



Hardship Experienced by Children and Young People in Jersey

**A report from the
Co-ordinating Committee
of the
Decade for the Eradication of Poverty**

July 2003

The Co-ordinating Committee of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (“the Committee”) was formed in 1996 to facilitate co-ordination of voluntary initiatives taken by groups inspired by the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. The Committee is currently chaired by Mrs Iris le Feuvre. Previous chairs have been Deputy Maurice Dubras and Jurat Nick Herbert.

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25 July 2003

I am pleased to write the foreword to this report as I believe it examines issues of great importance to our Island.

Two years ago the Co-ordinating Committee of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty released a significant report entitled "Housing and Poverty in Jersey". In researching that topic it became increasingly apparent that children and young people were suffering hardship in a number of aspects of their lives and this prompted us to begin the investigation that is summarised in this document.

When you read this report I hope that, like me, you will resolve that we cannot ignore these issues. I hope that you will also agree that the relevant authorities, supported by the community, must take positive steps to ensure that all our children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Iris H. Le Feuvre". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Iris Le Feuvre OBE

Chair

Co-ordinating Committee of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

Executive Summary

This report summarises an investigation into the nature and extent of hardship experienced by children and young people in Jersey. It draws on material collected in a series of five workshops together with individual interviews and written submissions that have, in total, involved almost thirty professionals whose background and experience span early years, statutory and charitable organisations; primary, secondary and tertiary education; social services; public health; employment services.

Key messages that the investigation highlighted are:

- Disappointingly the States of Jersey have not researched the scale and extent of hardship and studies that have been completed address only isolated aspects. In the absence of suitable data the indirect evidence, including research done in Guernsey suggests that there may be something of the order of 1,900 households with one or more young persons experiencing what would widely be regarded as real hardship.
- There is a perception that the number of young people experiencing hardship is increasing.
- The causes of hardships faced by Jersey's young people are many and varied and do not lend themselves to simple solutions. Circumstances that increase the risk of hardship appear similar to those in the UK (unemployment, lone parents, the sick and disabled, and large families). Aspects that are more prominent in the Island include the influence of inadequate and costly housing and the high cost of living in general and the effects this has on the work/life balance.

The Way Forward

The complex and multi-faceted causes of hardship do not admit simple solutions. Some of the risk factors are matters that have to do with economic policies and should be set in the context of a coherent strategy to eradicate poverty, perhaps along the lines being worked out in Guernsey. Yet there are positive steps that can be taken now that can have an immediate effect on those young people that are currently experiencing hardship. In particular we have the opportunity to equip those at risk with skills that will allow them to break out of a cycle of poverty that can otherwise be perpetuated from one generation to the next. We can also take steps to empower parents, kin and friends to create a network of support that can make a decisive difference. Some of these measures require significant investment; others only require a redirection of existing expenditure or smarter co-ordination among agencies. Examples of the measures that could have a significant impact are:

- Expand vocational learning opportunities at secondary level to provide a curriculum that better matches the ability profile of students
- Better and earlier support for those who are not getting the most from the learning opportunities
- More support and guidance for parents of young children

The scale of the hardship experienced by our young people is ultimately a reflection of the values that underpin our community. The authors of this report believe that the current situation does not reflect the values held by many Islanders. We therefore hope this report will draw attention to this gap and give added momentum to the on-going efforts to eradicate poverty.

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Introduction

In July 2001 the Co-ordinating Committee of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (“the Committee”) published a report entitled “Housing and Poverty in Jersey”. Probably the most frequently recurring theme which we encountered during our research for the report was the hardship experienced by young people living in inadequate accommodation. We therefore decided to investigate more fully the lives of children and young people for whom hardship of varied kinds is an everyday experience. In our report references to “children” include “young people” and vice versa unless the context indicates otherwise.

What is Hardship?

The title “Hardship Experienced by Children and Young People” was deliberately chosen to indicate that the problem is far wider and more complex than simply the lack of sufficient money, though financial poverty is obviously a major factor. The concept of hardship that we had in mind has been expressed particularly clearly by Peter Townsend¹:

Individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least are widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities².

Our Approach

This report is our synthesis of views gathered from a series of workshops, interviews and written submissions from professionals working in relevant areas. The participants who furnished us with their perceptions and experiences were not a random sample and as such, we cannot claim that their views are representative of those who work with children and young people. Nonetheless, we have endeavoured to listen to and capture a wide range of views. We therefore hope this report will act as a stimulus to more rigorous investigation of the connections between individual experiences and wider social structures that impact on those living in hardship in Jersey. More importantly we hope that the evidence presented in this report will generate the political will to identify and implement measures that will lead to the eradication of poverty among children and young people.

Finally, although we have included several first hand accounts from those in hardship we recognise that the report relies predominantly on the views of professionals. Ideally we would have liked to give more weight to the views of those experiencing hardship themselves but time and resource constraints dictated otherwise.

The invitation to contribute expressed our aims in the following terms:

¹ The question of the definition of poverty in Jersey was touched on in steering group’s paper *Poverty Indicators, Research, Reality, Recommendations for Jersey* issued in 2000. Further discussion of the meaning of poverty is included in the Appendices.

² Peter Townsend cited in Levitas, R. (1998) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, Basingstoke, Palgrave

“We should like you to talk about your perspective of hardship experienced by children, identifying the key issues as you see them, and commenting on how serious you think they are. Specific illustrations (obviously non-attributable to individuals) would also be helpful”.

Details of the range and background of the individuals who contributed is given in the appendices. The experience of these professionals spanned early years, statutory and charitable organisations; primary, secondary and tertiary education; social services; public health and employment services.

Individual and Societal Responsibilities

Social exclusion is a term that has gained much political currency since the 1997 elections in the UK: *“Though the concept of social exclusion targets a smaller section of society than earlier categories such as ‘the poor’ or ‘the underclass’, it does so in a way which does imply a societal responsibility for problems of fragmentation, as well as indicating a concern to draw people back³.”*

The Committee felt that it was important to highlight not only particular instances of younger people living in hardship, but to also acknowledge how whole sections of society are excluded from important life opportunities and experiences. Furthermore, we were conscious that debate around the issue of hardship can focus upon the ‘individual failings’ of those who live in hardship. This report embraces a broader picture in which problems can be seen in context as social ills rather than individual failings: *“The latter individualises failure by identifying problems in the home environment and not in the social and economic conditions in which people live. Such viewpoints have been widely criticised as victim blaming, in that people are seen as being responsible for factors which disadvantage them but over which they have no control⁴.”*

This report explicitly rejects a “victim blaming” mindset that imposes on society’s most disadvantaged members the additional burden of total responsibility for their circumstances.

Interrelationships

This report is largely based upon the comments of professionals who work within the health, social care and education systems in Jersey. They were asked to give their views on the impact of hardship on children and young adults as they progressed along the path from infant to young adult. Much of the feedback reinforced the observation that hardship issues were ‘multi-complex’ affecting different families in different ways and on different levels.

Our report focuses upon the core of common difficulties and challenges that young people face through their experiences of living in hardship in Jersey. In the lives of many young people these are not separate sections, but strands woven together in different patterns, making up complex textures of hardship. The writing of reports, however, demands a neater, more clearly defined structure. This structure may obscure these manifold interrelationships between factors. The structure may also deceive the reader into expecting solutions that are overly simplistic. Our report should be read with this in mind.

³ Batsleer and Humphries in Clarke, J Gerwitz, G and McLaughlin E (2000) *New Managerialism, New Welfare?* Sage, London, p76

⁴ Naidoo, J and Wills, J (1998) *Health Promotion, Foundations for Practice*, RCN, London, p37

Part 1 - Many Faces of Hardship

Hardship in the Early Years

Factors which can greatly reduce the potential of a child to benefit from education and fulfil his or her potential are often present long before the age of compulsory schooling. Some of these factors are inherent in the home circumstances; some are present before the child is even born. The following list summarises major factors identified during the consultation process:

- Reduced levels of self-esteem and emotional stability.
- Heightened risk of emotional and behavioural problems.
- Low paid jobs and single parents who are struggling to survive.
- Costly and inadequate housing.
- Lack of extended family support.
- Stress from long working hours.
- Low job security.
- Fear of taking off time from work when children are unwell.
- Lack of after school and holiday care.

Perpetuating Poverty

Many of the people that gave their views talked about the cyclical nature of poverty. In particular, concerns were expressed about the vulnerability of teenage girls in relation to early sexual activity, infection with sexually transmitted diseases⁵ and pregnancy. Early sexual activity is widely thought to be linked with low self esteem and young people in hardship will therefore be especially vulnerable. In turn, early pregnancy increases the likelihood that problems faced by parents re-emerge in the next generation who may find themselves born into difficult material circumstances. This self perpetuating pattern of hardship has been clearly documented in the UK where research reveals that the risk of becoming a teenage mother is almost ten times higher for a girl whose family is in social class V than those in social class I⁶.

Some readers might be tempted to dismiss these situations as “problems of the irresponsible or inadequate”. But this fails to recognise the role of circumstances and side-steps the burdens faced by children in these situations. Children from families which experience from

⁵ In the UK sexually transmitted infections have increased by 61% in the past decade with increases of 35%, 122% and 207% recorded for Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and Syphilis respectively.

⁶ Tackling Health Inequalities, Summary of the 2002 Cross Cutting Review, Department of Health

day to day, some of the many problems listed above find it correspondingly more difficult to make the most of educational opportunities and so escape this destructive cycle.

Evidence of Increasing Hardship

A senior professional, with 13 years experience in nursery and reception classes, talked about how positive learning behaviours were manifested in children as young as three years old. Children are at ease with themselves and persevere with a task. During the last 13 years she has however noticed an **increase** in the number of children who do not show these positive characteristics. Some children are often tired and malnourished. She has also observed an increase in speech and language disorders.

Richard Jouault, Chief Speech & Language Therapist in the Speech and Language Department, confirmed this perception of an increase:

“Of the 1000 or so 4 year olds (1084) in Jersey, 159 of them (14%) have seen a speech and language therapist and 76 (7%) are on our active caseload. This is part of a worrying trend of increased paediatric referrals to our service. Our birth rate in Jersey is relatively static and if anything it may have fallen slightly, but referrals to paediatric speech therapy have risen dramatically by 30% from 2001 to 2002.

So what or who is to blame? I would agree with Professor Furedi that it is too easy to blame this on the parents. Society as a whole has to look at this with collective responsibility. In Jersey we have a high cost of living with many households requiring both parents to be in full-time employment to make ends meet. Consequently we have one of the highest rates female participation in the workforce in Europe. This means we need excellent child care facilities in Jersey if children are to have experiences that promote good language development.”

In some cases parents seem unable to admit that they are facing hardships that are impacting their children. Some will not seek advice because of social stigma. Some are unaware of available support systems. Some who have asked for help have not had the type of support they require. Those who have difficulties with reading, cannot access leaflet-based information. Hardship both for parents and children is then compounded.

Education

Jersey is proud of the high academic achievement of many young islanders. Our exam results at GCSE and A Level are consistently higher than the national average; a high percentage (86%) of students remain at school until 18, and more than half of these go on to tertiary education. For many of these young people the future is bright.

There is, however, another story to be told.

Some of the issues that were discussed by participants ran across primary, secondary and tertiary provision. They are aspects of hardship that have a large impact on young people's fitness to learn.

Primary School Children

Our meeting with primary school Head Teachers was revelatory. We discovered that in some schools Head Teachers spend between 60 and 70% of their time on social, rather than educational issues. The implication of children coming to school with problems which

prevent them from learning is that these same problems prevent the teachers from teaching for substantial proportions of time. This situation then impacts on those children who come to school fit to learn. As one Head Teacher wrote,

"I have spoken to several of my colleagues since the meeting...and they have all said it made them stop and think about how complex our role is."

Head Teachers believed that the induction of parents into school was often as important as the induction of children, especially for parents who had a negative experience of schools themselves. In general Head Teachers felt there was a need to break down barriers in order to achieve an ethos which will enable parents to come to talk about their problems and successes and accept help where this is appropriate. There was also an acknowledgement that to work effectively in this area more training and resources need to be allocated in order to deliver support systems that are sensitive and non-stigmatising. In particular, on-site pre-school education and Jelly Clubs for very young children enable schools to get to know the mothers and fathers before the legal age of education begins.

In the experience of these teachers some parents who have previously hidden family problems feel entitled to ask for advice when their children begin school. Teachers felt that when children are legally bound to attend the parents feel they have a right to help, whereas before, they were afraid of the social stigma involved in asking for help. This is a positive step that needs to be built upon.

One Head Teacher expressed a concern about the pressures of work, particularly for those in jobs with low pay and security. She knew of parents who have lost jobs because they have stayed at home to look after a sick child. It is not surprising, therefore, that sick children are sent to school when they should be in bed. This Head Teacher wrote,

" One mother came into school yesterday, obviously unwell, but she had to go to work, where she hoped someone might notice and send her home....She said her boss tended to think people were "skiving" if they were unwell on a Monday. She works within the States sector. This parent is particularly trustworthy."

She went on to draw specific attention to problems of parents with no Housing qualifications

"One family in particular had to move from their accommodation, and despite living on the Island for over fifteen years, the Housing Department could not help them and for nearly three weeks they had no home. They moved from different friends' houses, spending two or three nights in each place. The mother tried to make this horrendous situation into a game for the children; nevertheless, of course, they were insecure.....It was a hugely stressful time for all concerned."

A number of teachers had experience of children and young people coming to school who seemed to be malnourished. A considerable number of children come to school with no breakfast and eat whatever lunch they have brought in the morning. Grainville School has started to run a breakfast club to target these children. Teachers felt that arriving at school hungry was, for many children, a real barrier to learning.

In conclusion, significant numbers of children enter primary school without the skills necessary for learning; endure various hardships that can further impede learning, and then leave for secondary school.

Secondary School

A number of contributors felt that the academic bias of the secondary curriculum is less than ideal for significant numbers of students and a broader vocational education would be more likely to motivate many of these non-academic youngsters, some of whom need more teaching support. At present many leave school at 16 with no academic qualifications or skills and drift from one job to another.

One Head Teacher believes that an entirely new system is needed. In his view an alternative curriculum offering a mix of opportunities for non academic 13/14 year olds, leading to vocational training and apprenticeships would achieve better outcomes and raise motivation and self-esteem by giving these youngsters things they can do.

One Head Teacher felt that Jersey's Education system revealed that we are "not an inclusive society":

"The end result is a significant tranche of young people who feel excluded from the "good life". Where they are unsupported by their families, or their community, they can easily fall prey to negative peer pressures. They seem to fall into self-sustaining peer groups of the disaffected and truancy, involvement in drug taking, abuse of alcohol and youth offending are the result."

Four secondary Head Teachers expressed concerns about the 14+ transfer system. Two went so far as to say that it was actually harmful. One Head Teacher told us that as a result of a particular school not taking up its quota of places at Hautlieu, the necessary score was reduced so that the places could be filled. In the view of that Head teacher some of those who took these places were unsuited to the academic curriculum at Hautlieu.

Highlands College

Highlands offers a vocational curriculum. The Principal estimates that at least 10-15% of the 600 full time students face real problems resulting from family circumstances, lifestyle, emotional neglect, behavioural problems, or financial hardship. Many students come from broken homes or shared homes. These problems often result in poor motivation, lack of concentration and little commitment to learning. Although many of these young people are attending college, learning has become a low priority for them.

The cycle of hardship that these young people face has recently been documented by Dr Kathy Bull. The cycle has often started early in their lives and once they reach college it has become difficult to break. The problems are not just educational but result from poor housing, lack of a proper home life, alcohol and drug abuse. Many of these young people live in dysfunctional families and lead chaotic lifestyles.

LISTEN

*We cry for help
Do you hear?
No you don't
Because we're still here*

*We all have rights
So people hear
We say it loud
We say it clear
Why do we have to live with fear?*

*Tell us now
How you feel
About these situations?
Listen, they're real!*

*We don't want to scream
We don't want to shout
We just want to put our point out.*

14 year old student living in hardship

Highlands offer a programme leading to the Award scheme of the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) which caters for many of these young people, although not all the students on it fit the profile of social disadvantage. The programme provides structure by offering vocational tasters and opportunities designed to improve social and communication skills such as timekeeping and respect for others.

The college also employs specialist support tutors, a student services team, a confidential counselling service and commits funds to pay for student hardship.

From Education to Employment

For many of those whose school career has been shot through with difficulties, the approach of the school-leaving age offers an apparent freedom but few real choices.

Although Project Trident and other school-based work experience schemes offer valuable opportunities, many youngsters suffering hardship are excluded. Those with a criminal record are not accepted. Neither are those who are unable to be punctual or to sustain a regular work pattern. Stricter Health and Safety regulations have also created more difficulties.

Parents tend to motivate their children towards higher paid jobs, which may not exist, and there is a lack of apprenticeship schemes.

For a 16 year old with no or limited qualifications, the opportunities are very few.

The Job Market

Although job losses have hit the news very recently, for some time the image of full employment may have been very different from the reality:

- First, the large number of job vacancies that were recently claimed to exist (as many as 4,000) may have been misleading. In response to the Regulation of Undertakings regime it is believed that many firms applied for spare licences which might be needed in the future, so that vacancy figures became an inflated indication of the situation on the ground. The jobs market might therefore be better characterised in terms of a skills gap rather than a labour shortage.
- Secondly, the actual number of the unemployed is not known, because there is no requirement to register as unemployed unless some benefit is being claimed. Unemployed 16 year olds who are supported by their families do not register. Moreover, single parents seeking part-time jobs are not even counted as unemployed.

Moreover, when employers do send workers for training, Highlands believe that too much can be expected of the courses and some small employers are even ignorant of what training is needed and available.

"You are right to be concerned about the issues of poverty in young people, as we are seeing a dramatic reduction in opportunities for them, caused by a number of factors, but not least the policy of the States of Jersey towards local business.

At present we have 23 apprentices employed by the company. We are, however, seeing a downturn in the number of opportunities we are able to offer as we are currently closing down the major contracts part of our Building Services Department, which deals with major electrical and air conditioning contracts. Therefore the number of training opportunities, and our needs for fully trained tradesman will decrease.

This loss of opportunities for young people can be directly linked to the drive by the States of Jersey to move major contracts to offshore contractors. In the past few months we have seen more than £7 million worth of work, some of which we would have hoped to have won, go offshore. The reasons for this are largely cost based, but due to the spiralling inflation rate and other costs in Jersey, we are finding it impossible to compete with those coming from much lower cost areas. We believe that there is a significant failure in the States policies to control inflation and costs generally in the Island, coupled with the States policy to get the lowest price, regardless of the social costs, loss of taxation, loss of spend in local shops etc.

On a more general note we are particularly concerned at the lack of job opportunities especially for those of the 16+ age group who, for whatever reason, have failed in their secondary education. We believe that poverty amongst our young people can only be eradicated by ensuring that they have good job opportunities and that they are well-motivated, balanced young people, prepared and able to enter into our community. We believe that there is much still to be done for a particular group of our young people who, for whatever reason, are entering the world of work either unprepared, or where there are few opportunities for them.”

Richard Plaster, Human Resources Manager at the Jersey Electricity Company

Further Aspects of Hardship

Housing

We have cited examples of the influence of inadequate housing throughout this report. Two further illustrations brought to our attention reinforce this message:

- Some accommodation is so cramped that when professionals are called in over child protection issues, the child cannot be assessed at home because of lack of space.
- In the experience of those we consulted, sometimes children suffer bruises, not because of harsh treatment, but because of over-crowded accommodation.

“In Jersey there’s a problem with housing. There is housing for people with qualifications which is cheaper and housing for people who are not qualified - which is very expensive. Most of the time landlords do not allow children in the house and that’s when you have a big problem. Some families have to live in one room like the mother, the father and one or two children. There is no privacy. So they start having arguments and that’s when the breakdown happens. The rents are charged by the head so even children have to pay. Parents need to do more than one job so they can afford the cost of living here. In some rooms, you have to pay by electricity meters and also for baths and showers. The meters are controlled by the landlord so this is a vicious cycle.”

“There is a lot of damp so I have clothes packed in boxes. When people visit we all sit on the beds. I get disgusted with the place. I’m not confident when people come here. I try and keep people away. It’s like I’m hiding out.”

- Figures taken from the 2001 census reveal that 1,007 households in Jersey are officially deemed to be overcrowded. This figure constitutes some 2.8% of the total number of private dwellings. This means that 2,684 people are currently living in overcrowded conditions in Jersey.

The scale of the shortfall of appropriate housing, the high cost of accommodation and the effects of the use of the housing market as a population management tool were addressed in our July 2001 report "Housing & Poverty in Jersey".

Leisure

The NSPCC Jersey Pathways Partnership Report 2002 revealed that for some people public play areas in estates (where hardship is prevalent) were not being used. Reasons included children being unable to play safely due to drug users' materials and rubbish lying around; equipment that was damaged and feeling intimidated by teenagers using the facilities.

The lack of play space at home and outside is exacerbated because of the expense of accessing leisure activities e.g. cost of dancing lessons/bowling/swimming. Some children are excluded from quite ordinary leisure activities because of lack of money.

"My family lives on sickness benefit and child allowance. A trip to the cinema with a few sweets would cost us over £25. We just can't afford to do things like that."

For rural dwellers the cost of transport is a further problem. One Head Teacher wrote:

"There is little absolute material poverty, but there are a significant number of "excluded" families whose children lead relatively limited lives. They find themselves, for example, unable to leave the limited confines of Jersey for trips or holidays abroad, and even the common run of entertainment, such as bowling, is denied to them except on very special occasions."

Living in an Affluent Society

"It is more difficult to be poor in Jersey" was an often-repeated sentiment. In addition to the economic pressure on parents caused by the high proportion of income needed for fixed costs of rent and child-care, Jersey's affluent society stimulates aspirations beyond means. As one participant put it, "here noses are pressed hard against shop windows."

Young people, influenced by peer pressure, are adept at persuading parents to provide the "right" expensive labels and footwear. This increases parental stress, especially for those who work very hard and still feel guilty that they cannot provide their children with what "everybody has", according to them. Sadly, some children are bullied if they are not wearing the "right" fashion labels. Sometimes luxuries are purchased instead of necessities.

Additional Perspectives

The Probation Service and the Prison Service provide some further important perspectives on facets of hardship and linkages with wider societal impacts.

The Probation Service

The Probation Service work involving young people arises in both matrimonial and social proceedings and criminal justice cases. The Chief Probation Officer, Brian Heath, echoed many of the findings in this report.

Matrimonial / Social Cases

Cases concerning care and control of children following family breakdown are referred to the Probation Service where there has been previous involvement with the Children's Service, or where Court Orders following divorce have not been successfully implemented. The high rate of family breakdown in Jersey causes many such cases. The majority of such cases are amicably settled, but in situations where parents are at war, the hardship suffered by the child's experience of family breakdown is compounded by becoming a risk factor for youth offending.

Criminal Justice Cases

Although the age of criminal responsibility is ten, it is very unusual for a child to be referred to the Probation Service at such a young age. In general the youngest clients are aged thirteen.

The most common risk factors leading to youth offending are:

- Non-consistent care
- Poor school attendance
- Lack of qualifications and training
- Lack of meaningful employment
- Poor employment record
- Peer-group pressure
- Alcohol and substance abuse.

The more risk factors in a child's life, the greater the likelihood of becoming an offender. Notably, four fifths of the Probation Service's clients are boys. There is a regular link between poor basic skills, lack of employment and offending behaviour. Of the 300 clients of all ages currently supervised by the Probation Service:

- One third is unable to read at a level which is of any use
- Two thirds are unable to write their names and addresses without mistakes, or give correct change from £5.

A child who fails to learn to read in school is likely to play truant or become disruptive. Socialising with others who live a similar experience commonly follows. This often leads to anti-social behaviour as a result of peer-group pressure and the desire to "belong", shown by adopting the same values as the gang. This pattern of behaviour is especially prevalent among boys.

Good quality, consistent care in a family with pro-social attitudes has a profound effect on a child's well being. Mr Heath stressed that children of middle-income families can also suffer from lack of parental time.

Finally, the problem of youth offending should not be overstated. Typically, two thirds of teenagers will not re-offend in the year following a period of probation supervision. Others

end up in Young Offenders Institutions or prison. A very small minority of these go on to become career criminals.

The Prison Service

In March 2003 there were twenty seven male and three female young offenders between the ages of fifteen and twenty one imprisoned at La Moye. These young people may be said to “have failed” or “been failed” by their upbringing and education, but there is no statistical data on the backgrounds of young offenders. Mike Kirby, the Prison Governor, believes that the backgrounds of many Jersey young offenders are similar those in the U.K. - truancy not dealt with early enough, poor educational attainment, social exclusion, and being in care are frequent themes in the history of young offenders.

Mr Kirby particularly identified poor parenting as a key factor leading to youth offending. Some youngsters currently in La Moye come from very wealthy backgrounds but have lacked affection, direction and attention from their parents. In his view “many adults are busy living their lives” and have little time for their children. He cited in particular the impact of high housing costs faced by middle-income families as a factor in driving both parents to work long hours, leaving little time for their families.

Part 2 - Meeting the Needs

Hardship experienced by children either directly, or indirectly (diffused through the difficulties of their parents) has been shown to be multi-faceted. This section is an account of some remedial measures actually in place, and their shortcomings, as seen by some of the professionals tasked with implementation. Suggestions for improvements that might provide a more practical, integrated and emotionally intelligent approach are also offered as a stimulus to further action.

Empowering Parents

The profound influence of parents on the developmental path of children is well established. Society has a direct interest in ensuring parents are equipped with strong parenting and life skills. These skills can help equip young people with resilience (see box) that can offset some of the hardships they encounter and improve their chances of growing up to lead a fulfilling adult life.

Resilience

An increasing number of parents are under pressure to adapt to new family situations. Today's families need to work intentionally at maintaining and building family ties. A helpful question to ask ourselves may be: what conditions need to be in place for my children to grow up with a positive self concept and for them to feel in control of their lives?

Resilience is an individual's capacity to thrive whatever the circumstances.

Rutter, a well known writer in the field, defined Resilience as involving several related elements:

- self-esteem
- self-confidence
- a belief in one's own self-efficacy
- ability to deal with change and adaptation
- repertoire of social problem-solving approaches

In other words, these form the personal psychological resources of the individual.

Resilience therefore is not a single trait or characteristic. Moreover, children may show resilience in relation to some sorts of stresses and adversities, but not others; similarly, they may exhibit resistance to some life experiences, but not others.

Studies of families in adverse circumstances show resilience to be linked to two key factors:

- the quality of the relationship between parent and child
- a supportive community network

(Source: Patricia Tumelty, who co-ordinates parenting programmes through the Education Department)

Relationships between parent and child

Single parents often have a difficult and lonely job and when they are caricatured as responsible for inadequate parenting this adds to the difficulties they encounter. Recent research has convincingly demonstrated that two parent families with no time are just as much at risk and that teenagers who felt emotionally connected to at least one parent were up to a third less likely to show some types of problem behaviour⁷. It is not the structure of

⁷ Based on a study of 12,000 American students reported in The Guardian newspaper, Oct.14th 2002

the family that makes the difference but the nature of the relationship between the child and main care giver⁸.

Early attachments

Karen Visconti, a leading author of research at Harvard Medical School, has argued that parental stress over the first three years of children's lives was the best predictor of child behavioural problems at the age of four.

More generally an individual's resilience and outcomes later on are very strongly determined by early experiences with caregivers when patterns of attachment are laid down. These attachments create a mental map in the child of how they will be responded to and cared for when distressed, hungry, and afraid and how their anger, joy, love and "naughtiness" will be received and dealt with. At a time when much is reported about "failing families" we need to seek any opportunities to celebrate parents' efforts at doing the best for their children.

If as a society we treat the young and those in difficult circumstances as beyond redemption, as "feckless" or "dysfunctional" then the chances are that is how they will emerge. A "blame and shame" mindset is counterproductive. In contrast, recognising parents in terms of what they can and what they are trying to achieve despite or in spite of all the odds can create an enabling environment. Such a shift affirms their potential to move forward and do the best for themselves and their families.

Parent's Aspirations and Needs

Lucy (see opposite) expresses the hopes and questions of many parents. Parents from many walks of life, express the same desires and aspirations for a good life for their children. Parents have a genuine longing to do what they can to make their dreams come true for their children. Regardless of age, cultural background, or geographic location, parents seem to share similar wishes for their children and similar questions about how to fulfil those wishes.

Research carried out in Jersey by Patricia Tumelty at the Parenting Project during 2002 involved over 90 parents. This revealed that parents ask for:

- flexible services
- respect
- acknowledgment that parents lead busy, pressured lives

When Laura grows up, I want her to be successful and happy. I want her to get along well with other people, but not to be a pushover. She'll need to know how to look out for herself and not let people take advantage of her. And she will need to feel good about her self- you know, have good self-esteem. I have a good idea of what I want for her, but what I'm not sure of is what I can do to see that things turn out that way. At what age will it really start to matter what I do with her? Is there anything I should be doing right now?

Letter from Lucy, a single mother
(name changed to protect anonymity)

⁸ Canadian Household Survey: National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth 1994-1995 and 1996-1997(NLSCY)

- recognition that their needs may be different from their children's needs at times
- follow-up after parents have made contact with services
- support during transitions
- recognition of the pressures of balancing work and family life
- greater financial support, and a change in people's attitudes towards children and families.

In the past few years both in Jersey and on the mainland there has been a considerable change in the climate surrounding parenting and family life with a steady rise in community and States led initiatives designed to impact on children and their parents. Exploring the concept of resilience is important, because if properly considered, the findings can provide a better understanding of risk and protective mechanisms, an understanding that should assist professionals to devise effective means of helping individuals living in troubled circumstances.

Recommendations

- **Increase provision of parenting classes which should take into account the difficulties of parents actually getting there; the means and cost of transport should be considered and the need for babysitters and crèche facilities.**
- **Provide financial incentives to parents caring for young children**

Increasing resilience through the community

Support outside the family, e.g., close friendships or having access to a network of kin and neighbours, peers and elders for counsel and support, is an important factor in promoting resilience. Alongside this, schools that have a positive ethos, high morale and which support pupil's academic and non-academic achievement play an important role in promoting resilience. *"Children can survive all manner of childhood disappointments and sufferings if there is at least one person (parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt...) in their life who is crazy about them, is deeply interested and protective of them, and advocates for them when it is needed. What matters is the quality, consistency and dependability of attention."*⁹

Recommendations

- **Explore ways of bolstering networks of kin and neighbours, peers and elders available to children.**
- **Expand school based support mechanisms**

Early Years

Community support and care services can help children with problems to become resilient, but there is a lack of resources to achieve this. At the same time, when problems become apparent sometimes too much uncoordinated help is offered at once, so that parents cannot

⁹ Urie Bronfenbrenner Family Studies; Cornell University N.Y. 1995

cope. This shows the need for increased understanding between agencies of their respective roles and functions.

The benefits of pre-school education are widely accepted but only 14 island schools offer this facility (Janvrin will open in September 2004). As yet there are no pre-school classes at Springfield or St Luke's. Jelly Clubs for babes in arms are good in themselves, and when based at primary schools they have the added advantage of enabling the staff and parents to get to know one another.

Recommendations:

- **An Educational Welfare Officer should be attached to every school to provide the link between families and agencies, and at primary to secondary transfer. Already in St Peter's Parish a Youth and Community Officer is in place, funded by the parish.**
- **A post at higher, directorate level should be established with overall responsibility to link and co-ordinate agencies.**
- **Develop and expand on the positive work of initiatives like Jelly Clubs.**
- **All parents should have automatic access to support (like the Sure Start project in the U.K.)**
- **Much more consideration needs to be given to improving access to opportunities that can lift people out of hardship. This has implications for employment, education, the parish welfare and benefits system. Again this needs to be focused on those who are the most excluded who will inevitably be working against many barriers to improve their material circumstances.**
- **Classes, and drop-in centres to discuss problems, should be community based services, within "buggy walking distance".**
- **The timing of and access to services should accommodate the realities of life. Office hours are difficult for working parents, especially those who are afraid that asking for time off will result in the loss of their jobs. The offices themselves may be difficult or expensive to reach for those without transport.**
- **Places need to be 'child friendly'.**
- **More thought needs to go into supporting parents who are difficult to reach.**
- **Agencies must work together and demonstrate effective communication.**

Day Care and Pre-School

There is a shortage of day care provision for babies, especially in the town. Facilities that are available are expensive and beyond the reach of many¹⁰.

¹⁰ The average cost of full time care for children under two is now of the order of £220 per week

The means tested Child Care Grant should be more flexible. It was introduced for the sake of the economy in order to encourage mothers back to work. Indeed Jersey has the highest percentage of employed women in Western Europe. A more child-centred approach would be more helpful. At present only working parents are entitled to the allowance, which is withdrawn if the parent loses the job. These criteria can be especially harsh for single parents.

More significantly, very young mothers who have not completed their education are not eligible for the grant. Similarly, mothers who have health, social and emotional problems are not eligible for the grant. Yet the children of mothers in these categories are perhaps most in need of the stimulation, care and security offered by nursery education. In some cases charities and individuals are asked to assist with nursery fees for children in difficult circumstances.

Investment of money in subsidised or free nursery places, by widening the scope of the grant might save money spent on trouble-shooting later. More positively this is an investment that would prepare children to make the best of their primary education by equipping them with the language and social development skills that are fostered in day centres.

Currently children who will eventually go to the (special needs) Mont a L'Abbe School are guaranteed a nursery place, but there are many others whose life chances would be greatly enhanced by this opportunity.

Recommendations:

- **Maternity and paternity leave**
- **States support for promoting parenting**
- **Investment in parenting facilities e.g. phone line for help and advice**
- **Greater workplace flexibility to encourage family life**
- **Subsidised places for day care and a limit on what private providers charge**
- **Training, support and encouragement for child minders**
- **Early support for families with children with behavioural problems**

Primary Classroom Support

School support assistants are needed in primary classrooms. It was reported that some unemployed and unqualified people who undertook this low-paid work were so successful that they are now undergoing Education Department training – a doubly beneficial outcome.

One primary Head Teacher noted that older people working as volunteers in the classroom seemed to have the ability to calm difficult children. Perhaps there is also scope here for filling the gap of absent grandparents when the extended family lives outside the Island.

Recommendations:

- **Support assistants trained to counsel troubled children should be available in schools**
- **Community services should involve volunteers such as church groups who could assist in various ways such as in “Home Start” or “Sure Start” centres.**
- **Older people should be encouraged to help in the classroom.**

The Pathways Project

Peter Le Breuille, Head teacher at Le Squez Primary School, outlines the following initiative that may provide valuable lessons for wider replication:

“Pathways is a joint agency project which aims to support very young children and their families by providing a cohesive and co-ordinated strategy, creating opportunities for parents and members of the wider community to benefit from a range of activities which promotes “the School for the Community and the Community for the School.”

The Pathways team will support other agencies that already provide such valuable help and guidance for families. It will establish a close relationship with parents through activities to raise awareness, offer support and advice on where specific professional help can be sought if needed. As a result of generous funding from the NSPCC Pathways will provide childcare, health and social care, lifelong learning opportunities, family learning, parenting support and ICT access. By offering these extended activities and services, Le Squez Primary School, in partnership with the NSPCC and supporting agencies, hopes to address the needs of its pupils and their families. Early intervention leads to prevention of the many difficulties parents can experience, and Pathways hopes to smooth the road they travel.”

Secondary Schools

One secondary school runs Homework Clubs at lunchtime or after school to help students who have no private study space in their cramped home conditions. Unfortunately some cannot take advantage of the after-school sessions because they have to look after younger siblings because neither parent is at home.

In addition, Student Services have been set up to provide:

- food - for there is recent awareness that many students exist on snacks rather than meals
- support for students with learning needs (spanning both those with traditional learning difficulties and others with emotional problems which impede learning)
- a full-time psychotherapist is available.

The services provided by this school in addition to its primary function of delivering education are indicative of the extent of hardship experienced by some young people.

Recommendations:

- **Volunteers could provide breakfast clubs and community drop-in centres for children whose homes are empty at the end of the school day.**
- **More support is needed for children with special learning needs.**

Highlands College

Highlands College intervenes in a number of ways to assist young people who are facing hardships that undermine their ability to take advantage of learning opportunities. Highlands delivers a vocational curriculum that meets the needs of many children that are not well served by the narrower academic curriculum of Jersey's secondary schools that follow the UK educational model. In addition, the Principal believes that placing more emphasis on practical programmes at an earlier age can prevent disaffection. In the last two years Highlands has run a 14+ vocational scheme in partnership with two secondary schools whose pupils come to Highlands one day a week for vocational tasters. This has proved to be motivational and in 2002 all of the students on this programme progressed to courses at Highlands despite many of them having a range of social and emotional and behavioural problems.

Highlands also supports adults who have difficulties with learning or who need additional skills to improve their life chances. The General Education team offer support with the basic skills of literacy and innumeracy, basic IT skills and programmes in the community designed to help parents to learn with their children. Family literacy is an important means of supporting families to help them see the value in learning and gives them new skills.

However Highlands is funded largely on the same basis as an academically selective school and, unlike the UK, funding is not flexed to take account of these factors.

Recommendations

- **Increase funding to reflect the additional support given to students**
- **Investigate expansion of vocational curriculum opportunities, perhaps looking to continental Europe for alternative models.**

Young Offenders

The Prison Governor's strategy is set out in the paper "*Education and Training Opportunities for Prisoners at H M Prison La Moye*". The strategy is based on the premise that employment, accommodation and a stable relationship are the three factors demonstrated to have the most impact on preventing re-offending. It sets out to implement educational and training geared to the offenders' needs.

The situation in respect of young offenders is complicated by the divisions of the States of Jersey committee system. A youngster entering prison ceases to be the responsibility of the Education Committee and comes under the remit of Home Affairs. In practice this means that a teenager sentenced to a term in custody is unable to complete A Level courses.

Recommendations

- **Provide learning opportunities geared to young offenders needs**

- **Bridge the functional silos to provide appropriate learning opportunities for young offenders.**

Other Factors

Finally we set out below other measures that can have an impact on addressing the needs that fall outside the areas discussed above.

Access to Information

Another recurring theme was the difficulty of actually finding out about the various problems experienced by families so that help can be given. Many are unwilling to talk about their problems and accept help. Distrust of professionals, fear of social stigma and the various difficulties of finding out about and accessing benefits are among the reasons for this reluctance.

When contact is made, emotional intelligence is needed by professionals dealing with those with problems; simplistic assumptions that are not informed by a real appreciation of particular circumstance do not help. As one Primary Head said, "We are not good at recognising how we add to their problems."

It was felt essential to find out how people see their problems and what they feel they need, rather than imposing from above. Such an approach is founded on empowering people to help themselves and allows support systems to be developed that are more in step with people's needs.

Recommendation:

- **A culture change is required among professionals that will promote better understanding of, and communication with, those experiencing hardship.**

Community Awareness

On a community level there appears to be little awareness among the majority of people in Jersey that these problems of hardship exist, perhaps because of the very wide gap between rich and poor. The situation is also clouded by factors such as housing costs, so that people on incomes which are perceived to be adequate are actually living in relative poverty with little money left over after their rent or mortgage has been paid.

Recommendation:

- **Develop a body of research around the extent, location and impact of poverty as a basis for expanding public and political awareness of the issues in question. Particular attention needs to be given to accessing the views and dilemmas of hard to reach groups.**

Benefits Delivery

Knowing which benefits one is entitled to and where and how to apply for them can also be an information gap. The process of applying for benefits, which in other jurisdictions would be an automatic entitlement, can be complicated, time-consuming, tiring, and sometimes humiliating.

Recommendation

- **A fundamental transformation is required from a department centred benefits system to an integrated, cross departmental, citizen centred service.**

Health

For some families, visiting the doctor is unaffordable, especially if a child has a recurring condition like ENT I. The child's condition can be blamed on parental neglect, whereas lack of money is the problem.

Dental charges are very high. There is a Dental Scheme, but teeth have to be in good condition before people are eligible to join.

Transport costs make accessing UK health services expensive.

Recommendations:

- **Increase Health Income Exemption thresholds**
- **Extend the scope of the social security scheme to include dental care**

The Need for Information

Finally several professionals drew attention to the lack of statistical data specific to Jersey on these issues. In order to inform strategic decision-making, carefully structured long-term studies are needed to measure the circumstances and influences that cause children to "succeed" or "fail".

Appendix I – What Does Poverty Mean?

In this report we have used a definition of poverty suggested by the UN:

“The denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others.”

This appendix provides a discussion of the issues surrounding the definition of poverty.

Alternative Definitions¹¹

Many research studies of poverty throughout the 20th Century illustrate an on-going struggle to extricate the concept of poverty from political ideology and to widen scientific perspectives from narrow concern with the physical and nutritional needs of human beings to include their complex social needs. Part of that struggle has been to find measures by which to compare conditions in different countries and especially conditions in rich and poor countries, so that priorities might be more securely established.

At the political level, there is some movement towards agreed definitions of poverty across countries. The United Kingdom has no official definition and Ministers often define poverty in terms of ‘knowing it when they see it’. However, the UK Government has signed international treaties and agreements at the European level that define poverty in terms of having insufficient resources to participate in a *“minimum acceptable way of life”* (EEC 1981; 1985)¹². These international definitions of poverty are also applicable to the Channel Islands and the current EU definition of poverty is very similar to that used in the [Guernsey] Requête regarding low-income earners and households (Billet VI, 1998).

An international agreement at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 was something of a breakthrough. By recommending a two-tier measure of ‘absolute’ and ‘overall’ poverty to be applied to every country, a means was found of bringing all governments together in a common purpose. An opportunity was created of exploring the severity of poverty according to standards that seemed to be acceptable everywhere. Even countries where it was assumed absolute poverty no longer existed found it easier to accept an international two-tier approach that self-evidently included their own conditions.

After the Copenhagen Summit in 1995, 117 countries including the UK committed themselves to eradicating ‘absolute’ and reducing ‘overall’ poverty, drawing up national poverty-alleviation plans (UN, 1995). Absolute poverty is defined in terms of severe deprivation of basic human needs. Overall poverty is a wider measure, including not just

¹¹ This note is taken from The Survey of Guernsey Living Standards Report on Phase Two: Poverty and Standard of Living in Guernsey, January 2002, chapter 8.

³ In 1975, the Council of Europe adopted a relative definition of poverty as: *“individuals or families whose resources are so small as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life of the Member State in which they live.”* (EEC, 1981). The concept of ‘resources’ was defined as: *“goods, cash income, plus services from public and private resources”* (EEC, 1981). On 19 December 1984, the European Commission extended the definition: *“the poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State in which they live.”* (EEC, 1985)

lack of access to basics but also lack of participation in decision-making, civil, social and cultural life:

Absolute poverty

“A condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.” (UN, 1995, p.57)

Overall poverty

...can take various forms, including: “..lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihoods as a result of economic recession, sudden poverty as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets.” (UN, ibid, p.57)

Causes of Poverty

Perceptions of the causes of poverty have a bearing on the political response. We can draw indirect evidence of perceptions in Jersey from the Survey of Guernsey Living Standards. This survey asked respondents why they thought that people lived in ‘need’ in Guernsey. They were given four options and asked which was closest to their own opinions. The results are shown in the table below:

People live in need....	(%)
Because they have been unlucky	16
Because of laziness and lack of willpower	22
Because there is much injustice in our society	25
It's an inevitable part of modern progress	26
None of these	7
Don't know	5

The results show that poverty is attributed to a range of causes by the Guernsey population. However, it is clear that only a minority of people (22%) believe that the main cause of need is a lack of willpower or laziness. Similar small proportions of people attributed need to laziness and lack of will power in Britain in 1983 (22%) and 1990. The large majority of Guernsey people (67%) believe that poverty and need are caused by inevitable changes in society, injustice or bad luck.

Appendix II – the Scale of Poverty

We are not aware of any direct quantifications of the scale of poverty among children in Jersey. However there is some indirect evidence that provides an indication of the possible scale of the issue, including:

- The 2001 census;
- The Household Income Survey (forthcoming);
- The Jersey Health Survey;
- Review of the Principles, Practices and Provision for Children and Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Disorders in the Island of Jersey; and
- Research conducted in Guernsey.

This evidence summarised below suggests that there may as many as 2,000 poor households with one or more children.

Poverty in Jersey

The Census

There is a recognised correlation between inadequate housing and child hardship. The 2001 census revealed that 1,007 households in Jersey or 2.8% of the total number of private households are overcrowded¹³. A total of 2,684 people were living in these overcrowded households¹⁴. The split between adults and children has not been published.

There is a recognised correlation between children in single parent families and hardship. The 2001 census established that the proportion of single parent households (with either dependent or non-dependent children) increased from 5% of the total in 1996 to 7% in 2001. The proportion of such single parent households in the UK was 9%.

Jersey Health Survey¹⁵

The 2001 Jersey Health Survey asked Respondents “Do you think you could genuinely say that you are poor now?” and given the option of answering ‘All the time’, ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Never’. The percentage of respondents who gave each answer and how these compare with Britain are shown below:

<i>Are you genuinely poor?</i>	<i>Jersey 1999 (%)</i>	<i>Britain 1999(%)</i>
All the time	2	7
Sometimes	20	20
Never	78	74

¹³ Overcrowded being defined as households where the number of persons per room is 1.5 or greater (e.g. a two person household occupying one room, or three persons in one or two rooms).

¹⁴ Of which 79% were non-residentially qualified households (2002 Statistical Review, p15)

¹⁵ Jersey Health Survey, September 2001, p74

As would be expected, there were fewer respondents in Jersey who considered they were poor than in Britain as a whole. However, over a fifth of Jersey respondents said they were genuinely poor either 'all the time' or 'sometimes'.

Poverty in Guernsey¹⁶

Guernsey probably has a broadly similar economic and population profile to Jersey. The profile of poverty in Guernsey might therefore be indicative of conditions prevailing in Jersey. An extract from a recently published report profiling the situation in Guernsey is reproduced below.

The Survey of Guernsey Living Standards (2002) identified over 3,000 households in Guernsey as poor. Almost a half of these households (45%) have one or more children. Table 5.1 below shows the different arrangements of the households in which there is a child living in poverty.

Table 5.1: Poverty by household type for families with children

<i>Families with children</i>	<i>Proportion of the poor</i>	<i>% of this type of household who are poor</i>
<i>Lone parents with one or more children</i>	14%	63%
<i>Couples with two or more children</i>	14%	16%
<i>Large households with children (three or more adults with one or more children)</i>	11%	26%
<i>Couples with one child</i>	6%	10%

As the table above shows, of the households in Guernsey that were identified as being poor, 14% were lone parents with one or more children and 14% were couples with two or more children. Large households with children comprised 11% of the poor. When considering the proportion of each household type who are poor, however, a different picture emerges. Almost two thirds (63%) of lone parents with one or more children are suffering from poverty, as are a quarter (26%) of large households with children. Clearly, when considering families with children, it is lone parent families that are at the greatest disadvantage and at most risk of being in poverty.

The mean net weekly household income for lone parents with one or more children is £220. By contrast, for couples with children it is just under £800. Overall, 40% of lone parents with children said their actual income was lower than the mean income said to be needed by households of that type to keep out of absolute poverty. This compared with 0% of couples with one child, 3% of couples with two or more children and 2% of large households with children.

The effect of poverty on families with children

The brunt of the effect of poverty is largely borne by the parents themselves. Almost all poor parents (91%) said they went without some social activities and financial security in

¹⁶ Anti-Poverty Policies – a Range of Possible Options for Guernsey, November 2002, chapter 5

the past year so that they could afford food, clothing and other ‘necessities’ for their children. However, lone parent families were twice as likely to report problems with their accommodation, reported twice as much social isolation or depression because of a lack of money and had fewer supportive social networks than other households containing children.

Despite parents appearing to take the brunt of the effect of poverty, children in the family are also disadvantaged. Nine out of ten (94%) of the children in poor families went without developmental items or activities and one in ten (9%) of the poor families said they could not afford to feed their children adequately. Other parents said they had problems paying for school activities, school uniforms or clothing or paying towards the costs of higher or further education for their youngster. A likely outcome of families with children living in poverty is that the children underachieve at school, which then impacts on future life chances.

Key factors in keeping families with children in poverty

Three quarters (76%) of the Guernsey population surveyed thought local nurseries and playgroups for children were essential. A similar proportion (78%) thought that attendance at a playgroup at least weekly for pre-school children was necessary. Both lack of affordability and lack of availability of childcare provision (pre-school nurseries and playgroups, after-school clubs and holiday play-schemes) were perceived to be major factors in keeping families with children (and particularly lone parent families) in poverty. There are two main aspects to this. Firstly, the lack of suitable, affordable childcare prevents the parent with the main caring responsibility from developing their skills, furthering their education, attending job interviews and joining or rejoining the workforce. Secondly, when in paid employment, the high cost of childcare is difficult to off-set unless the parent is earning a moderate income. However, the types of work that offer flexible hours to fit around childcare arrangements are generally those in retail or service sector industries which are comparatively poorly paid.

A second factor perceived to be keeping families with children (and particularly lone parent families) in poverty is that of the housing situation in Guernsey. Many of the issues will be explored in Chapter 6 but the key areas of concern to families with children are the high costs of housing, the lack of choice of provision within the rented sector because many private landlords will not let to families with children and the perceived shortage of States and social housing options.

Extrapolating the Guernsey data suggests that there may 1,900 poor households with one or more children in Jersey:

Families with children	number of Jersey households	% of this type of Guernsey household who are poor	Projected number of Jersey households who are poor
Lone parents with one or more children	1,374	63%	866
Couples with two or more children	3,807	16%	609
Large households with children (three or more adults with one or more children)	465	26%	121
Couples with one child	3,204	10%	320
			1,916

This extrapolation is subject to a margin of error insofar as factors such as welfare provision, housing costs and population profile may differ in Guernsey. Furthermore it should be understood in the context of the definition of poverty on which the figures are based. Nonetheless, until such time as the States of Jersey provide adequate local data it provides an indication of likely the importance of this issue.

Appendix III – Acknowledgements

Persons Consulted

We should like to thank all those who contributed to this report. Some attended one of our five workshops; some were interviewed; some made written submissions. They include:

- Five Early Years professionals
- Seven Primary Head Teachers
- Four Secondary Head Teachers
- Three senior secondary teachers
- Dr Edward Sallis of Highlands College
- Three professionals from Social Services
- Two professionals from Health and Social Services
- Two working in Employment Services
- The Prison Governor
- The Chief Probation Officer.
- Parenting Programme Manager (Education Sport and Culture)

Authors

This report draws on material gathered in the form of written submissions, workshops and individual interviews. The material was collected, interpreted and summarised in this report by a team on behalf of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of individual members of that team.