

Community consultation on poverty and ethnicity in Scotland

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An investigation into differences in low income and poverty among people from various ethnic backgrounds in Scotland.

This research involved a series of consultations with participants in two diverse regions outside the Central Belt in Scotland (Fife and Highland) to address the complex relationship between poverty, ethnicity and location. In addition, two key stakeholder groups were established to inform and shape policy-making and actions. The report explores:

- meanings and understandings of poverty;
- causes of poverty;
- the impact of poverty;
- coping strategies;
- 'magic wand' solutions; and
- implications for future research, policy and service delivery.

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Executive summary

The study

This study aimed to develop an understanding of reasons for differences in low income and poverty among people from various ethnic backgrounds outside the Central Belt of Scotland. It was undertaken in two sites – Fife and Highland – with more or less comparable population sizes, but exemplifying the very diverse geographies of Scotland.

The study involved 32 participants from four different ethnic backgrounds: white Scottish, East European, Gypsy/Travellers and Chinese. An individual or household on an income of £16,000 or less per annum was defined as being on a low income for the purpose of this study. ‘Purposive sampling’ was used and the sample included people on a low income in a variety of circumstances across the two sites.

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken that focused on participant perspectives on five issues: understanding and meaning of poverty; causes of poverty; impact of low income and poverty; coping strategies and routes out of low income/poverty; and ‘magic wand’ solutions.

In addition, two key stakeholder groups from a wide range of local public and third sector agencies in the two geographical areas were established and met twice during the course of study. The aims in establishing a stakeholder group in each area were to ensure local/regional involvement; provide support in identifying potential participants on a low income; and assist with the dissemination of the findings and in taking forward the implications of the research within their areas.

Findings

Participants’ perspectives confirmed that the relationship between poverty, ethnicity and location or place is complex and contingent on a variety of individual, community and institutional/policy factors. This complexity is further amplified by the significance of other identity markers intersecting with ethnicity and location, such as age, gender, disability and so on. The main findings are described below.

Perceptions of poverty

- All participants perceived poverty to be relative and compared their situation with others in the UK, internationally or in their countries of origin.
- Poverty was associated with having limited choice and opportunities with regard to accessing the basics: for example, food, warmth, healthcare and accommodation.
- Younger participants mainly from East European and white Scottish groups (under 35 years of age) were less likely to regard poverty as a permanent or inescapable condition.

Causes of poverty

Participants identified a range of factors as causing poverty, many of which focused on economic factors and barriers to employment. In addition, factors such as housing and intra-regional labour market issues were cited.

Economic factors

- Restructuring of the economy (e.g. a rise in service sector jobs and a prevalence of part-time low paid work) and limitations of local labour markets were the most commonly cited factors in relation to causes of poverty. Transport costs were identified as additional contributors to poverty in Highland.
- Factors such as gender, disability, age (being older) and marital breakups in conjunction with economic issues were identified as increasing vulnerability to poverty. In addition, the need to support a drug and/or alcohol habit was also cited as a factor that increased an individual's level of poverty.

There were also issues that were specific to particular ethnic groups:

- The loss of traditional forms of livelihood was seen as resulting in greater poverty for Gypsy/Travellers.
- Prejudice and racism experienced by the Gypsy/Travellers and some Chinese and East European participants in particular made it more difficult to find routes out of poverty, for example gaining employment.

Barriers to employment

Most participants, regardless of ethnicity, identified the following barriers to accessing employment:

- difficulties in accessing training and skills development programmes due to inadequate provision and costs;
- a lack of appropriately trained staff with the relevant skills within employment agencies at a local level, e.g. Jobcentre Plus, in helping them to seek work.

Furthermore, a number of ethnic- and/or gender-specific issues with regard to seeking employment emerged:

- a lack of English fluency for work purposes among many Chinese and East European participants and low levels of literacy amongst Gypsy/Travellers;
- poor access to English language provision, particularly in Highland, owing to a combination of factors: insufficient provision, and an inability to access provision due to childcare responsibilities or shift work and long hours;
- a lack of affordable and appropriate (e.g. culturally sensitive) childcare, cited by single parent women (particularly Chinese) with school-aged children;
- a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications;

- language barriers that exacerbated the challenges faced in accessing training and skills development programmes; in addition, some eligibility rules appeared to create barriers to accessing language training;
- the legal status of some Chinese women participants (e.g. asylum seekers/recently granted refugee status), in particular, impacting on their ability to access employment as well as other state support;
- concerns expressed by some white Scottish men about the diminishing opportunities for accessing well-paid skilled, manual occupations in their local areas.

Housing

- Poor access to good quality and affordable housing was an issue for participants of all ethnicities and housing costs took up a large proportion of their available income.
- The housing situation was compounded by much affordable housing being bought by second-home owners as holiday properties, in the remoter rural areas in Highland.

Intra-regional factors

The different geography and economies of the two regions were important in understanding the impact of poverty and low income amongst different groups. For instance, in Highland, limited labour market opportunities and the prevalence of low paid seasonal work affected access to well-paid secure employment among East Europeans and white Scottish participants, whilst in Fife it was the loss of manufacturing jobs that affected white Scottish men in particular. However, some issues were common regardless of geography; for example, minority ethnic participants in both areas identified prejudice as being an obstacle to gaining access to employment.

Impact of poverty

- Poverty impacted on participants' ability to afford the basics, such as healthy food, good quality accommodation at affordable prices and meeting the needs of their children. It also created additional strains and stresses on family life and affected their access to social and leisure activities.
- Access to training and educational opportunities were cited as being limited by lack of funding or restrictions placed on those in receipt of welfare benefits.
- Factors such as disabilities, gender and ethnicity, as well as living in remote rural areas, accentuated the impact of poverty in different ways for different groups.
- The impact of the economic recession was identified as reducing employment as well as apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- There were also concerns that outsourcing of public sector jobs, especially in Highland, may lead to further reduction in wages, especially in remote rural areas where well-paid employment opportunities were already limited.
- Poverty was perceived as leading to the erosion of identity and traditional lifestyles of Gypsy/ Travellers.

Coping strategies and solutions

- Participants used a variety of coping strategies: doing without; buying cheap food; and accessing support from family and friends where this was possible.
- Church and faith organisations provided a tangible form of support for most of the participants in Highland. However, in Fife, declared religious affiliation or participation within religious groups was much lower.
- Non-statutory local authority and third sector employment agencies were viewed as more accessible and helpful than central government agencies in assisting with job-finding and the provision of information.
- To improve their situation, most participants wished for good jobs, improved wages and affordable but good quality accommodation.

Implications for future research

Understanding the complex relationships between poverty and ethnicity alongside other identities and locations requires approaches and methods which enable a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of the issues and their context. One-off short interviews are not necessarily effective in developing in-depth insights into the complex dynamics of poverty and ethnicity. Ethnographic methods (such as walking interviews and case studies) may be more appropriate, while also being sensitive to issues of gender, ethnicity and linguistic appropriateness when selecting the research team carrying out the fieldwork.

A number of areas that merit further in-depth research are:

- the influence of global, national and regional economic policy and institutional factors on 'in work poverty' and unemployment for different ethnic groups with due regard for the intersectionality of identities (e.g. gender, age, disability and so on);
- more systematic research that takes into account explicitly the complex interaction of places, geographies and public policies, and their impact on poverty across different ethnic groups in a way that reflects the diverse economies that may be embodied within a region;
- mapping of the operation of regional and localised labour markets and how this impacts on different types of population in accessing employment;
- the differential impact of the economic crisis and public sector cuts on employment and vulnerability to poverty of different ethnic groups, taking into account the intersectionality of identities (e.g. gender, age, disability and so on) and geographical location;
- the impact, coping strategies and routes out of poverty across and amongst different ethnic groups, taking into account a variety of social identities as well as issues such as legal status and migration histories.

In addition, there are some specific issues which emerged in relation to minority ethnic groups in particular. These include developing a greater understanding of:

- the ways in which factors such as single parent status, lack of fluency or literacy in English and legal status may accentuate the impact of low income on minority ethnic groups, such as the Chinese women on a low income in the study;
- differences within specific ethnic categories; for example, recognising the possible diversity among seemingly homogeneous categories such as 'Chinese', with regard to causes and impacts of poverty, as well as strategies for coping, to allow a fuller understanding of the relationship between poverty and ethnicity;
- the impact of poverty on the identities of minority groups who may well already be marginalised, and the long-term repercussions of issues related to the non-recognition of identities or reduction of status as a result of poverty and migration.

Implications for policy and service delivery

- The need for local authorities and the Third Sector to be aware of and prepared to become involved with (former) Chinese asylum seekers who are living in desperate and degrading circumstances, with little income or independent support; in particular, the need to consider issues of intra-ethnic group forms of exploitation, such as mainland Chinese citizens being employed on low wages by longer resident Hong Kong Chinese shop/restaurant owners.
- The likelihood that non-UK and East European people and Gypsy/Travellers are not receiving their full welfare benefits because of a lack of information about what they are entitled to and communication problems as well as other system-based reasons, for instance, inadequate staff briefing and training.
- The extent to which constraints on the use of European Social Fund employment-related funds means that many potential A8 recipients are denied them.
- The need for all relevant agencies to gain a better understanding of the relationship between poverty and ethnicity amongst other minority ethnic groups not included in this study. In particular, to find ways of accessing those who may have little or no contact with agencies, and consequently be difficult to reach or access.
- The inadequacy of English language learning provision for different purposes (e.g. social, work and academic) and the need to provide it at accessible times. In addition, the need for more flexible provision was highlighted.
- The need to work with those who provide childcare support and services (public, private and third sector) to ensure these are culturally sensitive and proactive in ensuring racial, religious and linguistic inclusion.
- The need for statutory and non-statutory agencies to understand how racism (personal, cultural and institutional) impacts on the lives of minority ethnic people. Staff need to comprehend this and ensure that services respond to and challenge racism.
- The question of whether, as a remote region, Highland receives appropriate Scottish and central government support for addressing poverty in rural areas; in particular, reviewing the impact of the Holyrood 'Fairer Scotland' initiative.

Introduction

Aim

The overall aim of this study was to undertake consultations with individuals, to increase the understanding of reasons underpinning differences in low income and poverty among people from various ethnic backgrounds in two regions: Fife and Highland.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

- develop an understanding of and insights into participants' views on what poverty means to them;
- explore how poverty is articulated and experienced in different areas of their lives;
- explore coping strategies and identify possible solutions from the perspectives of participants;
- help inform and shape policy-making and actions at local, regional and national levels by establishing a group of key stakeholders;
- provide quality information that will help shape the Foundation's forthcoming programme on enhancing understanding of the relationships between ethnicity and poverty;

Poverty and ethnicity – an overview of the literature

Research on poverty and ethnicity in the United Kingdom demonstrates that the relationship between these is highly complex and is mediated by various intersecting social structures and identities (Platt, 2007). Platt's review of research (2007) in the UK suggests that white people, in general, are least likely to experience poverty – though white groups receiving benefits are more likely to be living on persistent low incomes. However, in this context it is important to recognise that the white group as well as other ethnic groups are heterogeneous, encompassing various intersecting social identities (such as social class, gender, age and so on) which may result in inter-ethnic as well as intra-ethnic differences. These complexities as well as the role of 'place' are not well understood, not least because of the continuing dearth of research and data on the relationship between ethnicity and poverty in Scotland (Netto, *et al.*, 2001; HWU, 2010). A recent literature review on poverty and ethnicity in Scotland (HWU, 2010) conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, whilst re-emphasising the continuing lack of research on the subject, also highlighted the following:

- All minority ethnic groups appeared to be disadvantaged based on one or more indices of poverty. However, some of the minority ethnic populations in Scotland did not seem to be as poor or deprived according to some indices compared with their English counterparts.

- It is important to explore the intersectionality of ethnicity with other dimensions of identity, including age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religious orientation.
- Some minority ethnic groups, including Gypsy/Travellers, refugees and women were vulnerable to experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.
- Fear of racial harassment among certain ethnic groups may be symptomatic of social deprivation.

It also highlighted a need to investigate the extent to which public services are addressing poverty in different sections of the local population.

With a few exceptions, much of the research on poverty in Scotland has been urban focused. Two issues have dominated the discussions on poverty outside the predominantly urban Central Belt in Scotland and rural areas elsewhere in the UK (Shucksmith, *et al.*, 1996; Milbourne and Hughes, 2005; EKOS Ltd, 2009). First, concerns that the indicators of deprivation used [e.g. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)] are primarily developed to identify and address geographical concentrations of deprivation, and consequently fail to capture the dispersed nature of poverty and disadvantage experienced in regions which are predominantly rural. For instance, in Fife there is a recognition that ‘the most deprived areas have concentrations and disproportionate shares of the most deprived people but the majority do live throughout the rest of Fife’ (Fife Partnership, 2009a).

Second, despite the evidence that a high proportion of rural dwellers fall within the standard definitions of ‘poverty’, most reject this ‘objective assessment’ of their position, emphasising the advantages of rural life in terms of quality of life. In addition, a very recent publication on ‘A Minimum Income Standards for Rural Households’ by Smith, *et al.* (2010) argues that:

although some things could be cheaper for rural households than for urban households (e.g. leisure activities for primary school children) this was unusual. Most household requirements were the same for rural as for urban families. However, there were critical differences that meant, overall, all rural households faced additional cost. (p. 7)

The ‘critical differences’ are related to extra costs associated with items such as transport (e.g. requiring to have and use a car because of lack of transport) and domestic fuel.

Given the geographical focus of the study on Fife and Highland, a brief overview of issues related to poverty and low income is presented in relation to these two areas as well as highlighting some common issues that have been identified about poverty and ethnicity outside urban areas.

Much of the information on poverty generally in Highland and Fife tends to be based on secondary sources (e.g. Census, Scottish Neighbourhood statistics, etc.), grey literature and policy documents produced by local authorities (e.g. UHI PolicyWeb, 2005; Scottish Affairs Select Committee, 2006; Fife Partnership, 2009a,b; The Highland Council, 2009; Opportunities Fife, 2010). Two exceptions are research by Shucksmith, *et al.* (1996), which included a Highland community in their study of rural disadvantage, and a regional survey undertaken in Fife between 2006 and 2008, *The Fife Regeneration, Health and Wellbeing Survey* (TASC Agency and Hexagon Research and Consulting, 2008). Although the Shucksmith, *et al.* (1996) study makes some reference to ‘incomers’ in the study, neither this study nor the Fife survey addresses the relationship between poverty and ethnicity.

With regard to prevalence of poverty in these two areas, in 2009, Fife was reported as having the joint fourth highest local authority national share of the 15 per cent most deprived data zones (along with Dundee), compared with having the sixth highest in 2006. The number of people who were income deprived had risen by 30 per cent from 45,718 in 2004 to 59,065 in 2009 (Fife Partnership, 2009a). Fife has also seen a 75 per cent rise in those registering as unemployed from November 2007 to November 2009, while simultaneously experiencing reduced job vacancies in the same period (Opportunities Fife,

2010). In addition, Fife has been experiencing a continuing shift from traditional manufacturing-based employment to a service-based economy (largely based in the public sector). Its average wage levels are below the Scottish level, with higher concentrations of people without work, lower levels of business formation and continuing manufacturing job losses as the economy undergoes structural change and due to the impact of the economic recession (Fife Partnership, 2009b, pp. 7–8).

In Highland, it is recognised that:

The income and employment deprived population are not confined to areas of concentrated multiple deprivation; indeed over 70% of the employment and income deprived population in Highland are found out with the areas of concentrated multiple deprivation (SIMD 2006) [cited in The Highland Council, 2009].

The Highland Council, 2009, p. 12

While unemployment rates were described as being below the Scottish average between 2004 and 2008, an increase in Job Seeker allowance claimants was noted in 2008, especially amongst the under 24-year age group. There was also recognition by the Highland Community Planning Partnership that in general the changing economic climate was having an impact on unemployment which was predicted to increase. The average income level was low compared with Scotland and the UK: in 2008, it was estimated to be £20,700, which was 90 per cent of the Scottish average (£22,900) and 84 per cent of the UK average (£23,500) (The Highland Council, 2009, p. 10).

In addition, Highland, like Fife, is geographically and economically diverse. For example, overall 'public administration, education and health' is the largest sector and accounts for up to one-third of jobs in the region, and 'distribution, hotels and restaurants' are important in all areas (The Highland Council, 2009, p. 12). By contrast, sectors such as agriculture and fishing are important in remote rural areas, for example Skye and the West Coast. Consequently, focusing on the regional level alone is not sufficient for an understanding of issues related to poverty.

A number of issues recur in research on rural poverty that have a resonance in both Fife and Highland (e.g. Shucksmith, 2000; Rural Poverty and Social Inclusion Working Group, 2001; EKOS Ltd, 2009). These are:

- low pay associated with limited employment opportunities and the restructuring of the economy generally;
- the predominance of small work places as well as low wage sectors and seasonal employment such as the service sector (e.g. tourism and hospitality) as well as agriculture and food (e.g. fish) processing;
- low take up of benefits reflecting a combination of poor access to advice and information, feelings of being stigmatised and eligibility issues as individuals move in and out of seasonal employment;
- lack of affordable access to services (e.g. public transport, information communication technologies and childcare, etc.) and closures of services such as post offices and banks;
- high costs in relation to basic items, for example housing and fuel;
- lack of access to social networks and isolation;
- declining/centralisation of public services in the light of the economic recession and demographic trends (declining population in remote rural areas in particular);

- changing demography and a growth in the elderly population, and especially single elderly households.

The small body of research which has focused on the experiences of minority ethnic groups and East European migrants living and working in regions such as Fife and Highland make no explicit reference to low income and poverty. Nevertheless, there are some recurring issues which may have an impact on considerations related to poverty and low income that emerge from these studies. These include language and communication barriers; lack of recognition of overseas qualifications; under-employment in predominantly low skilled occupations; ethnic variations with regard to education and employment opportunities; poor access to services; social isolation; and experiences of discrimination (de Lima, 2001, 2006, 2008; de Lima, *et al.*, 2005a,b, 2007; Fife Partnership, 2007; Jentsch, *et al.*, 2007; de Lima and Wright, 2009).

Organisation of the report

Following this introduction, the report is organised in four sections:

- *Methods*, which provides an overview of the geographical sites, sample, methods, stakeholder groups and profile of participants involved in the study (Chapter 1);
- *Findings*, focusing on participants' views about five issues: meanings and understanding of poverty; causes of poverty; impact of poverty; coping strategies; and the one change they would make if they had a magic wand (Chapters 2–6);
- *Summary of findings* (Chapter 7);
- *Implications for future research, policy and service delivery* (Chapter 8).

1 Methods

This was a small scale qualitative study undertaken between June and August 2010. The study involved interviews with 32 participants from four different ethnic backgrounds across two geographical sites in Scotland.

Geographical sites

The study was conducted in two regions/local authority areas with more or less comparable population sizes: Fife and Highland regions. The choice of these regions was based on a number of considerations. Fife is located in mid-Scotland, but is outside the Forth–Clyde ‘central belt’ corridor, in relatively close proximity to the major cities and centres of population. In contrast, Highland covers most of the northern mainland, and is characterised by small towns and scattered, remote rural and island communities. Combined, the regions exemplify the very diverse geographies of Scotland.

Sampling of participants on low income

Following a series of consultations in Britain including Scotland, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified particular minority ethnic groups for possible inclusion in this study. These were Chinese, East European (including A8/A2 migrants), Gypsy/Travellers, Indian and Roma communities. There was also a requirement to include ‘home’ white communities. Four of these ethnic groups were selected to be included in this study: white Scottish, East European, Gypsy/Travellers and Chinese.

For the purpose of this study an individual or household on an income of £16,000 or less per annum was defined as being on a low income. The project used ‘purposive sampling’ (non-random sampling), given the aim and objectives of the project and its exploratory nature. The overall sample of 32 included people in a variety of circumstances across the two geographical sites (see Appendices 1a and 1b).

Methods

Semi-structured interviews lasting between one hour and 1.5 hours were undertaken, mostly with individuals, three with couples (two in Highland and one in Fife) and one with a group of participants (five white Scottish participants in Fife). The aim was to obtain information that was illuminative in relation to poverty and ethnicity rather than to provide generalisable findings.

A semi-structured schedule was used and participants were asked to address, from their knowledge and experience, the issue of living on a low income and/or in poverty under five headings, which are also used as a basis for reporting the findings:

- understanding and meaning of poverty;
- causes of poverty;
- impact of low income and poverty;

- coping strategies and routes out of low income/poverty;
- ‘magic wand’ solutions.

Stakeholder involvement

Two key stakeholder groups from a wide range of local agencies in the two geographical areas were established at the beginning of the project (see Appendices 2a and 2b). Stakeholders included representatives from a variety of organisations, for example:

- public sector organisations: the local authorities, the National Health Service (NHS), and the Employment Service;
- third sector organisations: for example, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Gingerbread, representatives from minority ethnic organisations/groups, mental health and community care organisations.

The aims in establishing a stakeholder group in each area were to:

- ensure local/regional involvement;
- provide support in identifying potential participants on a low income;
- assist with dissemination of the findings and in taking forward implications of the research within their areas.

Two meetings were held in each location. The first took place at the beginning of the study, to provide information about the project, to obtain views on the study and interview schedule and to provide support in accessing participants. The second meeting took place at the draft report stage, providing feedback on the initial findings and identifying ways of taking forward the findings of the study.

Participant profile

The ethnic and gender composition of the 32 participants is identified in [Table 1](#) (see also Appendices 1a and 1b). Participants were recruited on the basis of self-defined ethnic categories.

The 20 women and twelve men ranged in age from 23 to 65. In Highland, whilst the majority of participants lived in Inverness, a number lived in what are categorised as ‘accessible’ and ‘remote towns’ (e.g. Dingwall and Fort William) and ‘remote rural’ areas (Skye and Assynt), according to the Scottish

Table 1: Ethnic and gender composition of participants

Ethnicity	Highland		Fife		Total in each ethnic group
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
White Scottish	2	2	3	2	9
East European	3	1	2	3	9
Chinese	3	1	3	1	8
Gypsy/Travellers	2	2	2	0	6
Total	10	6	10	6	32

Government definition of 'urban' and 'rural' (Scottish Executive, 2006, pp. 10–11). In Fife, the majority lived in the towns of Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline.

Overall, 15 participants lived in households where all or some members were in some form of employment. There was one pensioner and sixteen participants were living in workless (generally single) households, two of whom were also studying (see Appendices 1a and 1b). All defined themselves as heterosexual. Six participants declared they had a disability that impacted on their employment prospects. These ranged from having a learning disability, depression, arthritis, recovering from a broken back and sciatica to caring for a child with autism. A majority signified that they were married, but single and separated people were also present in the sample. The majority of single parents in this study were women.

2 Meanings and understandings of poverty

Overall, participants viewed poverty as relative and made a distinction between subjective and objective definitions of poverty. Most cited factors such as clothes worn, language use and so on as external indicators of poverty and identified poverty as limiting choices and opportunities in all aspects of their lives.

Poverty as 'relative'

Across all ethnic groups, participants appreciated that poverty was relative, and compared their situation with that of others in the UK or in their countries of origin:

Well, I think ... nobody poor here like I mean in some countries. I see Scotland is well very rich.

East European male, Fife

In comparison to Poland it is not as bad here – yes compared to Poland we are better off here. In Poland you could not get your rent or electricity covered. It's OK here. I get enough to survive. I cannot afford to have savings but I can survive on what I get.

East European female, Highland

Participants also made a distinction between objective definitions of poverty and subjective feelings, an issue highlighted consistently by previous research (Shucksmith, 2000; Shucksmith, *et al.*, 1996):

Well really I would say really have to think of it [poverty] on a worldwide scale really. And I know politically and otherwise, for various reasons, they work out, reckon to be the poverty line, you know, in the UK. And I guess possibly I'd be quite near that. But I personally don't feel I am. I make do. I'm about a stone or so overweight and I have everything I want really, you know, so I don't feel that. But I guess in the statistics of things I probably would be considered, you know, somebody who is just on the edge.

White Scottish male, Highland

External indicators of poverty

In many instances, participants understood poverty through external indicators such as the type of clothes worn, language used, behaviour, poor housing standards, not having material goods, and having lower levels of education, skills and qualifications:

Interviewer: How would you know if someone has no money?

Participant: No money, so no car. I think no money, they live in the council house. And oh ... buy the ... cheap, cheap food. And their clothes.

Chinese female, Fife

Participants also understood poverty to mean being in receipt of welfare benefits, being unemployed or having a low wage. Some indicated that being in poverty meant having unhealthy lifestyles, as people could not afford nutritious food or to relax by going on holidays or to engage in regular leisure activities. Being disabled was also identified as increasing vulnerability to poverty or low income.

Poverty as limiting

Overall, participants found it difficult to discuss what poverty meant in the abstract and were more confident in responding to this question by drawing on their own personal circumstances and life experiences. Their responses indicated that they understood poverty to mean limited choice and opportunities, usually with regard to access to employment, leisure services and lifestyles. Participants recognised that poor people were labelled and stigmatised for being in poverty and this resulted in feelings of loss of confidence, as well as impacting on their experiences of being marginalised and separated from those not in poverty. Some of the participants articulated poverty as being a 'continuous bleak condition':

Ma son, he got badly burned when he was age eleven ... so I ended up caring for him. The marriage, well that just broke ... and then I started going tae college. I wanted to get right in tae things but it just never, never turned out that way. You've tae fend for oor selves.

White Scottish female, Fife

Poverty as a temporary condition

On the other hand, younger participants, mainly among East Europeans in Fife and white Scottish participants (under 35 years of age), were less likely to regard poverty as a permanent or inescapable condition. Some indicated that they would simply move on to a new geographical area if the situation persisted for them where they currently lived. This hopefulness contrasted with older participants, who were more resigned to a situation of low income, poverty and the resulting consequences:

I don't feel myself poor ... my boyfriend has a good job but I'd like to go home. My boyfriend doesn't want to ... he's Australian. But if no jobs ... we can go there.

East European female, Fife

3 Causes of poverty

While economic factors and the erosion of well-paid work were consistently cited as a major cause of poverty, participants also referred to a complex range of factors; for instance, access to welfare support, accommodation, ethnicity, age, disability, housing and the impact of the economic recession.

Economic restructuring and regional/local labour markets

The impact of economic restructuring – loss of heavy and other traditional industries in Fife and Highland – and current economic circumstances such as the recession were identified across the board as significant in reducing the availability of manual, craft, agricultural and technology-related employment. This appeared to have particular impact on white Scottish men, but was also seen as increasing the vulnerability to poverty of people in general. In the remote rural areas in Highland traditional livelihoods based on fishing and crofting were identified as not generating enough income to live on, thus requiring people to have multiple jobs:

... and years and years ago, fishing was a good income. You know, people got a good income out of fishing. But then years ago they worked crofts. They got their veggies and all that from the crofts. They had cows, they slaughtered sheep, you know, for food and stuff like that. So it was a different, it was a way of life. Whereas that's kind of gone by the wayside because there isn't the money in that. So I mean we've still got sheep but they don't actually make, [laughs] they don't actually make any money ... there's not really a lot of, you have to have, you have to be able to do two or three or four things rather than just ... doing one [laughs].

White Scottish female, Highland

The structure of regional economies and labour markets, such as the predominance of the service sector, contributes to the prevalence of low wage jobs and seasonal employment, particularly in Highland (The Highland Council, 2009). This was identified by East Europeans and white Scottish participants as a factor that increased their vulnerability:

I am not sure why people are poor here ... the causes are many ... in Inverness it is a tourist destination. In the summer you can work full time but in the winter time you can only get very part time work ... one or two days per week which is not enough to survive. That is the problem with Inverness, most of the jobs are based around the tourist season and there are very few jobs which are full time all the year around.

East European female, Highland

The impact of the economic recession

The lack of jobs as a consequence of the recession was identified as a major barrier in getting work and moving out of poverty:

I've fought for my country. I've been in Iraq ... I was already in full-time employment as a chef ... came back, there was no jobs. And I was left wae nothing and had to start again ... There's nae support ... once you are oot, you are oot.

White Scottish male, Fife

The recent closure of some of the food processing industries in the Highlands, which employed large numbers of East Europeans (de Lima, *et al.*, 2005b), has also affected the employment prospects for this group as well as for white Scottish people working in this sector:

And somebody said, you know, this fish factory which was somewhere near Inverness was closed and ... so many people in, you know ... unemployed so probably they all went for any possible jobs. Again, you know, so maybe that's [the economic recession] what caused it ... So I suppose if the economics were better so maybe this factory wouldn't have closed at all and new people would still be employed and ... so probably there is, I mean there was some effect, you know, of this crisis.

East European female, Highland

The lack of apprenticeships or re-training opportunities as well as industry specific requirements – for example health and safety registration for those wishing to work in the construction industry – were also highlighted as key contributors to remaining in poverty:

Everything is slowing down. Which means the likes of modern apprenticeships and such are, they are not really an option here in the Highlands. Because construction and the building trade is slowing down there's less opportunity for young people to go on to become plumbers, joiners and electricians. So the basic construction trade is suffering there as well.

White Scottish male, Highland

For others, in addition to the impact of the economic recession on jobs, options for accessing work were limited further by what they described as the racist attitudes of employers:

[There are] definitely less jobs. There's a lot of people out there trying, struggling as well ... Everyone is struggling. But I feel that some of the employers are a bit racist, and they're only putting themselves first and other people who live in the village. And they are not even considering our children ... who are trying to survive, trying to better themselves, so they can be better people when they're older.

Gypsy/Travellers female, Fife

Additionally, in the light of reduced public finances, the growth of outsourcing by local authorities in areas such as care of the elderly was seen by participants as further reducing the availability of secure and reasonably paid work, especially in remote rural areas where work opportunities are already limited.

Accessing support from agencies for those seeking work

Participants who were unemployed found seeking work a demoralising process, especially given the lack of response to their applications for jobs from employers. In addition to factors related to the economy and employment/economic activity, participants identified a range of other factors that exacerbated their vulnerability to poverty. These are discussed below.

Participants identified some agencies as not providing effective support in helping to find routes out of poverty. For instance, assistance with accessing appropriate employment from Jobcentre Plus

was found to be inadequate, particularly for those who had language problems. Participants also felt that procedures related to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs reinforced their poverty:

I'm on £13 a week but it's no enough tae live on ... that's my entitlement. It's because I was recently in employment and because I came out of employment, the Working Tax Credit which is HM Revenue, I've had all sorts of problems with them. So, for the last almost three weeks I have survived on my last wage ... and I found that ridiculous.

White Scottish male, Fife

... Job Seekers is just a nightmare ... No win situation. And I know like people in the Job Centre, they have nae really got any sympathy for people ... It's not only me, there are hundreds of people like that.

Gypsy/Travellers female, Fife

Accommodation costs

Cost of accommodation – renting or buying property – and its availability was also highlighted as an issue that led to poverty. For a number of participants (across different ages and ethnicities) the cost of accommodation as a proportion of earned income was high:

There is a stranglehold on rented accommodation in and around Inverness. Landlords and landladies asking £550 per calendar month for very small properties which are not particularly up to standard. If you were only making £11,000 a year, that's you instantly lost over £6,000 of your, your yearly income to a very small living space.

White Scottish male, Highland

Gender issues

For women in the study, marriage or relationship breakdown, as well as issues of legal status (asylum seeker/refugee) among some of the Chinese participants in Highland in particular, were key causes of poverty. For example, the requirement for asylum seekers or those who had refugee status to get a permit to marry meant that those who were not in married relationships and had children found themselves in a vulnerable position with few rights and little access to state support. Lack of English communication skills and the fact that their contact within and outside their ethnic community was mediated mainly through their partner exacerbated their isolation and constrained their ability to seek redress.

Maintaining accommodation and a household (such as rent and associated costs) on one's own after a relationship breakdown made such individuals vulnerable to poverty because of the difficulty of covering all the household costs (e.g. council tax, heating bills) on their own.

The lack of affordable, appropriate and reliable childcare prevented single parents – all women in this study – irrespective of ethnicity, from accessing a range of jobs.

Gender stereotyping of jobs also affected what was seen as 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' work. For example, two white Scottish men in Fife indicated that low-end part-time jobs such as supermarket and cleaning jobs were more available to women (although the female participants did not agree). The men also seemed to be reluctant to take up what they perceived to be the 'worst' jobs, for example, cold calling sales work.

Other life-chance-related factors

Factors such as age (being older), disability, and the onset of illness or a death in a family were also identified as affecting access to and keeping employment as well as restricting the type of employment available. Examples were given by participants of having to give up work to become carers and of young people having to return to their parental home as family breadwinners owing to a death in the family or a change in parental circumstances.

Being on drugs and spending money on alcohol (mainly associated with white Scottish people in this study) was also perceived by some East Europeans and white Scottish participants as increasing people's vulnerability to poverty and dependence on welfare benefits:

But I know a lot of people do have some quite expensive habits ... Especially smoking, drinking and possibly for some taking drugs and a lot of money disappears quite quickly.

White Scottish Male, Highland

... I know somebody, a Scottish person ... who is, well, an alcoholic. But so he gets some money. And I don't know, maybe he never eats or something ... just, just drinks ... this is not good for him.

East European male, Fife

Lack of support for those unable to communicate in English created additional barriers for those seeking employment, especially when it came to approaching employers and Jobcentre Plus. In addition, some participants felt that being older made it even more difficult for them:

When I go to the Job Centre every two weeks they could be more helpful on site in helping me to find work, they don't seem to be that helpful – have interpreters. Young people who know less English can still get by, as they can phone employers and try and get into work. I am afraid of phoning employers because of my English. If I have to phone employers about a job advert I am terrified, it is a nonstarter ... others in my position face the same situation, we are all have the same problem ... The job centre is not good at trying to arrange/or help with arranging interviews.

East European female, Highland

Ethnicity

In relation to ethnicity, several factors in addition to those already mentioned were noted as reinforcing the risk of being on a low income by participants from outside the UK. These were language, cultural barriers, prejudice and discrimination and lack of recognition of overseas qualifications. Issues of legal status for those from outside the UK also affected access to employment and entitlement to state support.

Language difficulties impacted at different levels: there were those who felt that although they communicated adequately in English at a social level, they did not have sufficient technical English for work purposes, whilst others required the assistance of interpreters to communicate. Without access to English at a level sufficient for employment, prospects were limited. For example, one Chinese participant who was a graduate in English and proofreader in her own country, but with severely limited conversational English, could only seek work that required minimal verbal interaction, such as cleaning. Being on welfare benefits also limited her ability to seek more hours of paid work to provide additional income and therefore the poverty trap continued.

A support worker, working with East Europeans (including a participant in this project), highlighted a combination of factors relating to those recently arrived in Scotland. These included language issues, and a lack of awareness of their entitlements and how to navigate the system. These factors are also

identified by other studies as being significant in increasing the risk of being on a low income (see for example Rolfe and Metcalfe, 2009).

For the Chinese participants in the Highlands, the small number of Chinese businesses was seen as a disadvantage in accessing employment. The mainland Chinese asylum seekers/refugees in this study were heavily reliant for employment on Chinese businesses owned mainly by the longer established Hong Kong Chinese community, which seemed potentially to lead to poor working conditions and exploitation. The reliance of the Chinese participants on these businesses for employment was related to a combination of at least four factors: lack of English language skills, poor educational qualifications, the strong role of co-ethnic social networks in accessing employment, and issues related to legal status, particularly for Chinese asylum seekers/refugees from Mainland China. These tended to reinforce the dependency of the Chinese participants on their own ethnic community for employment and social support, an issue also highlighted by a previous study (see de Lima, *et al.*, 2005a).

For some participants, prejudice and discrimination by work colleagues or employers on the basis of particular characteristics (e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, etc.) also impacted on opportunities for obtaining work:

When I compare four years ago to now, there are big differences – they [East European migrants] speak the language and they are younger. I think it is funny, when I apply for work as a domestic worker they say my qualifications are low. As women we do cleaning all the time. I don't know what qualifications they need for cleaning jobs.

East European female, Highland

Some cited experiencing discrimination and isolation at work:

It's in my, it's in my Company manager. Company manager is one lady. I'm cleaner. She's, every morning no speaking. I say 'morning'. One time, two time and no speaking again. I'm no speaking. So I think if she no speaking I'm no speaking, it's okay.

Chinese female, Fife

Gypsy/Travellers participants referred to increased harassment by the police and local authorities in terms of accessing stopping places if they were travelling, which made it difficult for them to continue their traditional livelihoods. The Highland participants in particular described their experiences of a negative press campaign against them. This is an issue also noted by others such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC, 2010). Participants pointed out that their sites and stopping places were declining in number and standards through a combination of local authority neglect/intervention and 'moving on' by the police:

They are closing all the places off and big boulders everywhere along the road ... just everything is changing. We could be on one camp ... travel to the other side of the country ... to come back a week later ... and the camp has been closed off. The police will come and say 'you can't stay here, you're not allowed.'

Gypsy/Travellers couple, Highland

Gypsy/Travellers participants felt that the loss of traditional forms of livelihood – for example fruit/potato picking, which increasingly East Europeans are employed to do (de Lima, *et al.*, 2005b), and shellfish and pearl gathering – as well as casual labour, generally impacted on their ability to alleviate their poverty. This was reinforced by pressure from society in general to lead a 'settled' life; for example, living in a house rather than a caravan, resulting in increased costs (e.g. heating) and reinforcing further their

vulnerability to poverty. Additionally, stereotyping and prejudice against this group by society in general is known to limit employment opportunities (Cemlyn, *et al.*, 2009).

Education and training

As mentioned above, lack of recognition of overseas qualifications is one factor which resulted in participants being on a low income. Chinese and East European participants with degrees and/or vocational qualifications felt they were being relegated to 'unskilled' status because of their lack of English, prejudice by the employer, or a combination of both, reflecting the findings of previous research across Scotland and the UK (de Lima, *et al.*, 2005a; Fife Partnership, 2007). The East European and Chinese participants whose qualifications were not recognised did feel discriminated against, although they were not inclined to complain about these experiences.

Most references to education and training amongst the Chinese and East Europeans in Highland were around the perceived lack of opportunities to improve English language proficiency. Few Chinese or East Europeans seemed to be undertaking English classes because of costs, lack of time and inflexibility of provision. Participants also reported that it was not always possible to take up education or training opportunities owing to work commitments and the lack of suitable childcare.

Overall, there was low participation in adult and further education by Gypsy/Travellers participants, who expressed safety and other concerns about moving outside what they perceived as the safety net of their ethnic community:

There's me leaving my safety net ... getting public transport ... it's quite scary. I was scared at first on my own. I didn't really enjoy my student life. I didn't feel like I'd benefitted, fitted in like.

Gypsy/Travellers female, Fife

A further dilemma that Gypsy/Travellers participants discussed was the question of how young members of the community might acquire the necessary qualifications without routinely attending secondary schools. Concerns were also expressed that mainstream education did not sufficiently recognise, respect or teach about Gypsy/Travellers lives, cultures and contributions, which they felt acted as a deterrent for the young people in their community to attend and feel a part of the schooling system.

There were also differences related to legal status which affected some participants' entitlement to welfare support, increasing their risk of being in poverty. For instance, East Europeans registered under the Worker Registration Scheme who have been employed for less than a year are not entitled to access any public funds. In addition, there were also cases where Chinese participants, whilst eligible for UK citizenship and all the benefits and entitlements that arise from this, were unable to apply for citizenship because of their lack of English language skills. This led to inter-ethnic resentments being expressed; for example, between Chinese groups from Hong Kong or Macao and those from Mainland China – an issue that has come up in previous research (de Lima, *et al.*, 2005a):

I have tried to apply for social housing – it would take me 10–15 years to get on the list – that is me – a normal citizen – I am a normal citizen but less fortunate than asylum seekers. I have to pay my tax, rent and I start a business to pay VAT, tax rates, it is all so difficult to continue with a business in this situation.

Chinese female, Highland

Geographical location

Remoteness, 'distance' and feelings of marginality based on location were seen as having direct consequences in relation to quality (poor) and quantity (few) of jobs available. In addition to the changing

livelihoods and limited employment opportunities highlighted above, for those living in remote rural areas there were additional factors that put them at risk of poverty. These included costs of having to obtain private transport on account of the lack of public transport in some areas; the cost of fuel, both for cars and for heating homes; having to travel great distances for work which is low paid and to access services; and the relatively high costs of food:

But fuel is a huge thing because our, our fuel here is, is really expensive compared, I mean you are fifteen, twenty pence more than, than well Inverness. And when you are coming thirty miles a day ... Everything seems to cost that bit more ... Food tends to be pretty expensive ... I mean the local shops do try and keep it down food wise.

White Scottish female, Highland

4 The impact of poverty

Poverty impacted on participants' lives in many different ways. It affected their ability to afford the basics, such as healthy food, good quality accommodation and meeting the needs of their children. It also impacted on their health and wellbeing, social status and individual/family morale. It affected their access to training and educational opportunities, social and leisure activities and created additional strains and stresses on family life. In addition, factors such as disabilities, gender and ethnicity, as well as living in remote rural areas, accentuated the impacts of poverty in different ways.

Affording the basics

Poverty impacted on the ability of participants to afford to pay for basics such as rent/mortgage, utility bills, travel, clothing, food and children's needs. Participants described having to do without and reducing their spending:

We had, we tried to avoid, like I say, using the electricity and such. We started buying cheaper food and being more economic with what food we did buy ... I picked up a lot of skills, fixing washing machines and plumbing and [laughs] resealing things.

White Scottish male, Highland

Some participants, (for example, Chinese participants) talked about saving money by reducing electricity use (e.g. doing without heating) and walking to the supermarket with their children instead of using public transport. Not being able to afford to travel overseas to visit their family was a particular issue for Chinese participants and East Europeans:

The impact of being on low income does affect my life: being a woman on my own, can't have holidays. I can't go home ... as much as I would like to ...

East European female, Highland

This year the plane ticket too expensive. Yeah, last year maybe £300–£340. Yeah, this year it's £500. So only daughter go, go to my country. Me two years no go back ... Maybe Christmas?

Chinese female, Fife

The above participant's parents and siblings live in China. They live well there and are not in poverty. The participant sent her teenage daughter back for the whole summer to provide relief from the poverty and poor conditions they currently live in, as well as maintaining links with family back home. Thus it can be seen that for those with family overseas maintaining links can also become a cost which may have to come out of their low income.

Impact on social life

Working long hours or in multiple jobs had an impact on participants' leisure time and their ability to participate in social and other activities, as different choices had to be weighed up:

For me every time I have money I spend on food. I could choose the cheaper the food, you know. My daughter (five year old) wants to go on holiday ... [laughs] ... for so long. I can't take my daughter go anywhere on holiday ... it is hard I have council bill, this is a lot.

Chinese female, Fife

The situation was exacerbated for those who lived in rural areas where the lack of public transport and the cost of transport restricted people's choices further.

Impact on family life

The stress of being in poverty strained family relationships, leading to family breakdown and division:

I think it does [being on a low income] have a huge, I think it does have an impact. I think it has an impact on sort of family life and can be quite, quite stressful and I suppose people, people can suffer from depression and things like that because they are not, you know, they are not just managing to maintain that, you know. It's very much up and down because there isn't any permanent work ...

White Scottish women, Highland

Some participants felt that low income substantially affected people's ability to meet their family responsibilities. They referred to social pressures to support children and to provide a certain standard of living despite their circumstances:

Children are very demanding about clothes, toys, but we can't give it to them.

East European male, Fife

Single parents in this study, all women, stated that their low income prevented them from accessing suitable childcare which would enable them to seek employment. Divisions in family configuration, regardless of ethnic group, also resulted in a differential impact on the household. For example, the situation of participants in a couple relationship, where one of the couple had slightly more earning potential, contrasted dramatically with single parents/individual women struggling on their own to maintain a basic standard of living in terms of heating and other household costs.

Impact on access to education/training

Some participants indicated that not having access to funds prevented them from taking up courses to obtain the qualifications required to improve their employability:

I went tae college for the first year in my course and it was free. And as soon as I finished it's 'oh if you want tae come back you need tae take oot loans' and that's that. I am not getting involved in them.

White Scottish male, Fife

Being on welfare benefits also limited access to courses:

Aye ... most of the time it is part time. Cause if it's full time, you have tae watch for yourself tae cause your council tax, rent, benefits.

White Scottish female, Fife

Housing

People of all ethnicities found housing problematic, in terms of both contributing to poverty and reflecting it. Just under half of the participants (mainly white Scottish and Gypsy/Travellers) were living in council housing, most of them in Fife. White Scottish and Gypsy/Travellers participants expressed concerns at the recent government suggestion of limiting the length of council house tenure, as well as in the reduction of affordable housing in general.

Living in privately rented accommodation was most common amongst the East Europeans and owner occupation was most prevalent among the white Scottish participants in Highland. Owner occupation amongst participants was largely enabled by partner earnings or contributions.

Marital breakups also affected housing, as one Chinese woman in Fife indicated:

I am living in this property but once we get divorced, I probably no living here. I have no idea. We argue at the moment. He say if I live, I have to pay but I don't have money for him to pay out [buy him out]. Pay out, pay him out of the house. This is the problem. Because I think because my husband doesn't want my daughter. He doesn't want her right. And then, I don't have a place to stay with my daughter ... I don't wanna be my daughter grow up in the council house. Some council houses are really nice. Some council houses are really terrible. And I'm Chinese, I'm no local. I'm no Scottish. Maybe somebody, young people come and make problem for me. Do you understand what I mean?

Chinese female, Fife

Poverty does not impact only on the type of accommodation; as can be seen from the quotation above, for minority ethnic people, concerns about potential racial harassment are also a factor.

All those living in privately rented accommodation found it very costly, using up a large proportion of their low income, as highlighted above. For a number of East Europeans and Chinese participants, one way of reducing costs was to share accommodation (see de Lima, *et al.*, 2007), which created extra stresses:

It is really difficult living with another family and [going to] work. Almost every day stress and quarrel ... it is no good with the kids ... like my [child] he [only] start to speak now when we move the house ... [previously] he speak just maybe three words, that's it.

East European female, Highland

Being an asylum seeker/refugee seemed to create additional difficulties with regard to accessing housing. For instance, one of the Chinese participants in Highland and her family were homeless whilst her claim for refugee status was being processed. Another who had been granted recent leave to remain had been living in one room with access to a shared kitchen and bathroom in a small flat with her partner and her autistic child for the last seven years. The accommodation was owned by the Chinese employer who employed her partner and two other men who also shared the flat.

While concerns about the shortage of affordable housing were expressed by most participants in the study, this was most evident in Highland. Shortage of affordable and good quality accommodation to buy or rent was prevalent throughout the region. In remote rural areas this was exacerbated by 'incomers' seeking remote rural retreats, which was seen to result in inflating house prices, as well as reducing the choices for those living in the community:

But housing is a big thing because ... to have sort of affordable housing and stuff like that so that it can, that people can afford ... they have quite a lot of problems wae housing. I mean young people, I know one fella, one friend in particular that isn't married, is on his own, is younger, wants

to live in the place but can't get himself a house. He would like to buy a house. He has employment now and he would like to buy a house but the housing prices are just through the roof. And that has happened up with us in [...] a lot of the houses, but now they are holiday homes ... A lot of holiday homes, which is fine in one way but, I mean obviously what use is that to the community.

White Scottish female, Highland

Disability and health

For some participants, disability was perceived as a cause and an effect of poverty:

To come back to my own group, people with mental ill health problems ... 86% are unemployed ... people are blamed for not applying for and taking up these jobs ... that may be completely unsuitable [so] you are a benefit scrounger.

White Scottish female, Highland

Most participants, except the relatively young East Europeans and those with partners on a reasonable income, reported high levels of stress while experiencing and trying to cope with poverty and/or dependence on welfare benefits. In this context, alcoholism and drug consumption were acknowledged as a problem by white Scottish participants in both regions. Poverty was seen as contributing to lower self-esteem, increased isolation and loss of work/community links:

I'm just depressed. I'm negative all the time now. When you're on long-term unemployment you get negative about everything. It's gonnae get worse.

White Scottish male, Fife

It also engendered a variety of emotions ranging from despair, resentment, anger, guilt and shame to depression and feelings of suicide:

That [being out of work] affected my health. I was pretty near suicide until the mental health association found me and I found some meaning in life. But since then although I am on minimal benefits or minimal pension, I have learned to cope.

White Scottish female, Highland

The most extreme case was that of an older Gypsy/Travellers participant who reported that she had great trouble in having her physical and psychological problems addressed by the NHS:

I can't read and write ... I have a lot of medical problems and I'm no getting much success of that doctor doon there. The medication that I'm supposed to be on they've stopped them all.

Gypsy/Travellers female, Fife

While health issues were raised by the Highland participants, the relatively youthful profile of the Fife sample appeared to have made health issues less prominent than they might have been. White Scottish participants were most familiar with the NHS system and therefore knew how to access provision. In contrast, those who had not experienced a similar system elsewhere, such as the Chinese participants in Fife, were particularly pleased that the NHS system existed. However, generally there were issues of access based on language when those with poor English were unable to communicate their problem to the emergency services or rely on consistent support from staff, due to high turnover, in order to help them navigate the system (e.g. register with dental services).

Sustaining communities in remote rural areas

Concerns were expressed about the survival of rural communities in the light of an ageing population, young people migrating out of rural areas, and declining employment and services. Giving young people the chance to remain within the Highlands if they so chose was seen as important. Many young people, faced with poor employment prospects like their parents, leave the Highlands, which was seen as leading to declining communities, and which it was felt needed to be addressed:

Just so that we can hold things there, you know, for ... we've got quite a few young kids, well teenagers ... now in the place. And they tend to go away to Ullapool and once they get into Ullapool school and things like ... You know, so we're trying to say well we want something put back into our community and have something where the children can, can take their friends and, you know, stuff like that. So yeah it would be good to get that because I think you have to look at incomes that you can get in your own community. I think that seems to be the way to, to try, to try and keep these small communities going, you know. You have to sort of be inventive [laughs].

White Scottish female, Highland

Ethnicity-specific impacts

The impact of poverty in this study appeared to be experienced most acutely by Chinese women, Gypsy/Travellers and white Scottish participants. This was due to a range of factors: access to state support being minimal in the case of some, as discussed above; being on a very low income with high costs (such as those of accommodation, transport and so on); and for some women, dependency on a partner (present or absent), who in a number of cases was also on a low income. Previous as well as current asylum seeker status for those awaiting leave to remain in the UK and non-continuous employment histories (for example amongst East Europeans) accentuated economic and psychological stress and vulnerability.

Minority ethnic single mothers who had experienced a marital breakup felt particularly alone, as their family networks were in their country of origin and their isolation was compounded by language barriers:

Yeah, least if family around, you can talk to them. At the moment I sit at home. You know, my daughter only five. I wanna talk to someone about pay this, pay that. I need to worry about money, worry about this bill, worry about that bill, you know. And then no-one can talk to, everything have to do my own. My daughter's friends ... they all have family. Do you understand me?

Chinese female, Fife

Gypsy/Travellers found their traditional patterns of having a mobile and economically sustainable way of life characterised by 'all-family' employment, well-defined gender roles and community solidarity/exclusiveness were being eroded as a result of poverty. To access state provision, Gypsy/Travellers families and communities were increasingly having to succumb to expectations of the settled communities for them to settle down, get a good education and integrate into mainstream life. This seemed to be more acutely expressed by the Gypsy/Travellers participants in Highland. In addition, the disappearance and loss of their traditional way of life not only increased their vulnerability to poverty but also was seen as impacting on their heritage and identity:

We don't really want them [the children] to forget their way of life ... whatever is left of it we would like our kids to know about. We think it's a better environment for them because they are not getting involved in like drugs and drink and everything that all the people in the settled community are doing ... whatever we get thrown at us we have to deal with it ourselves.

Gypsy/Travellers couple, Highland

Our background ... our culture. We are poor people, very poor people but we manage to keep bread on the table, keep the kids clean, do all those things because different background, different culture. If somebody is a non-traveller, is in poverty, most times, they can't go to their relatives for help. And they want money back don't they. If I'm stuck, I'll go to my brother or he'll come to me ... and it's not a loan. I don't expect to get it back. We help one another in that way. It is kind of special to the travelling community yeah.

Gypsy/Travellers couple, Fife

Feelings about loss of identity and social isolation experienced by participants with disabilities (physical and mental) and by some of the women in the Chinese community can lead to an injury and distortion to the individual sense of self, as argued by Fraser (2000).

5 Coping strategies

Participants did not find questions related to coping strategies easy to respond to. There was no commonality of coping strategies; rather, individuals utilised and harnessed whatever was available to them with regard to applying for jobs and improving their access to the job market by retraining and/or developing English language competence. In this context, some coped on their own, whilst others sought and received support from family, friends and local agencies.

While not articulated as such, what came across was the resilience and determination to survive showed by some of the participants who were most badly off across ethnicities, gender and age in the two geographical sites.

Support from family, friends and communities

Those lucky enough to have friends and family used them as a resource and source of support. One of the participants, whose sons were accessing education at the local further education college and had to have student loans, discussed going to his well-off father as a last resort:

Participant: But he's [referring to his son] redoing it [a course] and he's having to do that at his own cost cause he's run out of student loan time. So it might be scrounging from rich relations I think, you know, but ...

Interviewer: So does that mean that they are dependent on you then?

Participant: ... well as much as we're able but that is quite limited. We might sort of, you know, put some money in for fuel in the car. And at the moment doing car repairs on that. But that's all we were able. You know, he knows how much we can and can't do ... Fortunately my dad is quite wealthy and he's quite supportive of those things, you know.

White Scottish male, Highland

Others coped by depending on their own communities:

A lot of travellers is looking tae each other to make money nowadays. Some travellers will come in war vans selling rugs, kettles, dishes, things like that. Yeah, I think a lot of travellers make their money within their own community. They've nothing else to look, they can't go out door to door amongst other communities so they say to theirselves, 'right we just look after oor selves'.

Gypsy/Travellers couple, Fife

Those with families overseas (Chinese and East Europeans) attempted to maintain contact by telephone, or in some cases Skype, to help overcome social isolation.

A mixture of strategies

Coping with poverty for all ethnic groups in both areas involved a range of strategies: a mix of very careful budgeting, frugality and self-sacrifice:

I have learned to find, find out where I can get something cheap, where I can get something for nothing, do without, without something. Not buying something just because I wanted it and I didn't need it which is not a, not very much fun but it's necessary. But you learn. And maybe it was easier for me because my childhood was poverty.

White Scottish female, Highland

Coping by turning to crime was also mentioned:

We don't earn a lot of money. So how do you make up that difference? And the only way for some people is tae to turn to crime.

White Scottish male, Fife

Overall there did not appear to be much social interaction, either between ethnic groups or between individuals and groups who shared similar issues as a result of being on a low income or in poverty. In the case of the Chinese and some of the East Europeans language and cultural modes of socialising (e.g. pubs and the emphasis on alcohol, especially in Highland) acted as barriers. With very few exceptions, most of the participants tended to socialise with other people from their own ethnic group where such groupings were large enough or managed on their own. For example, in Highland, most of the Chinese participants were supported in varying ways by the Scottish Highlands & Islands and Moray Chinese Association (SHIMCA). In Fife, there was less discussion about ethnic-specific support networks other than groups such as the Chinese Christian Fellowship. While Fife has a network of organisations supporting minority ethnic groups, such as the Polish Association, these were not really mentioned by East European participants, including those who were Polish.

Accessing support services

Others were in a position to access council and third sector support. For instance, in Highland the local authority had specific services and officials working with groups such as the Gypsy/Travellers communities and those with English as an additional language needs. In addition, third sector organisations were cited as important sources of support in Highland: the Catholic Church had recruited Polish priests who provided support to the Polish community; the Homeless project in Inverness had developed strong links with East Europeans; and the Highland Users Group (HUG) provided support for people with mental health problems. However, the extent to which the organisation engaged with the Chinese or East European individuals was unclear. In Fife, the council's non-statutory adult education and community learning and employment assistance services (Equal in Fife), and the third sector 'FRAE Fife' were mentioned by all but the Gypsy/Travellers (who did not refer to them) for their supportiveness.

Faith and belief

A number of participants across all ethnicities, including those with no previous affiliations to Christianity, turned to churches or specific groups such as the Chinese Fellowship and the Gypsy/Travellers 'Light and Life' church for religious and non-religious support. This trend was particularly noticeable among the Highland Chinese and East Europeans. Following a relationship breakdown, an East European participant who had no previous religious affiliation found joining a church helped her to cope:

The other thing I do, I go to church ... I've been through difficult times and I always had faith but I had forgotten it for a while. And when I got into a situation when I thought 'I don't know what I'm doing on this earth any more', and my friend from work she says 'I think that's time now to ask you if you would like to come to church on Sundays'. She said 'there's no pressure, you don't have to come but I thought you might have liked it'. So and I was going ever since. And just rediscovered [laughs] my faith again so ... you get support and you just become more positive ...

East European female, Highland

6 'Magic wand' solutions

Participants were asked to articulate what they would like to see changed or improved for them individually and for their household and/or community in five years' time if they had a 'magic wand'. While participants struggled to identify 'magic wand' solutions, most wished for good jobs with improved wages and affordable but good accommodation.

For the asylum seekers in this project, being able to work and have their own accommodation, whilst also contributing to society, were all important and implicitly reflected the views of all the other participants in the study:

I would love to work; my own accommodation; life is easier, have a job and afford to buy things. My main wish is for my own accommodation. Even as asylum seekers we wanted to earn a living, contribute to the economy rather than be locked up, it would be so much better if we could contribute to this society.

Chinese female, Highland

For others, maintaining well-paid jobs as well as expanding the types of jobs available was important:

I would magically expand the job market to be honest [laughs]. I would definitely put more job opportunities in place in all fields. Because there's a lot of service end and tourism and warehouse jobs. Industry and commerce jobs. The only other real option is a lot of people go and work at a call centre ...

White Scottish male, Highland

Others suggested they would like to have easier access to better public services, for example the NHS, housing, education and debt clearance:

The professionals in health need educating and the whole benefit system, disability system is designed for physical (not mental) ill health and disabilities. A psychiatrist asked me 'do you cook?' Yes I can but sometimes I'm not able to if I'm ill.

White Scottish female, Highland

Others suggested that they would like to see improved attitudes, behaviour and effectiveness on the part of central government employment and 'welfare' agencies, making them more like the valued council and third sector organisations with which some participants had contact.

However, there were views, particularly from white Scottish participants, that called for a 'fairer' system for those who they perceived were genuinely poor:

One thing they should stop daing is gieing people that are on drugs and alcohol mair money than folk that are sitting in hooses wae bairns or on their ain. It's bang oot of order like. It's their choice if they want tae take drugs. So if they've no got enough money tae survive that's their problem.

White Scottish female, Fife

In the remote rural locations participants described communities self organising to raise funding to address local community needs, such as spaces for young people to meet, building and maintaining community halls and so on:

... the hall definitely is, is yeah, is a big thing ... For our community. And hopefully ... for us, for me personally, for us that, that's a big thing is to get the hall up and running. But I suppose, what would I like to change [laughs]? I suppose just, and I suppose you do want, you still need, you still want people to come into the community. But that's getting harder and harder.

White Scottish female, Highland

Others had a more ambitious 'wish' such as an end to discrimination and disrespect towards poor and minority ethnic people:

A lot of people, how you look something like that ... what's your nationality ... yeah and a lot of people don't like Polish people. Change that and ... the weather.

East European male, Fife

Some Chinese respondents in particular mentioned their desire to feel that they could make more of a contribution to this society. They felt that they were prevented from doing so because of their legal status, and lack of interpreting/translation and English language learning services specifically targeted at their needs.

The most distinctive contributions from some of the East European as well as white Scottish participants was the call for the reduction of continuous, escalating consumption as a way of life. They wished for policies that ensured that the rich did not become too rich, or the poor too poor, and they expressed a desire for finding ways to enable 'ordinary' people to have more control over their lives:

Much benefit could arise if people gave up the supposed value of continuous consumption – you can't always be buying new things and be constantly told to do so by the media.

East European female, Fife

In the case of Gypsy/Travellers people, they wished for more safe, well-provided-for sites and stopping places; the end of racism and anti-Gypsy/Travellers discrimination; better representation at government level; more direct support for them to develop (new) skills; 'community halls' where they could assemble and discuss their situation; less feuding among Gypsy/Travellers; and for Christian principles of inclusion and mutual respect to be applied.

7 Summary of findings

This section draws together the main findings that have emerged from the participants and also takes into consideration comments made by stakeholders in both geographical sites. The relationship between poverty and ethnicity is dense and complex, and contingent on a variety of factors including age; gender; economic, location and cultural factors; and circumstances such as being single, having a partner in work and so on. These complexities are not always easy to unpick or understand fully in one-off short interviews. It is also important to be cautious in drawing firm conclusions from the apparent differences between Fife and Highland, as these may be caused by the participants who happened to be involved in the study rather than a reflection of geographical differences per se.

Nevertheless, despite these challenges and the small sample, the findings from this study on issues such as perceptions of poverty, the causes of poverty and its impacts are well supported by other research cited in the Introduction.

Perceptions of poverty

- Across all ethnic groups, participants recognised that poverty was relative and compared their situation with others in the UK, internationally or their countries of origin.
- Participants made a distinction between objective definitions of poverty (e.g. minimum wage, etc.) and subjective feelings – some considering themselves quite well off, others experiencing strong feelings of social isolation and stigma.
- All associated poverty with having limited choice and opportunities with regard to accessing basics, such as food, warmth, healthcare and accommodation. It also created stresses and strains within family relationships, leading to breakdowns and divisions, and made it difficult to access education, training and social and leisure activities.
- Younger participants, mainly from East European and white Scottish groups (under 35 years of age), were less likely to regard poverty as a permanent or inescapable condition. Younger East Europeans, particularly those without dependants, appeared more able to cope with being on a low income or in poverty.

Causes of poverty

Participants had much to say about causes of poverty, focusing mainly on economic factors, employment and housing issues.

Economic factors

- Participants, regardless of ethnicity, identified restructuring of the economy and local labour market constraints as key contributors to poverty and low income. The rise in service sector jobs and a decline in what was seen as well-paid, skilled manual work (e.g. construction, mining, fishing and so

on) were felt to result in limited employment that was well paid and secure. In Highland, unskilled low-paid seasonal work, combined with poor and expensive transport costs, were additional contributors to continued poverty.

- The impact of the economic recession was identified as reducing employment as well as apprenticeship and training opportunities. There were also concerns that outsourcing of public sector jobs, especially in Highland, may lead to further reduction in wages, especially in remote rural areas where well-paid employment opportunities were already limited.

There were some specific issues that emerged for particular ethnic groups:

- While the loss of traditional forms of livelihood has resulted in greater poverty, for Gypsy/Travellers this was compounded by pressures to lead a settled life, which they felt led to creating extra expenses; for example, having to spend money on heating a building (house).
- Experiences of prejudice based on societal stigmatisation of poor people affected all groups; however, further prejudice and racism were experienced particularly by Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, but also by some Chinese and East European participants in both areas, which made it more difficult for them to find routes out of poverty.

Factors such as gender, disability, age (being older) and marital breakups, in conjunction with economic issues highlighted above, were also identified as increasing vulnerability to poverty. The need to support a drug and/or alcohol habit was also cited as a factor that increased an individual's level of poverty.

Barriers to employment

Most participants, regardless of ethnicity, identified the following barriers to accessing employment:

- difficulties in accessing training and skills development programmes because of inadequate provision and costs;
- a lack of appropriately trained staff with the relevant skills within employment agencies at a local level, e.g. Jobcentre Plus, in helping them to seek work.

In addition, a number of ethnic- and/or gender-specific issues with regard to seeking employment emerged from the study. These were:

- A lack of English fluency for work purposes among many Chinese and East European participants and low levels of literacy amongst Gypsy/Travellers were noted.
- Accessing English language provision, particularly in Highland seemed problematic, owing to insufficient provision and inability to access current provision because of childcare responsibilities or shift work and long hours.
- Single parent women with school-aged children identified a lack of affordable, appropriate (e.g. culturally sensitive) childcare as preventing them from accessing a range of jobs, particularly work outwith school hours. This was most acute for single parent Chinese women who had little English and lacked family or social support structures locally.

- A lack of recognition of overseas qualifications was a particular issue for participants from Fife. In Highland, the issue related more to a lack of qualifications. However, this may be a factor pertaining to this sample of participants, as other studies have found that non-recognition of overseas qualifications does have an impact on East Europeans and others from a minority ethnic background with regard to accessing employment commensurate with their qualifications (see for example, de Lima, *et al.*, 2005b; Jenstch, *et al.*, 2007).
- Language barriers exacerbated the obstacles faced in accessing training and skills development programmes. In addition, some eligibility rules appeared to create barriers to accessing language training. For example, access to training funded by the European Social Fund was denied to those who had recourse to public funds.
- The legal status of some Chinese women participants (e.g. asylum seekers/recently granted refugee status), in particular, impacted on their ability to access employment as well as other state support. This placed them in a vulnerable position and made them economically dependent on other members of their community.
- Some white Scottish men expressed concerns about the diminishing opportunities in accessing well-paid, skilled manual occupations in their local areas. The decline in mining and manufacturing in Fife and traditional rural sector jobs (agriculture, fishing and forestry) in remote rural areas of Highland affected the ability of white Scottish men, in particular, to access well-paid craft/manual jobs. In addition, white Scottish men, in particular, appeared reluctant to take on what was perceived as 'women's work'.

Housing

- Lack of access to good quality and affordable housing can be seen as both a cause and impact of poverty. Participants of all ethnicities in both regions spent a large proportion of their available income on paying rent for poor quality public and private housing and items such as heating costs.
- In the remoter rural areas in Highland, the housing situation was compounded by much affordable housing being bought by second-home owners buying holiday properties in the area.

Intra-regional factors

The different geography and economies of the two regions were very important in understanding poverty and low income amongst different groups, as highlighted for example by a report published recently by the Foundation on 'a minimum income standard for rural households' (Smith, *et al.*, 2010). For instance, in Highland, the limited labour market opportunities and the prevalence of low-paid seasonal work affected access to well-paid employment among East Europeans and white Scottish participants, whilst in Fife it was the loss of manufacturing jobs that affected white Scottish men in particular.

Impact of poverty

- Poverty impacted on participants' lives in many different ways, but most importantly it reduced their ability to afford the basics, such as healthy food and good quality accommodation at affordable prices, and to meet the needs of their children.

- Access to training and educational opportunities was also limited owing to a lack of funding or restrictions placed on those in receipt of welfare benefits.
- Poverty created additional strains and stresses on family life and affected their access to social and leisure activities.
- In addition, factors such as disabilities, gender and ethnicity, as well as living in remote rural areas, accentuated the impact of poverty in different ways for different groups.
- The impact of the economic recession was identified as reducing employment as well as apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- There were also concerns that outsourcing of public sector jobs, especially in Highland, may lead to further reduction in wages especially in remote rural areas where well-paid employment opportunities were already limited.
- Poverty appeared to lead to the erosion of identity and traditional lifestyles of Gypsy/Travellers.

Coping strategies and ‘magic wand’ solutions

- Participants used a variety of coping strategies: doing without; buying cheap food; and accessing support from family and friends where this was possible.
- Church and faith organisations provided a tangible form of support for most of the participants across ethnicities in Highland. However, in Fife, declared religious affiliation or participation within religious groups was much lower.
- Non-statutory local authority and third sector employment agencies were viewed as more accessible and helpful than central government agencies in assisting with job-finding and the provision of information.
- The majority of participants wished for good jobs, improved wages and good quality and affordable accommodation.

8 Implications for future research, policy and service delivery

This section of the report starts by identifying suggestions for further research in relation to poverty and ethnicity, by drawing on the findings of the study. It also highlights some policy and service delivery implications that emerged from the participants' accounts of being in poverty, which participants were keen to have recorded and passed on to service providers.

Implications for future research

This study has highlighted the complexities involved in understanding the relationship between poverty, ethnicity and other identities, such as age, gender, etc., while simultaneously taking into account location or place. Understanding these relationships requires different approaches and methods, as well as scales (community, regional, and national) at which research is undertaken.

The following are some general suggestions that merit further in-depth research:

- the influence of global, national and regional economic policy and institutional factors on 'in work poverty' and unemployment for different ethnic groups with due regard for the intersectionality of identities (e.g. gender, age, disability, etc.);
- more systematic research that takes into account explicitly the complex interaction of places, geographies and public policies, and their impact on poverty across different ethnic groups, in a way that reflects the diverse economies that may be embodied within a region;
- mapping of the operation of regional and localised labour markets and how this impacts on different types of population in accessing employment;
- the differential impact of the economic crisis and public sector cuts on employment and vulnerability to poverty of different ethnic groups, taking into account the intersectionality of identities (e.g. gender, age, disability and so on) and geographical location; the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Government Equalities Office (GEO) (2009) found that minority ethnic groups experienced the highest rise in unemployment in the current recession – this requires further exploration;
- the impact, coping strategies and routes out of poverty across and amongst different ethnic groups, taking into account a variety of social identities as well as issues such as legal status and migration histories.

Some specific issues also emerged in relation to minority ethnic groups in particular, which merit further research. These include developing a greater understanding of:

- the ways in which factors such as single parent status, lack of fluency or literacy in English and legal status may accentuate the impact of low income on minority ethnic groups, such as the Chinese women on a low income in the study;
- differences within specific ethnic categories; for example, recognising the possible diversity amongst seemingly homogeneous groups such as 'Chinese', with regard to causes and impacts of poverty, as well as strategies for coping to fully understand the relationship between poverty and ethnicity;
- the impact of poverty on the identities of minority groups who may well already be marginalised, and the long-term repercussions of issues related to the non-recognition of identities or reduction of status as a result of poverty and migration.

In conclusion, research in this area would need to be more inclusive than this study was in a position to be with regard to the ethnicities involved, and accessing participants not necessarily in touch with agencies. This is challenging, and time and resource intensive, especially in remote rural areas.

Furthermore, one-off short interviews are not necessarily effective in developing in-depth insights into the complex dynamics of poverty and ethnicity. In this context, ethnographic methods may be more appropriate. For example, 'mobile' methods such as walking interviews, whereby researchers familiarise themselves with and navigate through the environment, events and lives of participants in their location (see Busher, *et al.*, 2011) and case study approaches which include multiple depth interviews to get at the complexities involved. In using these methodologies due regard should be given to issues of gender, ethnicity and linguistic appropriateness when selecting the research team carrying out the fieldwork.

Implications for policy and service delivery

The issues raised below are not new and have been consistently identified by previous research (de Lima, *et al.*, 2007; Rolfe and Metcalf, 2009). However, it was felt that it was important to include some discussion of the implications for policy and service delivery, to enable those responsible to be aware of the concerns that participants have highlighted in the course of this study:

- the need for local authorities and the Third Sector to be aware of and be prepared to become involved with (former) Chinese asylum seekers who are living in desperate circumstances, with little income or independent support; in particular to consider issues of intra-ethnic group forms of exploitation, for example mainland Chinese being employed on low wages by longer resident Hong Kong Chinese shop/restaurant owners;
- the likelihood that non-UK and East European people and Gypsy/Travellers are not receiving their full welfare benefits owing to a lack of information about what they are entitled to and communication problems, as well as other system-based reasons, for instance inadequate staff briefing and training;
- the extent to which European Social Fund employment-related funds are limited by constraints that mean that many potential A8 recipients are denied them – an issue raised by stakeholders;
- the need for all relevant agencies to gain a better understanding of the relationship between poverty and ethnicity amongst other minority ethnic groups not included in this study; in particular, to find ways of accessing those who may have little or no contact with agencies, and may consequently be difficult to reach or access;

- the inadequacy of English language learning for different purposes (e.g. social, work and academic purposes) and the need for provision to be more flexible;
- the need to work with those who provide childcare support and services (public, private and third sector) to ensure that these are culturally sensitive and proactive in ensuring racial, religious and linguistic inclusion;
- the need for statutory and non-statutory agencies to understand how racism (personal, cultural and institutional) impacts on the lives of minority ethnic people, and to make sure staff understand these and are able to ensure that services respond to and challenge racism;
- the question of whether, as a remote region, Highland receives appropriate Scottish and central government support for addressing poverty in rural areas; in particular, reviewing the impact of the Holyrood 'Fairer Scotland' initiative.

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Appendix I

Fife participant demographic profile

No.	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Education/ place	Religion/ faith	Disability	Employment/ type	Marital status	Language(s)	Household number	Household income	Location
1	Estonian	Male	26–35	D/K	Hindu	Not disabled	Unemployed	Single	English, Russian, Estonian, Polish	2	£65 p.w. JSA	Kirkcaldy
2	Polish	Female	18–25	MSc Econ, Poland	Catholic	Not disabled	Unemployed, College	Co- habiting	Polish, English	2	£1600 p.c.m. (partner)	Kirkcaldy
3	Polish	Male	26–35	College, Poland	No religion	Not disabled	Full time	Married	Polish, English	3	D/K	Kirkcaldy
4	Polish	Female	18–25	High school certificate, Poland	No religion	Not disabled	Part time	Married	Polish, English	3	D/K	Kirkcaldy
5	Hungarian	Male	18–25	College level (photography and sound engineering), Poland	No religion	Not disabled	Full time	Single	Hungarian, English	2	£200 p.w.	Kinghorn
6	Chinese	Male	36–45	MSc, studying for PhD, UK	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed, studying	Married	Chinese (Mandarin), English	3	£23K p.a. (partner)	Kirkcaldy
7	Chinese	Female	36–45	Graduate teacher, China	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Married	Cantonese, Mandarin, English	5	£25K p.a. (partner)	East Wemyss
8	Chinese	Female	36–45	Business marketing, D/K	Buddhist	Not disabled	Self-employed	Married/ separated	Mandarin, Japanese, English	2	D/K	Dunfermline
9	Chinese	Female	36–45	University, China	Not Christian but in Christian fellowship for support	Not disabled	Employed, cleaner	Married/ separated	Mandarin, English	2	£313 p.m. Child Benefit/ Working Tax Credit	Dunfermline

10	British	Female	46–55	D/K	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Married/separated	English	D/K	£138 p.w. JSA and Child Tax Credit	Kirkcaldy
11	British	Female	36–45	HNC, D/K	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Divorced	Scottish	1	£65 p.w. JSA	Kirkcaldy
12	British	Female	18–25	High school level, D/K	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Co-habiting	English	3	£20 p.w. Child Benefit and £53 p.w. Child Tax Credit	Kirkcaldy
13	Scottish	Male	26–35	D/K	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Single	Scottish	3	Partner's income £65 p.w. JSA	Kirkcaldy
14	British	Male	36–45	O grades/ National certificate, D/K	No religion	Disabled, mild asthma	Unemployed	Divorced	English	1	Less than £60 DWP	Kirkcaldy
15	Scottish Traveller	Female	26–35	College student, D/K	No religion	Not disabled	Unemployed	Single	English	4	D/K	Cupar
16	Scottish Traveller	Female	46–55	Primary, Scotland	Christian	Not able to work (sciatica)	Unemployed	Widow	English	1	D/K	Cupar

Notes

D/K, don't know; DWP, Department of Work and Pensions; JSA, Job Seeker's Allowance; p.a., per annum; p.c.m., per calendar month; p.w., per week. All respondents designated themselves as 'straight' so column was omitted.

Appendix II

Highland participant demographic profile

No.	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Education/ place	Faith	Disability	Employment/ type	Marital status	Language	Household number	Household income (per week unless otherwise stated)	Location
Chinese (CH)												
1	Macao Chinese	Female	36–45	Not completed secondary school, Macao	None	Not disabled	Husband: waiter in Chinese restaurant in London	Married	Cantonese	4	£500 Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit	Inverness
2	Chinese	Female	26–35	College, China	Christian	Not disabled	Husband: waiter in Chinese restaurant	Co-habiting	Mandarin/ Cantonese	3	£250	Inverness
3	Malaysian Chinese	Male	18–25	Standard grades, Scotland	None	Learning disability	Waiter, Chinese restaurant	Single	Mandarin/ Cantonese	2	£200	Dingwall
4	Chinese	Female	26–35	Secondary school, China	Catholic	Child autistic	Husband: kitchen assistant, Chinese takeaway	Married	Mandarin	3	£220; Child Benefit and disability allowance for child	Inverness
East European (EE)												
5	Slovakian	Female	20s	D/K	Catholic	Not disabled	Unemployed	Married	Slovakian, Russian	3	D/K	Fort William
6	Polish	Female	46–55	Vocational, Poland	Catholic	Not disabled	Unemployed	Widow	Polish	2	£65	Inverness
7	Czech	Male	36–45	D/K	D/K	Not disabled	Unemployed	Separated	Czech	1	On benefits	Inverness
8	Lithuanian	Female	36–45	Qualified teacher, Lithuania	Christian	Not disabled	Employed full time, sales assistant	Single	Lithuanian, English	2, shares with landlady	c. £200	Inverness

White Scottish (WS)												
9	Scottish	Male	18–25	Secondary school (dropped out), Scotland	Taoist	Not disabled	Employed part time, cleaning operative	Single	English	1, shares with mother or grandparents	c. £7K p.a., c. £140 p.w.	Inverness
10	British	Male	46–55	D/K	Christian	Not disabled	Employed part time	Married	English	5	c. £13K p.a., c. £240 p.w., in receipt of tax credits	Inverness
11	Scottish	Female	56–65	Higher education, Finland	None	Depression, arthritis	Pensioner, voluntary work	Single	English	1	c. £6.7K p.a., c. £130 p.w., in receipt of pension credit	Skye
12	Scottish	Female	36–45	D/K	D/K	Not disabled	Employed full time (facing redundancy), care worker	Married	English	3	c. £20K p.a. + husband's variable self-employed income	Assynt
Gypsy/Travellers (GT)												
13	Gypsy/ Traveller	Female	18–25	Primary, Scotland	Christian	Recent broken back	Unemployed	Married	English	2	D/K	Inverness
14	Scottish Traveller	Male	26–35	Primary/secondary, Scotland	Christian	Not disabled	Self-employed	Married	English	3	D/K	Inverness
15	Scottish Traveller	Female	36–45	Primary, Scotland	Christian	Not disabled	Employed full time	Married	English	2	D/K	D/K
16	Scottish Traveller	Male	36–45	Primary, Scotland	Christian	Not disabled	Unemployed	Married	English	6	D/K	D/K

Notes

D/K, don't know; p.a., per annum; p.w., per week.

All respondents designated themselves as 'straight' so column was omitted.

Appendix III

Stakeholders: Fife

Andrew Ballingall	Fife Council
Nancy Barrett	Fife Rights Forum
Ray Blackley	Fife Council/Adult Education/Community Learning and Development (CLD)
Maciej Dokurno	Fife Council/Equal in Fife
Norma Graham	Fife Rural Partnership
Ade Johnson	FRAE Fife
Li Fang Lamb	Fife Council/Equal in Fife
Robert McGregor	Sustainable Communities Group, Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) Management Group, Fife Council
Joanne Milligan	Fife Gingerbread
Chris Mitchell	Research Unit, Fife Council
Zahida Rahmzan	Equalities Unit, Fife Council
Donald Robertson	Citizens Advice and Rights Fife

Appendix IV

Stakeholders: Highland

Alasdair Christie	Inverness and Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)
Alison Clark	Highland Council
Carol Greer	Citizens Advice Scotland
Lyn Kilpatrick	Highland Council
Monica Lee-Macpherson	Scottish Highlands & Islands and Moray Chinese Association (SHIMCA)
Jamie MacDonald	Jobcentre Plus
Bob Mackinnon	Highland Council
Rosemary Mackinnon	Highland Council
Karen MacMaster	Highland Council
Graham Morgan	Highland Community Care Forum
Frances Nixseaman	Highland Community Care Forum, Highland Carers Project
Moiria Paton	NHS Highland
Julie Simmons	Highland Council
Anne Sutherland	Merkinch Partnership
Maya Uddin	Highland Bangladeshi Association

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