

MORI

Social
Research

Family Life in Scotland

Research study conducted for
Parenting Across Scotland


parenting
across scotland

November 2004



Contents

Executive summary	i
Introduction	1
Survey objectives	1
Methodology	1
Survey fieldwork	2
Family life	3
Parenting responsibilities	3
Changes in families over time	4
Other influences on upbringing	4
Pressures on family life	6
Important factors in bringing up children	8
Attitudes to parenting	9
Parents' experience of problems with their children	11
Conclusions	14
Appendix 1 – Survey method	I
Telephone surveys	I
Random digit dialling	I
Survey quotas	II
Appendix 2 – Survey questionnaire	III

Executive summary

Background

Parenting Across Scotland (PAS) is a multi-agency project financed by the Scottish Executive and led by CHILDREN 1st with a remit to research the concerns and issues affecting parents and to identify gaps in the support available to parents. It does this by bringing together agencies that provide support to parents and families, sharing good practice and promoting a positive image of parenting.

PAS commissioned MORI Scotland to undertake a short survey of adults in Scotland. The survey was designed to collect information on a number of key themes:

- different forms families and the different parenting relationships that people can have
- the difficulties and anxieties faced by parents
- identifying support needs and the circumstances when parents need support

The survey involved interviews with a nationally-representative sample of 1,015 adults across Scotland conducted by MORI's specialist telephone interviewing centre in Edinburgh.

Key findings

- Although about 1 in 5 households currently contain children under the age of 16 years, almost 70% of adults have a parental role mainly with older children.
- Most households with children contain only children born both of the adults in the household but 1 in 10 contain step-children, adopted children etc.
- A large majority of adults think it is harder to bring up children now than it was when they were young. The main pressure are related to materialism and financial pressure, discipline, children's safety and work-life balance.
- Almost 40% of parents worry 'all the time' or 'quite a lot' about how good a parent they are and agree that there is 'too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in bringing up children'.
- 1 in 10 parents, and 1 in 5 parents of teenagers, said they had experienced problems with their children when they thought they needed help. Mainly,

help was sought from medical and other professions or from family members. Support organisations were rarely turned to for help.

- Awareness of support organisations was low although there was interest in accessing a variety of forms of support for parents.

Family Life in Scotland

Family structures

The survey found that almost 70% of adults in Scotland have a direct parental relationship with either children of their own, step-children, adopted children or grandchildren living in their home. 86% of these adults only have children where they are the natural parent. The remainder have step-children, adopted and other children along with children they are the parent of. Just over 10% of households with any children under the age of 16 years have a mix of birth, step-, adopted and other children within them.

Extended families living in the same household are very rare, with only 1% of respondents living in a household with three or more generations such as grandparent, parent and child.

The traditional nuclear family – parents with their own children – represents the large majority of households containing dependent children (aged less than 16 years).

Changes in families over time

Respondents were asked to think back about their living circumstances when they were 12 years old. Since respondents varied in age, this fixed point provides an indication of how things have changed over time. Some respondents would have been 12 before or during WW2 while others would have been 12 years old in more recent periods. The proportion saying they were living with both of their birth parents at the age of 12 years declines from over 80% of adults who were 12 before 1970 to around 60% of adult who were aged 12 within the last 10 years.

Among those who were not living with both birth parents, the most common situation was to be living with their mother. Overall, 69% of those not living with both birth parents were living with their mother. This has changed substantially over time. Among those who were 12 years old before 1962, 60% were living with their mother. Among respondents who were 12 years old after 1981, this rose to 83%. The increasing proportion living with their mother is accompanied by a decline in the proportion living with their grandparents from 24% to 6%.

As well as the people they lived with when they were 12 years old, respondents were asked about other important influences on their upbringing. This could involve another relative or someone outside the family such as a neighbour or teacher. Just over half of respondents said there was someone who had had an important influence, with half mentioning a family member such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle. Outside the family, school teachers were the most

commonly mentioned influence although while 16% of the oldest respondents mentioned a school teacher only 3% of the youngest respondents did so.

Pressures on family life

Over two-thirds of respondents thought that, compared with when they were young – 12 years old – it is now more difficult to bring up children. This varied substantially depending on the period during which respondents were 12 years old, with respondents who were young during and in the period after the Second World War most likely to think that it is harder to bring up children now than it was then.

The reasons why people think it has become more difficult also varied substantially. Older respondents – those most likely to think that it had become more difficult to bring up children – were more likely to explain this in terms of children not respecting adults' authority, being opinionated and argumentative. The main reason given by younger respondents – those who were 12 in the 1960s, 70s and 80s – was that parents are under more pressure to buy things now than they were when they were young.

Broadly, four identifiable themes of materialism and financial pressure, discipline, children's safety and work-life balance represent the main reasons why people think it has become more difficult to bring up children.

A relatively small proportion of respondents – 17% – felt that it had become easier to bring up children compared with when they were young. Two main reasons were given: families' economic circumstances have improved (they have more money, there is less unemployment) and there are more options for childcare and other forms of support for families.

Overall, the things that respondents felt were most important in bringing up children well were stability in their family life, love and affection and discipline.

Bringing up children is a major source of anxiety for parents. While it might be expected that parents will worry at some time about how good a parent they are, 39% said they worry 'all the time' or 'quite a lot' about how good a parent they are. Over half of parents of children under the age of 16 are worried quite a lot or all the time about how good a parent they are.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about society's attitudes towards and support for parents, the survey found that a majority agree that there is too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in bringing up children, although parents were slightly less likely to agree with this. Almost all agreed that 'love is the most important ingredient in family relationships'. A majority of all adults (59%) agreed that children can be brought up just as well by one parent as two, with a higher proportion, 68% of lone parents themselves agreeing with this. There was also widespread support for the statement that 'balancing work and home life puts too much pressure on people', with 71% of all adults and 75% of parents agreeing with this.

Parents' experience of problems with their children

Respondents with some kind of parental responsibilities were asked if they had ever experienced problems with their children when they (or their partner) felt they needed help. Of respondents with teenage children, 21% said they had, compared with 18% of all parents and 10% of parents whose children were now aged over 16 years.

Although the teenage years represented the main period during which parents experienced problems where they thought they needed help, sizeable proportions also experienced problems at other periods, mainly in the period when their children were under 10 years of age.

The problems that respondents had experienced when they thought they needed help can be classified into six broad themes of which the most significant was physical or mental health problems, followed by problems of schoolwork, bullying or truancy and drinking, using drugs or involvement in crime.

Broadly, respondents sought help from professionals such as doctors, teachers, social workers and health visitors. The prevalence of medical problems explains why 26% sought help from a GP/doctor. Similarly, 19% sought help from a teacher. On other issues, however, respondents experiencing problems with their children sought help from other family members or friends. Almost 1 in 10 did not seek help at all.

Support organisations were accessed by 7% of respondents experiencing problems, 3% mentioned a counsellor and 1% mentioned each of a spiritual advisor or a helpline.

When asked how they might seek help in similar circumstances in the future (or if such a situation arose in the future) the respondents who had experienced problems in the past were more likely to seek help from professionals such as doctors, teachers, social workers and health visitors. Respondents who had not previously sought help would turn to family members, particularly parents and siblings. Support organisations, counsellors and helplines were mentioned by only 4% of respondents in this context.

When asked specifically if they were aware of any organisations that provide advice and support to parents, 71% were not aware of any and only 24% could name any organisations. There were few mentions of any individual organisation.

When presented with options for different ways in which support could be provided to parents there was widespread agreement that each would be of benefit. There is a clear tendency for parents who had experienced problems to seek help within their immediate family and friendship network or through specific types of professional help. It may be fair to assume that those who had not experienced problems would also be expected to use these forms of support. There is a general lack of awareness of parental support organisations but the support expressed in these questions indicates a demand for accessible services appropriate to the needs, ages and location of families across Scotland. Given the stated preference for practical and personal support rather than publications, meeting this demand is likely to have significant resource implications.

Introduction

Survey objectives

Parenting Across Scotland (PAS) is a multi-agency project financed by the Scottish Executive and led by CHILDREN 1ST with a remit to research the concerns and issues affecting parents and to identify gaps in the support available to parents. It does this by bringing together agencies that provide support to parents and families, sharing good practice and promoting a positive image of parenting.

PAS commissioned MORI Scotland to undertake a short survey of adults in Scotland. The survey was designed to collect information on a number of key themes:

- to identify the different forms of families and the different parenting relationships that people can have
- to analyse changes in families over time and how bringing up children has changed
- to identify the difficulties and anxieties faced by parents, and
- to identifying support needs of parent and the circumstances when parents need support.

The survey involved interviews with a nationally-representative sample of 1,015 adults across Scotland conducted by MORI's specialist telephone interviewing centre in Edinburgh.

Methodology

The survey was carried out by telephone. Random-digit dialling, where telephone numbers are generated by computer, was used to ensure that households who were ex-directory could still be included in the research. Households with no telephone or who only had a mobile telephone were, however, excluded from the survey.¹

Quota controls on age, sex and social class were used to ensure that the sample for the survey was broadly representative of the adult population of Scotland. More information on the survey method is provided as Appendix 1.

The questionnaire for the survey was designed by MORI Scotland in collaboration with the study project manager and was agreed by the full Parenting Across Scotland steering group. After agreement of the questionnaire, it was scripted for using by the telephone interviewing team. A copy of the

¹ Official estimates by the Office for National Statistics show that 95% of households in Scotland have access to a landline telephone and that the exclusion of households without a telephone does not lead to survey bias.

questionnaire showing the results of the survey for the sample as a whole is provided as Appendix 2.

Survey fieldwork

The fieldwork for the survey was carried out between 9 and 16 September 2004 by interviewers at MORI's telephone centre in Edinburgh. A total of 1,015 interviews were achieved. The data from the survey was compared with the population profile from the Census (which covers the whole population) and the Scottish Household Survey (which covers the population in private households). Post-survey checking of demographic characteristics such as ethnicity and disability showed that on these measures the sample was broadly representative of the population as a whole. There was a slight difference between the survey profile and the Census although no weighting was applied to account for this since the differences were within individual quota cells (such as the 25-44 bands) and the overall profile was good. Table 1 shows the profile of the sample and the corresponding data from the 2001 Census.

Table 1: Sample profile compared with 2001 Census

		Survey	2001 Census
Age	16-24	14	14
	25-34	14	17
	35-44	22	19
	45-54	18	17
	55-64	13	13
	65+	19	20
	Refused	1	n/a
Sex	Male	48	48
	Female	52	52
Ethnic group	White Scottish or British	97	98
	Black, Black Scottish or Black British	*	*
	Mixed ethnic group	*	*
	Asian, Asian Scottish or British	1	1
	Chinese	*	*
	Other	1	1
	Refused	*	n/a
Limiting long-term illness	Yes	21	20
	No	79	80

Family life

Although relationships within households have become less permanent, with higher levels of relationship breakdown and more children living in more complex relationships, with both birth and step-parents, the basic structure of family life remains centred around a traditional nuclear family. The structure of respondents' households showed that:

- 30% of adults live on their own
- 39% of single adult households are pensioners (12% of all households)
- 57% of non-pensioner couple households contain children
- 21% of all households contain any children under the age of 16 years.
- In households with children under the age of 16 years, 78% are couple households and 22% are lone parent households
- 1% of households contain at least three generations: most usually grandparent, parents and children.

Parenting responsibilities

Respondents in the survey were asked about the various types of parental relationship they might have. First, they were asked whether they had sons or daughters of their own i.e. children they had given birth to (if female) or were the birth father of. Almost two-thirds of respondents – 65% – did have children of their own, although in most cases these children were over the age of 16 years.

The survey then asked whether they were bringing up any other children such as step-children, adopted children or grandchildren living in their home. Five percent of households said they did but these children were almost always in households containing birth children, raising the proportion of respondents with any parenting responsibilities by 1% to 66%.

When respondents were asked about other children not already mentioned, five percent said that there were other children for whom they had a parental role, although, again, most were in households with birth children, giving a total of 67% of respondents with any parenting responsibilities.

Table 2 – Parenting responsibilities

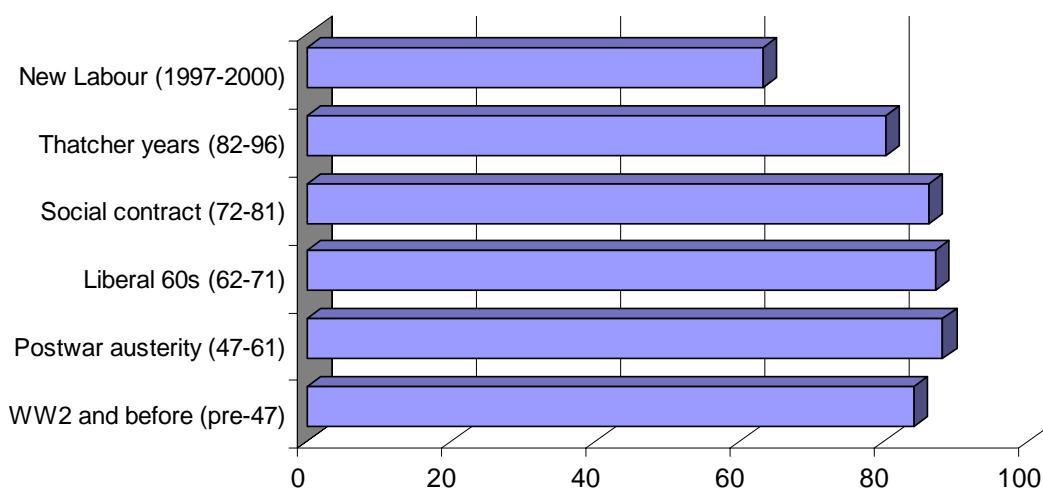
	Number of respondents	% of all respondents	% with parenting role
No parenting role	339	33	
Birth children only	582	57	86
Birth children and other children	82	8	12
Other children only	13	1	2

This suggests that in 1 household in every 7 contains children who are not the birth children of at least one the people in the household with a parenting role.

Changes in families over time

Respondents were asked to think back about their living circumstances when they were 12 years old. Since respondents varied in age, this fixed point provides an indication of how things have changed over time. For instance, some respondents were aged 12 before or during WW2. Others would have been 12 years old in more recent periods. This is shown in Figure 1 where the year when respondents would have been 12 years old has been linked to broad social periods.

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents living with both birth parents at age 12



While over 80% of respondents were living with both of their birth parents when they were 12 years old in each of the four earliest periods (WW2 through to the early 1980s) the proportion falls below 80% among those who were 12 years old during the 1980s and early 1990s. Of those who were 12 years old in the period since 1997, the proportion living with both parents fell to just over 60%. This suggests that a declining proportion of children are living with both of their birth parents at the age of 12 years.

Among those who were not living with both birth parents, the most common situation was to be living with their mother. Overall, 69% of those not living with both birth parents were living with their mother and 11% with their father. However, who children were living with at age 12 has changed substantially over time. For example, among those who were 12 years old before 1962, over half were living with their mother and 1 in 10 was living with their father. The remainder were living with a grandparent or an aunt/uncle.

Among respondents who were 12 years old after 1981, the proportion living with their mother rose to 83% while the proportion living with their grandparents declined from 24% to 6%. None were living with other relatives.

Other influences on upbringing

As well as the people they lived with when they were 12 years old, respondents were asked whether there was anyone else who had an important influence on

their upbringing. This could involve another relative or someone outside the family such as a neighbour or teacher.

Just over half of respondents (55%) said there was someone who had had an important influence, with half of these mentioning a family member such as a grandparent (26%), an aunt (10%) or an uncle (6%).

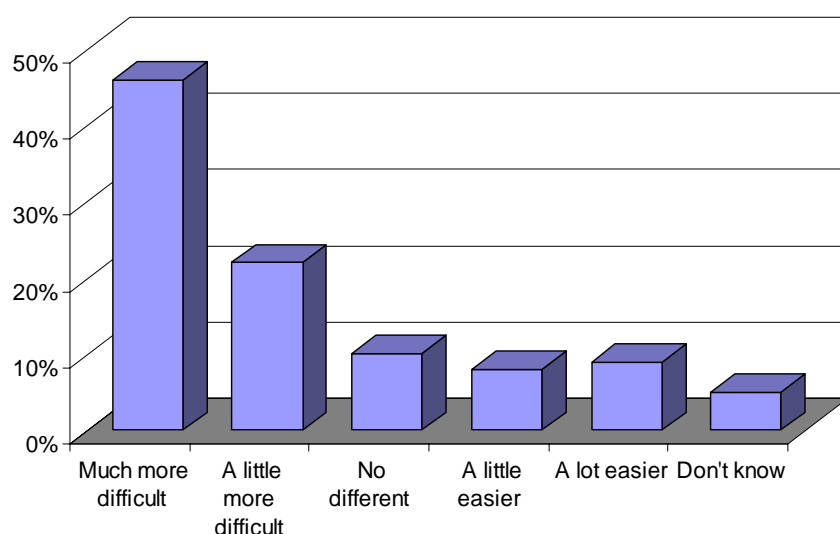
Outside the family, school teachers were the most commonly mentioned influence, although the importance of schoolteachers on young people's upbringing has declined markedly over time. While 16% of the oldest respondents mentioned a schoolteacher as an important influence on their upbringing, only 3% of the youngest respondents did so.

Grandparents remain a significant influence on young people's upbringing although they have shifted from being someone that directly brings up children (the declining proportion living with a grandparent at age 12) to becoming the most significant external influence on children's upbringing, and an influence whose overall importance has not changed significantly over time.

Pressures on family life

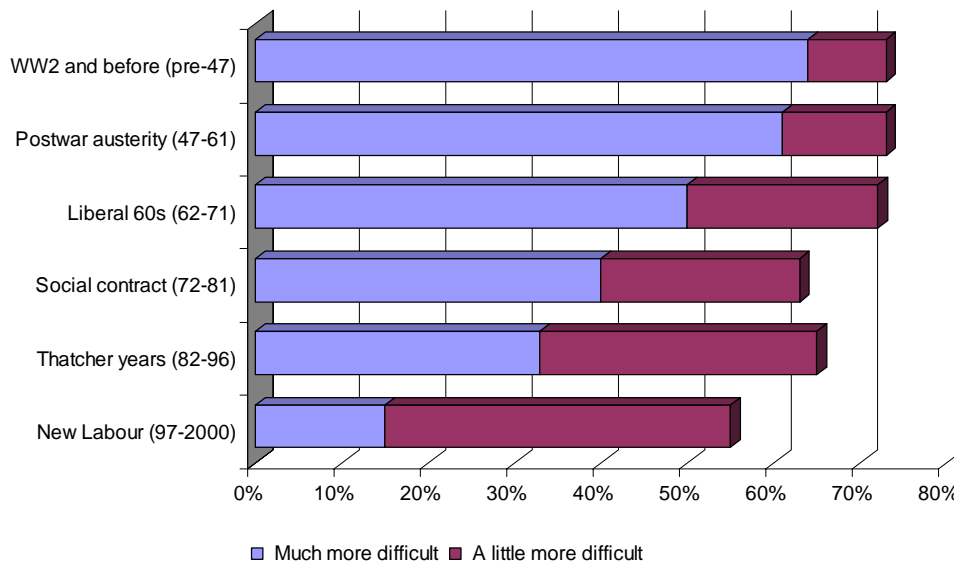
Over two-thirds of respondents thought that, compared with when they were young – 12 years old – it is now more difficult to bring up children. In some respects, this perception might be expected if people tend to look back on their own childhood nostalgically, emphasising positive memories.

Figure 2: Whether it is more or less difficult to bring up children now than when respondent was 12 years old



However, although a clear majority of respondents – 68% – felt that it was more difficult to bring up children now compared with when they were aged 12, this view was not uniform. There was substantial variation depending on the period during which respondents were 12 years old, with respondents who were young during and in the period after the Second World War and up to the early 1970s most likely to think that it is harder to bring up children now than it was then, as Figure 3 shows. For each of the three periods up to 1971, just over 70% of respondents felt it was more difficult although within this, the proportion thinking it was **much more difficult now** declined from 65% to 50%. This proportion declines through the periods to just 15% of respondents in the most recent period.

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who were 12 years old in each period who think it is harder to bring up children now than it was then.



The reasons why people think it has become more difficult also varied substantially. Older respondents – those most likely to think that it had become much more difficult to bring up children – were more likely to explain this in terms of children not respecting adults’ authority, being opinionated and argumentative. The main reason given by younger respondents – those who were 12 in the 1960s, 70s and 80s – was that parents are under more pressure to buy things now than when they were young.

Broadly, four themes of materialism and financial pressure, discipline, children’s safety and work-life balance represent the main reasons why people think it has become more difficult to bring up children, but with a wide range of additional influences.

A relatively small proportion of respondents – 17% – felt that it had become easier to bring up children compared with when they were young. Two main reasons were given: families’ economic circumstances have improved (they have more money, there is less unemployment) and there are more options for childcare and other forms of support for families.

Table 3: Factors making it more difficult to bring up children

	% of respondents mentioning
Any materialism / financial pressure	45
Advertising / pressure to buy / pester-power	25
Pressures of society/ changing of lifestyles/	8
Pressure for parents and kids/expectations too	7
Cost of living/bringing kids up etc	5
Too much temptations/ distractions	3
Absent parents not contributing financially	1
Any discipline	21
Children do not respect adult authority / argue	21
Any safety	30
Concerns about smoking/ drugs/drinking related	15
Concerns about dangers / can't play in the street	11
Concerns about child abuse/child safety	8
Sex/violence/crime	4
Any work-life balance	11
Both parents have to work	9
Parents working long hours / shifts	3
Both parents choose to work	1
Any others	24
Bad influences like technology/environment/	5
Too many people telling parents what to do /	3
Children grow up too fast/grow up too mature	3
Too much government interference	2
Families splitting up / parents having problems	1
More parents have to bring children up on their own	1
Other family members not close by to help	1
Kids have too much freedom these days	1
Kids know a lot/have access to too much	1
Don't know	1

Important factors in bringing up children

Respondents were asked to say what they felt were the most important things that help someone in bringing up children well. Overall, the things that respondents felt were most important in bringing up children well were stability in their family life, love and affection, and discipline. Table 4 shows the main responses to this question.

Table 4: Most important factors in bringing up children (main responses)

	% of respondents mentioning
Good/stable upbringing/ family life	30
Love/care/affection	19
Discipline	18
Teach them morality	14
Spend quality time with them	13
Financial support	12
Educate them well	12
Communication/listen/ talk to them	11
Teach respect	11

There was very little variation in the importance of these issues across sub-groups of the sample. Broadly, these factors were identified as important by all groups although some placed more emphasis on particular issues than others. For example, older respondents placed more emphasis on the need for discipline, reflecting their view that bringing up children has been made more difficult by the loss of respect for adult authority. Younger respondents placed more emphasis on providing stability and receiving support from their family, which reflects the stronger view among this group that financial issues and ‘pester power’ was a strong factor in making bringing up children more difficult.

Female respondents, especially younger women, placed more emphasis ‘love, care and affection’ than did male respondents (24% mentioning this compared with 14% of men).

Attitudes to parenting

The survey shows that bringing up children is a source of considerable anxiety for parents. While it might be expected that all parents will worry at some time about how good a parent they are, 39% of respondents said they worry ‘all the time’ or ‘quite a lot’ about how good a parent they are. Over half of parents of children under the age of 16 years (52%) worry quite a lot or all the time about how good a parent they are, and among parents of children under 16 years, women with children are more likely than men to worry about how good a parent they are.

Parents of older children i.e. parents whose children are aged over 16 years are substantially less likely to worry about how good a parent they are, although even among this group, 17% say they worry ‘all the time’ and 14% say ‘quite a lot’. Indeed, the survey suggests that some parents never stop worrying about their role as a parent and even among those whose youngest ‘child’ is in their 30s or 40s, 20-30% still say they worry at least quite a lot about how good a parent they are.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about society’s attitude towards parents the survey found that a majority agree that there is too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in

bringing up children, although parents of children under the age of 16 years were slightly less likely to agree with this.

Almost all agreed that ‘love is the most important ingredient in family relationships’, with 97% of all adults agreeing with this. A majority of all adults (59%) agreed that children can be brought up just as well by one parent as two, with a higher proportion (68%) of lone parents themselves agreeing with this.

There was also widespread support for the statement that ‘balancing work and home life puts too much pressure on people’, with 71% of all adults and 75% of parents agreeing with this.

Table 5 – Agreement with statements about family life today

All adults (1015) and key subgroups (parents of children under 16 = 223, lone parents with children of any age = 256)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in bringing up children	All adults	19	38	10	23	5	5
	Parents*	15	35	15	25	4	6
Love is the most important ingredient in family relationships	All adults	70	27	1	2	*	*
	Parents*	75	22	1	2	-	
Children can be brought up just as well by one parent as two	All adults	23	36	5	21	12	3
	Lone Parents	34	34	5	17	6	3
Balancing work and home life puts too much pressure on people bringing up children	All adults	29	42	6	18	3	1
	Parents*	28	47	7	14	3	1

Almost 60% of respondents (and a similar proportion of parents) felt that the Government understands the challenges and problems faced by people bringing up children either fairly poorly or very poorly. 38% felt that the Government understands fairly well or very well. However, there was much more support for the Government among younger parents, of whom 44% felt the Government understands the problems faced by parents.

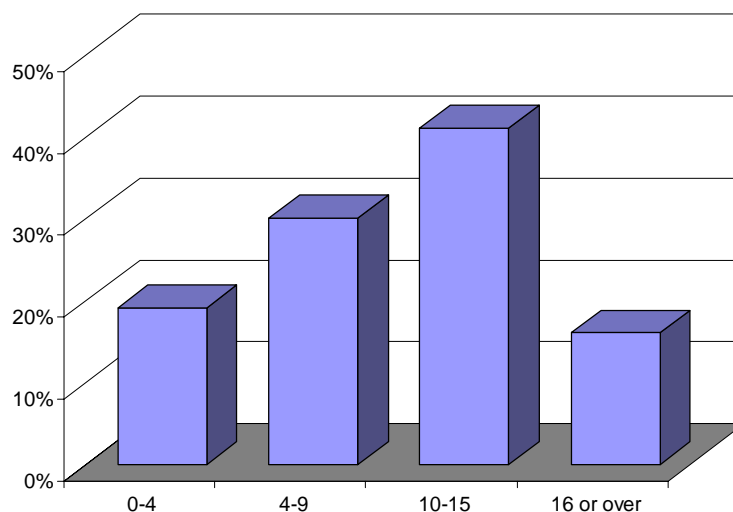
The reasons given by respondents for feeling that the Government does not understand the problems faced by people bringing up children tended to be unspecific, reflecting a perception that the Government was ‘out of touch’ rather than any clear link to policies promoted (or not) by the Government. The tendency for younger respondents to be more positive and older respondents to be more negative, might reflect these groups’ concerns, respectively, about work-life balance and discipline.

Parents' experience of problems with their children

Respondents with parental responsibilities were asked if they had ever experienced problems with their children when they (or their partner) felt they needed help. Of all parents, 16% said they had experienced problems that were serious enough that they felt they needed outside help. Parents whose children were teenagers at the time of the survey were more likely to say they had had problems (21%) compared with 16% of all parents and 10% of parents whose children were now aged over 16 years. Although this suggests that serious problems might be becoming more common – parents of teenagers now being more likely to experience problems than parents of teenagers who have passed that age – we need to bear in mind that perceptions will change over time and that what might have been perceived as serious at the time might diminish in seriousness as time passes.

Although the teenage years represent the main period during which parents experienced problems where they thought they needed help, sizeable proportions also experienced problems at other periods.

Figure 4: Ages of children when respondents experienced problems with their children



The problems that respondents had experienced when they thought they needed help can be classified into six broad themes of which the most significant was physical or mental health problems.

Table 6: Types of problems experienced by parents

	% mentioning
Any health problem	23
Mental health problems (eating problems, depression, self-harm)	9
Medical / Health problems (unspecified)	7
Child was diagnosed as ADHD	3
Child had speech problems	2
Child was diagnosed with autism	2
Any substance misuse / illegality	17
Drinking / abusing alcohol	8
Involved in crime	7
Drugs	6
Smoking	1
Any school problems	19
Homework / performance at school	8
Being bullied	8
Truancy	4
Any problems with social life / friends / relationships	15
Regular arguments at home	6
Involved in gangs / bad crowd	5
Relationships / boyfriends / girlfriends	3
Fighting/arguing with brothers/sisters	2
Any problems of discipline	9
Bad behaviour/Bad temper/Lack of respect	5
Staying out late / not coming in	4
Any other problem	24
Father not around/Away/ Died	4
Clothes / pressure on parents to buy	1
Refused	4
Others	15

Reflecting the types of problems that had been experienced, respondents mainly sought help from professionals such as doctors, teachers, social workers and health visitors. The prevalence of medical problems explains why 26% sought help from a GP/doctor. Similarly, 19% sought help from a teacher. On other issues, however, respondents experiencing problems with their children sought help from other family members or friends. Almost 1 in 10 did not seek help at all.

Support organisations were accessed by only 7% of respondents experiencing problems: 3% mentioned a counsellor and 1% mentioned each of a spiritual advisor (a minister, priest etc) or a helpline.

When asked how they might seek help in similar circumstances in the future (or if such a situation arose in the future) the respondents who had experienced problems in the past were more likely to seek help from professionals such as doctors, teachers, social workers and health visitors, again reflecting the types of problems they had experienced. Respondents who had not previously sought help would turn to family members, particularly parents and siblings. Support organisations, counsellors and helplines were mentioned by only 4% of respondents in this context.

When asked specifically if they were aware of any organisations that provide advice and support to parents, only 29% said they were, although only 24% could name any organisations. There were few mentions of any individual organisation.

When presented with options for different ways in which support could be provided to parents there was widespread agreement that each would be of benefit. Considered alongside the tendency for parents who had experienced problems to seek help within their immediate family and friendship network or through specific types of professional help, the responses show strong support for people-based services rather than information.

Table 7: Usefulness of different types of support for parents

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not at all useful	Don't know
A telephone helpline	47	35	15	3
An internet site giving information and advice	29	39	24	9
Booklets or leaflets	22	53	22	2
A service providing face-to-face advice and information	49	40	9	3
An service providing support and counselling for parents	43	43	10	4
Organised activities to occupy children and young people	68	24	5	3
Specialist services for children and young people in need	66	25	4	5

The responses show a strong preference for practical help – the organised activities and specialist services – followed by inter-personal help such as a telephone helpline, face-to-face advice and information or counselling. The types of support seen as least useful were internet-based information and advice or booklets or leaflets. With the strongest support for the most intensive services, meeting parents need for support is likely to require significant resources.

Conclusions

The survey highlights a number of concerns for parents in Scotland. Although the underlying structure of families is broadly constant, there have been a number of significant changes over time in the extent to which parents and children are able to stay together and in the extent to which people outside the immediate family are thought to influence the upbringing of children. These changes are combined with broader changes such as:

- changes in the labour market, especially women's labour market participation, the use of and availability of childcare and the distinctively British culture of long working hours
- concerns about child safety, both in terms of road safety and safe play and concerns about paedophiles and other forms of abuse
- the extent to which children are seen as a key market for products and the development of 'pester power' as a marketing strategy.

The survey suggests that for a large section of the population, parenting today is seen as a source of anxiety – there was general agreement among both parents and non-parents that it has become more difficult over time. The key findings of the survey are:

- A large majority of adults think it is harder to bring up children now than it was when they were young. The main pressure are related to materialism and financial pressure, discipline, children's safety and work-life balance
- Almost 40% of parents worry 'all the time' or 'quite a lot' about how good a parent they are and agree that there is 'too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in bringing up children'
- 1 in 10 parents, and 1 in 5 parents of teenagers, said they had experienced problems with their children when they thought they needed help. Mainly, help was sought from medical and other professions or from family members. Support organisations were rarely turned to for help.
- Awareness of support organisations was low although there was interest in accessing a variety of forms of support for parents.

However, in spite of the perception that the role has become increasingly difficult, most parents say they have not experienced problems where they needed help and of those who did, the most common reasons related to health problems. Parents tend to seek assistance within the family or from professionals dealing with specific types of problem. Awareness of support organisations was low. There was general support for measures to provide support to parents, both in terms of information and advice and practical assistance such as providing activities and for children and young people. The preference for practical and personal help has significant resource implications.

Appendix 1 – Survey method

The survey was carried out by telephone interviewing and used random digit dialling with demographic quotas as the method of selecting and identifying respondents for interview. This section discusses the survey methods and the reliability of the survey data.

Telephone surveys

Telephone surveys are obviously limited to those households that have a telephone and while it is estimated that household access to a telephone is, for all practical purposes, complete there is a small proportion of households who only have mobile telephones which, because of the nature of mobile telephone numbers, cannot be sampled. Approximately 95% of households have a landline telephone and those who don't have a landline telephone are more likely to be young adults and households in deprived areas.

This represents a potential source of bias and this needs to be considered alongside the practical and cost advantages of telephone surveys in selecting a survey method. In this case it was decided that telephone represented the best approach for a number of reasons. There are:

1. a telephone survey would be less expensive than a comparable face-to-face survey
2. the topic for the survey is not strongly related to telephone ownership and it is reasonable to expect that the opinions of those included in the survey will not be systematically different from those excluded.

Random digit dialling

One of the major issues in telephone research is the prevalence of telesales and telemarketing, which many householders view as intrusive. In response many households have registered with the Telephone Preference Society to be excluded from publicly-available directories. This means that if these directories were used, the 30-40% of telephone subscribers would be lost, representing a potentially serious source of bias.

Random digit dialling and new dialling technology gets round this problem by sampling from known telephone exchanges and generating telephone numbers at random based on the root numbers from valid exchanges. For example, the Edinburgh exchange 0131 557 might be sampled and the remaining four digits would be generated randomly.

Survey fieldwork

The sample for the survey is loaded into an automatic dialler, which dials numbers and passes valid, answering numbers to an interviewer. Invalid, fax and

modem numbers are filtered automatically by the dialler. Most of the interviewing is conducted in the evening so business numbers often do not answer or are answered by an answering machine. The combination of automatic filtering and interviewer screening of any businesses means that the interviewing is conducted efficiently and that all residential subscribers have an opportunity to take part.

Survey quotas

To ensure that the sample broadly represents the population as a whole, demographic quotas are used to ensure that the sample matches the population on key characteristics. For this survey, quotas on age, sex and social class were used.

Appendix 2 – Survey questionnaire

Introduction

Good morning, afternoon, evening. My name is from MORI Scotland, the research organisation. We are carrying out a survey about Family Life in Scotland. The research is being carried out for a number of organisations that work with families in Scotland. It asks questions about your relationships with members of your family – including those that might not live with you and about how family life has changed over the years since you were young. The interview will take about 15 minutes.

I would like to assure you that all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence. It will not be possible to identify any particular individual or address in the results.

Base: All respondents, 1,015

Q. 1 I'd like to start by asking about the household you live in. Do you live on your own or do you live with other people?

		%	
	On own	30	Q. 4

	With others	70	Q. 2

	Refused	-	Q. 3

Base: All who have another person living with them, 725

Q. 2 Who else lives with you?
Code all that apply

	%
Grandparent(s)	1
Mother	14
Father	10
Step-mother / father	1
Brothers / sisters (number)	6
Step-brother / sister	*
Husband / wife / partner	71
Sons / daughters (number)	46
Grandchildren (number)	1
Other (write in) _____	6
Refused	-

Base: All who have another person living with them, 725

Q. 3 Are you a householder, that is, are you responsible for paying the bills such as the rent or mortgage?

	%
Yes	80
No	20
Refused	*

Respondent

Base: All respondents, 1,015

Q. 4 Is respondent male or female?
Code without asking, unless not obvious

	%
Male	48
Female	52

Base: All respondents, 1015

Q. 5 Can I check what age you were on your last birthday?

Record exact age AND code into bands

	%	
16 – 24	14	
25 – 34	14	
35 – 44	22	
45 – 54	18	
55 – 64	13	
65 and over	19	Q. 7

Refused	1	Q. 6
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Base: All who refused to provide their age, 7

Q. 6 Could you tell me roughly what age you are?

Prompt with age bands

	%
Under 25	-
over 25 but under 45	16
over 45 but under 65	51
over 65	33

General questions about family life

Base: All respondents, 1015

Q. 7 Thinking back to when you were young, say 12 years old, do you think it is easier or more difficult for parents to bring up children NOW than it was THEN?

Probe: Is that a lot easier / much more difficult or just a little?

	%	
Much more difficult	46	
A little more difficult	22	Q. 8
<hr/>		
No different	10	Q. 10
<hr/>		
A little easier	8	
A lot easier	9	Q. 9
<hr/>		
(Don't know)	5	Q. 10

Base: All those who think it is more difficult, 691

Q. 8 Why do you think it is more difficult?

Do not prompt, code all that apply

	%	
Advertising / PRESSURE to buy / pester-power	25	
Children do not RESPECT adult authority / argue / opinionated	21	
Concerns about smoking/ Drugs/Drinking related problems	15	
Concerns about dangers / can't PLAY in the street	11	
Both parents HAVE to work	9	
Concerns about CHILD ABUSE/CHILD SAFETY	8	
Pressures of society/ Changing of lifestyles/ Different values	8	
Pressure for parents and kids/Expectations too high	7	
Cost of living/Bringing kids up etc	5	
Bad influences like technology/Environment/ Outside world etc	5	
Sex/Violence/Crime	4	
Too many people telling parents what to do / INTERFERENCE	3	
Too much temptations/ Distractions	3	
Children grow up too fast/Grow up too mature	3	All go
Parents working LONG HOURS / shifts	3	Q. 10

Too much Government interference	2
Both parents CHOOSE to work	1
ABSENT PARENTS not contributing financially	1
Families SPLITTING UP / Parents having problems of their own	1
More parents have to bring children up ON THEIR OWN	1
Other family members (grandparents / brothers / sisters) are NOT CLOSE by to help	1
Kids have too much freedom these days	1
Kids know a lot/Have access to too much information	1
Parents get BLAMED for everything	*
Not enough Government support	*
More people bringing up other people's children	*
Other	7
Don't know	1

Base: All those who think it is easier, 170

Q. 9 Why do you think it is easier?
Do not prompt, code all that apply

	%
Families have more money than before	46
More options for childcare	14
More help/Support for families	11
More jobs / less unemployment	9
More child friendly policies	9
More things to do/to go	6
No rationing / we were at war	4
Less stress in life	3
No discipline these days	3
Household appliances make things easier	3
More options/ Opportunities	2
Better education/ Education system	2
More accessible information/Advice via internet	2
Children are more independent/Mature	2
Technology/Entertainment for the kids	2
Kids are greedy/expect too much	1
Safer than before/less worries	1
Other	10

Base: All respondents, 1015

Q. 10 When you were 12, were you living with both of your birth parents, just one or with neither of your birth parents?

If respondent queries "birth parents", tell me this is their natural parents – the mother who gave birth to them and their biological father.

If at 'boarding school' ask about periods outwith school term times.

	%	
Both birth parents	83	Q. 12

One of birth parents	14	Q 11
Neither of birth parents	3	

Base: All who were living with only one of birth parents or neither of birth parents, 167

Q. 11 Who were you living with?
Code all that apply

	%
Mother	70
Father	11
Step-mother (inc partner, second spouse of father)	1
Step-father (inc partner, second spouse of mother)	5

Step-mother / father (inc. partner, second spouse of mother / father)	-
Grand parent(s)	14
Aunt / uncle	2
Adoptive parent(s)	3
Living in residential school / other institution	1
In care	1
Someone else (write in) _____	3

Q. 12 Apart from the people you lived with was there anyone else who you would say had an important influence on your upbringing. This could be another relative or someone outside your family like a neighbour or teacher?

None/Nothing/No-one	45
Grandparent(s)	26
Aunt(s)	10
Uncle(s)	6
Brother(s)	2
Sister(s)	3
Cousin(s)	1
Family members - (unspecified)	2
Step-parent	1
Friend(s)/Family friend(s)	3
School/Teacher(s)	8
Neighbour(s)	1
The church/Church official(s)	1
Foster parent	*
Father/Dad	1
Other	2
Don't know	*

Children

Base: All respondents, 1015

Q. 13 Do you have any sons or daughters of your own i.e. (if female) children that you have given birth to (if male), children who you are their birth father?

	%
Yes	66
No	34

Q. 14 Are you bringing up any other children such as step-children, adoptive children? If yes, what other children do you have?

	%
No, none	95
Step-child(ren)	3
Adoptive child(ren)	1
Son or daughter's child(ren) living in their home	1
Other (write in) _____	1

Q. 15 Do you have parenting responsibilities for any other children that I have not already mentioned?

	%
Yes	5
No	95

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities, 685

Q. 16 (If coded 1 at Q13 or coded > 1 at Q. 14 or coded 1 at Q. 15) Including all your children. Starting from the oldest to the youngest, could you tell me how old each of them is?

Insert names or initials as prompt for next question

Child 1	
Child 2 etc	

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities and given an age for their children, 684

Q. 17 For each child, unless obvious is {child} male or female?

	Male	Female	Refused
Child 1 - oldest			*
Child 2 - 2 nd oldest			*
Child 3 - etc			*
Child 4			

Parenting

(If coded 2 at Q13 AND coded 1 at Q. 14 AND coded 2 at Q. 15 i.e. no children of any type, read out) Even though you don't have children yourself, we would be interested in your views about different aspects of bringing up children

(Otherwise read out) I'd like to ask you some questions about different aspects of bring up children.

Q. 18 What do you think are the most important things that help someone bring up children well?

Record verbatim

Good/Stable upbringing/ Family life	30
Love/Care/Affection	19
Discipline	18
Teach them morality	14
Spend quality time with them	13
Financial support	12
Educate them well	12
Communication/Listen/ Talk to them	11
Teach them to show respect	11
Support from family	9
Show them understanding	6
Patience	5
Teach them manners/How to be polite	5
Good/Stable relationship	5
Encourage them/Give them confidence	4
Trust/Honesty	4
Don't know	3
Responsible	2
Religion	2
Common sense	1
Be a good role model/Set an example	1
Good health/Healthy eating	1
Other	7

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities, 685

Q. 19 (If parent – coded 1 at Q13 or coded > 1 at Q. 14 or coded 1 at Q. 15) How often, if ever, do you worry about how good a parent you are?

	%
All the time	23
Quite a lot	16
Just sometimes	25
Very rarely	18
Never	18

Base: All respondents, 1,015

Q. 20 I am going to read out a few statements about bringing up children today and I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each one.

Randomise list

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
There is too much emphasis on punishing parents rather than supporting them in bringing up children	19	38	10	23	5	5
Love is the most important ingredient in family relationships	70	27	1	2	1	*
Children can be brought up just as well by one parent as two	23	36	5	21	12	3
Balancing work and home life puts too much pressure on people bringing up children	29	42	6	18	3	1

Parenting and children

Q. 21 How well do you think the Government understands the challenges and problems faced by people bringing up children?

	%	
Very well	6	
Fairly well	32	Q. 23

Fairly poorly	33	Q. 22
Very poorly	24	
Don't know	4	

Q. 22 Why do you say that?

Government lack insight into normal family life/ Out of touch with reality	17
Lack of childcare resources/Facilities	2
Too much emphasis placed on one parent families	1
Not enough for kids/ Youths to do	1
Government are taking away parents responsibility/Dictating on raising of children	3
Government policies don't seem to support stay at home parents	*
Fail to offer support to ordinary working parents raising a family	2
Taxes are unfair/Too high	1
Instead of offering support they just bring in more rules/Regulations	1
Their policies are never right/They always get it wrong	3
Outlawing of smacking has put fear into parents to discipline their children	2
Too much emphasis placed on being in employment/Mothers going back to work	2
Not enough help/Support/ Money offered to single parents	2
Government stereotype people/Broad brush approach	2
Government lack understanding of children's needs	1
The government does not offer support to parents/Families	7
The government fail to listen to parents/Public	1
The government work to their own agenda	3
The benefit system is unfair/Not supportive enough	4
Political correctness has gone too far	1

Poor education system/ More money & resource needed for our schools	2
Lack of authority in schools/Government have taken discipline away from schools	1
Cost of living is too expensive	1
Dislike/Don't trust the government	1
The government fail to deliver on their promises	1
They don't do enough to help mothers back to work	*
Poor NHS/Healthcare services	*
Other	6
Don't know	2

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities, 685

Q. 23 (Ask if parent, others go to Q. 29) Have you ever had any problems with your children when you thought you {text sub insert if coded 7 at Q2 "or your partner"} needed help?

		%	
	Yes	16	Q 24
	No	84	Q 27
	Refused	*	

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities and have had a problem with their children, 111

Q. 24 How old was/were he/she/they?
Multi-code

	%
0-4	19
4-9	30
10-15	41
16 or over	16

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities and have had a problem with their children, 111

Q. 25 What were the problems you experienced?
Do not prompt, code actual and concerns under same codes

	%
Regular arguments at home (code but probe ... about?)	6
Drugs	6
Drinking / abusing alcohol	8
Involved in crime	7
Involved in gangs / bad crowd	5
Clothes / pressure on parents to buy	1
Clothes / hair – appropriateness	-
Piercings / tattoos	-
Relationships / boyfriends / girlfriends	3
Staying out late / not coming in	4
Smoking	1
Fighting/arguing with brothers/sisters	2
Money, how much children get	-
Money, what they spend it on	-
Homework / performance at school	8
Truancy	4
Privacy	-
Tidiness	-
Bullying	8
Mental health problems (eating problems, depression, self harm etc)	9
Child had speech problems	2
Child was diagnosed with autism	2
Child was diagnosed as ADHD	3
Bad behaviour/Bad temper/Lack of respect	5
Medical/Health problems (unspecified)	7

Father not around/Away/ Died	4
Other	15
Refused	4

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities and have had a problem with their children, 111

Q. 26 When you thought you needed help, who, if anyone, did you seek help or support from?

Do not prompt, code all that apply

	%
No one	9
Husband/Wife/Partner	6
Mother	6
Father	7
Brother / sister / other family member	8
Friend(s)	9
Priest/Minister/other spiritual advisor	1
Counsellor	3
A support organisation	10
A helpline	1
Social Worker	14
Health visitor	7
GP/Doctor	26
Teacher	20
Other	7
Don't know	1

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities, 685

Q. 27 {if coded 1 at Q. 23} If you were in a similar situation now, who, if anyone, might you seek help or support from?

{if coded 2 at Q. 23} If you were having problems with your children when you thought you {or your partner} needed help, who, if anyone, might you seek help or support from?

Do not prompt, code all that apply

	%
No one	7
Husband/Wife/Partner	9
Mother	27
Father	21
Brother / sister / other family member	22
Friend(s)	9
Priest/Minister/other spiritual advisor	4
Counsellor	2
A support organisation	2
A helpline	*
Social Worker	3
Health visitor	3
GP/Doctor	12
Teacher	8

Other (write in) _____

Q29.

Don't know

Y

Q. 28

Base: All those who did not know where to get help and support from, 65

Q. 28 Where might you go to find out where to get help?

	%
Husband/Wife/Partner	8
Other family member	12
Friend(s)	3
Priest/Minister/other spiritual advisor	3
Counsellor	3
A support organisation	14

A helpline	-
Social Worker	10
Health visitor	-
GP/Doctor	10
Teacher	2
Other	8

Don't know 35

Q. 29 Are you aware of any organisations that provide advice and support to parents?

Gingerbread	3
Social services/Social worker	10
Gp/Doctor	2
Childline	2
Drug helpline	*
Barnardos	1
Nspcc	*
Citizens advice bureau	2
Samaritans	1
Health visitor	1
Salvation army	*
Child support agency	1
Schools	1
Children first	1
Marriage guidance	1
Relate	1
Sure start	*
Home start	1
Local authority	1
Parentline	2
Yes aware of organisations but cannot remember their names	7
Youth clubs/Centres	*
Family mediation service	1
The church	1
Parents network	*
Other	14
Don't know	*
No not aware of any	1

Base: All who have parenting responsibilities, 685

Q. 30 (Ask if parent, others go to Q. 31) How helpful or unhelpful would you find each of the following types of help or support?

Randomise list

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not at all useful	(DK)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
A telephone helpline	47	35	15	3
An internet site giving information and advice	29	39	24	8
Booklets or leaflets	22	53	22	2
A service providing face-to-face advice and information	49	40	9	3
An service providing support and counselling for parents	43	43	10	4
Organised activities to occupy children and young people	68	24	5	3
Specialist services for children and young people in need	66	25	4	5

Base: All respondents, 1,015

Q. 31 If you knew of a young person or child that was at risk, would you know where to go for help?

	%
Yes	70
No	30

I'd just like to finish with a couple of questions about you to help us analyse the responses that people have given the survey

Q. 32 What ethnic group do you consider yourself to belong to? Would you say you are ... (read out)

	%
White Scottish or British	97
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	*
Mixed ethnic group	*
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	1
Chinese or other background	*
Other (write in) _____	1
Refused	*

Q. 33 Do you or anyone else in your households have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

	%
Yes	21
No	79

Q. 34 Occupation of Chief Income Earner

Position/rank/grade
Industry/type of company
Quals/degree/apprenticeship
Number of staff responsible for
REMEMBER TO PROBE FULLY AND CODE SOCIAL CLASS FROM ABOVE

	%
A	5
B	18
C1	29
C2	22
D	15
E	10
Refused	1