



One Parent Families: Current Policy Issues

Aug. 2009

Current Policy Issues affecting Lone Parents in Scotland are:

- **Welfare Reform:** Lone parents are progressively being required to move from Income Support to Job Seeker's Allowance and be actively looking for work when their youngest child reaches a set age, unless a child has significant additional support needs. Parliament is also discussing further changes abolishing Income Support and Incapacity Benefit. OPFS is part of a broad Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform which is opposing these changes. (www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/welfare-reform-scot.htm)
- **Child Poverty:** Children in lone parent families are significantly more likely to be poor than children in two parent families. Both the UK and the Scottish Government have pledged to abolish child poverty by 2020. The UK Government is currently debating the Child Poverty Bill which would be a legal commitment to end child poverty with a requirement for annual reporting to Parliament on progress. The Scottish Government has indicated its support in principle for this Bill and we are working with other voluntary organisations in the End Child Poverty Campaign Group to support this Bill (www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)
- **Childcare:** Lone parents need access to affordable flexible childcare to be able to work, but in many areas there is a real shortage of such care, especially for older children or children with additional support needs. The Scottish Early Years Framework included a commitment to review childcare availability in the medium term (next 3-5 years), but we are pressing for more urgent action on this and also for improved financial help for parents with childcare costs.

Some of the Policy papers OPFS has produced on these issues are:

Welfare Reform and childcare

National/policy responses/briefing childcare in Scotland 23209

Child Poverty:

National/policy responses/end child poverty/ECP letter to Scottish MP's budget 09 revised.

OPFS has also produced an outline of the overall UK and Scottish Policies affecting lone parents in Scotland

Web/articles and documents/policy framework for lone parents in Scotland 20090812