



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equal Opportunities Committee

1st Report, 2014 (Session 4)

Fathers and Parenting

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Equal Opportunities Committee

Remit and membership

Remit:

1. The remit of the Equal Opportunities Committee is to consider and report on matters relating to equal opportunities and upon the observance of equal opportunities within the Parliament.
2. In these Rules, “equal opportunities” includes the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.”

(Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament, Rule 6.9)

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Committee Clerking Team:

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The Committee reports to the Parliament as follows—

INTRODUCTION

Meet the fathers

1. In our inquiry, we hoped to investigate the distinct social and practical challenges faced by fathers, and the way in which they may differ from those experienced by mothers, with a view to better understanding how changes in social and employment practices may improve outcomes for children with parents who are together, parents who are separated, and lone parents. One witness, Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland), said that there was “a perception that parenting is a mother’s job”¹. Dr Gary Clapton explained that if fathers were seen as optional then women were more likely to be seen as having sole responsibility for children, something he rightly stated was “a lose-lose situation.”² During our inquiry, we met many fathers from a range of different backgrounds, living in different circumstances, who gave the strong impression that many families are ready to move on from these perceptions. We open our report by introducing three dads who were trying to do just this³—

Allan Kidd

2. Allan has twin girls and a 12-year-old stepson. He has worked for a small third-sector organisation for 16 years, which has been very flexible, allowing him to attend ante-natal appointments and work compressed hours so that he can look after his daughters for a morning every week. Allan’s wife had to go on maternity leave early so, to ensure the household income wasn’t affected, he used annual leave to take time off after the birth instead of paternity leave. Allan sees his wife and himself as a team and wants to share parenting but, if both he and his wife worked full time, nursery would cost £1400 a month – more than his wife’s salary.

¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1886.

² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1950.

³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014.

Victor Quested

3. Victor has sole custody of his two children, aged six and five. He struggles to access support because he sees most networks as being for mothers, and feels that single dads are ignored by society. Victor isn't working at the moment, but he attends college two days a week and does voluntary work. He feels the jobcentre is pressuring him into doing more job searches, and that none of the jobs available give Victor the flexibility to both work full time and be there to drop off and pick up his children from school. He is at risk of losing his benefits payments, but all the jobs available are part-time and traditionally done by women. Victor wants to both work and be recognised as the carer of his children, he is tired of people asking "where's the children's mummy?".

Peter McGhee

4. Peter has an 18-month-old child. Both he and his wife work full time but, without his mother-in-law's help, all his wife's wages would have gone on childcare costs. Peter is a hands-on dad – he changes his child in public places even if it means doing so in the ladies' toilets – but, when his child was a newborn, his local health board refused to let him attend breastfeeding classes with his wife. Peter is involved in running the Familyman Playgroup in South Lanarkshire. He saw an advert in a community centre for a new club and went along and after a while, together with some of the other dads, took over running the club. He feels his relationship with his daughter is better and appreciates the time spent with other dads, but is surprised that his playgroup pays for use of a community centre hall when the local mother-and-toddler group does not. Peter sees that his wife has a network of support groups she can attend – he wants men to have the same.

Background

Previous work - women and employment

5. In 2011, we agreed that we would carry out work focusing on the barriers women face in the workplace. We began by holding a round-table evidence session with the Scottish Trade Union Congress Womens' Committee in February 2012⁴. A focus on women in the workplace followed during our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2013-14⁵, and we carried out a full scale inquiry, with our *Women and Work* report being published in June 2013⁶.

Link to fathers

6. During this work, we often heard that gender stereotyping and the perceived role of the mother as the primary caregiver were significant barriers to women's progression in the workplace. We became curious as to whether fathers, especially fathers taking on the primary caregiver role, faced similar barriers, and set out to explore how fathers taking on a greater role in childrearing might help to support equality in the workplace.

⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 21 February 2012.

⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee. (2012) *Report on the 2013/14 Draft Budget*.

⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee. 4th Report, 2012 (Session 4) *Women and Work* (SP Paper 348).

Our inquiry

7. We launched our call for evidence⁷ on 11 January 2014, before visiting father and child groups in Edinburgh, Hamilton and Aberdeen in February, and found that fathers in relationships were facing many of the same challenges raised by single dads in written evidence. We agreed, to complement our work on women and employment, that the scope of our inquiry would cover all fathers who were primary caregivers, whether solely or jointly, and to include a specific focus on the workplace in our questioning.

8. We took evidence from fathers, support groups, employers, trade unions, local authorities and educational providers throughout March, before hearing from the Minister for Children and Young People on 27 March.

STERIOTYPES AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Cultural perceptions

9. One of the strongest themes we heard in evidence was the concern that social attitudes towards fathers, along with the historical and cultural trend of the mother being the main caregiver, were root causes of men struggling to take on an active parenting role. As such influencers can affect men and the society surrounding them well before they consider parenthood, this report begins on such themes.

Image of men in society

10. Witnesses spoke in general terms about gender stereotyping and how men are viewed in society. Worryingly, David Drysdale (Fathers Network Scotland) felt that—

“... in our culture we believe that men exist on a spectrum from useless at best to, at worst, violent or abusive—in other words, a risk.”⁸

11. He related a situation he had witnessed, in which a man saw a child fall in a park but did not help because, David felt, the man was afraid of being seen as a threat⁹. He also told us about a man who, once his children had entered full-time schooling, was advised to sign up for the men in childcare project—

“He was thrilled at the prospect, because he had loved bringing up his own kids and knew that he would be good at it. However, the next time the person who had made the suggestion saw the man and asked him how it was going, the man said, “I’m not going to do it.” It turned out that he had been down the pub with his mates, and they had started calling him a “paedo”.”¹⁰

⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Call for evidence on Fathers and parenting*. Available at:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Father_and_parenting_call_for_evidence.pdf [Accessed 8 May 2014].

⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1893.

⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1893.

¹⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1893-94.

12. Michelle Campbell (Fife Gingerbread) suggested that younger fathers may struggle to see themselves in the role of the father—

“The teen parenting project that covers Fife works predominantly with teen mothers, and it has been a real challenge getting teen dads involved. It is all to do with sheer intimidation; the teen dads feel that they will be judged.”¹¹

Fathers’ own upbringing

13. Many witnesses spoke of their own upbringing, describing fathers who hadn’t taken on a strong caring role. Robert Hall (Familyman Playgroup) explained—

“I wanted to be different from my dad. He had very little to do with my care when I grew up, which was probably because it was the ’70s and that was what you did: he went out and worked and whatever else. I know from my mum that my dad bathed me once in the entire time that I was young. I did not want to be anything like that. I have to be fully involved in the care of my child because I want to be. I do not want to be someone who goes out to work in the morning, comes home at night and sees my child for an hour before they go to bed. I want to be fully involved and I challenge the traditional dad role these days. It is what you make it.”¹²

14. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) spoke of a project involving men from Asian families who wanted to act differently from their fathers¹³, and explained the benefits of such changes—

“There is a real change in how men see the role, which is important for women’s politics as well. If men take up flexible working more—at the moment their requests for flexible working are refused twice as often as women’s requests—that would allow them to help more with the housework, which I would certainly welcome in my house. It works both ways. If we are integrated as families we need to allow men to have that space. That needs to happen and that needs to change.”¹⁴

Challenging tradition

15. Some fathers, encouragingly, made a point of challenging the traditional role of the father. Peter McGhee said—

“... my wife and I have made it a point that, when our child needs to be changed in a restaurant, I do it. I still have to go into female changing rooms or disabled toilets to do that and I can see the looks that I get when I pick up the changing bag.”¹⁵

¹¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1893.

¹² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1910.

¹³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1908.

¹⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1908.

¹⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1849.

Household roles

16. Witnesses suggested that, in general, there had been a shift in the way couples shared household responsibilities, and that shared parenting was an extension of this.¹⁶ Allan Kid explained—

“In our household, there has been a distinct change from the roles that my parents played when they were my age... When my wife and I set up home, it easily became more of a team situation in which we would both cook and do bits of DIY—in fact, she is much better at DIY than I am... Our friends are very much the same—households are a team effort as far as we are concerned.”¹⁷

17. Fathers giving evidence felt strongly that they were not in the minority of men who wanted to play a bigger part in family life, but that they may be in a “silent majority”¹⁸. Allan Reddick suggested that—

“Nowadays, every dad wants to take an active role with their kids and do all this stuff, but there is no provision to allow them to do so. If there were more groups and activities geared towards dads, we would become the majority.”¹⁹

Gender stereotyping

18. There were mixed views on whether gender stereotyping in toys and games might have an influence. Most fathers noted that, in early years’ at least, it might not have a distinct effect. Thomas Lynch (Dads Rock) said—

“I know from being in playgroups that kids generally do not care and that a lot of boys in playgroups love prams. They will go for anything that they can push and that has a baby in it.”²⁰

19. David Drysdale suggested that—

“Gender stereotyping is a symptom and not the main cause. We want to celebrate differences between men and women—there are many differences, as we know—and celebrate the different types of dads that are out there. We are not trying to prescribe what a dad should be. If it works out that a man is in a full-time job and the mother is at home, that is okay, and the opposite applies: it is okay if the woman wants to be the full-time breadwinner and the man is taking care of the child.

“We want to celebrate how a family works. It is wonderful to hear Ewan Jeffrey expressing his voice on gay dads, because a few years ago we would not have heard that.”²¹

¹⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1862.

¹⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Cols 1862-63.

¹⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1865.

¹⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1865.

²⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1907.

²¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1909.

Gender neutrality

20. Witnesses argued that the concept of gender neutrality, as an alternative, was not working.²² Dr Gary Clapton (University of Edinburgh) suggested—

“Gender equality is an aspiration that we would all sign up to, but gender neutrality is a failed policy. I do not think that it has worked and it has not included fathers. We recognised that we did not want to talk about mother and toddler groups and that we should get fathers and mothers involved, but the failed policy part of that was calling those groups parent and toddler groups. We know from experience, particularly the experience of front-line staff, that that has not worked because, as I said, the default position is that, when we read “parents”, we hear “mothers”.²³

The primary carer

21. We heard that assumptions of who the primary carer in the family might be often meant that communications and support were directed only at the mother, often at the expense of the father.²⁴ Kenny Drysdale called for a change—

“The father and mother are both parents and have the same concerns about and ambitions for their children. At the moment, my concern is about my children’s education...

“The primary carer role has to be equal from start to finish. If it is not, that builds boundaries and barriers.”²⁵

Parent = mother

22. Dr Gary Clapton (University of Edinburgh) explained that the move to ‘parent and toddler’ groups as opposed to ‘mother and toddler’ groups had failed, and had “not drawn in fathers”²⁶. He suggested—

“We have to talk about mothers and fathers when that is appropriate. Obviously, we need to use the term “parents” often, but we need to address fathers. In our society, when people talk about parents, they think about the mother. That applies across the board.”²⁷

23. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) suggested that the notion of parenting as a mother’s job was reinforced in society by the imbalance in maternity, paternity and parental leave allowances awarded to men and women.²⁸ Dr Clapton suggested that in public spaces, the message was often that parent meant mother—

“... foyers, general practice surgeries and social work reception areas ... are places where—for want of a better way of putting it—men are not really

²² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1959.

²³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1959-60.

²⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1854.

²⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1854.

²⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1950.

²⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1950.

²⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1886.

expected to be. Who do the leaflets and posters on the walls face? There are zero tolerance posters—not that I am against them, of course—and a number of other leaflets and posters about the moonwalk and so on, which are addressed to women. There is very little by way of publicity. As for reading material, we might find *Bella* and *Take a Break* on the tables, but very little else. It goes right down to colour schemes and so on.”²⁹

24. In his written submission, Dr Clapton drew attention to the effect of ignoring fathers on both children and mothers—

“... marginalisation of fathers presents three problems. It suggests that fathers are optional in children’s lives, and don’t contribute to children’s wellbeing. It is detrimental to mothers as it over-burdens them with sole rather than shared responsibility. It dissuades take-up of and participation in services by fathers and pushes men to accept a diminished role in the life of their families.”³⁰

Literature and advertising

25. Following on from this theme, many witnesses made reference to Dr Gary Clapton’s research. He described his findings and potential implications—

“In my research, I have found that publicity materials on children and families are particularly one-sided; there is a lack of references to, and images of, fathers in national health service materials. I did not look at them, but I am certain that there are similar examples to those that I found in national services such as the curriculum for excellence and local services that are run by councils. In social work services, I found not images but case scenarios and case studies that depict fathers only in an incredibly negative light.”³¹

26. In support of this evidence, dads were keen to see more positive images of fatherhood³². Allan Reddick agreed—

“The leaflets that people pick up at the doctor’s surgery or even at prenatal and postnatal classes always have pictures of mums with kids. I have struggled to find one with a picture of a dad in a positive role. Little things such as that need to change, because they embed in society the picture that the mum is the primary caregiver. Little things can start to change and, in that way, society’s impression will start to change.”³³

The way forward

27. Clare Simpson was able to speak of positive moves towards including fathers in marketing—

“Parenting across Scotland has a website that provides information for parents. After a bit of research, we found out that fathers thought that there was relatively little information for men. The website was not particularly

²⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1949.

³⁰ University of Edinburgh (Dr Gary Clapton). Written submission.

³¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1945.

³² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1890.

³³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1855.

marketed for men. However, we subsequently put information for dads on the website. I know that not all men like football—I would be stereotyping to suggest that they do—but we ran a marketing campaign that included advertising in football programmes. We said that our website included information for fathers and our monitoring showed a large rise in visits to that part of the website.”³⁴

28. She did admit, however, that more work could be done to reach men.³⁵ She was particularly keen to see the Scottish Government take the lead on portraying men in a positive light—

“There is one thing that the committee could proactively do, and I hope that it will. Just the other day, I sent a letter to the Scottish Government about the childcare provisions in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. In April, the Scottish Government will run an information campaign about those provisions. I would really like to see the campaign portraying not just mothers dropping children off at the school gate, but a more varied picture of family life that puts forward the idea that childcare is not just women’s responsibility but a whole-family responsibility and that lots of men drop their children off at school.”³⁶

Scottish Government

29. The Minister for Children and Young People (“the Minister”) gave an overview of the work being done by the Scottish Government to support fathers—

“The parenting strategy, which was launched in October 2012, supports everyone who is in a parenting role and recognises that fathers should absolutely be involved in their children’s lives...

“Through the strategy, we are working with partners to examine how to make services relevant and able to involve fathers positively in their children’s lives. We want to make the strategy fit for fathers, and what we need to do is listen effectively and respond to what dads really want.

“Along with Fathers Network Scotland, we co-chair the fathers advisory panel, which met earlier this week to consider how fathers can contribute to policy and practice development across Government. Most recently, the panel has helped us to restyle our “play talk read” and family information service websites to ensure that they work in a way that speaks to dads.”³⁷

³⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1887.

³⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1887.

³⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1886-87.

³⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1962-64.

30. When asked to talk on concerns relating to the negative or absent portrayal of fathers in documentation, the Minister responded—

“We understand that there is a need to make ... images much more balanced. In the development of our documents, such as the parenting strategy and the magazine that accompanied it, we tried hard to ensure that the pictures were much more balanced and showed the role of fathers.”³⁸

“We are working with the national parent forum of Scotland to ensure that we get messages about the [Children and Young People (Scotland)] 2014 act absolutely right. That needs to reflect all parents, not just mum and dads but grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents—it needs to reflect all parenting circumstances. Guidance is being and will be developed in consultation and collaboration with a number of different groups to ensure that it will do what is required of it.”³⁹

31. She also spoke about ‘father-proofing’ specific campaigns and websites—

“We are looking at ways in which the play talk read campaign can be improved to allow more fathers to access the hints and tips and the key messages that we are promoting with regard to playing, talking and reading with their wee one from day 1. We are working to ensure that it can be better used by parents.

“We are also looking at the “Ready Steady Baby!” website with regard to enabling it to be more father friendly, and we are progressing the mapping exercise so that we are better placed to ensure that fathers can access those key messages and play a full part in their child’s life, especially in those early years.”⁴⁰

Conclusion

32. Whilst it is clear that tradition and culture plays a strong role in how men and fathers are seen, it is clear that some organisations and individuals are making the effort to challenge stereotypes. **We are pleased to see that the Scottish Government has already taken steps to address fathers in its literature and guidance, but we feel that more can be done to support the idea of fathers being involved in childrearing as being the norm.**

33. Witnesses told us that the use of the term ‘parent’ is not sufficient as this is often taken to simply mean ‘mother’. **We ask that the Scottish Government and all organisations and companies working with parents and children continue to ensure work is aimed at both parents, and in recognition of the fact that ‘parent’ is often taken to mean mother, actively work to include fathers specifically.**

34. We were pleased to meet fathers who wanted to take an active role in raising their children, in particular their belief that they were not a minority. However, we

³⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1965.

³⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1967.

⁴⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1977.

recognise that many of the dads we met felt indebted to support groups in helping them to achieve this role. **We ask that all providers (including local authorities as funders) of parent and children groups, encourage the use of the terms like ‘mothers and fathers’ group’ or ‘mums and dads’ club’ as opposed to simply ‘parents’ to encourage fathers to access this vital source of support.**

ANTE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL SUPPORT

35. Many of our witnesses, both dads themselves and support workers, spoke of a lack of ante-natal and first-months’ support, and we heard of men feeling excluded from classes aimed primarily at women. Post-natal care, in particular, seemed to be a source of worry. Allan Kidd explained—

“I have gone to every group, class and provision, such as baby massage and antenatal and postnatal groups. The antenatal stuff is well attended by couples, but I was very much in the minority in going to lots of the postnatal classes. I was met with shock; people said, “Oh—there’s a dad here. What’s that about?””⁴¹

Ante-natal care

36. Echoing the evidence we heard on fatherhood in general, we heard that fathers wanted to be involved in the lives of their children from the offset, but that the support may be lacking. Thomas Lynch (Dads Rock) said—

“I went to antenatal classes because I wanted to be an active, involved dad, but the provision is crap—it is really rubbish and embarrassing. I have spoken to dads who have been asked to leave antenatal groups because of the embarrassment for the mothers and because it was perhaps not appropriate for them to hear some stuff.”⁴²

Support through pregnancy and at birth

37. Karen Love (West Lothian Council) drew attention to the need for fathers to be involved during pregnancy. She explained—

“Fathers are not engaged with maternity services. There is no midwife appointment so that dad can go along and discuss his hopes and fears about his child coming into the world—about what he is looking forward to and what he fears most. Antenatal appointments are very much focused on the mother, so even at the antenatal stage, we are disengaging fathers.”⁴³

Possible approaches

38. She went on to explain the approach being taken by West Lothian Council with their Sure Start programme—

“We are an early intervention service for children from birth to the age of three, and we have been in place at West Lothian Council for about 15 years...

⁴¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1849.

⁴² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1885.

⁴³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1952.

“We provide six-week antenatal programmes for fathers in the evening. We look at baby care tasks, what they will involve for fathers and how they will manage those tasks, and how they will support their female partner...

“We also provide antenatal support for young fathers who are under 21 years of age...

“We focus much more on mothers than we do on fathers, but I feel that we are getting better at engaging with fathers. As a service and as an authority, not just in early years services but in schools services, we have support groups for fathers that fathers engage with.”⁴⁴

39. David Drysdale (Fathers Network Scotland) spoke of his work, with Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project), on the NHS Health Scotland “Ready Steady Baby!” pack, which goes out to pregnant women. He explained that—

“... it speaks only to women, although it mentions that they might have a partner. It has a couple of clauses that say that if you are a dad—the partner—this is what you could be doing, but generally it is talking to women. All the imagery is about women.

“Too often, fathers think that antenatal services are not for them, that they are not meant to be involved and that they are a spare part. Lots of negative messages come up through the imagery and language that is used around the services.”⁴⁵

Keeping dad with mum

40. Karen Love pointed out the importance in allowing the father to remain with the mother and child immediately after birth—

“All the evidence shows us that it is good for the father to remain on the postnatal ward with the mother, but he is shown out at the end of visiting hours. The mother is then left without that support”.⁴⁶

Pre-birth classes

41. When men spoke of attending and enjoying ante-natal classes, there was still a feeling that certain aspects of support were not for them. Allan Kidd spoke about a breastfeeding class—

“... we had the lesson on feeding, whether it was formula or breastfeeding, she said, “The fathers don’t really need to bother about this, because there’s plenty for you to do at the other end—you’ll be changing the nappies.” Aye—very good.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1952-53.

⁴⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1887.

⁴⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1952.

⁴⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1855.

42. Where we did hear of good-practice, this was often localised. Thomas Lynch referenced the West Lothian programme being represented by Karen Love, and his experiences, but expressed frustration at the limited geographical scope—

“The dads-to-be resource that was developed by some of the people who are sitting round this table is an antenatal course for dads, and I do not understand why it is not being offered throughout Scotland. There is a little pocket in West Lothian where somebody from the national health service has been delivering the course for 10 years. I went to it, and it is an amazing course that involves a mix of dads from all walks of life. Why is it not available across the whole NHS?”⁴⁸

“I just do not understand why, in such a small country, we have so many inconsistencies in the delivery of the service. To me, antenatal and postnatal services are not rocket science.”⁴⁹

Post-natal care

43. We heard that during post-natal care, there was a lack of classes aimed specifically at fathers. Kenny Drysdale said—

“I attended all the classes before the children were born. As for classes afterwards, there are big issues—postnatal depression, for example—that fathers should maybe understand better. Fathers are also under pressure in a lot of ways. More could be done on that aspect of support.”⁵⁰

44. Thomas Lynch suggested that more mental health support for men post-birth would be welcome—

“I remember being a new dad and feeling quite stressed and anxious; I would not say that I was depressed, but I definitely did not know where to go or whom to speak to.”⁵¹

Attending classes

45. Men spoke of not only feeling unwelcome at classes, but of being actively refused the opportunity to attend. Breastfeeding classes in particular seemed to be considered for women only, and men spoke of the stress involved in trying to support their partners through this difficult stage.⁵² Peter McGhee explained—

“My application to go to breastfeeding support sessions that the local health board runs was refused. That was a point-blank refusal, so I could not offer my wife support for that.”⁵³

⁴⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1885.

⁴⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1886.

⁵⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1849.

⁵¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1886.

⁵² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1888.

⁵³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1849.

46. He did go on to say, however, that—

“... in the voluntary group that my wife attends, the women have been welcoming; they slag me off regularly because I go, but they do it lovingly, it has to be said.”⁵⁴

47. Thomas Lynch suggested that the general approach to ante-natal and post-natal care in the NHS was outdated, and that there was a lack of health visitors, midwives, and classes available to offer support.⁵⁵ He went on to describe services as “mummy-centric”, and suggested—

“We need to be careful about how we rebalance [services], but we need to start by saying, “Let’s try to get the dads seen.” As a new dad, I felt invisible; I felt that nobody spoke to me. I looked for young dads in Edinburgh, and I asked the NHS where I could find young dads and the ages of dads when their kids were born. The NHS said that it did not record the ages of fathers when kids were born, but it recorded the ages of mothers. I said to it, “Okay. So how no? When will you change that?” It has never replied.

“There is an absolute reason why mums have been focused on and so much energy has been given towards them, but it is now time to redress that balance slightly.”⁵⁶

Using *getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC)

48. Many witnesses suggested that changes should be made to the provision of ante-natal and post-natal care with the best interests of the child in mind, and many drew on the relevance of the Scottish Government’s GIRFEC approach. Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project) drew on child development—

“We now know that 80 per cent of the brain is developed before a child is four years old. Therefore, many of the things that they need to learn happen before then. If we think that it is early enough for a father to become involved at six months or a year, that is six months or a year too late. We know that the first few months are absolutely crucial.

“We should promote that, because we now know that the more adults who talk to a small child, the better the child’s speech and language will develop. If the mother and father both talk to the child, the child’s language will increase exponentially in comparison to what happens if only one of them does.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1851.

⁵⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1885.

⁵⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1885.

⁵⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1889.

49. He asserted that there needed to be a “conversation with the NHS”⁵⁸ to say that postnatal services “must be for both parents”⁵⁹, in the child’s interests—

“It is not necessarily about being in the dad’s interests. It is in the child’s interests that we get it right.”⁶⁰

GIRFEC in practice

50. Fiona Robertson (South Lanarkshire Council) gave an example of how GIRFEC can be applied—

“In South Lanarkshire, we provide multi-agency training for staff, through the getting it right for every child initiative, to raise awareness of why engaging dads is so important. We labour the benefits of that for children, and it is about what children get out of dads being involved. Staff from nurseries, social work and the NHS participate in that training. The staff need to know why it is important to engage dads, but for some of them the primary focus is the child. If they do not understand that everyone around a child has an impact on that child, or see how that impacts on their job and the child’s wellbeing, they might see it as something that is additional. That can happen in any parenting engagement process. They must understand why it is important to engage dads, be aware of the environment that they are working in and see it from the perspectives of both mums and dads. How easy is it for them to come into the building? What reception do they get when they come into the building? Equally, the staff should not cheer when a dad comes in; sometimes, they can go too far the other way and scare them off.”⁶¹

Keeping dad and his family involved

51. We also heard about the importance of involving fathers in cases where the parents are separated. Kenny Spence explained—

“The parents do not necessarily have to live together, but being involved is important. If the dad is involved for the first three years of the child’s life, he is likely to stay involved all the way through. We need to promote that.”⁶²

52. Donny Scott (City of Edinburgh Council) drew attention to the importance of kinship care—

“... if we do not engage the father—a separated father, say—that does not only miss out on the benefits that he can bring, but misses out on his parents, aunties and uncles and that whole side of the family, such that those resources are not there for the child.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1889-90.

⁵⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1889.

⁶⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1890.

⁶¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1948.

⁶² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1889.

⁶³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1949.

Scottish Government

53. As well as confirming that work with the NHS to ‘father-proof’ documents was ongoing⁶⁴, the Minister explained—

“The guidance that will accompany getting it right for every child will clearly require input from local authorities, and under the 2014 act there will be joint service planning between health and local authorities. We will need to make sure that that reflects the requirements that are set out in the parenting strategy.”⁶⁵

54. In speaking about the Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014 Bill, she said—

“The guidance that accompanies the bill will allow us to ensure that fathers are more properly reflected in policies, if that is a requirement. The networks that we have built up following the parenting strategy, such as the NHS fathers forum and our advisory panel, which is undertaking work now, will be in a good place to input into the guidance. That will allow us to ensure that the default position is not further ingrained through the bill.”⁶⁶

55. She highlighted the Scottish Government’s commitment to supporting fathers, saying—

“I believe that we have made solid progress over recent years, but I recognise that there is still a long way to go if we are to ensure that all parents—dads included—get the support that they need, when they need it, in order to be the best that they can be for their children.”⁶⁷

Conclusion

56. We were extremely concerned to hear that fathers may be excluded from attending parenting classes. We appreciate that single-sex groups can offer value in certain situations, but offering only ‘mummy-centric’ classes not only means that fathers are excluded from learning the skills necessary to look after young babies, but also that new mothers are deprived of a key source of support. Whilst we recognise that such care is administered at a local authority level, **we urge NHS Scotland to work with local health boards and local authority partners to ensure that fathers from all areas of Scotland are able to access a comprehensive range of pre and post-birth classes and support networks, and ask that the Scottish Government actively support and encourage such action.**

57. We were also concerned that, despite the Minister’s assurance that the “Ready, Steady, Baby” pack had been rewritten to focus more on fathers, the evidence from fathers was that they still felt that any mention of fathers in the pack was limited and tokenistic. **We ask that the Scottish Government look to**

⁶⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1965.

⁶⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1968.

⁶⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1970.

⁶⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1964.

improving the support and guidance it can offer for new fathers, for instance by issuing good-practice guidance on including new fathers in written publications and policies.

58. We were encouraged to hear how local authorities are using GIRFEC as a model for improving engagement with fathers, and **ask that that Scottish Government examine how such good practice can be shared as part of on-going work in establishing the GIRFEC approach.**

FIRST YEARS, INCLUDING CHILDCARE AND EMPLOYMENT

59. In the early years of child-rearing, mothers and fathers have to make decisions about how caring responsibilities will be shared. We heard that these decisions might be influenced by the leave available at birth, childcare arrangements, and employment status.

Paternity leave

60. At present, statutory maternity leave is 52 weeks, and paternity leave is 2 weeks; however should a mother choose to return to work sooner, maternity leave (up to 26 weeks) can be converted to additional paternity leave within the period of 20 weeks to 1 year after the birth of a child. As part of the Children and Families Act 2014, the UK Government introduced plans to switch to offering 50 weeks of parental leave that can be shared between mothers and fathers from 2015.⁶⁸

Assumptions and influences

61. We heard from men in various different working situations. Allan Reddick, a school teacher, told us—

“When my first child was born, it was automatically assumed that my wife would take full maternity leave. As a teacher, I was actively encouraged to take my paternity leave during the school holidays so that it would not impact on my work.”⁶⁹

62. Allan Kidd, who works for a small agency, explained that his employer had no enhanced rates for paternity leave—

“I took three weeks’ annual leave from my entitlement to ensure that the same level of income came into the household. I took no paternity leave. Although it was available, it was not affordable.”⁷⁰

Child care

63. We heard in our *Women and Work* inquiry that the availability and cost of childcare could heavily influence how children were brought up. Adding to that,

⁶⁸ SPICe briefing to the Committee. (2014) *Background note on parental leave and balancing work/family life*. Available at:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/20_March_papers.pdf [Accessed 8 May 2014].

⁶⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1846.

⁷⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1846.

during this inquiry we heard that the childcare environment, which is predominantly female, could have an effect on the perception of the caring role in general.

Affordability

64. Perhaps not surprisingly, we heard that the cost of childcare left many parents making the decision for one parent to give up work. Allan Reddick told his story—

“When my first daughter was born, we put her into childcare but it became too expensive. My wife ended up having to quit her job and working only at weekends. Had there been affordable childcare, we would probably have split the maternity leave between the two of us. I feel that I missed out.”⁷¹

65. Allan Kidd, a father of twins, explained just how costly childcare could be—

“A half-day a week costs us more than £200 a month for our two daughters. If we had decided to put them into nursery five days a week, it would have cost us £1,400 a month, which is more than my wife earned in her full-time position. Clearly, there is no way that we could have afforded that.”⁷²

66. Peter McGhee explained that even though he and his wife were working full time, his wife’s salary barely covered the cost of childcare. He added that they “could not survive without Granny”.⁷³

The childcare workforce

67. Witnesses felt that the childcare workforce had a role to play in including fathers. Fiona Robertson (South Lanarkshire Council) explained that, with the backing of management, awareness-raising and training, men could be better engaged in raising children.⁷⁴ She said—

“The nursery staff should be interested in not just the child, but the dad, as someone who is important in the child’s life. We must get the staff on board right through the organisation, from management down to practitioners on the ground.”⁷⁵

68. Children in Scotland, in its written submission, called for Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to actively consider how effectively establishments for pre-school children engage with fathers and include this routinely in the inspection process.⁷⁶ Inez Murray (National Day Nurseries Association (“NDNA”)) suggested work on this was already underway, and explained that, with the support of the Care Inspectorate—

“In the private sector, where I work, it is often easier for us to work with both parents—if they are both there.”⁷⁷

⁷¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1846.

⁷² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1847.

⁷³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1847.

⁷⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1948.

⁷⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1948.

⁷⁶ Children in Scotland. Written submission.

⁷⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1950.

Men in early years care

69. Witnesses suggested that the lack of men in the childcare workforce could be detrimental to encouraging fathers to participate in childrearing.⁷⁸ Donny Scott (City of Edinburgh Council) said—

“In our experience it is commonly—but not universally—true that social work practice tends to exclude fathers. In child protection work or work that involves concerns about domestic abuse, the tendency is to address and work with the mother and not to engage with the father. We are concerned about that.

“Significant stereotyping occurs in the early years workforce and in the care workforce generally. The early years workforce is massively female.”⁷⁹

70. Fiona Robertson agreed—

“Early years and nursery settings are not seen as places for men generally, so dads do not feel comfortable in them, and some staff are not particularly comfortable with men. It is hard to engage dads if those places are not welcoming to them.”⁸⁰

71. Dr Gary Clapton (University of Edinburgh) suggested—

“The caring professions are not seen as manly endeavours. We know that working in childcare, primary schools and social work are options that do not immediately appeal to a young lad at 17 or 18. They ought to, but they do not.”⁸¹

72. There were suggestions that fathers would welcome more men in early years services⁸², and Inez Murray suggested that concerns about men being unsuitable to work in the childcare workforce were unfounded—

“The most recent NDNA newsletter contained an article about some parents’ perception that it is not right for men to be in childcare and about comments such as, “I don’t want that male practitioner to change my baby’s nappy.” My experience is the opposite of that attitude. When I get men to work with children, they are very good role models. One of the most important points in the research is about the lack of positive comment about men.”⁸³

73. She went on to emphasise the importance in involving schools in the recruitment process—

“We must get schools far more involved in addressing the perception of gender stereotyping. It is still the case that, if a young girl does not know what to do, she goes into childcare or hairdressing. It is important that

⁷⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1886.

⁷⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1945.

⁸⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1946.

⁸¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1947.

⁸² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1892.

⁸³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1945.

schools become actively involved in letting young men know that it is okay to go to college to study childcare or social care, and that if people do not want to go to college it is okay to get an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are the best route; I employ most of my staff through apprenticeships, which give people the opportunity to develop a successful career.”⁸⁴

74. Witnesses agreed that recruiting men into the social care and early years’ services was challenging⁸⁵ and, although there was evidence that some diversification was taking place⁸⁶, a “sea change in culture”⁸⁷ was needed.

75. Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project) spoke of getting men involved in the men in childcare project—

“Initially, it was quite difficult. We decided to put the guys into a full-time course at college, but only one of the six stayed, so we decided to set up men-only courses. We have now had about 2,000 guys attending some training either to work in childcare or to learn about better parenting and understand child development. Guys are interested. If you put something out there that they can attend, they will be interested in it.”⁸⁸

Employers

76. Again, echoing evidence heard in our *Women and Work* inquiry, there was the suggestion that individual employers could have a significant impact on childrearing. Practically speaking, parental leave was a key part in the flexibility employers could offer.

Parental leave

77. Parental leave, where parents can take time off to attend classes or appointments with children, or take care of them when they were ill, is by law available equally to both parents. Witnesses gave mixed accounts. Allan Reddick said—

“... my employer would not let me away for anything. I missed my youngest daughter’s first day at nursery, and I have missed every nativity that she has done. I miss everything and I feel that my wife gets much more one-to-one time with the kids than I do.”⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1945.

⁸⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1946-47.

⁸⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1945-46.

⁸⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1947.

⁸⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1891-92.

⁸⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1847.

78. This did not seem to be an experience limited to men, rather to the employer. Peter McGhee explained—

“My wife works for the private sector and she finds it very difficult even to take holidays. I am very fortunate in having a flexibility that my wife does not have.”⁹⁰

79. We heard that small organisations, which may struggle to offer paid paternity leave, could sometimes offer flexibility in terms of working hours and time off for appointments instead.⁹¹ Larger employers were also able to offer welcome flexibility when it is requested. Robert Hall explained—

“I am very hands-on and lucky that the NHS has allowed me to work compressed hours so that I can get a whole day on Wednesday with my baby to take her swimming and do other things with her. I am proactive in that way and want to do it.”⁹²

80. We were relieved to hear that employers, over time, seemed to be adjusting their attitudes to parental leave. Alan Kidd said—

“Having worked for the same organisation for 16 years now, I remember that, when I first joined, its attitude towards people who needed time away for things to do with their children was very much that it could not allow or manage that. Over time, however, the organisation’s managers and directors have come to feel that they need to support their young fathers and mothers because they do a lot for the organisation, which operates a 24/7 residential school and fostering service.”⁹³

Attitudes and responsibilities

81. Other evidence received suggested that, rather than a question of attitudes, the ability for employers to provide support was more a question of resource. Ann Henderson (STUC) explained how the size of a company could have a significant effect—

“The difficulties that are flagged up to us are probably to do with smaller employers or the increasingly less structured employment—the more casual work and other broader patterns—that we see in the Scottish labour market in general...

“As the labour market becomes more fragmented, smaller employers try to manage difficult situations and changes in the workforce and people take part-time jobs and casual work, it is harder to comply with all the protections for parenting for which the employment legislation provides.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1848.

⁹¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1848.

⁹² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1888-89.

⁹³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1848.

⁹⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1919.

82. She did add, however, that “the issue has not been identified as a big problem.”⁹⁵ Allan Kidd explained that—

“The challenge for our organisation is affordability. Can it afford to pay enhanced rates for paternity leave or other leave that might be available for fathers under legislation?

“... My organisation is doing what it can within the resources that are available to it. A much wider economic argument is involved.”⁹⁶

Encouraging flexibility

83. Brenda Armstrong (Police Scotland), spoke of how promoting a positive view of flexible working might help—

“The view of businesses is sometimes that flexible working is a benefit for employees, but not for the business as well. It is fairly complex.”⁹⁷

84. Patrick Burke (Royal Bank of Scotland (“RBS”)), agreed that it was “more difficult for a smaller business to respond to a need for paternity leave because smaller business are reliant on a smaller number of staff”⁹⁸, and explained—

“Larger companies, such as the bank, have been investing in flexible working policies for some time now. For example, we offer home working, and many staff now have BlackBerrys, iPhones, iPads with remote access and so on. Probably one of the main differences for a smaller organisation is that it may not have the funds to invest in providing that flexibility.”⁹⁹

Using the PSED

85. Ann Henderson, that within the STUC there was no ongoing work looking into the rights of fathers in the workplace, but suggested—

“If the outcome of the committee’s inquiry is that there is a series of bad experiences that are related to the workplace, we will take that away and look at it and consider where the trade union movement can assist.”¹⁰⁰

Policies and implementation

86. Having gained an understanding of statutory provision, we asked two large employers, Police Scotland and the Royal Bank of Scotland to detail their policies with regards to paternity leave, parental leave and flexible working. Both reported offering statutory paternity leave, and RBS noted that this could be taken flexibly as opposed to as a single two-week block¹⁰¹.

87. Police Scotland looked to have as much notice of paternity leave arrangements as possible to fit in with their rota system.¹⁰² Both employers

⁹⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1919.

⁹⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1855.

⁹⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1920.

⁹⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1920.

⁹⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1920.

¹⁰⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1923.

¹⁰¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1918.

¹⁰² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1918.

acknowledged the need for autonomy at a local level and suggested that many arrangements were made at a local level on an informal basis, which could mean that in some areas flexibility more readily available¹⁰³.

88. Brenda Armstrong explained that following the move to a single police service for Scotland, work was underway to ensure policies were consistent. On monitoring the uptake of formal arrangements, she said—

“We see more examples of males applying for flexible working arrangements within full-time compressed hours, whereas women take more part-time work. We did some investigations in Lothian and Borders—one of the legacy forces—and found that 64 males have flexible working arrangements whereas 348 females have them. Those are the formal arrangements.”¹⁰⁴

Support for staff

89. We asked employers to detail what additional support they give to staff with regards to flexible working. Both RBS¹⁰⁵ and Police Scotland¹⁰⁶, aside from equipping line managers with the means to cascade information, use dedicated intranet sites to detail policies and promote wellbeing. Brenda Armstrong said—

“We aspire to have, and we continue to work to have, a workforce that feels valued. It is about an opportunity to work with values and ethics in Police Scotland. The more supported the workforce, the better the performance. I cannot sit here and say that everything has been perfect, but we work to the best of our ability to ensure that we support the vast majority of people in their home lives.”¹⁰⁷

Modern apprenticeships

90. We heard in previous inquiries¹⁰⁸ concerns that the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme does not do enough to address occupational segregation, and that minority groups are often underrepresented. Ann Henderson spoke on this issue—

“A lot of Government resources go into the modern apprenticeship programme, but we know from evidence that we have not quite cracked how to prevent the programme from reinforcing occupational segregation issues. Do we know how many of the 16 to 24-year-olds who are modern apprentices are parents? Do we know what work is being done to encourage young men who are parents to define themselves as fathers and parents in the modern apprenticeship programme? It is an important recruitment route into work for many young people.

¹⁰³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Cols 1925-26.

¹⁰⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1926.

¹⁰⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1927.

¹⁰⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1929.

¹⁰⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1931.

¹⁰⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee. (2013) *Report on the 2014/15 Draft Budget* and Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee. 4th Report, 2012 (Session 4) *Women and Work* (SP Paper 348).

“By the age of 24, a significant number of young people in Scotland will be mothers or fathers or will be thinking about starting a family. How do we look at occupational segregation in the modern apprenticeship programme and at how people in that programme define themselves? We often find that male workers are parents and fathers, but they do not define themselves in that way.”¹⁰⁹

91. Men can, however, claim paternity leave whilst in an apprenticeship, which is classed the same as any other job in terms of statutory leave requirements, and Ann Henderson was able to confirm—

“... there is a good example of a young woman who has managed to negotiate doing a three-year apprenticeship over five years and has had two children during that time.”¹¹⁰

Women in employment

92. Linking into the trend we saw in our *Women and Work* inquiry, which suggested that countries with improved childcare and flexible working conditions (for instance Sweden and Norway) had far better gender equality in the workplace¹¹¹, we aimed to explore the link between how fathers taking a greater role in their children’s care might improve employment prospects for women. Ann Henderson said—

“One thing that was clear from the women’s employment summit, which the STUC held jointly with the Government in 2012, was that the focus on the real experience of women in the workplace is something of a double-edged sword, as it reveals the assumption that women will primarily take responsibility for childcare. There were also examples of situations in which women had chosen to—or perhaps felt that they had to—stay in part-time work to facilitate family needs.

“Simultaneously, however, it was very clear in the workshops that people wanted their partners or husbands to take more responsibility—and to be perceived in the workforce as having that responsibility.

“At the STUC, we are delighted that the childcare discussion, for instance, has recently moved more into a discussion about economic growth, economic investment and investment in children’s wellbeing, and away from childcare being seen as primarily an issue for women to address.”¹¹²

93. Both Police Scotland and RBS spoke of having women’s development forums¹¹³, and both asserted that they were trying to tackle occupational

¹⁰⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1935.

¹¹⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1935.

¹¹¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee. 4th Report, 2012 (Session 4) *Women and Work* (SP Paper 348).

¹¹² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Cols 1928-29.

¹¹³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1932.

segregation as much as possible¹¹⁴, though RBS confirmed that individuals were very much free to choose their own career path¹¹⁵.

Scottish Government

94. Speaking about the childcare and employment of men in early-years care the Minister said—

“We have done some things directly. We fund the men in childcare initiative, which is a project to encourage more men to go into childcare in the earliest years of a child’s life. We have had to work hard to redress some of the gender imbalance that we see in the early years sector and to raise awareness of the need for more men to get into those roles.

“The employment of teachers is a local authority issue, but we want to ensure that the very best teachers are employed and that teaching is an attractive profession for people to get into. Some of that might mean ensuring that teaching is a viable profession for them. It might come down to some of the images that we see. In the childcare and early years setting, we are directly funding a group to try to redress the gender imbalance.”¹¹⁶

95. She highlighted the role of the parenting strategy in ensuring flexible working and other family-friendly policies were available to parents—

“That is a powerful tool that the Government has. We have the power to influence change in the national, top-level sense. Legislation is another powerful tool that the Government has to make further cultural change.”¹¹⁷

“We are also working with employers to support them in creating workplaces that encourage a better work-life balance for everyone. So that we can help dads to thrive at home and at work, we have formed a new partnership with Fathers Network Scotland, the parenting across Scotland group and Working Families to try to change the way that Scotland’s parents live and work.”¹¹⁸

96. The Minister also brought attention to other approaches the Scottish Government was taking to encourage employers to offer flexible working—

“At the Institute of Directors awards tonight, we are sponsoring an award for companies that have shown excellence in providing family-friendly flexible working practices. This is the second year that we have sponsored the award, in order to work with a group of people who would not normally

¹¹⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Cols 1933-34.

¹¹⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1933.

¹¹⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1971-72.

¹¹⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1970.

¹¹⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1963.

engage with this subject and to showcase the way in which businesses are doing their bit to allow families to have a better work-life balance.”¹¹⁹

Conclusion

97. We were not surprised to find that much of the evidence we heard on childcare and flexible working echoed what we heard during our *Women and Work* inquiry, but are concerned to find that not only do these issues keep women from actively participating in work, they keep fathers from actively participating in parenting. The imbalance in parental leave entitlements and access to flexible working arrangements are clearly a cause for concern. The Scottish Government has shown a drive towards improving the situation, and, as in our *Women and Work* inquiry **we commend the Scottish Government on its approach and ask that such issues remain a priority in implementing the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the national parenting strategy. In responding, we ask that the Minister include an update on progress made against the recommendations made in our *Women and Work* inquiry report.**

98. The lack of men within the childcare workforce and the potential lack of engagement with fathers during early-years care potentially represent a lost opportunity to encourage more fathers to take on a greater role in raising children. **We ask that the Care Inspectorate take this into consideration when supporting childcare providers through the recruitment and engagement process, and ensure that both issues are covered during the reporting process.**

99. Once again, we have heard concerns that the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme should do more to tackle inequalities and stereotypes. **As stated in previous reports, we feel it is crucial that the Scottish Government launch an awareness campaign promoting inclusion throughout the scheme.**

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FATHERS

100. Before taking oral evidence, we visited three groups set up specifically for fathers to attend with their children – the Dads Rock ‘Rock Academy’ in Edinburgh, the Familyman Playgroup in Hamilton, and Dadscare in Aberdeen. We saw for ourselves how positive fathers were about their experiences, and sought further evidence on how groups work, and what other sources of support are available for dads.

Online support

101. Some of the men who gave evidence had not heard of or attended support groups. When asked about finding support, Victor Quested spoke about his experiences in using internet-based support—

“Mumsnet is a good site, which I am not embarrassed to say that I use, but I have never contacted it and said that I am a dad. It is a good site but,

¹¹⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1972-73.

everywhere that I go, I feel isolated. Even in the playground, people look at me. That is not a nice situation to be in.”¹²⁰

Mixed-sex groups

102. Many men had attended mixed-sex groups, but most found the experience uncomfortable because they were so few dads there. Allan Reddick explained—

“I take my daughters to dancing and I took them to mums and tums, baby bounce and all that. Nobody speaks to the only dad in the room; not even the people who run the class speak to that person. Nobody speaks to the dad, and the mums and the leaders are cliquey. Dads feel out of place and think, “I shouldn’t be here. This isn’t for me. This is supposed to be for my wife”. ”¹²¹

103. Norman Fraser described groups as being “cliquey”¹²². Robert Hall, who runs a dad’s group and highlighted the importance of friendliness, had varying experiences—

“Before I went to my current group, I went to two parent and toddler groups. In the first, I was not spoken to by anyone at all for the whole period I was there and, in the other, I had 24 mothers trying to do everything for me. Neither was particularly helpful, although the second group was certainly a lot friendlier. People even offered to change my baby’s nappy and I had to say that it was fine, because I did it in the house and elsewhere.”¹²³

104. David Drysdale (Fathers Network Scotland) spoke of men being turned away from parent and baby groups¹²⁴. Allan Reddick suggested that it was the members of groups, rather than the organisers, who were discriminative—

“The groups are open to dads—it is not that we are not allowed to go—but we do not feel comfortable when we get there.”¹²⁵

105. Allan Reddick explained that the timings of mixed-sex groups, which are often scheduled for weekday afternoons, could present a barrier to men attending—

“Every one of the dads in our group works during the week, so it is very difficult for us to go and break those barriers down. That is perhaps a societal thing: the mums stay at home with the kids, so that is why those groups are for mums.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1850.

¹²¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1851.

¹²² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1851.

¹²³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1891.

¹²⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1891.

¹²⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1864.

¹²⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Cols 1864–65.

Setting up support groups for men

106. Allan Reddick explained how the Familyman Playgroup in Hamilton was established, and the challenges the group face—

“We went to a fun day in Hamilton last year, where we were approached by SPELL—Support for Play & Early Learning in Lanarkshire—which is an organisation in South Lanarkshire, about a dads-only group. Peter McGhee, Norman Fraser and I attend that every Saturday and we now run it. Before that, there was nothing that was solely for fathers...

“The group gets support from the council, but it is still discriminated against. For example, we are the only group that pays rent for the use of the hall—mums groups do not pay that.

“Since I started going to the group, I feel that my relationship with my kids is much better. I now see them interacting with other kids and I interact with other dads who have had the same experiences as I have had. It is much better now.”¹²⁷

107. Peter McGhee added—

“There was nothing before. I found out about the group from a poster in a community centre and I went along. I feel that I now have a better relationship with my child because I spend that quality time with her. I was also fairly new to the area, so it was good for me to get out and network with other fathers who were facing the same issues.”¹²⁸

108. Thomas Lynch told us about Dads Rock—

“When we started the Dads Rock playgroup, we were just looking for somewhere to take our kids, who were toddlers. It is a pre-school playgroup, and we have kids from age zero up to the age of five or just about six. We like to say that our playgroups are a broad church for any dad or male carer to come with their kids. It is important to have that mix.

“Because of the success that we have had and how our groups have grown, we keep talking about splitting the groups and segregating different ages of kids, because so many people are coming, but perhaps we would lose something by doing that. Some dads come with very young babies. Those dads are coming for themselves.”¹²⁹

Marketing groups

109. Inez Murray (NDNA) spoke of the importance of finding the right marketing technique and timing for groups—

“We have done surveys to find out what the best time is, and we find that fathers will come in the late afternoon, at around 4 o’clock. Last year, we sent out something that said, “Come to FRED,” which stood for fathers reading

¹²⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1860.

¹²⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1860.

¹²⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1883.

every day. We did not know what would happen. We did not say what would happen, but fathers came because it was called FRED and that was male. We had a very good storytelling session using props, and they went away inspired.”¹³⁰

Tackling social isolation

110. Kenny Drysdale, a lone father, explained that although attending a group may help him to feel less socially isolated, the demands of family life made it difficult to attend—

“My main focus is my job, and I have the kids for three out of four weekends. That affects my energy levels and ability to take part in groups.”¹³¹

111. However, Neil McIntosh (One Parent Families Scotland (“OPFS”) suggested that support groups could help in such situations—

“Our groups work with lone-parent and contact fathers, and they can have children of any age although they are usually of school age. Fathers gain a lot of peer support from one another during group work, and fathers with younger children sometimes gain a lot from the experience of fathers who have older children.”¹³²

112. Karen Love (West Lothian Council) explained that reaching out to fathers was crucial, but could depend on the resources available—

“We are in the very fortunate position of having access to our own people carrier and our own minibus. Our dads workers are able to go out and pick up the guys who say that they are interested and want to come along.

“Men can be referred to us by a professional such as a health professional or a social work professional, or they can refer themselves to us—perhaps they have heard of the group in their community and want to come along. If they phone up, they get a visit so that we can tell them what the group is about. If they are somewhere that is not accessible—if the group is run in Whitburn, for example, and they live 20 minutes away and cannot get there by public transport because the links are not great—we will ensure that transport is not a barrier to access by picking them up in our minibus, our people carrier or our own cars. If the service is there, we will endeavour to get a father—or mother—to that service.”¹³³

Scottish Government

113. On acknowledging the need to support parents from all backgrounds, the Minister said—

“The parenting strategy that we developed is for all parents—not just mums and dads, but adoptive parents, foster carers and kinship carers. It tries to be

¹³⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1958.

¹³¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1860.

¹³² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1883.

¹³³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1953.

as reflective as it can be of all the situations that families currently live in, and that influences the way in which we take forward Government policy.”¹³⁴

114. Erica Clarkson (Scottish Government) added—

“A commitment in the national parenting strategy set out that we would carry out a mapping exercise to see what national information is out there—both ours and other agencies’—and what advice is available to parents right across Scotland. We commissioned Children 1st to carry out that research on our behalf and it published its report in November. It highlights some of the issues that the committee has raised today. We are now looking at the recommendations in the report and considering how we can best meet them.”¹³⁵

Conclusion

115. We are in no doubt that attending support groups can be a great benefit to fathers, both in bonding with their children and in helping them to connect with other fathers. There were varying opinions on mixed-sex groups, but one strong message was that, given the relatively small geographical spread of fathers clubs, no group should be exclusionary. **Echoing our recommendation at paragraph 34, we hope to see clubs becoming more inclusive of fathers, and, given the concerns raised regarding charges for meeting space, we ask that local authorities and voluntary organisations ensure that all groups have access to facilities on equal terms.**

116. The cost of running and attending groups is clearly a barrier in some cases. **We ask that the Scottish Government consider how, in the context of the national parenting strategy, it can support the set-up of new groups and help existing groups to grow and help hard-to-reach fathers such as single dads and fathers in rural areas.**

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

117. We heard from witnesses that schools had a key role to play in encouraging fathers to take an active role in their children’s lives. In talking about the view that mothers were often seen as the primary carer, many witnesses suggested that schools and health professionals often ignored the father. As with the childcare profession, we heard concerns about the lack of men in teaching.

¹³⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1968.

¹³⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1968.

Mothers as ‘gatekeepers’

118. Fathers expressed concerns that mothers were often the first person to be contacted by schools.

Support for separated parents

119. There were also worries that fathers were excluded from their child’s education, particularly in cases where parents were separated.¹³⁶ Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project) explained—

“When my daughter was at school, the engagement that I had with the school was one evening a year, or one evening per term, depending on the school, when I was invited in to hear how she was doing. Other than that, there was not an awful lot of contact. Schools are not necessarily the most open of places for either parent, but an estranged dad often does not get the information.”¹³⁷

120. Fiona Robertson (South Lanarkshire Council) highlighted the fact that, where mothers had primary care of a child following separation, schools were not always given contact details for the father. Fathers themselves may not be aware of this, or how to resolve the situation—

“Dads have told us that they are not aware of the information that they are entitled to, because no one has ever told them that, although they live separately from the mum, they can get information from the school. They do not know where to start, as no information is available about how they can access things and what they are entitled to. If they have parental rights, they have entitlements, which include schools sending out information to them and making arrangements for parents evenings. However, if they do not know that they have those entitlements, they cannot access them.”¹³⁸

Keeping dad involved

121. Dr Gary Clapton (University of Edinburgh) pointed out that correspondence addressed to the ‘parent’ might be automatically opened by mums, and that using imagery focused on mothers only could exacerbate this.¹³⁹ Fiona Robertson spoke of finding that—

“... dads did not get information from the school. They were reliant on mum to pass on information from the school because, generally, it came through schoolbag mail and, generally, it was mum who went through the bag and got the information. If she did not think that it was relevant to dad, she did not necessarily pass it on. If it said “parent”, she took it on as her responsibility. For dads who were in share-care positions, it was even worse: if their relationship with mum was not particularly positive, she did not pass on information at all.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1897.

¹³⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1896.

¹³⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1961.

¹³⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1960.

¹⁴⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1956.

122. She did, however note that, when dads are asked why they are attending a group, they respond with “Because I was told I had to come.”¹⁴¹

Legislative support

123. Donny Scott (City of Edinburgh Council) spoke of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006—

“... it was only last year in Edinburgh that we established a policy on communications between schools and parents. That is about including all parents and recognising that, sometimes when parents have separated, communication cannot even be done through schoolbags with mums helping out; we have to find out explicitly who the relevant people in the child’s life are, ensure that they receive messages and communications, and invite them to parents evenings and so on.

“There is a lot of partnership between local authority workers and organisations such as Families Need Fathers, Dads Rock, dads club, which is partly run by One Parent Families Scotland, Circle, Stepping Stones and CHAI, the Community Help and Advice Initiative, out in Wester Hailes. That creates opportunities and is really effective. ...There are things to be learned and practice to be shared.”¹⁴²

Men in schools

Men as teachers

124. A study conducted for the Scottish Government (then Scottish Executive) providing data on teacher numbers in primary, secondary and special schools in 1994, 1998 and 2003 showed that women dominated in primary school teaching over time, representing 92-93 per cent of teachers consistently. More recent data shows little change in this trend, with women representing 91 per cent of primary school teachers in 2013.¹⁴³ Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Scotland) suggested that—

“One of the difficulties that we have in Scotland is that 40 per cent of primary schools have no males in them at all. There are 129 schools in Fife, and 109 of them have no men or only one man...

“I found out that in [the University of] Strathclyde, for example, more men are applying but fewer have been getting in during the past four years. Men are applying to get into teaching, but we have not done the same thing with teaching as we have with early years. We need more men in teaching.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1958.

¹⁴² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1958-59.

¹⁴³ SPICe briefing to the Committee. (2014) *Primary teaching: gender analysis*. Available at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/20_March_papers.pdf [Accessed 8 May 2014].

¹⁴⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1895-96.

125. Statistics support this notion, with 73 per cent of Scottish domiciled applicants to all teacher training programmes for entry in 2014-15 being female.¹⁴⁵ David Drysdale (Fathers Network Scotland) explained that this could be detrimental to the social development of children and young people—

“Kibble Education and Care Centre runs a school in Paisley for around 1,000 boys. The centre looked at its staff and found that approximately 80 per cent were women, and thought, “Hang on—what these troubled boys need more than anything else are good male role models.” Kibble ran a big campaign over several years to recruit men from traditional industries to the childcare sector. It took a great effort, but the results were great.”¹⁴⁶

126. Michelle Campbell (Fife Gingerbread) that the lack of men in schools could be particularly intimidating for lone fathers—

“We have experienced issues in education with, in particular, lone dads when issues in the household are affecting the children’s wellbeing and schooling. Dads find it very difficult to approach schools, because they are predominantly staffed by females and it is extremely challenging for them to bare their vulnerabilities to females.”¹⁴⁷

Focus on the child

127. In written evidence, it was reported that increased involvement of fathers in their child’s development resulted in children being more open, happier and confident. It also reported better educational attainment, less likelihood of being in trouble with the police, better relationships in adolescence and a reduction in homelessness and mental health problems.¹⁴⁸

Child-focused approaches

128. Witnesses suggested that all decisions should be made in the best interests of the child.¹⁴⁹ Barnardos, in written evidence, said that partnership was very important to success and highlighted that the way in which programmes are delivered, rather than the type of programme, can be a key element of success. Focusing on the strengths of parents, their relationships with their children, the relationship between staff and client and overall taking a holistic approach and working to identify barriers.¹⁵⁰ Fiona Robertson (South Lanarkshire Council) gave a local perspective—

“We have staff based in primary and secondary schools across South Lanarkshire. They work in the schools and with the surrounding communities, and their remit is to engage mums, dads and carers in their and their

¹⁴⁵ SPICe briefing to the Committee. (2014) *Primary teaching: gender analysis*. Available at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/20_March_papers.pdf [Accessed 8 May 2014].

¹⁴⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1898.

¹⁴⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1896-97.

¹⁴⁸ Children in Scotland. Written submission.

¹⁴⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1858.

¹⁵⁰ Barnardos. Written submission.

children's learning. Our staff provide learning opportunities that support children's learning at home; opportunities for parents to come into school and take part in classroom activities during the school day; and opportunities for family learning in the evenings in the community. We provide curriculum support, which means helping parents understand what the curriculum is and how they can support their children's literacy and numeracy. There are also take-home packs that families can work on at home, which is particularly good for families who find it difficult to come to the school because of work commitments, disabilities or family circumstances. We try to make it as easy as possible for families to work with their children.

"We also do things that build the parents' capacity. For example, we offer parent support and have parenting programmes on handling children's behaviour, building the child's self-esteem and helping with homework tasks; in general, we work to give parents more confidence in supporting their children's learning. We also have programmes that involve parents going into both primary and secondary schools to offer paired reading and buddying support. For example, parents go in and spend half an hour with a child on a one-to-one basis to increase their language skills. For all those processes, there is a full induction and training programme and continuous support. A lot of our parents have gone from that to work in classroom support and other areas of education, and some have gone on to college.

"It is a kind of holistic family learning approach, because it is about increasing the child's capacity, building confidence within families so that that can happen and engaging all members of the family. For example, sometimes grandparents come along to the daytime class sessions, but then mum and dad do the work at home with the children. It is just about communicating that that is fine, that it does not need to be just one person who takes responsibility and that a mix of people across the family can be involved."¹⁵¹

Engaging with dads

129. Fiona also spoke of success in engaging fathers, and explained how the public sector equality duties had supported their work—

"We started to focus on fathers in our family learning programme about seven years ago when 11 per cent of fathers engaged with our activities. This year, the figure is up to 27 per cent, but we are still counting—we hope that the figure goes up further. However, engaging fathers is an on-going battle. It requires a culture change for not just families but staff and organisations...

"Although that is where we started, we were very fortunate because the gender equality duty came into play at that time, so we managed to get that as a target within our statement of commitment so that it was more robust and we were answerable for it. The duty was also useful as it allowed us to sell dads as a resource up the way to other managers. We told them that we needed to do that work and that it had to be taken on board because we had a duty to do it.

¹⁵¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1953-54.

“Staff were encouraged to come up with initiatives to engage fathers. Our process was not about starting dads groups; it was about getting dads into our generic programmes across the board.

“The key barriers that came up were, as we expected, time and work commitments, but they were honest and said that, sometimes, the things that were on offer were just not of interest to them. The time that they have outside work or other commitments is very precious, so they judge whether an activity is something that they want to spend their time doing. Therefore, a service has to be sold to them on what is in it for them—we must be specific about that.

“We changed our publicity. We took out “parents” and moved to “mums and dads”. The dads came back and said that they were interested in dads-only groups and in outdoor activities in particular, so we started programmes based on the things in which they were interested. We ended up with dads-only groups but also had family days.”¹⁵²

Scottish Government

130. In reference to concerns about information not reaching fathers, the Minister responded—

“In addition, we are working with the advisory panel and Fathers Network Scotland to develop clear, simple messages about GIRFEC and the named person. We have also sought the views of dads in developing the sexual health and relationships education resource for secondary schools. As well as that, we are working with young men and fathers as we take forward the development of the new teenage pregnancy and young parent strategy.

“There were differences of opinion on the named person provision, but that provision, which is based on universal services, gives support to parents should they require it. That is another layer of support that both parents, male and female, can access as a result of the bill.”¹⁵³

131. On the lack of men in teaching, she said—

“In the past couple of years, we have seen a modest increase in the number of men going into the teaching workforce. That is welcome.

“I have no doubt that there are fathers who have felt that when they go to a school where all the teachers are women, that is a barrier. We need to ensure that we are being as welcoming as we can be to men who are in the profession, and that schools are also welcoming to fathers.

“The employment of teachers is a local authority issue, but we want to ensure that the very best teachers are employed and that teaching is an attractive

¹⁵² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1955-56.

¹⁵³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1971-72.

profession for people to get into. Some of that might mean ensuring that teaching is a viable profession for them. It might come down to some of the images that we see. In the childcare and early years setting, we are directly funding a group to try to redress the gender imbalance.”¹⁵⁴

132. The Minister agreed with evidence we heard suggesting that ingrained cultural norms needed to be challenged—

“It is about the cultural change that we need to bring about, the default position being that the mother is the parent and the mother has the caring role. In my situation, my husband is the primary carer for our wee boy. We know from personal experience how important it is to allow fathers to have that positive role in their children’s lives. It is something that we need to work at. However, the legislation does not prohibit teachers from allowing fathers to have a full role in their children’s lives. I would also mention curriculum for excellence and all the other things that are gradually changing the situation.”¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

133. It is clear that schools have a role to play both in engaging fathers and ensuring that children have strong male role models to learn from. We understand that education and teaching is very much in the hands of local authorities and individual schools, but **we ask that the Scottish Government, through the curriculum for excellence and the support it gives to local authorities, continues to present men as a crucial part of the family and support the extension of successful initiatives such as the approach taken by South Lanarkshire Council.**

134. **Again, we emphasise the importance of literature and imagery, and ask that the Scottish Government to consider how a national awareness-raising campaign may help to raise the profile of men in childcare and teaching.**

FATHERS WITH SOLE OR SHARED RESIDENCY

135. One of our aims at the outset of this inquiry was to look into the specific issues facing single fathers, and how they might differ from those faced by single mothers. What we found was that many single fathers faced the same problems as fathers in relationships, and single mothers – issues discussed above, such as childcare, difficulty in finding flexible employment, and in finding support – and in addition often suffered from social isolation, faced additional financial strain, and felt disconnected from their children’s lives.

Establishing and maintaining contact

136. There were a number of submissions received directly from fathers experiencing difficulties in establishing residence or access arrangements with their children. They focused on the challenges in maintaining a civil or constructive

¹⁵⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1971-72.

¹⁵⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1973.

relationship with the child's mother, the expensive nature of the legal action involved and facing perceived preconceptions on the part of social workers and the courts that were seen to be heavily biased on the part of the mother. Evidence also outlined the considerable stress and emotional upset caused by the whole situation which at times was unfolding over a prolonged period of time.

137. As the majority of submissions relating to shared residence or lack of contact with children related to judicial and reserved matters, we agreed that such issues were outside the scope of our inquiry. We instead focused on the day-to-day lives of fathers, the way they are viewed in society, and the support networks available.

Financial support

138. Some of submissions highlighted the imbalance in benefits payments administered by the Child Support Agency, speaking, for instance, of the fact that in a case where residence is split the full benefits payment will be made to the mother as the 'parent with care', even where residence is shared evenly.¹⁵⁶ Neil Mackintosh (OPFS) explained—

"When parents have split the care of the child 50:50, the benefit payments sometimes go to the mother and the father is left with nothing. Dads have come to us who get their kids at the weekend but they do not have any money—and I mean no money. We have to refer them to food banks so that they can get food for the weekend to feed their kids. I am not saying that everything should be split 50:50."¹⁵⁷

139. One anonymous submission drew parallels between child benefits provision and women's equality—

"Endowing only women with work-family benefits discriminates against male parents and is not going to deliver equality for women. This only makes women of child-bearing age relatively unattractive to employers."¹⁵⁸

Housing

140. An example was given of separated parents of a child of additional support needs. Often the house which is adapted to meet those needs will be that of the mother.¹⁵⁹ In some cases the father will not be able to obtain appropriate ground floor social housing making overnight visits and being involved in the care of the child more difficult.¹⁶⁰

141. The so called 'bedroom tax' impacts on fathers having overnight visits with their children or shared residence arrangements.¹⁶¹ Due to changes in welfare legislation, parents who are not considered to be the main carer will need to pay

¹⁵⁶ "Anonymous 9". Written submission.

¹⁵⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1904.

¹⁵⁸ "Anonymous 25". Written submission.

¹⁵⁹ East Renfrewshire Council. Written submission.

¹⁶⁰ East Renfrewshire Council. Written submission.

¹⁶¹ East Renfrewshire Council. Written submission.

extra to keep a room 'spare' for their children to visit. Discretionary Housing Payments may be available to help depending on circumstance.¹⁶²

Portrayal of single fathers

142. Neil McIntosh (OPFS) highlighted the minority status of single fathers who play an active role in their children's lives—

"Only 8 per cent of single parents in Scotland are single fathers, and they face significant barriers—all single parents do, whether they are mums or fathers.

"The media portrayal of single parents is terrible and a lot of it is very inaccurate. At One Parent Families Scotland, we would like single parents—mothers and fathers—to be recognised for the good job that they do, rather than their being condemned in the media."¹⁶³

Terminology

143. One anonymous written submission raised concerns about the terminology used in relation to separated couples, and how this can affect daily life—

"Care of my children, the ability to buy things for them and living with them are at the core of my family life. I have care of, care about and care for my children yet I am commonly referred to as a 'non-resident parent' and my ex is referred to as the 'parent with care'. As a result of this when my children have hospital appointments only my wife is sent notice of these."¹⁶⁴

Shared residence

144. Neil MacIntosh raised concerns about how negative portrayal of single fathers may make it more difficult for the father to be seen as a good parent—

"... I ... work in a child and family centre—a children's centre—and we have a lot of situations in which there is conflict between parents, one of whom might not be managing to parent well. In my experience, it is much more difficult for children's hearings and social workers to agree that the dad is the best parent to take the child. If they do decide that, the dad usually has a lot more hurdles to jump than the mother would, with more supervised contact, more visits and a longer process of rehabilitation to ensure that he can actually do it."¹⁶⁵

Data deficit

145. Ann Henderson (STUC) pointed out the lack of data available on shared residence arrangements—

"Much of the data that is collected in society—through the census, for instance—does not make provision for categories that allow us to pick up the existence of shared residence arrangements...

¹⁶² South Lanarkshire Council. Written submission.

¹⁶³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1903.

¹⁶⁴ "Anonymous 9". Written submission.

¹⁶⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1902.

“We know that 11 per cent of households in Scotland are lone-parent households, but we do not know how many have shared parenting arrangements. How do we record which house the child lives in or is based in for accessing services? How does the parent declare it to their employer if they have shared residence but the child is shown as being resident at another household?”¹⁶⁶

Employment

Finding work

146. Witnesses spoke of lone fathers’ difficulty in support when trying to find employment.¹⁶⁷ Victor Quested said—

“The jobcentre has told me that it has lone-parent advisers, but they do not know what to do with me, because most of the jobs are geared up for women who will work part time. They cannot accommodate me to drop off and pick up my children. It is just so unfair.”¹⁶⁸

Link to benefits and attending appointments

147. Michelle Campbell (Fife Gingerbread) explained that—

“The job searches that they are expected to do are not really intended to meet their skills, but are intended to get them off benefits, and that is it. There is a “make work pay” calculator to ensure that it is affordable for people to work, but the DWP still has to meet targets. If it is specified on someone’s jobseekers allowance that they are a lone dad, lone mum or lone kinship carer, they have to meet the demands of Jobcentre Plus, and they have to satisfy it with evidence, otherwise they are sanctioned. Jobcentre Plus is just following legislation.”¹⁶⁹

148. She went on to say—

“... a single father with no support network does not have the back-up of there being somebody else who is able to go and pick up the kids from school so that he can attend a jobcentre appointment at 10 to 3 in the afternoon. He is the only person who can pick up the children. He may be called to the school because of the child’s behaviour and if he misses an appointment at the jobcentre because of that, he is sanctioned. I am thinking about a particular child who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Tourette’s and is in behaviour support at a Fife primary school. The dad is called regularly to come and pick up his child. What is the priority? Should he go and get the child who is kicking off at school or attend the jobseeker appointment? If he does not attend the jobseeker appointment, he will be sanctioned. He was sanctioned for four weeks, and lost benefits for those four weeks, which results in debt.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Col 1936.

¹⁶⁷ One Parent Families Scotland. Written submission.

¹⁶⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1850.

¹⁶⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1904.

¹⁷⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1905.

Working patterns

149. Ann Henderson (STUC), in contrast, drew attention to the differing work patterns between lone parents of each sex, highlighting the prevalence of women working in part-time work, and suggested that parenthood was not the biggest barrier to work in Scotland—

“The STUC sees significant differences in the labour market with regard to where men work and where women work... 92 per cent of lone parents in Scotland are female and 8 per cent are male. However, when you break that down with regard to who is in work, you see that 18 per cent of the male lone parents are in part-time work and the remainder are in full-time work... How do those fathers, who have reported difficulties in other areas, manage to hold down full-time employment while caring for their children? It does not mean that they are not being excellent fathers at all. Does it mean that their wage levels and access to flexibility were better in the first place, which is why they have been able to accommodate having a child on their own? Why do so many of the female lone parents work part time? Why have they not been able to get back into the labour market full time?

“The vast majority of lone parents in Scotland—men and women—work. That is not what the headlines might tell us. Nearly 68 per cent of women in Scotland are in the labour market—they are in work. The majority of women are not just at home, even in two-parent households. Most people work, and most people want to work. Other factors are keeping people out of the labour market.”¹⁷¹

Support networks – formal and informal

150. Single fathers spoke of feeling isolated. Norman Fraser explained—

“I feel quite isolated. It is hard for me to have much social contact when I am trying to look after three young children, and I have a son with autism, so there are added responsibilities. I feel quite socially isolated at times.”¹⁷²

Support groups

151. Single dads, like other dads, struggled to find support which they felt was right for them, and explained the added difficulties a single father might have in accessing support groups. Victor Qusted said—

“I cannot access many things because I am a lone dad. Every club that I go to generally has mothers and toddlers—albeit that they have grown up a bit. However, even now, I feel that people have a stereotyped view of what women’s role is, and I am not supported at all.”¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 20 March 2014, Cols 1924-25.

¹⁷² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1852.

¹⁷³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Cols 1849-50.

“Gilmerton child and family centre pointed me to the dads club, but I had to take two buses to get there, so it was a bit of a stress.”¹⁷⁴

152. He called for mixed-sex groups to be more welcoming of single fathers—

“If we have separate clubs for dads and mums, we will never move forward. People should accept dads as part of a mixed club. There are clubs out there for dads but, if clubs were more open and welcomed mums and dads, it would be more acceptable for dads to be seen with their children.”¹⁷⁵

Support through schools

153. Fathers also spoke of missing out on the social networking opportunities schools could provide. Victor Quested said—

“I struggle with the fact that none of my children’s friends ever comes to my house, because I am a lone dad. I do not know why, but that is frowned on.”¹⁷⁶

154. Kenny Drysdale spoke of how separation from his partner had led to him losing the connection to school networks—

“Before our relationship ended, I did the school run most of the time. Not doing the school run means missing out on the interaction and all the friends—the networking with the kids and their families. Of the parents whom I met through the school, few have been in touch with me since my wife and I separated. That is a huge part of the social network. People’s lives totally change.”¹⁷⁷

Successful approaches

155. Neil McIntosh (OPFS) explained the work his organisation was doing to support lone fathers, and the challenges they faced—

“One Parent Families Scotland has been running services for lone-parent fathers for 12 years. When we evaluated our early years early action project in 2012, we found that fathers felt that the peer-support groups that we offer men and their children was the most successful factor, and that it improved outcomes for the children of those lone-parent fathers... we contacted those fathers, who said that there should be more services of that nature across Scotland. At the moment, we operate only in Edinburgh, Dundee, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire. I am aware that other services, such as Dads Rock, operate in various places, but the services that are available for fathers, especially lone fathers, are sporadic.

“Sometimes ... we can be viewed with suspicion, because some fathers assume that we are social workers, and we have to explain that we are a

¹⁷⁴ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1852.

¹⁷⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1852.

¹⁷⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1852.

¹⁷⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 6 March 2014, Col 1851.

different service that is here to support them and to introduce them to other fathers and their children.”¹⁷⁸

GIRFEC

156. Echoing evidence we heard on the role of the father in general, witnesses urged that single fathers should be given more support in the best interests of the child. Neil MacIntosh gave an example of how One Parent Families Scotland used the GIRFEC approach to support this aim—

“Normally, our children-and-fathers worker, who is male, meets them one to one and finds out what the issues in the family are and what kind of problems the child is facing. They then put together an action plan using the safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included—or SHANARRI—indicators from the getting it right for every child model to conduct a baseline assessment of the family and the support that it needs.

“After that one-to-one work with the father, we introduce him into our groups with other fathers and their children. They normally take place on a Saturday, when we go out and undertake some low-cost, sustainable, healthy, learning-type activity with a group of, say, eight or nine fathers and their children.

“They might then move on to a specific parenting programme that we run. One such programme called mellow dads, which we run in Falkirk in partnership with Mellow Parenting, is already proving to be quite successful; in fact, seven fathers have just signed up to take part in it.”¹⁷⁹

157. Michelle Campbell explained that Fife Gingerbread had several projects that supported lone mothers, lone fathers and kinship carers—

“The teen parent project provides support to teen parents aged between 16 and 19. It encourages both females and males to attend mellow baby classes and parenting programme classes, and it is well attended by lone fathers who are actively involved in baby massage, learning about baby weaning and developing healthy eating. We also have the gateway project for families, which provides family learning and addresses family issues in the community. It works with lone dads and lone mothers, or with both dads and mothers together, and the family learning aspect helps parents to become involved in their children’s lives through education.

“Ours is a charitable organisation and the referrals come through self-referral as well as through social work, health and housing. It is publicly advertised through the website, flyers, the media and schools.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1894.

¹⁷⁹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1894-95.

¹⁸⁰ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1884.

Kinship care

158. Witnesses also spoke about the importance of the kinship caring network in raising children, and how this could be affected by separation. David Drysdale (Fathers Network Scotland) said—

“... fathers are often excluded when a family is broken up. The obvious point to make is that, if a father is not engaged, we lose half of the kinship caring network. If a man is ostracised by the family or not included, what happens to his parents and his brothers and sisters?”¹⁸¹

Support for fathers in prison

159. Some witnesses, in talking about lone fathers, spoke of the additional barriers faced by fathers in prison, and the benefits of developing the relationship with the child. Clare Simpson (Parenting across Scotland) said—

“... it is estimated that reoffending can be reduced by up to six times in prisoners who have contact with their families. Even the most conservative estimate, which is the Ministry of Justice estimate from a couple of years ago, is that there is about a 39 per cent reduction in reoffending. Obviously, that figure is to do with the parent, but we should look at outcomes for children, as well because children are seen to want to have contact with their parents.

“Families Outside told me yesterday that it has been supporting a lone-parent dad who had sole custody and who has gone in for a prison sentence. The relationship between that father and his child was very good, but the maternal grandmother has taken over care of the child and there is a degree of animosity, so the maternal grandmother will not take the child to visit the prison. Families Outside has been trying to put in place arrangements, but there are no funds or support mechanisms for it to do so.

“A number of very encouraging things are going on; parenting programmes are taking place and the Scottish Pre-school Play Association goes into Dumfries prison and Dads Rock goes into Edinburgh prison. There is educational work around things like parenting apart, parenting programmes, communication and relationships. Such programmes improve relationships on the parenting level, but they also improve the offender’s chance of establishing a more settled life and relationships with their families when they go back into the community.”¹⁸²

160. Kenny Spence (Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project) added—

“The best work that I have seen in Scotland went on in Shotts prison, with videos of fathers reading stories to their children going back and forth. That is an excellent example. The Scottish Prison Service has been very open to

¹⁸¹ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1906.

¹⁸² Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Cols 1901-02.

any engagement with dads who are in prison and I can only commend it for that.”¹⁸³

161. Barnardos suggested in their written submission that all prison staff should be trained to a basic level to understand and support fathers with parental responsibilities in order to secure better outcomes for the relevant children.¹⁸⁴

Scottish Government

162. Addressing concerns that services were not set up for single fathers, the Minister responded—

“You are right that persistent issues might relate to mother and toddler groups, for example, and the default position of going back to the mother. Whether we have influence over that might be questionable. However, the parenting strategy articulates the importance of all parents and is intended to bring about cultural change.

“As we move forward with implementation of the parenting strategy, we will continue to ensure that services such as health and education and those in the third sector make dads feel welcome and included. For example, we are currently working with Children in Scotland to examine ways in which our public bodies can ensure more equal treatment of dads when it comes to parenting responsibilities.

“Furthermore, in partnership with Families Need Fathers, we have been gathering data from local authorities on policy and practice in schools in relation to fathers and non-resident parents. That is being used to develop a good practice guide for schools, and NHS Health Scotland has been working with a group of dads to father proof a range of resources and to inform the development of new content to be made available on the “Ready Steady Baby!” website. The overhaul will include a fathers section, usability testing with fathers and the development of a communication strategy for the launch.”¹⁸⁵

163. She confirmed that, according to legislation, different families’ circumstances should be taken into account—

“...best practice would be to ensure that both parents are fully aware of situations in the school. The school should be aware of the family situation. The legislation does not suggest that there should be a default position to one parent; it involves encompassing the whole gamut of situations in which families might find themselves.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 13 March 2014, Col 1902.

¹⁸⁴ Barnardos. Written submission.

¹⁸⁵ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Cols 1970-71.

¹⁸⁶ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1973.

164. Finally, the Minister stressed again the role of implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014—

“Families face a lot of different situations, but we want to embrace the opportunity that the guidance on the 2014 act offers us. Having the national parenting forum on the programme board will allow us to ensure that our messages in the guidance that we develop to enable the successful implementation of the act are mindful of the issues that have arisen through the committee’s investigation on fatherhood. We want to ensure that fathers feel properly part of their children’s lives. The committee has raised a lot of good issues, and has challenged Government and local authorities, and our perceptions as a country.”¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

165. Whilst many of the concerns we heard about, such as judicial matters and those relating to benefits payments, are the responsibility of the UK Government and outwith the control of the Scottish Government, we still feel that it has a role to play in ensuring that single fathers are not ignored. **We ask the Scottish Government to set out how the measures it has put in place to partially mitigate welfare reform are benefitting fathers, and to what extent it can further support fathers with shared custody who are facing financial hardship.**

166. The lack of data on shared parenting arrangements is concerning, and, we feel, contributes to the perceived invisibility of lone fathers. **We urge the Scottish Government to explore how it can better capture data on shared residence agreements, and in particular how this might be included in the 2021 census.**

167. We commend the work of the Scottish Prison Service in supporting fathers in prison, and **ask that this be recognised as excellent practice.**

168. We were impressed to hear of the successful application of the GIRFEC approach and the use of dedicated support groups for single fathers and fathers in prison. **We ask the Scottish Government to continue to support and promote the good-practice approaches we heard of, such as those run by One Parent Families Scotland and Families Outside.**

¹⁸⁷ Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee, *Official Report*, 27 March 2014, Col 1975.

ANNEXE A: EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

31st Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 28 November 2013

Work programme: The Committee considered its work programme and agreed to ... (f) consider issues faced by single fathers and fathers who share custody.

32nd Meeting, 2013 (Session 4) Thursday 19 December 2013

Dads and parenting: The Committee considered its approach to an inquiry and agreed to issue a Call for Evidence to stakeholders in January.

2nd Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 30 January 2014

Fathers and parenting (in private): The Committee considered its approach to the inquiry. It agreed to take oral evidence in March, and to consider potential witnesses at a future meeting.

3rd Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 20 February 2014

Fathers and parenting (in private): The Committee considered and agreed its approach to forthcoming oral evidence.

4th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 6 March 2014

Fathers and parenting: The Committee took evidence from—

Kenny Drysdale;
Norman Fraser;
Allan Kidd;
Peter McGhee;
Victor Quested;
Allan Reddick.

5th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 13 March 2014

Fathers and parenting: The Committee took evidence from—

Michelle Campbell, Volunteer Development Co-ordinator, Fife Gingerbread;
David Drysdale, National Development Manager, Fathers Network Scotland;
Robert Hall, Chairman, Familyman Playgroup;
Ewan Jeffrey, Chair, Gay Dads Scotland;
Thomas Lynch, Chairman, Dads Rock;
Neil McIntosh, Senior Children and Fathers Worker, One Parent Families Scotland;
Clare Simpson, Project Manager, Parenting across Scotland;
Kenny Spence, Manager, Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project.

6th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 20 March 2014

Fathers and parenting: The Committee took evidence from—

Brenda Armstrong, Interim Equality and Diversity Lead, Police Scotland;
Patrick Burke, Regional Resource Manager, RBS Business Banking,
Scotland,
The Royal Bank of Scotland;
Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, STUC.

7th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 27 March 2014

Fathers and parenting: The Committee took evidence from—

Dr Gary Clapton, Senior Lecturer, University of Edinburgh;
Karen Love, Team Manager - Sure Start, West Lothian Council;
Inez Murray, NDNA Scotland Policy Committee member and Nursery
owner, National Day Nurseries Association;
Fiona Robertson, Senior Community Learning and Home School
Partnership Worker, South Lanarkshire Council;
Donny Scott, Service Manager, Family and Community Support, City of
Edinburgh Council;

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People, Erica Clarkson,
Team Leader – Policy Delivery Unit (Parenting, Play, Family Support and
Flexible Working), and Simon Stockwell, Policy Delivery – Family and
Property Law, Scottish Government.

Fathers and parenting (in private): The Committee considered and agreed its
approach to a draft report.

8th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 24 April 2014

Fathers and parenting (in private): The Committee considered a draft report.

Various changes were agreed to, and the Committee agreed to consider a revised
draft, in private, at its next meeting.

9th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4) Thursday 8 May 2014

Fathers and parenting (in private): The Committee considered a revised draft
report. Various changes were agreed to, and the report was agreed for publication.

ANNEXE B: ORAL AND ASSOCIATED WRITTEN EVIDENCE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

WRITTEN EVIDENCE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF ORAL EVIDENCE

[Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project](#)
[Gay Dads Scotland](#)
[Fathers Network Scotland](#)
[Father Network Scotland, further submission](#)
[One Parent Families Scotland](#)
[Parenting across Scotland](#)
[STUC](#)
[University of Edinburgh - Dr Gary Clapton](#)

ORAL EVIDENCE

[4th Meeting, 2014 \(Session 4\) Thursday 6 March 2014](#)

Kenny Drysdale;
Norman Fraser;
Allan Kidd;
Peter McGhee;
Victor Quested;
Allan Reddick.

[5th Meeting, 2014 \(Session 4\) Thursday 13 March 2014](#)

Michelle Campbell, Volunteer Development Co-ordinator, Fife Gingerbread;
David Drysdale, National Development Manager, Fathers Network Scotland;
Robert Hall, Chairman, Familyman Playgroup;
Ewan Jeffrey, Chair, Gay Dads Scotland;
Thomas Lynch, Chairman, Dads Rock;
Neil McIntosh, Senior Children and Fathers Worker, One Parent Families Scotland;
Clare Simpson, Project Manager, Parenting across Scotland;
Kenny Spence, Manager, Edinburgh Lone Fathers Project.

[6th Meeting, 2014 \(Session 4\) Thursday 20 March 2014](#)

Brenda Armstrong, Interim Equality and Diversity Lead, Police Scotland;
Patrick Burke, Regional Resource Manager, RBS Business Banking, Scotland, The Royal Bank of Scotland;
Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, STUC.

[7th Meeting, 2014 \(Session 4\) Thursday 27 March 2014](#)

Dr Gary Clapton, Senior Lecturer, University of Edinburgh;
Karen Love, Team Manager - Sure Start, West Lothian Council;
Inez Murray, NDNA Scotland Policy Committee member and Nursery owner, National Day Nurseries Association;

Fiona Robertson, Senior Community Learning and Home School Partnership Worker, South Lanarkshire Council;
Donny Scott, Service Manager, Family and Community Support, City of Edinburgh Council;

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People, Erica Clarkson, Team Leader – Policy Delivery Unit (Parenting, Play, Family Support and Flexible Working), and Simon Stockwell, Policy Delivery – Family and Property Law, Scottish Government.

ANNEXE C: OTHER WRITTEN EVIDENCE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

OTHER WRITTEN EVIDENCE

[Anonymous written submission 1](#)
[Anonymous written submission 2](#)
[Anonymous written submission 3](#)
[Anonymous written submission 4](#)
[Anonymous written submission 5](#)
[Anonymous written submission 6](#)
[Anonymous written submission 7](#)
[Anonymous written submission 8](#)
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[Brown, Tony](#)
[Bruce Family Centre](#)
[CHILDREN 1st](#)
[Children in Scotland](#)
[Circle](#)
[Dadscare](#)
[Dadscare, further submission](#)
[Dads' Club](#)
[Dads R Us](#)
[East Renfrewshire Council](#)
[Families Need Fathers Scotland](#)
[Gilmerton Child and Family Centre](#)
[Malcolm, M](#)
[Midlothian Council](#)
[North Ayrshire Council](#)
[Relationships Scotland](#)
[Scottish Police Federation](#)
[Smithers, N](#)

[South Lanarkshire Council](#)
[West Lothian Council](#)

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