



Young Parents: A Better Start

An Integrated Approach to
Policy and Practice

Seminar Report

Contents

Seminar Report	2
Seminar Delegates' Working Location.....	3
Speakers.....	4
Group Discussions.....	5
Workshops.....	5
What you thought – Summary of the Evaluation Questionnaire	7
Qualitative Feedback.....	7
Quantitative Feedback.....	9
Conference Delegate Pack Contents	10
Appendix 1 – Summary of Workshops	11

Seminar Report

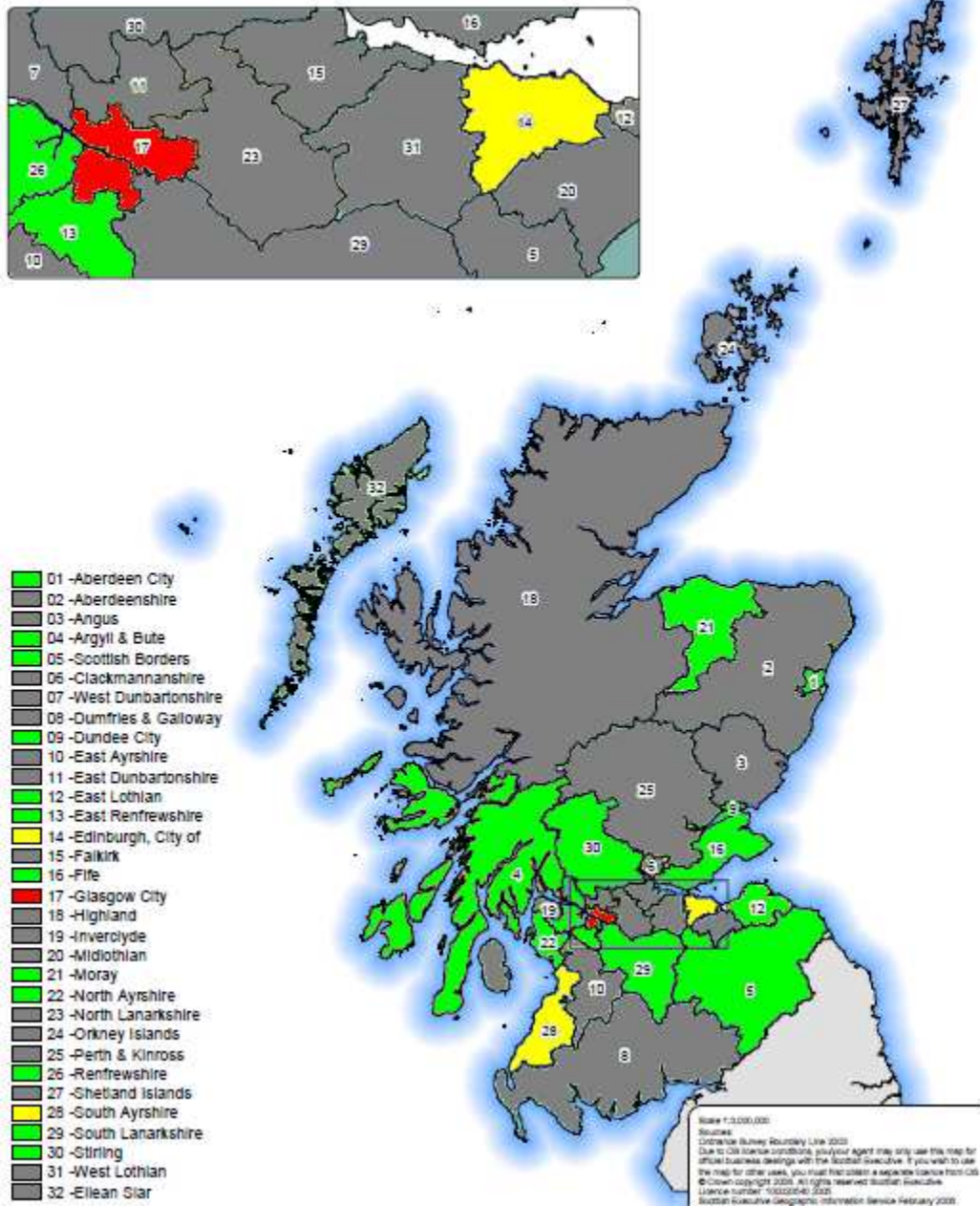
This one day Seminar, was held by in partnership by Aberlour's National Parenting Development Project and One Parent Families Scotland. Through the seminar Aberlour and One Parent Families Scotland sought to respond to concerns raised by practitioners in Scotland about the availability, accessibility and suitability of services for young parents and investigate the willingness of young parents to engage with those services. The seminar was planned to be of interest to staff working in health, education, parenting, early years, youth services, housing and community organisations who are keen to develop integrated planning and practice to ensure the best start for young parents and their children.

One Parent Families Scotland and Aberlour structured the Seminar to address the following outcomes:

- Increase participants' awareness of the needs of young parents and their perceptions of professionals working with them.
- Allow participants' to explore the policy context in Scotland and UK as it impacts on Young Parents
- Give participants' the opportunity to share practice "the barriers and the breakthroughs" when working with young parents
- Help participants' to develop clearer plans for working together leading to more integrated service planning & delivery for this group

Conference delegates were working in a variety of locations across Scotland for a range of organisations from the public and voluntary services.

Conference Delegates' Working Location



More Than 15 Delegates Glasgow City – 29	5 – 15 Delegates Edinburgh – 15 South Ayrshire - 6	1 – 5 Delegates
		No Delegates

Speakers

The Programme for the day began with an opening address and welcome to the Conference by Sandra White, Member of the Scottish Parliament.

Sue Robertson, Director of One Parent Families Scotland then spoke under the general heading of *“Does UK and Scottish Policy meet the needs and desires of Young Parents?”*. Sue noted the high rate of teenage parenthood in areas of deprivation and among care leavers. She then compared Scottish and UK policies regarding young parents, including Benefits, Childcare and Poverty Policy, Sexual Health Policy and Scottish Policy Objectives including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Early Years Framework (EYF). She noted that the English strategy on Teenage Pregnancy had also included work with parents and had shown some good examples of effective work. She also referred to work carried out by OPFS on the needs of young parents.

Lis Bardell, Project Manager, National Parenting Development Project then emphasised some of the underlying principles of working with parents. Lis went on to describe a staged intervention model that allows a strategic approach to the organisation and delivery of services to parents. She articulated some of the challenges facing Local Authorities as they move to refocus resources towards the early years and describe some specific issues, such as service evaluation, workforce development and effective partnership working that are challenging service providers in Scotland.

The final speaker of the morning session was Margaret McLeod, Policy and Information Manager, Youthlink Scotland. Margaret spoke on the lived experience of parenthood for young people, on the basis of Youthlink’s work. Central to Margaret’s presentation was the need to engage with young parents as young people, as well as parents, and the difficulties in achieving this when parenting services are often geared toward services for adults.

Group Discussions

After the morning tea break participants were invited to engage in group discussions, discussing the services that they offered for young parents at the moment, the challenges they faced and the successes they had had in providing those services. The 8 round tables at the seminar each included approximately 9 conference participants, and group members were assigned to groups in order to give each group a wide range of members, both in terms of type of service, and in terms of service location. A group facilitator was provided for each of the round table groups to guide and record group discussion. Specifically, groups were asked to address two questions:

- What are members of the group doing already to support young parents and what stories of success have they had?
- What are the goals for the future that members of the group have in their work with young parents?

Space was given at the end of this discussion for each group to feed back the major points that they had raised, and to share any positive stories of success that had been described.

Workshops

In the afternoon participants attended their chosen Workshops, which included:

- **Education and Young Mothers**
 - Presented by: Marriann Raymond, Fife Young Parents Project
- **Young Parents and Being Looked After**
 - Presented by: Susan Stewart, Langlees Family Centre, Aberlour Child Care Trust
- **Child Protection Issues**
 - Presented by: Kim McRae, One Parent Families Scotland
- **Engaging Young Parents in Employment**
 - Presented by: Kathryn Roarty, Young Parent Project, Glasgow
- **Engagement**
 - Presented by: Lesley Ingles, Youthlink (Surestart), North Lanarkshire
- **Sexual Health and Relationships**
 - Presented by: Trish Dunlop and Kristine Boyle, Speak Easy
- **Homeless Young Parents**
 - Presented by: Alissa Ruane, The Rock Trust

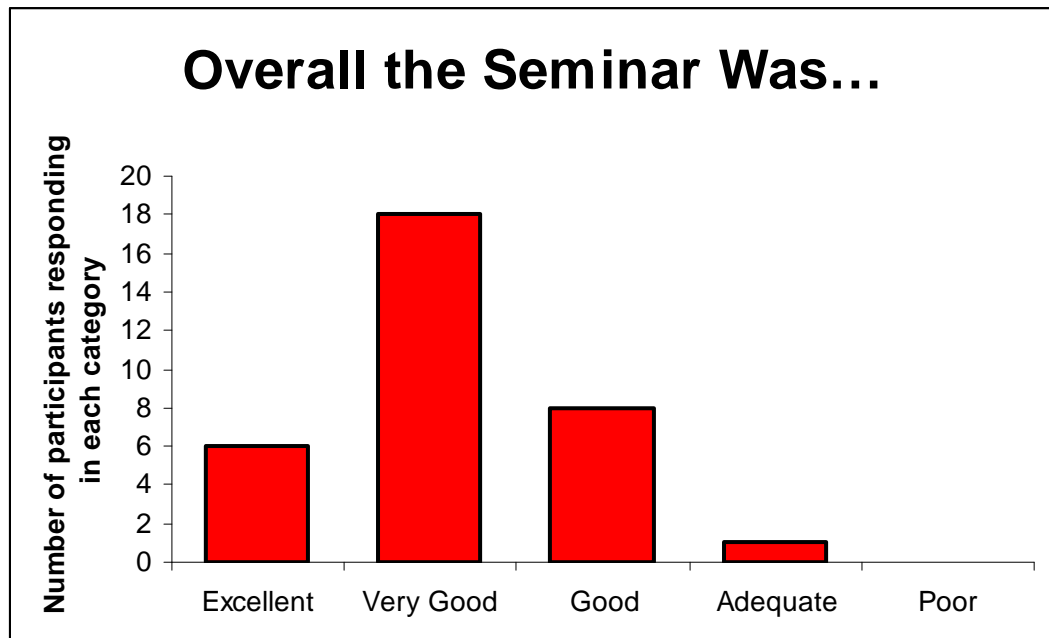
A summary of each of the Workshops, as well as the PowerPoint presentations for each (where available) are available below (Appendix 1).

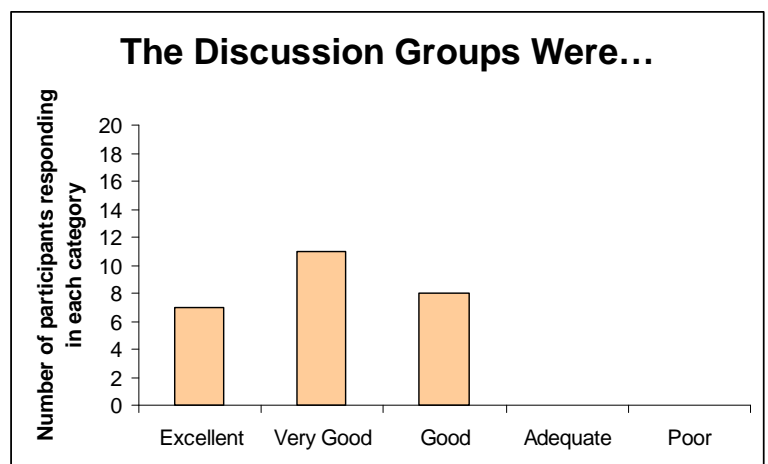
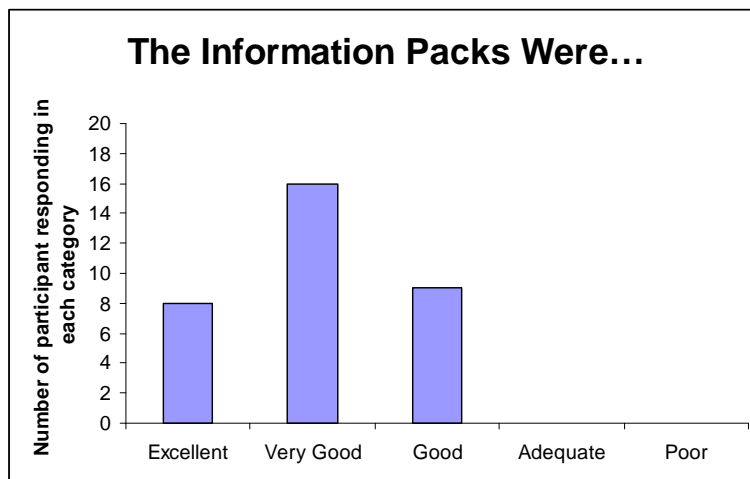
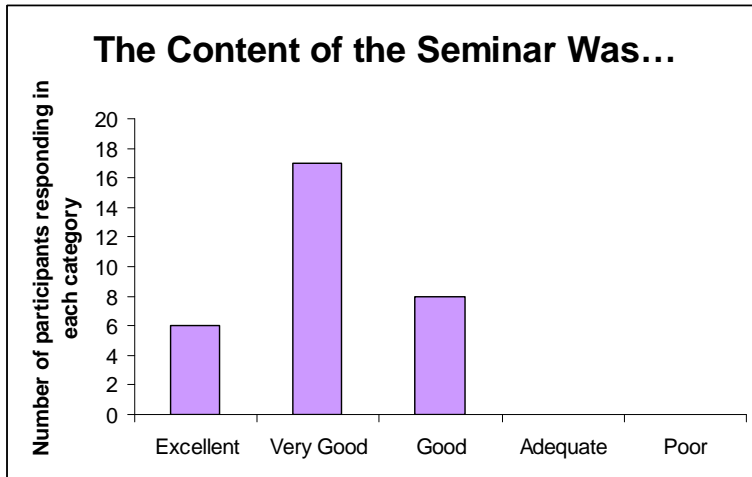
What you thought – Summary of the Evaluation Questionnaire

Quantitative Feedback

Within the delegates pack an Evaluation questionnaire was included and participants were asked to complete this at the end of the event. A total of 33 questionnaires were completed and collected on the day.

Overall feedback to the seminar was good, with the majority of participants rating the day as either Excellent or Very Good. Participants also stated that the content of the seminar, information pack, and round table discussions were either Excellent, Very Good or Good (See below).





Qualitative Feedback

Feedback was specifically sought on what Participants found most useful from the seminar, and what further issues participants felt needed to be addressed in light of issues raised over the course of the day. A consistent response in the feedback from participants was the benefit of having a range of different professionals attending the seminar, and the value of the group discussions with group members of mixed backgrounds / services. Specifically participants stated that it was "... good to hear what others are doing all across Scotland for a geographical spread of good practice..."

In terms of the content of the Seminar, participant reported that it provided an "excellent link to national strategy", and generally facilitated a "greater awareness of the specific issues facing young parents". Further, some participants felt that they had increased their knowledge for specific areas of work with young parents, as reflected in comments such as "I am now more aware of care leavers and homeless (issues)" and that knowledge was gained about "planning services, useful tips on policy and planning services to young/parents, how to effectively recruit and keep your group interested and involved".

As a result of the material covered on the day, participants indicated that they felt that they would benefit from further opportunities to learn and share good practice in a number of specific fields. These included:

- In depth Child Protection
- Working with parents who have been abused
- Working with parents who experience difficulties with substance misuse
- Social marketing of services to young parents
- Effective interagency collaboration in relation to work with young parents

Finally, many of the participants at the Seminar indicated that they would be enthusiastic about a follow up event that allowed a more in depth discussion about practice issues surrounding work with young parents. Such a day is currently under consideration by the National Parenting Development Project and One Parent Families Scotland.

“Young Parents: A Better Start” – An Integrated Approach to Policy and Practice

Conference Delegate Pack

- Conference Programme
- Opening Address by Addie Stevenson: Chief Executive, Aberlour Child Care Trust
- Slides to Accompany Speakers Presentations
- Model of Staged Intervention for Parenting Services – Bill Whyte, 2007
- Venue Map
- Marketplace List of Stalls
- Delegate List of Contact Details
- Workshop Allocations
- Training / Workforce Development Brochure – The National Parenting Development Project
- Conference Evaluation Form
- Young Parents Survival Guide, produced by One Parent Families Scotland

Appendix 1 – Summary of Workshops

Workshop 1 – Education and Young Mothers

Presented by: Marriann Raymond, Fife Young Parents Project

During this workshop, group members were presented with a case study and asked to explore educational issues. Through this exploration issues such as access to education for Young Parents, access to subsidiary services, such as childcare and nursery places (that allow Young Parents to Engage in Education) and the role of family and other networks. The differences in the educational opportunities for Young Parents were explored between the various local authorities in Scotland. Finally, some general points were raised about the importance of GP's and parents in inspiring Young Parents to stay in / return to education, and how schools can be flexible in supporting the needs of students who are young parents, using Additional Support Needs legislation.

Workshop 2 – Young Parents and Being Looked After

Presented by: Susan Stewart, Langlees Family Centre, Aberlour Child Care Trust

This workshop opened with a discussion of the challenges involved in parenting for any parent, and how these challenges were compounded when young people were also coming out of the care system. Further, it was noted that Young Parents also coming out of care system are often challenged with moving directly from a role that considers them as vulnerable and unable to completely care for them selves to a role where they are expected to care from themselves and for their children. Implications for attachment were also explored; in terms of the Young Parents own attachment experiences, the attachment experiences of their children and the relationship between Young Parents and workers. Susan also described the challenges faced specifically by young women in the care system and the associated messages for intervention.

Workshop 3 – Child Protection Issues

Presented by: Kim McRae, One Parent Families Scotland

The workshop presented by Kim McRae began by exploring the various factors that impact on parenting capacity and relating those to the experience of young parents. She then proposed that the normal development in the teenage years involves risk and that this behaviour needs to be assessed in terms of its potential impact on parenting. Kim then proposed that Young Parents should be understood as active, but marginalised actors in society, and that because of the worry often experienced by Young Parents in regards to asking for help, intervention needs to be respectful and balanced in terms of both assessing risk and promoting protective factors. Finally, a positive direction for the way forward was planned, including advocating for young parents, being proactive about sharing information and being clear about the time and resources required for successful work.

Workshop 4 – Engaging Young Parents in Employment

Presented by: Kathryn Roarty, Young Parent Project, Glasgow

Unfortunately no information is available from this workshop.

Workshop 5 – Engagement

Presented by: Lesley Ingles, Youthlink (Surestart), North Lanarkshire

Staff from Youth link described a project that they had recently been running to engage Young Parents. The “Sure Start Homelink Project” works with parents of 0-3 year old children across North Lanarkshire. The program was described as including resources for home visitation and Young Parents only groups as tools for increasing engagement with Young Parents. Other issues identified included the importance of crèche services, the content of sessions with young parents and a specific emphasis on engaging with fathers. Of the challenges identified, planning was emphasised, particular where young parents themselves were involved in the process, although this led to better outcomes overall. The session ended with a number of clear messages, including the importance of recognising the network of people around young parents, and the importance or understanding why parents are really involved in services.

Workshop 6 – Sexual Health and Relationships

Presented by: Trish Dunlop & Kristine Boyle, Speak Easy

To start this workshop, group members were asked to undertake an exercise that was designed to reveal the degree to which young people are often under pressure to have sex, and the challenges this presents to them. The interaction between these challenges and the challenges that parenthood presents were then examined. Group members then worked through a “Who Wants to be a Contraception Millionaire” game that can be used with Young Parents. This raised issues such as the number of young people who do want to hear about sex and relationships with their carers, and information that can support parents and carers to have this discussion. Trisha and Kristine then went on to discuss the parts of the Speak Easy program, that includes information on contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), work with schools, and an emphasis on taking a developmental perspective on the sexual health needs of young people.

Workshop 7 – Homeless Young Parents

Presented by: Alissa Ruane, The Rock Trust

Alissa began this workshop by introducing the work of the Rock Trust with 16-24 year old young people. A discussion was used to explore the basic needs that a home provides, revealing that homelessness impacts on people in a very wide range of areas, from safety to relationship skills, as well as concrete resources issues. Alissa then spoke about current accommodation in services in Edinburgh. The vital importance of communication between Social Work and Police was also discussed, as homeless Young Parents move through different geographical areas and different stages of homelessness. The needs of homeless Young Parents were also discussed in terms of both housing and their needs as parents and as people. For example, time for the gym or shopping trips can be important in meeting the needs of homeless young parents as individuals.

Aberlour Child Care Trust
36 Park Terrace
Stirling FK8 2JR

www.aberlour.org.uk

One Parent Families Scotland
13 Gayfield Square
Edinburgh EH1 3NX

www.opfs.org.uk

Tel: 01786 450335
Fax: 01786 473238
Email: enquiries@aberlour.org.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC007991

Helpline: 0808 801 0323
Tel: 0131 556 3899
Email: info@opfs.org.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC006403

