

Final Report

**IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE
MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY**
Economic and Social Research
Council

Steve Johnson and Matt Antill

September 2011



CONSULTING
INPLACE

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) commissioned Consulting Inplace to undertake an impact evaluation of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), focusing on the extent to which research utilising MCS data has influenced policy and practice across the UK to date.
2. The MCS is one of three birth cohort studies managed by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), an ESRC Resource Centre based at the Institute of Education (IOE). The study aims to chart the initial conditions of social, economic and health advantages and disadvantages facing children born at the start of the 21st century, with a view to understanding the origins of social exclusion and contributing to a range of policy debates for example in education, health, parenting and employment.
3. The MCS is co-funded by the ESRC and a consortium of government departments led by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) - funded by the ESRC and managed from the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex - checks the data supplied by the CLS, catalogues the dataset and creates metadata. The ESDS enables users to download MCS data, provided they are registered with the service.
4. A 'tracking forwards' approach was adopted for this research. This involves examining how the MCS is utilised, by researchers and intermediaries, and then how the consequent enhanced understanding results in different forms of impact on a variety of agents. The methodology was divided into two main stages. The 'review' stage involved a synthesis of background documentation, and a review of policy document and legislation review, MCS research and media sources. The 'consultation' stage comprised interviews with key individuals and other staff involved in communications and marketing at the CLS and the ESDS, plus consultations with government representatives, researchers, research institutes and other stakeholders engaged in the policy process.

Use and users of the MCS

5. There is a broad level of interest in and use of the MCS data from academic researchers (teaching and training, academic research, government commissioned research), central government departments (in-house analysis, policy research, comparative studies across the UK) and policy and research organisations and think tanks (government commissioned research and policy research). The vast majority of MCS data requests to the ESDS are however from higher education institutions.
6. MCS is seen as a valuable research resource that enables researchers to examine a wide range of topics to a level of depth and detail that has not been possible before. For example, MCS has been the exclusive or primary source in a number of important studies of cognitive ability and child adjustment in early childhood. The longitudinal nature of the MCS, enabling the tracking of changes over time and more sophisticated analysis, is felt to be its key benefit.
7. The focus of research activity is primarily upon child development, parenting and related issues, with the vast majority of research outputs producing policy relevant findings.

There is significant overlap between some topics, since many areas of interest are interrelated. It is clear that the availability of MCS data is laying the foundations for future research to build upon.

8. Use of the MCS is however constrained by relatively few researchers having the analytical skills necessary to work with the data. The dataset is large and complex; researchers do not always have the required quantitative skills to undertake longitudinal analysis. There is often a reliance on the CLS to support the data analysis in such cases.

Policy and practice impacts

9. An assessment of the extent to which the MCS has influenced policy needs to be placed in a much wider context that recognises the complex process through which research influences policy and practice. There does not appear to be a clear linear process by which the MCS has influenced policy and practice. Nevertheless, the research has identified the MCS as achieving instrumental, conceptual and capacity building impacts.
10. Instrumental impact can be seen as a result of the MCS being mentioned explicitly in policy and related documents in relation to early years, child poverty and family issues. MCS data informed the development of early years policy and practice and service provision. The Labour government (1997-2010) enhanced Sure Start Children's Centres in the most disadvantaged parts of England and the funding of more outreach workers and training, as a result of research that utilised MCS data showing the benefits to young people. Furthermore, Frank Field's Independent review, seen as the basis for informing future child poverty strategy, also made use of MCS data.
11. Some politicians and policy-makers at senior levels, including David Willetts, are also aware of, and value, the MCS. Nick Clegg also has understanding and engagement with analysis deriving from MCS data. Such awareness at senior levels of the policy-making process must play a part in ensuring that MCS data is used to inform the policy development process.
12. The MCS has also fed into a number of different policy areas in the devolved nations. For example in Wales, the Child Poverty Strategy consultation paper 2010 included an evidence annex based on MCS data. In Northern Ireland, the MCS was used to inform the development of the Northern Ireland Child Poverty Strategy under the UK Child Poverty Act, while in Scotland, MCS data is being used for research on a range of policy-relevant subjects.
13. The MCS has also had a conceptual impact. The vast majority of research outputs reviewed that have used MCS data can be seen as policy relevant. As such, many of the research findings are likely to have implications for future policy formation in various fields, thus enhancing understanding and informing debate. MCS-related research findings have also received considerable media coverage, particularly in areas that are the subject of intense public interest, for example, the health and wider benefits of breastfeeding and the relationship between early child-rearing practices and subsequent child development. Media attention has undoubtedly raised the profile of some MCS research, although the impact on policy and practice is not yet fully clear.

14. Capacity building impact has been realised through the analysis of the MCS dataset itself. Use of the data helps to develop the UK skills base for longitudinal analysis, although limited longitudinal analysis skills amongst researchers and other potential users is constraining wider use of the data.
15. The research has highlighted the role that think tanks, lobby groups and other intermediaries play in promoting the policy and practice impacts of MCS data, informing policy debate and challenging thinking. Research by think tanks such as Demos, the Smith Institute, the Centre for Social Justice and the Institute for Public Policy Research using MCS data has promoted effective parenting. Indeed, 'The Home Front' report by Demos was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, who cited evidence from the report as a means of supporting coalition government policy in relation to encouraging effective parenting. Such coverage has also again helped to raise the general profile of MCS research.

Role of ESDS and CLS in promoting the use of the MCS data

16. Promotion and awareness-raising are core activities of the ESDS. However resource constraints limit the extent of this activity, and it appeared to the evaluation team that the primary focus of ESDS is the provision of services for researchers using longitudinal data sets. Stakeholders who had interacted with ESDS felt broadly happy with the service provided, and CLS informants unanimously stated that ESDS is a valued partner. ESDS therefore clearly plays a role in ensuring that researchers have access to MCS data and in providing advice/support on how to use it. To this extent the service plays a limited indirect supporting role in the process of policy impact.
17. The CLS has limited resources to implement a promotional strategy for MCS *per se*, but has achieved considerable success – by itself and working with ESDS – in ensuring that interesting findings from CLS analysis of MCS reach a broad audience, including many overseas institutions. It is clear that these promotional activities have served to raise the profile of MCS.

Best practice for impact generation

18. It is clear that some key factors are in place to increase the likelihood of policy/practice impact being achieved, despite the complex processes through which research influences policy and practice. The CLS and ESDS have established effective relationships and networks with user communities as a result of promotional, awareness raising and general support activity, and have well-planned user-engagement strategies.
19. The MCS covers around 4,800 questions and over 28,000 data items. Such size and breadth means that a wide variety of topic areas can in principle, be researched. For example, boosted samples for minority ethnic groups have facilitated analysis that has not been possible before. There is potential to undertake in-depth analysis using MCS data collected on a range of family members too. Such in-depth research can help to develop policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations.
20. The fact that samples for the devolved nations are boosted to enable robust comparisons to be undertaken for many indicators across the UK nations is a major

advantage of the MCS database. MCS data is consequently being used to feed into a number of policy areas across the devolved nations.

21. The MCS has inspired similar studies in France, Australia and New Zealand, a process that ESDS has helped to promote. In the longer term it will be useful to compare the MCS findings with those from the cohort studies taking place in these other countries. Such comparative research may again help to develop policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations.

Lessons learned for impact generation

22. The MCS is a relatively new birth cohort study. The value of the MCS is likely to increase over time once further survey sweeps have been carried out. The MCS therefore has the potential to have an even greater impact upon policy and practice in the future.
23. A key constraint relating to use of MCS data is the limited range of quantitative skills available internally within government departments and other research organisations to undertake longitudinal analysis. Ensuring that researchers have the skills to fully utilise the data will be important when future spending constraints may result in greater emphasis in the future on the analysis of existing datasets and on data linkage.

Recommendations to support impact generation

24. The CLS should consider developing a bespoke dataset with a limited number of variables that is already linked longitudinally for a specific topic (or set of users). This will help to facilitate MCS data analysis by researchers who are less confident about data manipulation and matching data longitudinally.
25. The ESRC should continue actively to promote its Quantitative Methods Initiative across the social science research base as a means of helping to address the deficits in quantitative research skills that could inhibit future use of MCS data.
26. The ONS, CLS and the ESRC should continue to promote use of MCS resources internally within government departments and other agencies.
27. The CLS should make it clear in their reports whether differences presented are statistically significant. Providing confidence intervals would help the devolved nations to establish how they compare to the UK average.
28. The ESRC should combine the best elements of the 'tracking forwards' and 'tracking backwards' approaches to substantially improve understanding of the impact of the MCS on policy and practice.

2. Background to the evaluation and to the MCS

2.1 Introduction to the MCS

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) commissioned Consulting Inplace to undertake an impact evaluation of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), focusing on the extent to which research utilising MCS data has influenced policy and practice across the UK to date.

The MCS is one of three birth cohort studies managed by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) – an ESRC Resource Centre based at the Institute of Education.¹ The MCS is co-funded by the ESRC and a consortium of government departments led by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) - funded by the ESRC and managed from the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex - checks the data supplied by the CLS, catalogues the dataset, creates metadata, prepares the data for long term preservation and provides access to the data. Registered users of the ESDS may download MCS data freely.

The MCS is a multi-disciplinary research project following the lives of over 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000/01.² The study aims to chart the initial conditions of social, economic and health advantages and disadvantages facing children born at the start of the 21st century, with a view to understanding the origins of social exclusion and contributing to a range of policy debates for example in education, health, parenting and employment.

The initial survey of MCS was carried out between 2001 and 2002 with a cohort of 18,818 babies at age nine months and their families across the whole of the UK. Its sample was designed to provide a proper representation of the total population. However, certain sub-groups were intentionally over-sampled, in particular those living in disadvantaged circumstances, children from minority ethnic backgrounds (in England), and children from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As the MCS children were born between September 2000 and January 2002 the study is also well-placed to identify any season-of-birth effect on children's development. Since the initial survey, three further sweeps of the survey have been conducted at age three, five and seven years, with a fifth planned for 2012.

The MCS provides an extensive resource to enable researchers to investigate the relationship between the development of individuals over time and the socio-economic conditions into which they are born. The MCS provides vast amounts of data potentially enabling researchers to investigate how an individual's life opportunities, indicated by key variables such as education and health, develop over time given a particular set of circumstances at birth. The data allow researchers to not only track the influence of a set of initial conditions, but of events and changes over time on opportunities and outcomes. It also allows researchers to make comparisons with other longitudinal studies from the UK and other countries thus enabling inter-temporal and international comparative research. For example, research using MCS data has looked at racial/ethnic differences in breastfeeding

¹ The two other birth studies are the National Child Development Study (1958) and the British Cohort Study (1970)

² 19,517 children in 19,244 families selected through Child Benefit Records

initiation and continuation in the United Kingdom and compared the findings with those in the United States.³

The scale and richness of the MCS data provide researchers with a unique opportunity to explore a diverse range of issues important to policy and practice. For example, analysis of MCS could offer enormous insight into effective mechanisms for tackling social disadvantage, improving civic participation and finding solutions to youth disengagement.

It is now approximately 10 years since the MCS was instigated and 2010 is an appropriate time to assess the extent to which research using MCS has had demonstrable impacts on policy and practice. This is the focus of this study.⁴

2.2 Evaluation aims and objectives

Previous impact case studies have focused on ESRC research investments, such as its Research Centres and Programmes. This research extended the ESRC's evaluation programme by applying its well-established policy and practice case study approach to a different area of the ESRC's portfolio: research resources⁵. This study was designed to assess the impact of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), on policy-making and makers, institutions, professional practitioners, and other groups outside academia. Specifically, the research was designed to:

- identify and assess specific impacts resulting from MCS (e.g. how MCS has influenced policy formation and development; and changes in professional practice) (Sections 5 & 6)
- evaluate the ways in which MCS has achieved impact both through the Centre for Longitudinal Studies' dissemination, networking, and related activities, and through the use of MCS data by other organisations and individuals (Sections 5 & 6)
- identify the range of organisations/individuals who have made use of the MCS, and the ways in which the data have been used (Section 4)
- evaluate the role of Think Tanks, and other intermediaries and knowledge brokers, as transmission routes through which MCS may have influenced policy (Section 5)
- evaluate the role of the Economic and Social Data Service in promoting the use of the MCS data (Section 6)
- identify best practice and lessons for impact generation within research resource investments (Section 7)

2.3 Approach

A 'tracking forwards' approach was adopted for this evaluation, in contrast to the 'tracking back' approach utilised for two recent policy impact studies (focused on 'Pathways to Work' and child poverty policy) that Consulting Inplace has undertaken for ESRC. This involves examining how the MCS is utilised, by researchers and

³ Kelly, Y.J., Watt, R.G. and Nazroo, J.Y. (2006) Racial/ethnic differences in breastfeeding initiation and continuation in the United Kingdom and comparison with findings in the United States, MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL

⁴ Note that the study is not concerned with assessing the scientific quality of MCS or of research that uses MCS.

⁵ ESRC resource investments provide a foundation on which to undertake further research and encompass data, capacity/expertise in research methods and information resources

intermediaries such as think tanks, consultancies, and knowledge brokers, and then how the consequent enhanced understanding results in different forms of impact on a variety of agents, as defined by Sandra Nutley et al⁶ in 2007:

- **Instrumental** – influencing the development of policy, practice, or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour
- **Conceptual** – enhancing understanding, informing and reframing debates
- **Capacity building** – technical/personal skill development

Research, for example by Ian Sanderson and colleagues, demonstrates clearly that the processes through which research influences policy and practice are complex and non-linear.⁷ This is reflected in this evaluation, recognising in particular the interaction between conceptual and instrumental impacts. Previous work by and for ESRC⁸ has identified a number of key factors that need to be in place in order to increase the likelihood of policy/practice impact being generated:

- Established relationships and networks with user communities
- Involving users at all stages of the research
- Well-planned user-engagement and knowledge exchange strategies
- Portfolios of research activity that build reputations with research users
- Good infrastructure and management support
- Where appropriate, the involvement of intermediaries and knowledge brokers as translators, amplifiers, network providers

The extent to which these factors were in place was explored as part of this research.

⁶ Using Evidence: How Research can Inform Public Services (Nutley, S., Walter, I., Davis, H. 2007)

⁷ Professor Ian Sanderson, Approaches to assessing the policy and practice impact of research, Presentation to Economic and Social Research Council seminar *'New Directions in Impact Evaluation'*, London, 16 December 2010

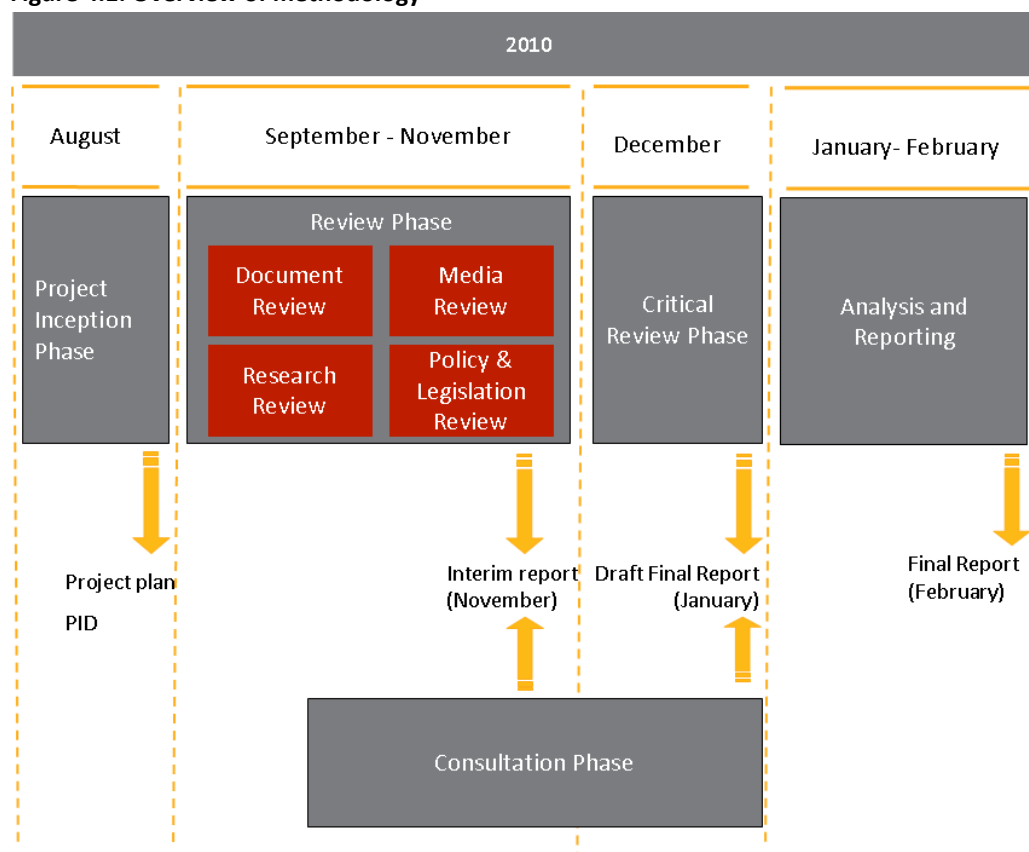
⁸ Taking Stock – a summary of ESRC's work to evaluate the impact of research on policy and practice, Economic And Social Research Council, February 2009: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/impacts-and-findings/impact-assessment/developing-impact-evaluation.aspx>

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview

Our methodology for this evaluation is summarised in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Overview of methodology



3.2 Approach

The research was divided into a 'review' phase and a 'consultation' phase. Key activities under each phase are summarised below:

3.2.1 Review phase

- Document review:** a detailed review of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies annual reports to the ESRC, together with other relevant documentation identified during the inception phase of the project. A structured approach to identifying key information was adopted, including evidence of direct and indirect impacts of MCS on policy and/or practice; information regarding the organisations that have used MCS data and how they have become aware of MCS; intermediary organisations that have played a role in generating, interpreting and disseminating research results that use MCS data; the role played by the Economic and Social Data Service in promoting the use of MCS data, and, initial indications of 'what works' in terms of ensuring that research findings using MCS data have the maximum possible impact on policy and/or practice

- **MCS research review:** a categorisation of MCS-related publications in relation to their 'policy-relevance'. This is a broad concept and aimed to capture a range of policy/practice impacts, from conceptual through to instrumental. In particular, evidence was sought of the extent to which research outputs that use MCS contain specific policy conclusions and/or findings that are potentially relevant to policy and/or practice.
- **Media review:** a review of all references to the Millennium Cohort Study in the media to enable us to understand the scale of conceptual impact that the MCS might have had so far on society, including policy-makers and practitioners
- **Policy document and legislation review:** an investigation of the extent to which MCS-related research has been referenced in policy documents. A review of relevant policy publications from 2000 until 2010 was undertaken, identifying references to research outputs that use MCS as a resource.

3.2.2 Consultation phase

The consultation phase ran in parallel with the review phase and was central to obtaining more in-depth qualitative evidence of the impact of the MCS, and to understanding the nature of research flows and networks specific to the Millennium Cohort Study. Consultations took the form of semi-structured interviews (face-to-face and by telephone as appropriate) based on a topic guide designed to ensure coverage of a number of core questions, but also with built-in flexibility to explore topics specific to individual respondents. Consultations were undertaken with the following individuals/organisations:

- Key individuals and staff involved in communications and marketing at the **Centre for Longitudinal Studies** and **Economic and Social Data Service** (six interviews)
- **Government representatives** (eight interviews):
 - Office for National Statistics⁹
 - Department for Work and Pensions
 - Scottish Government
 - Welsh Government¹⁰
 - Northern Ireland Executive
- **A cross-section of researchers, research institutes and other stakeholders that had used MCS in the recent past** (seven interviews)¹¹

⁹ Note that ONS, as the lead government organisation in relation to MCS, undertook a review of the use made by government departments of MCS and other longitudinal data resources in late 2010. ONS were able to provide relevant findings from this review, reducing the requirement to interview large number of government officials at an extremely busy time.

¹⁰ Following the May 2011 election, the Welsh Assembly Government was renamed the 'Welsh Government'. The latter title is used throughout this report.

¹¹ The names of the individuals and organisations consulted are not listed in the published version of the report, in order to preserve their anonymity.

3.2.3 Critical Review

An important part of this research involved a process of self-appraisal, through which we examined which components of the methodology worked well, and which aspects did not do so. We explored the relative strengths and weaknesses of the approach that we adopted, and have included recommendations on how to derive optimum benefit from future evaluations. A particular focus of this self-appraisal process was the extent to which the methodology was appropriate for analysing the impact of investments in a resource as opposed to a research programme or centre.

4. Use of the Millennium Cohort Study

4.1 Introduction

In this section we identify the range of individuals/organisations who have made use of the MCS, the ways in which the data has been used and its perceived benefit and value. The methodology involved:

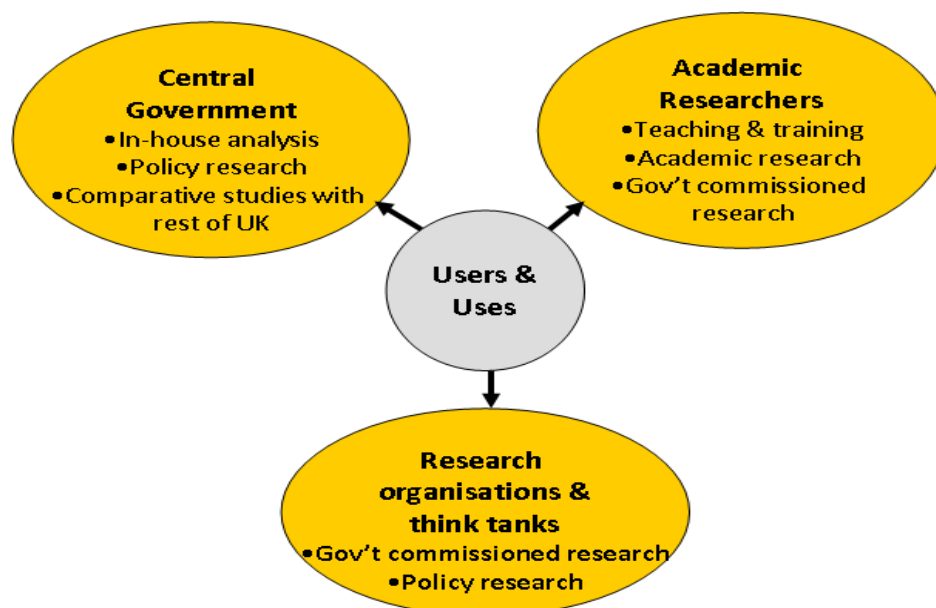
- An analysis of MCS data requests from the ESDS usage logs
- A desk-based review of research outputs that have used MCS data
- Consultations with users of MCS data (academic researchers, staff within central government departments, policy and research institutes and think tanks)
- Consultations with staff at the CLS and the ESDS
- A desk-based review of media coverage of the MCS, including examples of media coverage provided by the CLS

Understanding who is using the MCS, and what it is used for, provides the basis for understanding its impact upon policy and practice. This is explored in more detail in Sections 6 and 7.

4.2 MCS data use: overview

Our research has highlighted that there is a broad level of interest in and use of the MCS data. This includes academic researchers, central government departments, policy and research institutes and think tanks. The ways in which MCS data is used are summarised in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Users and uses of MCS data



Consultation with these stakeholders has identified that the MCS is seen as a valuable research resource that enables researchers to examine a wide range of topics to a level of depth and detail that has not been possible before. The longitudinal nature of the MCS, enabling the tracking of changes over time and more sophisticated analysis, is seen to be its key benefit. Our review of research outputs that have used MCS data has highlighted that certain researchers have produced multiple outputs over the years. To an extent this reflects the longitudinal nature of the MCS; researchers are able to update their own studies or modify their investigations when new datasets from additional sweeps become available. Other specific areas highlighted through the consultation process that distinguishes the MCS from its predecessors and alternative data sources include:

- the greater focus on ethnicity, meaning that researchers can investigate how outcomes vary by ethnic group
- the ability to look at the wider determinants of health outcomes due to the dataset being large and weighted for national representativeness
- use of a broad range of social indicators (for example, in comparison to the Avon Longitudinal Survey of Parents and Children)
- being able to compare the MCS survey findings with those from other birth cohort studies
- ability to focus on smaller geographical areas, including the devolved administrations
- facilitating research across policy areas covered by different government departments, for example, health, education and communities.

4.3 Academic research

A review of the ESDS usage logs identified a total of 4,937 data requests from the date of first data release (11 February 2004) to 25 January 2011 from a total of 730 distinct users. The majority of MCS data requests came from either staff within Higher Education institutions (44%) or postgraduate students (33%). Other data requests came from undergraduates (6%), staff in FE (4%), non-governmental/registered charity (3%) and central/local government (3%).

A more detailed breakdown of MCS users by type of individual and types of institution is provided in Appendix I. This shows the importance of HE staff and postgraduate students and a concentration in major centres of social science and medical research, including the Institute of Education, University College London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the London School of Economics and the Universities of Essex, Oxford and York.

The ESDS's holdings of the MCS data comprises 10 separate holdings. The spread of use is shown in Table 5.1. The total number of usages is considerably higher than the number of unique users for two reasons. First the ESDS releases new editions/versions of the same dataset and informs existing users of these changes; second, most of the core MCS data is also available in the ESDS's online tabulation system which records the number of tabulations being carried out.

Table 5.1: Users and usages of MCS data accessed through the ESDS

SN	Title	Number of unique users	Total number of usages
4683	Millennium Cohort Study: First Survey, 2001-2003	561	2708
5350	Millennium Cohort Study: Second Survey, 2003-2005	428	1004
5559	Millennium Cohort Study: Survey of Mothers who Received Assisted Fertility Treatment, 2003	64	92
5614	Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2003: Birth Registration and Maternity Hospital Episode Data	122	191
5724	Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2003: Hospital of Birth: Special Licence Access	6	13
5728	Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2005: Geographical Identifiers, Ward Level: Special Licence Access	6	10
5729	Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2005: Geographical Identifiers, Lower Super Output Area Level: Special Licence Access	8	15
5730	Millennium Cohort Study, 2001-2005: Geographical Identifiers, Output Area Level: Special Licence Access	9	30
5795	Millennium Cohort Study: Third Survey, 2006	325	626
6411	Millennium Cohort Study: Fourth Survey, 2008	141	248

The size and breadth of MCS, (there are around 4,800 questions and over 28,000 data items), mean that a wide variety of topic areas can, in principle, be researched. We have identified and reviewed 125 formally published outputs that use MCS data, over half (54%) of which were journal articles. Other outputs included academic papers, research reports, government-commissioned papers and books/chapters in books. An overview of research outputs that have utilised MCS data is included as Appendix II. A diverse range of subject matter is covered; however most research outputs can be categorised into the following broad areas:

- The impact and nature of parental employment, family composition and parental behaviour
- Inequality and child development
- Ethnicity and child outcomes
- Early years education and childcare
- Breastfeeding and development

There is significant overlap between a number of topics, since many areas of interest are interrelated, and methodologies usually entail multivariate statistical techniques such as regression analysis. Our review of data requests submitted to ESDS gives an indication of other areas of research being pursued using MCS data that may not yet have found its way into formal publications. Examples include:

- Housing mobility of young families
- Impact of neighbourhood quality on child development
- Analysis of parental choice of primary school
- Duration of relationships: comparing marriage and cohabitation
- Gendered pathways to adulthoods

It is clear that MCS is giving rise to a rich body of research in terms of variety and volume covering many different, but often linked, areas. While the focus is primarily upon child development, parenting and related issues, it is clear that the availability of MCS data is laying the foundations for future research to build upon. The vast majority of research outputs reviewed can be seen as policy relevant and as such many of the findings are likely to have implications for future policy formation in various fields. We explore this in further detail in Section 7.

4.4 Central government

The MCS is funded by the ESRC and the consortium of government departments (led by the Office for National Statistics¹²) including the Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Sure Start and the governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition to the main funding departments, the following departments have either undertaken research with, or shown an interest in, MCS data:

- Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Department of Transport
- Department for Communities and Local Government

The consultation process has highlighted a number of examples of government organisations undertaking analysis of MCS data as part of the policy development process; in other cases departments have commissioned bespoke analysis from MCS researchers. The impact of such analysis and research is explored in further detail in Section 7.

4.5 Think tank and pressure group research

The research review has also highlighted research outputs using MCS data that have been produced by think tanks including Demos, the Centre for Social Justice, Civitas and the Institute for Public Policy Research. Pressure groups that have been documented as using or referring to MCS findings in their publications include the Child Poverty Action Group, Families Need Fathers, the Family Education Trust, Family and Parenting Institute, NCT (formerly National Childbirth Trust), Social Liberal Forum and the Conservative Research Department.

¹² The Office for National Statistics brokers the relationship between the ESRC, CLS and government departments in relation to the MCS.

Research topics include:

- Parenting¹³
- Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)¹⁴
- Family breakdown¹⁵ and marriage¹⁶

Such research has highlighted policy relevant issues and findings. The extent to which this think tank research has impacted upon policy and practice is explored in further detail in Section 7.

4.6 Media review

The scope of the Millennium Cohort Study and the relevance of the findings from research using MCS data mean that there is considerable media interest in headline findings. The CLS takes very seriously the dissemination of research findings through various forms of media, notably the print media and broadcast media. CLS has built up a substantial bank of references to media reporting of research using MCS data.

Our analysis of material provided by the CLS confirms that research using MCS has attracted a considerable amount of media attention, to some extent reflecting the efforts of CLS in particular to publicise MCS research and to catalogue media coverage in a systematic way. Figure 5.2 provides an outline of the volume of media coverage since 2007.

It is clear that there are peaks of activity corresponding to specific data/research releases as follows:

- June 2007: release of the User Guide to Initial Findings for the Second Survey
- October 2008: release of the User Guide to Initial Findings for the Third Survey
- February 2009: release of the study regarding childcare
- February 2010: release of the book '*Children of the 21st century: The first five years*', edited by Kirstine Hansen, Heather Joshi and Shirley Dex

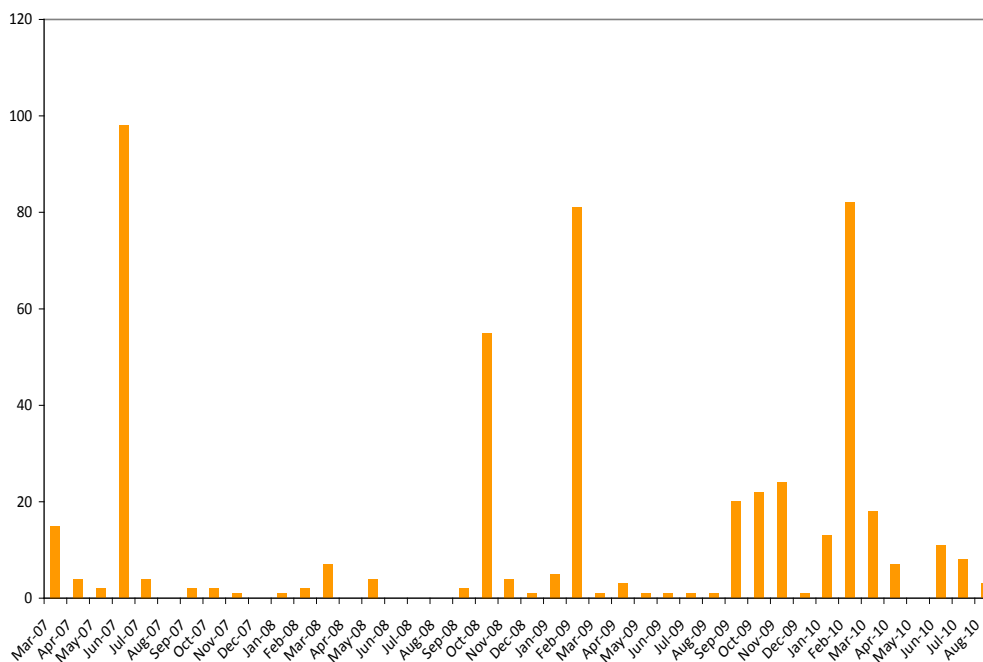
¹³ Lexmond, J., Bazalguette, L. and Margo, J. (2011) *The Home Front*, Demos Report, January 2011. London: Demos

¹⁴ Sodha, S. and Margo, J. (2010) EX CURRICULA "A generation of disengaged children is waiting in the wings..", Demos Report, 2010. London: Demos

¹⁵ Benson, H (2010) Family breakdown in the UK: it's NOT about divorce, Centre for Social Justice

¹⁶ De Waal, A. (2008) Second Thoughts on the Family, Institute for the Study of Civil Society

Figure 5.2 Number of articles featuring the MCS since 2007



Source: CLS database

The influence of media coverage of research that has utilised MCS data is explored in further detail in Section 5.

Summary of key findings:

- There is a broad level of interest in and use of the MCS data from academic researchers, policy and research institutes, central government departments and think tanks. The vast majority of MCS data requests to the ESDS are from higher education institutions
- The key benefit of MCS, according to most informants, is its longitudinal nature, enabling the tracking of changes over time and more sophisticated analysis
- The focus of research activity is primarily upon child development, parenting and related issues. The vast majority of research outputs reviewed can be seen as policy relevant
- Research using MCS attracted a considerable amount of media attention, with peaks of activity corresponding to specific data/research releases

5. MCS impact on policy and practice: detailed analysis

5.1 Introduction

In this section we provide a detailed assessment of the impact of the MCS on policy and practice across the UK and in the devolved administrations. We analyse the role of academic research, research by think tanks, use by central government departments and the role of the media and discuss their role in generating impact, to highlight learning and best practice. The methodology involved:

- An analysis of MCS data requests from the ESDS usage logs
- A desk-based review of research outputs that have used MCS data
- Consultations with the key users of MCS data (academic researchers, staff within central government departments, policy and research institutes and think tanks)
- Consultations with staff at the CLS and the ESDS
- A desk-based review of media coverage of the MCS, including examples of media coverage provided by the CLS

5.2 Research

Our review of the CLS bibliography identified 125 research outputs that utilised MCS data as being policy relevant. As such many of the findings are likely to have implications for future policy formation in various fields. In most cases research outputs do not make reference to specific policies, except where a paper is reporting an evaluation, such as that of the Children's Fund or Sure Start. It is typical however for papers and research outputs to assert the need for future policies to take account of their findings. We highlight this in the grey boxes for a number of key research themes where MCS data has been utilised.

5.2.1 The impact and nature of parental employment, family composition and parental behaviour

Parental employment

Maternal employment has been a key focus of research in this area. It is likely, as with other areas often related to child development, that future cohort sweeps will encourage additional research. *Mothers and the modern family* funded by the then Equal Opportunities Commission found that there is no association between negative early child development and maternal employment.¹⁷ Research published the following year did demonstrate however that children are more likely to be overweight at age 3 if their mother had participated in any employment since the child's birth.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Mothers and the modern family*, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, (2007)

¹⁸ Maternal employment and early childhood overweight: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study, HAWKINS, S.S, COLE, T.J., LAW, C. and The Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group (2008)

Implications for policy:

Argues the case for the promotion of healthier work-life balance among parents

The same authors built upon this research the following year, showing that five-year-old children of mothers who had worked part- or full-time since their child's birth were more likely to have unhealthy lifestyles.

Implications for policy:

Dietary and physical guidelines should be implemented in formal childcare environments in England, as they are in Scotland

Family composition

The 2006 Centre for Social Justice *State of the Nation* report analysed MCS data and suggested that marriage was a *causal* factor in the prevention of relationship breakdown.¹⁹ However, more recent research undertaken by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, sponsored by The Nuffield Foundation, demonstrates that child outcomes and relationship stability are not affected by the institution of marriage itself; people who marry are very different from those who cohabit and when this is taken into account there are no statistically significant differences in child outcomes and stability.²⁰

Implications for policy:

Affirms the former Labour government's decision to remove the term *marital status* in 2003 from their official documents

Quantitative analysis of MCS data for research commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions found that lone parents typically face high levels of social disadvantage with poorer health indicators and low attendance at antenatal classes.²¹ The analysis showed high rates of daughters of lone parents becoming lone parents. Kiernan used the MCS in 2005 to highlight that 15% of children are born to parents not in a union and probably not cohabiting, and argued that we need a greater understanding of the factors preventing and encouraging positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.²² This paper was referenced in the aforementioned DWP report.

Implications for policy:

Points to a need for interventions to be designed that 'focus on prospective parents' (both mothers and fathers) and 'ensure the best circumstances in which to seek to bring a child into the world'

5.2.2 Inequality and child development

A number of important studies have examined gaps in cognitive ability and behavioural adjustment at ages 3 and 5. The vast majority of those referenced below use MCS data exclusively, whilst for others the MCS is still used as a critical

¹⁹ Fractured families – the State of the Nation report, The Centre for Social Justice report (2006)

²⁰ Cohabitation, marriage and child outcomes, GOODMAN, A. and GREAVES, E. (2010)

²¹ Sole and joint birth registrations: Exploring the circumstances, choices and motivations of unmarried parents, GRAHAM, J., Creegan, C., Barnard, M., Mowlam, A. and McKay, S. (2007)

²² Non-residential fatherhood and child involvement: Evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study, Kiernan, K. (2005)

resource. Gaps in cognitive and behavioural development are apparent by 3 years of age²³, and economic deprivation is more important for the former and a mother's mental state for the latter.²⁴ Interestingly, work commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions shows that increases in family income between a child reaching nine months and three years of age have small but significant and non-biased effects on cognitive outcomes and behavioural development at age 3.²⁵ Further research illustrated that more persistent poverty and maternal depression further increased the likelihood of poor cognitive development and behaviour at age 3.²⁶

Research using the MCS datasets (sweeps two and three) undertaken by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, found large differences in cognitive development between children from rich and poor households, and that these differentials widen further between ages 3 and 5.²⁷ The research shows that whilst home learning environment differences are partly responsible, the majority of the gap remains unexplained. Research conducted by Demos, funded by the Private Equity Foundation, uses sweep 3 of the MCS to demonstrate a clear relationship between family income and child behavioural outcomes at age 5.²⁸

Implications for policy:

The research unanimously calls for more funding for early interventions and *earlier* interventions and suggests that policies that focus solely on improving home learning environments will not close the majority of the gap between rich and poor households' children's development

5.2.3 Ethnicity and child outcomes

The longitudinal nature of the MCS has enabled a number of different research subjects to be investigated once additional sweeps have been completed, that would not be possible using cross-sectional data. Researchers have, using the first three sweeps of the MCS, been able to explore ethnicity, birth outcomes, and development & health outcomes. In 2005, research undertaken by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and funded by the then Department for Education and Skills and HM Treasury, used the MCS to demonstrate clearly that birth weight and length of gestation varied by ethnicity.²⁹

Additional research using MCS data showed that differences in birth weight are explained by socio-economic disadvantage in some ethnic groups, whereas maternal and infant characteristics explain the discrepancies in other ethnic groups.³⁰ Developmental delay at nine months was shown to be more prevalent amongst

²³ Origins of social immobility and inequality: parenting and early childhood development, Ermisch, J. (2008)

²⁴ Economic deprivation, maternal depression, parenting and children's cognitive and emotional development in early childhood, Kiernan, K.E. and Huerta, M.C. (2008)

²⁵ Changing economic circumstances in childhood and their effects on subsequent educational and other outcomes, Plewis, I. and Kallis, C. (2008)

²⁶ Poverty, maternal depression, family status and children's cognitive and behavioural development in early childhood: a longitudinal study, Kiernan, K.E. and Mensah, F.K. (2009)

²⁷ Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?, Goodman, A. and Gregg, P. *et al*

²⁸ Ex-curricula, Sodha, S. and Margi, J. (2010)

²⁹ Ethnic differences in birth outcomes in England, Dearden, L., Mesnard, A. and Shaw, J. (2005)

³⁰ Why does birth weight vary among ethnic groups in the UK? Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study, Kelly, Y., Panico, L., Bartley, M., Marmot, M., Nazroo, J and Sacker, A. (2009)

Pakistani and Bangladeshi children.³¹ Poor cognitive ability was more common amongst these ethnicities at age five, according to research funded by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families.³² The paper showed that ability at age 5 was associated with ability at age 3. There has however been some catching up in cognitive scores among Pakistani and Bangladeshi children by age 7.

Implications for policy:

The evidence indicates that differential outcomes by ethnicity may require tailored interventions for specific sets of circumstances

5.2.4 Early years education and childcare

Impact evaluation of Sure Start

To date there have been three main reports produced by the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Team. The research for two of the three reports used MCS data. The first, *Early Impacts of Sure Start Local Programmes on Children and Families*³³, published 2005, compared detailed data on 9 month and 36 month old children and their families living in Sure Start Local Programme (SSLP) areas with children of the same ages living in areas soon to become SSLP localities, but did not use MCS data. The authors concede that since:

- *“it typically takes 3 years for SSLPs to achieve a full range of functioning services...there would be a limited period that families and children at this stage of the study might have been influenced by SSLP services”* (page 6).

The report goes on to say that:

- *“Stronger grounds for drawing definitive conclusions...will exist once longitudinal data on the 9-month olds and their families in SSLP areas who are included in this report are followed up at 36 months of age and thus have been exposed to SSLPs for a much longer period of time”* (page 6).

Therefore, the longitudinal element of SSLP impact evaluation is seen as providing the most robust evidence of the Programme’s longer term impact. However, the main methodological problem presenting a barrier to this was the lack of a control group from suitable comparator areas that could be tracked. MCS data provided the solution to this. Without the MCS the research it would have been necessary to re-orientate the research to examine variation *within* SSLP areas, which would not have provided as insightful analysis as examining the differential impact of SSLP provision and the no provision:

- *“Early decisions not to undertake a randomised control trial and to double the number of SSLPs (reducing the opportunity to identify suitable comparison areas) meant that the evaluation had to use the MCS cohort as a source of comparison data”*³⁴

³¹ Ethnic differences in achievement of developmental milestones by 9 months of age: the Millennium Cohort Study, Kelly, Y. J., Sacker, A., Schoon, I. And Nazroo, J.Y. (2006)

³² Child development in the first three sweeps of the Millennium Cohort Study, Cullis, A. and Hansen, K. (2008)

³³ Early Impacts of Sure Start Local Programmes on Children and Families, National Evaluation of Sure Start Team, Birkbeck, University of London (2005)

³⁴ The Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Five Year Olds and Their Families, National Evaluation of Sure Start Team, Birkbeck, University of London (2010)

This is important since the early findings indicated that Sure Start, a flagship policy of the Labour Government, provided only modest benefits for the moderately disadvantaged and small adverse impacts on the most disadvantaged. Once MCS comparison data was employed the evaluation shows “*almost no evidence of adverse effects of SSLPs*”.³⁵

Implications for policy:

A range of policy implications cited in the evaluation report include:

- Maintained settings should continue to be supported, as these offered the highest quality provision overall
- Settings in all sectors need support to improve quality of provision for children’s developing skills in the areas of literacy, mathematics and science
- The development of Children’s Centres should be supported

Additional research outputs

The MCS was also used in research into childcare settings, and this report formed part of the wider evaluation of Sure Start beyond the core impact assessment.³⁶ Among the key findings identified is the significant variation in quality resulting from differences in sector, size, staff qualifications, staff-child ratios etc, and that the voluntary sector has made the greatest improvements since ‘Effective Provision of Pre-School Education’ (EPPE) data was collected. Most importantly, association with Children’s Centres implied a *positive* impact while association with Sure Start Local Programme areas implied a *negative* impact.

Implications for policy:

If there is not sufficient funding, the educative elements of children’s centres, essential for improving children’s outcomes, may suffer. There also needs to be sufficient space in children’s centre buildings for health visitors and others to work effectively

Further research uses an MCS sub-sample of children whose mothers were working when they were nine months old to investigate the effect that this has on cognitive and behavioural development to the age of three.³⁷ The authors find a positive association between school readiness test scores and, unlike previous research in this field, no association with problem behaviour. Data on the use of formal and informal childcare from the first sweep of the MCS, when the children were aged nine months, has also been compared with data from the 1958 National Child Development Study and the 1970 British Cohort Study.³⁸

Implications for policy:

Affordability and concerns regarding trustworthiness limits the use of formal childcare which impacts indirectly on the labour supply of mothers

³⁵ The Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Three Year Olds and Their Families, National Evaluation of Sure Start Team, Birkbeck, University of London (2008)

³⁶ Quality of Childcare Settings in the Millennium Cohort Study, Joshi, H., Sylva, K., Mathers, S with Hansen, K., Plewis, I., Johnson, J., George, A., Linskey, F. and Grabbe, Y. (2007)

³⁷ Early Childcare and Child Development, Hansen, K. and Hawkes, D. (2009)

³⁸ Childcare and Mothers’ Employment: Approaching the Millennium, Hansen, K., Joshi, H. and Verropoulou (2006)

5.2.5 Breast feeding and development

The majority of the research conducted in this field focused on exploring differing rates of breastfeeding initiation and continuation across a range of individual characteristics. For virtually all of the identified research outputs, the MCS was the sole data source. In 2005, research found that breastfeeding initiation rates were lowest among white mothers and that having a partner of a different ethnic group was independently and positively associated with initiation and continuation of breastfeeding to one month.³⁹ Single white mothers were also more likely to start breastfeeding if they resided in areas with high ethnic minority populations. The same authors built upon this research in 2007, finding that discontinuation rates were higher amongst white mothers but that socio-economic status was positively associated with breast-feeding continuation among white women.⁴⁰ Other research also confirms that social class is positively related to both initiation and continuation rates.⁴¹

Research by a consortium including The Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group shows that being employed full-time was responsible for lower breastfeeding initiation⁴² and duration⁴³ rates, independent of confounding factors such as social class. Breastfeeding was shown to protect children against developmental delay⁴⁴ and was associated with lower hospitalisation rates among infants.⁴⁵

Implications for policy

- The research points to the necessity for policies that recognise that socio-economic circumstances and ethnicity are highly influential in the determination of breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates. Furthermore, there should be more development of policies that focus on continuation of breastfeeding, and not just initiation.

5.3 Impact on central government

The research has identified how the MCS has been used to inform the policy process within central government. We begin our analysis of the impact of MCS by examining its influence on family policy. Understanding the social conditions surrounding birth and early childhood is increasingly recognised as fundamental to the study of the whole of the life course. This applies across the range, from the origins of social exclusion through investigation of the influence of early circumstances on health over the life course to providing evidence for major policy

³⁹ **The contribution of parental and community ethnicity to breastfeeding practices: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study, Griffiths, L.J., Tate, R., Dezateux, C. and Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group (2005)**

⁴⁰ **Do early infant feeding practices vary by maternal ethnic group?, Griffiths, L.J., Tate, R., Dezateux, C. and Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group (2007)**

⁴¹ Breast-feeding initiation and exclusive duration at 6 months by social class – results from the Millennium Cohort Study, Watt, R.G. And Kelly, Y.J. (2005)

⁴² Maternal employment and breast feeding initiation: findings from the Millennium Cohort Study, Hawkins S.S., Griffiths L.J., Dezateux C., Law C. and The Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group. (2007)

⁴³ **The impact of maternal employment on breastfeeding duration in the UK Millennium Cohort Study, Hawkins S.S., Griffiths L.J., Dezateaux C., Law C. and The Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group. (2007)**

⁴⁴ Breastfeeding and developmental delay: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study, Sacker, A., Quigley, M. And Kelly, Y. (2006)

⁴⁵ **Breastfeeding and Hospitalization for Diarrheal and Respiratory Infection in the UK Millennium Cohort Study, Quigley, M. A., Kelly, Y. J. and Sacker, A. (2007)**

initiatives such as "Sure Start".⁴⁶ From the start of the last Labour government there has been clear movement and change with regard to families and children's policy. A detailed overview of the most important shifts is provided in Appendix III, with a summary provided below:

- 1998: **Supporting Families Green Paper** - from a new Labour government focused on families as a policy unit
- 2002: **Integration of all early years and childcare services** - integration of services for families and parents was formally started by the integration of early years and childcare services
- 2003: **Department of Education and Skills** - responsibility for children's services moved from Department of Health to Department of Education and Skills to encourage greater integration
- 2003: **Laming Report into Victoria Climbié** - this report was the catalyst for the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper which has defined family and child legislation and policy from 2003-2010
- 2003: **Every Child Matters (ECM) Green Paper** - went beyond dealing with protection issues to setting out five children's outcomes which became the framework for all government interventions after this time
- 2004: **Children's Act** - this legislation put the recommendations from ECM into law
- 2004: **National Service Framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services** - set for the first time national standards for children's health and social care
- 2006: **Childcare Act** - legislated for the integration of childcare and Early Years services
- 2007: **Aiming high for children: supporting families** – informed the Comprehensive Spending Review and included a universal advice service for parents and support for Children's Centres that delivered parenting classes
- 2007: **Department for Children Schools and Families** - created by Gordon Brown in order to further integrate children's services
- 2007: **Every Parent Matters** - this strategy recognised the importance of parents in the development of children
- 2007: **Children's Plan** - this plan aimed to improve schools and support for families
- 2008: **21st Century Schools White Paper** - set out the strategy for schools to deliver the Children's Plan
- 2009: **Child Poverty Act** - formalised the Labour government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020
- 2010: **'New approach'** – priorities under the new government to be delivered by the Department for Education
- 2010: **'The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper'** – set out the reform programme for the schools system, with teachers placed at the heart of school improvement.

⁴⁶ The Centre for Longitudinal Studies

We reviewed the policies after 2005 and gathered information on the evidence base for these initiatives. This was usually a briefing paper connected to the policy, or the further information released with the legislative documentation. We reviewed these documents for evidence of research utilising the MCS. We started at 2005, since the first survey took place from June 2001 until January 2003 and was published in 2005. This was not a comprehensive process, due to the volume and complexity of the policy area, but it does provide an indication of the presence and influence of the MCS in the policy process.

Figure 7.1: MCS influence on family policy

Policy	Is MCS used as part of the evidence?
2006 Childcare Act	The Childcare Act comprises a number of legislative documents. Although the Act is focused on early years, the drivers are reducing child poverty and the <i>Every Child Matters</i> agenda. There is no mention of research relating to the MCS as part of the documentation relating to the Act.
2007 Aiming High for Children: supporting families	The <i>Aiming High</i> Green Paper mentions the Millennium Cohort Study 6 times. This seems to mainly be based on one paper ⁴⁷ that highlights the differing levels of support accessed by families on low incomes. The research was used to support the policy relating to integrated services for those with complex needs, and support for families caught in a cycle of low achievement
2007 Department for Children Schools and Families	This departmental change was in support of greater integration in services. It is unlikely that the MCS contributed directly to this decision; however, as in the above 2007 Aiming High for Children Green Paper, it did form a small part of the body of evidence for the need for more integrated services.
2007 Every Parent Matters	This document refers to 73 different research documents and sources. Of these documents or sources, six could have had input from the MCS ⁴⁸ .
2007 Children's Plan	In the document 'Children and Young People Today: Evidence to support the development of the Children's Plan' the Millennium Cohort Study is referenced twice: Hansen, K and J. Heather (eds) (2007) <i>Millennium Cohort Study Second Survey A User's Guide to Initial Findings</i> Centre for Longitudinal Studies and Mathers, S. et al (2007) <i>The Quality of Childcare Settings in the Millennium Cohort Study (QCSMCS)</i> . This research was used to support the evidence regarding early years' childcare and that social class can affect early development.
2008 21 st Century Schools	Not directly - considering the age range of those targeted by this document, it is unlikely to contain reference to the MCS.
2009 Child Poverty Act	Not directly - however child poverty overall has been impacted by the MCS research (see case study below)

⁴⁷ The prevalence of multiple deprivation for children in the UK: Analysis of the Millennium Cohort and Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England, Feinstein and Sabates, 2007.

⁴⁸ The poverty site JRF; Explaining Intergenerational Income Persistence: Non-cognitive Skills, Ability and Education, by Jo Blanden, Paul Gregg and Lindsey Macmillan, CMPO Working Paper No 06/146; Freedom's Orphans: Raising Youth in a Changing World: Margo and Dixon et al: IPPR 2006; Sure Start Children's Centres Practice Guidance, DfES, November 2006; The 'Healthy Living' Social Marketing Initiative: A review of the evidence. MRC Human Nutrition Research, Cambridge, and Department of Health, 2007; Policy review of children and young people: A discussion paper, HM Treasury, January 2007 (this resulted in the Aiming High reports).

2010 'new approach'	We can be sure that the Millennium Cohort Study is continuing to inform policy in the early years and child poverty areas (see case studies below). The other areas of focus for the government are unlikely to be based on MCS data as they target older children (for example the pupil premium etc.) and the MCS has not yet published its findings for this age range.
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5.3.1 Policy case studies

Two detailed case studies in relation to early years development and child poverty are provided below. Both case studies highlight the role of the MCS in influencing policy decisions. The case studies are based on:

- a review of the key policy developments that have taken place in each policy area
- a review of the key evidence/research/policy papers that informed such decision making and whether MCS data was used as part of this process

Early years policy

The case study highlights the 'instrumental role' played by the MCS in influencing the development of early years policy and practice and service provision in terms of enhanced Children's Sure Start Centres.

Case Study: Early years

Early Years policy developments that took place between 2005 and 2010 and have been informed by the MCS are highlighted below:

1. Sure Start, announced in 1998, was a flagship Labour programme that integrated health, social care and education services under one roof. This was the main method that Labour used to enable services to get to hard to reach communities. The final wave of local programmes was not approved until 2002. In 2003, these were replaced by Children's Centres, a universal programme covering the whole country. These also integrated job-seeking support. From September 2008 they were also meant to provide early years education and day care. This shift is an important one, from specialist provision for the poorest, to a universal offer that included economic goals such as job seeking.

MCS role in informing policy development:

The change from Sure Start to Children's Centres was to some extent evidence led, with the national evaluation of Sure Start utilising MCS data. The research highlighted the importance of early intervention and thus recommended that the development of Children's Centres should be supported. The Labour government consequently enhanced Sure Start Children's Centres in the most disadvantaged parts of England and funded more outreach workers and training as a result of research using MCS data.

2. The coalition government has decided that early years policy is a particular priority. One of the key recommendations is to reverse the universalisation of Children's Centres to focus again on the original Sure Start goals of supporting the poorest and most vulnerable.

MCS role in informing policy development:

The Early Years Evidence Pack was issued by the coalition government after the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010, as a mechanism to inform policy makers of the current available evidence. It used the MCS as recent evidence that social class and affluence had an effect on achievement.⁴⁹ As early years is a particular priority of the government, this is enlightening. An indication of the future direction to be taken by the department on early intervention⁵⁰ is based on a report by the Centre for Social Justice and the Smith Institute.⁵¹ This report draws on the findings from the MCS regarding early intervention (although no particular research was cited).

3. Frank Field was asked by the coalition government in 2010 to investigate life chances and their effect on children. The final report of this investigation, *'The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults'* strengthened the political will to focus on 'Foundation Years' services. This report sought to broaden the definition of child poverty from merely income measures to include developmental and health indicators. These are called 'life chances' indicators and are meant to focus on the ability of children born into poverty to escape it when they become adults.

MCS role in informing policy development:

Frank Field's Final Report⁵² makes much use of the MCS to understand the links between poverty, child development and service provision. It was clearly a major part of the evidence gathering, and the Independent Review commissioned additional analysis of the MCS data in order to support his conclusions. The MCS was used by Field to verify that the indicators he was proposing regarding positive and authoritative parenting, the home learning environment and other home and family related factors measured at age 3 are indeed predictive of children's readiness for school. Evidence from the MCS and analysed by York University⁵³ was used to understand how poverty impacted on cognitive and behavioural outcomes by ages 3 and 5. They also used the MCS and the same study to link mental health of parents with the outcomes by 3 and 5. Perhaps the greatest impact from the MCS was a study commissioned by the Inquiry from University of Bristol that looked at the suggested set of life indicators to assess their suitability for measuring life chances. This was important as it used the MCS data as the primary way of checking that the policy proposals were fit for purpose, and so had a direct effect on the final 'Life Chances Index'.

⁴⁹ <https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/early%20years%20evidence%20pack.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0063345/early-intervention-key-to-giving-disadvantaged-children-the-opportunities-they-deserve>

⁵¹ Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens, 2008, Graham Allen MP and Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP

⁵² The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults, The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, Frank Field, December 2010

⁵³ Predictive factors from age 3 and infancy for poor childhood outcomes at age 5, evidence from the Millennium cohort study, Hobcraft, J and Kiernan, K, (2010), University of York

Child poverty policy

This case study again highlights the ‘instrumental’ role played by the MCS in influencing the development of policy and practice in relation to child poverty. The use of the MCS in Frank Field’s Independent Review has been particularly influential with this review now largely informing current child poverty strategy.

Case Study: Child poverty policy

Early years policy developments that have taken place over the last ten years and have been informed by the MCS are highlighted below:

1. In 1999 the Labour government asked Carey Oppenheim to convene a research group to look into aspects of defining and measuring child poverty. This group developed ‘*Measuring Child Poverty: A consultation Document*’ that set out options for measuring child poverty. *Measuring Child Poverty* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2003) set the indicators that the Labour government used to monitor its progress against the target of eradicating child poverty following the consultation. Following the announcement there were many key policies set by the Labour government aimed at families, children and poverty. The Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*, links the relief of child poverty to benefits for society as a whole, including reduced public spending and maximising the contribution of all citizens, including those who grew up in poverty.⁵⁴ This led to the Children’s Act 2004, which ensures that all policy initiatives aimed at children must fulfil one or more of five outcomes: that all children should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well-being.

MCS role in informing policy development:

*The Child Poverty Unit provides the government with analysis and evidence relating to child poverty. It published research reports in 2008 and 2009. Of these, *Ethnicity and Child Poverty* by Lucinda Platt used the MCS as one of its most important data sources for young children.*⁵⁵

2. The Child Poverty Act obtained Royal Assent on 25 March 2010 and enshrines in law the Government’s commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

MCS role in informing policy development:

Ending child poverty: mapping the route to 2020, published in March 2010 by Treasury, DCFS, and DWP, was the strategy to take forward the Child Poverty Bill. It relied on the MCS to understand the links between poverty and development in early years, as well as the importance of early intervention.

3. As noted above, Frank Field was appointed in 2010 by the coalition government to conduct a review into poverty. He was charged with looking at the current definition of poverty as being households with less than 60% of median income, following criticisms by Ian Duncan-Smith.⁵⁶ He was also tasked with looking at

⁵⁴ Every Child Matters Green Paper (2003), Department for Education and Skills Children’s Act 2004

⁵⁵ *Ethnicity and Child Poverty* (2009), Platt, L

⁵⁶ Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pension, *Welfare for the 21st Century*, Thursday 27th May 2010

the role of parents and local services to nurture children. His findings confirmed an approach which focused on ‘foundation years’.⁵⁷ The coalition government has retained the goal of ending child poverty by 2020 in its programme for government and reiterated its support for the statutory responsibility to develop a Child Poverty Strategy in 2011. A consultation on this strategy launched in December 2010. This was based largely on findings from Frank Field’s Independent review.

MCS role in informing policy development:

Current child poverty strategy is based largely on Frank Field’s Independent Review. As discussed above, this means that the MCS is still a vital source of evidence for the government when dealing with child poverty, one of its key priorities. It also takes into account Graham Allen’s report ‘Early Interventions: Good Parents, Better Kids, Great Citizens’ as mentioned in the Early Years case study.

5.3.2 Impact of MCS in the devolved administrations

Several stakeholders noted that one of the major advantages of the MCS database is the fact that samples for the devolved nations are boosted to enable robust comparisons between the UK nations to be undertaken for many indicators. Also of significance is the ability of researchers to undertake analysis within the devolved nations, for example spatially or between demographic groups. The following case studies illustrate the ways in which MCS has been used to inform policy or strategy decisions in these countries:

Northern Ireland

Case study: Child health and educational attainment in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Executive commissioned a study to analyse outcomes at age 7 in Northern Ireland.⁵⁸ This was let by competitive tender and CLS won the contract. The main focus was on the consequences of childhood poverty in NI. The study generated inter-ministerial correspondence following submission. One of the main contributions of MCS was that it enabled multivariate analysis to be undertaken, which highlighted the complexity of causes and outcomes of child poverty. This resulted in a much richer analysis than had previously been possible and provided a counterbalance to the prevailing (largely implicit) view that policy needs to focus primarily on poverty targets as a ‘good outcome’.

A number of people within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister were involved in developing the Northern Ireland child poverty strategy, completed in March 2011. Analytical experts were involved in this process, and MCS analysis and research played an important role. The longitudinal nature of the data set is useful in highlighting the complexities of the factors associated with child poverty, although cross-sectional findings are often easier to interpret, particularly for non-specialists. In contrast, longitudinal evidence can be difficult for analysts to explain and ‘sell’.

⁵⁷ The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults, The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, Frank Field, December 2010

⁵⁸ Sullivan, A. et al *The consequences at age 7 of early childhood disadvantage in Northern Ireland and Great Britain*, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, December 2010

Departmental officials felt that the CLS research was very clear and helpful. The report contains important messages regarding child obesity levels and their relationship with poverty, which would not have been possible without the MCS data set. MCS captures the educational, behavioural and health outcomes and suggests that Northern Ireland is doing slightly better than the rest of the UK; however it is not clear why this is the case. The Northern Ireland public health agency responded to this research through a press release⁵⁹ because they felt that it underscores their strategy in relation to child health.

MCS analysis also looked at educational outcomes, illustrating that outcomes at age 5 for Northern Ireland are at the same level or better than the rest of the UK. A potentially interesting use of MCS will be to test whether outcomes at age 7 are better than the rest of the UK as a result of the earlier start in full-time education made by children in Northern Ireland.

The main benefits of MCS for the Northern Ireland Executive, according to our interviews, are:

- It enables analysis of drivers, rather than simply measuring outcomes
- It enables more sophisticated analysis due to the number of variables, the range of respondents and the longitudinal nature of MCS
- Over-sampling for Northern Ireland means that it is possible, for example, to look at disadvantaged areas in a way that is not possible with other data sets (e.g. Understanding Society)

At this stage it is difficult to identify precise impacts on policy that have occurred due to the use of MCS in Northern Ireland. It is clear from our consultations that the Northern Ireland Child Poverty Strategy will be influenced heavily by the MCS analysis undertaken by CLS. There are also indications that the public health agency is taking on board some of the messages about childhood obesity and its relationship with poverty. MCS analysis has also highlighted the value of early intervention, for example the need for pre-natal advice for mothers.

One respondent felt that MCS is important in adding to the stock of information:

- *'The more information the better ... you hope that what you are saying filters through at some level. It is really a drip-drip process'*
- *'MCS is good value for a relatively limited financial contribution. The user guides and evidence reports are really good'.*

Scotland

Case Study: Exploring the 'Scotland effect'

The Scottish Government funds its own birth cohort study, *Growing Up in Scotland* (GUS). As the sole funder of GUS, the Scottish Government has maximum control over what information is collected and how it is analysed and reported to inform

⁵⁹ See <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/research-shows-negative-impact-poverty-children%E2%80%99s-life-chances>

policy. GUS is designed specifically to meet the needs of Scottish policy-makers. It has a particular focus on service use, awareness and contact (e.g. health, education, childcare), and on the early years of children's lives. In particular, the distinctive education system in Scotland has components that demand special coverage but are easily overlooked in UK-wide surveys. The large Scottish sample size means that meaningful analysis can be undertaken on relevant sub-groups of the Scottish population (e.g. rural/urban areas, areas of deprivation and household type).

However, it is recognised that data from MCS can be used to complement GUS data and analyses. MCS is running ahead of GUS, and so will provide evidence on the long-term consequences of early childhood conditions sooner. Although there are fewer Millennium Cohort Study children in Scotland than in the Growing Up in Scotland cohorts, there are more in the UK as a whole. There is growing evidence that processes differ very little between Scotland and the rest of the UK – particularly for policy areas such as health and the environment, which have a bio-physical base. Therefore, many findings from analysis of the entire MCS sample are likely to also apply to Scotland. In addition, MCS allows policy makers to compare the impact of different policy regimes in Scotland and the other countries in the UK.

CLS analysis commissioned by the Scottish Government looked at key differences between Scotland and the rest of the UK - in relation to breastfeeding and cognitive scores⁶⁰. It examined whether these represent a genuine 'Scotland effect' or could be explained by differences in the characteristics of the children and their families in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

MCS babies in Scotland were not breastfed to the same extent as babies in other countries of the UK. Analyses showed that the lower rate of breastfeeding among mothers in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK was not explained by the differences in characteristics between MCS mothers in Scotland and those in the rest of the UK. In fact, breastfeeding rates in Scotland were lower once these other factors were taken into account, which suggests that there was a 'Scottish effect' at work. Attendance at antenatal class appeared to have a stronger positive effect on mothers taking up breastfeeding in Scotland than in the rest of the UK.

MCS children in Scotland had a small but significantly higher vocabulary score than children in the rest of the UK at age 3, which could not be fully explained by the gender of the child or the measured characteristics of MCS families. In other words, children in Scotland performed better than would be expected based on their characteristics. The conclusion was that it must have been due to unmeasured factors that differed between Scotland and the rest of the UK – for example, it was suggested that there may be differences in early years education provision, pre-school education, activities in the home or grandparent influence (factors that could not be controlled for in the analysis, as data had not been collected on these).

The Scottish Government has subsequently undertaken in-house analysis of the

⁶⁰ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/18133613/0>

MCS data on a range of other policy topics.

Wales

Case Study: Child poverty strategy in Wales

The MCS sample is boosted for Wales, which provides a big enough sample to analyse the data by disadvantaged areas within Wales. MCS findings have been used by a number of different policy areas and departments within the Welsh Government – for example, in relation to parenting, early years and tackling child poverty. Welsh Government researchers feel that the MCS will continue to be useful in future, particularly in light of the Welsh Government’s strong focus on children and young people’s wellbeing.

Following a competitive tendering exercise, the Welsh Government asked the Centre for Longitudinal Studies to undertake additional analysis of the MCS, which has been reported in the Children’s and Young People’s Wellbeing Monitor for Wales. The Children and Young People’s Wellbeing Monitor for Wales was first produced in 2008 and a second edition was published in March 2011⁶¹. The Monitor is a ‘One Wales’ (the Wales coalition government agreement) commitment and focuses on the wellbeing of children and young people up to the age of 18 (in 2008) and 25 (in 2011). The Monitor pulls together statistics from a wide range of sources and the MCS is used extensively in relation to indicators for young children.

The impact of the MCS will increase as the number of sweeps increases. However, it was noted that there are limits on the capability to undertake longitudinal analysis of the data, both within the Welsh Government and across the broader academic community in Wales. At the moment the Welsh Government primarily uses CLS to undertake research using MCS. One suggestion was that external researchers could be supported to put forward research proposals that involve analysis of MCS data e.g. to compare Wales with UK and also to analyse Wales-only data.

The Welsh Government issued its draft Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan for consultation in May 2010. The Delivery Plan included an evidence annex, which included data from the first three sweeps of the MCS. The evidence annex was drafted by members of the Welsh Government’s Child Poverty Analytical Team, which comprises social researchers, economists and statisticians. The then Deputy Minister for Children (Huw Lewis) and other Welsh Ministers have reported on findings from the MCS in the National Assembly for Wales, underlining the perceived importance of this data source.

Other issues include:

- Welsh Government respondents felt that Welsh findings are not presented strongly enough in the main reports. In particular there is limited acknowledgement of differences between the UK nations in the policy

⁶¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/110328cypmonitoren.pdf>

environment. For example early years policies differ quite markedly between the nations, but the main MCS reports tend to focus on the English policy environment.

- A key positive element is that MCS will be collecting information from the children themselves, which fits into the philosophy of the Welsh Government, working closely with children.
- Colleagues from the CLS have led seminars for policy and analytical staff within the Welsh Government, which were useful.
- The CLS press office is very good – media coverage definitely helps Ministers to understand the importance of the MCS.

5.3.3 Evidence of recognition of MCS at senior policy levels

There is evidence that some politicians and policy-makers at senior levels are aware of, and value, the MCS.

For example, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) carried out research in relation to ‘Births out of wedlock and cognitive and social development throughout childhood: a quantitative analysis’, using MCS data. Researchers examined data on 10,000 three and five year olds and concluded that developmental differences between children born to married parents and those born to unmarried parents are **not** primarily accounted for by marital status, but determined by other factors, such as parental age, education, and income. CLS were made aware that David Willetts (Minister of State for Universities and Science) showed interest in the research, due to the ‘highly politically contentious’ findings. The research findings will also be used to inform the Government Review of Family Law being undertaken by the Ministry of Justice. David Willetts has also made reference to the MCS in public speeches, including to the Daycare Trust on 13 July 2007, in a speech on ‘Science, Innovation and the Economy’ on 9 July 2010 at the Royal Institute, London and to the Select Committee on Science and Technology on 22 July 2010:

- *“...personally I have been struck by the way in which the 1958 and 1970 birth cohort studies have driven so much of the debate on social mobility and how already the Millennium Cohort Study is helping us assess what works when it comes to early years interventions, so they are very valuable research tools...”* (David Willetts, Select Committee on Science and Technology, 22 July 2010)

Further examples of MCS being cited as evidence by senior politicians include:

- Lord Patten – House of Lords debate, Families: Economic Inequality (April 2008): MCS used to show that four out of 10 people finding it difficult to manage financially were living on an income estimated to be above the poverty line
- Mervyn Storey – Northern Ireland Assembly, Private Members’ Business: Primary Schools: used MCS data to highlight that by the age of three, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are already one year behind more advantaged children in their social and educational attainment

- Gerry Kelly – Northern Ireland Assembly, Private Members’ Business: Childcare Strategy (April 2009): used MCS data to highlight that 144,000 parents have children who are under six years of age, but there are fewer than 50,000 registered childcare places

There is also evidence that the MCS has been mentioned in a number of Select Committee hearings. Examples include the following:

- Written evidence ordered by Select Committee on Science and Technology: Memorandum from the Department for Education and Skills, June 2006
- Education Selection Committee hearing, 7 March 2007: Professor Lorraine Dearden, Institute of Education/Institute for Fiscal Studies
- Select Committee on Work and Pension: Memorandum submitted by the Daycare Trust, printed 20 February 2008
- Written evidence on Sure Start Children’s Centres ordered by the Children, Schools and Families Committee,: Memorandum submitted by the International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (ICMEC), printed March 15 2010

Clearly this does not, in itself, provide evidence that the MCS has influenced the policy thinking of these or other senior politicians. Nonetheless, awareness at senior levels of the policy-making process must play a part in ensuring that MCS data is used to inform the policy development process.

5.4 Think tanks

Research undertaken by think tanks using MCS data can also be seen to play a role in informing policy debate and challenging thinking. There are also examples of how such research has been picked up by senior political figures.

A wide body of research utilising MCS data has been produced by think tanks, particularly in relation to parenting. The Centre for Social Justice (Family breakdown in the UK: it’s NOT about divorce) found that those experiencing family breakdown are 75% more likely to fail at school, 70% more likely to become drug addicts, 50% more likely to have alcohol problems, 40% more likely to get into serious debt and 35% more likely to be unemployed. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR, also cited the MCS, when stating that *“changes to families, such as more parents working, and rising rates of divorce and single parenthood, have undermined the ability of families to effectively socialise people”*.

More recently, ‘The Home Front’ report by the think tank, Demos, which drew on the MCS and the 1970 British Cohort Study, was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg. The research can be seen to be implicitly linked to some of the coalition government policies. Examples cited by Mr Clegg at the launch event of ‘The Home Front’ included:

- Social mobility being the primary objective of the coalition government – *“good parenting is absolutely central to social mobility”* (Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister)
- The introduction of the Universal Credit is designed to lower workless parenting

- A major objective of the Coalition is flexible working with changes to flexible working laws helping to nurture better parenting and further gender equality
- A Big Society approach to parenting – *“Social progress doesn’t have to be driven by Whitehall”* (Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister)
- The Government is planning a consultation to investigate and promote shared parenting, which is intended to ensure that women’s guaranteed rights to maternity leave are maintained, but will aim to transform fathers’ opportunities. One of the measures to be considered may be ‘use it or lose it’ paternity leave

This shows how research using MCS data has been used to reinforce the need for government policy that encourages effective parenting.

There are other cases of think tank research informing policy debate. The *Ex Curricula* research by Demos, states that the current generation of 16-18 year olds NEET will cost society an estimated £31bn over their lifetime, including the costs of unemployment, to health services and to the criminal justice system. It suggests that policy initiatives have not worked, because they are designed to impact too late, when a young person’s disengagement from the education system is already endemic. The researchers warn that a future generation of NEETS could be created unless policies are established to prevent young people becoming disengaged from education.

Research into the public value of social housing, undertaken by the Smith Institute using MCS data, also generated policy-relevant findings.⁶² The research identified the importance of better linkage between housing policy and other elements of social and public policy, including education, health, work and welfare. The report also states that there are good grounds for an emphasis on multi-agency working, community ownership and neighbourhood-level interventions, but that there are questions about how far the state should support owner occupation as compared with other tenures.

5.5 Role of the media

The CLS regards its relationship with the media and its coverage of the MCS as being largely positive. Our evidence review suggests that media coverage, certainly as measured through total numbers of articles or broadcasts, tends to be concentrated on a small number of high-profile topics. This includes baby development and learning, childcare and the role of grandparents, parents’ primary school choices, and the health and wider benefits of breastfeeding. Research on such topics often leads to the syndication of stories through regional and local media, and in some cases large numbers of follow-on interviews with key researchers. The volume of attention also appears to be related to the fact that MCS has enabled in-depth research to be undertaken for the first time into such topics above that are the subject of intense public interest.

While a small but important proportion of MCS-related research findings have received considerable media coverage (the health and wider benefits of breastfeeding and the relationship between early child rearing practices and

⁶² The Smith Institute (2008) *The public value of social housing: a longitudinal analysis of the relationship between housing and life chances*

subsequent child development are such examples), in many cases the reporting does not refer explicitly to MCS as the main source of data underpinning the research findings. This is to be expected however, particularly in the general rather than specialised media, and is in line with other studies of media coverage of research.

Furthermore it is clear that the print media in particular tends to disseminate research findings that appear to either agree with or challenge ‘common sense’. The same research results can also generate selective responses from the media. For example, research on grandparents’ role in bringing up children received considerable coverage in February 2009, following research on ‘Early childcare and child development’ by Dr Kirstine Hansen and Dr Denise Hawkes. The research generated 92 different articles, with 81 occurring between 10th February 2009 and May 2009. This included radio and TV coverage as well as print news. It is clear that the sources of coverage include specialist magazines such as *Nursery World* that cater for professionals, as well as more mainstream ‘broadsheet’ newspapers.

The main angle that appealed to the media was the issue of the effect grandparent carers have on behaviour (linking bad behaviour in young children with those looked after by grandparents), as this was the most controversial. For example, a national newspaper reported that ‘*Children do less well with granny than in a nursery, study finds: Children looked after by grandparents while their mothers are at work would be better off in nurseries, or with childminders, according to a new study...*’ (The Times, 10 February 2009)

However, these types of headline do not reflect that the positive role of the grandparent as identified in the research. The research found that babies that are looked after by grandparents score ‘significantly higher’ in vocabulary tests at age three than those placed in any other form of childcare. As such, the researchers urged ministers to give greater support and flexible training to grandparents caring for children to increase the positive effect they have. This shows that selective media attention paid to such research findings could have the potential to distort public and policy trust in the findings and the research process itself.

The review has highlighted the widespread media coverage that the MCS has received. Indeed, the CLS are positive with regard to the media coverage that the MCS has received. Whilst this has undoubtedly raised the profile of some MCS research, the impact of this media attention on policy and practice is not clear.

5.5.1 Recognition from abroad

The CLS also highlighted that the MCS has inspired similar studies in Ireland, France, Australia and New Zealand and thus has an ‘international impact’. In the longer term it may be useful to compare the findings from the MCS with the findings from the cohort studies taking place in these other countries, although there is no evidence of this influencing policy development as yet. The MCS research findings have also attracted interest from media abroad. For example, Nieuwsblad (Flemish language newspaper in Belgium) included an article on baby development research following extensive media coverage.

Summary of key findings

- The vast majority of research outputs reviewed that have used MCS data can be

seen as policy relevant, and as such many of the findings are likely to have implications for future policy formation in various fields. It is typical for papers to assert the need for future policies to take account of their findings

- The MCS has played an important role in influencing policy making within central government. The MCS has informed the development of early years policy and practice and service provision in terms of enhanced Sure Start Children's Centres. Frank Field's Independent Review, seen as the basis for informing current child poverty strategy, also utilised MCS data
- The MCS is seen as being valuable in the devolved nations, where samples are boosted to enable robust comparisons to be undertaken for many indicators between the UK nations. The MCS is being used to feed into a number of different policy areas
- There is evidence that awareness of the MCS has filtered through to some politicians and policy-makers at senior levels, including David Willetts. Nick Clegg also has understanding and engagement with analysis deriving from MCS data. Awareness at senior levels of the policy-making process must play a part in ensuring that MCS data is used to inform the policy development process
- Think tank research using MCS data has played an important role in informing policy debate. MCS data has been used to reinforce the need for coalition government policy that encourages effective parenting
- MCS-related research findings have received considerable media coverage, particularly in areas that are the subject of intense public interest. Whilst this has undoubtedly raised the profile of some MCS research, the impact of this media attention on policy and practice is not clear
- The MCS has had an 'international impact' due to inspiring similar studies in France, Australia and New Zealand. MCS research findings have also attracted media interest from abroad.

6. Factors affecting impact generation

6.1 Introduction

In this section we explore the factors affecting the impact of the MCS on policy and practice. Specifically, we examine existing research on the link between research and policy before setting out some of the issues identified by stakeholders that were felt to influence the level of impact. We also examine the role of the CLS and the ESDS in promoting the use of the MCS. The methodology involved:

- A review of existing research on the linkages between research and policy
- Drawing out learning from our previous impact-related research for the ESRC
- Consultations with the key users of MCS data (academic researchers, staff within central government departments, policy and research institutes and think tanks)
- Consultations with staff at the CLS and the ESDS

6.2 Link between research evidence and policy

A number of scholars including, for example, Professor Sandra Nutley and her colleagues⁶³, point to the '*... absence of a strong and compelling evidence base documenting improvements in public service arising from increased research use ...*' (298). This limited evidence base is even more telling in relation to research resources such as MCS, and the findings presented in this report represent a significant addition to the knowledge base.

The research synthesised by Nutley *et al* provides a number of insights that are relevant to the task of looking at the impact of the MCS on policy and practice. Key points from the extensive research literature include:

- Not all research has – or is intended to have – an impact on public policy
- Where research can be demonstrated to have an impact, this is rarely straightforward or direct in nature, with research messages often being '*mediated, blocked or amplified*' in the process (ibid, 297)
- Research impact can – in principle – be categorised in terms of conceptual (or 'enlightenment') uses and more pragmatic 'instrumental' applications
- Research use is '*complex and contingent ... (and) ... multichannelled, multifaceted, interactive, iterative and transformative ...*' (ibid, 298)
- Where research is used in practice, it is often adapted rather than simply adopted, in many cases involving the bringing together of research evidence with other types of knowledge
- Traditional, positivist-based, linear models of research use do not adequately describe the iterative, interactive and social ways in which research is typically used in policy development and/or practice.

⁶³ Nutley, S. M., Walter, I. and Davies, H. T. O. (2007) *Using Evidence: how research can inform public services*, Policy Press, Bristol

These statements suggest that an assessment of the extent to which the MCS has influenced policy needs to be placed in a much wider context that recognises the complexities involved in the processes through which research influences policy and practice. Indeed, feedback from stakeholders consulted as part of our research emphasises this complexity:

- *“It is difficult to work out the impact of evidence on policy – evidence is part of a much wider package”* (Government representative)
- *“Impact works on a subtle level”* (Government representative)

A further argument made by a number of stakeholders is that any cohort study should be seen as a long term investment, so the MCS should not be expected to necessarily change policy or practice to any great extent at this stage. Moreover, the policy areas where impact might be observed are restricted by the fact that the MCS cohort is at a relatively young age. Nevertheless, many stakeholders perceived that the MCS was having some sort of impact, even though it was often difficult to specify precisely what this impact has been (see Section 6.4.2).

6.3 Routes of impact

We have noted the limitations of the linear approach to understanding the relationship between research evidence and policy outcomes. A number of more sophisticated models serve to illustrate the complexities of the research-policy relationship, of which none refer explicitly to the role of research resources. For example, in a recent review paper Cozzens and Snoek identify the following models, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive⁶⁴:

- **Rational, linear or ‘knowledge-driven’** model: child poverty policy (in the UK and the devolved nations) is one example of research being undertaken or commissioned at an early stage the process of policy development. Not all of this research was based on MCS, but it is clear from our investigations that MCS is regarded as an important resource, enabling a relatively sophisticated understanding of the factors associated with child poverty. However it is often difficult for respondents to identify clear links between the use of research resources such as MCS and policy outputs/impacts. Our conclusion is that the linear model is not typical of policy impact processes involving the use of MCS.
- **Pluralism and opportunism**, involving pragmatic decision-making under uncertainty and incorporating a wider view of useful sorts of knowledge, including non-academic sources, local populations and civil society. Politicians and policy-makers typically take account of a wider range of sources of evidence than that which might be regarded by a trained social scientist as robust research evidence.
- **Politics and legitimisation**, reflecting a view that power is infused through the knowledge process. This was alluded to by our respondents, some of whom suggested that some politicians and/or policy-makers prefer to see research (including evaluations) that supports their political position.
- **Relationship models**, based on relationships that develop within networks of collaborating research producers and users: this is very similar to the ‘pluralism and

⁶⁴ Cozzens, S and Snoek, M. *Knowledge to policy: contributing to the measurement of social, health and environmental benefits*, Workshop on the Science of Science Measurement, Washington DC, December 2010

opportunism’ model and is perhaps the closest to describing the routes through which research impacts upon policy within a range of government organisations.

- **Systems models**, *‘embedded in relationships (and)...interwoven with the priorities, cultures and contexts of organisations and systems’*⁶⁵: this appears to describe a model aspired to by those who seek to ensure an approach to policy that is evidence-based, but which reflects the realities of both the research and the policy processes.

In all of the above models, research resources such as MCS can be regarded as one of a range of inputs that play a role in shaping the policy process. In our assessment of policy and practice impacts, we found no examples of MCS playing a sole or even leading role in the policy process. Nonetheless it is clear that, in relation to pertinent policy areas such as child poverty, analysis of MCS has played an important role in providing a robust evidence base, to an extent that is not possible with most other data sources. We therefore observe that MCS has provided a resource that has contributed significantly to the evidence generation process. However the process by which this then translates into changes in policy is mediated by a number of facilitating and inhibiting factors that are explored below.

6.4 Factors affecting policy impact

Stakeholders identified a number of issues that affect the extent and nature of the impact of MCS upon policy and practice.

6.4.1 Timing

Any cohort study should be seen as a long term investment. The MCS is relatively new compared to other birth cohort studies and so the MCS should not be expected to necessarily change policy or practice at this stage. The stakeholder consultation process highlighted the view that the value of the MCS data will be greater over time, as the number of survey sweeps increases:

- *“Cohort studies go through the wilderness during the mid-childhood years. The MCS has got to hold its nerve over the next five years, and stay operational for the next ten”* (Researcher/research institute)
- *“The popularity of the Avon Longitudinal Survey of Parents and Children among funders and researchers diminished for a period. The study continued and now the data built up has meant that it is now unbelievably valuable”* (Researcher/research institute)

It is a fair assumption therefore that as the value and usefulness of the MCS data increases with time, its impact on policy and practice will also increase.

6.4.2 Awareness among policy makers

Most stakeholders gave examples to indicate that many-senior policy-makers are aware of MCS and its potential to influence policy decisions, as highlighted

⁶⁵ Best and Holmes (2010), cited in Cozzens and Snoek *op cit*

throughout this report. However a small number of respondents were sceptical with regard to the level of influence of the MCS on policy-making:

- *“There is low awareness of MCS amongst policy-makers. The influence and impact of MCS data has not been as considerable as it could have been”* (Other stakeholder – charity)
- *“The MCS is a rich source of data that is under-exploited”* (Researcher/research institute)

There was thus seen to be a need for the ESRC to have a greater role in raising awareness of the MCS and/or disseminating research findings that utilise MCS data.

6.4.3 Skills of researchers to utilise the dataset

A further issue identified by stakeholders that is seen as constraining the use of MCS data is the skills of researchers to analyse the data. The dataset is large and complex; relatively few individuals within research organisations and public sector bodies have the required quantitative skills to undertake longitudinal analysis. There is often a reliance on the CLS to support on the data analysis in such cases. Whilst the impact of the MCS may well increase over time, the current limits on the capability of researchers to undertake longitudinal analysis may hamper its potential unless these skill needs are addressed.

This skills issue has been recognised by the ESRC through their Quantitative Methods Initiative, which aims to combat the skills deficit in quantitative research methods across the social science research base. A key challenge is the limited numbers of both interested undergraduates and quantitative orientated lecturers. The strategy recognises that there is a need to enhance quantitative skills across the full breadth of the ‘educational life course’, from building new capacity at the undergraduate level to refreshing the quantitative skills of mid-career academics who teach undergraduates and supervise PhD students (‘training the trainers’). The usefulness of the MCS, and thus its potential impact, could be increased by improving the capacity and skills of researchers to undertake longitudinal analysis. The Quantitative Methods Initiative has the potential to be valuable in this regard.

6.4.4 Data interpretation

The research has also highlighted some concerns regarding the way the data is presented. In particular, it was stated that the User Guide to Initial Findings could provide further guidance as to whether any differences across the four countries are statistically significant and in relation to interpreting the confidence levels. For example, feedback was that it was sometimes difficult to establish whether Scotland, for example, is significantly different from the UK average. Addressing these issues above may help to encourage more effective use of the MCS research outputs.

6.5 The promotional role of the Economic and Social Data Service

The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) is funded by the ESRC and is managed by the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex. *ESDS Longitudinal* is responsible

for MCS, along with a range of other longitudinal data sets including the 1958 and 1970 cohort studies and the British Household Panel Survey. The Head of ESDS Longitudinal also has a number of other roles, with other ESDS staff contributing to ESDS Longitudinal as appropriate.

The role of ESDS in relation to MCS consists primarily of checking the data supplied by CLS, cataloguing the data, creating metadata for resource discovery, preparing the data for long term preservation and the provision of authorised access to the data and the relevant documentation/user guides.

The licence agreement between CLS and the University of Essex states that the following organisations are eligible to access the MCS data held by the ESDS:

- UK HE institutions
- Commercial users in the UK (data is chargeable for this group)
- Third sector organisations, charities etc
- Government users
- Overseas users (although a ‘special licence’ may apply which means that some data are not available to this group)

The ESDS longitudinal service produces an introductory guide for users and an online FAQ service. They also deal with new queries and they monitor links to publications (using the information on the CLS web site) using a specially-designed search programme. ESDS also submits monthly reports to CLS which includes a list of people who have downloaded MCS data (see Appendix I for a breakdown of types of individuals and institutions that have downloaded MCS data, and an indication of the projects for which the data are being used).

ESDS has limited resources to undertake promotional activity and sees its role primarily in terms of providing technical support for researchers who are using longitudinal data sets or who wish to use them. Moreover, the remit of ESDS Longitudinal covers all of the longitudinal data sets that they hold. MCS is only one such dataset, albeit an important one.

ESDS works closely with CLS and contributes to a number of activities that comprise some element of ‘promotion’, for example:

- User workshops, training events and conferences
- Maintenance of email lists of people who use ESDS Longitudinal, who are alerted when new MCS data arrives
- Information services available through the ESDS Longitudinal web pages

ESDS has noticed a steady increase in the usage of MCS. The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), which is located in separate premises next door to the UK Data Archive (and incorporates the ESRC UK Longitudinal Studies Centre, ULSC) is a particularly heavy user of MCS and other longitudinal data sets.

ESDS feels that there is some scope to further promote the use of MCS to those already using other longitudinal studies, such as BHPS/Understanding Society. The MCS boosted samples (e.g. by ethnicity and social group) are also a useful 'selling point' for MCS. It is clear from our consultation with ESDS Longitudinal and our review of their activities that a great deal of effort is made to provide information about MCS (among other longitudinal data sets), and to work with others (such as CLS) to provide support for MCS users, thereby raising awareness among core MCS user groups.

Promotion of MCS beyond these core user groups appears to be a less common ESDS activity, primarily a consequence of the limited resources available to the longitudinal team and the large number of current users of MCS and other longitudinal datasets. It is clear that the main user groups that interact with ESDS are individual academic researchers and research groups, with limited engagement with government researchers (mainly through workshops) or users or potential users from third sector organisations or think tanks.

Stakeholders who had interacted with ESDS felt broadly happy with the service provided, and CLS informants unanimously stated that ESDS is a valued partner. ESDS therefore clearly plays a role in ensuring that researchers have access to MCS data and are able to obtain advice/support on how to use it. To this extent the service plays a limited but indirect supporting role in the process of policy impact described in subsequent sections of this report.

6.6 CLS promotional activities

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies has a Communications Fellow (for two days per week) who is an experienced journalist and is very effective at ensuring that MCS-related research undertaken by CLS is reported in a range of media outlets. In particular, the Communications Fellow sees his role as 'translating' academic research outputs into language and style that is appropriate for media presentation.

Funding for the activities of the Communications Fellow is heavily constrained. Funding from ESRC accounts for 10 per cent of his time; a further 30 per cent is funded by CLS itself to support wider Institute-related communications activities. With this limited resource, CLS is able only to promote the work that CLS researchers produce using MCS, and not the totality of MCS-related research.

CLS undertakes a range of other promotional activities in a number of guises, most notably through the publication of regular user guides presenting headline findings from each sweep of MCS, and associated launch events. User workshops and conferences can also be regarded as a form of promotion.

CLS researchers also maintain strong formal and informal networks with other academic users, government researchers, lobby groups, think tanks and policy-makers through a variety of means. Senior CLS researchers have visited several UK government and devolved administration departments, presented seminars and workshops, and responded to many informal requests for information and advice.

The CLS website is also a valuable promotional tool.⁶⁶ According to the latest information available from CLS (2009 Annual Report to ESRC and ONS), 1,134 users are registered with the web site, the vast majority based within the UK. A detailed CLS review of web site traffic conducted in 2008 found that visits to the site averaged 3,482 per month with significantly increased traffic coinciding with the publication of key outputs such as the User Guide to Initial Findings.

In conclusion, CLS has limited resources to implement a promotional strategy for MCS *per se*, but has achieved considerable success – by itself and working with ESDS – in ensuring that interesting findings from CLS analysis of MCS reach a broad audience, including many overseas institutions. As we note elsewhere in this report, media coverage does not always highlight MCS as the data source and, understandably, the focus tends to be on the research findings rather than the data sources used. It seems clear, however, that these promotional activities have served to raise the profile of MCS, a conclusion supported by the views of other stakeholders interviewed for this study.

6.7 Transformation of use into impact

Despite the issues identified above, many stakeholders perceived that the MCS was having some sort of impact, even though it was often difficult to specify what this impact has been:

- *“MCS has an indirect impact, although it is difficult to quantify”* (Researcher/research institute)
- *“You hope that what you are saying filters through at some level”* (Government representative)
- *“It really is a drip-drip process”* (Government representative)
- *“No single study is going to be the answer. Policy is built up from a multitude of sources, but the MCS is a very important source. One can’t overestimate the importance of having information on the family, on the effects of dissolutions and reunions, and between ethnic groups”* (Researcher/research institute)
- *“MCS helps to point out what doesn’t work”* (Researcher/research institute)
- *“The MCS is a cog in a wheel”* (Researcher/research institute)

The transformation of MCS use into impact is likely to depend upon a number of factors including the political and socio-economic landscape and the existence of other relevant research. In Section Two, we highlighted the key factors identified in the ESRC’s ‘Taking Stock’ research that are seen as vital for impact generation:

- Established relationships and networks with user communities
- Involving users at all stages of the research
- Well-planned user-engagement and knowledge exchange strategies
- Portfolios of research activity that build reputations with research users

⁶⁶ Citations of publications resulting from analyses of cohort data (both by external researchers and those within CLS) can be viewed in the CLS database: <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/publications.asp?section=000100010006>

- Good infrastructure and management support
- Where appropriate, the involvement of intermediaries and knowledge brokers as translators, amplifiers, network providers

Certainly, stakeholder feedback is that the CLS and ESDS appear to have established effective relationships and networks with user communities as a result of promotional, awareness raising and general support activity and have well-planned user-engagement strategies. Activity has included:

- Producing books/reports/journal articles on the MCS
- Producing briefings on the MCS that are commissioned by government funders
- The issue of press releases to promote the findings that are reported in books/journal articles
- Producing leaflets promoting the CLS
- Providing references to the MCS on the CLS website
- Producing *Kohort*, the CLS newsletter, which often includes material on the MCS
- Speaking at various events to promote the MCS more generally, and specific research that uses MCS data

These factors all support the potential for impact to be realised.

Summary of key findings:

- Previous research has highlighted the complexities involved in the processes through which research influences policy; there is not a clear linear process by which the MCS has influenced policy and practice
- A range of issues have been highlighted that influence the potential for the MCS to impact upon policy and practice:
 - Timing – the value of the MCS will increase over time as the number of survey sweeps increases
 - Perceived lack of awareness among policy makers
 - Quantitative skills – current limits on the capability of researchers to undertake longitudinal analysis
 - Perceived lack of guidance and information on variables at the devolved administration level
- The CLS has limited resources to implement a promotional strategy for the MCS, but has achieved considerable success – by itself and working with ESDS – in ensuring that interesting findings from CLS analysis of MCS reaches a broad audience. Stakeholders who had interacted with the ESDS felt broadly happy with the service provided
- Stakeholder perception is that the MCS is having some level of impact. Factors such as effective relationships and networks with user communities are in place, which will support impact on policy and practice to be realised in future

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Key conclusions

7.1.1 Users and use of MCS data

There is a broad level of interest in and use of the MCS data from academic researchers (teaching and training, academic research, government commissioned research), central government departments (in-house analysis, policy research, comparative studies across the UK) and policy and research organisations and think tanks (government commissioned research and policy research). The vast majority of MCS data requests to the ESDS are however from higher education institutions.

MCS is seen as a valuable research resource that enables researchers to examine a wide range of topics to a level of depth and detail that has not been possible before. The longitudinal nature of the MCS, enabling the tracking of changes over time and more sophisticated analysis, is seen to be its key benefit. The focus of research activity is primarily upon child development, parenting and related issues, with the vast majority of research outputs producing policy relevant findings. Use of the MCS data is however constrained by too few researchers having the quantitative skills required to analyse and work with longitudinal data.

7.1.2 Impacts of the MCS on policy and practice

The research has highlighted the difficulty of isolating the impact of the MCS due to the range of influences and the complexity of the policy-making decision process. The value of the MCS data (and potential impact upon policy) is likely to be greater over time, as the number of survey sweeps increases. The CLS (and the ESDS) has however established effective relationships and networks with user communities and have well-planned user engagement strategies, both of which would support the potential for impact to be realised.

There is indeed evidence of the MCS having instrumental, conceptual and capacity building impacts. Instrumental impact can be seen as a result of the MCS being mentioned explicitly in policy and related documents in relation to early years, child poverty and family issues. MCS data informed the development of early years policy and practice and service provision. The Labour government (1997-2010) enhanced Sure Start Children's Centres in the most disadvantaged parts of England and the funding of more outreach workers and training, as a result of research that utilised MCS data showing the benefits to young people.

Furthermore, Frank Field's Independent review, seen as the basis for informing future child poverty strategy, also made use of MCS data. There is evidence that some politicians and policy-makers at senior levels are aware of, and value, the MCS, including David Willetts. Nick Clegg also has understanding and engagement with analysis deriving from MCS data. Such awareness at senior levels of the policy-making process must play a part in ensuring that MCS data is used to inform the policy development process. The MCS is also being used to feed into a number of different policy areas in the devolved nations.

The MCS has also had a conceptual impact. The vast majority of research outputs reviewed that have used MCS data can be seen as policy relevant. As such, many of the research findings are likely to have implications for future policy formation in various fields, thus enhancing understanding and informing debate. MCS-related research findings have also received considerable media coverage, particularly in areas that are the subject of intense public interest, for example, the health and wider benefits of breastfeeding and the relationship between early child-rearing practices and subsequent child development. Media attention has undoubtedly raised the profile of some MCS research, although the impact on policy and practice is not clear.

Capacity building impact has been realised through the analysis of the MCS dataset itself. Use of the data helps to develop the UK skills base for longitudinal analysis, although as highlighted above, the lack of longitudinal skills amongst researchers and other potential users is constraining use of the data

7.1.3 Role of think tanks and other intermediaries and knowledge brokers as a transmission route through which MCS has influenced policy

The research has highlighted the role that think tanks and other intermediaries play in promoting the policy and practice impacts of MCS data, informing policy debate and challenging thinking. Research by think tanks such as Demos, the Centre for Social Justice and the Institute for Public Policy Research using MCS data has promoted effective parenting. Indeed, 'The Home Front' report by Demos was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, who cited evidence from the report as a means of supporting coalition government policy in relation to encouraging effective parenting. Such coverage has also again helped to raise the general profile of MCS research.

7.1.4 Role of the Economic and Social Data Service and the Centre for Longitudinal Studies in promoting the use of the MCS data

The promotion of MCS through awareness-raising, particularly beyond core user groups, is constrained by the limited resources available to enable ESDS to provide support services for researchers using longitudinal data sets. Stakeholders who had interacted with ESDS felt broadly happy with the service provided, and CLS informants unanimously stated that ESDS is a valued partner. ESDS therefore clearly plays a key role in ensuring that researchers have access to MCS data, and can obtain advice/support on how to use it.

To this extent the service plays an indirect supporting role in the process of policy impact. It is important to note that permanent access is crucial for extracting the full research value from longitudinal studies. In the case of an 'immature' longitudinal study like MCS, outcomes in adult life for cohort members have clearly yet to be realised, and only expert long-term curation of the birth and childhood data will allow researchers in, say, 2035 to make full use of data collected in the early 2000s to explain the later statuses and behaviours of the cohort.

The CLS has limited resources to implement a promotional strategy for MCS per se, but has achieved considerable success – by itself and working with ESDS – in ensuring that interesting findings from CLS analysis of MCS reach a broad audience,

including many overseas institutions. It seems clear that these promotional activities have served to raise the profile of MCS.

7.1.5 Best practice and lessons learned for impact generation

Best practice

- Despite the complex processes through which research influences policy and practice, it is clear that some key factors are in place to increase the likelihood of policy/practice impact being achieved. The CLS and ESDS appear to have established effective relationships and networks with user communities as a result of promotional, awareness raising and general support activity, and have well-planned user-engagement strategies. As such, the research has identified the instrumental, conceptual and capacity building impacts that the MCS has achieved to date
- The MCS has around 4,800 questions and over 28,000 data items. Such size and breadth means that a wide variety of topic areas can in principle, be researched. Boosting samples for minority ethnic groups has facilitated analysis that has not been possible before. There is also the potential to undertake in-depth analysis using MCS data collected on a range of family members too. Such detailed research can help to develop policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations
- A major advantage of the MCS database is the fact that samples for the devolved nations are boosted to enable robust comparisons to be undertaken for many indicators between the UK nations. MCS data is consequently being used to feed into a number of policy areas across the devolved nations
- The MCS has inspired similar studies in France, Australia and New Zealand. In the longer term it may be useful to compare the MCS findings with those from the cohort studies taking place in these other countries. Such comparative research may again help to develop policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations

Lessons learned

- The MCS is a relatively new birth cohort study. The value of the MCS is likely to increase over time once further survey sweeps have been carried out. The MCS therefore has the potential to have an even greater impact upon policy and practice in the future
- A key constraint relating to use of MCS data is the lack of quantitative skills available internally within government departments and other research organisations to undertake longitudinal analysis. Ensuring that researchers have the skills to fully utilise the data will be important when future spending constraints may result in greater emphasis in the future on the analysis of existing datasets and on data linkage

Our recommendations for addressing these lessons learned and to encourage impact generation are outlined below.

7.2 Observations on evaluation method

- This study has demonstrated the value and potential of using a ‘tracking forwards’ approach to explore the impact of the MCS on policy and practice. The ‘tracking forwards’ approach was effective in understanding how the MCS is being utilised and in identifying instrumental, conceptual and capacity building impacts
- The research review was valuable in highlighting numerous research outputs that use MCS data and in identifying specific policy conclusions and/or findings that are potentially of relevance to policy and/or practice
- Qualitative research with researchers, policy makers and other organisations was less successful in identifying the impact of MCS on practice due to the difficulty of being able to attribute policy decisions to one specific data source. Policy decisions were perceived to have been made using a broad range of evidence and multitude of sources, so researchers found it difficult to isolate the specific influence of the MCS in some cases
- The media review was valuable in identifying that MCS-related research findings have received considerable media coverage. However, it has proved to be difficult to understand and identify the impact of this media attention on policy and practice
- While it is clear that the ‘tracking forwards’ approach adopted here is the most fruitful approach to assessing the impact of research resources such as MCS, there may well be value in introducing some elements of ‘tracking backwards’ to future impact studies. For example, it may be useful to identify policy areas (e.g. education, skills and employment) that are, in principle, likely to be relevant to current and planned MCS cohorts, with the intention of conducting ‘tracking back’ studies at some point in the future

7.3 Recommendations to encourage impact generation

- The CLS should consider developing a bespoke dataset with a limited number of variables that is already linked longitudinally for a specific topic (or set of users). This will help to facilitate MCS data analysis by researchers who are less confident about data manipulation and matching data longitudinally
- The ESRC should continue actively to promote its Quantitative Methods Initiative across the social science research base as a means of helping to address the deficits in quantitative research skills that could inhibit future use of MCS data
- The ONS, CLS and the ESRC should continue to promote use of MCS resources internally within government departments and other agencies
- The CLS should make it clear in their reports whether differences presented are statistically significant. Providing confidence intervals would help the devolved nations to establish how they compare to the UK average
- The ESRC should combine the best elements of the ‘tracking forwards’ and ‘tracking backwards’ approaches to substantially improve understanding of the impact of the MCS on policy and practice

APPENDIX I

ESDS data requests

Appendix 1a: Breakdown of user type (2004-2011)

Central government staff	20
Commercial user	2
Local government staff	3
NGO or registered charity staff	20
Other not-for-profit	12
Personal / genealogical user	2
Postgraduate	243
School student	1
School teacher	3
Staff at institute of further education	32
Staff at institute of higher education	321
Staff, class tutor using Census data	3
Staff, other	17
Student in further education	9
Student, other	1
Undergraduate	41

Appendix 1b: Breakdown of use by user's institution

Institution	Number
Department of Health	23
Environment Agency	2
House of Commons Library	6
Medical Research Council (MRC)	10
Office for National Statistics (ONS)	22
Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network	9
The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	7
Welsh Assembly Government	3
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust	50
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	3
Ealing Hospital	2
Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority	1
NHS Lanarkshire	1
Richmond & Twickenham PCT	3
Taunton & Somerset NHS Trust	1
Census Registration Service	2
Anglia Ruskin University	31
Bangor University	22
Birkbeck College	32
Bournemouth University	3
Brunel University	28
Cardiff University	52
City University London	20
De Montfort University	14
Edinburgh Napier University	8
Glasgow Caledonian University	6
Imperial College London	33
Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)	25
Institute of Education (IOE), University of London	388
Keele University	1
King's College London	170
Kingston University	4
Lancaster University	68
Leeds Metropolitan University	1
Liverpool John Moores University	5
London Metropolitan University	1
London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)	281

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	307
London South Bank University	11
Loughborough University	6
Middlesex University	11
National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)	7
National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR)	44
National Public Health Service for Wales	3
Newcastle University	15
Newman University College	2
Open University (OU)	11
Princeton University	8
Queen Margaret University	22
Queen's University Belfast	21
Roehampton University	3
Royal Holloway, University of London	22
Sheffield Hallam University	1
Suffolk New College	3
Swansea University	33
Teesside University	2
UCL	493
University College Dublin	22
University of Bath	7
University of Bedfordshire	2
University of Birmingham	21
University of Brighton	1
University of Bristol	77
University of Buckingham	2
University of Cambridge	48
University of Chester	1
University of Dundee	1
University of Durham	1
University of East Anglia	6
University of East London	10
University of Edinburgh	60
University of Essex	313
University of Exeter	31
University of Glamorgan	2
University of Glasgow	55
University of Greenwich	11
University of Hertfordshire	7
University of Hull	9
University of Kent	26
University of Leeds	39
University of Leicester	8
University of Liverpool	10
University of Manchester	81
University of Nottingham	94
University of Oxford	319
University of Plymouth	15
University of Portsmouth	42
University of Sheffield	36
University of Southampton	13
University of St Andrews	2
University of Stirling	11
University of Surrey	55
University of Sussex	8
University of the West of England	2
University of Ulster	6
University of Warwick	146
University of Westminster	3
University of Wolverhampton	5
University of York	324
Unattributed on-line tabulations made by registered users	642

Appendix 1c: Projects utilising MCS data – indicative list

Note: this list contains only projects for which the users have given permission for details to be made public. It has also been heavily edited and should therefore be treated as indicative of the range of projects that use MCS, rather than as a comprehensive list.

Project Title	Type	Institution
Sizing The Illicit Drugs Market	Staff At Institute Of Further Education	University Of Essex
PhD Thesis	Postgraduate	City University
Children With Palliative Care Needs	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Wales
Final Year Dissertation	Undergraduate	University Of Bath
Addiction And Social Support Research	Postgraduate	University Of Ulster
PhD Thesis	Postgraduate	
Nature And Scale Of Spatial Disparities	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Learning About Health Survey In England	Postgraduate	University Of Nottingham
PhD	Postgraduate	University Of Essex

Effects Of Ethnic Density	Postgraduate	University Of London
Comparison Of MCS And GUS	Postgraduate	University Of Edinburgh
Research Into The Impact Of Teenage Pregnancy On Young People In Merthyr Tydfil	Local Government Staff	
Pathways To Health Inequalities	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Liverpool
Father Involvement	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Family And Child Health	Postgraduate	University Of London
Autism And Theory Of Mind In MCS	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
The Impact Of Month Of Birth On The Development Of Cognitive And Non-Cognitive Skills Throughout Childhood	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	

Associations Between Media Exposure And Child Adjustment And Parent-Child Conflict	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Medical Research Council
Childhood Limiting Long-Term Illness/Disability And Socio-Economic Disadvantage: Exploring Patterns, Predictors And Trends	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Warwick
Determinants Of Infant Feeding Practices And Early Weight Gain	Postgraduate	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Development Of An Obesity Risk Tool	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Leeds
Dissertation; Smoking And Pregnancy	Postgraduate	University Of Nottingham
Effects Of Breastfeeding On Children's Outcomes	Other Not-For-Profit	
Effects Of Breastfeeding On Children's Outcomes	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Post-Grad Module	Postgraduate	Cardiff University

Accident Rates In The Under 5's	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
ESDS Government - End User Licence Data	Staff, Other	University Of Manchester
Characteristics Of Parents In Ethnically Mixed Unions	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Dissertation On Parenting	Postgraduate	University Of London
Non-Labour Market Implications Of Family Migration	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of St Andrews
Changing Demographic Behaviours	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of York
Comparison Of Public And Voluntary Sector Provision Of Pre-School Childcare And Education	Non-Governmental Organisation Or Registered Charity Staff	National Institute Of Economic And Social Research
The Effects Of Prenatal Exposure To Smoking And Alcohol On Childhood Behaviour And Learning	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Nottingham

	Labour Market	Staff At Institute Of Further Education	University Of London
	Assignment	Postgraduate	University Of Warwick
	Black Africans In Britain: Integration Or Segregation	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Kent At Canterbury
	Family Social Characteristics And Birth Weight	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
	Scottish Survey Statistics	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Edinburgh
The Psychoepidemiology Of Postnatal Depression; Exploring Socio-Demographic And Psycho-Social Factors Involved In Postnatal Depression Among Ethnic Minority Mothers		Postgraduate	University Of Surrey
	Ethnic Differences In Growth	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Glasgow
	Child Development In France And UK	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London

Early Environments, Social Capital And Children' Cognitive And Social Development	Postgraduate	University Of London
Obesity In Children Age 7	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Wales
Deprivation And Development	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Glamorgan
Mode Of Birth: Demographic Correlates And Psychosocial Consequences	Postgraduate	University Of York
Intergenerational Contributions To Childcare	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Edinburgh
Attitudes To Education	Non-Governmental Organisation Or Registered Charity Staff	
PhD Thesis	Postgraduate	University Of Edinburgh
Health Outcomes	Postgraduate	

Comparing MCS With GUS Central Government Staff

Parental Educational Pairings And Children's Outcomes Postgraduate University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)

Health Of Migrants And Access To Health Services Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)

Child Health And Social Inequalities. Staff At Institute Of Higher Education Cardiff University

Childcare And Child Outcomes In The UK Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Family Environment And Children Emotional And Behavioural Wellbeing Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of London

Academic Interest Postgraduate

Impact Of Air Pollution On Emergency Hospital Admissions For Asthma Postgraduate University Of Bristol

Mcs1-3 Nonresponse Analysis	Staff At Institute Of Further Education	University Of London
Duration Of Relationships	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Birmingham
What Affects People's Views On Domestic Violence?	Undergraduate	University Of Teesside
MSc Research Methods Assignment And Dissertation	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Chester College Of Higher Education
Migrant And Established Muslim And Non-Muslim Women In Local Areas In The UK	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Investigating Determinants Of Health And Fertility	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
Changes In Distributions Of Abilities In Teachers Cohort	Postgraduate	
Early Childhood Studies- Social Policy	Undergraduate	University Of East Anglia
Epidemiological Analyses Of Association Between Perinatal Events And Child Health And Development	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)

Family Background And Children Outcomes	Postgraduate	University Of Essex
Impact Of Intergenerational Social Circumstances On Child Health	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Warwick
Econometric And Other Analysis	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Dynamics Of Child Support	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Birmingham
Millennium Cohort Study	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Manchester
Comparative Study On Early Childhood Education Between Japan And UK.	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Dissertation	Postgraduate	City University

The Longitudinal Analysis Of Child Health And Development In Ireland Non-Governmental Organisation Or Registered Charity Staff

Analysing The Causes Of Childhood Obesity Undergraduate University Of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

I Need The Data To Do A Postgraduate Econometrics Project At The University Of Nottingham. Postgraduate University Of Nottingham

Research Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of London

Exploring The Aetiology Of Early Child Mental Health Using A Life course Approach Postgraduate University Of London

Research Postgraduate University Of London

Early Emergence Of ADHD Symptoms Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of London

Interethnic Unions In The EU	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Trends In Parenting Of Adolescents	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Heights Of Adult Indians	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of East Anglia
Dissertation	Postgraduate	University Of London
Physical Activity And Obesity	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Wales
Nonmarital Fertility And Its Impact On Female Employment Patterns In Great Britain, East And West Germany	Postgraduate	
Research On Paternal And Maternal Age	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
Evolutionary Psychology	Postgraduate	University Of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

The Influence Of Kin On Reproductive Behaviour In The UK	Postgraduate	University Of London
Gender, Family Context And The Well Being Of Parents And Children	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of York
The Effect Of Education On Earnings In Leicestershire	Undergraduate	University Of Leicester
Centre For Learning And Life Chances In Knowledge Economies And Societies (Llakes)	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
CLAHRC, Maternal And Child Health	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of York
CLAHRC, Maternal And Child Health	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of York
Social Class And Timing Of Childbearing	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
Modelling The Impact Of Parental Involvement	Central Government Staff	

Estimating The Number Of Deaf Blind People In The UK	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Lancaster University
Impact Of Month Of Birth On Cognitive And Non-Cognitive Skills	Other Not-For-Profit	
Family Environment, Adult Social Participation And Health	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Smoking During Pregnancy And Child Behaviour	Postgraduate	University Of York
Psychosocial Factors Related To Obstetric Intervention	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of York
Ma Dissertation	Postgraduate	University Of Manchester
Inequalities In Early Life In Ethnic Groups In The UK: Millennium Cohort Study	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Essex
Marital Happiness	Undergraduate	University Of Warwick

Autistic Spectrum Disorders And Intellectual Disability	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Wales
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Postgraduate Ma Dissertation & PhD	Postgraduate	University Of Essex
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Obesity And Infection	Postgraduate	Cardiff University
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MCS Neighbourhoods And Child Development	Staff At Institute Of Further Education	University Of London
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Breast Feeding And Child Cognitive And Behavioural Development	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
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Height In Relation To Maternal Ethnicity	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
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Disadvantaged Children's Outcomes	Postgraduate	University Of Edinburgh
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Undergraduate Dissertation	Undergraduate	University Of Warwick
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Cognitive Ability And School Attainment Of Children In Rural Compared With Urban Areas Postgraduate University Of London

Student Dissertation Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of Manchester

The Role Of Social Capital On Early-Mid Childhood Health And Development Postgraduate University Of London

Urban Housing Moves Among Families In The Millennium Cohort Study And Patterns Of Population Change In British Cities Staff At Institute Of Higher Education University Of Southampton

Maternal Investment And Child Outcomes Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Health Sciences Dissertation - Lack Of Support During Childbirth

Postgraduate

University Of York

The Costs Of Pregnancy Related Discrimination: Estimates For London

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of Warwick

Fatherhood: Is Active Fatherhood And A More Gender Equal Division Of Parenting On The
Increase?

Postgraduate

University Of Manchester

Migration, Geography And The Health And Social Status Of Infants And Young Children

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of York

Migration, Geography And The Health And Social Status Of Infants And Young Children

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of York

Working-Time Constraints, Choices And Preferences Of Women In Local Labour Markets

Postgraduate

University Of Manchester

Gendered Pathways To Adulthood

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of York

Children's Psychological Adjustment

Postgraduate

University Of (Scroll Down For
Colleges)

High Risk - High Harm Outcomes

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of London

Mental Health And Social Capital

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of Nottingham

Parents Health And Child Development

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of London

Scoping Childhood Disability Datasets

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of Warwick

Grandparent Caring

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

De Montfort University

Grandparent Caring

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

De Montfort University

The Role Of Health Within Gendered Pathways To Adulthood

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of York

	Rae	Undergraduate	University Of Warwick
	Workcare Package No 7	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Edinburgh
	Developmental Delay In The MCS	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Lancaster University
	Ethnic Inequalities In Child Health	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Comparison Of LSAC And Millennium Data In Terms Of Teenage Pregnancy And Motherhood		Postgraduate	
	MSc Economics Dissertation UCL	Postgraduate	University Of London
Comparative Study Of Maternal Health Capacities In The Us And The UK		Postgraduate	University Of London
	Infant Feeding And Sleeping Practices	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Durham
	Generational Differences In Health In Ethnic Minorities	Postgraduate	University Of London

MSc Dissertation:Employment Transitions Of First-Time Mothers

Postgraduate

City University

MSc Economics Dissertation UCL

Postgraduate

University Of London

Descriptive Epidemiology Of Early Growth Patterns And Its Determinants

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of Manchester

Why Women Continue To Smoke During Pregnancy

Postgraduate

University Of Leeds

Sampling Minorities

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

University Of Essex

Long & Short Of Immigration

Postgraduate

University Of Warwick

Investigation Of Attrition Over Time From A Country Perspective On The Bcs70

Staff At Institute Of Higher
Education

Edinburgh

Native And Migrants Family And Child Wellbeing	Postgraduate	University Of Essex
Multiple Deprivation In The UK And Its Consequences	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Sussex
Changes In FSM	Postgraduate	University Of London
MSc Methods And Methodologies	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Queen's University Of Belfast
Speech And Language Development	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Effect Of ETS On Birth Outcomes Using The Millennium Cohort	Staff, Other	University Of Nottingham
Self-Esteem Development	Postgraduate	University Of London
Intellectual & Developmental Disability In Major Surveys	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Lancaster University
CLS Database Manager	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London

An Economic Analysis Of Parental Choice Of Primary School In England	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Bristol
Psychosocial Development And Family Formation	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Data For Research Methods Teaching Purposes	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Warwick
Postgraduate Course In Secondary Analysis	Postgraduate	University Of Manchester
Estimating The Number Of Children Living With Substance Misusing Parents.	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
	Research	
	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Socioeconomic Density Effects On Health	Postgraduate	University Of York

How Do Parents Make Sense Of Their Parenting Role?	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Newman College
Degree Of Prematurity And Cognitive Outcomes	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Warwick
Causes And Consequences Of Outcomes For Young Children In Northern Ireland	Staff At Institute Of Further Education	University Of London
Family Instability And Children's School Readiness In Great Britain	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	
Late Motherhood And Children Outcomes	Postgraduate	University Of London
Alcohol Consumption And Socioeconomic Position	Postgraduate	University Of York

Young People And Housing	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	Cardiff University
Studying Pregnancy Lifestyle Factors Influencing Physical Child Development	Postgraduate	University Of Nottingham
Social Gradients Of Child Health And Wellbeing In Relation To Inequality	Postgraduate	University Of York
Oxford DPhil	Postgraduate	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Child Blood Pressure And Obesity	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of London
Maternal Psychological Distress And Childhood Obesity	Postgraduate	
New Family Structures	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Birmingham
Policy Analysis	Central Government Staff	

Child Development And Cumulative Risk	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Hull
Children's Psychological Adjustment And Fathers' Residence, Parenting And Traits	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Disability In A Household Context	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Kent At Canterbury
Dissertation	Postgraduate	University Of London
Adiposity And Cardiovascular Risk	Staff At Institute Of Higher Education	University Of Manchester
University Project	Undergraduate	University Of Warwick
Teenage Pregnancy, A Risk For Cognitive Deficits In Children?	Postgraduate	University Of (Scroll Down For Colleges)
Health Disparities Among Ethnic Groups Using The Millennium Cohort Data Set	Postgraduate	University Of London
Child Health And Parenting Style	Postgraduate	University Of York

Immigrant Children And Cognitive Outcomes Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Research Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Assessing Outcomes Of Mixed Ethnic Children Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Families Headed By Parents With Learning Difficulties Staff At Institute Of Higher Education

Comparison Of Questions And Results Non-Governmental Organisation Or Registered Charity Staff

Key Data On Relationships And Families Postgraduate University Of London

APPENDIX II

Research outputs

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
2004	2004	2004	2004	2004
MCS1 Health Visitor Survey Interim Report.	BRASSETT-GRUNDY, A., JOSHI, H. and BUTLER, N.R	CLS	Sub-study report	Health
Patterns of parenthood at the beginning of the 21 st century	CALDERWOOD, L.	CLS	Conference presentation	Parenthood
Millennium Cohort Study First Survey. A Users' Guide to Initial Findings London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies	DEX, S. JOSHI, H. (editors)	CLS	First sweep findings report	All
Flexible working arrangements: Will they help the bigger problems?	DEX, S. and JOSHI, H	CLS	Chapter in book	Parental employment
Flexible or family friendly working arrangements in the UK	DEX, S.	CLS	Paper presented at conference	Parental employment
Inequalities in starting and continuing to breastfeed: exploring social disadvantage and ethnic group in the Millennium Cohort Study	FOSTER, L.J., TATE, R., DEZATEUX, C. and ICH MILLENNIUM COHORT CHILD HEALTH GROUP.	Institute of Child Health	Paper presented at conference	Inequalities and development
Unequal Entry to Motherhood and Unequal Start to Life: Evidence from the First Survey of the UK Millennium Cohort	HAWKES, D., JOSHI, H. and WARD, K.	CLS	CLS Cohort Studies Working Paper No.6	Parenthood
Population replacement and the reproduction of disadvantage	JOSHI, H. and WRIGHT, R	CLS	Academic paper	Inequalities
Social mobility, life chances and the early years	WALDFOGEL, J	CASE, London School of Economics	Academic paper	Inequalities

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
2005	2005	2005	2005	2005
Evaluation of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative for the promotion of breastfeeding; findings from the Millennium Cohort Study	BARTINGTON, S.E., GRIFFITHS, L.J., TATE, A.R. and DEZATEUX, C.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Breastfeeding and Development
Children of the 21 st century: From birth to nine months	DEX, S. and JOSHI, H (editors)	CLS	Book	All
Ethnic differences in birth outcomes in England	DEARDEN, L., MESNARD, A. and SHAW, J.	IFS	Academic paper	Ethnicity and Child Outcomes
The contribution of parental and community ethnicity to breastfeeding practices: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study	GRIFFITHS, L J., TATE, R., DEZATEUX, C. and MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Breastfeeding and Development
The Social Profile of Rural England	JOSHI H., DODGEON B. and HUGHES G	CLS	Academic paper (also presented to Conference)	Demographics
Starting Life in Scotland	JOSHI, H.E. and WRIGHT, R.E.	CLS	Chapter in book	All

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Parental marital status and child well-being.	KIERNAN, K	Institute of Social Policy at University of York	Academic paper (also presented to Conference)	Family Composition
Non-residential fatherhood and child involvement: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study	KIERNAN, K	CASE, London School of Economics	Academic paper	Family Composition
Mothers, Babies and the Risks of Poverty.	MAYHEW, E. and BRADSHAW, J.	University of York	Journal article	Inequalities
Lone motherhood and socio-economic disadvantage: Insights from quantitative and qualitative evidence	ROWLINGSON, K. and MCKAY, S.	Universities of Bath and Bristol	Journal article	Inequalities
Factors affecting a mother's recall of her baby's birth weight.	TATE, R., DEZATEUX, C., COLE, J. and DAVIDSON, L. and the Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Misc
Breast-feeding initiation and exclusive duration at 6 months by social class – results from the Millennium Cohort Study.	WATT, R.G. and KELLY, Y.J.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Breastfeeding
2006	2006	2006	2006	2006

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Are breastfeeding rates higher among mothers delivering in Baby Friendly accredited maternity units in the UK?	BARTINGTON, S., GRIFFITHS, L.J., TATE, R., DEZATEUX, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Breastfeeding
Effects of Sure Start Local Programmes on Children and Families: Early Findings	BELSKY, J., MELHUIH, E., BARNES, J., LEYLAND, A., ROMANIUK, H. and the NESS RESEARCH TEAM	Birkbeck College, UCL	Journal article	Early Years
The conflation of marriage and cohabitation in government statistics – a denial of difference rendered untenable by an analysis of outcomes.	BENSON, H.	Bristol Community Family Trust	Appendix to report	Family Composition
Health Visitors' Awareness of Local Service Accessibility (MCS sub-study)	BRASSETT-GRUNDY, A., JOSHI, H., BUTLER, N. and BRYAR, R	CLS	Journal article	Health
Women's Experiences of Successful Infertility Treatment: Results from the MCS Fertility Survey.	DAVIDSON, L. and QUIGLEY, M.	CLS	Sub-study report	Misc
Working to prevent the social exclusion of children and young people: Final lessons from the national evaluation of the Children's fund	EDWARDS, A., BARNES, M., PLEWIS, I. and MORRIS, K, et al	University of Birmingham and Institute of Education	Policy Evaluation Paper	Early Years
Childcare and Mothers' Employment: Approaching the new Millennium.	HANSEN, K., JOSHI, H. and VERROPOULOU, G	CLS	Journal article	Childcare and Parental Employment

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Early and late entry to motherhood in Wales: evidence of socio-economic inequalities in the first survey of the UK Millennium Cohort.	JOSHI, H. and HAWKES, D.	CLS	Policy Paper Commissioned (by WAG)	Inequalities
The Social and Demographic Profile of Rural Wales: Preliminary Insights from the Millennium Cohort Study	JOSHI, H., HUGHES, G. and DODGEON, B	Rural Evidence Research Centre, Birkbeck	Academic paper	Demographics
Ethnic differences in achievement of developmental milestones by 9 months of age: the Millennium Cohort Study	KELLY, Y. J., SACKER, A., SCHOON, I. and NAZROO, J. Y.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL & Department of Psychology, City University	Journal article, Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 48, 825-830	Ethnicity and Child Outcomes
Racial/Ethnic differences in breastfeeding initiation and continuation in the United Kingdom and comparison with findings in the United States	KELLY, Y. J., WATT, R. G. and NAZROO, J. Y.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Ethnicity and Breastfeeding
Marital status disparities in maternal smoking during pregnancy, breastfeeding and maternal depression	KIERNAN, K. and PICKETT, K.E	Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Department of Health Sciences, University of York	Journal article	Family Composition
Breastfeeding and developmental delay: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study	SACKER, A., QUIGLEY, M. and KELLY, Y.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL, & National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford	Journal article	Breastfeeding and Development
Differences in risk factors for partial and no immunization in the first year of life: prospective cohort study	SAMAD, L., TATE, A.R., DEZATEUX, C., PECKHAM, C., BUTLER, N. and BEDFORD, H.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
The National Evaluation of Sure Start: Does area-based early intervention work?	BELSKY, J., BARNES, J. and MELHUISH, E.C.	Birkbeck College, UCL	Book	Early Years
Recent changes in intergenerational mobility in Britain	BLANDEN, J. and MACHIN, S.	Economics Department, University of Surrey and Centre for Economic Performance, LSE, & Department of Economics, UCL & Centre for Economic Performance, LSE	Sutton Trust Report Dec 2007	Inequalities
Millennium Cohort Study Second Survey: A User's Guide to Initial Findings.	HANSEN, K. and JOSHI, H (eds)	CLS	Second sweep findings report	All
Parental care and employment in early childhood. Analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) Sweeps 1 and 2	DEX, S. and WARD, K.	CLS, on behalf of Institute of Education	Working paper	Parental Employment and Childcare
Sole and joint birth registration: Exploring the circumstances, choices and motivations of unmarried parents	GRAHAM, J., CREEGAN, C., BARNARD, M., MOWLAM, A. and MCKAY, S.	National Centre for Research & Institute for Applied Social Sciences, on behalf of DWP	Paper commissioned by DWP	Misc
Do early infant feeding practices vary by maternal ethnic group?	GRIFFITHS L.J., DEZATEUX C., LAW C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Breastfeeding and Ethnicity

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
	GROUP.			
Differential parental weight and height contributions to offspring birth weight and weight gain in infancy	GRIFFITHS, L.J., DEZATEUX, C., COLE, T.J. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Misc
The impact of maternal employment on breastfeeding duration in the UK Millennium Cohort Study	HAWKINS S.S., GRIFFITHS L.J., DEZATEUX C., LAW C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Parental Employment and Breastfeeding
Maternal employment and breast feeding initiation: findings from the Millennium Cohort Study	HAWKINS S.S., GRIFFITHS L.J., DEZATEUX C., LAW C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article, Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology 21, (3)	Parental Employment and Breastfeeding
Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of ethnic minority mothers in England	JAYAWEERA, H., HOCKLEY, C.A., REDSHAW, M.E. and QUIGLEY, M.A.	National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford	Academic paper	Inequalities and Ethnicity
The Health of Infants at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century	KELLY, Y. J.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Chapter in book	Health
Quality of childcare settings in the Millennium Cohort Study.	MATHERS, S., SYLVA, K. and JOSHI, H.	CLS	Report for SureStart	Childcare

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Ethnic variation in childhood asthma and wheezing illness: findings from the Millennium Cohort Study.	PANICO, L., BARTLEY, M., MARMOT, M., NAZROO, J. Y., SACKER, A. and KELLY, Y.	Department of Epidemiology & Public Health, UCL	Journal article	Child Health
Income inequalities and self-reported maternal health status: Cross-sectional national survey	PETROU, S., KUPEK, E. and GRAY, R.	National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford	Journal article	Inequalities
Breastfeeding and hospitalization for diarrheal and respiratory infection in the UK Millennium Cohort Study	QUIGLEY, M. A., KELLY, Y. J. and SACKER, A.	National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford & Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London	Journal article	Breastfeeding
Prevalence of maternal smoking and environmental tobacco smoke exposure during pregnancy and impact on birth weight: retrospective study using Millennium Cohort	WARD, C., LEWIS, S. and COLEMAN, T.	Division of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Nottingham	Journal article, BMC Public Health, May 16 th 2007 (7), 81	Health
2008	2008	2008	2008	2008
Anatomy of a Health Scare: Education, Income and the MMR Controversy in the UK.	ANDERBERG, D., CHEVALIER, A. and WADSWORTH, J.	Royal Holloway University	Academic paper	Inequalities
Research and policy in developing an early years initiative: the case of Sure Start	BELSKY, J., MELHUISH, E. and BARNES, J.	Birkbeck College, University of London	Journal article	Early Years

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Family poverty assessed at three years old.	BRADSHAW, J. and HOLMES, J.	CLS	CLS Working Paper	Inequalities
Millennium Cohort Study, Third Survey: A User's Guide to Initial Findings.	HANSEN, K. and JOSHI, H (eds)	CLS	Third sweep findings report	All
Cross-National Research Using Contemporary Birth Cohort Studies: A Look at Early Maternal Employment in the United Kingdom and United States (full version).	CROSBY, D.A. and HAWKES, D.D.	CLS	CLS Working Paper	Parental Employment
Child Development in the First Three Sweeps of the Millennium Cohort Study.	CULLIS, A. and HANSEN, K.	Institute of Education on behalf of DfES	Paper commissioned by DfES	Child Development
Intrafamily Resource Allocations: A dynamic Model of Birth Weight 2008-27	DEL BONO, E., ERMISCH, J. and FRANCESCO, M	Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex	Working paper	Inequalities
Millennium Cohort Study: Exploration of some Distinctive Results for Scotland.	DEX, S.	CLS on behalf of Scottish Government	Paper on behalf of Scottish Government	Demographics
Origins of social immobility and inequality: parenting and early childhood development	ERMISCH, J.	Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex	Journal article	Inequalities

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Mothers without Companionship During Childbirth: An Analysis within the Millennium Cohort Study	ESSEX H. and PICKETT K. E	Department of Health Sciences, University of York	Journal article	Misc
The Public Value of Social Housing: A longitudinal analysis of the relationship between housing and life chances	FEINSTEIN, L., LUPTON, R., HAMMOND, C., MUJTABA, T., SALTER, E., SORHAINDO, A., TUNSTALL, R., RICHARDS, M., KUH, D. and JOHNSON, J.	The Smith Institute	Smith Institute Report	Inequalities
The UK Millennium Cohort Study and the circumstances of early motherhood	HAWKES, D	CLS	Chapter in book	Inequalities
Maternal employment and early childhood overweight: findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study	HAWKINS, S. S., COLE, T. J., LAW, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health,	Journal article	Parental Employment
Regional differences in overweight: an effect of people or place?	HAWKINS, S. S., GRIFFITHS, L. J., COLE, T. J., DEZATEUX, C., LAW, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health,	Journal article	Health
Influence of moving to the UK on maternal health behaviours: prospective cohort study	HAWKINS, S. S., LAMB, K., COLE, T. J., LAW C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health,	Journal article	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
A profile of population change in Rural England	JOSHI, H., DODGEON, B. and HUGHES, G.	CLS, commissioned by DEFRA	CLS Working Paper	Demographics
Setting the Scene	JOSHI, H.	CLS	Paper presented to conference	Misc
Economic Deprivation, Maternal Depression, Parenting and Children's Cognitive and Emotional Development in Early Childhood	KIERNAN, K.E. and HUERTA, M.C.	Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York & Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE	Journal article	Inequalities
Effects of fully-established Sure Start Local Programmes on 3-year-old children and their families living in England: a quasi-experimental observational study.	MELHUIISH, E., BELSKY, J., LEYLAND, A., BARNES, J. and the NESS RESEARCH TEAM	Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, Birkbeck, & MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, Glasgow, & National Evaluation of SureStart Research Team	Journal article, Lancet, 372 (9650), 1641-1647	Early Years
The Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Three Year Olds and Their Parents	NESS (The National Evaluation of Surestart). and ISCFSI Birkbeck College.	Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, Birkbeck, & MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, Glasgow, & National Evaluation of SureStart Research Team	National evaluation report	Early Years

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Residential mobility and uptake of childhood immunisations: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study	PEARCE, A., ELLIMAN, D., BEDFORD, H., LAW, C. and MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL & Children's Population Health Unit, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust	Journal article	Inequalities
Factors associated with uptake of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) and use of single antigen vaccines in a contemporary UK cohort: prospective cohort study.	PEARCE, A., LAW, C., ELLIMAN, D., COLE, T. J., BEDFORD, H. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL & Children's Population Health Unit, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust	Journal article	Health
Meaningful differences in maternal smoking behaviour during pregnancy: implications for infant behavioural vulnerability	PICKETT K. E., WOOD C., ADAMSON J., DESOUZA L. and WAKSCHLAG L. S.	Department of Health Sciences, University of York, & Institute for Juvenile Research, University of Illinois	Journal article	Health
Changing economic circumstances in childhood and their effects on subsequent educational and other outcomes.	PLEWIS, I. and KALLIS, C.	DWP	DWP Working article No. 49	Inequalities
2009	2009	2009	2009	2009
Factors for childhood obesity at age 5: Analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study	BROPHY, S., COOKSEY, R., GRAVENOR, M.B., MISTRY, R., THOMAS, N., LYONS, R.A. and WILLIAMS, R.	Centre for Health Information, Research and Evaluation, School of Medicine, Swansea	Journal article	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
		University, & Africa Educational Trust, & Centre for Child Health, School of Human Sciences, Swansea University		
What Parents Want: School preferences and school choice	BURGESS, S., GREAVES, E., VIGNOLES, A. and WILSON, D.	Centre for Market and Public Organisation, Bristol Institute of Public Affairs, University of Bristol	Working paper	Early Years
The social context of parenting three-year-old children with developmental delay in the UK	EMERSON, E., GRAHAM, H., McCULLOCH, A., BLACHER, J., HATTON, C. and LLEWELLYN, G	Division of Health Research, Lancaster University, & Department of Health Sciences, University of York, & Graduate School of Education, University of California at Riverside, & Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney	Journal article	Child Development
Inequalities in educational outcomes among children aged 3 to 16.	GOODMAN, A., SIBIETA, L. and WASHBROOK, E.	Institute for Fiscal Studies, & Centre for Market and Public Organisation	Final report for the National Equality Panel	Inequalities
The Timing of Motherhood, Mothers' Employment and Child Outcomes	HANSEN, K., HAWKES, D. and JOSHI, H	CLS	Chapter in book	Family Composition
Early childcare and child development	HANSEN, K. and HAWKES, D.	CLS	Journal article	Childcare and Development

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Examining the relationship between maternal employment and health behaviours in 5-year-old British children	HAWKINS, S.S., COLE, T.J., LAW, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Parental Employment
Perceived and objective measures of the neighbourhood environment and overweight in preschool children and their mothers	HAWKINS, S.S., PEARCE, A., COLE, T.J., LAW, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Health
An ecological systems approach to examining risk factors for early childhood overweight: findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study	HAWKINS, S.S ., COLE, T.J . and LAW, C.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Health
Using Foundation Stage Profile Assessments To Assess Outcomes From Early Years Education	HOPKIN., STOKES. and WILKINSON.	National Institute of Social and Economic Research	Journal article	Early Years
Family Trends: British families since the 1950s	HUNT, S.A.	Family and Parenting Institute	Book	Demographics
Why does birthweight vary among ethnic groups in the UK? Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study	KELLY, Y., PANICO, L., BARTLEY, M., MARMOT, M., NAZROO, J. and SACKER, A	Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, & Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, & Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), University of Essex	Journal article	Ethnicity and Outcomes

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Light drinking in pregnancy, a risk for behavioural problems and cognitive deficits at 3 years of age?	KELLY, Y., SACKER, A., GRAY, R., KELLY, J., WOLKE, D. and QUIGLEY, M.A.	Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, & Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), & National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford, & Department of Psychology and Health Sciences Research Institute, Warwick Medical School, The University of Warwick	Journal article	Health
Poverty, Maternal Depression, Family Status and Children's Cognitive and Behavioural development in Early Childhood: a longitudinal study.	KIERNAN K.E. and MENSAH, F.K.	CLS	Journal article	Inequalities
Building Character	LEXMOND, J. and REEVES, R	DEMOS	DEMOS Report	Inequalities
Growing up in social housing in Britain: A profile of four generations from 1946 to the present day.	LUPTON, R., TUNSTALL, R., SIGLE-RUSHTON, W., OBOLENSKAYA, P., SABATES, R., MESCHI, E., KNEALE, D., SALTER, E., HAMMOND, C., KUH, D. and DODGEON, B.	Published by Tenant Services Authority and Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Research Report	Inequalities

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Does childcare influence the risk of overweight and obesity in the early years? Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study	PEARCE, A., LI, L., ABBAS, J., FERGUSON, B., GRAHAM, H., LAW, C. and THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL, & York and Humberside Public Health Observatory, York, & Department of Health Sciences, University of York	Journal article	Health
Does primary immunisation status predict MMR uptake?	PEARCE, A ., ELLIMAN, D., LAW, C., BEDFORD, H., AND THE MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL , & Children's Population Health Unit, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust	Journal article	Health
The psychosocial context of pregnancy smoking and quitting in the Millennium Cohort Study	PICKETT, K. E., WILKINSON, R. G . and WAKSCHLAG, L. S.	Department of Health Sciences, University of York, & Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, University of Nottingham Medical School, & Institute for Juvenile Research, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago	Journal article	Health
Ethnic density effects on maternal and infant health in the Millennium Cohort Study	PICKETT, K.E., SHAW, R.J., ATKIN, K., KIERNAN, K.E . and WILKINSON, R.G.	University of York, & University of Nottingham	Journal article	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Ethnicity and child poverty	PLATT, L	Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex on behalf of DWP	DWP Research Report	Inequalities
Lineage based differences in grandparental investment: Evidence from a large British cohort study	POLLET, T.V., NELISSEN, M. and NETTLE, D.	Centre for Behaviour and Evolution, Newcastle University, & Behavioural Biology, University of Antwerp	Journal article	Misc
Infant feeding, solid foods and hospitalisation in the first 8 months after birth.	QUIGLEY, M.A., KELLY, Y.J. and SACKER, A.	National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford, & Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, & Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex,	Journal article	Health
Millennium Cohort Study Sweep 3 Scotland Report.	SULLIVAN, A. and DEX, S	CLS	Scotland specific report	All
The relationship between household income and childhood respiratory health in the United Kingdom.	VIOLATO, M., PETROU, S. and GRAY, R.	University of Oxford, Health Economics Research Centre, & University of Oxford, National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit	Journal article	Inequalities

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
2010	2010	2010	2010	2010
Children of the 21st century (Volume 2): the first five years.	HANSEN, K., JOSHI, H. and DEX, S (eds),	CLS	Book	All
Cognitive development following ART: effect of choice of comparison group, confounding and mediating factors	CARSON, C., KURINCZUK, J.J., SACKER, A., KELLY, Y., KLEMETTI, R., REDSHAW, M. and QUIGLEY, M.A.	National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford, & Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, & Department of Epidemiology & Public Health, University College London	Journal article	Child Development
The development of children living in Wales: Analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study.	DEX, S., CULLIS, A. and HANSEN, K.	CLS	Report to the WAG	Child Development
Emotional and behavioural difficulties in young children with and without developmental delay: A bi-national perspective	EMERSON, E. and EINFELD, S	Lancaster University, UK and University of Sydney, Australia	Journal article	Child Development
Socioeconomic Circumstances and Risk of Psychiatric Disorders Among Parents of Children With Early Cognitive Delay	EMERSON, E., McCULLOCH, A., GRAHAM, H., BLACHER, J., LLEWELLYN, G.M. and HATTON, C.	Lancaster University, & University of York, & University of California, Riverside, & University of Sydney	Journal article	Inequalities

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Selection and the effect of prenatal smoking	FERTIG, A.R	Department of Health Policy and Management, University of Georgia	Journal article	Health
Modelling risks: Effects of area deprivation, family socio-economic disadvantage and adverse life events on young children's psychopathology	FLOURI, E., MAVROVELI, S. and TZAVIDIS, N.	Department of Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education, & Social Statistics and Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester	Journal article	Inequalities
Area and family effects on the psychopathology of the Millennium Cohort Study children and their older siblings	FLOURI, E., TZAVIDIS, N. and KALLIS, C.	Department of Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education, & Social Statistics and Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester, & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London	Journal article	Health
Adverse life events, area socio-economic disadvantage, and psychopathology and resilience in young children: The importance of risk factors' accumulation and protective factors' specificity	FLOURI, E., TZAVIDIS, N. and KALLIS, C.	Department of Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education, & Social Statistics and Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester, & London School of Hygiene and Tropical	Journal article	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
		Medicine, University of London		
Cohabitation, marriage and relationship stability	GOODMAN, A. and GREAVES, E	Institute for Fiscal Studies, sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation	Briefing note commissioned by Nuffield Foundation	Family Composition
Cohabitation, marriage and child outcomes.	GOODMAN, A. and GREAVES, E.	Institute for Fiscal Studies, sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation	Paper commissioned by Nuffield Foundation	Family Composition
Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?.	GOODMAN, A. and GREGG, P	Institute for Fiscal Studies, sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Paper commissioned by Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Child Development
Lifecourse influences on women's smoking before, during and after pregnancy	GRAHAM, H., HAWKINS, S.S. and LAW, C.	University of York, Department of Health Sciences, & Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health	Journal article	Health
Risk factors for rapid weight gain in preschool children: findings from a UK-wide prospective study	GRIFFITHS, L.J., HAWKINS, S.S., COLE, T.J., DEZATEUX, C. and the MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP.	MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL	Journal article	Health
Age 5 Cognitive Development in England	HANSEN, K. and JONES, E.M.	CLS	Journal article	Child Development

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Changes in Family Composition and Marital Status in Families with a Young Child with Cognitive Delay	HATTON, C., EMERSON, E., GRAHAM, H., BLACHER, J. and LLEWELLYN, G. (Lancaster University, University of Sydney, University of York, University of California at Riverside	Journal article	Family Composition
An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK.	HILLS, J., BREWER, M., JENKINS, S., LISTER, R., LUPTON, R., MACHIN, S., MILLS, C., MODOOD, T., REES, T. and RIDDELL, S.	Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE, & the National Equality Panel	Report of the National Equality Panel	Inequalities
Smoking in pregnancy and disruptive behaviour in 3-year old boys and girls: an analysis of the UK Millennium Cohort Study.	HUTCHINSON, J., PICKETT, K.E., GREEN, J. and WAKSCHLAG, L.S.	Department of Health Sciences, University of York, & Hull-York Medical School, & Institute for Juvenile Research, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago	Journal article	Health
Fair Society, Healthy Lives	MARMOT, M.	Commissioned on behalf of Secretary of State for Health	Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post-2010 (Marmot Review).	Health
Evaluation and value of Sure Start	MELHUIH, E., BELSKY, J. and BARNES, J.	Birkbeck College, UCL	Journal article	Early Years
Child Health & Well-being in the Early Years: The National Evaluation of Sure Start	MELHUIH, E., BELSKY, J., LEYLAND, A., ROMANIUK, H. and the NESS RESEARCH TEAM.	Birkbeck College, UCL	Chapter in book	Health

Title of Output	Author	Institution	Type	Subject
Gender differences in educational attainment: influences of the family environment.	MENSAH, F.K. and KIERNAN, K.E.	Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York, & Institute for Effective Education, University of York	Journal article	Inequalities
Dying young and living fast: Variation in life history across English neighbourhoods	NETTLE, D.	Centre for Behaviour and Evolution, Institute of Neuroscience, Newcastle University,	Journal article	Inequalities
Part-time working and pay amongst Millennium Cohort Study mothers.	NEUBURGER, J., JOSHI, H. and DEX, S	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, & CLS	GeNet Working Paper	Parental Employment
Does childcare influence socio-economic inequalities in unintentional injury? Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study	PEARCE, A., LI, L., ABBAS, J., FERGUSON, B., GRAHAM, H., LAW, C. and the MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY CHILD HEALTH GROUP	Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UCL Institute of Child Health, & York and Humber Public Health Observatory, & Department of Health Sciences, University of York	Journal article	Childcare
Ex Curricula.	SODHA, S. and MARGO, J.	DEMOS	Demos Report, funded by the Private Equity Foundation	Inequalities

APPENDIX III

An overview of family policy since 1997

1998 Supporting Families Green Paper	This Green Paper from a new Labour government focused on families as a policy unit. It laid the basis for the Labour policy, which was integrating services for families and parents to a much greater extent.
2002 Integration of all early years and childcare services	This integration was formally started in 2002 by the integration of early years and childcare services.
2003 Department of Education and Skills	The responsibility for children's services moved from Department of Health to Department of Education and Skills to encourage greater integration.
2003 Laming Report into Victoria Climbié	The failure of services to protect Victoria Climbié, who died as a result of abuse in 2000, was investigated by Lord Laming. This report was the catalyst for the Every Child Matters Green Paper which has defined family and child legislation and policy from 2003-2010
2003 Every Child Matters (ECM)	This Green Paper went beyond dealing with protection issues raised by the Laming Report to setting out children's outcomes: Being Healthy; Staying Safe; Enjoying and Achieving; Making a positive contribution and Economic wellbeing. These five outcomes were the framework for all government interventions after this time.
2004 Children's Act	This Legislation put the recommendations from ECM into law. This was designed to make children's services more integrated under local authority level 'Directors of children's services' as well as introducing Children's Trusts, or partnerships at local level to coordinate all outcomes. Other changes included the use of a Common Assessment Framework, a universal database (that has never fully been achieved) and a team around the child lead by a single professional.
2004 National service framework for children, young people and maternity services (NSF)	The NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services was published in September 2004. It set, for the first time, National standards for children's health and social care, promoting both high quality women and child-centered services and personalised care.
2006 Childcare Act	This Act legislates for the integration of childcare and Early Years services, as well as laying out the Duties on Local Authorities to work in partnership and secure sufficient childcare for working parents.
2007 Aiming high for children: supporting families	An important report by the Treasury that informed the years Comprehensive Spending Review. This document included a universal advice service for parents and support for Children's Centres that delivered parenting classes.
2007 Department for Children Schools and Families	DCSF was created by Gordon Brown in order to further integrate children's services.

2007 Every Parent Matters	This strategy recognised the importance of parents in the development of children. This is in line with the increased interest in 'parents' as an appropriate target of state support. This was a feature of Labour policy, from the establishment of the 'National Family and Parent Support Institute' in 1999.
2007 Children's Plan	This plan aimed to improve schools and support for families. It included renewed focus on supporting parents to support children, developed Children's Trusts, involve parents in their children's education and ensure young people have more positive activities outside of school.
2008 21st Century Schools	This white paper sets out the strategy for schools to deliver the Children's Plan. This included a more outward facing school, offering personalised education, with a range of partners.
2009 Child Poverty Act	The Child Poverty Act formalises the Labour government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020. The Act defines what is meant by this statement, using a measure of relative poverty, and sets out this will be evidenced. It also conveys duties on local authorities and requires a strategy to be produced every 3 years.
2010 'new approach'	2010 saw the election of a new government. The priorities for the Department for Education include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater autonomy for schools, through expansion of Academies programme ▪ Improving parental choice by making it easier for them to set up their own schools ▪ The introduction of pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils, which will be administered by the schools ▪ Improvement of the system with support for teachers. ▪ Repositioning Sure start for poorer families, changes to safeguarding proposals and to the national curriculum
2010: 'The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper'	Set out the reform programme for the schools system, with teachers placed at the heart of school improvement

- Communities
- Economies
- Skills
- Enterprise