each subsection for anyone who would like to learn more about a specific policy area. This is by no means an exhaustive list. However, it does provide an indication of the breadth and changing nature of the policies with which workers in this area need to engage.

The public sector Gender Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2006, the UK-wide Gender Equality Duty currently places a legal responsibility upon public bodies across Scotland to identify specific gender equality issues and areas for action and, more broadly, to actively promote gender equality. This has provided a key opportunity to challenge assumptions and ways of working which (often inadvertently) have perpetuated gender stereotyping and sexual discrimination.

The Gender Equality Duty includes:

- 1) A general, **positive** duty on public sector bodies to **promote** equality and **prevent** unlawful discrimination.
- 2) **'Specific duties' for Scottish public sector bodies to:**
 - Publish a gender equality scheme
 - Assess the impact of policies and practices on both women and men
 - Set gender equality objectives, plan and take action to achieve these
 - Report annually and review progress every three years.

In practice, this means that all policies should be examined in light of the Gender Equality Duty and, where necessary, revised. Public sector bodies have an obligation to lead by example – pushing forward changes in public service provision and employment practices.

The general Gender Equality Duty will not be substantially altered under the new UK **Equality Act 2010**, which brings together all the equality duties – current and new (e.g. age, religion) – under one Act. The main provisions of the Equality Act will come into force in October 2010, and the public sector integrated Equality Duty (with which we are mainly concerned) will come into effect from April 2011. The Scottish Government is responsible for setting the specific duties for public sector bodies in Scotland, including reporting

requirements. Consultation has been carried out on these specific duties and we are currently waiting to see what form these will take.

For further information see:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/1_overview_of_the_gender_duty.doc

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/PublicEqualityDuties>

Single Outcome Agreements

In November 2007, the Scottish Government signed the Concordat with COSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), representing a significant change in the way that public services are planned and delivered in Scotland. The Concordat set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, ending the ring fencing of local government funding in exchange for a freeze on council tax. Under the Concordat, local government funding is underpinned by Single Outcome Agreements established, initially, between each council and the Scottish Government, and contributing to the 15 National Outcomes (part of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework). Key National Outcomes include:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Single Outcome Agreements set out the strategic priorities for each local area, expressed as outcomes to be delivered. From 2009, Community Planning Partnerships have taken over direct responsibility for the agreements from the local authority side. The outcome agreements are intended to give the planning partnerships greater scope to reflect local circumstances and priorities in their strategic plans. However, the agreements are also intended to commit local government to driving national level progress through local level improvements in national priority areas. Whether the Concordat and the Single Outcome Agreements will continue after their initial three-year period remains an open question at the time of writing this report. The outcome of the Scottish Parliament election in May 2011 could also affect the continuance of the Concordat.

Appendix 1 – Key policies summary

The Improvement Service (IS) is a partnership between COSLA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). The service, which was set up in 2005 to provide advice, consultancy and programme support to councils and their partners, has developed Single Outcome Agreement guidance and advice for councils and Community Planning Partnerships. The current, Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project, aims to 'improve and expand the availability of indicators for the measurement of outcomes'. Other current Improvement Service work includes the mapping of local activities and resources for Single Outcome Agreement planning.

For further information see:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/SOA>

<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/library/577-single-outcome-agreements/681-phase-2-single-outcome-agreements-2009-onwards/view-category/>

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it Right for Every Child is a national framework intended to guide the development of a shared approach and common language by all services that provide support to children, young people and their families – including services for parents. The underpinning objectives are to: build solutions with and around children and families; enable children, young people and their families to get the help they need when they need it; and to ensure practitioners and agencies work together and support each other to best effect. Core components include:

- A focus on improved outcomes for children, young people and their families, based on a shared understanding of wellbeing (the eight wellbeing indicators are summed up as: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included – often referred to as "Shanarri")
- A common approach to gaining consent and to sharing information where appropriate
- An integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention
- Streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time
- Consistent high standards of co-operation, joint working and communication where more than one agency involved
- A lead professional to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity where necessary
- Maximising the capacity of the universal services workforce to address needs and risks at the earliest possible time.

For further information see:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec

Early Years Framework

The Early Years Framework was launched by the Scottish Government and COSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) in December 2008. This is an ambitious, aspirational, policy tool, which recognises the earliest years of life as being crucial to a child's development and their future opportunities and achievements. The Framework signals local and national government's joint commitment to tackling, through prevention and early intervention, existing inequalities in health, education and employment opportunities that are passed from one generation to the next.

In the context of the Framework, early years is defined as pre-birth to eight years. The Early Years Framework sets out 10 elements of 'transformational change' that will be required to achieve its goals. These are:

- A coherent approach
- Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves
- Breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years
- A focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities
- Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention
- Putting quality at the heart of service delivery
- Services that meet the needs of children and families
- Improving outcomes and children's quality of life through play
- Simplifying and streamlining delivery
- More effective collaboration.

Single Outcome Agreements and the community planning process are the key mechanisms for putting this Framework into practice. The Framework highlights a need to develop better indicators of outcomes from early years policies and services. Key elements of likely future policy development identified in the Framework include:

- More help to develop parenting skills within antenatal and postnatal care and developing the capacity needed to deliver them
- A renewed focus on birth to three as the period of a child's development that shapes future outcomes
- Breaking-down barriers between education and childcare through a move towards more integrated, flexible services

Appendix 1 – Key policies summary

- Improving play opportunities and addressing barriers to play
- More consistent access to intensive family support services in the early years
- More help for informal support networks
- Nurseries, schools and childcare centres developing their role in family and community learning
- Adult services such as housing, transport and development planning putting a greater focus on the needs of young children and families
- Developing common values in the workforce, enhancing workforce skills and developing broader workforce roles.

An important – often controversial – aspect of the Early Years Framework is that its call for ‘transformational change’ has been introduced without any new Scottish Government funds being made available to local partners for its implementation. The Framework acknowledges that its agenda “can only be taken forward by realigning and prioritising resources to offer more effective support to all families and to enable help to be provided earlier to children and families requiring additional support”.

For further information see:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/13095148/0

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence is the Scottish Government's major programme of reform for the education sector, including: nurseries, schools and colleges. It is intended to provide a coherent, flexible, cross-disciplinary and enriched approach to learning (as opposed to a formal subject-based curriculum) from 3-18, focused on the needs of the child and young person. Curriculum for Excellence entails not only a review of teaching and learning, but also an opportunity to review other aspects of Scotland's education system, including: qualifications, assessment and lifelong learning.

Curriculum for Excellence is intended to provide a framework for all young people in Scotland to gain knowledge and skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. It focuses on enabling all children and young people to be ‘successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors’.

For further information see:
www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.aspx

Human Rights Provisions

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) applies to all children and young people in the UK (which is a signatory country) under the age of 18.

The three UNCRC Articles that are most often cited in child policy work in Scotland are:

- Article 2 – all UNCRC rights apply to all children without discrimination
- Article 3 – the best interests of children must be a primary consideration
- Article 12 – children's views must be taken into account in decision-making

There are guides to the UNCRC available at:
http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_understanding.html
http://www.sccyp.org.uk/webpages/cypr_rightsofthchild.php

In April 2004, Kathleen Marshall was appointed as the first Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People, with a remit to pay close attention to the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland. Tam Baillie became the second Commissioner in 2009.

More information about Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People can be found at:
<http://www.sccyp.org.uk>

Appendix 2 – Event programmes

'Breaking-down stereotypes and engaging fathers in services for children and families'

One-day practice sharing events:

Tuesday 2 February 2010, Glasgow

Tuesday 9 March 2010, Aberdeen (hosted by Aberdeen City Council)

Children in Scotland ('Making the Gender Equality Duty Real' project)
Supported by the Fatherhood Institute

Programme: Glasgow Event (2 February)

9.30 – 10.00	Coffee
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and Introduction – Chaired by the Fatherhood Institute
10.10 – 10.30	Pauline Fountain, Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland Gender Equality perspective on occupational segregation
10.30 – 11.00	Agenda setting and presentation (Kat Allen, Children in Scotland) using information from our national survey of Gender Equality Duty activities and priorities. Setting out the four key themes, which will be explored in the workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging stereotyping in education, career and life choices• Engaging fathers in children and family services• Tackling occupational segregation - men in the children's sector workforce• Meeting complex needs.
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 11.30	Guest speaker – Eddie Barnes, Political Editor, Scotland on Sunday
11.30 – 12.00	Why does the GED matter? Examination of the research and presentation of the evidence base: Presentation (Fatherhood Institute)
12:00 – 12:45	Divide into first of four workshop groups each based on one of the four key themes. Case studies exploring practice examples. The sessions will be presented by practitioners and service-users. Participants join their first workshop.
12:45 – 1:00	Plenary – Fatherhood Institute (observations from 1st workshops)
1.00 – 1.45	Networking Lunch
1.45 – 2.30	Small workshop groups. Participants join their second workshop
2.30 – 2.45	Tea break
2.45 – 3.30	Using the GED to shape practice/policy: panel and discussion (Children in Scotland, Fatherhood Institute, EHRC, Scottish Government).

Appendix 2 – Event programmes

Workshops: Glasgow event (2 February)

No	Workshop	Contact	Topic
1	Challenging stereotypes in education, career and life choices	Helene Witcher Quality Improvement Officer, Educational Development Service, Clackmannanshire Council (Kathy Jones led on the day due to illness)	LA focus on promoting gender equality in education
2	Engaging fathers in children and family services	Andy Brough Early Years Development Officer, West Lothian Council – Sure Smart	Dads services 'Dads 2 Be' approach (ante natal classes, young Dads)
3	Tackling occupational segregation – men in the children's sector workforce	Annette Reid Workforce Development & Training Manager North Lanarkshire Council	Introduction to Childcare skill-seeker programmes – for 3rd & 4th year boys and for older men. Theatre co. work to counteract stereotypes in vocational career choices
4	Meeting complex needs	Libby Welsh and colleagues Project Manager Quarriers Dumfries & Galloway	Supporting fathers of significantly disabled children & fathers with disabilities

Programme Aberdeen Event (9 March)

9.30 – 10.00	Coffee
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and Introduction – Chaired by the Fatherhood Institute
10.10 – 10.40	Why does the GED matter? Examination of the research and presentation of the evidence base. Presentation by Kathy Jones, Fatherhood Institute
10.40 – 11.00	Agenda setting and presentation (Kat Allen, Children in Scotland) Using information from our national survey of Gender Equality Duty activities and priorities. Setting out the four key themes, which will be explored in the workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging stereotyping in education, career and life choices • Engaging fathers in children and family services • Tackling occupational segregation - men in the children's sector workforce • Meeting complex needs
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee break
11.15 – 11.35	Douglas Guest, Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland Gender Equality perspectives

Appendix 2 – Event programmes

Programme Aberdeen Event (9 March) Continued

11.40 – 12:40	Divide into first of four workshop groups each based on one of the four key themes. Case studies exploring practice examples. The sessions will be presented by practitioners and service-users. Participants join their first workshop
12:40 – 1:30	Networking Lunch
1.30 – 2.30	Small workshop groups Participants join their second workshop
2.30 – 2.45	Tea break
2.45 – 3.30	Plenary – using the GED to shape practice/policy: observations from workshops and discussion (Chaired by the Fatherhood Institute)

Workshops: Aberdeen event (9 March)

No	Workshop	Lead	Topic
1	Challenging stereotypes in education, career and life choices	Sohail Faruki, Education, Aberdeen City Council – cancelled	Challenging stereotypes in education
2	Engaging fathers in children and family services	Ron Bird, Senior Support Worker, Neighbourhood Service, Aberdeen City Council with Brian and Mark from dads group (leading workshop)	Dads' Work support services
3	Tackling occupational segregation – men in the children's sector workforce	Gordon Kidd & Derek Thompson (graduates of the Men in Childcare programme) Men in Childcare, Gilmerton Child & Family Centre, Edinburgh	Men in childcare approach – working with childcare partnerships to deliver training specifically for men
4	Meeting complex needs in engaging with fathers	Tom Carroll Lone Fathers Support Worker, One Parent Families Scotland/Gilmerton Child & Family Centre, Edinburgh With inputs from Neil, dads club	Lone (& contact) fathers project

Appendix 3 – Contacts and links

Project on 'Making the Gender Equality Duty Real for children, young people and their fathers'

For further information about the project or to share practice experiences, please contact:

Dr Katrina Allen
Policy Officer
Children in Scotland
Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4RG
Tel: 0131 228 8484
Direct Dial: 0131 222 2440
Email: kallen@childreninscotland.org.uk
Web: <http://makinggenderequalityreal.org.uk>

Keynote presentations are available on the project website (link above), together with materials from the workshops. More detailed information about the case studies featured in the workshops is also available on the project website. Further case study details and related materials will continue to be added during the life of the project.

Fatherhood Institute:

Kathy Jones
Training Manager
k.jones@fatherhoodinstitute.org
07867 761251
0845 634 1328
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>

The Fatherhood Institute website (link above) provides an extensive set of research summaries relating to fatherhood and service provider engagement with fathers.

Fathers Network Scotland

Professionals interested in fatherhood and/or in supporting fathers in practical ways may wish to participate in the developing Fathers Network Scotland. See link below for details:
<http://www.fathersnetworkscotland.org.uk>

Message from the Scottish Government's Equality Unit

"As funder (2008-2011) of Children in Scotland's project, 'Making the Gender Equality Duty Real for Children, Young People and their Fathers', Scottish Government was happy to contribute to the practice sharing events in Glasgow and Aberdeen early in 2010. We look forward to reading the report.

The project contributes to our efforts to reduce gender stereotyping and occupational segregation – a Ministerial priority for closing the opportunity gap between women and men – and contributes to responsive policies, practices and services that help develop a healthier work/life balance for all.

In promoting men's active involvement in children's lives, we are all winners – children, men and women."



Children in Scotland / Princes House / 5 Shandwick Place / Edinburgh EH2 4RG
Phone: (+44) 131 228 8484 / Fax: (+44) 131 228 8585
Web: <http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk>

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in Scotland No. 83383
Inland Revenue Charity No. SC003527 VAT No. 875 7960 59
© Children in Scotland, September 2010



**Making the Gender Equality
Duty Real for Children,
Young People & their Fathers**