

Young people in rural Scotland

Pathways to social inclusion and exclusion

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1 Introduction

The issues

The Scottish Office classifies 90 per cent of Scotland's land mass as rural, and estimates that a third of the population lives in rural areas. The Government recognises that the experiences of people living in rural environments are often significantly different from those of urban populations, but also that diversity exists within rural areas and regions. Promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life for rural inhabitants are current policy priorities.

Many young people leave rural areas during their late teenage years and early 20s, yet their retention is the key to the survival of rural communities. The life period between 18 and 25 years is inherently one involving change. Young people in this age group leave school and many become involved in various types of training courses [For example youth training (YT), apprenticeships, further and higher education], seek employment and set up independent households (either alone or with partners). Young people also acquire certain rights and responsibilities of citizenship, such as the entitlement to welfare benefits, political enfranchisement and the right to marry.

However, we currently know very little about the ways that these transitional processes and mechanisms combine and are played out in the lives of young people in rural areas. Key questions that require further exploration include: how do such young people achieve the transition from childhood to adulthood? For example, what are the bridges and barriers encountered when moving from school to work or training and/or from their parents' home to their own household? What are the values and/

or aspirations of young people who remain in rural communities and what pressures might lead them to leave rural areas for city life? What do they most value and what do they see as contributing to an acceptable quality of life?

Current policy pronouncements stress the importance of creating an inclusive society, with labour market participation championed as the primary mechanism leading to social inclusion. This raises further questions. Are rural communities homogeneous and/or cohesive, and how is this experienced by young people during their transition to adulthood? Do young people see participation in paid employment as central to their inclusion into their local community, or are other areas of life (particularly housing and family life) perceived as equally important? Are all forms of employment equivalent, with regard to social inclusion? This study seeks to understand the experiences of young people in rural communities through an exploration of their pathways towards adulthood and of the processes that contribute to their social inclusion or exclusion.

The study areas

Rural towns and landward areas are far from homogeneous and can be differentiated on many of the dimensions that contribute to people's well-being and quality of life, including employment opportunities, material resources, community cohesion, proximity to urban conurbations, population size and the less quantifiable areas of local culture and history. This study compared the experiences of young people in two areas that were chosen to be

similar in some dimensions, but contrasting in others. The study locations were rural towns and their surrounding landward areas. The towns both had populations of approximately 2500 and the distribution of their household composition was similar (Table 1).

The first town, Duns, is located in the Scottish Borders Council region. It is geographically isolated, with poor road- and no rail-link to its nearest large city (Edinburgh). As the following examples illustrate, residents without cars must rely on infrequent and expensive bus services. To travel from Duns to Dunbar, where people must go to 'sign on' for welfare benefits, the cost is £4 return by bus, with the last return bus leaving Dunbar at 4.30 pm. To get to Galashiels, the nearest town with a cinema, the cost is £5.60 return, with the last bus back leaving at 8.20 pm. Duns residents do not tend to commute to urban areas, but often travel quite long distances by car to work in other rural towns. Levels of in-migration are low and the area has not been affected heavily by tourism.

In contrast, the second research area, Callander, is in Stirling Council region. It is less isolated and has better road links to the cities of Glasgow and Stirling. The local bus service is also superior. For example, whilst a bus to the

nearest city (Stirling) still costs £5.20 return, the last bus is not until 10.40 pm. The more efficient transport infrastructure (particularly road networks) provides locally born people with the opportunity to work in urban areas, whilst also attracting urban-born professionals seeking a rural home life. Callander is affected heavily by tourism, lying at the gateway to the Trossachs, and tourism and leisure now provide a significant amount of employment.

Table 2 presents comparative data on employment patterns in the local regions where the study areas are located, i.e. Borders and Stirling. The table highlights the dominance of manufacturing in the Borders region, and hotel, catering, financial and public sector employment in Stirling region. In the last few years the Borders region has experienced significant job losses in the textile and electronic industries, and the Scottish Borders Council has recently called for Assisted Area status to be restored to the region. However, the town of Duns itself has not been affected as severely by these large-scale closures as some other areas in the region. This is primarily because in and immediately around Duns, the majority of employment is in small local enterprises (e.g. shops and garages) and food processing. Stirling region has avoided the serious economic

Table 1 Household composition 1991 (percentages in parentheses)

Description	Duns	Callander
Total number of households	1,044	1,019
One or more adults without children	785 (75)	704 (69)
One or more adults with children	259 (25)	315 (31)
Households with dependant children aged 0–4 years old	120 (11)	134 (13)
Households with dependant children aged 5–15 years old	304 (29)	382 (37)
All households with children	468 (44)	573 (56)

Source: 1991 Census General Register Office, Scotland

Table 2 Numbers employed in each sector in 1995 (percentages in parentheses)

Employment sector	Borders	Stirling
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	442 (1)	275 (0.8)
Manufacturing, food, drink and tobacco	778 (2)	0
Manufacturing, textiles products, leather	5,052 (15)	0
Manufacturing, pulp, paper products, printing	459 (1)	0
Manufacturing, timber, rubber, plastic	938 (3)	0
Construction	2,220 (6)	1,621 (5)
Hotels and catering	1,991 (6)	3,506 (10)
Financial and business	2,466 (7)	4,104 (12)
Public services, administration and defence	4,229 (12)	6,888 (21)
Total (includes those employed in sectors not listed above)	34,834	33,501

Source: Office of National Statistics 1995, Census of Employment, personal communication

difficulties that have affected the Borders region.

The town of Callander is slightly more affluent than Duns (Table 3). For example, Callander contains more owner-occupied housing, more homes with central heating and has higher levels of car-ownership.

Research methods

This report is based on the analysis and synthesis of three types of data. First, official statistics (primarily from local authorities and

the 1991 census) were used to build up profiles of the two study areas, thus providing contextual information within which to understand respondents' biographical accounts. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with 60 respondents (31 males, 29 females). Two-thirds of the young people who took part in the interviews were from rural towns, the other third was drawn from surrounding landward areas. The young people were selected randomly from two sampling frames: a general practitioner's patient list in Duns and

Table 3 Household tenure and amenities 1991 (percentages in parentheses)

Description	Duns	Callander
Total households	1,044	1,019
No central heating	159 (15)	123 (12)
No car	358 (34)	295 (29)
Owner-occupied	502 (48)	694 (68)
Rented privately	44 (4)	51 (5)
Rented with a job or business	12 (1)	20(2)
Rented from housing association, local authority, new town or Scottish homes	492 (47)	256 (25)
Total renting	548 (52)	327 (32)

Source: 1991 Census General Register Office, Scotland

old school registers in Callander. The interviews took place in the young people's homes and covered five key life-domains: family life, housing, education, employment, and leisure and community. For each of these domains respondents were asked, using various prompts, to recount their experiences from early childhood through to the present day. Most of the interview focused on experiences during the teenage years and early 20s. Finally, a postal questionnaire was sent to all the young people in the two sampling frames, of whom 187 (100 in Duns and 87 in Callander) responded. The questionnaire sought to gather factual information and attitudinal data in the areas of family structure, housing tenure, health, employment, income and welfare.

A total of 286 people (145 in Duns and 141 in Callander) was approached in order to achieve the required 60 qualitative interviews, a response rate of 21 per cent. The response rate for the structured questionnaires was 38 per cent. Response rates were not significantly different between study areas. Sampling bias could only be assessed to a limited degree. However, when those who were interviewed and had completed the questionnaire were compared with those who were not interviewed and did not complete the questionnaire, no statistically significant differences were found in relation to gender or location (town versus landward). Further evidence about sampling bias is presented in the Appendix. However, on the basis of the available evidence, we are reasonably confident that our findings can be generalised to the larger populations from which the samples were recruited.

Structure of the report

The primary focus of this study was the description and understanding of young people's experiences and the meanings which they attach to transitional life events and behaviours and, for these reasons, this report draws most heavily on the in-depth interview data. However, at appropriate points in the report we also provide information derived from the larger sample who completed the questionnaire.

The importance of academic and professional qualifications in determining life chances was the most dominant theme to emerge from our data. The differences in the transitional pathways and experiences of young people with various levels of qualifications were marked. Four subgroups were identifiable within our study sample: graduates; respondents who had begun higher education (HE) or professional courses but had dropped out prior to completion; those who had never attended HE; and current students.

This report concentrates on the experiences of the first three of these subgroups. For each of these groups of young people we report on their transitional experiences in the key domains of employment, housing and family formation. We consider the reciprocal relationships between these life domains and the contribution of young people's experiences to their social inclusion or exclusion. Table 4 presents the breakdown by educational subgroup separately for Duns and Callander.

Respondents who were current full-time HE students were found to be in a somewhat different position compared with other respondents. First, they were not currently

seeking full-time employment. Second, the vast majority were living away from the rural areas and in student accommodation. Third, it was unclear which young people would ultimately graduate and which would leave their courses

Table 4 The educational groupings of in-depth interview respondents

	Duns	Callander
Higher national diploma or degree	3	9
Left HE before graduating	4	5
Never attended HE	16	9
Current full-time student	7	7
Total	30	30

early. Although interesting, information gathered from current students did not provide additional insights, over and above those provided by the graduates and by those who had dropped out of HE. For these reasons we do not include here a separate section on the experiences of current HE students.

The interview extracts used in this report are followed by a two-letter, two-digit code. The 'M' or 'F' indicates whether the respondent was male or female, the 'C' or 'D' whether he or she was from the Callander or Duns sample, and the two digits are the respondent number (ranging from 01 to 60).

2 Young people who had not attended higher education

In this chapter we report on the employment, housing and family formation of young people who had not taken part in further education beyond the level of higher national certificate (HNC). From the in-depth interview sample this group comprised 16 young people from Duns (nine males, seven females) and eight young people from Callander (four males, four females); this reflects the higher levels of participation in HE in Callander compared with Duns.

Labour market experiences

Table 5 shows the number of young people out of work and claiming benefit in the two study towns during 1998. It is apparent from the table that unemployment was higher in Callander than Duns and that both areas were affected by seasonal variation.

Of the 24 in-depth interview respondents who did not have educational qualifications above HNC, 12 could be classified as working full-time, three were working part-time (one of these was also studying for an HNC), four were taking part in work-based training, one was

registered disabled but seeking full-time work, and four were not working because of child-care responsibilities or pregnancy. Of the 12 whom we classified as working full-time, three were officially employed on a part-time basis but in reality worked full-time hours (one had two part-time care assistant posts, one worked for a care assistant/nursing bank and one worked in retail sales).

Tables 6 and 7 present an overview of the young people's previous and current employment and housing positions. They indicate some variation in the types of employment available in the two study areas. In Duns, the primary sources of employment were in food-processing factories and farming, while in Callander employment was more varied, with a higher proportion of respondents working in hotels, restaurants and bars. There was some evidence that young men were more likely to be in the heavier manual jobs (e.g. farm work, tyre fitting and building) but there was also considerable cross-over in employment by gender. For example, one young woman was a trainee surveyor and another a trainee car mechanic, while several young men had worked in shops and one as a care assistant. However, the three respondents who were caring full-time for children were all women.

The youth labour markets in both study areas shared important attributes. Wage levels were low and broadly equivalent. The questionnaire data revealed an average monthly take-home pay of £536 in Duns and £576 in Callander among those receiving wages. In the in-depth interviews care workers reported weekly take-home pay between £140 and £150 per week; a tyre fitter, £157; a builder, £140; a

Table 5 18–24 year olds unemployed and claiming benefit in 1998

	Duns	Callander
January	11	23
April	9	19
July	5	16
October	4	15
December	6	34

Source: Employment Services, personal communication

Table 6 Labour market and housing positions of respondents from Duns who had not gained an HND or higher

Gender and age	Previous jobs (reported)	Labour market position	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 25	One finance, one bar work	Pregnant	Private rented (£300 per month)	Partner
F 25	Two food factories, one care work, plus YTS	Mother and not in paid employment	Private rented (£160 per month), heating and other problems	Lone parent with baby
M 25	Two farming and one food factory	Forestry work (temporary)	Public rented	Living with parent(s)
F 24	None	Secretary	Private rented (£238 per month)	Partner
M 23	Three sales, two banking	Call centre	Parents' second home	Flatmates
M 23	Several farm labouring jobs, gamekeeping, YTS	Tyre fitter	Private rented (£30 per week), no mains water or gas. Coal fire only form of heat and hot water	Partner and baby
M 22	Building work with father	Seeking work	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 22	Numerous seasonal farming jobs, two food factories	Two care assistant jobs, both part-time	Public rented, coal fire only	Living with parent(s)
M 22	Shop sales, caravan park	Bottle factory	Private rented, coal fire only	Alone
F 21	Two food factories, plus YTS	Mother and not in paid employment	Public rented (£36 per week)	Partner and baby
F 21	More than five care work jobs	Agency care work	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 21	Two construction, one sales	Food factory	Public rented (£38 per week)	Partner and baby
F 20	One (surveyors prior to beginning training)	Trainee building surveyor	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 19	Three food factories, YTS	Mother and not in paid employment	Private rented (£120 per month), heating/damp problems	Partner and baby
M 19	Food factory and farm	Part-time hotel work, plus HNC in game management	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 19	Several seasonal farm jobs	Food factory	Private rented (£47 per week)	Living with parent(s)

Table 7 Labour market and housing positions of respondents from Callander who had not gained an HND or higher

Gender and age	Previous jobs (reported)	Labour market position	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 24	Hotel, hairdressers (junior), two offices (junior)	Council tax officer	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 23	Waiter, gardening, YTS	Trainee garden centre manager	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 22	Two waitress, one bar work	Postal worker (part-time)	Owner-occupied	Partner
M 22	Handy-man, bar supervisor, food factory, insurance salesman	Trainee hotel manager	Tied housing, lives in hotel	Alone
M 21	Farm, kitchen work, forestry, bar work, fairground, trainee undertaker	Shop work, plus benefits	Employer's flat	B&B
M 21	None	Builder and retained firefighter	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 19	None	Apprentice mechanic	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 18	Gym instructor	Life-guard (part-time)	Private rented (£375 per month)	Flatmates

secretary, £136; and a forestry worker, £200. Those in work-based training posts reported lower net weekly incomes: apprentice mechanic, £75; trainee hotel manager, £125 (plus accommodation); trainee garden centre manager, £140.

In both study areas informal networks (kith and kin) were the major means of securing work for all respondents. Few young people with low educational qualifications reported finding employment through formal routes (job centres, newspaper advertisements, etc). In the following interview extracts respondents describe their paths into employment

... that's where my Mum used to work, you see, an, em, you know like some of the workers still keep in touch with her an' pop down for a coffee whatever an' they told me to like you know 'Get your name on the bank' so I did. (FD05)

It was through one of the guys I play rugby with. It was him that said there was ... 'cos I was still working at [the chicken factory] and as you'd imagine I got quite sick and fed up of that. He said to me there's a job coming up do you fancy it. Well the money had something to do with it as well, you know, it was better money than what I was getting ... I get £200 a week. Which is not bad for round here. (MD11)

Although most respondents' social networks were a key bridge into employment, for a small minority a 'bad' reputation within the tight-knit communities made finding employment difficult, if not impossible. In the following interview extract, one young man with learning disabilities, who had also been in trouble with the police (breaking and entering), describes his frustration at not being able to find employment.

... half the time I feel like just pack the bags and just leave. But you just can't do that, but what's interesting in my life now – nothing. I can't do anything, can't work, there's nothing, the only thing I can do is walk about, sleep, walk about, sleep, walk about ... I like to do things but there's nothing round here ... it's just four walls, Sky TV and that's it or walk about. (MD09)

In both study areas nearly all respondents reported poor transport infrastructures as a major barrier to employment. Local employers were not located in small concentrated industrial estates, but were scattered around the landward areas of the two study towns. In both areas it was crucial to use a car to attend work or HE. In the following extract a non-driver woman from a landward area describes the problems she encountered when trying to work in a nearby city.

I spoke to the head of personnel for [large retailer] who was doin' the interviewin', em, I fibbed ... 'Oh yes, there's buses ... I'll get there for seven o'clock in the morning' you know, so I just answered 'Yes' to every question, absolutely desperate for this job. They then gave me the job, em, I went for the trainin' an' I remember, an' there was no buses ... I think my Mum found out from the bus station that night that there was no buses at all, so I thought 'I'm in a dilemma, what the hell am I gonna do? How am I gonna get to Stirling?' I didn't know anybody in the area that was headin' that way, so I sort of said to the Head of the Personnel Department 'Look, I'm terribly sorry, but there isn't any buses, I don't know if I can get here' so I walked out, she says 'Right OK that's fine, you can just leave' ... And my Mum phoned an' said 'Listen, I'm gonna run her to her work'. My Mum got up at six o'clock in

the mornin' to run me all the way to Stirlin' from [place name] for two hours work an' she'd drive all the way back an' I'd have to make my own way back, which meant hangin' about until the school bus which would be what, three o'clock in the afternoon from Stirling, just jump on the bus to go all the way home. (FC45)

In the following interview extract a young woman from Duns expresses her frustration at the lack of understanding by Employment Service officers about the transport difficulties in rural areas. After describing how she was made to travel 13 miles to 'sign on', she goes on to say:

... they used to make me, em, write letters to like Boots and Woolworth's and things in Berwick ... Which is miles away and I was sayin' to them 'But how am I gonny get there?' and (they replied) 'But you've got a car' and I said 'But my husband needs that car for his work as well' and they were like 'Well get the bus then'. And it's miles away. But I mean I did, I had to do it because they were checkin' up on me. (FD04)

In both areas most of the available employment was low-skilled, with little career development or promotional opportunity. In the following interview extracts two respondents who had not attended HE describe their working conditions. The first refers to a fish-processing plant in Duns, where many respondents had worked, and the second to a knitwear factory a few miles from Duns.

Oh it's got a reputation alright ... I mean the folk that they take on as charge-hands and that are ... phff I've got no word to emphasise how bad they are ... they've not got ... a clue on how to co-operate with their workers and that. I mean ... it's all the f...ing and blinding words, 'You get f...ing

on with that' ... I mean, if you're going to work in an environment like that, you'll not do the job properly ... I mean with somebody speaking to you like a bloody animal, I mean, you think 'Oh phff, F off, if that's the way you're going to treat me'. (MD20)

Oh, it's just, if you can imagine a jumper, it's sewing these bits together. Sewing the arms on, all day, every day ... Oh, it's just boredom, total boredom, and it was a factory full of women, so it was total boredom and bitchiness ... (FD08)

The low levels of unemployment, in conjunction with the poor quality of employment, led many young people who had not attended HE to change jobs relatively frequently and to move back and forth between low-level courses and paid work. Below, a respondent describes her employment experiences since leaving school:

Hairdressin' as well. An' I hated it, I couldn't do it to save mysel', I ended up enjoyin' speakin' to the folk an' sweepin' the floor more than what I did actual hair, so I left there an' I worked at the [local food factory] as a food processor, an' the plan was to get money an' go into nursin', so I made some money, got my car, an' I worked down in the nursin' home in a town just outside of Duns an' I loved it ... I really, I loved that job, I really enjoyed it. However, we were only makin' £60 a week, I couldn't afford to run the car, so I had to go back to the local food-processing factory, however I stayed on the bank an' I worked as a bank nurse down there, well care assistant, so eventually that just got too much, workin' full-time at the [local food factory], an' goin' there at a weekend, I wasny getting any time for mysel' so I stopped doin' that ... (FD25)

The types of employment most valued by young people who had not attended HE involved an element of training and potential for career advancement. In the following two extracts a trainee hotel manager and a trainee garden centre manager describe the aspects of their work that they enjoyed and valued. In both cases, however, it was unclear whether the young person being trained would one day be offered a permanent full managerial post. In particular, the trainee garden centre manager appeared already to be undertaking most managerial tasks without receiving the appropriate salary. He had recently attended a short college course organised by himself, but paid for by his employer.

I'm like learnin' here, not like learnin' at college, you know, I'm a trainee manager so I do, eh, get shown a lot more than the general assistants will ... it's constant learning here for me, you know, I mean we do the same thing, in an' out every week but you're always learnin', you know? Eh ... I think I would go back to college, maybe, I mean I'm 22 now, I still ... I'm still like 'I've gotta go back an' learn ... I've gotta go back an' learn'.
(MC35)

I order in stock, eh, make up the rotas, do the money, it's ... I mean the Centre's left to me, basically, I mean there are ... our Head Office do allocation orders, just for certain things, I mean they'll only come in once a month, but I mean, I've got to order that in an' make sure it's there, eh, dealin' with customer problems, there's always loads o' customer problems [laughter] eh, and staff problems as well. It's left to myself in quite a big way. (MD18)

The young people who had not attended HE tended to operate in local, rather than national, labour markets and, in this respect, they were different from graduates and those who had dropped out of HE (see Chapters 3 and 4). The non-HE attenders most often sought employment locally, or in 'nearby towns', albeit as far as 30 miles away. This group also seemed to be more emotionally attached to rural life than their HE achieving counterparts. The non-HE attendees also often lacked confidence in their abilities to cope with city living and perceived cities to be dangerous, threatening and lonely places. The reality was that most of these young people also lacked the skills necessary to make them competitive in the type of jobs that were advertised nationally. Moreover, moving to another area (rural or urban) necessarily led to the loss of social networks, which provided much of the young people's employment. The fact that most low-skilled employment was secured through word of mouth and local reputation gave the local young people an important comparative advantage within their community.

Housing situation

Tables 6 and 7 show that only a very small number of young people lived in single-person households or flat-shares. This finding also held for the total sample of young people who took part in the study, and stands in contrast to the way that, in general, young people are increasingly living alone, or with flatmates, prior to cohabitation or marriage. All of the young people from the in-depth interview sample who had not attended HE and who were living alone or in flat-shares had 'special'

characteristics, which made them atypical of the non-HE attenders group: one was living in the hotel where he worked and which was managed by his mother; one was in the fortunate position of being able to live rent-free in his parents' second home in Edinburgh; one had grown-up in social work care, been homeless and lived in various B&Bs, prior to moving in with his current employer, who was claiming from the DSS for his board and lodgings; and one rented his home from a friend who had temporarily moved away from the area.

The young people who were least likely to be able to set up independent households were those involved in work-based training. This group had the lowest incomes and relied on their parents to support them, via the provision of cheap housing and other financial support.

They've helped me out financially in a big way, a very big way. Eh, I mean I need a car to get to my work, I mean there's no doubt about it, I mean there's ... I canny ... I canny get public transport unless I left here about four in the mornin', I mean my car, clothes as well. (MD18)

Many, but not all, of the young people aspired to live independently prior to cohabitation/marriage. However, the combination of low incomes and lack of single-person accommodation made this extremely difficult, if not impossible. The primary triggers for setting-up independent households were cohabitation/marriage and/or the birth of a child. Although many of the non-HE attenders dreamed of owning their own home, public sector (i.e. council or housing association) housing was often perceived as the best realistic option.

Interviewer: Would you rather buy a house or would you rather get a council house?

Respondent: I think I'd get a council house to start wi' and then get the money saved and like buy one or something. Chance of that's a fine thing I think. I can save a bit, it's like savin' it and you're needin' it again, cause something always breaks down. It's always the same. (FD10)

The two couples who were living in council accommodation had both previously been homeless with a child (living with parents). A third respondent who was just about to move into public sector housing was suffering from a disability. The reality for most couples was that they were not deemed to be in high enough need to get access to public sector housing and were therefore living in privately rented homes.

Social networks and local knowledge were found to be important in the distribution of privately rented accommodation (particularly in Duns), and these mechanisms worked in ways similar to those described in relation to employment.

Interviewer: So what you're saying is it wasn't advertised in the papers?

Respondent: It was aye, an' it was my Dad that recognised it ... so we phoned and he says 'Oh, well I know you' an' things like that, so we got the house that way. (FD25)

Private sector accommodation was found to be more expensive than council or housing association property and was also frequently of a lower quality. Moreover, much of the available accommodation was in landward areas (on farms and estates) so that some young people were forced to move from the town to outlying areas,

commonly not served by public transport, gas or even mains water. Such moves were often socially very isolating, particularly for young mothers and those who did not drive.

Respondent: Well I pay £160 rent a month which isn't that bad for the actual house so, it's quite good. It's coal fire so the house is quite cold, I mean we've got a storage heater at the top of the stairs, but in the winter it's ... in the winter it's really, really cold. The rain comes in through the windows an' every'hin', it is terrible. But in the summer it's lovely, really nice.

Interviewer: So how do you get your hot water?

Respondent: The fire. Or the immersion. I've got an immersion for in the summer. But the tap drips up the stair so the immersion has to be on for hours and hours before. He [landlord] doesn't really bother really much, so you have to be on at him the whole time to dae somethin' ... he doesn't like spendin' money on the houses. (FD25)

... it would be easier if there was a service bus, but there's no, if she [partner] wanted to go to Duns she'd either come through with me or use the school bus, that's the only transport there is. Occasionally a post bus ... you're snookered really. So you can see [her] point, bugger being stuck up here aw the time. We'll just try to get her through her driving test. (MD24)

Family formation

The lives of the young people who had not attended HE demonstrate more than for any other group the complex interrelationships between the key life domains of work, housing and family. Often their lives did not conform to

the stereotypical patterns of getting a good job, then secure housing, meeting a partner and deciding to start a family. For this group (particularly the women), partnerships formed at a young age, together with the birth of children, tended to be key triggers to the establishment of independent households, often in insecure financial circumstances. In turn, respondents with family responsibilities commonly cited job security and the receipt of a regular income as key issues.

In both study areas the lack of affordable child care and cultural attitudes about appropriate roles for mothers led many women who had not attended HE either to withdraw from the labour market, or to regard their employment as secondary to their responsibilities or ambitions regarding family formation. The following interview extracts represent common lines of reasoning among women. In the first extract a woman working as a typist talks about her prioritisation of family over career and, in the second, a mother explains why she is not currently seeking paid employment.

Oh, to have a family, em, I can see myself still bein' at the job that I'm in. I really can. (FD02)

She'll [daughter] be two in September, so I don't really want to do anything just now. I'm really enjoying being with her, and just because he left [partner] I don't see why I should have to return to work. I mean her dad's just left, I don't want to have to leave her with somebody and leave as well... I don't know, I'm settled just now an' just see what happens. (FD25)

Several respondents also described the persistence of strong divisions of labour within

the home and clear gender-role expectations. In the following extract a young woman, who had moved to a landward area when she became pregnant, describes how a combination of geographical isolation and her husband's expectations impacted on her life.

I'm stuck in aw day and then my husband comes home from work wi' the car an' like he's tired, he's had a hard day at work, so either my Mum comes from Berwick or, em, I don't get out till weekends [laughter]. Like being stuck in prison, get out on day release.

[and later on] I wanted to go back to work once she started like nursery or somethin' just part-time but John'll not let us. He's a supervisor up in Duns an' he's on a salary an' he says 'I make enough money to keep the both of we goin' he says 'you're not workin' till she's in high school'. 'High school, oh no!' but, em, yeah he says 'you could be out workin' an' she'll be ill an' you'll have to get off ... time off work to look after her an' all the rest'. (FD14)

Summary

- Most young people who had not attended HE were able to find employment, with the primary route into work being informal networks. Those with 'bad' reputations found access to employment very difficult.
- The available work was mostly low-paid and low-skilled, with little opportunity for career advancement. The most valued types of work were those that involved an element of training and/or career progression.
- Most young people who had not attended HE moved directly from the parental home to live with partners, they did not generally live in single-person households or flat-shares. Cohabitation, marriage and/or childbirth were the key triggers for setting up independent households.
- Low incomes, in conjunction with limited public sector housing, forced many young people into the private rented sector. Informal networks were found to be important in the allocation of this accommodation.
- It was not uncommon for young couples to be pushed into moving from rural towns to more isolated outlying areas to secure housing. Much private sector housing (particularly around Duns) was on farms or estates and was found to be in need of modernisation. Much accommodation lacked mains gas, double glazing and, occasionally, mains water, and relied on coal-fired heating.
- The combination of limited affordable child care, cultural attitudes towards motherhood and geographical isolation led many young mothers to withdraw from paid employment. Several of these women had become socially isolated and expressed dissatisfaction with their situation.

3 Higher education achievers

In this chapter we report on the employment, housing and family experiences of young people who had gained HE qualifications at higher national diploma (HND) or above. From the in-depth interview sample this group comprised 12 young people: three from Duns (two female, one male); and nine from Callander (five female, four males). Current students were not included in these analyses.

Labour market experiences

Of the sample of young people who completed the questionnaire, only 53 per cent of those with degrees had secured permanent full-time posts, compared with 80 per cent of those who had not attended HE. Many of the HE graduates were found to be working in temporary, low-paid jobs, while devising and implementing strategies to improve their employment situation. Age was an important factor in determining whether the young people had found graduate/professional-type employment. Graduates nearing their mid-20s were more likely to have found a graduate/professional-type job than those in their early twenties.

Tables 8 and 9 show that in the in-depth interview sample, only four of the young people who had left HE with a university degree had found graduate/professional-type employment (health care, education, information technology adviser and management). The first two of these posts were located in Duns and filled by people who had moved into the area specifically to take up their appointments. The latter two posts were located in a city near to Callander and respondents had recently moved from the study area to take up their employment.

Young people who had secured graduate or

professional employment more often reported job satisfaction than those in unskilled, or semi-skilled work.

I thoroughly enjoy it, I mean I never get up in the morning thinking 'Oh God I've got to go to work' an' I think I'm really lucky in that sense ... I'm sure there probably will be days like that but I think I'll still enjoy it, so long as I keep enjoying it and I don't every day have to force myself out the door then I'll keep doing it. (FD23)

However, in the following interview extract a health care worker draws attention to some of the disadvantages of being a professional living and working in a small tight-knit community.

You know that there's certain people who'll do certain things, so you know that if you went there you would get their whole story about how [ill they are] ... they can't see you as having a separate life ... And I mean you often get 'Oh, I didn't recognise you with your clothes on', you know that sort of thing, because you're out of uniform. (FD06)

Similarities were found between the experiences of HE graduates in temporary, low-paid work and the employment experiences of the young people who had dropped out of HE (see Chapter 4). Both groups saw this type of low-grade employment as a temporary stop-gap, before moving on to graduate/professional-type employment. In this respect, the expectations of graduates and HE drop-outs differed from those who had not attended HE. Non-attendees at HE did not view their employment as 'stop-gap', although they often aspired to more rewarding types of work.

In the following interview extract a graduate describes the insecure nature of her current

Table 8 Labour market and housing positions of the HE achievers from Duns

Gender and age	Status	Qualification and employment	Employment aspiration	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 25	Incomer – moved to Duns with job	Professionally trained health care worker	Establish own private practice, or MSc	Private rented (£151 per month)	Alone
M 24	Born in Duns, parents local	Degree, working part-time in a shop	Continue working as a shop assistant	Owner-occupied	Living with parents
F 23	Incomer – moved to Duns with job	Educationalist	Promotion within profession	Private rented (£220 per month, including council tax)	Alone

Table 9 Labour market and housing positions of the HE achievers from Callander

Gender and age	Status	Qualification and employment	Employment aspiration	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 25	Incomer at age 14	Degree, clerical assistant (temporary)	Curator at a museum or an archaeologist	Rented accommodation in a Scottish city	Flatmates
M 25	Incomer as a young child	Degree, assistant manager leisure industry	Move into sales for better pay	Owner-occupied	Partner
M 25	Incomer at age 10	Degree, sales consultant	Continue up the career ladder in sales	Partner's owner-occupied flat in a Scottish city	Partner and child
F 24	Incomer as a young child	Degree, disabled	Make musical instruments or start an MSc, but both unlikely so will start a carpentry course	Rented accommodation	Living with parent(s)
M 24	Incomer at age 9	HND, unemployed	Ideally, play music professionally but thinks it is more likely that he will work in a record shop. Eventually hopes to be a counsellor with a charity	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 23	Incomer at age 2	Degree, administration job (temporary)	PhD	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 23	Incomer at age 5	Degree, working in a local shop	PhD, then research, or work in personnel or sales	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 22	Incomer at age 10	Degree, library (temporary)	Librarian or research analyst (has interview), or a secretary	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 21	Born in Callander	Degree, cafe (temporary)	Accepted to study for an MA	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)

employment with the local council.

I was a bit bored being unemployed so I went to the job centre and got that. I sometimes wish I hadn't ... [I want to] stay in historical management museumy archaeology type of thing, but those sort of jobs are very few, so you have to come to terms with that and take something that pays the rent.

[and later on]

So every month I go, 'do I have a job next week' and Jean goes 'just a minute I will phone personnel' and says, 'give her another month will you.' Seriously, it is like that, you get told the day before, the week before. (FC56)

Despite being generally dissatisfied with the available local employment, most graduates still welcomed the opportunity to return to Duns or Callander and to live cheaply with their parents. Returning afforded the opportunity to gain employment quickly and to pay off student debts. Debt incurred while studying was the major reason why the young people were prepared to take low-quality work prior to entering the graduate labour market. In a similar way to the non-attendees at HE, graduates used their previous social networks to secure local employment.

Most young people with university degrees expected eventually to find graduate/professional-type employment. They recognised that this would probably involve moving away and their job search strategies were in national, as opposed to the local, labour markets. As a result of the way graduate/professional jobs are advertised, even when such jobs came up in the study areas local graduates still had to compete with people from other parts of the country. The

two study respondents who were in professional jobs in the study areas were both incomers, recruited through national advertising campaigns.

Only three of the young people who had graduated from HE were not actively seeking graduate-type employment. All of these respondents experienced mental health difficulties: one described himself as suffering from depression, one had been diagnosed as having 'drug-induced psychosis' and one had a form of autism. These young people were a particularly vulnerable group and none had managed to secure a permanent full-time job, or graduate/professional employment. At the time of the interview one of these respondents was working on a part-time basis in a shop. However, he subsequently informed the research team that this employment had only lasted three months.

The difficulties that this group of young people experienced in relation to securing and keeping employment appeared to result from three factors. First, there was stigma attached to suffering from a mental illness, or learning difficulty, within a tight-knit rural community. Second, as a result of their mental health problems there were real limitations on these young people's abilities. Finally, at least one of the respondents had previously been involved in behaviours that most community members deemed unacceptable (i.e. drug-taking).

Housing situation

Tables 8 and 9 show that five of the graduate group had set up independent households. All of these young people had moved specifically

because of employment and four were currently in graduate/professional jobs. The remaining graduates were living with their parents. However, most were also engaged in national job-search strategies and expected to move in the relatively near future. Returning to the parental home was a temporary respite, before pursuing their professional careers, primarily in cities. These data suggest that for graduates the ability and desire to set up independent households is closely tied to their employment situation.

One small group of graduates who were not currently planning to leave their parental homes comprised those who experienced mental health difficulties. In the following interview extract one of these young men describes his housing plans and the difficulties that he experienced while living with his parents.

Well, within probably say a year or so, I'll probably look toward getting a, you know, maybe a wee flat, eh in Duns or whatever. And maybe come back home for meals.

[and later on]

... it makes for quite a lot of confliction, you know, especially, you know, wi' me because, if you, mostly with [my difficulty], if you don't get your own way you throw a paddy an' I've been like that several times recently, you know, it's eh, just the sheer frustration. (MD13)

Previous research has shown that young people with parents who are migrants into rural areas are themselves more likely to migrate, compared with young people whose parents were born in these areas (Jones, 1995). Tables 8 and 9 show that most of the young people who had left Duns or Callander to enter HE also had

parents who were incomers. An awareness of not really being accepted as a 'true local' may partially explain why some young people were prepared psychologically to leave their rural area. Certainly, the children of incomers were aware of the difference between being a 'true local' and an 'outsider'. Some respondents even perceived the 'incomer status' to stretch beyond first generation incomers and to include the children who were born to incomers after they had moved in.

Some incoming young people were found to have developed fairly complex lines of reasoning to justify why they should be accepted and included into the rural communities. For example, one respondent, who described her move from England into Callander as hellish, completely hellish, went on to say:

Em, I mean I'm not purely English cause my Dad's Scottish an' it just happened to be that they were living in Devon when I was born, em, so I sort of class myself as a half-caste in between the two. (FC40)

Other young people (locals as well as incomers) appeared to need to create a psychological distance between themselves and the community, prior to making any physical move. Here a common strategy was to become critical of the small-minded mentality of the young people who remained.

I don't know, it's just ... I wouldn't be happy, if it was just ... Callander, as far as I'm concerned, is a bit of a backwater an' there's lots of people my age who think they're big fish, em ... basically the people ... people of my age group who can't see further than Callander and their whole world

revolves around that. They can't see the bigger picture. (MC33)

Although the majority of graduates expected to be geographically mobile, many also expressed a wish to return to a rural way of life later on. This suggests that many graduates would choose to live in a rural area if there were graduate / professional-type jobs available.

To be honest, I'd like to live in a rural area, later, when I'm retired [laughter] but the thing is, there's no jobs in a rural area, especially not for someone like me. (FC31)

Eh, yeah, I wouldn't live in ... in town, we live here because we have to, basically. Em, I wouldn't go an' live in a town, if I had a choice I would go somewhere north of the central belt, em, I wouldn't ... I would certainly, by the time I've got children that are school age, eh, I'll not be stayin' in ... not be stayin' in a town. (MC48)

Family formation

In contrast to those young people who had not attended HE, the graduates commonly saw family formation and parenthood as still some way off. Only two of the graduates (both males aged 25) were living with partners and only one of these had child-care responsibilities (for his partner's child from a previous relationship).

Three of the graduate women were involved in serious relationships with partners, but were not currently living with them. Their stories highlight the way that the desire to establish a career can often conflict with a wish to be near a partner. All three of these women were attempting simultaneously to pursue a career and continue their relationships. In the

following extracts two young women describe the complex balance between trying to meet employment aspirations and their desires to be near partners, family and friends.

Em, and my boyfriend's got another four years at university in Aberdeen, so it would fit in quite nicely, I could go down there and enjoy myself in London while he's at uni, and next year he's got to do a year's work placement and he's said that he'll try and get his placement wherever I'm working. Obviously it should be quite easy for him to try an' get a placement in London if I'm down there, so that would work out quite nicely, em ... (FC40)

Go with the flow [laughter]. Em, I'll do another probably half year in Duns an' then I'll start buying the papers which have the jobs advertised in them, write to the region ... an make it clear that I'm interested in working for them, see what happens there ... I'm unsure as to whether I'm willing to give up a permanent contract for something which could have me signing on the dole within three months, which I think would be crazy to do. No matter how much it would be nice to live at home, the sensibility would tell you that you're better to stick where you are and just wait until something suitable comes up. (FD23)

These data highlight the ways that graduates (particularly females) tend to put off establishing new families until their careers are established. This stands in contrast to the housing and family transitions of those young women who had not attended HE and those who had started, but not completed, HE.

Summary

- Recruitment for graduate-type employment is primarily through national, rather than local, media (newspapers, etc). Graduates from rural areas must compete with graduates from other parts of the country for the limited appropriate employment that is available in their local area.
- Graduates commonly saw their return as short-term and as a respite prior to leaving to take up employment in other parts of the country. They worked in manual occupations (gained through local networks) while paying off student debts and searching for better quality work elsewhere. Most were hopeful of finding graduate-type work in the near future.
- Housing transitions were found to be driven primarily by the realities of employment location, rather than plans concerning family formation. Graduates commonly saw cohabitation, marriage and /or childbirth as still some way off.
- Social and cultural distance existed between those who had attended HE and those who had not. This resulted, in part, from the HE attendees having experienced different geographical and social environments, and ways of living. However, there was also evidence of a psychological distancing and separation taking place prior to moving away. Those who attended HE were themselves mostly incomers to rural areas during their childhood.
- Graduates who had experienced mental health difficulties were found to be a particularly vulnerable group. A combination of social stigma and the limitations imposed by mental health problems made finding work and gaining independent housing very difficult for these young people.

4 Young people who had dropped out of higher education

In this chapter we report on the employment, housing and family experiences of young people who had at one point started an HE course (HND or above) but had dropped out prior to completion. From the in-depth interview sample this group comprised nine young people: four from Duns (one female, three males) and five from Callander (two females, three males). At first sight, the size of this group appears large as a proportion of 60 in-depth interview respondents. In part, this results from our sampling procedures. Those who had left HE early were more like to have returned to their parental homes (and therefore to have received the invitation to take part in the study) than those who graduated and subsequently found employment in the national labour market. However, at the same time, the most recent figures from the HE Funding Council for England show that around one in four of those who begin full-time undergraduate courses fail to graduate (Major, 1999). The experiences of young people who drop out of HE provide particular insight. On the one hand, they have demonstrated ambition and ability by starting courses; on the other, their failure to graduate places potential limits on the types of employment open to them.

Reasons for dropping out of higher education

The young people provided three main reasons for dropping out of HE: first, they were distracted from their studies by engaging in 'bad habits'; second, they found themselves in financial difficulties; and, third, they were not

enjoying the courses that they were pursuing. One young woman did not complete her nurse training because she became pregnant.

The young people's accounts draw attention to the importance of psychological maturity and of being prepared for independent living. In the following interview extract a respondent describes the complex set of factors that led to him leaving his university course.

It was just ... it was hellish. It was horrible. Eh ... I failed it so I came back here [to Duns] and just live with my parents, stay with them ... I was a bit lazy like, I didn't do much work. Just got into bad habits ... Drinkin', smokin', that's about it. Goin' out a lot. Spent money that I didn't have.

[and later on]

Phff. Oh, I just got into a bit of a mess wi ... I had two bank accounts, two student bank accounts goin', an' stopped usin' one an' they started, they sent it over to debt collectors. (MD28)

Other young people's stories highlight how easy it is to take a wrong path when leaving school. As the interview extract below indicates, with the benefit of hindsight this respondent now wishes that he had stayed at home and attended a local college, prior to moving away from home.

Cause that's ... it was strange, cause when I was younger, it was ... the big thing was that nobody really thought about goin' to university at all. See when I was about ten or that, I thought well I'll go to university if I'm dead clever an' I'll go to college otherwise, cause that's just the way I thought it was done, an' then when I got round to it, now I thought ... I realised the end requirements

weren't really that high ... eh, most of my friends were goin' to university and people I knew in the year above that I'd, like, you know people like in the year above had gone to university an' it was just sort of the done thing.

[and later on]

I think I probably should've probably gone to the college first, the Borders College and then gone on to do a degree, if I'd wanted ... definitely, cause it's a pretty good stepping stone. (MD12)

The important role that university tutors can play in supporting students during their courses was also highlighted.

Eh, just they didn't do much, I know it's meant to be, like you're meant to make the effort to go in, but they didn't ever get in contact with you, like find out if you were havin' problems or anythin', an' eh, it was a bit rough ... If they'd been a bit more ... eh, I dunno, a bit more friendly sort of, cause they were just like, they'd come in, give the lecture, then they'd be straight off an' ... but in the ... one of my friends was in the media an' like his lecturers were phonin' up all the time wantin' to speak to him an', they were always really involved, he used to go out with them after, like for drinks an' that. (MD28)

Labour market experiences

The majority of young people who had dropped out of HE were in low-paid, manual employment with little opportunity for career advancement or promotion (Tables 10 and 11). It was also not uncommon for them to have more than one job and/or work long hours. This type of employment was something that they endured, rather than enjoyed, and in this respect

their employment experiences were similar to those young people who had never attended HE.

... a hellish job, just a nightmare standing in a chip shop. (MC55)

I don't like it very much but it's a job ... It's a means to an end for me ... It's not exactly job satisfaction. (MD07)

... mad hours cause I was doing about 60 hours a week, but it calmed down a bit cause I'm doing about 40 now, between the two jobs, an' I've just had my first three days off in a month. (FC41)

The majority of those who had dropped out of HE found local employment through informal social networks, again highlighting their importance within tight-knit rural communities.

Ehm, since I have been, sort of, coming back to Callander, sort of on and off like, for the last five years. I know people here from when I grew up here and I used to work as a baker in the bakery down the street so it is just a case of, they are friends of mine as well and I went to see them when I came back and eh, they said would you like some work? (MC55)

Here the same respondent describes how he had previously secured work in a local chip shop.

So I'm quite fortunate, doors are always open sort of thing and ehm, I just happened to walk in at the right time, sat down and had a chat and a coffee and boss was in and said, 'are you looking for work?' (MC55)

Tables 10 and 11 show that none of the young people who had dropped out of HE

Table 10 Present employment and aspirations of the young people in Duns who had dropped out of HE

Gender and age	Location after dropping out	Employment	Employment aspiration	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 25	Town near Duns	Two part-time jobs in a leisure centre: receptionist, gym instructor. Starting a new job in a local bank	Complete OU degree and become a psychologist	Buying house with partner. Currently staying with his parents during the week and her parents at the weekend	Partner and parents
M 21	Duns	Full-time manual work, food-processing factory	Work abroad	Public rented	Living with parent(s)
M 21	Duns	Part-time shop work and part-time HND	Journalist	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 21	Duns	Chicken hatchery (temporary). Soon starting with an insurance company	Accountant	Private rented	Living with parent(s), but moving to Edinburgh to live with flatmates

Table 11 Present employment and aspirations of the young people in Callander who had dropped out of HE

Gender and age	Location after dropping out	Employment	Employment aspiration	Housing tenure	Household composition
F 24	Village near Callander	Mother and not in paid employment	Finish nurse training	Parents' second home	Partner and child
M 22	Callander	Chip shop, pub and bakery (all part-time)	Travel abroad and record live music	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
F 21	Callander	Bar work and cleaning (both part-time)	Return to university and complete degree course, then train to be a journalist	Partner's owner-occupied	Partner
M 20	Callander	Delivery driver	Return to university, join the police	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)
M 19	Callander	Unemployed	Rally driver, modern apprenticeship, car mechanic, as a last resort return to HE	Owner-occupied	Living with parent(s)

intended to remain in their present employment. The majority still aspired to graduate/professional-type employment and hoped or intended to leave their manual jobs to work in a chosen profession (e.g. journalism, accountancy or nursing). In a similar way to graduates, they perceived returning to Duns or Callander as a temporary stop-gap before migrating once again.

Despite having dropped-out of college or university, many young people still regarded HE as the best route to reach employment goals. Other young people, on the other hand, had decided that the best way to pursue career aspirations was through employment. One respondent, for example, wanted to pursue a career in accountancy via employment and taking professional examinations. He was about to start work at a major insurance company in Edinburgh, at the bottom of the career ladder as an administrative assistant.

The small minority who were not actively seeking to change their labour-market position seemed most at risk of remaining in low-paid, dead-end jobs. In the following interview extract one such respondent expresses his regret at having dropped out of university. However, he then goes on to make it clear that he still intends to leave Duns at some point in the future.

Some'imes, aye, 'specially the fact that I'm workin' in a factory, you know. Not that I think I'm great or intelligent or that but, I mean even I'm higher than that, specially the ... people are just stupid, it's just annoying.

[and later on]

[Laughter] *Mmm, I dunno, oh well if I was stuck*

in Duns, then I would regret it but, I dunno, I just can't wait to escape, so it's just like another period for me ... yeah it's not like that was my one shot at escapin', you know what I mean? It's like, it was a good time and all, but leaving Duns'd be better. (MD07)

Housing situation

Of the young people who had dropped-out of HE, all the young men were currently living with their parents, while all the young women had set up independent households (Tables 10 and 11). These respondents' experiences demonstrate how the transition from parental home to own home is far from straightforward and unidirectional for many young people. The majority had experienced periods of independence from, and dependence on, the parental home. Some young people had, in fact, left and subsequently returned to the parental home on several occasions. Living with parents provided cheap and comfortable accommodation. In many cases respondents would have struggled financially and almost certainly not been able to clear student debts without their parents' support. Living in the parental home often disguises young people's personal poverty and the lack of affordable single-person housing in rural areas.

Most of the young people who had dropped out of HE either wanted, or expected, to move away from Duns or Callander. Employment and career aspirations were the major driving force.

I want to get out of Duns. It's like the Borders is gettin' paid off at the minute, everything's shuttin' down, there's no work. (MD28)

However, other young people also cited the

‘small-minded mentality’ which they perceived to dominate their rural communities, as a reason for wanting to leave. These young people’s accounts appeared to reflect a complex mix of: a heightened sense of dissatisfaction brought about by having seen other ways of life and places; psychological preparation prior to leaving; and a genuine social or cultural distance between those who had returned to the area and those who had never left (e.g. in terms of leisure pursuits, tastes in music, dress, etc).

It’s eh, if you play rugby you’re alright ... They’re all sort of what we call rugby buffers and they’re all like, all they, they’re all sorted ... I dunno they’re all sort of like cliquey and that... like they all go to each other’s pubs an’ like they all get jobs on the council ... They’re all idiots ... an’ we just don’t like them. (MD07)

I quite enjoy being back – it is funny coming back, seeing people just doing the same old thing day in day out. It’s sad – there are people here that have lived here all their life. I was at school with most of them, eh, and people younger than me at school and older people have lived here all their life. Their parents live here, and they leave school and they get whatever it is, a YTS or you know, a job at local hotels, whatever and they work their way up and then they go out and put their name on the housing list, or they rent accommodation, or they buy a flat, three or four houses away from their parents and they move in with their girlfriend. The girlfriend gets pregnant, the girlfriend moves out and she gets a house on her own, ehm, the guy’s left to pay for this house and is also left to pay maintenance for his kid. He just doesn’t do anything, doesn’t get out, and they work Monday to Friday and every penny they save up they go out at weekends and blast it and

get pissed. They get into fights, beat up their ex-girlfriend, she fights the new girlfriend, and then they go home and Monday is just the start of it all again. (MC55)

In a similar way to graduates, some of the young people who had dropped out of HE reported that they wanted to return to a Scottish rural location at some point in the future. This suggests that if there were graduate/professional type jobs available, some young people would be happy to live in a rural area.

If I had to live in a city for work, then yes, I would live in the city ... but I prefer the countryside though, I really do. (MC55)

Family formation

Although employment opportunities were important in the young people’s decisions to set up independent households, so too were personal/sexual relationships, particularly for the young women. Three of the young women from the in-depth interview sample who had dropped out of HE were living with, or just about to move in with, their partners, while none of the young men had yet taken this decision. The process of setting up an independent household with a partner and having children did not appear to be an immediate priority for these young men. The data raise the possibility of gender differences among young people in rural areas with respect to family transitions. It appears that women may be likely to cohabit or marry partners at an earlier age than young men.

The accounts of these young women illustrate how their desires to have children and/or look after their children often conflict

with their career aspirations. For example, one respondent became pregnant during her final year of nurse training and left the course five weeks before the end. When she found out that she was pregnant, she was living with friends in a student flat. However, the news of her pregnancy promoted a series of housing moves. Initially, she moved into her boyfriend's house but found this very cramped. She then moved, with her partner, to live with his parents for a short time, before moving back to Callander and into a property that her parents owned, but did not live in. This respondent described these housing transitions in the following way.

... I think had I not had Angela I would have stayed in [the city] for my career and then got a job where I had trained and I wouldn't have been as bothered about being near them [parents], but having Angela and that, I think I needed my Mum. Baby-sitting and advice, I didn't have a clue about babies. (FC53)

Prior to her pregnancy this respondent had been considering extending her studies, to complete a degree in nursing. However, at the time of the interview she was more concerned to finish her training and get a job. She recognised that fulfilling her ambitions in relation to both family and career would be difficult, if not impossible, and highlighted the tensions between wanting to have more children but also develop a nursing career.

... my career might just be getting off the ground and we will have to stop and start again basically. So I would like to have more [children] but maybe when our first one is at school. Maybe I will change my mind, I don't know, it's very difficult ... I don't know, I think any way you do it, you always have doubts. (FC53)

This respondent's story also highlights how the birth of a baby can impact on a partner's career and housing. Her boyfriend owned a one-bedroom house but had agreed to rent it so that they could be near her parents. Fortunately, his nursing qualification enabled him to find work relatively easily. However, as the respondent explained:

... he worked in intensive care ... it was really kind of fast and furious, a lot of respect but he had to get a job down here and he just really took anything and just now he is working in recovery and he just doesn't like it, it is very mundane and repetitive. (FC53)

In the following interview extract another young woman describes how she experiences the tensions between wanting a career, but also to have a family. At the time of the interview she was studying for a psychology degree with the Open University (OU) and eventually wanted to train to be a child psychologist. However, when she was asked whether her career or family came first, she replied:

... my family I think would come before that because so long as I've got a job, an' bein' able to pay the mortgage, an' ... an' have money, em, I've come to the way of thinkin', I think, that as long as I've got money, an I'm happy, that's more important than anythin'. (FD21)

These data highlight the importance of understanding young people's lives as connected wholes, rather than a collection of disconnected elements (i.e. work, family, housing, etc). They illustrate that, for many young people, there is a tension between family commitments and employment aspirations. For the group who had dropped out of HE, housing

transitions were most commonly triggered by either employment or family transitions. In these respects they shared elements of the experiences of both graduates and those who had not attended HE.

Summary

- The major reasons for dropping out of HE were found to be financial difficulties, feeling that the wrong course had been chosen and/or spending too much time 'partying' and not enough working.
- Young people who had left HE before graduating were in a difficult position. In a similar way to graduates they experienced heightened expectations and ambitions, and often perceived themselves to be different from those who had not attended HE. However, simultaneously they lacked the educational qualifications to compete in the national labour market for graduate/professional types of employment.
- The young people who had dropped out of HE were found to be in similar types of occupations to those who had not attended HE, i.e. low-skilled manual work, with little opportunity for career advancement.
- They commonly described their current low-skilled work as temporary and stop-gap. Most were actively seeking other, better quality employment in the national (as opposed to local) labour market. Returning to the parental home was seen as a temporary respite and a means of living cheaply while paying off student debts and searching for other work.
- For the young men cohabitation, marriage and having children were all aspects of life which they saw as happening in the future. Their housing transitions were primarily related to employment location. Conversely, the small number of young women were all living with partners. For them, family formation was the trigger to set up independent households.
- The young women found balancing the desire to have children and develop a career extremely difficult. They tended to prioritise their family responsibilities and had commonly lowered their career ambitions.

5 Conclusion

In this exploration of the experiences of young men and women living in two rural areas of Scotland, we have examined in some detail the various life domains that are centrally involved in the successful transition from childhood to adulthood, and the processes of social exclusion and inclusion. As originally designed, the study was intended to highlight differences by geographical area (i.e. between two regions and between rural town dwellers and those in more landward areas) and by gender in both subjective and objective aspects of social exclusion. One study site, Duns, was chosen because it is geographically isolated, with a poor transport infrastructure, and has not been affected significantly by tourism. The second site, Callander, is less isolated, is served by better road networks, which allow for daily commuting to nearby cities, and has been affected heavily by tourism in recent years. However, our data show that in important respects respondents' 'rurality' and 'youth' were more influential in shaping their life opportunities and experiences than the impact of the variations between the two study locations. Gender, as expected, was also found to be an important determinant of life experiences.

Public transport

Very limited and, on occasion, non-existent public transport was a major issue for respondents in both study locations. Being able to drive and owning a car were perceived as prerequisites to living in rural areas (both town and landward). The major employers in Duns and Callander are not located in small concentrated sites, but rather are situated in

areas outside of the towns (in Duns these are primarily manufacturing and food-processing plants, whilst in Callander they are hotels and leisure-based industries). Public transport to such sites is often not available at the times when employees need it. Similarly, in both study areas shopping at a major supermarket involves a 20–30-mile round trip to a larger town (Galashiels, Berwick, Stirling or Glasgow). However, most people make such a trip at least once a week, by car, in order to buy food. People from Duns who claim state benefits also have to travel to Dunbar to 'sign on', a trip which, if made by bus, costs £4 return. Those respondents who could not drive or did not have access to a car often reported feeling socially isolated, and this was particularly true for young mothers who were living in landward areas.

Dynamic transitional processes: the pathways to adulthood

In both study areas variation in educational attainment and professional qualification emerged as the single most consequential factor in understanding the childhood to adulthood transitional processes. Educational experiences were found to influence the types of employment that the young people sought, whether they looked for work in the national or local labour market, the timing of first leaving the parental home, and their feelings about their local community and rural life. At the same time, in both areas, young people who wished to undertake HE had to leave their parental home in order to do so. Previous research (Jones and Jamieson, 1997) has shown that two-thirds of young people who attend school in the

Borders region have left the area by the age of 19, with participation in HE being the primary motivating factor. Comparable data for Stirling region are unavailable. However, our data suggest that participation in HE is greater in Callander than in Duns. In line with Jones and Jamieson's (1997) findings, our data also point to the children of middle-class incomers being more likely to attend HE than those born to local working-class parents.

A number of the young people who took part in this study had begun HE courses, but subsequently left prior to completion. The reasons why these young people did not graduate were found to be complex, but most often resulted from a combination of financial difficulties, dissatisfaction with their courses, and not achieving the right balance between work and recreation. However, an important difference between young people living in rural and urban areas is that the former often have to leave their home and community to attend HE. Young people from rural areas do not normally have the option to stay with their parents whilst studying at university. Accordingly, there are increased financial and emotional burdens upon young people from rural areas who attend university, i.e. they are forced to set up independent households and to live away from their social networks and support structures. It is those young people who have least resources, financial or personal (in terms of confidence or maturity), who appear most vulnerable to non-completion of HE courses.

Respondents who did not attend HE often found the movement from parental home to independent household difficult. In recent years housing markets have become increasingly segmented, through a combination of 'right to

buy' policies, which have reduced the availability of public sector rented accommodation, a rise in house prices and a shortage of single-person housing. The result has been a polarisation between those wealthy enough to purchase and those poor enough to qualify for social housing. Many of the young people who took part in this study fell somewhere between these two extremes. They were neither wealthy enough to buy, nor were they poor enough to qualify for the limited public sector provision. The result was that they were pushed into the private rented sector, which was often found to consist of poor-quality accommodation, located in isolated landward areas (for example on farms or country estates). Moreover, the housing transitions of those young people who had not attended HE were often triggered by cohabitation/marriage and/or the birth of a child, with the result that some young people found themselves living with young children in geographically isolated areas and in substandard accommodation.

The labour markets in the two study areas varied in terms of the dominant industries. However, our data again show important similarities in respondents' labour-market experiences across the two study locations. Chapman *et al.* (1998) have highlighted tourism and manufacturing as employment sectors within rural economies that often rely upon cheap labour employed under poor conditions. Tourism and manufacturing dominated in our two study areas and respondents indeed reported low income levels; the mean take-home pay of those receiving wages was just £556 per month. Much of the available employment involved the repetition of easily

learnt manual tasks and provided little opportunity for career development or intrinsic job satisfaction. Yet, at the same time, respondents reported pay, job security, promotional opportunities and intrinsic satisfaction as their most valued attributes when evaluating the quality of employment. Here it is important to stress that we are not describing a discernible youth labour market, from which the young people will one day graduate, but rather the bulk of the available work in the two study areas. The predominance of this type of employment is being increasingly recognised as an issue for all young people and not solely those living in rural areas. For example, the Social Exclusion Unit (1999) recently cited low-skilled dead end work as one of the major reasons for the introduction of the Government's new 16–18 strategy:

Full-time work outside of Government supported training available to young people is increasingly insecure, part time, poorly paid and lacking in training and prospects. Where jobs are available they tend to be in occupations such as sales, plant or machine operators and other low skill work. Training for these young people is often limited to on-the-job training, such as basic induction and health and safety. Many get no training at all.

Our data show that the personal poverty of many young people living in rural areas is hidden by the fact that they live with their parents. Graduates were commonly found to return home after completing their courses and to work for a short time in relatively easily-obtained low-skilled employment. For them, returning to the parental home was a temporary respite and provided the opportunity to pay off

student debts, while searching in the national labour market for better quality employment. In contrast, many of the young people who had not attended HE lived with their parents, either because they could not afford to live elsewhere or because there was no suitable accommodation available. For many of these young people this situation was tolerable during their mid- to late teenage years, but became increasingly difficult as they sought greater independence and began to form relationships and families of their own.

As experienced by our respondents, both study areas constituted fairly close-knit and interlocked communities. People tended to know each other and each other's business. Those belonging to families or households with powerful informal contacts and networks were more likely to gain privileged access to (the better) jobs and (the more desirable) rented accommodation. With regard to employment, the predominance of small firms further intensified the importance of social contacts. As Atkinson and Meager (1993) have shown, smaller employers tend to place a strong emphasis upon finding workers who 'fit in well' and commonly select applicants known to them. Our data suggest that landlords who rent small numbers of properties (for example cottages on a farm) similarly prefer to rent to people known to them. Respondents with a marginal status in the community, whether by virtue of a discredited personal characteristic (e.g. mental illness) or incomer status, were found to be disadvantaged in their access to the valuable resources of employment and private sector rented accommodation.

The fact that community members often held high levels of knowledge about one another

should not, however, be taken as evidence of social homogeneity, or of a lack of social division within rural communities. Our data point to the persistence of strong gender divisions within both communities, particularly amongst those who had not attended HE. Many of these young women saw their primary roles, responsibilities and priorities as lying in the domestic sphere, rather than in paid employment. Simultaneously, several male respondents expressed a strong desire for their partners to remain at home and to care for their children. In reality the lack of child-care provision in both areas resulted in many young women feeling that there was no alternative but to stop paid employment once their children were born.

There was also evidence of psychological and cultural distance between those who had attended HE and those who had not. In part this appeared to be related to psychological change processes, for example a desire for new experiences and a curiosity about other ways of living, and/or beginning to think of oneself as different from those who were not intending to leave the area, prior to leaving one's community. At the same time, being away at college provided the social distance and opportunities to experiment, as well as to develop new ideas and ways of living.

Social exclusion and young people in rural areas

Is there, then, a problem of social exclusion among young people in rural areas in Scotland today? In order to answer the question we need to disentangle the key elements of this essentially contested concept. Ruth Levitas

(1998) usefully distinguishes between three distinct, but overlapping, understandings of social exclusion, which can be found in the literature. The *social integrationist* model is based on a consensual view of society: core shared beliefs and values are assumed. To the extent that rural communities are characterised by low crime rates, a strong work ethic and a commitment to the integrity of family and community life, the integrationist model suggests that social exclusion may not be a major problem for rural areas. However, some teenagers in our sample experienced the close-knittedness of their communities as claustrophobic and intrusive surveillance. A shared culture may arise less from an agreed set of norms and values among equal citizens but, rather, come to represent an expression of social hierarchy and serve to reinforce existing relations of power and influence. Poor-quality employment and housing may be accepted as a reality, but unequal access to these resources is nevertheless seen as inequitable and deserving remedy. Some transitions may not even be questioned, but instead taken for granted as customary practice or 'traditional', normal features of the cohesive rural community. Early marriage/ cohabitation and motherhood, however, profoundly affect future life chances and trajectories, curtailing scope for engaging in alternative lifestyles, as well as restricting labour market possibilities.

Within current social policy, labour force attachment is being championed as the key mechanism for avoiding or extracting oneself from social exclusion. However, the evidence from this study suggests that some groups of young people, particularly those young women who have not attended HE, do not see their

social inclusion as resting solely, or even primarily, upon their labour market position. For some young women motherhood and the construction of family were seen as more important than employment. Within their sub-culture the role of 'mother' carried a higher social status than that of 'factory-hand' or 'hotel worker' and was therefore, in many ways, more inclusionary. Mothering and caring for children were valued socially, even though not rewarded materially. At the same time, the young people who had attended HE were found to be delaying parenthood and, for them, labour market participation and status were indeed perceived as the primary route to social inclusion.

According to the *redistributive* model, derived from critical social policy, social exclusion stems from economic inequality. Building upon the earlier concepts of poverty and material deprivation, it is argued that some people lack the resources (e.g. cash incomes, access to services) that permit meaningful citizenship and full participation in activities that are considered 'normal' for most members of society. Thus exclusion does not result from individual or community failures or failings. On the contrary, it should be viewed as a consequence of inherent contradictions and inequities in the prevailing economic system, which ensure that certain sections of the population (e.g. young people lacking skills and educational qualifications, or older people without private or occupational pension provision) are less able to take advantage of available opportunities for improved quality of life on offer to other sections of the population. The problem of structural poverty is exemplified by the failure of both public and

private sectors to provide a transport infrastructure, which enables young people in these rural areas (particularly in Duns) to seek work across a large geographical area, or take full advantage of leisure facilities in local towns, or establish and maintain an extended network of friends and acquaintances. In relation to personal poverty, many of those who attempted to set up independent homes, especially young women, found themselves living in remote areas, in substandard accommodation and with child-care responsibilities that they had to bear on their own (whether as a result of inadequate local facilities, lack of money or absence of social support). Their personal poverty could then be seen as exclusionary across a whole range of life domains.

In common with the integrationist approach, the *underclass* model of social exclusion is highly normative in orientation, emphasising the threat posed by certain social groups to social order and economic progress, rather than concentrating upon the values and norms that bind society together. Within underclass theorising, particularly that by the New Right, economic dependence on welfare benefits is seen both to result from and to create a wider deviant culture. The problem lies in the moral and cultural character of the poor, not in the working of the economic system that generates losers, as well as winners. At particular risk of being considered excluded under this model are those who are workless (especially long-term) or those in danger of so becoming (particularly the young unemployed or 'unemployable'). New Labour's rhetoric certainly incorporates elements of the underclass model (while also being influenced by the integrationist approach, but largely ignoring the redistributive position).

It is relatively common for government ministers and spokes-persons to argue that socially excluded groups hold certain values and/or attitudes that prevent them fulfilling many of the obligations of citizenship. Political speeches over the past two years have used phrases such as ‘poverty of aspirations’, ‘hopelessness’, ‘lack of self confidence’, ‘lack of self respect’, ‘fatalism’, ‘desperation’ and ‘dependence’ to capture psychocultural tendencies among the excluded. There were several young people who took part in this study who displayed at least some of these attributes. However, these young people were a long way from being a morally corrupting underclass. Rather, they were very vulnerable young people who had experienced personal difficulties (largely related to mental health problems). Any ‘lack of self confidence’, ‘dependence’, ‘fatalism’ or ‘desperation’ that they experienced was primarily related to the social stigma or prejudices associated with their difficulties and the limitations imposed upon their abilities by their mental health problems.

In our in-depth interviews we presented respondents with edited highlights from ministerial pronouncements on social exclusion and sought views about whether or not the alleged tendencies were recognisable, either in themselves or among family, friends, acquaintances and neighbours in their local area. The term ‘social exclusion’ itself was virtually unknown and failed to evoke any meaningful connotations. Respondents did not own up to feeling or being ‘socially excluded’ themselves. Occasionally, they could point a finger at others in their community who fitted the government profile, but this was the exception rather than the rule.

Taking into account the broad mass of our findings, we can offer little empirical support for the underclass model. Young people in rural areas appear to share in the usual mainstream aspirations across a number of life domains. Those with fewer qualifications wanted more education or training. The unemployed and economically inactive were more likely to hope for a change in their situation over the next five years (in comparison with the employed). Expectations about achieving goals, in relation to education, occupation and accommodation, did not differ by gender, marital status, employment status or socio-economic position. However, it was notable that respondents with more qualifications were likely to be more confident (than those with fewer qualifications) about achieving valued goals in relation to both education and occupation. In the light of all the other evidence gathered in this study, this finding should be interpreted as a realistic appraisal of the restricted life chances of the under-qualified, rather than as demonstrating the deviance of their cultural system.

As is often the case with research, the findings from this study suggest additional areas where knowledge is limited and which would benefit from further research. Here, in conclusion, we outline one area that seems to us particularly important; namely, understanding the experiences of people from rural areas who are slightly older than those who took part in this study (i.e. 26–40 years). We have shown that rural labour market opportunities, particularly for young people who have not attended HE, are very limited. We have also shown that, as young people with low educational qualifications begin to form families, many are pushed into poor-quality private sector

accommodation, often in landward areas. However, from our data we cannot say what will happen to these young people and their families over the next few years of their lives. We do not know whether they will remain in this type of accommodation, secure other types of tenure, move back into the rural towns or migrate to urban areas. Moreover, we do not know whether they will return to education and/or other forms of training, secure better quality employment, or how they will cope with

the increasing financial burdens associated with growing children. Finally, we do not know what the future will hold for our most vulnerable respondents (those who experience mental health problems or have other special needs), what opportunities will be open to them and how these will differ from people with similar needs who live in urban areas. These are all areas where further information is required in order to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to promote sustainable rural development.

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Appendix: methodology

Sampling and recruitment of respondents

The research design stipulated that respondents should be between 18 and 24 years of age at the time of recruitment. However, some respondents had turned 25 years by the time they took part in the in-depth interview. It was intended to use general practitioners' patient lists as the sampling frames. The advantage of using such lists lies in the fact that they are relatively comprehensive and kept current. Access to general practitioners' patient lists for research recruitment purposes involves obtaining consent from both individual general practices and the appropriate health board ethics committee.

In Duns there is one general practice and access proceeded smoothly. However, in Callendar the situation proved more complex as there are two practices serving the population; one practice gave the required consent but the other declined. The available information suggested that, if the study proceeded using only one general practice patient list, there would be a strong likelihood of sample bias. Accordingly, we sought an alternative sampling frame for the recruitment of Callendar respondents.

The best available option proved to be pupil records kept by the local high school. Ethical approval was sought and obtained from Stirling education authority and a sampling frame constructed from old school registers. The disadvantages of school registers compared with general practitioners' patient lists are that they are more out of date and less comprehensive. Some young people move out of the area after leaving school (to study or take up employment), while others move in after compulsory schooling.

The total number of eligible young people was 245 in Duns and 253 in Callendar.

In-depth qualitative interviews (see below) were sought with 30 young people in each of the two study areas. These samples were stratified, so as to achieve broadly equal numbers of males and females, and an approximate two-thirds to one-third split between town dwellers and those living in more landward areas. Random selection within these gender and geographical strata ensured that respondents covered the entire 18–24 years age range. Not all of the respondents were current full-time residents in the research areas; some were students studying away from home and others were young people who had recently moved for employment reasons. However, all respondents had sufficiently close links to receive the invitation to take part in the study and all had enough knowledge and experience to make valuable contributions. A total of 286 people (145 in Duns and 141 in Callendar) was approached in order to achieve the required 60 qualitative interviews, a response rate of 21% in both areas. Tables A1 and A2 provide breakdowns of the achieved interview samples by geographical location, gender and age. It can be seen that the socio-demographic characteristics were reasonably in line with the study design, with a fairly equal distribution by gender and location, a ratio of 2:1 between town and landward dwellers, and a coverage of the whole age range.

A structured questionnaire was designed, piloted and subsequently administered by post to eligible young people in both areas, including those who had taken part in the qualitative interviews. One follow-up reminder letter was sent. Questionnaires were returned by 187

Table A1 Qualitative interview samples by location and gender

	Duns		Callendar	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Town	11	9	9	10
Landward	6	4	5	6
Total	17	13	14	16

Table A2 Qualitative interview samples by location, gender and age

	Duns		Callendar	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
18–19 years	2	1	1	6
20–21 years	7	2	6	3
22–23 years	5	6	3	3
24 years	3	4	4	4
Total	17	13	14	16

young people, giving an overall response rate of 37.6% (40.8% in Duns and 34.4% in Callendar, a non-significant difference).

Sampling bias

Thirty-eight (21%) of those who returned the questionnaire also took part in the qualitative interview stage. Compared with those ($n = 145$) who returned the questionnaire only, this group was similar (i.e. not significantly different in statistical terms) in respect of geographical location (i.e. Duns versus Callendar), gender, marital status, employment status, housing tenure, psychological well-being, general health and prevalence of long-standing illness or disability. Differences of borderline statistical significance ($p < 0.10$) were found with respect to education (the interviewed group tending to be more educated than the non-interviewed

group) and personal disposable income (the interviewed group reporting a somewhat lower level of cash available from all sources over the past month). On the whole, therefore, we can conclude that the *interviewed* group who also completed the questionnaire is representative of *all* who returned the questionnaire. However, this does not reveal anything about the generalisability of either the questionnaire data or the interview findings to the total population of young people in the two areas from which the samples were derived. Unfortunately, scant information is available about these populations. The only comparisons we have been able to make concern gender and within-area location (town versus landward). In respect of both these variables, no statistically significant differences were found between interviewed and non-interviewed groups, or between those who completed the questionnaire and those who did not.

Data collection

The study design required the collection and analysis of various types of data: community resources audits, semi-structured interviews and the administration of a structured postal instrument.

Community resource audits (CRAs) were designed to collect contextual information that would facilitate the understanding and interpretation of interview and questionnaire data. The CRAs relied primarily on available statistical data produced, for example, by the 1991 census, regional councils, education departments, health boards and various housing agencies. However, a small number of supplementary qualitative interviews were also

conducted by key personnel working with local young people (i.e. school headmasters, community education workers and the police).

The *qualitative interviews* took place in the young people's homes and lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, depending on the salience of the issues to the respondent and the level of rapport with the interviewer. The interviews were semi-structured and sought to gather information in five key life domains: family, housing, education, employment, and leisure and community. For each of these domains respondents were asked, using various prompts, to recount their experiences from early childhood through to the present day. However, the majority of the interview focused on experiences during the teenage years and early 20s. Some respondents took each domain in turn, while others moved between domains and different periods of their lives. In either case the interviewer facilitated and encouraged respondents to tell their life story, and the interviews produced rich and detailed biographical information. Some of these data were recalled 'facts', for example how many jobs, homes, relationships, educational qualifications the respondent had had, or their level of income, housing costs, etc; whilst other data were at the level of feelings, emotions and perceptions. At the end of the interview respondents were asked whether they had heard of the term social exclusion and what they understood by it. Respondents were then shown extracts from speeches by Tony Blair (Prime Minister) and Harriet Harman (then Secretary of State), wherein they describe the socially excluded, and were asked to comment on whether these applied, firstly, to themselves and, secondly, to anyone living in their local community.

The *structured questionnaire* gathered demographic information and contained sections on housing, education, income, employment, family and health. In addition, the instrument contained questions designed to measure key attitudes and values often cited as being associated with social exclusion; namely, ambition, self-efficacy and dependency. Wherever possible, pre-existing validated questions were used in order to enhance opportunities for comparison with other data sets. The instrument contained questions drawn from the British Social Attitudes Survey (Bryson, 1997), Scottish Health Survey (Scottish Office Department of Health, 1997) and General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, 1993).

Data management and analysis procedures

Although the study design involved the use of mixed methods, during both data collection and analysis efforts were made to integrate and look at the relationships between the various data sets. For example, CRA data were drawn upon in order to achieve grounded contextualised understandings of the qualitative interviews. Similarly, the interview data provided insights into the mechanisms and relationships which lay behind the statistical associations produced by the structured instrument.

Qualitative interviews

The qualitative interviews were audio-tape recorded, transcribed verbatim and entered into the qualitative data management package QRS NUD*IST. Data were initially coded under broad themes developed through reading the transcripts and during discussions between the researcher team; namely, housing, health, work,

family, social support, education, locality, leisure and social exclusion. Within these domains, further sub-themes were developed inductively. That is to say, we started from the data and what respondents had told us (in their own terms) and sought to identify recurrent ideas, experiences and perspectives, while also paying attention to the occurrence of divergence and difference.

Structured postal instrument

Completed questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS for Windows. The

associations between key aspects of social exclusion (socio-structural, attitudinal and personal) with geographical location and gender were explored using a range of non-parametric and parametric tests (including chi square, correlation analysis and analysis of variance). In addition, respondents who received the in-depth qualitative interview and those who did not were compared with regard to the same range of variables, in order to assess the likely representativeness of the interview sub-sample.

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