



Glasgow Homelessness Network works to end homelessness in Glasgow, and ensure that outcomes for people affected by homelessness meet their needs, interests and aspirations.

Families Up Front!

A service-user led project to investigate the role of Family Learning in promoting empowerment, employability & inclusion

Evaluation & Model
September 2008

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SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Summary

This Evaluation & Model report combines the learning and evaluation from a 6-month, service user-led Project called Families Up Front! The Project was facilitated by Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN), in partnership with Glasgow Homelessness Partnership (GHP), and funded through the first round of Glasgow Works.

The project ran between January and June 2008, with GHN independently facilitating a 3-month continuation to assist the participants to represent their perspectives through a DVD, and to provide signposting for the participants to engage in local opportunities.

The purpose of Families up Front! was to facilitate an empowering environment for lone parent families affected by homelessness in Glasgow to have a say in the planning and development of local learning opportunities.

Throughout the development of this Project, it became possible to integrate Family Learning into a matrix of identified good practice indicators in working with lone parent families affected by homelessness. We believe that the enclosed Family Learning Model may be particularly appropriate for Lone Parent Families being resettled after a period of displacement and/or exclusion (e.g. families affected by homelessness and/or domestic abuse; families affected by harassment or abuse in previous communities; asylum seekers; refugees).

It is important to note that the evidence base in the development of this Model comes directly from the women involved in the Families Up Front Project. For usefulness to the intended audience, GHN has applied practice-based language and terminology to this Evaluation & Model and has proudly undertaken the writing of this report on their behalf. However, the DVD that accompanies this Report was developed and directed by the families involved, and provides a welcome 'jargon-free' account!

1.1 Report Structure

This Report is structured as follows:

Section A: Provides an introduction to the project and its intended aims. It also provides a context for the process adopted, in relation to Policy, Budget, Inequalities & Participation considerations.

Section B: Provides an outline of the methodology adopted by the families involved and facilitated or assisted by GHN. It also presents our key findings from survey work undertaken.

Section C: Provides relevant contextual concepts and definitions and the characteristics of a best practice Family Model, as developed by the project participants.

1.2 Project Aims

The target client group was lone parent families affected by homelessness, currently residing in temporary or supported accommodation across the Glasgow area. The aims of the Families up Front project were:

- i) To facilitate a service-user led initiative that will investigate and design a new-approach to Family Learning;
- ii) To involve a minimum of 5% of lone parent families affected by homelessness in Glasgow (45 families over a six month period);
- iii) To develop a 'Families up Front!' Business Plan that will translate the outcomes of the 6-month initiative into principles and proposals for a 'new-approach' model;
- iv) To present this Business Plan to Glasgow Works, Equal Access Glasgow and other stakeholders;
- v) To integrate this Glasgow initiative with national Family Learning Week (Oct 08)

These aims were met to the extent that:

- i) The initiative was service-user led (as described below) and participants explored approaches and reported on the key features of the design of a family learning structure which would support the participation of excluded families;
- ii) The project did not engage with 45 families but with 37 families over the 6 month project cycle;
- iii) The business plan approach has produced key features of the Learning model;
- iv) This report and the accompanying DVD on the process, the findings and the model of service has been produced in a format that is intelligible and useful to all stakeholders including Glasgow Works and Equal Access Glasgow;
- v) We are currently working with colleagues in Community Learning to disseminate the Project Findings during Family Learning Week.

2. Context for Process

2.1 Policy Context

- **Homelessness Policy**

Any unintentionally homeless families with children will automatically be in priority need under homelessness legislation and be legally entitled to permanent accommodation. The distinct housing needs of families with children are recognised within homelessness legislation and policy,

specifically through the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004. This order effectively bans the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, regularly provided for homeless households on a temporary basis, for homeless families with children, except in specific circumstances.

In practice, Temporary Furnished Flats will be used to house homeless families in Glasgow until permanent accommodation becomes available. The local housing supply situation will mean that families may have to wait a significant amount of time before they are permanently housed and the permanent accommodation may be in a different area of the city, which may have an impact on issues such as children's education.

- **Asylum Policy: Legacy Cases**

At the time that the fieldwork was carried out, a Home Office directive in relation to the processing of asylum applications meant that a unique situation had occurred in Glasgow housing – a large number of refugees had been granted leave to remain over a very short period of time. These households, referred to as 'legacy cases', would then need to access a route into permanent housing as their right to NASS accommodation normally ends with their asylum status.

However, the granting of leave to remain simultaneously enables access to rights under homelessness legislation, and in exercising those rights these families are housed in Temporary Furnished Flats by Glasgow City Council, until permanent accommodation becomes available. This is a similar route to permanent accommodation that a number of indigenous households affected by homelessness will face. At the time of the fieldwork around 14% of homelessness presentations to the local authority were by Legacy Refugees.

- **Employability Policy**

Glasgow has been chosen as one of fifteen pathfinders in the UK to participate in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Cities Pathfinder Initiative. This initiative aims to enable City areas to develop local solutions to worklessness in their area, allowing them to shape the delivery and provision of training opportunities and employment programmes to tackle worklessness.

The City Strategy Partnership Group has been formed and is now known as 'Glasgow Works', which will guide and monitor delivery of the Strategy. They have chosen 5 main groups they feel have not traditionally engaged or are underrepresented in employability projects. Lone parents are included in their target group which acknowledges the future plans of the DWP to encourage lone parents back to work after their children reach a certain age. Welfare Reform changes will require those lone parents who are capable of work to claim Jobseeker's Allowance if they are currently claiming Income Support (solely based on being a lone parent) when their youngest child is:

- 12 or over from November 2008
- 10 or over from October 2009
- 7 or over from October 2010

BME communities are also a target group of Glasgow Works. Homelessness is not a specific target group, but is among the thematic care groups that each of the 5 local Lead Management Agencies (the Local Regeneration Agencies) are considering.

Employability is identified as having a key role to play in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow. In parallel, the evidenced high aspirations to work among people affected by homelessness can contribute to the objectives and targets of Glasgow Works.

- **Literacies and Learning Policy**

'New Lights' in Adult Literacy & Numeracy in Scotland was commissioned by Learning Connections and analyses Scottish data to establish relationships between literacy and numeracy skills and social and economic factors. The survey found that those with lower skills were much more likely to experience social and economic disadvantage.

The relationship between survey participants' literacy and numeracy skills; experience of the housing market; likelihood of becoming homeless and engagement with the local community was also investigated. It was found that:

- 4% of men & 6% of women had experienced a period of homelessness;
- Women with SCQF level 2 or 3 literacy or numeracy levels are 4 times more likely to experience homelessness.

Survey participant's health & well being was also analysed, where 13% of women were living as lone parents and women with numeracy SCQF level 2 or below - most likely to be bringing up children on their own and to have been teenage mothers.

The recently published Glasgow City Council Learning Partnership Strategic Statement and Framework 2008/2010 has a series of outcome indicators and suggested activities that will go towards achieving the Community Learning & Development plan. Suggested activities to help reach the outcomes include increasing the number of parents/carers taking part in Family Learning programmes. This suggests that there has historically been a shortage of Family Learning provision which they are now planning to address.

- **Child Poverty Policy**

Child poverty can, in part, be addressed by the same policies as general poverty. By maximising the earnings of parents and reducing worklessness, children can be lifted out of poverty through an increase in family income. A report by Scottish Affairs Committee (*Poverty in Scotland*, 2007) reported that although positive steps have been taken to make work pay for many, there are still high levels of child poverty and in-work poverty is still a real prospect for some. Despite the introduction of the national minimum wage and tax credits, many poor children live in households where at least one adult is employed. Particular difficulties were experienced by families who moved in and out of employment, enduring a 'low pay, no pay' cycle, with associated transitional costs.

The Government has succeeded in increasing the incomes of many working parents through the minimum wage and tax credits, but in order to continue to reduce child poverty, the Government's focus on getting people into work needs to be responsive to the needs of families.

It is also acknowledged that moving into work does not necessarily insulate people from poverty, and it may in fact make them more vulnerable. In this context, Family Learning may offer a means to secure higher paid, more secure employment and may therefore merit a clearer role in poverty and child poverty prevention.

2.2 Budget Allocated

Expenditure	Description	Original Budget	Adjustment Description	Actual Spend
5 information events (targeting 75 adults)	Venue & Crèche	£ 3,750		£4,256
	Refreshments	£ 375		<i>(inc above)</i>
	Travelling Expenses	£ 225		£0
6 Steering Group Meetings (targeting 5 members)	Refreshments	£ 150		<i>(inc below)</i>
	Travelling Expenses	£ 90		£89
			5 Meetings: Venue & refreshments	£780
			Incentives	£1000
2 Local Participation Group Meetings	Refreshments	£ 400		--
	Travelling Expenses	£ 240		--
			Not held: reporting sub group & DVD funded by GHN: £2k	
Marketing	Postcard size invitations: print &	£ 1,000	Designed & produced in-house	£738

	publication Posters for community venues	£ 500	--
Postage	Event Mailshot & meeting reminders	£ 350	£233
Travel Expenses	Participants	£ 270	Not required. --
Administration and Consultancy		£ 6569	£7,207
	TOTAL	£ 13,919	(surplus funded by GHN). £14,303

The forecast budget and actual expenditure highlights the following:

- There was a total budget overspend of £384 (2.8%), a shortfall covered by GHN.
- The five information sessions hosted in each Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP) area were £94 (2%) over budget. It was decided not to pay travel expenses as this created accounting difficulties in verifying incurred expenses (if people had not kept bus tickets / taxi receipts etc). However, care was taken to use venues that were central to any clusters of Temporary Furnished Flats in each CHCP area and for ease of public transport use insofar as this was practicable.
- The travelling expenses budget of £270 was unspent as the activity for which they were budgeted was not undertaken as the user-led steering group chose to progress the work by other means (see below).
- The steering group meetings were £1629 (703%) over budget. Venue costs for city centre venues which could accommodate appropriate crèche facilities proved expensive and the steering group itself was larger than anticipated. As these people were not volunteers, but part of a service user expert panel, it was decided to give them gift vouchers to ensure their consistent attendance and participation and to recognise the contribution they were making.
- For reasons stated below the local participation group meetings did not happen and so this freed up money to employ professionals to produce a dissemination DVD that showed the main findings of the Steering Group's enquiry in a manner and through a medium selected by the Group as being most effective.
- The Marketing budget was under-spend by £762 (51%) as GHN produced materials in-house that were then directly marketed to homelessness services who are members of GHN. Through the co-operation of colleagues in the Glasgow Homelessness Partnership, it was possible to directly market by sending materials to the occupants of Glasgow's entire stock of Temporary Furnished Flats.

- The postage budget was underspent by £117 (33%). The project was more reliant on text messaging and email for communication with participants than had been envisaged. These were the agreed and most efficient means of communication after the establishment of the Cross-city group.
- The Consultancy and Administration budget was £638 (9%) under budget. This reflects a changes in the manner in which the work was undertaken as decided by the user-led steering group.

2.3 Equalities Considerations

• Families

A homeless family is defined as one or two adults who are homeless with dependent children. In Glasgow in 2006-07, 27% of homelessness applications were from families:

- 18% from single female parents
- 3% from single male parents
- 4% from couples with children
- 2% from other households with children.

The relationship between homelessness and lone parenthood is significant and lone parents as a household type are the most vulnerable to homelessness. Common reasons for family homelessness include:

- Domestic abuse;
- Relationship breakdown;
- Harassment from neighbours;
- Overcrowding; and
- Loss of private rented accommodation.

Families experiencing homelessness are often economically marginalised and cycles of deprivation occur in families, and often over several generations. Not all families experiencing homelessness present themselves as homeless, and many stay with relatives for periods of time. Overcrowding can become an issue in these cases, whereby everyone in the accommodation becomes effectively homeless.

Homelessness can have a serious impact on a child's mental and physical health, cause behavioural problems, lead to lower educational attainment and negatively impact their social life and development. Homelessness in families affects several individuals, and can have serious consequences for children for the rest of their lives.

There are clear potential connections between poverty, insecure housing, the experience of homelessness, trauma in childhood, violence within the home - alongside disrupted education and poor experiences of learning/education

which create barriers to employability, even after these issues have been resolved.

- **Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**

(Section Source: BME & Homelessness; Sarkkinen; GHN 2008).

Less than 5% of homelessness applications in Glasgow are from people in BME communities, who are instead more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation and are overrepresented in Below Tolerable Standard housing. Racism, lack of awareness of options, cultural conflict between generations are also common issues. BME people tend to rely strongly on BME specific services for advice and advocacy to help them access mainstream services. Settled BME communities in Glasgow are varied and thus the causes and characteristics of their homelessness differ as well. According to the 2001 Census, Glasgow's BME population was around 5.5%. The largest ethnic groups in 2001 were Pakistani (50%), Indian and Chinese. It is thought that in the BME communities, homelessness may be more common among women than men.

A member of the settled BME communities can become homeless for any of the reasons that anyone else can. For instance, relationship breakdown (with or without domestic violence) is a common trigger of homelessness in BME communities. However, there are also differences in the causes and characteristics of BME homelessness and the homelessness in the mainstream population. BME people are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (overcrowding being among the legislative definition of homelessness), and are overrepresented in Below Tolerable Standard housing. The main factors leading to homelessness mostly fall into two categories for BME people:

- overcrowding & poor living conditions, including ejection from overcrowded accommodation;
- insecure accommodation, sometimes linked to employment.

There is evidence that substance misuse is less likely to cause homelessness in the BME communities, however, there can be cultural taboos around these issues, as well as around gambling and mental health problems, and as these issues would be self-reported on making a homelessness presentation to the local authority, there is little information about the actual bearing these have on BME homelessness.

Other issues for BME people with regard to homelessness and housing include, for example:

- racism and anti-social behaviour by neighbours;
- lack of awareness of housing options;
- cultural conflict between generations;
- problems living in close-knit extended family or with in-laws;

- difficulty in getting complaints addressed; and
- lack of appropriate housing, including affordable larger properties to accommodate larger families.

It also appears that mainstream service providers do not fully understand the significance of the need for BME people to be housed in 'safe areas': areas with less racial harassment, community support available, near culturally appropriate shops and religious centres. Indeed, racism and hostility which some experience while in a hostel or once re-housed is an issue. However, outcomes for BME homeless people tend to be better than for homeless people in general, and BME people are less likely to re-present as homeless than the general population.

- **Asylum Seekers/Refugees**

Asylum seekers are entitled to accommodation and subsistence until their asylum case has been decided, or can opt for subsistence only. This is funded through the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Those opting only for subsistence are free to make their own accommodation arrangements. Those who need accommodation, however, are dispersed across the UK on a no-choice, no-refusal basis. In Scotland, Glasgow City Council is the only council receiving dispersed asylum seekers (2007).

The first asylum seekers were dispersed to Glasgow in 2000. The accommodation contracts were renewed in 2006, and there are now three housing providers providing accommodation for asylum seekers: GHA, the Angel Group, and the YMCA. At the end of 2007 approximately 5,300 asylum seekers were staying in Glasgow of whom around 170 are receiving subsistence only support.

When an asylum seeker receives a positive decision on their asylum application, he/she is regarded as a refugee and is given leave to remain. Refugees are entitled to public funds and thus to homelessness assistance. Upon receiving a positive decision, refugees are encouraged to make a homelessness application. They normally have to vacate their NASS supported accommodation with short notice of receiving leave to remain (in case of GHA properties, the security of tenure in current accommodation may be converted).

Over and above homelessness caused by this transitional period, refugees may be particularly vulnerable due to lack of support networks, difficulties with the English language and the British & Scottish systems, and uncertainty around the entitlement to benefits and support. Refugees can experience homelessness for any of the reasons anyone else can. But they may also have particular vulnerabilities, including:

- Lack of support networks of friends and family;
- Difficulties with the English language and understanding the British system;
- Uncertainty around entitlement to benefits and support;
- Past traumatic experiences.

In 2007-08 changes to the ways in which asylum applications were processed were introduced to try and fast-track a backlog that had built up. This meant that a comparatively large number of people were given leave to remain in a short space of time. This statistical 'bubble' will work its way through the system. However, it seems likely that the number of homelessness presentations by non-settled black ethnic minorities will remain higher than in previous years as asylum applications are processed quicker and as homelessness recurs as an issue for people granted leave to remain who fail to settle in accommodation.

2.4 Service User Involvement Context

GHN has long and varied experience of service user involvement and is responsible in carrying out user involvement activities and in building other agencies' capacity for service user involvement. GHN has based this work on, and further developed, evolving theoretical models and models of good practice. In 2008 GHN's model of Service User Involvement was funded by the Scottish Government to share learning across other Local Authority Areas. This will support service user involvement & empowerment as a core component of local homelessness strategies.

GHN adopted, and modified, Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (*Arnstein, Sherry R. A Ladder of Citizen Participation, JAIP, Vol. 35, 1969*) to define a conceptual model for our service user involvement activity, adopting an 'asset contribution and gain' approach, instead of a manipulation and therapy approach.

GHN's framework for involvement and empowerment highlights foundation-level requirements as a pre-requisite for effective involvement, which prioritises the empowerment of the service user.

This project was developed using the **Full Control/Shared Power** participation techniques whereby service users control decision making in the latter stages of the project which sought to describe a model for family learning appropriate for families affected by homelessness.

SECTION B: METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS

1. Methodology

1.1 Service User Involvement

GHN undertook this work in the Full Control/Shared Power participation techniques (as described in Section A). By leading on the development of a 'new-approach' model, we created an empowering environment for homeless families to articulate, structure and present an approach to learning that genuinely engages people and moves them on appropriately.

As the families involved took control of the project, the direction and process undertaken changed from the original plan. This had been anticipated and was welcomed as it demonstrates both that service users have control and that service user led work does develop processes which vary from those anticipated by professionals.

As described above, the people participating in this project were predominantly from the BME community with recent Refugee status. This presented GHN with an opportunity for the participation of a broader spectrum of ethnicities and cultures, and with that came many learning experiences. GHN were determined that although the level may be uniquely high, we should strive to include and maintain participation from as wide a range of people affected by homelessness as possible and that beyond 'representativeness' efforts should be made to maximise representation of minorities within the homelessness community. The most obvious opportunity was to focus on black ethnic minorities and to use this opportunity to learn from the experience of refugees affected by homelessness.

By participating in the project, families were engaged with local providers in a neutral and accessible family-friendly community-based venue. This served as an introduction to local family learning activity providers and thus raised awareness of community-based opportunities that are available for families who may not previously have considered them. Homeless families were able to meet and discuss issues with other homeless families, increase their social networks and minimise social isolation. There is good evidence that those who participated longest in the project have developed and deployed these social networks.

The means to involve children in this work was developed by the service user group. They decided that they would develop a recording/prompt sheet with questions, which would be used to survey their own children. This method was chosen because it meant that the opinions of whole families were captured and this method was safe, ethical and cost effective.

1.2 Community Based Activity

GHN organised 5 community-based events (one in each CHCP area), to provide an initial engagement vehicle. These events were intended to:

- Enable families affected by homelessness to attend a local event in a local community setting (community centre etc);
- Enable families to participate in taster session of a range of family learning activities (computer, reading, mask-making, balloons, storytelling, smoothie-making, gardening, birdhouse making);
- Enable participant families (adults and children) to answer a questionnaire designed to map participants experiences and perceptions of family learning, the range of their current and desired future participation and perceived obstacles to participation;
- Enable participants to nominate themselves to be part of a group to develop the project further.

These events were successfully organised. Family learning taster sessions were organised in conjunction with local community projects and colleges. Participants were recruited in a range of ways:

- Homeless Families were contacted through voluntary sector homelessness services working in the relevant CHCP area. These services had been informed of the event through GHN's contact with its own membership organisations;
- Homeless families in Temporary Furnished Flats were informed of the events through a direct mailing facilitated by the Homelessness Partnership that allowed GHN access to their database;
- Health Visitors, as part of the Homeless Health Team, supported the project by informing homeless families they visit of the events, and undertaking some survey work.

Unfortunately the events were very poorly attended. GHN had hoped that a direct appeal to families affected by homelessness *by a homelessness organisation* to attend such an event would overcome some of the barriers experienced by such families in participating in family learning. However, while this may have been a reasonable and accurate insight, there were

obviously continuing and more profound barriers. It is worth noting here that GHN made efforts that it would have been unreasonable and in some cases impossible for a mainstream family learning provider to make in an effort to involve families affected by homelessness.

Valuable learning from this is that although people may indeed trust a homelessness organisation to treat them appropriately, the fear of stigma is transferred to the venue when 'homelessness' events are held within community venues. This may be true, to a lesser extent, to any stigma or invasion of privacy around being identified as a single parent or being unemployed. The flyer advertising the events and even the logos of the stakeholder agencies – Glasgow Homelessness Network and Glasgow Works - may have contributed to this.

1.3 The Cross City Group

Contrary to the original plan, given the poor response to the initial engagement events and building on the 'marketing' learning, GHN undertook a revised mailing to people resident in Temporary Furnished Flats, alongside visits to direct support agencies. This targeted nature of the mailing ensured it reached lone parent families affected by homelessness, without explicitly mentioning homelessness or lone parent status. The mailing was in the style of an invitation to meet at a neutral city-centre venue (being exclusively used for this event).

The attendance at the first meeting was 25 and the participants agreed that they would all meet together for another 4 subsequent meetings. Attendance at these meetings was good and 22 of the original 25 member of the group maintained contact with the project throughout. GHN's role was to facilitate the group and to respond to its needs. The service users themselves drove the agenda for the group and were particularly keen in developing ways of working that they thought would be accessible and effective. They were keen that their findings, the Family Learning model (Section C), should be adequately communicated to planners and managers of services, as well as to other service users.

At the group's request, GHN organised that experts on Family Learning should visit and give a short presentation and answer questions about issues related to Family Learning. The group then discussed these issues and suggested possible solutions that would help improve the participation by people affected by homelessness in Family Learning.

1.4 The Reporting Sub Group

At the last meeting of the Cross-city Group, it was decided that a smaller subgroup should be formed which would decide how the findings of the larger Group should be presented and disseminated. The group comprised of 7 participants who volunteered to come together for a final 4 meetings to discuss how best to report back on the findings of the main group. In this

context, the reporting sub group members represent themselves and the other 18 participants who worked together as the Cross City Group.

These participants decided that the best media for reporting back would be by video. GHN facilitated this by employing a media company to record and edit a DVD with editorial control resting with the group. Members of the group presented their findings which enabled them to speak as themselves and as members of the wider group and to present the findings in a personalised manner which was accessible.

1.5 Professional Investigation

GHN attended the *Early Learning Matters* Conference in London in June 2008 to better understand the latest theoretical and practice developments in relation to Family Learning. The theme of the conference was Successful Strategies for Engaging Parents.

The importance of involving children in early learning to prevent developmental delay was demonstrated. Acknowledgement was made of the barriers to this learning for parents & children caused by poverty, homelessness, isolation and parent's lack of educational and learning opportunities.

The Peal project www.peal.org.uk looked at what prevents parents being involved with children's learning and development. It concluded that negative experiences of their own learning experience represent a significant barrier, as do professional attitudes to parents. Parents often lack confidence because of the 'professionalisation' of the play and learning process and suspicion of their motivation for involvement with the family.

The FWA New Pin Family Play Programme presented on the importance of parental attachment in children's early learning, where parent's relationship with their children (especially fathers) has a profound effect on their developmental journey. This project looked at ways of illustrating the importance of play with parents and children and trained peer mentors to help this process.

1.5 The Survey

A survey based on a questionnaire was carried out with participants in the community based events (22 respondents), with Health Visitors from Hunter Street Homeless Health Centre undertaking survey work on behalf of GHN (6 respondents). The Survey asked about people's background, current status and aspirations in relation to Learning and Family Learning. It also consulted on the availability and accessibility of local learning opportunities, and any barriers or challenges that they faced.

- **Profile of Survey participants**

Of the 28 participants, 27 were female and 1 male. Asked to identify their ethnicity, there were 4 Asians; 12 Black; 7 White and 5 recorded as

'other'. Their accommodation status was: 1 was living in their own tenancy; 1 was staying with family/friends; 2 were in supported accommodation and 23 were living in Temporary Furnished Flats. 1 participant failed to respond. Of the respondents 12 had one child; 6 had two children; 2 had three children; 3 had four children; 1 had five children and 2 had six children. 2 survey participants failed to respond to this question.

2. Findings

2.1 Results of Survey

Participants' children's ages	Number of Children	Participants' children's ages	Number of Children
0-6 months	2	9 years	4
7-12 months	3	10 years	2
1 year	3	11 years	1
2 years	5	12 years	3
3 years	1	13 years	3
4 years	3	14 years	1
5 years	3	15 years	1
6 years	3	16 years	2
7 years	6	16 years +	11
8 years	2		

- **Involvement of children in learning activities** (excl nursery, school or college)

Based on the age of their child (or their youngest child if they have more than one child), parents were currently involved in the following activities:

Age of child (youngest where appropriate)	Current Learning Activity Undertaken by Parent	No of parents undertaking this learning activity
<1 year	Reading and Writing	1
<1 year	Computers and F E (part-time)	1
	Computers and Another Language	1
<1 year	Learning fulltime in FE	1
<1 year	Sport	1
<1 year	No activity	0
1-3 years	Learning another language	1
1-3 years	Reading and Writing and Outdoor Pursuits	1
1-3 years	Other and Arts & Crafts	1
1-3 years	No Activity	4 (57% of parents)
3-4 years	Other	1

3-4 years	Part Time F E College	1
3-4 years	Learning another language	1
3-4 years	No Activity	0 (0% of parents)
5-7 years	Computers	1
5-7 years	Outdoor Pursuits and Cooking	1
5-7 years	No Activity	3 (60% of parents)
7-10 years	Cookery	
7-10 years	Learning Part Time in FE	
7-10 years	No Activity	2 (5% of parents)

- Age brackets have been used in the context of stages of child involvement in learning (nursery provision from age 3 and school provision from 5) and proposed changes to the benefits system
- Of the 47 children themselves, 15 (32%) were not involved in any non-school / non-nursery learning. Of the 28 families, 9 families' children were not involved in learning.
- Of the 28 parents, 9 were not involved in learning. 5 of these parents' children were not involved in learning either. This means that out of the 28 families, only 5 were not involved in any learning. Four families had no children involved in learning who had parents who were involved.

Age of child	Current Learning Activity Undertaken by Child	Number of children undertaking this activity
<1 year	None	2
1-3 years	Outdoor Pursuits	1
1-3 years	Sports/Fitness	1
1-3 years	Clubs (e.g. Rainbows)	1
1-3 years	Arts & Crafts	1
1-3 years	None	6
3-4 years	Outdoor Pursuits	1
3-4 years	None	2
5-7 years	Computers	1
5-7 years	Arts & Crafts	4
5-7 years	Computers	3
5-7 years	Reading / Writing	2
5-7 years	Sports/Fitness	6
5-7 years	Music/Drama/Dance	2
5-7 years	Clubs	1
5-7 years	None	4

7-10 years	Music/Drama/Dance	1
7-10 years	Other	1
7-10 years	Sports & Fitness	2
7-10 years	Computers	1
7-10 years	Cooking / Baking	1
7-10 years	Music, Dance and Drama	1
7-10 years	Outdoor Pursuits	1
7-10 years	Arts & Crafts	1
7-10 years	None	2
10-12 years	Sports/Fitness	3
10-12 years	None	3
12-16 years	Sports& Fitness	1
12-16 years	None	3

- **Participation in Family Learning**

Of the 28 parents, 10 (36%) said they had undertaken no learning activities with their children. There was no correlation between age of parent, number of children or age of children. However there is evidence of parents putting together complex packages of learning and obviously investing significant effort and time in pursuing family learning.

Current Learning undertaken by Family	Number of families undertaking	Age(s) of children	Age(s) of Parent
Reading & Writing	2	2, 2	26, 20
Reading & Writing Computers and Cooking & Baking	1	4	28
Music, Dance & Drama & Other (Church)	1	6	n/a
Arts & Crafts, Computers, reading/Writing, Sport & Fitness and Outdoor Pursuits and Cooking & Baking	1	6	30
Music, Dance & Drama & Other (Church) and Outdoor Pursuits	1	16	n/a
Cooking & Baking	1	13, 10, 8	47
Gardening and Other (Church)	1	1,7,11, 13	33
Sports & Fitness	1	2,7,13,14,	31
Computers, Reading & Writing, Outdoor Pursuits and Cooking & Baking	1	16,5	34
Sports & Fitness	2	8,9,12,	46,57

Computers, Cooking & Baking and Reading & Writing	1	6	30
Reading & Writing	2	3,5,7	30, 25
Arts & Crafts	1	2,9	30

17 participants were able to identify 37 venues where they had participated in learning. These included Sports & Leisure Centres; Libraries; Churches; Community Centres; voluntary Sector Projects; The Healthy Living Centre; and Local Parks and Museums). Participants were asked to comment on these facilities. Where they chose to express an opinion, all opinions were entirely positive except one comment that public transport costs made venues expensive to get to and that going to a leisure centre was expensive. Where venues can be accessed there is positive response.

- **Barriers to Participation in Family Learning**

When asked to identify barriers to participation, it was clear that the majority of families identified barriers, and in many instances multiple barriers, to their participation in Family Learning. 10 parents did not identify any barriers to participation in Family Learning. However of the 16 who did:

Barrier	Number of families	Ages of children	Parents' age
Confidence and Childcare	1	1	19
Local availability, Childcare, Temp Address	1	2	20
Local availability	3	4, 17	34, 59
Temporary Address	2	4, 4, 2, 1	28, 25
Temporary address & Expense	1	6	30
Time, expense and other	2	16, 13,11,7	n/a, 33
Childcare	2	10 & 11 months	36, 27
Local availability and expense	2	8,9,12,	
Childcare, Expense	1	6, 5 months	30
Local availability, childcare, time.	1	9,2	30

2.2 Summary of Key Findings

A summary of key findings from the Questionnaire Survey is as follows:

- Over 2 in every 3 children were undertaking learning in addition to school or nursery. Most were doing this learning in a family context.
- There is evidence that some children are undertaking 'packages' of learning – i.e. they are involved in a range of learning activities and that siblings have tailored packages' i.e. that they are undertaking different 'packages' of learning. This is proof of parental commitment including the investment of time and effort.

- Being in temporary accommodation and being unfamiliar with the local area are two significant issues for families being resettled after becoming homeless.
- There is a relatively small range of perceived barriers, although these may have a profound effect. Most predominantly these are in relation to:
 - **lack of confidence;**
 - **lack of childcare;**
 - **learning opportunities not available locally;**
 - **lack of information and advice**
 - **cost – particularly transport costs.**
- The Family Learning opportunities that people would like to see more local availability of include:
 - **ICT**
 - **Scottish Culture & History**
 - **Sport and Fitness**
 - **Reading and writing**
 - **Arts and Crafts**
 - **Cooking**

SECTION C:

FAMILY LEARNING MODEL

1. Concepts & Definitions

To understand the potential of Family Learning, it is necessary to understand the inter-connectedness of barriers to learning and employment and how these affect lone parents.

1.1 Family Learning: *Definitions*

- Family learning is learning that is shared together, although the notion of 'family' encompasses the myriad of forms in the contemporary context.
- Family Learning is an approach that is widely regarded as assisting people to operate as a family, to participate in and enjoy learning activity, and to develop further skills for parents/ carers to interact positively with their children and support them in learning.
- Improving literacies for family life fits with the four key areas that the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland report 2001 describes.

1.2 Family Learning in relation to: *Barriers to Learning*

Lone parents are a hard-to-reach group for education and learning providers. The most obvious barrier to participation in learning for parents is the cost and availability of childcare and the daily demand of caring, especially for younger children. *Family* learning has potential as a means of overcoming these barriers, as engaging parent and child in learning together addresses the issue of childcare. While it may contribute to parenting skills and to child development, our focus here is on the opportunity to get involved in learning when children are very young. Family Learning can be flexible and may be short interventions which, at least initially, do not demand large commitment from participants and provide a 'positive activity' that is shared together.

1.3 Family Learning in relation to: *Barriers to Employment*

Lone parents have considerable barriers to employment – the availability and acceptability of affordable childcare; the de-skilling of lone parents as they lose contact with the work environment, lack of awareness of the demands of the labour market and welfare benefit all act as a considerable disincentive in taking on work or in 'risking' participation in the labour market in lower paid or part time work. Family Learning provides personal development opportunities and the enhancing of soft skills, including confidence, motivation and self esteem, and offers the chance to develop means to address employability issues inter-generationally within families and in communities. Family learning offers a chance for parents to explore an interest in a subject and learning with their child; this may have an obvious link with employment or the link may be less obvious. As the parent develops these skills, there are obvious links to further training and to employment. Consequently, Family Learning increases employability and acts as a means of overcoming personal, social and skill barriers to employment for when children are no longer dependent.

In the context of welfare reform, the Family Learning model is a useful approach to assist lone parents who have younger children, thereby giving them the opportunity to develop skills and vocational interests before their transition to Job Seekers Allowance.

1.4 Family Learning in relation to: *Engagement*

Family Learning can be very effectively deployed as an engagement tool for a hard-to-reach group and those furthest from the labour market. It is a non-intrusive, holistic, and achievable method of providing a goal-focused intervention for those at risk of, or affected by, multiple exclusion. Over time it is reasonable to expect that some parents will develop further learning interests and seek to develop these as their child becomes more independent or is able to take up a place in a nursery or at school.

1.5 Family Learning in relation to: *Inclusion*

Family Learning is an approach that has the potential to be particularly effective for homeless families, asylum seekers and refugees as it addresses the complexity of needs that promote sustainable resettlement. For example, community integration; positive social networks; minimising isolation; enhancing personal and basic skills development; increased social capital and, ultimately, employability.

2. Characteristics of a Family Learning Model

The following provides characteristics of a Family Learning Model that may be particularly appropriate for Lone Parents Families being resettled after a period of displacement and/or exclusion (e.g. families affected by homelessness and/or domestic abuse; families affected by harassment or abuse in previous communities; asylum seekers; refugees).

It is possible to integrate Family Learning into a matrix of identified good practice indicators in working with people affected by homelessness. The remainder of this report outlines the key components of this matrix. For usefulness to the intended audience, GHN has applied practice-based language and terminology; however the evidence base in the design and development of this matrix comes directly from the women involved in the Families Up Front Project.

☑ Strand 1: User Involvement

Previous research by Glasgow Homelessness Network (*Dis) empowerment Through Involvement?* (Sarkkinen & Brunjes; GHN 2007) concluded that “effective service user involvement enhances the employability of service users by assisting the development of their skills. It also creates an empowering environment which enhances people’s self-esteem and confidence.”

Any attempt to involve people, disempowered through their experience of homelessness and exclusion, in learning should actively involve them in the development of learning services and take a holistic and learner-centred approach. This involvement and participation also strengthens the link between learning and employability by developing transferable skills and aptitudes – negotiation, reflection, assertion, and confidence.

☑ Strand 2: Social Networks

Useful social networks can prevent crisis in housing as well as in employment. Likewise social networks can support people in crisis. Good social networks can insulate people from homelessness, exclusion and from unemployment. Conversely, people who are unemployed and homeless can develop social networks which will help their pathway to resettlement and employment.

For some, there is a causal link between social isolation and poor health, particularly mental health. People who are socially isolated are more difficult to engage in services, increasing their isolation. Any service seeking to address unemployment through initial engagement in Family Learning, should maximise and support opportunities for the expanding of social networks.

☑ Strand 3: Peer Mentoring/Volunteering

Support through mentoring may be a useful means by which to address isolation and improve social networks (e.g. peer translation was a significant feature of the Families Up Front project). The stigma associated with homelessness, exclusion and related issues means that peers may help to quickly establish positive relationships of mutual trust. The experience of homelessness and other forms of exclusion can be traumatic and the trauma can exacerbate the crisis and impede inclusion. Peer Mentoring can not only support engagement, but ensure engagement - as the learning opportunity is only part of the benefit an excluded family may perceive themselves as receiving. The peer mentoring & volunteering opportunities that would arise would in themselves represent a positive contribution to employability, creating significant benefits in the development of transferable skills.

Strand 4: Advice & Information

Timely and appropriate advice and information for learners and potential learners will support engagement and appropriate engagement. During this project, this was the issue that stimulated the most debate among participants. Family learning opportunities are not consistent or uniform and are communicated in a myriad of ways across communities. However, by their nature, community-based services communicate in a manner and by means which are thought appropriate to a community and do not necessarily consider outsiders or newcomers to that community.

This is a particular issue for some homeless families and other displaced families, who are in new and perhaps temporary accommodation. Basic information on the location of venues and the opportunities available are not freely available to people who are new to a community even if they seek them out. Services need to not only publicise learning opportunities and indicate the location of venues etc, they need to actively recruit families affected by homelessness by reaching out to these families directly.

Participants suggested that there should be more publicity given to a Family Learning Week that had a higher profile within communities. Direct marketing to homelessness accommodation would help new community members to know what opportunities were available. Participants also thought that learning marketed to children in schools may encourage parent involvement and that all family learning activities should be marketed via leaflets and booklets through community centres, through being sent home with children from schools and through local event boards and community centres.

Strand 5: Settled Accommodation

While a service offering family learning opportunities to families affected by homelessness would not be responsible for providing accommodation, the service should do nothing that would obstruct the provision of accommodation and duly recognise that learners and their families may move on at very short notice. Some families would be more likely to engage if they knew that they could maintain involvement after moving to permanent accommodation or be able to transfer to a similar service in their new community. It should also be recognised by learning providers that many people in temporary accommodation are wary of integrating into new communities as they anticipated they will be resettled again. However, temporary accommodation for some can last for many months and sometimes years. Any learning or employability considerations and aspirations cannot be tackled in isolation from a family's critical housing considerations and aspirations.

Strand 6: Travelling Expenses

It is generally recognised that people should not be worse off because of their attempts to improve their employability and get into employment. Participants in this project felt that although services went to considerable trouble to have free learning opportunities or to offer refreshments, the cost of travel represented a disincentive or even a barrier to participation. The cost of family travel was perceived to be a significant percentage of household budgets. Extra 'unnecessary' travel – to take up a family learning opportunity was sometimes not seen as a viable choice.

Participants suggested that free travel for children taking part in family learning would be a significant enabler to participation.

Strand 7: Local Networks: Engage – Refer – Engage!

Strategic social support is a key component for learning and employability providers to engage the most marginalized groups. These groups are sometimes described as 'difficult to engage' or 'hard to reach'; when there are in fact other services already effectively engaging the same people in relation to alternative support needs. This is particularly true of voluntary sector organisations, where some people feel most comfortable accessing the services of a trusted, non-statutory agency. The majority of participants in this project disclosed regular engagement with the Scottish Refugee Council, but little engagement with local employability providers. Proactive and innovative partnership protocols with non-employability providers will reap benefits for the Cities employability strategy.

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