Reframing the Irish activation debate;
Accommodating care and safeguarding social rights and choices .

This book is dedicated, with love and thanks, to my own mother Olive Murphy.

Thank you to the Policy Institute for hosting my six month visit to write to this paper and to Combat Poverty for funding the Visiting Research Fellowship in the Policy Institute. Thank you also to the various Trinity College staff who assisted me, especially Tony McCashin for his insight and support. Likewise I owe my gratitude to statutory and non government agencies in New Zealand who facilitated me in my visit and to Maria Hegarty who accompanied me there. I would also like to acknowledge the opportunity to listen to input from a DFSA Consultation about Proposals to Support Lone Parents, an EAPN Activation Working Group Seminar and an ICTU Round Table on Lone Parents all of which took place in the formative stages of this paper. Various people read drafts, agreed to be interviewed or attended presentations of various aspects of this work, thank you for your input, thoughts and feedback. I am most grateful to the insightful and useful comments from the two referees of this paper. As always final conclusions and mistakes are my own. Finally, a sincere thank-you to my family, Declan, Dan and Emer who know all too much about how combining work and motherhood impacts on family life!

Contact details

Dr Mary Murphy
Department of Sociology
National University of Ireland
Maynooth
Co Kildare
Email Mary.P.Murphy@nuim.ie
Ph 0035317086556

Executive summary

This paper critically engages with a recent government initiative 'Proposals to Support Lone Parents (DSFA 2006) which proposed to introduce a stronger form of work activation for recipients of the Irish One Parent Family Payment and qualified adults in Irish social assistance payments (DSFA 2006). The proposals suggest, among other changes, to introduce a work obligation of at least 19.5 hours per week for this target group when their youngest children reaches aged eight. The paper aims to develop a positive model of activation capable of supporting people of working age in their efforts to find decent, sustainable employment. It does this by developing an activation template that can be used as a model for activating adults of working age, including people with disabilities, migrants, youth, homeless or older people. It also examines how such an approach might be implemented in Ireland.

Activation is 'a social discourse with divergent ideological roots' (Geldof 1999). These roots cause much cross-purposes in debates about activation. International concepts of 'flexicurity' and 'active inclusion' are now features of Irish labour market inclusion and anti poverty debate (NESC 2005, EAPN 2006b). The language that frames policy debate on activation is important. In analysing official Irish rhetoric about activation, different discourses are evident, including welfare dependency, child poverty, gender equality and productivist social policy Care needs to be taken, while promoting active social policy, not to demonise those dependent on welfare or to reinforce exclusion of certain vulnerable groups.

Activation policy also has to be sensitive to how motherhood is differentiated by class and ethnicity. State policy can create or reinforce different experiences of motherhood. Mahon (2004) highlights how a new social contract of motherhood differentiates women on grounds of both class and marital status. Irish social security and taxation policy has developed in a gender-biased way and still supports 'wifely' labour. Activation policy sits in an ambiguous policy context aiming as it does to maximise some mothers' work participation, while other policy continues to support the domestic roles of other Irish mothers. It is questionable whether it is fair or consistent to fiscally support some parents choice to full time parent care while obliging others parents to work part time.

Present Irish activation policy, broader employment policy and the DSFA 2006 proposals do not reflect the priority that many women afford to the ethic of care in their lives. Practical issues still present significant challenges for successful activation of low-income mothers

with primary aged children. While preschool childcare is not an issue, managing time, co-ordination and scheduling issues associated with children of schooling age is stressful and present policy does little to address such needs. Physical and mental health is a serious impediment to employment and there are important questions of child well-being and adolescent emotional health. Time and transport limitations often restrict low-income mothers' access to local labour markets where there is often only very low-paid and unsustainable employment options. Activation policy has be flexible to manage such limitations and the reality of women's lives. In particular policy and practice has to be sensitive enough to recognise that labour market participation may not always increase and sometimes might decrease family well-being. If activation policy is to reflect the ethic of care and the practical challenges that mediate women's lives, it will have to incorporate an ethic of care, accommodate care itself, and include realistic, rights-based exemptions to work requirements.

A decision to apply 'conditionality' or a work requirement to lone parents and qualified adults is a common feature of other countries' social and labour market policy, but there is huge variety in how activation is implemented across countries. It is not activation that achieves high levels of maternal employment but incorporating family-friendly and work-life balance policy into overall labour market and activation policy. From a 'rights' or 'citizenship' perspective, recognising the centrality of personal autonomy and freedom to personal well-being, there are few merits to being forced to participate in paid employment at the expense of sacrificing a core choice to prioritise care. Nor is there much practical merit in forcing people to do something that, in the right conditions, they would choose to do. Hence there is little by way of sustainable arguments for introducing compulsion for lone parents or qualified adults.

Drawing on various academic and policy frameworks, this paper discusses what would be required of a positive or an 'emancipatory framework' for activation. Such a framework focuses on broader social inclusion rather than work focused approaches to activation. It outlines a long term human and social capital approach, which focuses on 'education first' rather than 'work first' employment strategies. A positive approach anchors the State's obligations to claimants in legally defined rights and standards frameworks, and ensures claimants' obligations are proportionate to the level of investment by, and obligations to, the State.

An examination of the composition of the target groups (Irish recipients of One Parent Family Payment and qualified adults on social assistance payments) highlights their

heterogenity and the diverse labour market and care needs of this group. Lone parents and qualified adults cannot be treated as one target group. Examination of the Irish experience of in-work-poverty highlights that it is women in part-time non-standard employment that are most of risk of in-work poverty. Without strategies to enhance the capacity of part-time work to be an effective route out of poverty, an activation strategy based on part-time work may trap these women into poverty. Given such low levels of educational achievement in the target group, an educational guarantee rather than compulsory work requirement would be a more useful strategy. Given the scale of multidimensional disadvantage and practical obstacles including health, housing, care, transport and educational disadvantage, the activation strategy must be embedded in an institutional framework that is capable of addressing such needs in a co-ordinated and integrated manner.

The challenge, if a more compulsory form of activation policy is to be adopted, is how to ensure that: the priority afforded to issues of care in women's lives is respected; appropriate and affordable childcare is available; work actually pays; secondary benefit retention issues are addressed; education needs are prioritised; exemptions from work tests are available; and safeguards are built in so that pressure applied to lone parents and qualified adults is appropriate to the supports and pathways available and the likely rewards from paid work. Several aspects of the quality of work and labour market relevance of labour market supports need to be examined, including enhancement of part-time employment options, supports to employers to develop family-friendly practice; strategies to overcome lack of local, quality, appropriate employment and access to appropriate training and education programmes.

A defining feature of Irish policy-making is the considerable gap between formulation and implementation. National and local institutional reforms are necessary to develop a coherent, integrated activation implementation strategy. Finn (2000) observes radical changes in traditional welfare and a move from an employment agency bureaucracy to more flexible local delivery. A major challenge is re-imagining the institutional relationship between employment services (FAS) and income supports (DSFA). Co-ordination between the employment authorities and social authorities has happened elsewhere by joint venture or merge, or by new processes of mediation between the authorities. Regardless of the model, co-ordination requires effective national leadership, which enables local co-ordination in a framework of accountability and standards (Ditch and Roberts 2002:90-2).

Activation policy is delivered locally and it is only at local level that the client can experience co-ordination and integration. Success in welfare-to-work strategies is highly contingent on capacity of local institutions and networks to work to a common agenda. The

range of local implementation actors include the family resource centres, local employment services, jobs facilitators, community welfare officers, community education workers and non government organisations. Building on a 'social inclusion' rather than 'work first' approach means focusing on the case work process. The role of the mediator needs to be interpreted as widely as possible and the mediator empowered to do the networking necessary to provide an integrated service. Recent social inclusion strategies have highlighted the emerging role of City and County Development Boards. In theory these boards are well placed institutionally to lead a local employment partnership in the context of a national strategic employment framework linked to a national reform programme. However many groups are dubious as to whether significant level of institutional and cultural change required of national and local statutory agencies is possible or likely. Such a quantum leap requires clear political and bureaucratic leadership and active collaboration with key representative groups.

A 'rights and standards approach' to an activation framework requires a strong legal framework that frames the clients and the State's rights and obligations in legal instruments and provides legal safeguards and monitoring systems. A shift in rights implies a shift in power. Imposing a work requirement on a claimant shifts the power balance towards the mediator. Careful policy design, training and monitoring are required to ensure such power is used appropriately in the case management process. So too attention needs to be focused on framing the discourse of leaders at political, departmental and agency level, so that a positive message is heard at 'street level' and that clients, workers and agencies are 'on message' promoting a 'social inclusion' rather than 'work first' strategy.

Existing challenges to make work pay and to tackle in-work poverty traps associated with loss of secondary benefits and costs of childcare, need to be managed out of the system before the activation policy is implemented. Various poverty traps are already associated with One Parent Family Payment (OPFP) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). The irony of the DSFA 2006 proposals is not just that they will not address current traps but that they will create new, more intense traps. While such losses may be mitigated by tapering arrangements, there may still be a net loss in the transition from the new Parental Allowance to Job Seekers Allowance (as claimant or qualified adult). If this happens, an unfortunate negative message about the reform will travel quickly 'on the grapevine'. Such a possibility should be avoided. The development of a work-neutral child benefit system and refundable tax credit scheme would assist many lone parents. Family-friendly policy is no threat to competitiveness. However employers, instead of providing flexible employment, are increasingly requiring flexibility from low-income employees (Duggan and Loftus, 2006).

In the absence of satisfactory voluntary progress through the National Framework Committee on Work-Life Balance, consideration should now be given to a stronger legislative approach and a regulatory framework for work-life balance (Irvine 2007) Finally, for partnered mothers, Ireland has a very inegalitarian state of affairs with regard to the sharing of household functions, more public policies equal to promote domestic task sharing are required.

Working in paid employment is now a common aspiration for many low-income mothers and any supports that can assist them towards the goal of decent employment are to be welcomed. There is much therefore to be welcomed in government proposals to pursue a more energetic activation policy. However there is also need for caution, as the present debate, while framed in a discourse about tackling child poverty, is also set in a wider discourse of tackling welfare dependency. Reframing activation policy in an 'ethic of care' discourse allows the notion of dependency to be challenged and the concept of care and interdependency to be valued and accommodated. There is no compelling argument for a more conditional social security system. Introduction of work requirements should be at least delayed until adequate institutional frameworks and quality supports are in place. As debate moves on it is necessary to be both ambitious about the future but grounded about the reality and tensions in women's lives and to focus on what is required to achieve long term child well-being in future generations. It is remarkable that we set into this journey with little empirical evidence about the lives of such women and their labour market experience. This highlights the importance of both quantitative and qualitative research, and ensuring that mothers' own voices inform the debate.

Chapter One

Introduction and Chapter Structure

1.1 Introduction

Work activation is the term used to describe a policy objective of moving people of working age from a social welfare payment into paid employment. It involves using the social welfare system proactively to support, encourage or oblige claimants to participate in work, education or training. Over the last decade, Irish anti poverty policy has increasingly centered on work activation as the primary route out of poverty. The National Employment Action Plan requires that, after three months of signing on for Job Seekers Allowance or Benefit, recipients are referred to FAS the Irish labour market placement agency. They should be offered, and should accept, a work, training, education or guidance option. Recent Irish policy reports (NESC 2005, Ireland 2007) have injected momentum into Irish activation policy and it is now a formal aspiration to apply activation policy to all adults of working age who are depending on social welfare payments and considered capable of employment. To enhance institutional capacity to expand activation the Department of Social and Family Affairs is to develop a new Social and Economic Participation Programme where staff in local offices will take a more active approach and FAS is to develop more targeted training for groups considered further form the labour market.

In this context the Irish government launched *Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents* in March 2006 (DSFA 2006). This paper critically engages with proposals in that publication to introduce a stronger form of work activation for lone parents and qualified adults. The paper aims to reframe the debate on work activation and to scope out what is required to introduce a positive model of activation that can genuinely impact on adult and child poverty. The challenge is to develop an activation template that provides a positive model for activating other adults of working age, including people with disabilities, migrants, youth, homeless or older people. A template for activation has relevance beyond lone parents and qualified adults, but because they are the first target group for a new approach to activation, getting it right first time is crucial. This first chapter sets the research context by introducing the background to, and the content of, recent government proposals to support lone parents and qualified adults. Having introduced the research objectives and methodology, the chapter concludes by outlining the structure of following chapters.

1.2 The proposal

Present Irish social welfare and labour market institutions reflect a time when the priority was not activation but managing unemployment. With high levels of job growth, the challenge is now to maximise economic inclusion. Various international institutions have discussed how activation schemes can work for social inclusion and introduced the concepts of 'flexicurity' and 'active inclusion' into anti poverty debate. Flexicurity aims to make labour markets more flexible and in return provide high levels of social security for those in and out of work (EAPN 2006). It requires active labour market measures, generous public welfare and flexible labour markets. Active inclusion stresses labour market attachment but also income support and accessible services. Crucially, it acknowledges the need to provide decent standards of living to those who are and will remain outside the labour market. NESC's *Developmental Welfare State* (2005:221) proposed a more active Irish social policy, which would encourage lifetime attachment to the labour market. A move to more active social policy was confirmed by the social partners in the new national partnership document, *Towards 2016* (2006), which agreed to extend the National Employment Action Plan process of systematic engagement, to groups such as lone parents and people with disabilities. This direction has been reaffirmed in the most recent *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2106* (Ireland, 2007).

Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents (DSFA 2006) is a government proposal to develop a more active social policy for recipients of the One Parent Family Payment and some qualified adults. The report includes a discussion paper, prepared by senior officials, for the Cabinet Subcommittee on Social Inclusion, as part of the initiative to end child poverty, which was part of the then national partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*. The report contains a separate but complementary review of income support arrangements for lone parents, which was carried out by a working group within the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The report argues that children of lone parents are one of the major groups at risk of child poverty and presents a review of the issues facing lone parents and the barriers to their achieving economic independence. It concludes that the €1 billion being spent on supports is sufficient in monetary terms but is not effectively addressing social inclusion or child poverty. It outlines reforms and recommendations to address particular problems faced by lone parents. Before outlining the specific income support proposal it is necessary to briefly outline the current income support arrangements for lone parents and qualified adults.

The proposals need to be seen in the context of the historical development of social security policy in Ireland. McLaughlin and Roberts (1997), Yeates (1997) and McCashin (2004) stress how, until recently, Irish policy firmly treated lone parents as mothers, not workers. Unusually in international terms, since 1973 Ireland provided a specific payment to enable those parenting alone to provide full-time care. This approach, used also in Norway, New Zealand and Australia, amounts to a relatively strong recognition of the social right to give and receive care (Skevik 2005). At the time of writing, anyone parenting on their own one or more children under 22, can, providing they satisfy a household means test and a cohabitation test, access a One Parent Family Payment which is paid at the same rate as Job Seekers Allowance. Under this payment there is no requirement to work but there are income disregards built into the payment and these provide a financial incentive to work.

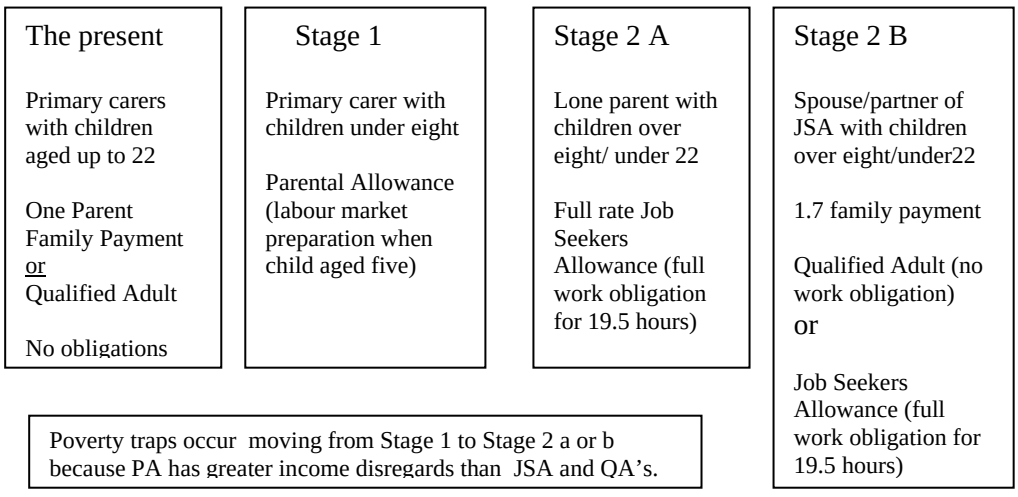
This approach to lone parents is consistent with the male breadwinner Irish social security system. The traditional structure of the Irish social security system assumes two parent households are comprised of a full time bread winner and a full time carer. The main family social assistance payment is Job Seekers Allowance. This payment, again subject to a household means test, is paid directly to the claimant and comprises a full adult rate, a qualified adult rate paid (which ranges from approximately .65 – 70% of the adult rate) and the appropriate number of child dependant allowances. The qualified adult, in over 95% of cases the female woman spouse or partner of the male claimant, is not required to seek employment (Murphy, 2003). The entitlement to the qualified adult payment is regardless of the age of any dependent children or whether or not there are children in the household. Historically there have been some limited income disregards in the structure of the qualified adult allowance which provided limited financial incentives to work. Since Budget 2007 the income disregards for qualified adults have been improved to make them consistent with those of Job Seekers Allowance. Nonetheless the qualified adult payment remains unconditional on either care or employment obligations and represents a strong financial support for wifely labour and a bias towards supporting the role of full time parenting in a social welfare dependant family.

The proposals involve a significant break in the historical development of social security and a fundamental restructuring of both *One Parent Family Payment* and *Qualified Adult Allowances.* The report proposes abolishing the One Parent Family Payment and reforming it into a household means-tested *Parental Allowance* (PA) for those who are primarily caring for children up to age seven. There will be no rule prohibiting cohabitation and all one-parent families can apply for the household means-tested PA. For two-parent households depending on a social assistance based Job Seekers Allowance there will no longer be an

option of a qualified adult payment in households with children under eight. Instead the qualified adult will directly receive the *Parental Allowance.* In those households with children over eight the qualified adult allowance will remain an option for spouses and partners of claimants. Hence when entitlement to a parental allowance ends (when the youngest child is eight) the lone parent claimant will revert to a *Job Seekers Allowance* (paid at the same rate as PA but with less generous income disregards as the PA) and spouses or partners will become *Qualified Adults* (paid at the .7 of a adult rate). This means that those on the Parental Allowance who find themselves in continued need of income support will experience a drop either the level of income disregards or a drop in the level of household income. The proposals only apply to social assistance based payments. This means that those who qualify for social insurance based benefits will, once the qualified adult meets the criteria to be a qualified adult, be able to claim for a qualified adult allowance.

For those on the social assistance Parental Allowance, once the youngest child is aged between five and seven, the PA is conditional on the lone parent or primary carer engaging with a DSFA-based job facilitator about future education, training and employment options. When the youngest child is eight, the PA ceases. Once on JSA, the parent is subject to a work test and systematic engagement under the *National Employment Action Plan* and is obliged to take up an education, training, and employment option of 19.5 hours per week or more. While the report discusses the supports needed to enable significant employment of this target group, there is no tangible quantification of, or a budgetary commitment to providing, such supports. Rather this is the subject of an implementation planning period with other service providers, which has been ongoing over the same period as the writing of this paper.

Diagram 1.1 Diagrammatic presentation of proposals



The clear targets of these work activation proposals are the 80,103 (2004) recipients of the OPFP who between them have 129,232 dependent children (46,294 have only one child and over 80% less than two children). Within this group 50,388 are under 30 years of age, 26,491 are aged between 30 and 50 and 3,124 over 50 years of age. The second target group are the 119,159 (2004) qualified adults in the Irish social security system. These can also be differentiated by working age and by the type of social welfare payment received by their partner. A significant number, 58,688 qualified adults, live with an old age payment recipient and claim child dependant additions on behalf of just 5,746 children. It is plausible that this group who live in retired household will not be a priority for activation. This leaves 20,000 social assistance based qualified adults as clear targets of the strategy. It is not clear whether low-income mothers in households that depend on employment related means tested social welfare income support schemes (for example spouses who receive a qualified adult payment in the structure of Back to Work Allowance), and those who are still dependent on State support (for example stay at home spouses of FIS recipients) will be part of the activation target group?

A number of qualified adults are in social insurance related-payment categories. These include 6,356 in Job Seekers Benefit household over 20,000 in various disability related households . While between them these adults claim over 75,000 child dependant additions they are not expected to be part of the activation strategy[1]. The differentiation between social assistance and social insurance based recipients is difficult to justify within the context of an anti poverty strategy. The 950 widows with 1784 dependent children in receipt of OPFP will be targets for work activation, but 8,514 widows on contributory pensions will not be targeted even though their 14,237 children are at considerable risk of poverty? To exclude all social insurance sourced payments means omitting over 100,000 children from the potential anti poverty benefits of the strategy and dilutes the effectiveness of the proposal on child poverty grounds. Applying the DSFA (2006) activation proposals apply *only* to social assistance payments implies shifts in power, status and autonomy between families with children dependent on social assistance and other families including families dependent on

[1] 20,000, Unemployment Benefit recipients claim Child Dependant additions, as do 55,000 recipients of Disability Payments.

social insurance payments. What validates such demarcation is unclear, even on anti poverty grounds.[2].

1.3 Reaction to the proposal

While widowhood has declined as a source route into singleparent hood, over the last two decades marital breakdown and non-marital birth became an increasing cause of single parenthood. The latter is now the dominant entry point to single parenthood for OPFP recipients. Just as entry routes into lone parenthood differ there are different exit routes from the poverty of lone parenthood. Two exit routes dominate: the decision to cohabit/marry and the decision to take up employment. The absence of legal divorce up to 1985 and the consequent denial of the right to remarry meant Ireland has always been characterised by relatively longer durations of single parenthood (DSFCA 2000). In addition, as the DSFA (2006) proposal recognises, there are structural disincentives in the social welfare system to cement or formalise new cohabitation relationships. The proposal to eliminate the cohabitation rule, abolish the One Parent Family Payment and replace it with a Parental Allowance (at least until the child is eight) is a welcome structural proposal, which opens up significant constructive family formation proposals for one parent families.

The second exit route from poverty, employment, is heavily promoted in various national anti poverty plans, national employment actions plans and the EU anti poverty policy. This desire to increase labour market participation of lone parents and qualified adults is the key motivating factor behind the 2006 DSFA proposals. Labour market trends of lone mothers have varied across time and between different routes into lone parenthood. In 1988, for example, 37% of separated women were working as compared to 23% married women, 51% single and 7% widowed women (McLaughlin and Roberts 1997). In general terms, Ireland along with the UK and the Netherlands goes against a general trend for lone parents to have higher employment participation than married mothers. The following QNHS 2006 third quarter breakdown of the Irish lone parent population by age of child and employment status of the parent highlights the vast range of labour market participation and how it correlates with the age of the child.

Table 24 Employment rates of lone parents by family type QNHS, Sep/Nov 2006:24

[2] Dean (1998) argues that this type of policy move is very serious given other explicitly coercive behavioural controls such as Anti-Social Behaviour Order's etc.

000's	EMP	EMP	EMP	UN	UN	UN	NA	NA	NA	TOT	TOT	TOT
Lone Parents	M	F	TOT	M	F	TOT	M	F	TOT	M	F	TOT
1 child or more over 5 and none over 15	.9	17.2	18.11		1.6	1.7		25.1	25.2	1	43.9	45
1 child or more under 5 and one over 15		1.3	1.4					1.6	1.6		3	3.2
All children aged 5-14	2.8	16.1	19		1.5	1.6	.8	8.3	9.1	3.7	25.9	29.6
All children over 15	8.2	25.4	33.5	.4	1.2	1.5	9	43.6	52.6	17.6	70.1	87.7
Total	12.8	76.5	89.3	.6	6.5	7.1	10.2	86.6	96.8	23.6	169.6	193.2
Total labour force	717.6	569.1	1286.7	21.8	20.6	42.4	2.4.4	491.7	696.1	943.7	1081.5	2025.2

EMP – Employed, UN- Unemployed, NA - Not economically active, Tot – total

Over 50% of lone parent households do not access OPFP, indeed of 193,000 lone parents 89,000 are in employment and a further 7,000 are seeking employment. 96,800 consider themselves economically inactive and on home duties. Many of these will be in receipt of One Parent Family Payment. But of the 80,103 who, for example availed of OPFP in 2004, over 60% were in some form of employment (even if this employment was often low-paid and part-time). This demonstrates significant levels of voluntary participation in employment. Using the above QNHS data Rahaleen (2006:9) shows that by 2005, employment rates of lone parents were on a par with equivalent married mothers. In fact, it is only when a lone mother has very young children (under five) or older children (aged 15 plus), that their labour market participation is less than that of married mothers. Crucially parents with children under five who experience the lowest employment participation are not part of proposal. There is concern that, in the context of limited resources, the employment support needs of this group may be compromised if those with older children are prioritised.

The policy proposal reflects growing interest in active labour market policy (NESF 2006, EAPN 2007, McCashin 2004, Cousins 2005, O'Connor 2005) and is a welcome and overdue opportunity to examine the employment needs of low-income women. However, there is much to be cautious about. The trend elsewhere has been to introduce work obligations for dependants in means-tested payments, but without questioning remaining care obligations and without improving the quality of labour market conditions (Bennett, 2002:565). In April 2006, the then Minister, Seamus Brennan T.D. hosted a consultative meeting with 26 stakeholder groups and has since met with individual national lobby groups. While feedback has been varied, groups have been broadly positive overall about proposals to eliminate the cohabitation rule, to partially eliminate the concept of qualified adult and to offer greater labour market supports to low-income mothers wishing to return to work. However various groups signalled a significant disquiet about aspects of the proposal. The caution can be divided into two types of concerns. From a citizenship rights approach, groups have questioned the proposal to subject lone parents and qualified adults to a compulsory work test, and have questioned the choice of age of the child at which to initiate activation[3]. They also questioned the loss of parents' right to care for children and to the childs' right to receive parental care. Groups also challenged the proposals on the grounds that the quantity and quality of practical supports (including affordable and accessible childcare, issues associated with retention of secondary medical and housing supports, relevant education and training, and decent employment opportunities) are not available. Further, they argued that the delivery of such supports in an integrated fashion did not seem likely and that without well integrated local supports, the practicalities facing low-income mothers who wished to enter employment would remain insurmountable. All agree however with the urgent need to tackle the high risk of poverty experienced by lone parents in receipt of OPFP. Over 31.1% experience consistent poverty (compared to the national average of 7%) and 48.3% experience the risk of poverty. It is clear that this status quo is not an option.

Moving in the direction of greater conditionality raises key questions about citizenship and rights and responsibilities. The significance of the NESC (2005) and DSFA (2006) focus on 'people of working age' has important gender and equality implications. Cousins (2005) argues such language is highly ideologically motivated, implying that those of working age *should* be at work. The childcare debate reflects a lack of political consensus about where mothers should be on a home life/working life continuum and the lack of societal consensus

[3] The review groups choice of age at which a parent could be deemed reasonably able to seek part – time employment was in some respects arbitrary. An age limit of 12 for eligibility for the proposed new PA was considered to result in too long a dependence on social welfare for such parents and would mean that only 25 per cent of those currently on the OPFP would be captured in the scope of the proposed activation.

about mother's roles. Recent attitudinal survey evidence (Hilliard 2005) suggest Irish mothers wish to work and are actively seeking the supports to do so. The reality is of course that mothers are neither exclusively at home or work but are involved in a combination of both (Murphy 2003). Good activation policy must reflect that balancing act and cater for the reality of care as well as enabling access to paid employment.

1.4 Research Objectives and Chapter Outline

This blue paper seeks to inform the ongoing debate about activation of low-income mothers in Ireland. It does so by addressing the philosophical questions and practical challenges raised in the debate about proposals to activate low-income mothers. The starting point is not that activation is good or bad but that such reconceptualisation of Irish welfare opens up welcome opportunities which need to be realised, but also potential threats which need to be mitigated. By examining the DSFA proposals and helping reframe the debate, it aims to influence the evolving model of Irish activation. The challenge is to reconcile or proportionately balance ambiguous social policy objectives. Balancing too much towards paid employment and conditionality may work against social rights and equality. Too much balance the other way may lead to an unambitious activation policy, which reflects the status quo and leaves many people of working age trapped in long periods of poverty and benefit dependency.

An emancipatory model for labour market activation of social welfare claimants opens up possibilities of employment for all, promotes equality and respects existing social rights associated with citizenship. This research aims to develop such a model for Irish active social policy. This is not a simple task. Finn (2000) observes how in most countries new active approaches involved radical changes in traditional welfare and employment agencies, decentralisation and increased use of local agencies. NESC's (2005) proposals for a *Developmental Welfare State* seek to conceptually redefine the relationship between core public services, income supports and local activist innovative delivery but provides no blueprint for doing so. This research begins to engage with an initial blueprint.

Research methods include an international literature review, interviews with key stakeholders involved in developing an implementation strategy, and a close inspection of how policy is applied in a country considered to offer useful lessons for Ireland. New Zealand was chosen as a peripheral state with a similar-sized population, a small open economy and similar institutional challenges in a liberal welfare regime with Anglo Saxon influences. The theoretical approach is based in the hypothesis that, while more intense international competition pushes redistributive welfare states to more productivist 'workfare'

states, it is still possible, through political mediation of policy, to develop positive work-focused models that enhance individual well-being and respect social rights (Torfing 1999).

Chapter two reflects on international literature concerning employment of low-income mothers and discusses issues concerning the ethics of care, time, health and work/life balance. Chapter Three reviews international evidence about activation of lone parents and low income mothers and analyses the present situation of Irish lone parents and low income mothers. Chapter Four discusses conditionality, develops the principles of an emancipatory activation framework and argues for a rights-based approach that incorporates a strong legal framework for activation policy. Chapter Five examines the challenges faced by the same actors and institutions that dealt with high unemployment, and which are now implementing a very different labour market policy, and so outlines possible changes in national and local Irish institutions. Chapter Six discusses the evolving role of case managers and their training needs, briefly refers to other policy challenges and summarises the blueprint for moving forward.

Chapter Two

Values and Practical Concerns in Activation of Low-Income Mothers

This chapter reviews the different values women bring to parenting, discusses the need to facilitate an ethical perspective about care in an activation strategy, and explores how values about care intersect with class and race. The chapter then shifts to discuss practical issues that present significant challenges for successful activation of low-income mothers. Given that the 2006 DSFA proposal focuses on primary school-going children, the focus here is not on preschool childcare but on managing the time, co-ordination and scheduling issues associated with children of school age. This chapter also addresses the degree to which physical and mental health problems are a serious impediment to employment; and discusses the important question of child well-being and adolescent emotional health. The chapter concludes by arguing for a careful, inclusive discourse that is sensitive to ethics of care, class and ethnicity.

2.1 Issues relating to labour market participation of mothers

Daly and Klammer (2005:123) note how women's decisions to participate in paid work are governed by a complex series of factors that extend beyond individual choice and embrace key sets of national societal arrangements. While there is little Irish research to establish what combination of work and parenting low-income women want, Hilliard (2005) notes a change in Irish attitudes about maternal employment and declining normative support for the male breadwinner model. While the tax individualization debate illustrates substantial subsets of women promoting more traditional roles for women (Montague 2001), there has been a quite dramatic shift in Irish attitudes towards gender and towards employment orientation of mothers. Hilliard (2005) notes how in both 1994 and 1998, some 50% believed that preschool children would suffer as a result of maternal employment, but that by 2000 only 33% believed this would be the case. International qualitative studies highlight ambiguity about mothers' attitudes to labour market participation and observe that mothers negotiate the world of work from a different financial, practical and emotional starting points. Duncan (2003) discuss the 'moral economy' involved in reconciling parenting and paid work and warn of a 'rationality mistake' evident in the 'make work pay' rhetoric. People are emotional, affective beings and an idealisation of an adult worker model is based on an unreal assumption of reality of care which impacts badly on 'affective' equality (Lynch and Baker 2005, Lyons and Lynch 2005, Pascall and Lewis 2004). Coakely (2005:3) and Daly and Leonard (2002:16) reflect that Irish mothers' decisions are mediated

primarily by childcare responsibilities; parental responsibility is prioritised over financial gain.

A welfare-to-work policy informed by an ethics of care perspective would facilitate adult workers to care, encourage family-friendly work practice, and facilitate adequate parental leave over the lifetime of the child in a way that addresses family-based gender inequality (McAuley 2005, Lewis 2004:167). Williams (2004:13) argues that what is needed is a political principle about care, which is equivalent to the principle about paid work and that makes care as central to the concept of citizenship as paid work. Policy to support unpaid care work needs to at least match the scale of development for activating paid employment. If the 'right to time to care' is to be taken seriously, then men must be required by social and political regulation to change their behaviour and broaden the scope of domestic activities.

Class and ethnicity are defining features of women's lives. Armstrong (2006:24) argues family backgrounds shape access to financial, informational and network resources. It is not necessarily the presence or absence of partners that influences decisions about how motherhood and work should be combined. Rather, middle class women often primarily self identify as workers and working class women primarily as mothers. Positive maternal identity is a key identity for working class women; such women have always juggled care and work but identify more with being a mother (Pearson, 2005). Edin and Kefelas (2005:204) found that the poor ascribe a higher value to children than the middle class. They suggest this is a function of both opportunity cost and stronger absolute preferences. Contrary to middle class childrearing norms, which focus on long term outcomes, good mothering for some low-income mothers meant 'being there'. Teen motherhood rather than paid employment can be the central identity in transition to adulthood; motherhood is a secure adult identity (Graham and McDermott 2006).

Likewise, in the event of women working, there are class differences in the experience of what it means to juggle between motherhood and work. Armstrong (2006) differentiates types of flexibility where middle class women have capital resources to negotiate flexibility but where working class women are required to be flexible. She points out that for middle class women to be flexible often means working class women being flexible for them (again the issue of inadequate sharing of household tasks between men and women is highly relevant). Dean (2001:283) found a qualitative difference between middle and working class mothers' experience of working or between 'career jobs' and work to supplement family income. Russell et al (2001) and (Coakley 2005:15) also highlight the class differentiation in

the Irish experience of motherhood and for example the correlation between higher education and transition into well-paid jobs.

Duncan and Edwards (1997) warn against 'economic citizenship' or framing the anti poverty debate around work requirements. This can reinforce a type of 'neo liberal individualism' which fails to acknowledge the constraints implied by human interdependency and undervalues the social contribution and social outcomes achieved through full-time parenting. A more sustainable policy would offer support for combining employment **and** care giving as both activities are critical for social and political participation and full citizenship. Pascall and Lewis (2004:261) observe how the strong focus on paid work in present social inclusion discourse makes it more difficult to recognise care obligations and to value and support care work. In Ireland there is however a parallel societal ethos of respecting, and facilitating through the tax system, support for full-time mothering (Millar and Rowlingson, 2001, Mahon 2004). Irish social and fiscal policy still strongly supports the choice to parent full-time. A proposal to apply a work requirement to lone parents and qualified adults fundamentally restricts the choice to parent full-time. This substantial policy shift should not be entered into lightly, or for the wrong reasons, the gain made through working needs to be proportionate to the loss of social choice. Is it reasonable while some mothers have their 'right to give care' vindicated others, dependent on the State are enforced or obliged to work.

Ethnicity is a defining characteristic determining women's approach to employment. In Ireland debate about ethnicity has previously been limited to issues associated with the Traveller Community however recent migration means an increasing need to be sensitive to differentiating needs in Ireland's ethnic communities. Research elsewhere records differences between ethnic groups. Afro Caribbean women are seen to have high rates of lone parenthood but also high rates of economic participation. Pakistani women, on the other hand, have very low rates of economic participation. How such issues might be translated into Irish policy is unclear but awareness of cultural or ethnic differences is a prerequisite for understanding how to accommodate difference; and case managers' training must include diversity and equality training. Holland (2005) recounts how the English evaluation of New Deal for Lone Parents highlighted how those without English as first language were least likely to enter work after work-focused interviews.

2.2 Childcare co-ordination

Skevik (2005:6) asks what is happening to care in a time of activation. Analysing the DSFA (2006) proposal from the perspective of care gives mixed results. Irish policy is not totally insensitive to care. Some care is recognised and legitimated in the exemption of activation until the child is aged 8 and in various tax allowances targeted at those parenting alone. Income disregards in the parental allowance indirectly acknowledge childcare costs and the national childcare strategy generally subsides the development of childcare. National discourse recognises the reality that care is the most important criterion or significant influence in determining mothers' labour market entry. Given that the general childcare debate is well rehearsed elsewhere (NWCI 2005, Coakely 2005) the focus in this section is on the tensions arising in the everyday child co-ordination practises of lone mothers and couples, time and how women cope with the time pressures of care and work.

Leira et al (2005) show considerable differences between family care arrangements in European countries and warn that availability of other women as significant informal care resources and intense intergenerational support is generally underestimated in the literature. Proximity to informal care supports is important and in their absence time, transport and co-ordination is crucial. Rahaleen (2006:23) noted that the travel to work time of lone parents was significantly less than the average female travel to work time recorded in Census 2002. This indicates the restrictions on lone parents' capacity to travel to work outside local labour markets, restrictions motivated by care management strategies and/or inadequate transport.

Tobio and Trifiletti (2005) identified temporal, spatial and transport strategies, which women employ to cope with new demands of care when in paid employment. Strategies involve packaging childcare, informal assistance from kinship networks and community, and reciprocal exchanges. Such packages are highly individualised, creative and flexible. Crucially, childcare services are only an element of the package. Making the strategy work requires keeping under control the 'complex texture of daily life'. A 'common cold is an organisational tragedy' when there is a 'timetable for each day of the week' (ibid: 68). Some women, when packaging strategies break down, resort to sub-optimal coping strategies based on no choice, for example, phoning in sick, taking children to work or leaving a child home alone. Skinner (2003) highlights challenges associated with physical transportation from home to place of care/education and the complex co-ordination required, and urges that policy makers need to have greater regard for the time and space aspect of childcare co-ordination, co-ordination support and transport. She describes how mothers organise and

supervise 'co-ordination points' or transfers and highlights that it is usually informal carers (grandparents, neighbours, other parents, friends) that glue together messy after-school activities. This can leave a child dependent on too many people and there is always the possibility of weak links in the chain. Baldock and Hadlow (2004:706) focus on time factors and idiosyncratic factors that constrain work and care timetables. They identify 'scheduling problems' and illustrate how the preferences and behaviour of men play a critical (often passive) part in the construction of work and care choices where males 'veto' possible co-ordination schedules by refusing to play their part. There are limits to productivity. Sometimes there is simply too much to do in the available time and too much uncertainty in the co-ordination of all the component activities.

2.3 Parenting and child well-being

The issue of the child's well-being raised in the last section is different to childcare and requires dedicated discussion[4]. There are various ways to approach this debate. Will the activation policy impact on child poverty rates? Does the mother working impact on child development? Does a mother being forced to work impact differently on child development than a mother who chooses work? O'Brien (2004) distinguishes between the direct impact of obliging mothers to work on children (impacts that directly impact on a child relationship with a parent or a child's behaviour) and indirect outcomes (that impact on income and poverty rates). As far as the latter goes, it is clear that the child's well-being only increases if the mother's employment actually increases household income. Here the discussion focuses on the direct impact of mothers who are working and low-income mothers being forced to work.

O Brien (2004) cites the New Zealand Ministry of Women's Affairs conclusion that maternal employment has no significant negative or positive effect on children as long as there is an increase in income from the paid employment. This is consistent with Irish research which found subjective financial well-being to be an important positive influence on children's psychological well-being (McKeown and Hasse 2006). Evidence from US evaluations for children under three (Sawhill et al 2002, Zaslow et al 2002, Morris 2002, Hamilton, 2002, all cited in O'Brien 2004) suggests if the child is enrolled in quality childcare there are positive child development results from a mother's return to work, especially in low-income families. The value of centre based childcare on child development is echoed in British

[4] In considering the trade of to be made between care and work the Department of Work and Pensions (2005) presents a four fold typology which reflects the needs of lone parents with different orientations to work and parental childcare. High work and parental care, High work and lower parental care, Low work and high parental care Lower work and lower parental care.

conclusions (Gregg and Washbrook 2003). For school-going children, the impact on workfare appears positive when parental working is associated with increased family income. However, for adolescent children the impact of imposing obligations to work on mothers has been more negative, with evidence of a decline in school performance emotional and behavioral problems, and a decline in health status (O'Brien 2004). The issue of a negative impact on adolescent children is serious and echoes fears voiced by lone parent groups and focus groups with lone parents and primary carers (Russell and Corcoran 2001).

Whether adolescents from lone parent families are more or less vulnerable than other adolescents is not clear, but it is reasonable to assume, given the other indicators associated with lone parenthood and unemployment, that such adolescents will be living in areas with higher than average early school leaving and social disadvantage, and with more likelihood of being exposed to anti-social behaviour. The fears expressed by these women about their adolescent children seem realistic. Holland (2005) notes in the UK experience, that a specific problem of childcare affected many parents with children aged 12-15, which was caused by a combination of a lack of out-of-school provision, parents' unwillingness to leave children at home unattended, and children's unwillingness to be 'child' minded[5]. O Brien (2004) highlights the stress on both mother and child when the lone parent is not 'available' to parent (a stress that may bear more heavily on a working class mother's personal ethic of care). Mothers were also sensitive to children's emotional needs in the context of difficult separation and divorce or bereavement (Holland 2005). Baker and Tippin (2004) highlighted the issue of how managing children's ill-health impacted on mother's employment possibilities. Children's ill-health or even periodic illness makes it hard to retain work and retaining part-time work just as difficult. They also stressed issues of leaving behaviorally 'difficult to handle children' to the care of others or of leaving such children alone.

More general literature, reviewing impacts on work and family life (Brunton, 2006), refers to questions of choice and control and the 'spillover' that happens when the situation in one area of a person's life interacts negatively or positively with another part of life. The impact of work on children depends not so much on whether and how much parents work. Rather it depends on 'how' they combine work with parenting. The difficulty arises when people feel a mismatch between ideal hours and real hours, when they feel overworked, parentally stressed and withdrawn from children; in such a context, younger children respond by

[5] DSCFA (2000) noted that the Springboard programme, run by Department of Health and Children, targeted its focus at lone parents with children aged 7-12 and in some cases aged 12 –15. It is not clear that applying work tests to these parents is consistent with the aims of such parenting projects.

compensating and older children by withdrawal. Negative spillover occurs when people experience stress associated with not living preferred lifestyle choice (feeling too tired to pay attention to things at home, too distracted by work worries, missing out on important aspects of parenting, scheduling conflicts and home life interrupted by work demands and calls). However, if living one's preferred choice then positive spillovers occur (job satisfaction leads to improved home life, wider social network, children learn good values or take on other responsibilities, parents are better able to deal with personal or practical matters). Parcel et al (1996:208) suggest that maternal employment can impact positively on children's cognitive skills. Work that enhances personal psychological functioning (self direction, job control and autonomy) led to valuing self direction in children. Controlled work environments lead to conformist values in childrearing. The lack of control and choice associated with an imposed work requirement combined with a low-quality job seems likely to provoke more negative than positive spillover. The quality of the job has a crucial impact on women's health and child well-being. The last section reviews health and well-being issues associated with mothers' employment.

2.4 Health

Many mothers have some form of health-related barrier to employment. Conversely, lack of control over low-paid employment and bad working conditions may also contribute to a deterioration in health. Holland (2005), in a review of NDLP, found that although health issues were common for lone parents and their children, they were not discussed with personal advisers. Lone parents with health problems were mostly likely to have negative views of Work Focused Interviews and have particularly difficult barriers to overcome in relation to progression to employment. Baker and Tippin (2004) argue poor health represents a substantial and under appreciated barrier to transition into sustainable paid employment for some lone mothers. Health has to be understood in the social context of lone mothers lived experience and identity. Poor health compounds other obstacles such as the emotional impact of marriage breakdown, continuing disputes with former partners and coping with children's behavioural problems. Baker and Tippin (2004) found 30% of mothers they interviewed (who had been deemed fit to work), reported physical or mental health problems that interfered with daily life and social functioning. They especially stressed mental health, feelings of depression and a general absence of emotional well-being (ibid: 102) and highlighted the difficultly of managing. For some, the tiredness and fatigue of juggling paid work, caring responsibilities and managing a tight budget caused extreme stress with

physical symptoms.[6] This is consistent with a large body of international and Irish literature, which found that high rates of mental distress, anxiety and depression in lone parents, are an obstacle to employment. (ibid:93, Edin and Lein, 1996, Whelan 1994, Daly and Leonard 2002).

Worth et al (2004) question the basis on which agencies assess health and fitness for work and argues that work activation can exacerbate health discrepancies. Sutton et al's (2004) review of employment support needs of substance users (drug, alcohol and poly use) highlights the need for specialised programmes dealing with women drug users. They highlight fears of losing custody of children and distinct needs of women who have suffered domestic violence and whose violent partners employ physical means to stop them obtaining or returning to work. Dean (2003), from the perspective of people with multiple needs, highlights tensions in trying to push people into neat 'those who can or those who can't' work typologies (ibid 441). An over focus on work first (any job is better than none) may be at the longer term expense of enhanced social integration and human capital. His study of 50 participants with complex, chaotic, harrowing biographies concluded three quarters had experience of violence and questions of fundamental identity and well-being / esteem. In such a context, discourse needs to focus not on sanctions but on human potential and promotion of well-being. People need the right to work on terms that allow them resolve their needs. This means realistic time frames. In practical terms this means ability to interrupt courses, space to deal with problems, case management for years into employment and long term sustainable supports based on key workers.

The above discussion leads some to have serious reservations about applying work requirements to mothers. Some lone mothers described to Baker and Tippin (2004) how they knew 'a job was a step too far', that they need jobs that are not demanding, they are able to take 'short burst of stress but not constant'. The impact on partnered mothers will be different than for lone parents. Reconciling the practical requirements of work and parenting, in context of lack of reform of domestic gender roles, is difficult and often leads to a double burden. Sweeney (2002:49), Nicaise's (1998:29) and Mooney (2004:111) argue that it may not be socially optimal or reasonable to expect or require a low-skilled woman, who has to provide all social emotional and practical domestic family support, to take up employment.

[6] The most common of these were physical functioning, limitations of daily performance, bodily pain, general health perceptions, vitality – energy levels, social functioning, limitation of daily work due to emotional health, general mental health well-being with the most common ailment was capacity to carry out everyday activities.

The alternative allocation of time for parental responsibility is not necessarily less optimal than a low-paid unprotected and stultifying job[7].

2.5 The timing of the activation debate

Geldof (1999:17) describes debate about activation as 'a social discourse with divergent ideological roots' which results in talking at cross purposes about activation. Activation originated from a social and community setting and was understood as belief in the potential for emancipation of social rights or citizenship. The roots of current activation discourse, however, lie in a disciplinary reaction to welfare dependency. With this contradiction there is 'a real danger of a socially acceptable exposition of social reintegration being perverted by measures directed against the poor (ibid:19). Hvinden (1999) warns about the latent functions of activation policy, making unemployment statistics more favourable, fudging public expenditure cuts and disciplining the workforce. It is necessary therefore not to accept the language of activation, flexicurity or active inclusion at face value, but to interrogate the context of their use to examine the ideological purpose of the discourse.

Given this reality and given that such women already recognise, value, and where feasible, take up the possibilities offered by employment, it is not fully clear why policy makers have chosen this point in time to impose a work requirement on this target group. Uttley (2000) stresses the importance of analysing fully the official rhetoric to fully understand the policy objective behind the proposal. Three discourses are evident: child poverty, productivist social policy , and gender equality. The formal rhetoric in the proposals (DSFA 2006) firmly identifies that the policy objective is to contribute to reducing child poverty. This appears on the surface quite plausible. There is a genuine moral and ethical desire to target child poverty, and consistent lobbying of Combat Poverty and the *Open your Eyes to Child Poverty Coalition,* means child poverty is high on the political agenda. White (2004) however advises caution in accepting this rhetoric at face value; a vast number of policy discourses centre on child poverty as a unifying rhetorical strategy.

[7] Mooney cites the well known example that occurred in February 2000 in Flint, Michigan USA. Tamarla Owens, a lone mother in Flint, Michigan, was working on a compulsory welfare-to-work programme in a grill bar (in a city a three-hour round trip away from her home) when her six year old son shot dead a 6 year old girl, Michela Boland, with a gun he had taken from his uncle's house, where he was being minded before school began. This example highlights the co-ordination and scheduling challenges and highlights what happens when low-income mothers are forced to rely on 'weak links in the chain'.

Throughout the early 2000s a number of parallel policy processes debated policy relating to participation, activation and further extension of conditionality. O'Connor A. (2005) argues that institutions including the National Economic and Social Forum, the Forum on the Future of the Workplace, the National Competitiveness Council and FAS all stressed the need for greater activation and mobilisation of the workforce. Internationally, EU employment guidelines promoted activation and OECD analysts Pearson (2003) and Grubb (2004) argued low Irish unemployment afforded a political opportunity to introduce more activation in the Irish labour market. This debate reflects international discourse where often arguments for greater activation were not in the name of reducing child poverty but in the context of more productive efficient social policy. NESC(2005) observes how the decreases in unemployment have proportionally reduced the numbers of working aged long term dependant on social welfare. It is reasonable to assume that policy-makers are concerned to reduce the growth in numbers claiming lone parents and disability payments. A formal goal of reducing welfare dependency has been embedded as a high level goal of the social inclusion strategy 'overall aim of reducing by 20% the number of those whose total income is derived from long term social welfare payments' (Ireland 2007:14).

2.6 Conclusion

At a value level, it is clear that Ireland reflects international shifts in values relating to parenting and women's labour market participation. However, such values or choices are a function of the structural design of tax, welfare, labour market and family policy in each country and are socially constructed. Irish policy reflects and sustains a value system that promotes choice about labour market participation for mothers. However, the DSFA 2006 proposal promotes a considerable shift in this consensus by singling out two subgroups of mothers, lone parents and qualified adults, and proposing that their choice to parent full-time be limited to when the children are seven years of age. While this shift may well reflect a consensus amongst policy-makers, it is less clear that it reflects more general societal consensus or a more specific class consensus of the two sub groups. Rather, the consensus in the subgroups may value hands-on mothering significantly more than labour market participation. A policy proposal significantly out of kilter with such values is likely to fail politically or at implementation stage, where it will be sabotaged by workers or resisted by the target groups.

Scott and Brown (2000:62) and Uttley (2000) focus on the discourse of policy framing and the danger of demonising dependency and reinforcing exclusion of certain vulnerable groups. While to date DSFA (2006) proposals have been framed supportively, Mahon (2004)

suggests broader Irish discourse is problematising lone parenthood and framing only labour market solutions. There is a danger, as this debate evolves, of presenting the primary care role as a problem that needs to be overcome or of stigmatising those who invest in motherhood on a full-time basis (Uttley 2000:34). A social inclusion discourse should build on and affirm rather than damage people's sense of self-worth; it should not socially construct a negative public image of working class or welfare dependent or migrant mothers.

Piauchaud and Sutherland (2001) estimate that up to 51% of poor children in the UK have parents who cannot reasonably be expected to take up employment because children are under five, or have ill health or disability, or they are already working in low pay. There remains a considerable number of practical barriers to mothers' employment, the more serious of which were availability of childcare (and value differences in what is considered appropriate childcare), time and transport co-ordination challenges requiring informal support networks, the sheer challenge of juggling limited time with unlimited tasks, male veteos in unequal power relationships with partnered women, domestic violence, health of mothers, children and relatives and emotional well-being of adolescents.

Chapter Three

Setting the scene for the International and Irish context

This chapter focuses on the policy decision to apply 'conditionality' or a work requirement on lone parents and begins by outlining how work requirements are applied to lone parents and qualified adults in other countries. It then reviews Irish literature concerning lone parents and qualified adults and reflects on the education, training and employment experiences of such women. It ends by summarizing the wider social policy and labour market challenges that need to be addressed before an activation strategy can be implemented.

3.1 Work requirements for lone parents and qualified adults

Millar (2005:189-190) documented work-related activity requirements and labour market programmes eligibility for lone parents. The table below outlines policy on work testing for lone mothers and employment rates for lone mothers with dependent children.

Table 3.1 Work testing and employment rates for lone mothers

Country	Work Test for lone parents	Dependent on age of child	Age of child	% Lone mothers[8] with dependent children who are employed
Australia	Y	Y	5	46 (2000)
Austria	Y	Y subject to childcare	3	80 (1999)
Belgium	Y	Discretion	-	59 (1997)
Canada	Y	Yes	6	51 (1996)
Denmark	Y	No subject to childcare	-	73 (1995)
Finland	Y	Y	4	65 (1998)
France	N	-	-	66 (2001)
Germany	Y	Y	3	67 (2000)
Greece	N	-	-	75 (1996)
Ireland	N	-	-	53 (1999)
Israel	Y	Y	7	N/a
Italy	Y	Y	3	65 (1998)
Japan	Y	Y	1	83 (1999)
Luxembourg	Y	Y	6	82 (2000)

[8] As Millar observes, definitions of lone parenthood differ by age of child (ranging from under 18 in France and Germany, under 15 in Austria and Ireland and under 20 in Japan. She also observes that it is not clear how or whether women on parental or maternity leave are counted in such figures.

Netherlands	Y	Y	5	42 (1997)
New Zealand	N	-	- (was 11)	45 (2001)
Norway	Y	Y	3	68 (1999)
Portugal	N	-	-	88 (1996)
Spain	N	-	-	68 (1991)
Sweden	Y	No	-	68 (1998)
UK	N but compulsory interview	-	-	52 (2000)
US	Y	Y	1 (3 mths)	68 (2000)

Source Millar 2005, Table 8: 22

The general situation is that lone parents with children of school-going age are expected to participate in he labour market (ibid. 192). However, it is difficult to draw clear conclusions about the circumstances under which they are required to work, as there is considerable discretion concerning the actual application of a work requirement across and within different countries.

Various countries, recognising the validity and intensity of these obstacles and aware that social good comes from direct caring, opt to exempt mothers in certain circumstances from a work requirement. The assumption that paid employment will enhance well-being and health does not hold when employment is restricted to low-paid serial or casual work, it therefore makes little sense, form a child well being or antipoverty perspective, to oblige poor mothers to take up such work. Individual countries also exempt mothers caring for temporary or long term disability in family or allow for parental choices, such as home parenting, as in the case of New Zealand. It is reasonable to assume that some mothers will be exempted from work obligations either fully or for periods of time while barriers are being reviewed. Imposition of work requirements will not be seen to be reasonable unless transparent exemptions are clearly available and unless case workers are allowed a degree of accountable discretion.

In Germany, Austria and Denmark, the work test is conditional on a guaranteed childcare place; In the US, no sanctions can be applied if adequate childcare cannot be found when children under six (albeit there is no definition of 'satisfactory childcare' in the act (Waddan 2004). Italy, Finland and Norway on the other hand, do not guarantee a childcare place for a child but work test all parents. In Belgium and Netherlands, there is significant local discretion; while in Japan and Norway work tests are strictly applied in a national framework. Germany has a moderate work test aiming at part-time work. While Spain, France and Portugal have no work test social integration clauses attached to receipt of minimum income can require labour market insertion. Differences in the experience of implementation of work requirements vary across local labour markets and local political boundaries depending on local political attitudes to women working and variations in institutional responses to childcare provision. In some instances regional differentiation is due to differences in rural/urban or religious composition or local political power balances. There is not only national variation in programmes but also further variation at local or individual levels. Knijn and van Wel (1999:2) illustrate well the variation in work obligations of single mothers whose youngest child is five years or older across five Dutch municipalities[9] with urban The Hague obliging over half of lone parents to work full time and only granted one quarter a full exemption while more rural Zaanstad fully exempted half of lone parents from paid employment and obliged only 38% to work full time.

There is also significant variation in policy over time. Various Canadian states have diluted previous work test requirements (Breitkreuz: 2005) and the Netherlands moved age of work requirements from 12 in 1996 to five in 2002 (Knijn and van Wel, 2004). In 2002 New Zealand for example reversed a previous 1997 work test policy and moved towards a system of mandatory work and development planning rather than mandatory employment. This New Zealand reversal of policy was prompted by concerns that without adequate in work benefits work activation was in reality locking lone parents into low paid part time work and not moving them above the poverty line. Policy makers also reflected that health, childcare and family care obligations to labour market participation were more significant than had been anticipated. The New Zealand experience offers some useful lessons for Ireland. Fiscal incentives to work and in work benefits need to be in place before the activation strategy. Policy needs to be realistic about the reality of women's lives and have the appropriate level of quality supports. An unfortunate legacy of the premature introduction of such a mandatory policy is that New Zealand case workers now have hard job to sell a more positive activation

[9] In this instance, local social assistance officers are exempting the majority of lone parents (ibid:126) because local lone mothers, caseworkers and policy makers do not agree with reform. Rather there is a dominant motherhood ideology with consensus that work comes second to caring responsibilities.

model to a target group that, having been scarred by a mandatory activation process, is less trusting of statutory supports. In contrast the UK experience has been a more successful gradual move from a fully voluntary system to mandatory work-focused interviews (Harkness, Macmillan and Gregg 2006).

Duncan and Edwards (1997:269) warn that, given overall variability in single mothers' conditions of life, it cannot be assumed a national policy change to apply a work requirement will result in single mothers taking up work. They point also to the variety of single parent families, the different processes by which different mothers become workers, the local and neighbourhood context of this process and the vastly different experiences, motivations and capacities of parents. Single mothers' identity and local support networks (important sources of informal childcare support) also vary locally and across class. What is also clear from Millar's table is that there is no necessary correlation between applying a work requirement and the numbers of lone parents in paid employment. Clearly approaches based only on activation are inadequate. Policy must facilitate child, family-friendly flexible work and parental care (Millar 2005: 273). What is most important in achieving high social and economic participation rates is incorporating family-friendly and work-life balance policy into overall labour market and activation policy. Lone parents and qualified adults will benefit from a regime that is parent and child-friendly and Ireland has much to do in this regard.

Evaluations of activation policy show mixed results and given the different policy and cultural contexts in which activation has been applied some lessons are more meaningful than others. Nicaise et al (2004:15) argues that activation polices in the 1990s produced more exclusion than inclusion (poor quality, carousel, displacement, sanctions, lower benefits etc). They argue that work requirements can place a disproportionate burden on those already most disadvantaged and that conditionality can worsen standards (without conditionality, employers or other labour market providers are forced to improve job conditions to ensure voluntary take up). An OECD-wide review of labour market activation evaluations shows little result from activation programmes (Martin, 2004). Cebulla et al (2004), who undertook a meta analysis of UK and US welfare-to-work outcomes, found that impacts (generally small, temporary and expensive to implement) are better under sanctions-based 'work first' rather than 'human capital' approaches (this finding is based on evaluating only two variables, increased earnings and caseload reductions, so it might be expected that 'work first' had better results). They acknowledge that characteristics of the target group, as well as local socioeconomic conditions at the programme sites, can be important variables in determining outcomes as the type of programmes that are run, and they argue that policy

design has to be flexible enough to take into account the individual needs of the different women in the context of differentiated local labour markets. (ibid, 144). Zhan and Pandey (2004) show post secondary education significantly improves single mothers' economic status, and advocate 'human capital' focused not 'work first' focused activation policy.

The British experience is perhaps most relevant to Irish context. Harkness, Macmillan and Gregg (2006) found that of the 11% rise in lone parents employment participation between 1992 and 2002 5% has been attributed to policy reform. Overall UK lone parent employment participation rate could reach 64% by 2010 and lone parents are now as successful at finding jobs as single women with similar characteristics. This is encouraging given the approach has been voluntary and welfare generosity also increased over the same period. The New Deal for Lone Parents requires continued investment in personal advisors, childcare and flexible working and while there remains considerable retention issues and regional blockages (particularly in the London area) overall it has achieved its aim of increased labour market participation of lone mothers. With reference to the UK (Francesconi and Van der Klaauw 2002, Harkness and Gregg 2003) and New Zealand (Stephens 2005) studies highlight the role of in-work benefits in encouraging work participation in lone parents both in terms of increased numbers working and increases in the numbers of hours worked. Overall evaluations demonstrate that activation approaches alone will not suffice, that in work benefits, flexible employment and wrap around childcare are essential and that, as the UK and New Zealand experiences demonstrate voluntary activation policy achieves as much as mandatory activation policy.

3.2 Views of Irish lone parents and qualified adults

Prior to 1980s, Ireland had low levels of single parents but since the 1980s has moved nearer the European norm. Census figures show the number of households headed by a lone parent rising from 29,658 in 1981 to 90,906 in 1991, 150,634 in the 2002 census and 189, 213 in the most recent 2006 census. Census 2006 captured more detailed data on relationships between persons living in the same household than previously, giving a more accurate assessment of multi-family households. A **household** is defined as a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping arrangements. A **family** is defined as either a husband and wife or cohabiting couple; a husband and wife or cohabiting couple with one or more children (usually resident, never married, of any age); or one parent with one child or more. This 189,213 one parent families comprise 18% of all families in Ireland. 86% of one parent families are lone mothers, 14% are lone fathers. 58% of one parent families have one child, 26% have 2 children, and 10% have three children. There

were 169,761 lone parent households - 12% of all households in Ireland. 19,452 one parent families, over 10% of all lone parents, live in multi-family households, for example, they live with their own parents. Alternative measurements from the Quarterly National Household Survey (which defines lone parents as those living alone with a non-married child under 20) recorded 178,800 lone parent families in 2002, rising to 187,000 lone parent families in 2005 and 193,200 in 2006.

Policy needs to differentiate between different groups of lone parents and qualified adults who may have different personal, employment and educational histories. It is useful to enquire whether there are differences between lone parents and the second key target group, qualified adults. The needs of qualified adults cannot be extrapolated from census CSO survey data and, DSFA administrative data tells us little about this population group. Social welfare data suggests qualified adults have a lower employment participation rate than lone parents (Murphy 2003) Many such women are involved in peripheral labour market activity, especially in cleaning, care and hospitality sectors. Some limit employment to stay within confines of means test thresholds. Less is known about their employment aspirations but they may, like other married or cohabitating women, have strong affiliation with maternal role models (Daly and Leonard 2002). Following campaigns by various non government organisations the issue of qualified adult access to labour market supports was the subject of a social partnership working group (Ireland 2000). However, despite some technical changes to income disregards in 1996 and facilitation of a 'swop' in entitlement to labour market programmes between spouses, there has been little structural change to facilitate such women into employment. As Murphy (2003) remarks, very little is known about them.

Policy in countries like the Netherlands, New Zealand and the UK has included wives of the unemployed as a target group for labour market activation. While we cannot assume that British characterstics of dependent spouses will apply in Ireland, it is useful nonetheless to review the results of recent British research. '*What we know about Partners'* (Arrowsmith 2004) suggests deep-seated attitudes to gender roles in relation to employment and the household among participants of the UK *New Deal for Partners*. There is a strong assumption that women still have responsibility to collect school-going children even when the male is not working. In the UK, which now obliges couples to jointly claim (rather than, as in Ireland, allowing one adult claim the second other as a dependant), there is evidence that such joint claims are causing already polarised gender attitudes to deepen. There are mixed feelings in Britain about the policy of requiring two partners in a couple to make joint claims and then split benefits and there are real fears from those in unequal

relationships that the man would keep more than his fair share. Cultural resistance to a more individualised system of joint claims is stronger in some traditional working class couples and some minority ethnic groups.

Partners are clearly not lone parents nor are they a homogenous group. Arrowsmith (2004) shows needs and situations vary and that they are to some degree co-dependent on need and situation of claimant and that needs of couples can be more complicated than lone parents. Couples tend to share the same characteristics, such as class, education, ethnic group and age. Crucially, the many live in families with a health or disability issue. In particular there are co-dependent health (male) and caring (female) relationships, hence the barriers for one partner affect the other partner. While caring (for children and other adults is the main presenting barrier to work force participation), this differs with the type of benefit claimed. Partnership breakdown and domestic violence are also issues. Only one quarter of partners are labour market focused and the majority say they do not want to work. Sixty percent do not have any qualifications, they lack work experience and face more than one employment barrier. The financial relationship and employment and poverty traps may also be more significant and harder to negotiate. Case workers note a significant issue with confidence and a need to disentangle the origins of attitudinal and psychological barriers. This requires a skilful, sensitive and patient approach by case managers who need to be sensitive to individual circumstances especially with regard to health and caring issues. Clearly more Irish research is needed in this area. These women have social and employment needs in their own right but their activation may also trigger the spouses or 'partners' activation. While spouses may have very different work histories, future work potential is correlated in that if one gets work, the other is (or may be) more likely to find work. Given there is little empirical information available about qualified adults most of the remaining discussion focuses on lone parents.

Qualitative research commissioned by DSCFA (2000), NESF (2001) and Combat Poverty (Daly and Leonard, 2002) suggests lone mothers and mothers who are qualified adults are directly and extensively involved in caring for children and have a positive view of mothering, but are also ambitious to engage in paid employment. Russell and Corcoran's (2001:20) focus groups with lone parents illustrated that while the positive orientation to paid work is subordinated to primary function of mother, there is nonetheless a 'mothers and workers' approach. Low income mothers immediate life is often preoccupied with high poverty levels and the direct tension of living in deprived areas. Support is found in intense familial and neighbourhood relations and networks. Accessing childcare required good relations with the maternal grandmother .

Focus groups highlight how lone parents and low income mothers are constantly pulled in different directions. Lone mothers identified employment as key to gaining control over their lives, having a job contrasts strongly with being not being in control but with being subject to the controls exercised by the DSFA and other government services. Daly and Leonard (2002) found that, for people in poverty, children dominated as the most beneficial feature of their lives and that the strong interest in taking up employment is channelled towards part-time work which facilitates childcare and home responsibilities (ibid:77). Low-income mothers reconcile work and family in a hierarchy of need and desires and work is only considered realistic if it is located in accessible places with flexible hours that allow pick up of children. After those concerns are met the next criterion is how much it pays. Work satisfaction is not a primary concern and work is often low-skilled, repetitive and monotonous. This is sometimes welcomed: 'I'd like to go out at the end of an evening and forget about work – I want a job I am not stressed out at (Russell and Corcoran, 2001).

While there is evidence of strong motivation to access work, the commitment to children as the over arching responsibility precludes many from pursuing some opportunities. While financial disincentives were an obstacle to employment, the most fundamental obstacle was the likely impact on the children of their working and the sense that bringing up children alone means extra responsibilities. Full-time work is rarely an option because the loss of one parent means requiring more time from the remaining parent – male or female. For some older women, 'the mere fact of surviving and raising children was seen by some as an achievement in itself and a mark of self-worth' (Russell and Corcoran 2001:36). As children grow older, many lone parents identity an even greater need to be present in a supervisory and emotional supportive role for their children. This may in part be because vulnerabilities arising out of past separation or domestic violence become more apparent, but it is also the case that parents are fearful of living teenage children alone:

> When you do work and you get home there is always friends in the house – you don't know what they've been up to – you need to be at home when you have teenagers. (Russell and Corcoran 2000:22 mother over 40, midlands town)

Horgan (2005) found almost half of the 72 mothers interviewed wished to have sole charge of childcare. The majority want to work only within school hours, with many concerned to be there for their teenage children. The importance of local social and kin networks is stressed by lone parents. Lone parent households also comprise a significant number of those on social housing waiting lists and often find themselves refusing housing offers to

continue living near social and kin networks. The issue of housing location thus needs to be given more centrality in social policy. Likewise, housing costs present a significant barrier in the form of the disincentive caused by the loss of supplementary rent allowance (see 5.10 for further detail).

The *National Anti Poverty Strategy* highlights how poverty is multidimensional and one of the clearest factors any activation strategy needs to take into account is the cumulative impact of income poverty, housing and environmental factors and parenting stresses on a person's health:

> we must understand how poverty dominates the lives of these women making them more vulnerable to health-related setbacks than more advantaged members of society. Uncontrollable and unpredictable aspects of health make it very hard to manage, there is a need for a more holistic approach to the related issues of poverty, health, employment and parenting (Baker and Tippin 2004)

Whelan (1994) records women are more likely to experience mental ill-health and psychological distress than men. The stress associated with managing the monetary impact of poverty clearly impacts most on the household manager in this case, either the lone parent or the 'qualified adult'. Like Arrowsmith's 2004 UK findings, Daly and Leonard (2002:59) recorded significant mental health issues 'feelings of depression and apathy which in some cases is shared by both partners' and noted how the cumulative nature of health problems was striking with links between low-income, mental health, depression and other types of illness. Horgan (2005:17) also notes, in a study of similar groups in Northern Ireland, 'although we knew there would be high levels of disability and ill health we were shocked at how much we found'. Likewise, in working class areas with higher proportionate numbers of lone parents, there is a increased incidence of stress and use of antidepressants. The reality is that a low-income mother is sometimes managing ill-health on a daily basis, which requires significant flexibility. Horgan (2005:21) highlights that doing all of this, while depending on public transport, sometimes makes getting and keeping work next to impossible.The combination of health, housing, lack of car ownership and low education achievement work together to create obstacles to employment. EAPN (2006) questions the dominance of measures that throw responsibility back onto vulnerable people rather than questioning how economic policy and employers might create decent employment opportunities. The next section explores what kind of progression opportunities are open to the target groups of this work activation proposal.

3.4 Education and low-income mothers

While employment is stressed as a route out of poverty, for many education is the route to employment and the first necessary step to decent sustainable employment. It is telling that there is no up-to-date educational profile of this target group. The DSFA (2000) review, using 1997 labour force survey data, highlighted how 47% of lone parents have either no formal education or only primary level education. Fifty eight percent of young lone parents (those between 15-24) have not passed beyond junior certificate level. This rises to 64% for those in the 25 – 44 age group. This is consistent with the educational profile of the long term unemployed. British research shows that the educational profile of wives or partners is also similar to that of their unemployed male partners (Arrowsmith 2004).

Rahaleen (2006) found in a survey of 64 lone parents participating in FAS programmes, that 27% had no formal education or had primary school only, 53% had only completed up to junior certificate level, and 20% up to leaving cert level. Crucially, however, they found a keen interest in education, with over a quarter pursuing further education (60% of those who had left school indicating that they would consider completing their education). A profiling exercise of those using Local Employment Services Networks services in Ballymun and Ballyfermot found very significant levels of intervention were required among the 57% not considered employment ready. Forty five percent had no educational qualifications, 26% had literacy difficulties and 35% had never participated in training. Given the scale of educational disadvantage, this suggests that an 'education first' rather than 'work first' activation strategy is required. Whether this is possible using the NEAP process is questionable. Up to four education target groups might be distinguished and each of these may require different educational responses.

- Teen mothers whose main and immediate priority is to ensure that recent, present or future pregnancy does not stop them leaving school early or without completing the senior cycle.
- Lone parents who are characterised by previous early and single entry to motherhood, low educational achievement and disadvantaged socio-economic status.
- Separated, widowed or always single older women with older children who will have been in previous employment prior to motherhood but who are low-skilled and lacking in confidence and self-esteem.
- Women with degrees and significant levels of, confident and qualified but lacking childcare or other types of support

While a significant number are participating in Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) education programmes and avail of the Back to Education Allowance, not as many avail of education options as need indicates. Reasons for this are varied but seem dominated by childcare (White Paper on Adult Education 2000:93). The annual structure of Irish education programmes which means Back to Education programmes such as VTOS only have one annual intake. There is perhaps a need to develop a modular leaving certificate option along the US Graduate Equivalency Diploma (an option that will be increasingly necessary given that migrants now comprise 10% of the labour force(CSO, 2007). Section 9 of the Vocational Education Amendment Act (2001) requires a new focus on planning, co-ordinating and reviewing provision. This offers a statutory framework from which to build integrated and co-ordinated area-based strategies for developing adult and community education services, which provide adequate progression pathways and access to guidance and supports (Treacy 2007). This offers a strategic and structured way to plan for an activation strategy strategy based on an education first model.

Richardson (2000) notes that the majority of teen lone parents left school prior to pregnancy with very low levels of educational attainment but the majority wished to return to education. They planned to return to school once their own children are in school and saw this return to education as a central goal of their lives. They cited access to childcare and the need to travel outside their own area as obstacles to returning to education. Given local family are central to childcare local educational services are also essential. Education providers need to accept the reality that lone mothers have a right to a supportive learning environment to complete their education. Despite a comprehensive evaluation affirming the usefulness of the pilot Teen Parents Support Initiative (Riordan 2002) support is this area remains patchy and uncomprehensive (Murphy 2006). The Budget 2007 allocation of resources to the Teen Parents Support Initiative is hopefully a first step in consolidating this model into a national strategy (DOF 2007).

3.5 Training and low-income mothers

Mention was made earlier of the need to develop training programmes that are both relevant to new job opportunities and accessible to lone parents and low-income mothers. Rahaleen (2006) discuss the tensions and tradeoffs between delivering the need for industry standard training and accessible opening hours and venues. If industry standards is a valid rationale for retaining 8.30am opening hours (and it is not clear that it is) and flexibility cannot be found at the training end of the spectrum, it can only be through easier facilitation of children and earlier school opening times so that such training is accessible. Reviewing lone parent

placement in training and employment programmes, Raheleen (2006) also shows that 2005 FAS placement is heavily dominated by CE (84%), Jobs Initiative (6%) and social economy (6%), with the remaining 4% accounted for largely by local training initiatives or community training centres. This is caused by an inclination towards the greater monetary reward from CE but also the lack of variety of training, accessible venues, transport, and opening hours of alternative mainstream training options (NESF: 2006). Early informal feedback from 20 projects funded in 2007 to run pilot labour market participation initiatives under the NDP Gender Equality Unit Initiative for Lone Parents confirms significant obstacles to accessing training linked to employment options.

FAS (2006:45) discusses expanding a tailored activation approach to OPFP recipients and argues FAS should provide a range of suitable services on caseload basis. FAS (2006:46), aware of some barriers facing this group, does not expect high participation in training programmes and progression to employment for lone parents with young children until such barriers are removed. FAS also cautions that the benefits and conditions accruing to OPFP participants taking CE should be examined to ensure there is a clear net gain from participating in regular employment. The National Reform Programme (2006) advises that claimants who take up a CE scheme are entitled to keep their OPFP payment '*at the moment'*, which suggests change is possible or likely.

FAS has been funded under the Equality for Women Measure to pilot an *Expanding The Workforce* (ETW) model, an initiative to provide a gateway for women returnees to the labour market. The ETW (a programme originally targeted at raising awareness amongst older women returners with older children about return to work options) has been restructured as *CHOICES Days,* an initiative to encourage lone parents to avail of training and re-enter the labour market. This commenced in Autumn 2006. However FAS is now conducting a review of the low rates of participation of lone parents in ETW (only 10% of lone parents initially interested actually participated.) The information FAS gleaned from 5,000 lone parents will be very informative. Some lone parents groups have been critical of the soft information focused direction FAS have taken and were unsurprised that ETW failed to engage the lone parent target group. They advocate instead more specials skills and mainstream training provision that leads to recognised qualifications relevant to employment growth areas.

The high demand for CE, the low levels of education of participants, and the degree to which recent profiling exercises showed almost 60% of those using LES were not job-ready, suggests there will be a continuing need for social integration programmes such as the rural

resource scheme, the social economy scheme and some form of targeted community employment. If it is accepted that these are more oriented to social integration, then there is strong argument for delivering social integration programmes through DSFA rather than FAS. For this reason the DSFA based Social and Economic Participation Programme will be an important new programme.

3.6 Employment and low-income mothers

An emancipatory framework stresses the quality of employment. Will Irish jobs be of sufficient quality in terms of pay, working conditions and family-friendly flexibility to be considered positive social inclusion outcomes? While up to 60% of OPFP recipients and a significant number of qualified adults are working, many of them are on very low pay and in part-time work. All those women working are doing so voluntarily and without a work requirement, but many may have little choice other than to work in local labour markets for low pay to top up inadequate social welfare payments. Low pay is evidenced in Rahaleen's (2006:13) observation that while in 2004, 38% of FIS claimants were lone parents, they made up almost 70% of the lowest wage bands claiming FIS.

Child poverty and child well-being will only be addressed if a mother's and a family's financial situation improves as a result of going back to work. However, while only 1.7% of those in employment experience consistent poverty (Ireland 2007:41), a job does not assure protection from poverty. The 'working poor' comprise a distinct group of employees experiencing relative poverty (Vermelyen 2004[10]). In Ireland, the percentage of working poor increased from 3.2% in 1994 to 7.4% in 2000 and 9.8% in 2004 (CSO 2005); and the 16.9% who those experiencing relative income poverty headed by an employed person in 2000 increased to 17.3% by 2004. This should be distinguished from the definition of the low-waged as 'workers earning less than two thirds of (hourly, weekly, yearly) medium earnings' (Nolan and Marx, 2000). The problem for some low-waged workers is that they are heads of households with no other adult working and /or with child dependants. Their individual wages are insufficient to take their household out of poverty. Lone parents are particularly vulnerable in this regard as childcare reduces the possibility of full-time work. Factors impacting on the likelihood of being working poor include employment status, age, sex, education level, contractual status and working time arrangements. Those working in non-standard employment (neither permanent or full-time) are most at risk of being working poor. Nash (2004) and McCabe's (2006) reviews of the economic implications of non

[10] The European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Social Inclusion define the working poor as 'individuals who are employed or self employed and whose household disposable income is less than 60% of national median income'.

standard employment highlights how such jobs are concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled sectors and how such workers have less access to training, pension, health, insurance or sick pay cover. Even taking into account human capital differences, non-standard workers still had lower income than standard workers. Non-permanent part-time workers fare the worst. Women had a higher risk of poverty and financial strain for non-standard workers than men with permanent part-time workers having the highest risk (Nash, 2004, McCabe 2006). Ensuring that part-time paid employment lifts people from poverty needs to be part of any gender sensitive social inclusion strategy. Recent changes have enhanced social security and labour rights of part-time workers and the Social Inclusion Strategy (Ireland 2007:43) commits to considering recognising validity of part-time work choices. This recognises that women have little choice but to take part-time work (it is often the only way they can financially and ethically reconcile care obligations and economic participation). However the challenge is not only to recognise that such work is a valid choice but also to ensure it is an effective route out of poverty.

There are also serious concerns about the quality of employment. These concerns extend beyond lone parents and qualified adults to the more general issue of occupational segregation and the inequality that occurs when women are concentrated into lower paid or lower skilled work, which does little to liberate them. A further key issue given the geographical clustering of lone parents, is accessibility of employment and local labour market supply issues in areas of disadvantage (Duggan and Loftus 2006). Mothers generally trade off flexibility against low pay (Russell and Corcoran 2001:04). Social welfare dependent mothers may also have disincentives to seek higher pay because of earnings disregard or secondary benefit issues, which can create demand for cash-in-hand work which also is restricted to low-quality work. In reviewing issues about availability of appropriate decent paid work, Russell et al (2001) tracked employment types that women returners accessed over the years 1995 to 1999 and found re-entry was associated with low skilled employment typically in personal services. For previously employed women, they noted a significant departure from previous employment due to the need for local flexible work. On average 71% re-enter through part- time work options (compared to the national female average of 30.6% part-time over the same period (ibid;113). While part-time is by ‘choice’, real choice is restricted to part-time because of domestic and childcare responsibilities. While 22% worked less than 15 hours per week, the average worked was 24 hours per week with the average hourly wage for women returners significantly lower than the female average. Crucially, half felt under utilised relative to skills and under employed in terms of skills levels; and they ranked satisfaction with hours and distance for commute significantly higher than satisfaction with earnings, job security, type of work and working conditions.

The choice is clearly the convenience of hours and location of work and these take precedence over intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for working in rewarding and suitable employment. Horgan (2005: 24-26) documented low pay, poor working conditions, long unsocial hours, use of agencies and contracting out. Stressful employment has the potential to impact negatively on both mother and child well-being. Horgan (2005:26) records one mother's assessment: *It wasn't worth it because I was snappy I was shouting at them for every little wee thing.* Duncan and Edwards (1997: 271) fear UK mothers are simply transferring their source of income to a sex segregated and badly rewarded labor market.

Local job supply is a crucial factor and regional and local employment strategies must complement labour market activation strategies. The FAS (2006) 2005 Irish Labour Market Review highlights whether and where more jobs are likely to be available and and identifies room for further improvement in services sector employment. The trend has been significant increases in professional and clerical and drops in manufacturing vacancies. This reflects the shift to the service economy. Difficult to fill vacancies included site managers and surveyors, engineers and accountants, sales staff and insurance clerks, but immigration meant labour shortages were generally manageable. NESC (2005a) highlights the lack of skills auditing and forecasting in the social policy and civil society fields of work. Considerable work needs to be undertaken with training and education institutions to develop universal, high-quality education and training courses relevant to emerging fields of work. Careful analysis of forecasted skills shortages is required to develop specific training initiatives relevant to the labour market.

Special reference needs to be made to part-time work and to strategies that encourage greater availability of flexible family-friendly part-time work. Various countries have sought to stimulate realistic part-time work opportunities. The Netherlands policy of promoting part-time work was originally designed to cope with high unemployment and was aimed at promoting a greater sharing of available employment. The promotion of part-time work in the Netherlands is now firmly associated with promotion of married women or mothers in the work force.[11] Employers also need soft supports (skills, training and logistical management tools) to help them overcome fears of introducing more flexible work practices. A cause for concern was that few lone parents are placed into part-time employment by FAS employment services and that (aside from CE), there is little part-time work available in

[11] The Dutch government's main strategy was to ensure equal treatment for part-time workers under social security and labour law. It has also encouraged social partners to draw up agreements on part-time work (10th October 1997 Labour Foundation). The ethos is that anyone who wishes to work part-time should be entitled and enabled to do so wherever and whenever possible.

FAS' Jobs Ireland employment data. Rahaleen (2006:20) shows that for 2002, FAS placed 1,918 lone parents in full-time employment but only 4 in part-time employment. The lack of access to part-time employment is somewhat balanced by significant numbers of lone parents placed by FAS in CE (5,596 in 2005). The trend towards more flexible working practices is mixed. While public sector employment is characterised by increased use of flexi time, job share and term time, outside of the large financial institutions, there is less evidence of private sector firms introducing family-friendly work policy or practice. Yet it is here that such women will expect to find employment. Evidence is mixed about trends towards flexible work in the service sector but the trend seems to be towards employers requiring greater flexibility of employees, with the Northside Partnership, for example, reporting that TESCO's hiring policy (requiring significant employee flexibility) meant many lone parents could not apply.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined how Irish lone parents and low-income mothers experience life. It examined how social welfare adequacy, health and housing policy work together to create significant obstacles to employment and other multidimensional and negative impacts on their family life. When viewed from the perspective of the target group, the move towards a more conditional form of activation still seems premature. The Quarterly National Household Survey, Q2 2006, shows that 45.6% of lone parents are in employment, an increase of 1.3% on 2005 and 8.8% on 1998. Over 60% of OPFP claimants are already in paid employment. More would be if well-documented childcare and rent/medical card barriers were dealt with. Forty five percent of lone parents have not participated in formal education beyond junior certificate and require a progression pathway focused on education. For others it is likely that rural transport, children's health and development needs, and direct personal mental and physical heath needs mean that labour market participation is not realistic for a considerable period of time.

The challenge, if a more compulsory form of activation policy is to be adopted, is how to ensure that appropriate and affordable childcare is available; how to ensure that work actually pays and secondary benefit retention issues are addressed; that education needs are prioritised; that exemptions from work tests are available and safeguards built in so the level of push applied to lone parents is appropriate to the supports and pathways available and the likely rewards from paid work. Finally, several aspects of the quality of work and labour market relevance of labour market supports need to be examined. The above discussion highlights the need to focus on four labour market supply issues:

- protection of part-time employment options;
- supports to employers to develop family-friendly practice;
- strategies to overcome the lack of local, quality, appropriate employment
- access to appropriate training and education programmes.

Chapter Four

Reframing the Debate - Framework for Emancipatory Activation

This chapter, first discusses issues associated with compulsion. It discusses the pros and cons of compulsion from a pragmatic 'outcomes' perspective and a 'rights' or 'citizenship' perspective. It then reflects on the concept of activation and outlines an 'emancipatory framework' for activation. This focuses on social inclusion rather than workfare approaches to activation and stresses a long term human and social capital approach, which focuses on 'education first' rather than 'work first' strategies. Such an approach argues for the State's obligations to claimants to be as clear and as proportionate as are the claimants' obligations to the State. The Chapter then reflects on what is required to promote a rights based approach that guarantees high standards of service delivery and provides sufficient legal safeguards to protect other social rights.

4.1 Issues relating to citizenship, autonomy and coercion

Is it possible to reconcile compulsion with a positive model of activation? Earlier we discussed the tensions experienced by women who must manage, emotionally and practically, the balance between care work and paid employment. Conditionality or the imposition of a work requirement also raises issues of citizenship (Skevik:2005). Here the debate is not about lone mothers' caring obligations but their right to pursue autonomous life projects. How benefits are organised and any strings attached to them shapes the relationship between the state and the citizen (ibid:46). Citizenship implies limits to State intervention and assumes that the State should not interfere with all aspects of life (Lister 2003:49). Being in control is seen to be a positive aspect of citizenship. Self autonomy is seen as an essential aspect of mental well-being and mental health; conversely, inability to control is a major factor of stress and ill-health (Whelan 1994).

The strong moral rhetoric about responsibilities is associated with shifts in individual power relations at case management level. The exercise of power can mean that *recommendations* to do something can be perceived as *instructions* (this may be intentional or unintentional on the part of the case worker). Such a shift in autonomy signals a shift in rights and a shift in power. Citizenship is transformed by taking some rights away and giving other rights, strengthening some rights and weakening others (Lister 2003:53, Lodemel and Trickey:2001)). For example, the imposition of a work requirement could be framed as less rights and less autonomy and a loss of the right to care. It can also be framed as an enhanced

right to work, a right to supports (including care and income supports), or a right to be free of poverty or have enhanced well-being. A work requirement is about changing expectations of certain actors (NESC 2005, DSFA 2006). The shift in expectations is usually understood as a shift in expectation about the claimant's relationship to the labour market. However, there is another parallel way to understand the concept of a shift in expectations, that is a shift in expectations of statutory organisations (and employees in those organisations) as to what is required of them in relation to standards of service delivery. This could lead to more services and better options for the claimants. The more the added value in terms of enhanced service delivery, the better the trade off is for the citizen.

There are moral and ethical arguments for and against sanctions. Typical anti-conditionality arguments include accusations of its illiberal nature, violation of social citizenship and the undermining of unconditional social rights (Collins and Rossiter 2004). Sen's (1997) argument sees freedom as a 'capability' and coercion as inherently 'not good'. Activation is good when it is about empowering clients' capability or potential combinations of functioning in one or more dimension of life (resources, competences, health, social networks, income). The challenge is to increase one resource without deleting another. Saunders (2003:8) on the other hand argues that 'mutual obligation' is required to assist people find work (help) and also to weed out those who do not really need the benefit at all (hassle). Saunders (2003) assumes that without incentives people will not contribute with anything like their full potential to the communal pot; and without constraints they will not voluntarily limit their demands upon it. He argues over half of Australian unemployed are demotivated and need hassle[12].

Increased work obligations offers some opportunity to reframe the debate about welfare generosity in the sense that obligations can be traded against greater welfare adequacy. Millar (2005:206) suggests one advantage of clear lines about work obligations is that it is possible to give those without work obligations more generous payments without jeopardising the incentive to work of those with obligations. Likewise policy makers can be confident that when there are clear work obligations, it is possible to increase income

[12] Research does suggest that when people are exposed to mandatory processes there is a 5-10% reduction in welfare roll (Martin & Grubb, 2001). Finn's (2000) finding that three quarters of young people fail to attend their first 'work for dole' session is consistent with Irish NEAP experience that a work requirement results in voluntary exit (DETE 2005). Little is known however about where people exit to, there is evidence that people re-enter welfare and 'churn': i.e. move on and off welfare.

supports for those on Job Seekers Allowances without undue fears of impact on work incentives. This argument has recently been made by Callan (2006) in the Irish context.

Work requirements can imply a range or scale of coercion, from a compulsion to work full-time, to a weaker compulsory requirement to simply attend an interview or explore options. Waddan (2004) differentiates between types of sanctions. Some are introduced early in the activation process and used quickly with short sharp consequences for those considered work shy. Alternatively, sanctions can be introduced slowly as ultimate deterrents and only applied after all effort is made to check for and remove significant obstacles (ibid: 27). The evidence suggests that it is the threat of sanctions that triggers behavioural changes but that the actual application of sanctions results in little change in behaviour other than to further marginalise most vulnerable families (O'Brien 2004). Waddan (ibid:30) suggests there are ways of organising sanctions to shift the balance away from a punitive approach towards a more balanced process with three stages: a personalised assessment of barriers; conciliation processes after non-compliance but before sanctions; and an open door for families on sanctions when they want to come back in. This suggests the process of applying sanctions must be as enabling and supportive as possible and safeguarding rights (for example the safeguards built into the New Zealand process discussed later in this chapter).

One of the strongest reasons for compulsion is to encourage a first point of contact. Millar (2005) cites rising support for compulsion amongst case workers working with jobless people. A recent Australian pilot project appears to have won previously reluctant case workers over to compulsion, and while in the UK there is mixed feeling about their use, there is consensus that mandatory work-focused interviews have had a positive impact on caseloads (Holland 2005). With up to 27% of potential UK and 31% of potential Danish clients not reached, Nicaise accepts sanctions may have some role in reaching the hardest to reach. Sanctions can help in sending a message and clear signal (Waddan 2004:29). If the intention of the mandatory requirement is motivated by outreach and the desire to send the target group a strong message about work, then the mandatory requirement should be about participation in the activation process rather than participation in paid employment work. This is especially so in the case of low-income mothers who may, after an initial intervention, be legitimately exempted from further work activation. How much opportunity has to be created before responsibility can be demanded? To judge whether the total activation policy is proportional requires that the State's obligations and inputs be clear. This would require at macro and micro level that the State would explicitly commit to the level and quality of resources necessary to achieve stated policy aims of activation and anti

poverty outcomes. This input of the State needs to be proportional to what is expected of the client.

To conclude in a general sense it is preferable to promote voluntary participation in quality programmes. However clearly outlining the obligations of the claimants offers the opportunity to seek a clear statement of statutory supports. There may also be a case for a mandatory first point of contact to ensure contact with claimants as long as those claimants can subsequently choose to pursue voluntary participation in labour market programmes. Increased conditionality and a desire for greater flexicurity can also be used to reframe the debate about welfare adequacy.

4.2 A framework for positive activation policy

This section discusses the work of various writers who have in common a desire to articulate a framework for a more positive approach to activation policy. They have in common a stress on maximising freedom, choice, capability, quality, sustainability and familial and societal independence. Beginning with Geldof (1999:22), he outlines the following assessment criteria to ensure that activation is coming from an emancipatory rather than disciplinary approach.

Assessement Criteria for positive model of activation: Geldof (1999:22)
Are the activation measures embedded in a broader structural policy aimed at combating poverty and social inclusion or are they merely intended to help control their consequences?
Do they offer the target group any perspective of lasing integration or are they merely temporary activation initiatives?
Are they based on respect for the poor and for benefit claimants or based on the assumption that benefit schemes predominantly lead to abuse or to individual settling in their exclusion?
Are they voluntary or based on forcible activation?
Do they focus on opportunities for participation or sanctions for non-participation?
Is there an adequate administrative and social framework in place for non-standardised implementation?
Are they geared exclusively in the labour market or do they also encourage numerous forms of social integration including outside the labour market

Nicaise offers the concept of a ladder of integration, which moves from the first rung of 'social integration' and progresses to the final rung of 'full labour market integration'. For positive activation the time frame between rungs must be individually determined and it should be accepted is possible some may never climb the ladder fully.

Ladder of Integration (Nicaise 2002)	
Labour market integration	Stage Four –Exit Point
Work experience	Stage three
Education and training	Stage two
Social integration	Entry point - Stage One

To achieve mobility along this ladder requires a social inclusion approach to actication policy. Nicaise (2002) distinguishes different approaches along an axis with a workfare approach and a social inclusion approach as the two opposing poles.

Workfare approach _____Continium_____	**Social inclusion approach**
Combating dependency	Ensuring additional services
Welfare clients	Universal
Restricted choice of content	Offers choice
Financial or legal pressures	Remuneration – better status
More in work poor	Less poverty
Focus on low replacement rates	More generous rates

Torfing (1999) argues it is possible to take the concept of 'workfare' from its neo-liberal discourse and rearticulate it in a social democratic and universalistic discourse. Neo-liberal welfare to work strategies such as in the UK and the US, are characterised by ungenerous payments and targeted education and training programmes, these result in more inequality and in-work poor. Social democratic welfare to work strategies such as in the Netherlands and Denmark are associated with the following features.

- Activation focused on education and training
- Education and training focused on skill improvement rather than job search
- Programmes mainstreamed to general workforce rather than only welfare recipients
- A legal framework guaranteeing no activation into 'futile work for the sake of work
- Empowerment rather than surveillance, control or punishment
- Relatively high rates of payment,
- More equitable outcomes and less number of in-work poor people.

Ecological, environmental, community development and human rights frameworks of sustainability offer holistic understanding of the human condition focusing on creating unified solutions. Maximising human potential to establish long term economic, physical, psychological and social well-being for individuals and their families would move from a social control based policy to a goal of maximising human potential and capacity as well as capability.In moving towards a 'capability' model, a framework of 'personal and family sustainability' offered by Hawkins (2005) presents an alternative to the present paradigm of self sufficiency, which undermines the natural dependency we have on each other. People who are not self sufficient are not insufficient, rather there is a continuum of self sufficiency where everyone has interdependent relationship with the state and other sources of survival. Hawkins (2005) advocates the following as outcome indicators of a sustainable labour market policy for low-income parents.

- Economic security (income and access to resources like housing, employment)
- Health and well-being (health care access)
- Behaviour and social environment (social capital, safety, clean air);
- Education (long term career and development human capital).

While there are differences[13] between the approaches discussed by Geldof, Nicaise, Torfing and Hawkins, there are a number of common features all consider appropriate to good activation. The concept of active inclusion (Commission of the European Communities 2006) stresses labour market attachment but also income support and accessible services. Crucially it acknowledges the need to provide decent standards of living and social integration to those who are and will remain outside the labour market. For those in work it requires labour market integration programmes and quality work. It also recognises two stages of integration and the need to bridge 'social' and 'labour market' integration. Bringing these together and borrowing from guidelines developed NESF (2006) and good activation guidelines from EAPN (2007) a number of features of a positive or emancipatory policy are now outlined.

- Appropriate outreach focused and minimal sanctions.
- High rates of payment/in work/welfare
- Prioritising 'education first' or 'human capital first' approaches
- Attention to quality of job, in job mentoring and progression

[13] Nicaise and Torfing for example differ in how they view the UK and in how they see the institutional relationship between income supports and employment services.

- Exemptions for social needs, including child well-being
- Recognition of social integration as valid need
- Strong local implementation varied to local circumstances
- Local labour market supply strategies
- Universal services including childcare
- Choice and flexibility
- Legal guarantees and safeguards, appeals process
- Participation of claimants in the activation and policy process
- Training of case workers and attention to and style of case work
- Childrens and families rights accommodated in the model

From the previous discussion we can conclude that if sanctions have a place in activation policy they may have an outreach function, but they have to be proportionate to the scale of investment and likely outcomes, the process itself needs to ensure all potential obstacles can be overcome, and supports would be offered before sanctions could be implemented.

4.3 A rights and standards approach

This section considers what is required in an emancipatory framework if it to reflect a rights based approach. In doing so it attempts to put flesh on NESC (2005a) conceptual framework of a rights approach that incorporates standards of service delivery. Chapter Six applies this discussion to the Irish context by considering legal safeguards, legislative requirements and an appeals machinery for a new Irish activation process.

According to the EAPN (2006a) standards can be 'hard' or 'soft' and can vary from precise, legally defined standards to general guidelines or aspirations for good practice. Two different types of standards can be identified: clear procedures that are mandatory, monitored and enforced; and standards described as an amount of goods or services. A rights approach should incorporate both types of standards, and guarantee both the process and resources in legislation that is monitored and enforced. Administrative agencies which apply benefit sanctions have a dual and partly ambivalent role, enabling citizens to achieve social rights but also having significant administrative power over citizens. Van Aerschot (2003) argues that the adoption of activation measures for citizens must also be accompanied by measures to protect citizens against improper administrative action infringing their rights. There are two essential features of such protections: preventative measures to protect against rights being infringed; and redress measures including corrective adjudication and appeals mechanisms.

Preventative measures are required in active regimes where there is greater uncertainity about entitlement and where payment depends on the extent to which a person has complied with activation conditions. Discretionary powers need to be limited by proportionality, objectivity, equality and lawful purpose. Reviewing legal safeguards in the context of activation in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, Van Aerschot observes a complex legal relationship between the individual, the municipality and national policy. This requires a relationship between activation and legal safeguards at a structural level, with *normative clarity* of legal provisions and regulations and respect for hierarchical order, and clear definition of rights and duties of claimants and officials. It also requires *organisational appropriateness* of the workload of the administrative machinery, including specifying the quality of the work environment, skills of staff and efficiency of services. Finally it should include *distributive* arrangements to minimise power-resource disparities between different actors (e.g. literacy, translation).

It also requires measures and processes that enable substantive legal security and to ensure the actual law is implemented in a way that is consistent with the outcomes or goals set by the legislator, but also in more general legislation relating to the claimants' legal position and in basic rights provision. Formal legal security which protects the claimants' legitimate interests can include process values, such as obligations to provide reasons for decisions, access to and provision of information, clear definition of powers of authorities, and surveillance to make sure these are not exceeded.

A practical example of process-based safeguards can be found in New Zealand's lone parents activation process. The safe guards require a number of stages of before a lone parent can be sanctioned. No case worker has yet sanctioned a lone parent under this process (Wellington Peoples Center, private communication, 2006). In New Zealand, before any sanction can be imposed the statutory body must follow the following process

- Determine if the individual has failed to comply with the specific requirement and has no good or sufficient reason for doing so.
- Review the original commitment to see if it was a reasonable suggestion.
- Set a review period of 30 working days (six weeks) for the individual and any support person to meet with the statutory body to determine if there was a failure, the reason for the failure and whether the reasons were good and sufficient.

- Require compliance within 20 working days – if the failure was a lack of commitment – then the compliance is a demonstrable activity understood by both parties.
- If this is still a problem then give written notice on a particular form.
- No sanction can be applied until ten working days from the beginning of the period of written notice.
- An initial 20% benefit sanction is applied and then a sanction of 50% of the original benefit is then further applied after four weeks of contuined non compliance.

A stronger rights-based approach is Finland which introduced, by legal provision in 2001, a Rehabilitative Work Activities Act. This states the obligations of authorities and claimants regarding provision and uptake of activation, employment, training, social services, and medical treatment. This obliges all claimants to have an activation plan and obliges those under 25 years to take up work activity. While there are sanctions and benefit reductions (reductions of 20% or denial of labour market supports for two months), they are subject to limits because total denial would infringe other social rights. The framework necessitates evaluation of effectiveness and whether action is proportionate to the stated objective of improving employability. It also demands methods to measure this assessment. The Act stipulates a constitutional right to move freely and choose one place of residence. Social and civic rights are further safeguarded by the Client Act 2001, which aims to make the 'clients' rights consistent with constitutional citizenship. This infers, for example, the right to appropriate treatment without discrimination and requires the wishes, opinions, needs and culture of the client to be taken into account. It upholds the right to privacy and personal integrity and to life without arbitrary or unjustified interference. It supports the principles of self determination, requires that the client be 'given the opportunity 'to participate in and influence' and ensures that the primary concern shall be his/her long and short term interest, work and family interest.

In Denmark, all social welfare claimants have the right and duty to participate in activation measures. The 1997 Active Social Policy Act strengthened procedural safeguards, for example, by stating what a client has a right to receive in writing and including a 'dialogue principle' which offers opportunity for clients to participate in decisions concerning their life. Authorities are obliged to present a range of options and sanctions can not exceed 30% of the weekly payment. The 1997 Act also outlines duties and timeframes for the authorities, if the authority fails to access alternative available supports for the claimant then the claimant may get compensation. The Swedish Social Services Act 1997 obliges activation

and withdrawal of benefit but also a right to means for immediate subsistence. It obliges authorities to engage with the wishes of claimants and specifies issues of quality.

All of the above are examples of right based approaches where legal safeguards limit the states right to intervene in the private lives of citizens. They also offer examples of using legislation to promote and safeguard quality public services. Some of these rights are in primary legislation, others in statutory instruments. Such legal safeguards and rights to high quality services are an essential part of positive activation.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed various issues associated with applying a work requirement to lone parents and qualified adults. The discussion reflected on moral, legal and practical issues associated with introduction of conditionality and sanctions; and concluded that if conditionality has a role to play in labour market activation it is best applied at the point of invitation to participate rather than to direct the form of participation a parent chooses to make. Further the conditionality should be proportionate to the scale of the problem and to the level of resources the State is committing towards solving the problem. While the scale of child poverty is high the incidence of involuntary lack of participation of the target group is low. So far the commitment of the state to sufficient resources (monetary or at the level of solving known poverty traps) is low. This implies a weak rather than strong type of conditionality (such as mandatory work focused interviews) might be the most appropriate start. This is particularly the case given the lack of quality, flexible work opportunities in relevant local labour markets, and the time frame needed to develop national and locals supports for better quality part-time jobs. Indeed given the absence of such jobs, activation into medium to long term education and training options is likely to be more desirable in the short to medium term. The chapter ended with a discussion of what would be required of a good or emancipatory activation policy and argued for a strong rights-based approach and the use of strong legal framework. The following two chapters attempt, taking into account the starting point for Irish activation, to spell out in detail the various institutional and human resource requirements of an emancipatory activation policy.

Chapter Five

Implementing an Emancipatory Framework

A defining feature of Irish policy-making is the considerable gap between policy and implementation. NESC (2005a) suggest the problem of implementation reflects four distinct issues: lack of decision, weak execution by departments and agencies, lack of knowledge about how policy is impacting, and resistance or unresolved conflict. NESF (2005a:52-54) identified a blockage in the implementation of policy midway between the national and local levels, and stressed the importance of local labour market context and local economic context. All of these obstacles to implementation are evident in any review of activation policy. While institutional and implementation issues associated with activation of lone parents have been discussed, by Autumn 2007 a specific implementation strategy had yet to emerge. Essential to implementation is holding key institutions to account and requiring those institutions to lead from the top and to give confidence to street level workers that the structures they work are effective in supporting them in their jobs. This chapter tries to define the national and local institutional reforms necessary to develop a coherent integrated activation implementation strategy.

This chapter begins with an overview of implementation features in various countries. It follows with a more detailed examination of institutional implementation challenges in the Irish context. This begins with issues associated with the institutional relationship between employment services (FAS) and income supports (DSFA). Given that the activation policy will be delivered locally, some time is then spent examining local co-ordination and integration issues, as well as horizontal and vertical governance and accountability issues. The chapter concludes with some comment on leadership.

5.1 Overview of implementation features in various countries

Just as there are variations in policy, there are also significant variations in the institutional implementation of activation processes. The following table (sourced from various tables in Millar:1999) highlights, in a very summary fashion, the variety of institutional and design features of activation approaches across different countries.

Table 5.1 Institutional features of various countries activation processes (source Millar 1999)

	Australia	Netherlands	Norway	UK	Michigan US-
Programme name	JET	Work and Income	OFO	NDLP	FIP
Designated Lone Parent	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compulsory to attend	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
% Participation	20-40%	Up to 50% exempted	-	20%	limited diversion
Pre nursery	-	Possible seek work obligations	-	Interviews Education Training	Work
Primary aged	Interviews Education Training	Seek work	Seek work Interviews Education/Training	Interviews Education Training	Work
Secondary	Work Interviews Education Training	Seek work Interviews Education Training	Seek work Interviews Education Training	Seek work Interviews Education Training	Work
One Stop Shop	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Case worker	In part	Yes	Lone Parent mediator	Yes	Yes
Private sector provision	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Self help one parent	No	No	Yes	No	No
Work/Training	Information Advice Work first	Human Capital	Human Capital	Information Advice Work first	Work first
Staged approach	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
In work monitoring	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

A review of institutional arrangements for activation in other jurisdictions highlights how the focal point of delivery of activation involved two key characteristics: a defining role for local government, and a tighter working relationship (and often a total merge) between the income

supports agency and public employment service. It is remarkable that, to date, there is so little public debate or proposals for such institutional reforms in the Irish discussion of activation. Some implementation challenges have been signalled in various reports, including the DSFCA Review of OPFP (2000), NESF (2001), NESC (2005), DSFA (2006) and FAS (2005). As well as income supports agencies and employment support agencies the range of potential implementation bodies includes family resource centers, local employment services, jobs facilitators, community welfare officers and community education workers. Building on a 'social inclusion' rather than 'work first' approach means ensuring the case work process and the role of the mediator is interpreted as widely as possible and the service an integrated service.

5.2 Integration of benefit agencies and employment services

Finn (2000) observes radical changes in traditional welfare and a move from an employment agency bureaucracy to more flexible local delivery in the UK, US and the Netherlands. According to Finn (2000:53), 'large scale uniform inflexible benefit and employment and training systems are ending' (Finn 2000:53) and the counter approach is for municipalities to now have public employment services functions. This has meant partnership with community groups, decentralisation, local discretion in case management and competition in public employment services. It has also included more convenient access through one-stop-shop gateways and greater organisational accountability about responsiveness.

Finn (2000:45) noted how OECD ministers have urged 'integration of benefit administration, job brokering and referral to active measures'. Likewise, the Vaarala Group recommendations, reached during the Finnish Presidency of the EU in 1999, offered the view that a profound reassessment of the division of responsibilities between social welfare and employment administrations was required. Finn (2000) recalls how in the UK *New Deal*, a key institutional reform required the public employment service to develop, in partnership, district delivery plans, with a long term aim to restructure local delivery of benefit into a one-stop-shop gateway or *Job Centre Plus*. Likewise PES and benefits offices merged into a *Office for Work and Income* in the Netherlands, *Work and Income* in New Zealand, and *Centrepoint* in Australia. Combining the three functions of job placement, benefit payment and labour market activation has been widely stressed by international organisations Karagiannaki (2007) suggests that the model of integration adopted in the UK, Job Centre Plus, has a clear positive effect on job entry outcomes for all client groups. This was achieved with no change in customer service outcomes but with a

negative impact on business delivery due to a diversion of resources to job placement at the expense of other aspects of benefit administration.

Co-ordination between the employment authorities and social authorities can happen by joint venture or merger, or by new processes that enable mediation between the authorities. Regardless of which model of co-operation is chosen, co-ordination requires effective national leadership that enables local co-ordination in a framework of accountability and standards (Ditch and Roberts 2002:90-2). Bridging the traditional outlooks of employment and social welfare authorities, requires interagency joint planning and budgeting. While there are no templates, there are clear structural requirements, including organisational political and legal frameworks, as well as operational requirements including management, common working styles, processes and resources.

The Commission on Social Welfare (Ireland, 1986) reviewed the respective functions and links between the DSW (now DSFA) and FÁS and recommended continued institutional separation of functions but close co-operation between job placement and income support functions. The intervening years have seen considerable institutional tensions between the DSFA and the DETE: with both developing services for the same target groups and with little institutional co-operation (Cousins 2005). Recognising the need for more targeted localised support than that available under FAS Employment Services, the *NESF Report No 4 'Ending Long-Term Unemployment'* (NESF 1994) led to the establishment in 1995 of a new 'Local Employment Service'[14]. Since 1998 relations between the DSW and the DETE have developed through the institutional linkage required of them by the EU Open Method of Co-ordination, which requires the development of a National Employment Action Plan (NEAP, DETE various).[15] While the Irish political process managed institutional sensitivity by spreading functions across a number of institutions, the common trend in other OECD countries was to merge Departments providing income supports and employment supports so as to make it institutionally feasible to enforce stronger forms of conditionality on claimants. Various reports have identified the limits in Irish institutional co-

[14] This has since been merged back into FAS structures in 2004

[15] The National Eempoyment Action Programme sets the employment and labour market framework for the period ahead. The NEAP includes a preventive strategy under the requirements of EU Employment Guidelines, of engaging systematically with persons at an early stage of unemployment. By 2006 all unemployed claimants of all ages are required to voluntarily engage with FÁS. Failure to do so could lead to payment review. Towards 2016 (Ireland 2006) proposes to extend this process to lone parents and people with disabilities.

operation and recommended various measures to improve data sharing (Indecon 2002, 2005) while visiting academics have urged such institutional reform (Boyle 2005). In Northern Ireland, the merge of the Social Security Agency and Training and Education Authority encountered 'issues arising from differences between organisations in terms of culture and working practice' (Ditch and Roberts 2002:116). In the same way, roll out of the NEAP posed challenges for FAS and DSFA. A Cork city evaluation highlighted 'potential for some tensions between the full exchange of information across organisations and the rights/privacy of the client' (ibid 112). Challenges of accessing services (literacy, drugs advice, health) and lack of local options and facilities was highlighted in other rural and urban Irish case studies. In interviews with this author, it was suggested that FÁS, wishing to maintain a non-conflictual relationship with the unemployed, prefers not to fully share information with the DSFA. Indecon (2005) concludes this means a less than meaningful application of 'supportive conditionality'.

The development of a ten-year activation strategy for lone parents and qualified adults presents an opportunity to develop an institutional template than can be used for all low-income groups. If it is really intended that 'public authorities periodically review the extent to which recipients best interests are being facilitated by the arrangements governing access to their income' (NESC 2005a: 221), some form of institutional change is required. One such change could be movement towards a closer working relationship or indeed a merge of the employment support services of FAS and the income support function of DSFA[16]. Such a merge offers advantages to both FAS and DSFA. Boyle (2005) suggests FAS is over- burdened with too many service delivery functions. Community groups express serious disquiet about its capacity to deliver appropriate and accessible training to the target groups (EAPN 2007). Reform would allow FAS develop more adequate universal type training programmes focused totally on labour market insertion and further improvement, expansion and development of other FAS services. Such reform would allow consistency in delivery of DSFA's activation, control, delivery and social integration roles. A national merge would mean that local office space could be utilised to provide key private interviewing space. The discontinuity in the clients relationship between the DSFA jobs facilitator (up to age seven) and the FAS placement officer in the NEAP process (aged eight and over), a major flaw in the present proposal, would be avoided. Torfing (1999) advises against such a merge, arguing that good activation requires a separation of supports and control

[16] See Cousins (2005:179) for review of institutional changes in Irish labour market placement services.

functions. Indeed some qualitative research raises issues of trust between DFSA's investigative roles and how clients feel about service delivery. However DSFA service delivery has improved immensely, the investigative role (particularly sensitive in relation to lone parents) would be lessened with abolition of the old rules on cohabitation. Lone parents appear to have no positive relationship with FAS (Rahaleen 2006). So far DSFA jobs facilitators have no direct control functions, care should be taken to ensure that control inspectors, freed up with abolition of the old rules on cohabitation, are not assigned to job facilitation or mediation roles. Giving DSFA a full activation function is consistent with the objective in *Towards 2016* (Ireland 2006), which places activation on a level with service delivery and control as a central part of the core business of DSFA.

Another crucial national institutional weakness is the incapacity of the centralised Department of Education and Science (DES) to play its part in local implementation structures. As discussed earlier, the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001 empowers and enables the Vocational Educational Committees to plan and co-ordinate at local area level. At least two further responses are required of DES. One is in response to issues raised earlier in Chapter 2 of this paper and also raised in Rahaleen (2006), the issue of early school opening to facilitate pre-school childcare. This could be managed by way of each local authority appointing a supervisor for children waiting for school to begin. The second is the need to ensure every expectant teen mother is facilitated to complete secondary school education (by way of statutory obligation under the National Education Welfare Board Act if necessary).

5.3 Localisation of service delivery

Local differentiation is an important element characterising urban governance solutions. Common to all activation approaches is a shift to a more active leading role for local authorities in dealing with problems of unemployment and poverty. Success in 'welfare to work' strategies is highly contingent on the capacity of local institutions and networks to work to a common agenda. Finn (2000:45) argues 'the reality is that more flexible institutionalised arrangements are a key element of a localised employment policy'. Local partnerships' in the EU are often local authority based or led. Rik van Berkel (2006) noted how decentralisation of social assistance in the Netherlands emphasises the role of local welfare actors in the Netherlands and the importance of focusing on operational aspects of policy. This emerging form of local governance allows co-ordination of policy, adaptation to local circumstances and more stakeholder participation across

organisational boundaries. In Portugal these took the form of 'local support committee', in Belgium 'Public Centres of Social Action' and in Denmark 'local co-ordination committees. Vertical devolution of power to co-ordinate also took place in Italy, Finland, Sweden and Germany. Craig (2006:194) observes quite radical reforms in how communities and local territories are governed and strengthening capacity of soft institutions to play more ambitious roles in enabling well-being.

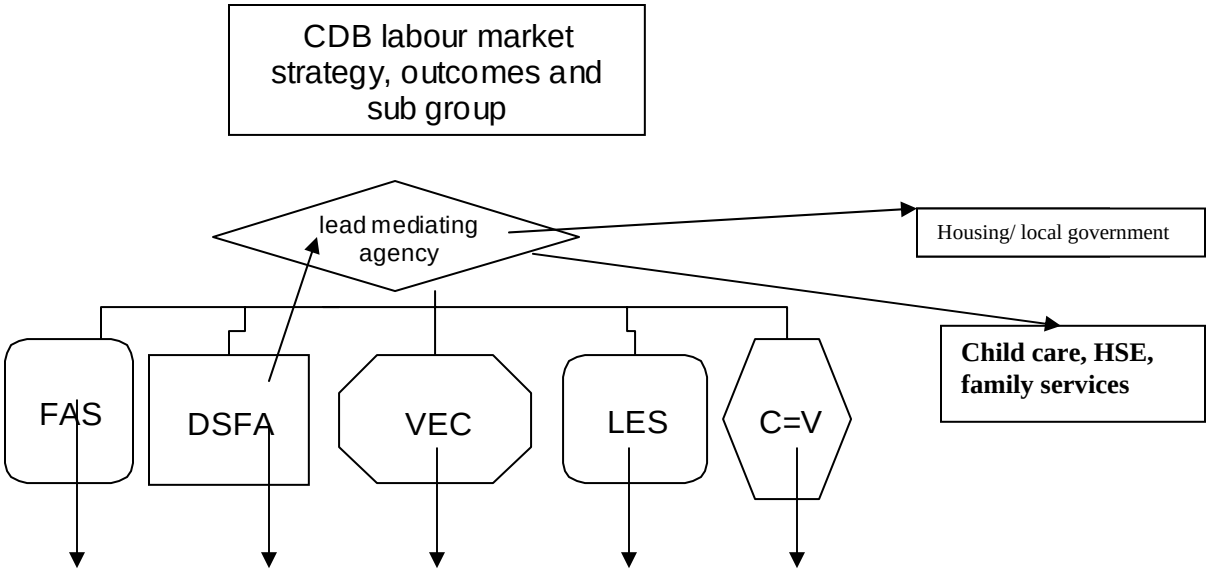
O Broin and Waters (2006:5) observe that Irish local democracy 'has been a matter of concern for some period of time'. They describe a local governance structure characterised by a large number of agencies[17] (491 in total and 22 different types), overlapping and operating at three operational sub-national levels: sub-county, county, quasi-regional. In the latter level is FAS and DSFA, both appear to be regionalised but are planned and managed from national offices and have no local autonomy. Co-operation is not factored into the institutional design principles of these agencies (ibid;13). There is nonetheless an ever wider circle of policy actors in sub-national governance and Irish local government is seen as a central co-ordinator for an ever widening arena of actors. The most recent change has been the local development cohesion process, which seeks to coordinate area partnerships and local government administrative boundaries. The NESC *Developmental Welfare State* conceptualises innovative proactive local institutions capable of responding to social needs that are not delivered through core public services. (NESC; 2005, 157-8). *Towards 2016* (66-70) affirms this direction and reinforces the leadership role of the City and County Development Boards and Social Inclusion Measures Groups[18]. This structure has already been used to organise the 2007 Gender Equality Unit Initiative for Lone Parents and while early evaluations show much work needs to be done to engage mainstream statutory agencies there is also emerging evidence of potential for interagency work at national level.

17

Structure of Irish Local and Regional Governance
Regional assemblies
8 regional authorities
29 County Councils, 5 City Councils
34, City Development Boards, Vocational Education Committees, Social Inclusion Measure Committees
75 Town councils
38 Area partnerships, 33 community groups, 22 leader groups
14 Drug Task Forces
25 RAPID and 25 CLAR areas

Given that this institutional framework already exists there is little sense in constructing an alternative framework to deliver a local activation programme. However it is difficult to overstate the crisis of confidence among community groups in the ability of statutory agencies to undertake the extent of institutional reform required to deliver national and local interagency cooperation. Many community groups are pessimistic about the possibility of meaningful institutional reform and cultural change in local statutory agencies and question whether there is even a basic shared understanding of what is meant by interagency co-operation. Giving a key role to local government in activation proposals would require major reforms in terms of culture and practice. This is especially the case given lone mothers can experience negative and stigmatising attitudes from these local services. It is clear that if local government structures are to be used as a framework for delivering activation that trust will have to be developed with groups representing the target groups for activation. The right to be consulted in relation to design and delivery of any publicly provided service and to complain and receive redress is fundamental and should be, as in the examples in Chapter Four, enshrined in law. Local groups might also have a direct delivery role in relation to some aspects of the services.

Despite the serious operational and development issues in Irish local governance the City Development Board institutional arrangement seems most realistic in the longer term of leading to enhanced interagency work (Toward 2016:72). Indeed given the most significant challenge is mainstreaming good social inclusion in statutory provision it seems there is little choice but to persist with present institutional reform and *get it right.* NESF (2006) stress a specific labour market role for the National Employment Service institutions (FAS and LES) as key personal plan mediators for all job-ready and low-skilled workers who need post employment mentoring or upskilling. However it is proposed here, on the same logic that the previous section proposed merging Employment Services and Income Supports that DSFA, not FAS, would be the lead agency for activation and that local interagency co-ordination would be achieved though DSFA led action through the Social Inclusion measures group located in the City Development Board. A local institutional partnership arrangement would look like the following.



This is broadly consistent with what the NESF (2006) outlines as a national strategic employment framework linked to a national reform programme. NESF advocates an Interdepartmental National Framework, which would encourage a more personalised service from a Local Partnership Network to provide a full menu of supports, funded through service delivery agreements. It identifies DSFA, FAS, VEC, CDBs, and Area Based Companies, which it argues should have an explicit mandate, should have co-operation built into the job descriptions of staff, and should be allowed maximum flexibility.

The physical environment mediation takes place in is important. In Norway, for example, meetings take place anywhere including in the client's own home and this allows a broader agenda to be pursued at such meetings. The UK New Deal for Lone Parents has also successfully experiemented with more community based delivery of activation processes. In most countries, building trust requires avoiding open office environments and planning a confidential, non threatening interview space. This presents a practical challenge for local offices. However it is clear that taken together there is a sufficient local infrastructure between the main local statutory and voluntary actors. Merging the employment services aspect of FAS and the DSFA would allow greater synergy of resources. The localisation of the administration of OPFP has been a valuable exercise for DSFA and has given the Department an opportunity to appreciate issues about localised management of the flows and structures in public offices and the changed roles of some staff, for example Deciding Officers. Information technology can play a large role in

communicating information, tracking and monitoring. There remains technical and legal issues to be managed about cross agency information sharing.

The target group can be distinguished by geographical distribution. Place or location determines to a significant degree women's local employment opportunities. Confining the discussion to those on One Parent Family Payment distribution is heavily concentrated in Dublin (27,741 claimants) and other major cities (Cork, Limerick and Galway). However counties Louth, Wexford, Wicklow, Waterford and Tipperary have significant numbers justifying targeted intervention on a significant scale. Within these counties there is a further geographical clustering in areas of high socio- economic disadvantage (likely to be CLAR or RAPID areas). There is a strong argument, in the first instance, to target these areas. On the other hand, policy implementation plans need to take into account the needs of lone parents and qualified adults (many on family farms with the support of Farm Assist), living in isolated areas, far from access to public transport or employment. Variation in implementation is inevitable and should be encouraged. However local providers do need to be accountable.

5.4 Conclusion – the function of leadership

To understand the institutional behaviour of key Irish departments or agencies, one has to understand the political context in which they operate. Organisational leadership in the public sector is often focused on protecting departmental and ministerial resources at the expense of effective implementation and interagency co-operation. Clear political leadership is required to successfully challenge this negative culture. An implementation strategy requires significant institutional and cultural change and hence strong bureaucratic leadership. There is little confidence amongst groups representing the target groups of this proposal that political leadership is evident. Given the lack of confidence it is is essential that this strategy is led from the strongest possible arm of government. It should therefore be sited in the context of the work of the Cabinet Sub Committee on Social Inclusion chaired by An Taoiseach. The national implementation structure should be led and serviced by Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) but chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach, membership should comprise DSFA, FAS, Department of Employment Trade and Enterprise, Department of Finance, the Department of Education and Science, the Office of the Minister for Childen, lone parent representative groups, the Office for Social Inclusion and Combat Poverty. A key function of the national

implementation team should be holding each institution to account for the role it plays and in rewarding those that show leadership. This team should also prioritise the mainstreaming of best practice.

Chapter Six

Getting the Detail Right – A Rights and Quality Standards Approach

This chapter reviews in more detail what needs to be done in the Irish context to effect a rights and quality standards approach to an activation framework. It first discusses the need to develop a strong legal framework for the policy, this requires framing the client's and the State's rights and obligations in legal instruments. It then focuses on the role of the mediator and discusses what is required to ensure that those charged with activation are fully equipped and adequately trained for this important role. It briefly sketches already existing barriers (in work poverty, poverty traps, loss of secondary benefits and childcare) and argues these need to be managed out of the system before the activation policy is implemented. Finally it concludes by locating the institutional framework of the previous chapter and the recommendations discussed in this chapter into the three platforms of the Developmental Welfare state: income services and innovation.

6.1 Legal safeguards in the Irish context

Chapter Two argued for exemptions from work requirements and Chapter Four argued a positive activation model required legal safeguards of rights and legal guarantees of high standards. Already established statutory 'available for work and genuinely seeking' guidelines require claimants to be genuinely seeking employment 'suitable to age, education, physique, location and family circumstances'. Traditionally claimants were required to show genuine efforts to secure employment. Clearly some of these guidelines need to be amended to facilitate a 19.5 hour week and accommodate an ethics of care as well as other exemptions. Present guidelines for example advise against looking for one particular type of work only; looking for part-time work only; moving to a place where the prospect of getting work is significantly reduced; placing unreasonable restrictions on taking up work due to domestic circumstances; placing unreasonable restrictions on the rate of pay for the job and not having childcare facilities in place. Chapter Three discussed the possibility of activation exemptions. How any possible exemptions are implemented depends on the form the exemptions take and whether they are operationalised at legal or statutory levels, through administrative guidelines levels or culturally through training and work supervision processes. The more emancipatory the process, the more likely that such exemptions will be grounded in a legal framework. But even when clearly expressed in law or by

statutory instruments, administrative guidelines with operational instructions are usually required and training is necessary to provide an interpretation of the implementation of such guidelines.

A person also requires a redress mechanism in the event of being unfairly denied payment on foot of breaching these activation obligations. The fact that Irish claimants can be totally excluded from payment for failure to accept an offer of an active labour market measure places Ireland at the higher end of the punitive scale for this kind of refusal (similar to Spain, France and Denmark). Hence it is even more essential that there are effective safeguards to prevent and monitor for excessive use of such sanctions. Over the years 1998- 2002 Social Welfare Appeals Office Annual Reports show significant increases in the numbers of unemployed claimants who appealed decisions to withhold these payments on grounds of failing 'availability' or 'genuinely seeking work' tests. An Appeals Office Annual Report 2000 (2001:8) outlines a substantial work increase for the Appeal Office 'available for and genuinely seeking work appeals increased by 1,700 or 47 per cent in 2000'. However the strength of the Appeals office as a monitoring safeguard is illustrated by comments in a subsequent report (2002:12) which noted concern that:

> Claimants who are ill-equipped to take up employment --- frequently come to attention on appeal as a result of having their unemployment payments disallowed for failing to fulfil the statutory requirements of being available for and genuinely seeking work.

This suggests that when there was inappropriate implementation of conditionality a sufficient watchdog was in place to call halt. Care must also be taken to monitor how conditions are interpreted on a gender basis. Rules impact differentially on men and women and women still experience a gender bias in the interpretation of rules that requires that claimants be available for full-time work and have childcare in place. Unpublished administrative data show that in 2004 a significant 5,290 claimants, the vast majority women, were refused payment on the grounds of their not being available for work at the initial stage of the claim because they did not have childcare arrangements or because they were seeking only part-time work. Even if such rules change, old attitudes will not change overnight and training will be needed in all parts of the process to eliminate remaining gender bias.

6.2 Case management and the role of mediators

A key implementation challenge is agreeing a clear definition of the role of the mediator or case manager (from here on referred to as the mediator). As noted earlier, imposing a work requirement on a claimant shifts the power balance towards the mediator and it is only with careful policy design, training and monitoring that we can be sure this power is used appropriately. Kazepov and Sabatinelli (2005:10) notes how, regardless of the political colour of regimes 'in all cases activation changes the relationship between the recipient and the public administration, widening the duties of claimants and, only in some positive cases, their rights'. Allen (2003:192) warns of the danger of creating a new type of power 'a new economy of welfare professional power where there is holistic power to discipline and control every aspect of welfare recipients' lives'. Lipsky (1980:203) notes the contradictions between rational policy objectives and the real world which requires human judgment. He notes the human tendency, in such circumstances, to construct stereotypical views of clients and to structure responses accordingly. Different organisational cultures lead to the construction of different views or stereotypes of clients. This makes co-ordination between institutions more difficult. Waddan (2004:208) stresses the potentially powerful role of 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980) who have discretion to act as gatekeepers and to determine what exemptions or sanctions can be applied. The need for a clear criterion for who decides what is evident.

While the crucial interpretive role of the mediator is key to good practice, there are wide variations about what is expected of the mediator. Waddan (2003) observes the range of numbers a mediator works with ranges from 15 to 400 and how face time with clients varies significantly across different activation regimes. Qualitative research into clients' reactions to the mediation process highlight the complex and sensitive nature of the case management process and decision-making context. Concern about children's well-being is often under appreciated in a mother's transition from welfare to work. Baker &Tippin (2004:111) advise that case managers training needs to be particularly sensitive about health and cite that one lone parent observed how case workers *'weren't really worried about where my head was at'*. Women valued a counselling relationship especially when exiting an abusive relationship or when managing health was a key issue. On the other hand some women found not talking about health to be a way of holding onto self-esteem. Some did not want to get into areas that were contentious or disputable, one describing the process as a *meat factory – you are naked, stripped to the bone, (*Baker and Tippin 2004:115). Skevik (2005) outlines an alternative approach to case work in Norway where the

strategy has been to mobilise civic society and enable other lone parents to act as mediators. Lone parents as peers are assumed to not be in a position to abuse power. Such an approach contrasts with New Zealand where it was certainly the case that lone parents in New Zealand perceived mediators had power to instruct them in a wide range of areas. UK New Deal for Lone Parents's suggest personal advisors have managed to achieve a balanced working relationship with lone parents, Holland (2005) notes lone parents are 'relaxed' after a second meeting with personal advisor. No surprise then that changing case managers is seen by clients to be a nuisance because trust had to be re-established (ibid:115). This highlights the disadvantage in moving from a DSFA-based job facilitator to a FAS-based case worker. Evaluations suggest that in the process of activation and interviewing, there is evidence that case workers pay more attention to men (Arrowsmith 2004 576). While this likely reflects similar processes where teachers give more time to male students it also reflects the structural design features of the case management review system in the UK where the job performance monitoring system weights job placement of lone parents at 12 points but partners or spouses at only 2 points. While there is clear need for gender awareness training for mediators, it is also necessary to ensure the labour market integration needs of qualified adults are made a specific target that can be monitored separately to lone parents.

Finn (2000) notes that the co-ordination and integration role of partnership relations are significant in all models but requires significant resourcing and advises that the equivalent of one senior manager per office is required for networking. The Compass programme in New Zealand identified the formal inclusion of networking and co-ordination in the job description of mediators as good practice. The issue of information or more precisely lack of information as a barrier to employment needs to be taken seriously. Numerous Irish policy reviews have highlighted the need for better information strategies. A specific review of labour market strategies for women (Ireland, 2000) went so far as to recommend a specialised information leaflet for women (a recommendation that was not implemented). It should also be taken into account that while 'make work pay' information is essential, the decision to return to work is not always a rational one. Non-economic considerations like family responsibilities qualify economic calculations and preparedness to take whatever work is available. Information on how maternal employment can impact positively on child well-being may also be useful.

The security of having a guaranteed income is crucial for many families and many lone parents are reluctant to part with the security of a guaranteed independent income. O Donnell & Arup

(2001) argue that claimants are ignorant of the finer points of income tests and that they value the stability of a regular though lower income flow over what may be theoretically possible to earn. Holland (2005) reviews the in-work benefit calculations that take place in 30% of NDLP interviews and argues this should happen in all interviews (a view endorsed by FAS and DSFA). Word of mouth is a key information conduit among the target group (Rahaleen 2006:31) and care should be taken in the design of the strategy to eliminate negative perceptions or flaws that will be quickly spread on the grapevine. In particular potential bad press associated with personal losses incurred under the poverty or unemployment traps associated with uneven income disregards in the JSA and PA need to be tackled before the programme begins.

Mentoring and post-employment support are also seen as crucial roles for mediators. A UK pilot of five types of post employment support found while counselling produced good outcomes, it was perceived as middle class and suffered low take-up. Vocational mentoring was seen as very useful for progression, as was mentoring by an employment services co-ordinator. Peer mentoring has potential where ethnicity was a post employment issue while family support suffered a very low take-up. Holland (2005) concluded that specialist mentoring works best and that the role of a personal advisor was crucial in promoting mentoring, but that post employment support was hampered by employer attitudes and clients not wanting to be seen to need support and their desire to be free of benefit system.

It is likely, given that various pilots of 'profiling' clients have now been undertaken (NESF 2006), that profiling will be part of the process of case management and that mediators will require training in profiling. Profiling involves generating a client profile (consisting of demographic, educational, employment, health, criminal, care and attitudinal information about the client). It then involves mapping the overall client situation against local labour market demand and monthly updating of the assessment. From the assessment information, it is possible to gauge the number of presenting problems (highly correlated with employment readiness) and the likely number of mediation interventions required. For example, those with five presenting problems required on average 9.8 meetings and 10.59 hours of mediation. This will assist in planning better quality service delivery.

The role of mediator is varied and includes direct communication with the client, micro counselling, referral, information giving, teaching benefit calculations, networking with other providers and local employers, post employment support and monitoring and evaluation. Training

needs to reflect the variety of the job and the crucial role the mediator plays. Targets for such a programme need to be realistic and participants numbers per mediator kept low. Given what was said earlier about the importance of framing discourse in a positive way, it is essential that political and departmental leadership gives the correct message to street level workers and that all agencies are 'on message' promoting a 'social inclusion' rather than 'work first' strategy .

There is a great variety in the role and training of mediators. Ditch & Roberts (2002:25) identity that a key characteristic of administrative and client oriented work in the fields of social security and labour market activation, is the high reliance on staff skills and deployment of discretion. By its nature social security policy is inevitably subject to interpretation by staff in face-to-face encounters with individuals. Ridzi (2004: 30) highlights how staff aversion to change and intentional subversion hamper welfare reform, noting that 'career social work staff were well aware of client resistance to welfare arrangements and were furthermore likely to sympathise with them'. This was the practical experience in the Netherlands. In over to overcome such aversion to change, Ridzi (2004) highlights the need for culture change and training. Case management training in an earlier COMPASS programme in New Zealand stressed early health interventions in income support process, realistic strategies to manage childhood illness, full range of referral and counselling, full information on health benefits and mediator training in micro counselling and active listening skills. Current training in New Zealand stresses the importance of training that enables mediators to understand their role in the widest possible context. Equality and diversity training is also mandatory. Given the stress on rights and standards, training is also required to ensure mediators are fully aware of their statutory requirements and the rights and obligations of clients. Given the technical and administrative nature of client profiling, tracking and monitoring, there is also a large element of systems training required. It is crucial that such training is integrated across all statutory agencies that will be delivering services to the same clients and is high quality and comprehensive. Given the class, ethnicity and gender dimensions discussed earlier, it is essential that gender and equality issues in delivery of services discussed earlier also need to be factored into training and also that processes and procedures are subject to a wider process of equality proofing (Hegarty 2005).

Given that the Irish proposals are at an early stage of development it may be useful to examine the possible role Irish client representative groups could play in the mediation process. The context of the new activist innovative local sphere in the Developmental Welfare State (NESC 2005) also lends itself to the possibility of refocusing the role of agencies in delivering public

services and developing new types of service delivery partnerships at local level as is the case in New Zealand . It is also useful to consider whether lone parents or claimants representative groups could be contracted to deliver aspects of such training. Certainly the British experience of lone parents groups delivering training had been advocated by Irish lone parent groups (One Family 2006). Lessons from Norway about a more central role for lone parents as mediators are also interesting in this regard (Skevik 2005).

6.3 Eliminating working poor traps, poverty traps and addressing childcare barriers.

Apart from the rate of pay and the problem of issues of low pay leading to in-work poverty discussed earlier, there are also issues relating to financial outcomes, including issues of inconsistent income disregards, issues relating to retention of secondary benefits, and in-work supports such as FIS and child income support (OPEN 2004, NESF 2006). The irony of the present proposal is not just that they will not address but that they will intensify current traps. In the DSFA (2006) proposals, the Parental Allowance has an income disregard with a lower limit of €120 per week and an upper limit €400 (the same as the present OPFP). However between €120 and €400, 40 per cent of income will be assessed as means (rather than the current 50 per cent assessed as means under OPFP). Once income exceeds €400 per week, the PA will be stopped but parents will be able to claim Family Income Supplement (FIS), if they meet the FIS means test requirements. On Jobseeker's Allowance (and now under qualified adults), the income disregard will be €20 per day (subject to a maximum of three days) and is reduced at a 50% rate. This means there are substantial employment traps for parents moving from the PA back to JSA when the child is aged eight. These arise from the loss of the income disregard associated with PA and the lack of an equivalent disregard on JSA (OPEN 2006). A second loss for those in two parent families occurs during the reversion from Parental Allowance to Jobseeker's Allowance, as this involves a move from a full adult rate of parental allowance to a qualified adult rate of Job Seekers Allowance (OPEN 2006). As OPEN highlights, the losses are considerable ranging from €55 for lone parents at a 20 hour per week minimum wage job, to €80 per week for a partnered woman in the same job. While such losses may be mitigated by tapering arrangements, there will still be a net loss and the lone parent or qualified adult will still have to manage childcare costs. The shift between payments and income disregards is also complicated, and inconsistent with stated principles of simplicity and consistency. If even a small number of claimants experience a net loss as a result of reforms, an unfortunate negative message about the reform will travel quickly 'on the grapevine'.

While the proposal to reform the limitation rule (where the qualified adult allowance is only 70% of the adult rate) and establish a parental allowance to be paid at the full adult rate is a welcome partial individualisation it is nowhere near a full version of individualisation of social welfare. Once the youngest child is eight the spouse or partner of a JSA claimant will have to revert to being a qualified adult. While the lone parent will no longer be subject to a cohabitation test she will, in the event of cohabiting, be subject to a household means test. Bennett (2002:560) discusses tensions between the inconsistent individualisation in terms of labour market activation and continued joint assessment of a couple's income and needs. Gender sensitive analysis of income policy tends to respect the goal of economic independence for women and the aim of eliminating of dependency on either the state or the partner. This limited proposal only partially enhances financial autonomy for women and only partially enables longer term sustainable transformation of gender roles for labour market autonomy. (Bennett, 2002:565).

It is recognised that some of the employment or poverty traps could be tackled through reform of child income support. While the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) have been working on reform proposals there is little expectation of a significant policy change in this area and no serious government commitment, at the time of writing in Autumn 2007, to introducing a second tier of child income supplement for all families with children in poverty. This is unfortunate given the low take-up of FIS and the clearly successful policies supporting working families elsewhere. New Zealand's Working Family Support administered through the tax system has 100% take-up (Stephens 2005) and is considered an important factor in increasing labour market participation of NZ lone parents. The success of in work benefits in the UK was discussed in Chapter Three. In the event of a child income supplement policy being eventually adopted, the policy choice will be between a work-neutral family support and a work-oriented family support. Given that the overall DFSA proposal is framed in the context of high child poverty, it makes little sense to develop a second tier 'in work' child income support which is unavailable to the most vulnerable families. Callan et al (2006) conclude that tackling child poverty requires both a broad view of welfare income supports and activist supports. The development of a work-neutral child benefit system remains an essential part of the overall strategy, a refundable tax credit scheme would be a more efficient mechanism to target support to poor families in low paid employment who remain outside the tax system.

Further employment and poverty traps are caused by the loss of secondary benefits including rent allowances and medical cards. Budget 2007 abolished the ban on full-time work for people in

receipt of Rent Supplement. This change and other positive changes have eased some, but not all, of the poverty traps associated with rent supplement[19]. There is longer term potential with the transfer of those in long term private rental accommodation and depending on rent supplement to the new Local Authority managed Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). This operates on a differential rent basis which claws back between 10-20% of earned income in rent and produces more positive better work incentives. It would be useful, while RAS is being rolled out nationwide, to allow those eligible for RAS to transfer to a differential rent scheme while formally awaiting inclusion in the full RAS programme. A universal health care approach just as non means tested medical cards for all children would alleviate the cause of poverty traps associated with loss of medical cards as well as promoting broader child well-being.

The new National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010 and a new National Childcare Training Strategy has a target of 17,000 additional childcare training places to be provided by 2010 and will seek to improve co-ordination and integration at national and local level between key players, including Local Planning Authorities and County Development Boards. Chapter 2 of this paper and Rahaleen (2006) discussed the issue of early school opening and later school closing to facilitate pre and post school childcare for school-going children. This could be managed by way of each local authority appointing a supervisor for pre and post school supervision and for local authorities to have formal role in providing recreation camps for holiday periods. An alternative approach pioneered in Dundee was the employment of women to attend the home of other women in order to facilitate early exit of other mothers to work. Such arrangements could also be extended to holiday cover. The issue of a family-friendly work place and supports for local employers to develop positive flexible working practices and reduce negative flexible working requirements should be examined and practical proposals developed.

One of the major obstacles to achieving better work-life balance or family-friendly policy is the attitudes of employers, who fear greater flexibility for employees will threaten competitiveness. The evidence from Nordic countries shows high levels of compatibility between competitiveness and work-life balance. However such is the national reverence in Ireland to competitiveness that even the principle of ‘an opportunity to balance work and family commitments in the 2007 social

[19] There remains a gross household earning limit of e317 (income from BTWA and FIS and monies paid in PRSI and reasonable travelling expenses are disregarded). This e317 limit has been frozen at a 1994 base even though the average industrial wage has increased seventy five percent in the same period and average rents have increased forty percent in the same period (FAS 2006:46).

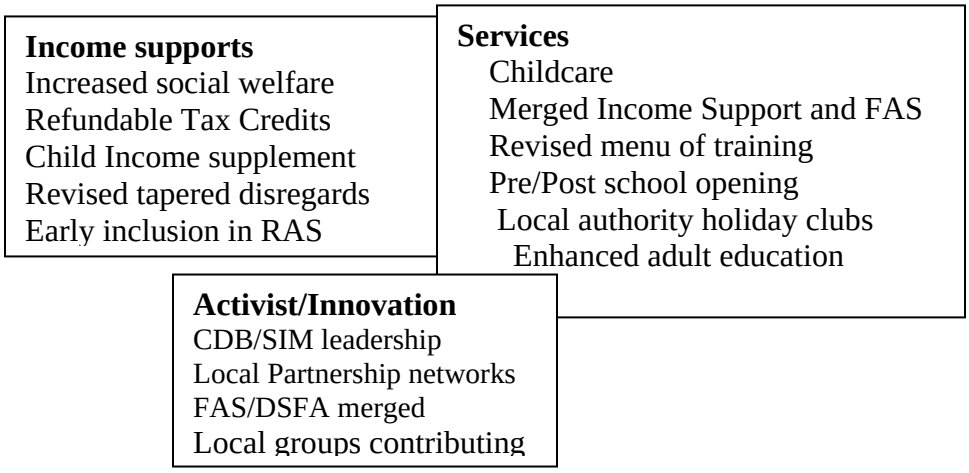
inclusion strategy has been deliberately qualified and made contingent on being *'consistent with employers' needs'* (Ireland 2007:40, italics added by author). Employers, rather than providing flexible employment, are increasingly requiring the employee to be more and more flexible to suit their needs (Duggan and Loftus 2006). In the absence of satisfactory voluntary progress through the National Framework Committee on Work-Life Balance consideration, should now be given to a stronger legislative approach and a regulatory framework for work-life balance (Irvine 2007, Keogh 2007).

Reforms that focus on work requirements for low-income women do nothing to transform existing gender roles and relationships that currently structure and constrain those choices to allow both sexes to fulfil their capabilities to the full. A Budget 2007 (DOF 2007) decision to award a half-rate of Carers Allowance to social welfare recipients who are caring for another person full-time, while welcome from some perspectives, is inconsistent with a broader policy to apply work activation to those same people. If a lone parent or qualified adult is validated as engaging in such a socially useful activity, will this be enough to exempt her from a work requirement or will she be expected to fulfill her work requirement alongside the caring role and parenting role? The 2007 social inclusion strategy qualifies the principle 'that every person with caring responsibilities should have access to appropriate supports to enable them to meet these responsibilities' by adding *'in addition to employment and other commitments'* (Ireland 2007:40, italics added by author). Finally, for partnered mothers, Ireland has a very unegalitarian share of households functions with women working an average 20 hours per week more than men on unpaid household tasks (McGinnity et al 2005:10). Clearly the issue of developing more balanced gender roles in relation to care and housework needs to be more of a national policy priority.

6.4 Conclusion

This paper sought to develop the principles of a positive Irish activation framework and the examined the practical implementation challenges involved in delivering a social inclusion focused activation strategy. In doing so it highlighted the reality of women's lives, the significant obstacles facing women wishing to access employment and the priority afforded to issues of care in women's lives. The paper questioned the objectives behind the recent government proposals to apply a work requirement to lone parents and qualified adults and argued that the objective of eradicating child poverty sits alongside other objectives of tackling welfare dependency. It challenged the notion of dependency and argued about the need to build policy on an ethic of care

recognises and values interdependency. The paper argued that there was no compelling argument for a more conditional social security system and that introduction of work requirements should be delayed until adequate supports are in place and there is evidence that such obligations are required. Learning from the New Zealand experience (where compulsion was introduced in 1997 and then withdrawn in 2002) it is necessary to have appropriate supports and fiscal instruments in place before introducing more systematic engagement. Likewise the UK experience suggests much progress can be made with voluntary engagement and that mandatory engagement considered necessary for outreach purposes, should only be introduced carefully and over a considerable time period. The first step then is not the introduction of compulsion for lone parents or others but the fiscal and institutional reforms required to ensure that activation of social welfare clients will actually deliver social inclusion. A quantum leap is required for almost all local and national institutions touched by the activation agenda. In order to contribute to an emerging blueprint for Irish social policy the actions required for a positive activation policy are illustrated in the NESC (2005) Developmental Welfare State framework.



The practical issues raised in both 5.10 and 5.11 are a sobering reminder of the very practical obstacles facing mothers who wish to work. As debate moves on it is necessary to be both ambitious about the future but grounded about the reality of women's lives and the tensions between short and long term child well-being. It is remarkable that we set into this journey with little empirical evidence about the lives of such women and their labour market experience. This highlights the importance of both quantitative and qualitative research and of mothers' own voices informing the debate. Good activation policy is flexible and tailors services to the individual. This requires institutional reform so that there is administrative, policy and political

accountability and so it can be judged whether policy is being delivered in a way that is consistent with the aims of the programme and proportionate to the investment of the State. While it is a cliché that all research ends with recommendations for further research it is imperative that the information gaps discussed in this paper (gaps relating to labour market wages and conditions, levels of education of lone parents, views of lone parents, good practice in inter agency work) are filled and that there is a data strategy coherent enough to track ongoing trends across a range of social and economic indicators. This will require carefully considered evaluation and data collection systems capable of differentiating on regional, ethic and gender grounds, of tracking participants progression in employment and of assessing child and family well being. It is only when we have sufficient information of this type that we will be able to determine whether work activation is working to eliminate child and adult poverty and is delivering improved well being for the target groups.

Bibliography

Allen Chris (2003) Desperately seeking fusion on joined up thinking: 'holistic practice' and the new economy of welfare professional power. *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 54 No. 2 p287-306,

Armstrong Jo (2006) Beyond 'juggling' and 'flexibility': classed and gendered experiences of combining employment and motherhood, Lancaster University *Sociological Research Online* Vol. 11 Issue 2, 30/06/2006

Arrowsmith Jessica (2004) *A review of what we know about partners of benefit recipients*, accessed www.dwp.gov.uk

Baker Maureen and Tippin David (2004) More than just another obstacle: Health, Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries and the transition to paid work, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, Issue 21 March 2004 p98-120

Baker John, Lynch Kathleen, Cantillon Sara and Walsh Judy (2004) *Equality, From Theory to Action* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

Baldock John and Hadlow Jan (2004) Managing the family: productivity, scheduling and the male veto, *Social Policy and Administration* Vol. 38 No 6 Dec 2004 p706-720

Bennett Fran (2002) Gender implications of current social security welfare reforms *Fiscal Studies* Vol. 23 No 4 p559-584

Boyle Nigel (2005) *FÁS and Active Labour Market Policy 1985-2004*, Studies in Public Policy: 17, Dublin, The Policy Institute.

Bradshaw Johnathan et al (2003) Financial incentives and mothers employment: a comparative perspective, *Paper for the Foundation in International Studies in Social Security* Stiguna Sweden June 14-17 2003

Breitkreuz Rhonda (2005) Engendering citizenship? A Critical Feminist Analysis of Canadian Welfare to Work: Policies and Employment Experiences of Lone Mothers. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* June 2005 Vol. XXX11 No 2 p147-165

Brunton Colmar (2006) *Work, family and parenting,* Centre of Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development, Wellington April 2006

Callan Tim (2006) *Child Poverty and Child Income Support* presentation to Combat Poverty Agency, Research Seminar Series 27 November 2006

Callister Paul (2004) Over worked families; Changes in the paid working hours of families with young children *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* Issue 24 p160-183

Cebulla A. et al (2005) *Welfare to work New Labour and the US Experience*, Aldershot, Ashgate

Central Statistics Office (2005) *EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions, First results 2004,* Dublin, Stationery Office.

Central Statistics Office (2006) *EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions, First results 2005,* Dublin, Stationery Office.

Central Statistics Office (2006) *National Quarterly Household Survey September/October 2006,* Dublin, Stationery Office.

Coakely Anne (2005) *Mothers, Welfare and Labour Market Activation* Research Working Paper 05/04, Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency

Charles Nickie and James Emma (2003) Gender and work orientations in conditions of job insecurity *British Journal of Sociology* Vol 54, Issue No 2, June 2003 p239-257

Collins Philip and Rossiter Ann (2004) *On Condition* Social Market Foundation www.hero.ac.uk/inside 14/04 2006

Conroy Pauline (2001) Analysis of gender inequalities in European social protection and their impact on women in poverty in *EAPN, A Social Europe for Women Also,* Vienna, 23-25 February 2001

Cousins Mel, (2005) *Explaining the Irish Welfare State,* Lewiston, N.Y, The Edwin Mellen Press

Craig David (2006) Community well-being strategy and the legacies of new institutionalism and New Public Management in Third Way in New Zealand *Social Policy Review* 18, Ch 10 p193-218

Commission of the European Communities (2003) *The Future of the European Employment Strategy, A strategy for full employment and better jobs for all* Com 2003.6.Final, Brussels European Commission

Commission of the European Communities (2006) *Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market'* 8.2.2006 COM 200644: Final, Brussels, European Commission

Daly Mary (2002) Care as a good for social policy, *Journal of Social Policy* Vol. 31 No 2 p251-270

Daly Mary and Leonard Madeline (2002) *Against all odds, Family Life on a Low Income in Ireland,* Dublin, Irish Public Administration

Daly Mary and Klammer Ute (2005) Women's participation in European Labour Markets in Gerhard Ute et al (2005) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices,* Cheltenham, Edward Elgar p122- 143

Daly Mary and Yeates Nicola (2003) Common Origins, Different Paths: Adaptation and Change in Social Security in Britain and Ireland, *Policy and Politics* Vol. 31 No1 p85-87

Duncan Simon (2003) *Mother Knows Best: Social Division and Work and Childcare*, WP 31 Families, Life Course and Generational Research Centre Working Paper Series , Leeds University

Duncan Simon and Edwards Rosalind (1997) *Single mothers in an international context; mothers or workers*, London, UCL Press

Dean Hartley (1998) Undermining social citizenship; the counter productive effects of behavioural controls in social security administration, paper presented to the *International Social Security Research Conference* Jerusalem 25-28 January 1998

Dean Hartley (2002) Reconceptualising welfare to work for people with multiple problems and needs *Journal of Social Policy* Vol.*32* No 3 p 441 459

Dean Hartley (2001) Working parent hood and parental obligation *Critical Social Policy* Vol. 21 No 8 p267 - 286

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (various) *National Employment Action Plan,* Dublin , Stationery Office

Department of Finance (2007) *Budget 2007* Dublin, Stationary Office

Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs Welfare (2000), *Review of One Parent Family Payment*, Programme Evaluation Report No 7, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Social and Family Affairs (2004-2007) *Strategy Statement*, Dublin, Stationery Office

Department of Social and Family Affairs (2006), *Proposals to Support Lone Parents* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Social and Family Affairs (2006a) *Annual Statistical Report 2005*, Dublin: Stationery Office

Ditch John and Roberts Ellen (2002) Integrated approaches to active welfare an employment polices in *European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions: Linking Welfare and Work* Luxembourg Office of Official Publications of the European Communities

Duggan Carmel and Loftus Camille (2006) *A study of labor market vulnerability and responses to it in Donegal Sligo and North Dublin,* accessed from **www.nesf.ie**

EAPN (2006a) *Setting minimum social standards across Europe summary of research and papers summer 2006* accessed at www.eapn.ie `

EAPN (2006) *Briefing note on flexicurity* EAPN No 1191 2006

EAPN (2007) *Developing Positive Activation,* EAPN Employment Working Group Briefing Paper accessed www.eapn.ie

Edin Kathyrn and Kefelas Maria (2005) *Promises I can keep* Berkerely, University of California Press

Edin Kathryn and Lein Laura (1997) *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive on welfare and low wage work,* New York, Russell Sage Foundation

FAS (2004), *The Irish Labour Market Review 2003: Challenges Facing the Irish Labour Market,* Dublin. FAS

FAS (2005) *The Irish Labour Market Review,* Dublin, FAS accessed www.fas.ie

FAS (2006) *FAS quarterly labour market commentary* Dublin, FAS accessed at www.fas.ie

Finn, Dan (2000) Welfare to Work: The Local Dimension, *Journal of European Social Policy* Vol.10 No1 p 43-57

Forssen Katja and Hakovirta Mia (2000) Family policy, work incentives and employment of mothers, paper presented at *Social Security in the global village* Helsinki 25.9 – 27.9 2000 ISSA

Francesconi Marco and Van der Klaauw Wilbert (2004) *The socioeconomic consequences of in-work benefit for British lone mothers: New evidence from Panel data* IZA Discussion Papers, Institute for the Study of Labour IZA.

Geldof Dirk (1999) New Activation Polices Promises and Risks in Helikkila M (ed) *European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions Linking Welfare and Work* Luxembourg, Office of Official Publications of the European Communities

Gerhard Ute et al (2005) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices,* Cheltenham, Edward Elgar

Gerhard Ute (2005) Mothers between individualisation and institutions; cultural images of welfare policy in Gerhard Ute et al (eds) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices* Cheltenham Edward Elgar p18-40

Gilbert Neil (2005) *Welfare to work in practice*, Ashgate, FISS

Graham Hilary and McDermott Elizabeth (2006) Qualitative research and the evidence base of policy: Insights from studies of teenagers in the UK, *Journal of Social Policy* Vol. No. 35 Part One p21-37

Gregg Paul and Elizabeth Washbrook (2003) *The effects of early maternal employment on child development in the UK,* CPMO Working Paper Series 03/070

Grubb David (2004) The aims and effectiveness of Public Employment Services, presentation to Third FAS Labour Market Conference *The Irish Labour Market: Working for our future,* Dublin Nov 30th 2004

Harker Lisa (2006) *Delivering on child poverty in the UK. What would it take? A report for the Department of Work and Pensions* accessed www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/2006/harker

Harkness Susan and Gregg Paul (2003) *Welfare Reform and Lone Parents in the UK,* CPMO Working Paper 03/072

Harkness Susan, MacMillan Lindsey and Gregg Paul (2006) *Welfare to work polices and child poverty,* York, Joesph Rowntree Foundation

Hay Carolyn and Breuer Zoey (2004) *Mentoring and post employment supports* accessed www.dwp.com

Hawkins Robert (2005) From self sufficiency to personal and family sustainability a new paradigm for social policy *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* Vol. XXXX11 No 4 p77-92

Hegarty Maria (2005) *FAS Equality Proofing Project Report,* accessed directly from author

Hilliard Betty (2005) Gender roles in intimate relationships in Garry J., Hardiman N., Payne D (eds) *Irish Social and Political Attitudes*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press.

Hobson Barbara (2000) *Gender and citizenship in transition,* Basingstoke, Macmillan

Holland James (2005) *Evaluation of the extension of the New Deal for Lone Parents Eligibility* , accessed at www.dwp.gov.uk

Horgan Goretti (2005) *On the edge, surveying the most disadvantaged areas of the North of Ireland; the voices of mothers and young people*, Derry, Bogside and Brandywell Women's Group

Hvinden Bjorn (1999) Activation: a Nordic Perspective, in Helikkila M (ed) *European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions: Linking Welfare and Work* Luxembourg, Office of Official Publications of the European Communities

Ireland (1986) *Commission on Social Welfare*, Dublin Stationary Office

Ireland (1999) *Review Group on the Treatment of Households in the Social Welfare Code,* Dublin Stationery Office.

Ireland (2000) *Report of the P2000 Working Group on Women's Access to the Labour Market,* Dublin Stationery Office.

Ireland (2005) *Lisbon Agenda: Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs Republic of Ireland Programme,* October 2005, Dublin Stationery Office

Ireland (2006) *Towards 2016,* Dublin, Stationary Office

Ireland (2006a) National Reform Plan, Dublin, Stationary Office

Ireland (2007) *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2010,* Dublin, Office for Social Inclusion

Indecon (2002) *Review of Active Labour Market Programmes* Dublin, Indecon International Economic Consultants, DETE

Indecon (2005) *Review of the National Employment Action Plan Preventative Strategy*, Dublin, Indecon International Economic Consultants, DETE

Irvine Tese (2007) *Time we considered work life balance as a legal right* Irish Times Friday 2nd Feb 2007

Jennings Patricia (2004) What mothers want: welfare reform and maternal desires *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* Vol. XXXI No 3 p113-131

Karagiannaki Eleni (2007) Exploring the Effects of Integrated Benefit Systems and |Active Labour Market Policies: Evidence from Jobcentre Plus in the UK, *Journal of Social Policy* Vol. 36 No 2 p 177-195

Kazepov Yuri (2006) The decentralisation of social assistance in Netherlands *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol.26 No2 p20-31

Kazepov Yuri and Sabatinelli Stefania (2005) Minimum Income and Social Integration Institutional Arrangements, *Peer Review in the Field of Social Inclusion Processes* accessed www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net

Keogh, Barbara (2007) Congress Work Life Balance presentation to *Lone Parent Round Table* Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 26th February 2007

Knijn Trudie and van Wel Frits (2004) Does it work? Employment policies for lone parents in the Netherlands in Millar Jane and Rowlingson Karen (eds) *Lone parents, employment and social policy cross national comparisons*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Knijin Trudie et al (2005) Care packages; the organisation of work and care by working mothersin Gerhard Ute et al (eds) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar p97-121

Leira Arnlaug et al (2005) Kinship and informal support: care resources for the first generation of working mothers in Norway Italy and Spain in Gerhard Ute et al (eds) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar

Leira Arnlaug (1992) *Welfare states and working mothers: The Scandinavian experience*, Cambridge, CUP

Layte Richard et al (2005) *Profiling the Unemployed: An analysis of the Galway and Waterford Live Register Surveys* Dublin, ESRI

Levitas, R. (2001) Against work: a utopian incursion into social policy, *Critical Social Policy* Vol. 21 No 4 p449-465.

Lewis, Jane (1992), Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 2 No 3 p159-73.

Lewis Jane (2001) Orientations to work and the issue of care in Millar Jane and Rowlingson Karen (eds) *Lone parents, employment and social policy cross national comparisons*, Bristol, The Policy Press p153-168

Lind Jens (2006) Activation for what purpose: lessons from Denmark, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* No 26 p5-19

Lister Ruth (2003) Investing in citizen workers of the future: transformations in Citizenship and the state under New Labour, *Social Policy and Administration* Vol. 37 No. 5 p427-443

Lister Ruth (2004) *Poverty*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Lipsky Michael (1980) *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in public services* New York, Russell Sage Foundation

Lodemel Ivar and Trickey Heather (2001) An offer you cant refuse; Work Fare in International Perspective, Bristol, The Policy Press

Loftus, Camille (2005) *Out of the Traps: Ending poverty traps and making work pay for people in poverty,* Dublin, Open and EAPN

Loftus, Camille (2007) Presentation on Lone Parents *to Lone Parent Round Table* Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 26th February 2007

Lynch Kathleen and Baker John (2005) Defining care love and solidarity within an equality framework, paper presented at *Equality, care and social inclusion*, UCD/QUB Armagh City Hotel, 24 June 2005

Lyons Maureen and Lynch Kathleen (2005) States of Care, Time Povety and the Moral imperative to care *Equality, care and social inclusion*, UCD/QUB Armagh City Hotel, 24 June 2005

Mahon Evelyn (2004) Families Children and Labour Markets paper presented at *Families Children and Social Policy Irish Social Policy Association Conference*, Croke Park Dublin 17th September 2004

Mairhuber Ingrid (2001) The interdependence of social developments and the gender contract, in EAPN, *A Social Europe for Women Also*, Vienna, 23-25 February 2001

Martin, John and Grubb, David (2001) What *works and for whom? A review of OECD's countries experiences with active labour market policies*, OECD Office of Labour Market Policy Evaluation, Working Paper 2001.14

May Vanessa (2004) Meanings of lone motherhood within a broader family context *The Sociological Review* No 52 p391 411

McCabe, Breda (2006) *Economic implications of non standard employment* presentation to Combat Poverty Agency Research Seminar Series 26 September 2006

McCashin (2004) *Social Security in Ireland*, Dublin, Gill and McMillan

McCashin Anthony (1997) *Employment aspects of young women in Ireland*, Dublin, Irish Youth Work Press

McCashin Anthony (1996) *Lone mothers in Ireland, a local study of young women in Ireland*, Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin

McGinnity Frances et al (2005) *Time use in Ireland 2005 Survey Report*, Dublin, ESRI

McKeown Kieran and Haase Trutz (2006) *The mental health of children and the factors which determine it*, Dublin, Young Ballymun

McLaughlin Eithne and Roberts Paula (1997) Single mothers in Republic of Ireland; mothers not workers, in Duncan Simon and Edwards Rosalind (1997) *Single mothers in an international context; mothers or workers*, London, UCL Press

Millar Jane and Rowlingson Karen (2001) *Lone parents, employment and social policy cross national comparisons*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Millar Jane (2005) Work as welfare; lone mothers social security and employment in Saunders Peter (ed) *Welfare to Work in Practice; Social security and participation in economic and social life* Aldershot, Ashgate

Mooney Gerry (2004) *Personal lives and social policy*, Open University The Policy Press

Montague, Pat (2001) *Persuasive Influence, An Assessment of how Irish groups campaign around the budget*, unpublished master's theses, Dublin City University

Murphy Candy (2006) *Ensuring Quality of Life of all One Parent Families*, Dublin, One Family

Murphy Candy (2007) *Activation: What is it and how to make it positive*, EAPN Ireland employment working group seminar, Cassidys Hotel Dublin 11.January 2007

Murphy Mary (2003) *A woman's model for social welfare reform*, Dublin, National Women's Council of Ireland

Nash Vanessa (2004) *Wages and Poverty Risks of Atypical Workers* presentation to Combat Poverty Agency Research Seminar Series 28 May 2004

National Economic and Social Council (2005): *The Developmental Welfare State*, Dublin: Stationery Office

National Economic and Social Council (2005a) *Strategy: People, Productivity, Purpose Report No 114*, Dublin, Stationery Office

National Economic and Social Forum (1994) Report No 4 *Ending Lone Term Unemployment*, Dublin, Stationary Office.

National Economic and Social Forum (2001) Report No 20 *Lone Parents*, Dublin, Stationary Office.

National Economic and Social Forum, (2006) Report No 33 *Creating a more Inclusive Labour Market* Dublin Stationery Office.

Nicaise Ides (1998) Welfare to Work: The role of social security regulations, *The Margin* Summer 1998 p27-32, Dublin INOU

Nicaise Ides (2002) *The active welfare state: a defense of social exclusion* Bruges, Vives Lecture 23 April 2002

Nicase Ides (2005) *Peer Review of experiment in social activation in the NL Peer Review in the field of Social Inclusion practices*, EC DGV Belgium 2005 accessed peer review social inclusion.net

Nolan Brain and Marx Ive (2000) Low Pay and Household Poverty in Gregory M et al (eds) *Labour Market Inequalities: Problems and Polices of Low Waged Employment in International Perspectives*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

NWCI (2005) *An accessible childcare model*, Dublin, NWCI

NWCI (2006) NWCI presentation to *DSFA consultation on DSFA proposals for supporting lone parents*, Farmleigh House 27 April 2006

O'Brien Mike (2004) *Workfare: Not Fair for Kids, A review of compulsory work polices and their effects on children,* Auckland, Child Poverty Action Group

O'Broin Deiric and Water Eugene (2007) *Democratic audit: assessing local democracy in Ireland governing below the centre, local governance in Ireland* Dublin, TASC

O'Connor, Anne Marie, (2005), *An investigation into whether the contingency based nature of social assistance meets welfare objectives in the light of changes in Irish society* Masters Dissertation, IPA, Dublin unpublished

O Donnell Anthony and Arup Chris (2001) *Social Security and Labour Law: Constructing the labour market subject*, Working Paper No 24, Dec 2001 Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law, Australia

One Family (2006) *Submission in relation to Government proposal for supporting Lone Parents* 1/06/06 Dublin, One Family

OPEN (2006) *Submission in relation to Government Discussion Paper: Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents,* Dublin OPEN

Orlaff Ann Shola (1999) Explaining US welfare reform: power gender race and the US policy legacy, *Critical Social Policy* Vol. 22 No 1 p96-118

Parcel Toby et al (1996) The effects of parental work and maternal non employment on children's reading and math achievement *Work and Occupations* Vol 2 No 3/4 p461 483

Pascall Gillian and Lewis Jane (2004) Emerging gender regimes and policies for gender equality in a wider Europe *Journal of Social Policy* Vol 3 No 3 p373-394

Pearson, Mark, (2003), Targeting social expenditure, discussion paper to Combat Poverty Agency, *Social, Expenditure Conference* 16th September 2003

Pfau-Effinger Brigit (2004) *Development of culture: welfare states and women's employment in Europe* , Adlershot, Ashgate

Porter Doug and Craig David (2004) The third way and the third world: poverty reduction and social inclusion in the rise of inclusive liberalism *Review of International Political Economy* Vol 11.No 2 p387-423

Rahaleen (2006) *An evaluation of FAS services to lone parents*, unpublished: accessed from FAS

Richardson Valarie (2000) *Young mothers A study of young single mothers in two communities*, Dublin, Vincentian Partnership for Justice.

Ridzi Frank (2004) US: Making TANF work: organisational buy in, restructuring, staff buy in , performance monitoring in local implementation. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* Vol XXX1 No 2 p27-48

Riordan Sinead (2002) *Final Evaluation of the Teen Parents Support Initiative*, Dublin, Department of Health and Children

Russell Helen et al (2004) *Work poor households: The welfare implications of changing household employment patterns.* Policy Research Series No 52Dublin ESRI

Russell Helen et al (2001) *Getting out of the house: women returning to employment, education and training* Dublin: Liffey Press

Russell Helen and Corcoran Mary (2001) Report of the ESRI Lone Parent Focus Groups in Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs Welfare (2000), *Review of One Parent Family Payment*, Programme Evaluation Report No 7, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Sabel Charles (2006) Local Partnership and the Developmental Welfare State: How diagnostic monitoring links them, presentation to *Pobal Local Development Conference*, Croke Park Sept 7th 2006

Saunders Peter (2003) Help and Hassel, Do people on welfare really want to work *Work* Vol 19 No 2 p8-13

Saunders Peter (2005) *Welfare to Work in Practice; Social security and participation in economic and social life* Aldershot Ashgate

Sarfati, Hedva and Bonoli, Guillano eds (2001) *Labour Market and social protection reforms in international perspective*, Aldershot, Ashgate

Scott Gill and Brown Usha (2000) New labour and the restructuring of welfare: what's in it for women? *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* Vol. 20 No 7 p51-65

Sen, Amartya., 1997a. *On Economic Inequality*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Shaver Sheila and Bradshaw Jonathan (1995) The recognition of wifely labour by welfare states S*ocial Policy and Administration* Vol. 29 No 1 p10-25

Shaver Sheila (2002) Australian Welfare Reform: From citizenship to supervision *Social Policy and Administration* Vol. 36 No. 4 p331-345

Skevik Anne (2005) Women's citizenship in the time of activation: the case of lone mothers in needs based welfare states, *Social Politics* Spring 2005, pp42- 66

Skinner Christine (2003) *Running around in circles; coordinating child care education and work.* Bristol, The Policy Press

Sutton Liz et al (2004) *Drug and Alcohol use as barriers to employment; A review of the literature* CRSP 499S. Loughborough University, March 2004

Stephens Bob (2005) *Income Adequacy and Poverty Alleviation in New Zealand* paper to Combat Poverty Research Agency Research Seminar Series 31st May 2005

Sweeney John (2002) *Ending child poverty in rich countries:what works*, Dublin, Childrens Rights Alliance

Treacy David (2007) *The Co-ordination and Integration of the CDVEC Adult Education Services*, paper to Dublin City Development Board 28 March 2007

Tobio Constanza and Trifiletti Rosanna,(2005) Strategies, everyday practices and social change Gerhard Ute et al (eds) *Working mothers in Europe; a comparison of policies and practices* Cheltanham, Edward Elgar p58-73

Torfing Jacob (1999) Workfare with Welfare: Recent reforms of the Danish welfare state, *Journal of European Social Policy* Vol. 9 No 1 p5-28

Uttley Stephen (2000) Lone mothers and policy discourse *New Zealand Journal of Social Policy* Vol 29 No 3 p441-458

Van Oorschot Wim and Abrahamson Peter (2003) The Dutch and Danish miracles revisited; A critical discussion of activation polices in two small welfare states *Social Policy and Administration* Vol. 37 No. 3 p288-304

Van Oorschot Wim. (2003) Dutch flexicurity policy: Flexibility and security for Dutch workers paper to *Social Security in a long life society* ISSA 4th International Research Conference on Social Security, Antwerp 5-7 May 2003

Van Aerschot Paul (2003) Some aspects of the application of legal safeguards to active social policy in Demark, Finland and Sweden Paper to *Social Security in a long life society* ISSA 4th International Research Conference on Social Security, Antwerp 5-7 May 2003

Vermeylen Greet (2004) *The working poor in Europe* presentation to Combat Poverty Agency Research Seminar Series, 21 September 2004

Waddan Alex (2004) Sanctions, *Benefits; A journal of social security research and practice* Vol 12 Issue 1 p27-30

Whelan Christopher (1994) Poverty unemployment and psychological distress in Nolan and Callan (eds) *Poverty and Policy in Ireland,* Dublin Gill and Mc Millan

White Deena (2004) Children's agendas: How are they new and how new are they? Project on Social Cohesion, Government of Canada.

Williams Fiona (2004) Rethinking families, rethinking care paper presented at *Families Children and Social Policy* ISPA Conference, Croke Park Dublin 17th September 2004 ISPA Annual Conference accessed www.ispa.ie

Worth Heather et al (2004) Ill prepared for the labour market: health status in a sample of single mothers on welfare *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand,* Issue 21 p83-97

Yeates Nicola (1997) Gender and the development of the Irish social welfare system in Byrne and Leonard (eds) *Women and Irish Society, A Sociological Review* Belfast, Beyond the Pale , IPA p145-169

Zhan Min and Pandey Shanta (2004) Economic well-being of single mothers: Work First or Post Secondary Education? *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* Vol. XXX1 No 3 p87-111