

Some Useful Sources

Keleigh Groves

ESRC Research Group for the Study of Care, Values and the Future of Welfare (CAVA), School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds
E-mail: k.a.groves@leeds.ac.uk

The websites listed here provide free access to a large body of information on the ‘state’ of families, care and welfare – working papers, policy position statements, lectures, book excerpts, statistical reviews, press releases, consultation papers, project reports, and findings documents. All websites were visited on 14 May 2004.

UK government sites

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.asp>

The Information and Analysis Directorate of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) continues to produce a steady stream of research reports and working papers in and around the subject of families, care and welfare. Most relevant here is the *Families and Children Study* – an annual longitudinal survey of a cross-section of families with dependent children.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/>

In 2003, responsibility for children’s services and family policy was transferred to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). At the time of writing, these pages were earmarked for redevelopment, but whatever its new look, users will still be able to access material concerned with the Green Paper *Every Child Matters*, and the national Sure Start programme.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/lib2002/default.asp>

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) website has become a staple feature of this section of *Social Policy and Society*, but for the concerns of this issue, the ‘Living in Britain’ pages are perhaps the most useful. These provide access to the results of the General Household Survey, including data on the changing composition of families and households and the levels of divorce and cohabitation.

<http://www.dca.gov.uk/family/famfr.htm>

Formerly the Lord Chancellor’s Department, the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) has responsibility for ‘relationship support’ and as such, their *family matters* page provides access to reports, reviews and consultation documents on parental responsibilities, contact and divorce. Their research pages offer more free reports (see, in particular, report by CAVA’s Deputy Director Carol Smart and colleagues on Residence and Contact Disputes in Court).

<http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/index.htm>

The Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI's) Women and Equality Unit (WEU) has responsibility for 'promoting and realising the benefits of diversity' in the economy, the workplace, and the family. The research and publications page offers links to many documents, but see, in particular, the research report on minority ethnic mothers and childcare (January 2004), the responses to the Civil Partnerships Bill (November 2003), and the Gender Briefing (January 2004).

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance/>

The DTI's Work-Life Balance campaign started in 2000, and this microsite contains information on its progress so far. Although rarely updated, the site does offer a thorough description of the meaning of work-life balance, and a collection of press releases on local access to childcare, businesses that allow flexible working, and survey results on the 'state' of people's work-life balance.

Policy research centres, think tanks and campaign groups

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/home.asp>

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has recently initiated a research programme specifically on differences in parenting. Older and recently completed research projects, however, have looked at the relationship between families, care and welfare, and their *findings* series documents the results of projects on issues such as family-friendly employment, state support for families, and the impact of mothers' employment on family relationships.

<http://www.ippr.org.uk/research/index.php>

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is often described as Britain's leading centre/left think tank. It has a substantial research programme on social policy, and the website provides free access to a range of publications on families, care and welfare (see, in particular, The Family Report 2004 and Young People and Communities).

<http://www.civitas.org.uk/pubs/familyMain.php>

In recent times, Civitas – the Institute for the Study of Civil Society – has shifted its attentions towards the 'immigration issue', but their website still offers free access to 'fact sheets' on cohabitation, marriage, fathers, and lone parents. Their reports offer a perspective on family change that challenges much academic research (see, for example, the 'Experiments in Living' findings sheet).

<http://www.nfpi.org.uk>

The National Family and Parenting Institute (NFPI) was established in 1999 with the specific aim of providing a 'strong national focus on parenting and families in the

twenty-first century'. Their website certainly achieves that – the research and policy pages provide free access to project summaries on issues such as services for minority ethnic families, representations of families in the media, and family-friendly Britain. The press room too keeps users informed of the key policy developments.

http://www.eoc.org.uk/EOCeng/dynpages/research_by_topic.asp

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is committed to eliminating sex discrimination in the twenty-first-century Britain. Their website provides access to a wealth of information on this broad topic, but a specific issue they are tackling in their externally commissioned research is caring and parenting. Research findings and summaries are available from their projects on working fathers and fathers' role in the home.

<http://www.nch.org.uk/publications/>

NCH – formerly the National Children's Home – is one of the biggest children's charities in the UK. Their publications page offers free access to numerous reports on subjects such as young mothers in care, child migration, and families after divorce. See also their policy statements (<http://www.nch.org.uk/policy/>) that reveal the actions NCH feels the government should take with respect to, for example, asylum seekers, poverty and social exclusion, and families.

University research centres

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cava>

The website of the ESRC Research Group for the Study of Care, Values and the Future of Welfare (CAVA) provides an overview of their five-year research programme on changes in parenting and partnering and the implications of these for future social policies. The recently redeveloped site provides access to working papers, book chapters and journal articles written by members, including details of new research projects.

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/family/>

Established in 1998, the Centre for Research on Family, Kinship and Childhood (CRFKC) is based at the University of Leeds and has a very active research programme looking at various aspects of 'family life' in Britain. Whilst users do have to pay for CRFKC working papers, detailed summaries of all recently completed and on-going research projects are freely available to view.

<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/publications.shtml>

Based at London's South Bank University, the Families and Social Capital ESRC Research Group looks at the 'interrelationship between the dynamics of family change and processes of social capital'. The group is only in its second year, but they have produced a number of freely available working papers on, for example, families and intimate

relationships, friendships between gay men and heterosexual women, and youth values and transitions to adulthood.

<http://www.crfr.ac.uk/index.htm>

Based at the University of Edinburgh, the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) is a consortium research centre with extensive research interests. Their research briefing series provides accessible information on, for example, unpaid carers in Scotland, how people balance their work and care obligations, and the relationships between teenagers and parents.

<http://www.workliferesearch.org/r.asp>

The Work-Life Research Centre – founded by Julia Brannen, Cary Cooper, Suzan Lewis, and Peter Moss – aims to ‘increase understanding and stimulate critical thinking about the relationships between employment, care, family and community’. At the time of writing, the pages on families, work and childcare were being updated, but users can still access on-going and recently completed research summaries on childcare workers, transitions into parenthood and reconciling work and family lives.

<http://iserwww.essex.ac.uk/pubs/>

Housing the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change, the ESRC UK Longitudinal Studies Centre, and the European Centre for Analysis in the Social Sciences, the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) based at the University of Essex is a valuable source of statistical information and analysis. Their publications pages offer free access to newsletters, reports, and working papers on subjects such as parent and adult-child interactions, benefit take-up, and the consequences of teenage pregnancies.

<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/sospol/soccare/>

The SOCCARE project – co-ordinated by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Tampere, Finland – was a comparative European research project that studied informal and formal care arrangements of four key family types: lone parent families; dual-career families; migrant families; and multi-generation families. The project formally finished in October 2003, but the site is still live and offers free access to all 24 research reports.

Press reviews, morning bulletins and news stories

Perhaps the most important way of keeping abreast of policy developments in and around the issue of families, care and welfare is by trawling through the free, email news bulletins

offered by broadsheets, specialist press and internet news sites. Speaking personally, the three most useful providers are:

epolitix.com	http://www.epolitix.com/EN/News/
Government News Network	http://www.gnn.gov.uk
Society briefing	http://society.guardian.co.uk/

And finally . . .

<http://www.socialpolicy.net/>

The Social Policy Net (SPNet) website – funded by the Social Policy Association (SPA) and the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of York - offers an all-embracing guide to social policy links on the web. Their pages provide links to government departments, think tanks, and the media, and their Google-powered search engine is impressively swift.